

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Historical Spotlight	1
President's Report	1
Vice-President's Message	3
Lifetime Sponsors	3
Curator's Report	5
Train Museum Report	5
Millbrae Works app	5
Calendar of Events	6

**HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT:
MILLBRAE'S FOUNDING FAMILIES—PART 2
BY TOM DAWDY**



In my last article, I talked about the original founding families of Millbrae in the 1800's and early 1900's. The **Sanchez Family**, **Mills Family**, **A.F. Green Family**, **Ludeman Family**, **Massolo Family** and others were the Millbrae pioneers. Now I would like to discuss other important families from the 1900's. A good number of these families farmed the lands in the village of Millbrae. Most were flower growers that owned nurseries that supplied the needs in **San Francisco**.

There are dozens of early families that lived or worked in Millbrae that helped shape our early community. I cannot name everyone, but a few were the **Pallas Family** (**Les Pallas** became our first Fire Chief in 1937), the **Phillips Family** (moved here in 1924 and built a lumber yard named **Burlingame Lumber** where Safeway is today), the **Pound Family** (moved here in 1926 and opened a book & school supply store that later became **Millbrae Stationery**), the **Schultz Family** (**Niels Schultz** bought property and developed it into the **Millbrae Highlands** subdivision; later, during World War II, Schultz developed **Bayside Manor**). Niels and his family lived in Millbrae until 1950 and were very civic-minded (unlike other early Millbrae developers). The **Rogers Family** moved to Millbrae in 1934, and their son **Edgar** was elected as Millbrae Treasurer in 1952 and held that position for 28 years. Edgar's son **Dan Rogers** is still living in Millbrae. The **Muzzi Family** operated the **Millbrae Serra Sanitarium** beginning

(Continued on Page 4)

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT
JOHN MUNIZ**

I am overjoyed to inform you that our **American La France** fire engine is up and operating. A crew from Millbrae Public Works (headed by **Craig Centis**) came to the **Carriage House** on October 19th and performed a total evaluation on the La France. A new battery was installed, and the La France was up and running. Millbrae Public Works will now take over the upkeep and maintenance

of the La France. The next maintenance procedure will be to have the water pump re-built, the oil changed and the radiator flushed.

Pictured on Page 2 is the La France at the Children's Halloween Party at the **Millbrae Recreation Center** on October 28th. What a thrill it was to ride the La France to the Recreation Center! Come on down and see the La France in person at the Millbrae



Carriage House at the rear of the **Millbrae Museum**, open on Saturdays from 12:00 to 4:00 pm (weather permitting).

(continued on Page 2)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

November 8th marked 66 years since the loss of **Pan American Flight 7** on November 8th, 1957, when a **Pan American Airways Boeing 377 Stratocruiser** departed **San Francisco International Airport** and was lost in the Pacific enroute to Hawaii. 44 lives, including both passengers and crew, were lost at sea. Relatives of the passengers and crew of Flight 7 gathered in front of the **Millbrae Museum** on April 4th, 2023 for an unveiling of the stone tablet that memorializes the names of the victims of the crash. The memorial was fully funded by the **Pan Am Flight 7 Memorial Committee**. Inside the Millbrae Museum, there is a replica of the Boeing 377 and news articles related to the crash.

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



Pan American Flight 7



1936 American LaFrance Fire Engine

VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
PAUL LARSON

Greetings Millbrae Historical Society Trustees, members and friends!

As of this writing, Millbrae is being graced with the soft patter of rain and the return of moisture in the air after a long period of our summer-time dry.

Speaking of precipitation, as you may remember, Millbrae had an historic and wild weather ride this past January 2023: Fueled by an atmospheric river, rain pounded the Bay Area and Northern California following "bomb cyclone" storms that battered the Peninsula. Gusty winds blowing in the 40 to 65 mph range left widespread damage behind. The sound of nearby thunder along with lightning was exciting, but

a bit scary. Saturated soil gave way, sending dozens of Millbrae trees toppling, many onto homes and businesses (we had a wind incident at **Chapel of the Highlands** that collapsed our front porch awning). Power outages resulted up and down the Peninsula. City officials were keeping an eye out for rising waters (remember that flooding had been an issue in 2021 on Millbrae Avenue & Rollins Road, in addition to the flooding of the Hillcrest Blvd. underpass east of El Camino Real, which submerged and trapped occupants in their vehicle).

So, keep in mind that it is always best to be prepared (while it's dry) by cleaning out leaves from your



roof gutters and looking for debris blocking storm drains.

El Niño will hopefully be kind to us this winter and through 2024.

All my best to you and your family, from **MHS 1st VP Paul Larson**



Please patronize our Millbrae Historical Society Lifetime Business Members:



Corey, Luzaich, Pliska, de Ghetaldi & Nastari

BUSINESS - SALESMEN - HOME & CONDO OWNERS - APT. RENTERS

MATEO AVE. MINI-STORAGE

1162 SAN MATEO AVE., SO. SAN FRANCISCO 94080

Security - Fireproof Concrete Bldg.
Lockers 4x4 to 16x12 - Self Stor. - Own Lock

9:30 to 5:00 PM
Monday - Saturday
Closed Sundays

952-6464

**Ferrario
Properties**

FULLY EQUIPPED, RADIO DISPATCHED MOBILE UNITS
COMPLETE LOCKSMITH SERVICES
FOREIGN CARS - SAFES

ML MILLBRAE LOCK

VERNON W. BRUCE, C.M.L.
CA LIC. LCO 674
www.millbraelock.com

(650) 583-5898
FAX (650) 692-0162
311 EL CAMINO REAL
MILLBRAE, CA 94030-2609

MILLBRAE'S FOUNDING FAMILIES - PART 2
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Millbrae Founding Families & Businesses



Chief Les Pallas



Alfred Gee's Blacksmith Shop



Fagnani Family



"Doc" Kirby's Chili Parlor



Niels Schultz
Millbrae's slogan
"A Place in the Sun"
came from Neils project



Phillips Family Lumber Yard

in 1938, and **Vince Muzzi** currently owns the **Magnolia of Millbrae**. **Isobel Smart Muenster** moved to Millbrae in 1938 and served as Millbrae City Clerk from 1948-1974. **James Wilson** moved to Millbrae in 1928 and worked in the local nurseries where he met **Fimmo Peters**. Together they started **Peters & Wilson Nursery**, which later moved to where **In & Out Burger** is currently located on Rollins Road. Jim was known for his lifetime involvement in the community. In 1958, **Josephine Waugh** became Millbrae's first woman Councilmember and later served two terms as Mayor. She was well known for her intense opposition to routing the **Junipero Serra Freeway** through Millbrae, something that would have changed our town forever. **Martin Wilms** and his son **Earl Wilms** built the beautiful **El Rancho Inn** in Millbrae in 1948. The Inn is still owned by the Wilms Family today.

One thing I cannot forget to mention in this article is the families of our first City Council in 1948, especially since we are celebrating Millbrae's 75th Anniversary this year. The **Leutenegger Family** (**W.F. Leutenegger**, Millbrae's first Mayor), the **Taylor Family** (**Harold Taylor**), the **Kelly Family** (**George Kelly**), the **Kilpatrick Family** (**James Kilpatrick**), and the **Warman Family** (**George Warman**). On Tuesday, January 15, 1948 the first Millbrae Council was sworn in at their first Council meeting at **Taylor School**.

There are so many important families that can be considered in this great group. I wish I could name them all, but maybe someday someone will write a book and credit

them for what they accomplished to make Millbrae the great **Place in the Sun**.

Some additional early Millbrae families include the **Fagnani Family** (**Joe** and his brother **Frank** moved to Millbrae in the 1920's, where they built several buildings and houses and owned electrical and real estate businesses), and the **Kirby Family** (**Doc Kirby** owned **Doc Kirby's Chili Parlor** on El Camino Real in the 1930's). The parlor had a reputation for selling the best bowl of chili in the area. The restaurant was a popular gathering place for many years — all the legal slot machines really added to the crowds!

The **Larson-Lyerla Families** (**Albert** and his wife **Ethel** moved to Millbrae in 1919). **Albert** worked for the **Millbrae Dairy** delivering milk by horse and buggy and later in motorized vehicles. The family lived in the original house at 196 Poplar Avenue until the 1990's. The **Gee Family** (**Albert Ernest Gee** was a local blacksmith for the **Millbrae Dairy**). When Faye and I were first married we lived in his old house for five years. I still have one of his horseshoes hanging up for good luck. There is a great history album of the Gee's in our Museum.

As I put this article to bed I cannot stop thinking about the many families that moved to the village of Millbrae and raised their families here and had businesses when Millbrae became a City. To name a few, the **Schmidts**, **Ritzaus**, **Richmonds**, **Mitchells**, **Leras**, **Lawrences**, **Larsons** (**Clarence**), **Hickeys**, **Glanges**, **Garibaldi's**, **English**, **Caines**, **Belvini's**, **Nordstroms**, and I can't forget my own family that moved here in the 1940's.

CURATOR'S REPORT

DOROTHY SEMKE

All the members of the Historical Society hope that everyone had a safe and happy Thanksgiving. I would like to personally thank our hard working Docents, who give of their time to open up the Museum for all to enjoy. We would not be around without them.

Welcome to **Erick Herrera** and his family who recently joined the Society. Thank you to **Paul Larson** who donated a figurine belonging to his late mother. It is a beautifully created rendition of **Scarlett O'Hara** brought to life by the **Hamilton Company** and based on **Margaret Mitchell's** 1936 book

Gone With the Wind.

We were all so happy to once again host **Spring Valley School's** 2nd/3rd Grade for a very well planned out scavenger hunt that their teacher **Elizabeth Graff** has been putting together for the past five years. The 55 children not only got to visit the **Museum** and **Carriage House**, but also the **Millbrae Library** before returning to school in time for lunch.

A plaque that the Historical Society had made in 2010 has recently been returned to us. It tells the history of the **Dunphy House**, built in



1883. It will be framed and soon on display for all to see in the Carriage House.

Stay well,
Dorothy Semke
Curator

TRAIN MUSEUM NEWS

VERN BRUCE

Hello everyone!

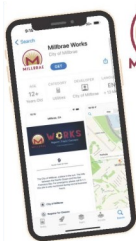
Elijah Cabatic, Ben Guzzardi, and **Peter Sheerin** continue to do extensive work on our security/surveillance systems. Our latest member of the team is another Mills High student, **Robby Hillman**. He has also been helping with various needed items around the Train Museum, as well as the security work listed above.

As the restoration arm of the Millbrae Historical Society, we have been working on the **1895 Larkins** horse-drawn carriage donated to us in earlier days. It is completed except for the fabric needed to cover the dashboard and fenders. Originally, the work was

started with a complete disassembly of the unit, by **Joseph Bonavia, Jason Brady, Richard Kennedy, Jorge Quezada,** and yours truly. Further restoration work was done by Peter Sheerin, removing some of the stubborn paint. The final assembly and completion was handled by **James King** and myself, with additional help from Elijah Cabatic, Ben Guzzardi, Robby Hillman and Peter Sheerin.

Don't forget, we're always open between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm on Saturdays, so come by and get a guided tour, or give yourself a self-guided tour.

Cheers,
Vern Bruce
Train Museum Director



WORKS

Report | Track | Connect

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

The City of Millbrae has 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**

Post Office Box 511
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, December 12: Mayoral Inauguration

- 7:00 pm; Millbrae Recreation Center
- Inauguration of Mayor Anders Fung and Vice-Mayor Maurice Goodman
- RSVP requested at RSVP@ci.millbrae.ca.us

Tuesday, December 12: City of Millbrae 75th Anniversary Appreciation Gala

- 7:30 - 9:30 pm; Millbrae Recreation Center
- Highlighting our esteemed community service organizations
- Reception featuring food and drink from local culinary establishments

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)