

# Millbrae Life & Times

M I L L B R A E   H I S T O R I C A L   S O C I E T Y   N E W S L E T T E R

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**HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT:**

**THE YEAR 1948**

BY TOM DAWDY



In 1948, we became "The City of Millbrae". The journey became a reality on **January 14, 1948** when several Millbrae residents traveled to Sacramento to charter Millbrae as a city. 1948 was a banner time for us, but what about the rest of our first year as a city? Here are several stories of our town's inaugural year as a city, taken from the archives of our local newspaper at the time, the *Millbrae Sun*.

This year, the residents of Millbrae are celebrating the **75th Anniversary** of our city. Many of our city services began to be formed in 1948. We did have a **Police Commission**, which regulated Millbrae's police force, but Millbrae really wanted their own **Police Department**. To establish an official Police Department, Millbrae needed a Police Chief. There were ten applicants for the job, and in the end **CHP Officer Walter Swope** was chosen as the first Chief of Police in Millbrae. Soon after, three officers were named to the MPD under Chief Swope – **Lawrence Pickett, Howard Schroeder** and **W.H. Stelter**. This made the MPD a four-man force.

Millbrae's first Council were **Harold Taylor, George Kelly, James Kilpatrick, George Warman**, and **William Leutenegger**. William Leutenegger was elected Council Chairman at their first meeting, held at Taylor School. This made Leutenegger Millbrae's first official Mayor. In April 1948, the City of Millbrae held their first municipal election. Prior to the election, the Council agreed that the "high man" on the polls would be the new Mayor of Millbrae. James Kilpatrick edged out William Leutenegger by 13 votes,

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**PRESIDENT'S REPORT  
JOHN MUNIZ**

Hello friends and neighbors,

Well here we are in a new year, and new adventures will be presented to us as we continue to celebrate the **City of Millbrae's 75th Anniversary** and continue to move this city forward on a path of financial growth and urban development. I hope you were able to attend the Millbrae 75th Anniversary Gala at the beautiful Recreation Center on January 14th.

The Millbrae Historical Society created a beautiful and educational history room on the second floor of the Recreation Center, which was visited and lauded by many guests and dignitaries.

We have a very special event coming up on **Tuesday, April 4th**, at 11:00 am in the front yard of the Millbrae Museum. Last October, **City Manager Tom Williams** was con-



tacted by a group called the **Pan Am Flight 7 Memorial Committee**., a non-profit organization, who had friends and relatives on the ill-fated flight of Pan Am Flight 7, which  
(continued on Page 2)

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**  
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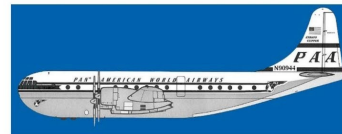
(L to R) Zoe Evanchik, Dorothy Semke, Gloria Borruso and Gaetane Andrews



departed from SFO bound for **Honolulu on November 8th 1957**, then disappeared with the loss of forty-four souls. With the long shared history between SFO and the City of Millbrae, many sites were proposed for the memorial. The most practical space was determined to be the grounds of the **Millbrae Museum**. A commemorative marble memorial gifted to the City of Millbrae will be dedicated to the crew and passengers of Pan Am Flight 7. After the dedication, the Pan Am Flight 7 Committee will be hosting a reception with light refreshments in Millbrae Library Room "A". All are invited to attend the dedication and reception.

I also encourage you to visit the state-of-the-art **Millbrae Recreation Center**. Check out the more than two dozen historical Millbrae photos hanging on the walls. Many of them have never been seen by the public. A big "thank you" to **Tom Dawdy of Dawdy Photography** for his generous donation of time and expertise which went into the production of the Millbrae historical photos for the Recreation Center.

Thank you for your continued support of the Millbrae Historical Society and our three museums — the Millbrae Museum, Carriage House, and Millbrae Train Museum. Thank you to our docents and volunteers



THE  
**PAN AM FLIGHT 7**  
MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

*Respectfully requests  
the honor of your presence at the  
Dedication of the Pan Am Flight 7 Memorial*

*11 a.m., Tuesday, April 4, 2023*

*On the grounds of Millbrae (CA) Museum  
420 Poplar Avenue, Millbrae, CA*

Please join us as we gather with families, friends, and community members to meet and pay our respects to those who perished on November 8, 1957. Light refreshments will be served after the ceremony.

who expend their time, talents and energy to support our museums and keep them operating.

All the best to everyone,  
John Muniz  
Millbrae Historical Society President  
**"The Past is our Key to the Future."**

**VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**  
PAUL LARSON

Greetings Millbrae Historical Society Trustees, members and friends!

Rain, rain go away – come again another day! That is what some say, but with all the rain we've had in the past few months, historic rains, it is considered a very large blessing. Since drought was seemingly the new normal, with water in most parts of the West becoming scarce and in demand, the end of the dryness tunnel was very hard to see. Now with an abundance of rain storms in regular succession, it's easy to imagine that we are in a new period of wet, wet, wet. The historically-low temperatures have given way to a big snowpack in the mountains, and at lower elevations the reservoirs are full or filling up to a more comfortable level. This weather period has been appreciated, but we shouldn't count our chickens before they're hatched.

Climatologists are noting that we're not out of the woods yet. Change in global conditions are still in a fragile

state, and overall warming has given rise to observable differences in our climate. Storms are "stormier", cold is "colder", warm is "warmer" and hurricanes are just more violent and forming more often than ever in recorded history.

On a positive note: remember that time a few years ago at the onset of the COVID Pandemic when cities across the world were shut down and we all had to shelter in place? Remember what happened when there were no cars, factories or utilities churning out exhaust and fumes into the atmosphere? Almost immediately, the air quality cleared up pure and clean. This was well documented and noted by scientists as an indicator that the earth can heal itself very quickly with very little help. This phenomenon was very encouraging, especially in places like China and India known for unimaginably dirty air.

If we humans, as caretakers of our home planet, can quickly learn how



to decontaminate ourselves and not be so filthy, we can prove to future generations that we really do care. Living in a garden is better than living in a garbage dump ...we all agree on that. If we believe and work on cleaning up our act then our species has a bright future ahead.

At least it's been raining a lot. Let's see what happens.

All my best wishes for health and happiness!

**MHS 1st VP Paul Larson**



**HARRIET TUBMAN MEMORIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY**

A public sculpture honoring the abolitionist **Harriet Tubman** was unveiled this week at the **Gateway at Millbrae Station** project, a multi-use housing development adjacent to the Millbrae BART and Caltrain station.

San Francisco-based artist **Cheryl Derricotte** created the 12-foot, free-standing sculpture, formally titled **Freedom's Threshold**. The sculpture includes Tubman's likeness across more than 30 glass tiles, standing in the "doorway" of her home in Auburn, New York. It also sits on a foundation that includes 14 glass bricks, representing the 14 trips Tubman took on the **Underground Railroad**, a network of secret trails and safehouses that Southern slaves used to escape into free Northern states and Canada during the 19th century. (Source: *San Mateo Daily Journal*)

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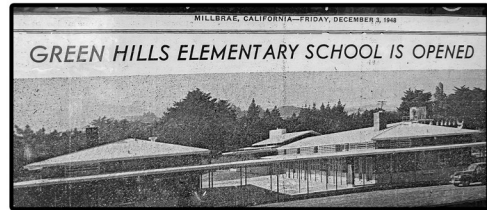
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THE YEAR 1948  
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Millbrae  
1948



SUGAR	POWDERED OR BROWN	1 LB. Pkg.	5 <sup>c</sup>
CATSUP	HUNT'S C. H. B.	16 Oz. Bottle	12 <sup>c</sup>
EGGS	BABY NULAIID STRICTLY FRESH	Doz.	49 <sup>c</sup>
COLOROX	THE GENTLE BLEACH	Doz. Bottle	10 <sup>c</sup>
COFFEE	M. J. S. DRIP OR REGULAR	5 1/2 Lb. Tin	85 <sup>c</sup>
DREFT	SUDS - NEW and IMPROVED	1 Lb. Pkg.	23 <sup>c</sup>

MILLBRAE SUN VOL. XIII. NO. 18      MILLBRAE, CALIFORNIA, FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 1948      Leader— VOL. XV. NO. 21

## WILLIAM F. LEUTENEGER ELECTED FIRST MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MILLBRAE



W. F. LEUTENEGER



HAROLD G. TAYLOR



GEORGE KELLY



JAMES T. KILPATRICK



GEORGE T. WARMAN

... (unreadable text) ...

followed by Harold Taylor and George Warman. **Frank Oehm** was also elected, replacing George Kelly who did not file for re-election. Also, **Isobel Smart** was elected as the City Clerk and **Reif Schneider** as the City Treasurer. Things were falling into place in our new city. We had a new Council, City Clerk, Treasurer, Police Department and **Les Pallas** continued as Fire Chief.

Early on, gambling was still somewhat legal in Millbrae. During the fiscal year ending in June 1948, seven Millbrae taverns still had licenses for “payoff machines”. In February 1948, the *Millbrae Sun* reported that these license holders were confident they could pay off the police to “look the other way.” In October 1948, Police Chief Swope clamped down on all gambling in Millbrae. He gave operators of all establishments with any type of payoff machines or book making their last warning to “clean up or shut up”.

So many exciting things happened in Millbrae’s first year as a city. In February, our City Seal was created by Millbrae artist **E.C. Williams**. In June, the Planning Commission approved the **El Rancho Motel**, which was de-

scribed as a 40-unit “modern in every way” motel. In May, residents of the **Millwood** and **Capuchino** subdivisions got mail delivery, followed by **Meadow Glen** in July. In September, PG&E installed real streetlights in the Capuchino area, and the cows began to move out of the **Millbrae Dairy** after 78 years of operation. There was a movement to extend California Drive from Burlingame to San Bruno, since the **Street Car Railway** franchise would expire in 1950. The street cars were losing \$240 a day, so in 1948 it was announced this would be their last year. On January 16, 1949 the last car ran from San Mateo to San Francisco. In November, **Green Hills School** opened up in Millbrae to accommodate all the new “Baby Boomers” coming to live in Millbrae.

In the Millbrae Museum, we are fortunate to have a collection of old *Millbrae Sun* newspapers describing many of the events that happened in Millbrae during the early days. If you have some free time, you might consider stopping by the museum to read through the old papers to read about Millbrae’s events that make up our history today. Hopefully our local schools will enlighten our youth with some facts on how Millbrae became a city.

## CURATOR'S REPORT

DOROTHY SEMKE

Thank you to everyone who came to the History Room for part of the **75th Anniversary of the City of Millbrae** held at the beautiful new Recreation Center on March 10. Special thanks go to all those who worked hard to set up the room for your viewing and the docents who came out to greet and answer questions.

We want to welcome three new Docents who recently joined us: **Wayne Lee, Clark Bennett,** and **Amy Kelly Lauer.** If you are inter-

ested in becoming a Docent, please call the Museum at (650) 692-5786.

We recently received an aerial photo of Millbrae Meadows (early 1960's) donated by a Millbrae resident and brought in by **Vern Bruce,** soon to be hung. We also have on display in the **Fran Baxter Room** two lovely Asian sculptures donated by **Chen Chung Ho.** Thank you both so much!

Hope to see you soon 12 to 4 pm on Saturdays!



Stay well,  
**Dorothy Semke**  
Curator

## TRAIN MUSEUM NEWS

VERN BRUCE

Hello everyone!

Since our last newsletter, we had our very successful **Children's Christmas Party,** on December 3rd. Considering that the weather was not exactly in our favor, we had a good turnout of kids, parents, volunteers, and other people from the community. Those volunteers that helped make that a wonderful event were **Joscelyn Lampman Carlos, Ben Guzzardi, Charlie Hegarty, Gina Kimura, Peter Sheerin,** and **Rose Shubin.**

If you haven't been to our **Train Museum** in the last few weeks, we have an interesting update on the railroad passenger car '**Civic Center.**' We now have the lights working on it! Both the inside, and the outside lights are all working, as well as the ventilation fans. Cur-

rently we have a power supply only capable of providing enough current to light around 15 of the approximately 155 lights within the car. We're working on getting a stronger power supply in order to light all the lights and run the fans on hot days. We will keep you posted on our progress with that.

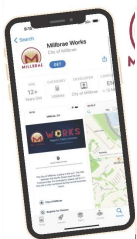
Other progress at the museum includes work primarily headed by Peter Sheerin, involving the total restoration of our two outside original benches. He is doing extensive work removing numerous layers of paint, allowing documentation of all the different colors used in the past. Then they will be re-painted in the first original color.

Our newest volunteer, **Elijah Cabatic,** from Mills High in Millbrae, has been hard at work helping out with the many chores

that we have to do all around the museum. One of his specialties is the review and organizing of the many books, documents, pictures and other items that always need attention.

So, if you find yourself with any time available between 10am and 2pm on a Saturday, be sure to come by and visit!

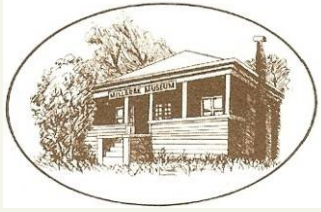
Cheers,  
**Vern Bruce**  
Train Museum Director



**iOS and Android Phone Apps  
are now available for  
download!**

The City of Millbrae recently launched the new request management software **Millbrae Works** powered by SeeClickFix. The application is available for all residents to download on any Apple or Android device. The *Millbrae Works* app allows Millbrae residents who identify community repair or service request needs to submit photos, location information, and details directly to City of Millbrae administrative staff members.

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT  
WWW.MILLBRAEHS.ORG



**MILLBRAE  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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Millbrae, CA 94030

Phone: 650-692-5786

**MHS OFFICERS – 2023-24**

**John Muniz, President**

**Paul Larson, 1st Vice-President**

**Joe Teresi, 2nd Vice-President**

**Gaetane Andrews, Secretary**

**Vern Bruce, Treasurer**

**Mary Vella Treseler, Parliamentarian**

**Dorothy Semke, Curator**

**Tom Dawdy, Historian & Carriage House Curator**

**Ray Gier, Museum Facilitator**

**Joe Teresi, Newsletter Editor**

**C A L E N D A R   O F   E V E N T S**

**Tuesday, April 4: Pan Am Flight 7 Memorial Dedication Ceremony**

- 11:00 am; Millbrae Museum, 420 Poplar Avenue, Millbrae
- Please join us for the dedication of the new memorial in front of the Museum
- Reception with light refreshments in Millbrae Library Room "A" following the ceremony

**Fourth Wednesdays of the Month:** Millbrae Historical Society Board Meetings, 7:00 pm,  
Millbrae Museum, 420 Poplar Avenue. MHS members and guests are welcome to attend!  
**(Please note that Board meetings are being held online via Zoom until further notice)**