

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: DAWDY PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM DAWDY

Tom and Faye Dawdy, owners of Dawdy Photography, were both born in Millbrae and both have a long history with our City. Tom's parents (**Glenn and Hazel**) moved to San Francisco shortly after World War II. In 1946, **Glenn Dawdy** opened a Shell Service Station on the corner of Millbrae Ave. and El Camino Real. Shortly thereafter they bought a brand new house in Bayside Manor for a whopping \$4000!

In 1951, Faye's grandparents (**Adele and Augustino Arata**) bought a house located at 585 Chadbourne Avenue that belonged to the Gee family. Mr. Gee was the blacksmith for the Millbrae Dairy. Mrs. Gee had been living in the house after her husband's death, but then moved to



a rest home. They bought the house from the Gee's son, which came with a barn and windmill. A couple of years later, Faye's parents (**Melba and Frank Catania**) bought a house on Bayview Ave. Both families now lived in Millbrae!
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARY VELLA TRESELER

As I approach the end of my term as your president, I reflect on the past two years, as well as the prior six years, when I had the honor and privilege of serving in this capacity for such a wonderful organization.

At our March 15 General Membership meeting, I will be turning over the reigns to our Vice-President **John Muniz**. I know we will be in

good hands with his leadership skills. In addition to having served as our Vice-President for the past year, John served as President of the Millbrae Lions Club for 2007-2008, and he continues to be an active member of that organization. I will continue to serve on the Board as Parliamentarian and as a Lifetime Trustee. I look forward to my involvement with our various pro-



projects and upcoming events.

One of our greatest accomplishments was the publishing of our book by Arcadia Publishing titled **Images of America: Millbrae**.
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VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JOHN MUNIZ

What an exciting and challenging time we live in! What a beautiful, culturally diversified city we live in, with such a colorful history and a bright future. As members of the Millbrae Historical Society, we have been entrusted with a wealth of history which we are charged with protecting and cultivating for generations to come.

What an honor and privilege it is for me to be nominated as President of the Millbrae Historical Society. I certainly have some big shoes to fill. Over the years, our President **Mary Vella Treseler** has worked diligently, giving her time and talents to protect and grow our historical treasures and artifacts. Such a gracious lady, we are very fortunate to have Mary as our leader and mentor. Thank you President **Mary Vella**

Treseler for your hard work, dedication and community service.

Thank you to my fellow Millbrae Historical Society Board of Trustees for having the confidence that I will carry on our great tradition of preserving our rich historical treasures for our generation and generations to follow. Thank you to our members and their families who continue to serve the Millbrae Historical Society year after year. Thank you to our dedicated members who believe as I do that "the past is the key to our future".

This year our annual Millbrae Historical Society installation of officers will be held at the Millbrae Public Library Community Room on Sunday, March 15th, commencing at 1:00 pm. **Mayor Robert Gottschalk** will per-



form the installation of our new officers. We are very fortunate to have as our guest speaker **Mitchell P. Postel**, the President of the San Mateo County Historical Association. He will be speaking to us on the "First Recorded Description of Millbrae". We will also have a Millbrae history Trivia Contest where teams will be pitted against each other for first prize. I invite all our Millbrae Historical Society members and their families to join us for a fun and informative afternoon.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

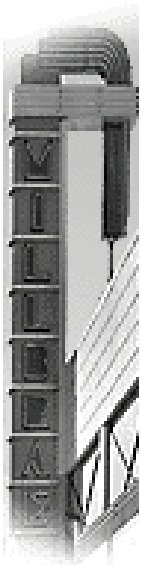
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They have sold very well. They sell for \$21, which includes sales tax. If you're interested in purchasing a book, please call the Millbrae Museum at (650) 692-5786.

On another note, I was truly surprised and honored to have been chosen as the eighth recipient of the Millbrae Historical Society's "Living History Award" at our annual Holiday Party on December 10, 2008. I graciously thank Trustee and Chairperson of the Awards Committee, **Helen Habeeb**, her fellow Committee members Trustees **Doris Golder** and **Madelyn Richardson**, and the MHS Officers and Board of Trustees for choosing me to receive this most prestigious award. I am most grateful to all of you!

Please make plans to join us at the Millbrae Library Community Room on Sunday, March 15, 2009 at 1:00 pm for the Annual Installation of the Millbrae Historical Society's Officers and Board of Trustees. We're honored to have with us **Millbrae Mayor Robert Gottschalk**, who will perform the installation of the Society's newly-elected officials.

On a final note, I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to the numerous Society members who have contributed countless hours of dedicated service. With your help throughout the years, our achievements have certainly been impressive.



CURATOR'S REPORT

ALMA MASSOLO



Mildred Cavanaugh Wilson, great, great, great granddaughter of **José Antonio Sanchez**, gave the Museum a large amount of artifacts and history of the Sanchez family that came to California in 1776 with the **Juan Baptista De Anza** expedition. She verbally instructed that the doll that she kept on her bed, which belonged to her mother, be given to the museum upon her death. The doll (circa 1890s) has a head, arms and legs made of porcelain. A beautiful addition to the Sanchez collection was delivered to us by the executrix of Ms. Wilson's estate in January.

Another high quality item recently added to our collection is the Kimball pump organ manufactured in Chicago in the 1800s, donated by **Charles 'Smitty' Smith**. He also donated two large music box discs that were manufactured by the Regina Music Box Company, U.S. Patent #500370, dated June 27th 1893. The song on one disc is *Charm of Love*; the other disc was not readable. He also donated antique shaving brushes, art books, many baskets and a box filled with various items. Thank you **'Smitty'**!

Paul Baxter, son of **Bill Baxter** - our past president of many years - and his wife **Fran** - who was historian of the Millbrae Historical Society for many years, donated a unique golf

caddy carrier invented by **Merle Faber**, who operated a hobby shop on Broadway in early 1940s. He also donated an antique scale in a beautiful glass and wood case that was used to assay gold and other precious metals that belonged to his parents. Thank you **Paul** for the great contribution to our museum!



Thank you to **Shirley Rieland** for the donation of a key that once opened doors at the Mills mansion. Your donation is greatly appreciated.

Twelve patients from the **Three Bells Rest Home** in Pacifica toured our museum last August. Most of the visitors were in wheelchairs. It was a blessing that we have a wheelchair ramp for their convenience and safety in entering the museum. After a viewing and question and answer period, they gathered around the dining table with a lace table cloth and ate their box lunches as we served coffee, tea and cookies. We were told that it had been a long time since they sat at a table covered with a lace cloth. They felt that we had given them a royal treatment. They were very appreciative of what was offered to them and also for the opportunity to have a most enjoyable outing.

Our Yard Sale of October 4th and 5th was a huge success and very profitable. Thank you to all the members that helped price the



items and place them in containers to be carried from the museum basement to the yard. Thanks also to the men members who set up the tables and loaned us tarps to cover the merchandise from the scheduled rain. We moved all the merchandise under the tables and covered everything to prevent it from getting wet overnight, but, unbeknown to us, the lawn was equipped with an automatic sprinkler system. Thank God it did not turn on over the weekend. What a catastrophe that would have been!!

Thank you to **Vern Bruce**, our personal locksmith, who is always there when we need him for lost keys and to open locks for us. Your services are always greatly appreciated. Thank you **Vern**!

Doris and Les Morse have donated a 1941 Greyhound Bus schedule for service between San Francisco, San Bruno and Millbrae that will be placed in our transportation album. Thank you **Doris and Les**!

A tribute was paid to **Ralph Jaeck**, the first city manager of Millbrae, at his retirement dinner at the Westin Hotel. Millbrae Historical Society President **Mary Vella Treseler** presented him with a copy of our book, *Images of America: Millbrae*. His photograph will be hung in the section of the museum display depicting the incorporation of the city of Millbrae.

TRAIN MUSEUM NEWS

ELIZABETH FURBER, EDITOR
VERN BRUCE, REPORTER

Repairs, restorations, and the like are all a major part of what our museum is all about. Current projects underway include the repair of several leaking win-



dows on the *Civic Center* sleeping car, as well as the construc-

tion of a power supply for same. These tasks are being performed by **Dave Hannigan, Jay King,** and **Vern Bruce.** Other recent accomplishments include a complete remake of our railroad patch and badge display, done by **Richard Kennedy.** **Richard** again, with the help of **Vern Bruce,** had to re-install our 3-foot by 12-foot aerial view of the Caltrain corridor, as it had fallen down after four years.

We thank the following docents that have volunteered in the last few months: **Mark Evans; Liz Furber; Robert Gorran; Richard**



Kennedy; Gino & Gerry Micheli; and **Vern & William Bruce.**

We also would like to thank the following individuals for various recent donations to the museum: **Ralph Bennett; Leigh Bradbury; Ralph Domenici; Liz Furber; Robert Gorran; Dave & Dianne Hannigan; Dave Hockett; Ronald Johnson; Bruce Shelton;** and **Bob Swanson.**

Millbrae Historical Society Officers & Trustees for 2009-10

President: John Muniz
Vice-President: Paul Larson
Secretary: Lois Way
Treasurer: Vern Bruce
Historian: Alma Massolo
Parliamentarian: Mary Vella Treseler

New Trustees: John Espinoza, Faye Dawdy, Donna Curusis

New Lifetime Trustees: Jack & Ann Gardner, George & Helen Habeeb

To receive e-mail reminders of Millbrae Historical Society meetings and events, please send your e-mail address to Joe Teresi at jtnia@comcast.net

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: DAWDY PHOTOGRAPHY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

In 1953, **Glenn Dawdy** moved his Shell Station to 500 Broadway (the corner of Broadway and Taylor). There was not much on



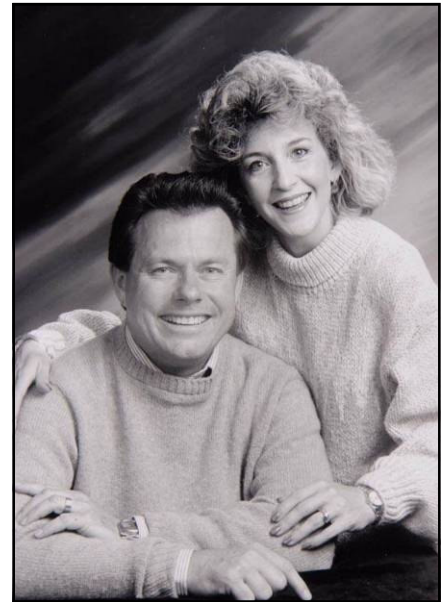
the block at that time. The gas station was near the Phillips Lumber Yard and an animal farm. Glenn was an active member of the community. He was in the Millbrae Lions Club until his death in 1973. Tom grew up on the corner of Broadway and Taylor, working many years at the gas station. Around this same time, Tom met Faye. Faye would drive in to the station several times per day and buy 50 cents worth of gasoline. Faye's dad, Frank, worked in the produce section at the QFI Supermarket down the block and would often come by the station after work. One day Glenn told Frank to come in the back room and have a drink, because it looked like

Faye might turn out to be his daughter-in-law. Tom and Faye married one year later, May 5, 1974.

Three years later in 1977, they opened up a small photography studio two blocks down the street at 316 Broadway Suite C (above Suzanne's Bakery). In 1980, Faye and Tom opened up a storefront studio at 1653 El Camino Real in Millbrae. After 10 years at that location, they needed more space and moved back downtown just a few doors south of Broadway and Taylor. They opened Dawdy Photography at 449 Broadway in 1990 and remained there until 2004.

Faye and Tom were active in the community, especially during the years they owned the studio on Broadway. Dawdy Photography was business of the Year in 2000. Tom was named Millbrae Man of the Year in 2002. They were both active in the Millbrae Chamber of Commerce and many Art and Wine Festivals. Tom joined Millbrae Rotary in 1980. He is a Past President and Rotarian of the Year twice. He was Chair of the Millbrae Sister City Commission for many

years, and they both traveled to Millbrae's Sister City of La Serena, Chile several times on humanitarian projects. Tom is currently a Trustee for the Millbrae Historical Society. Tom was born in Millbrae in 1948 - the same year Millbrae became a City. On November 20, 2008, the San Mateo County Board of



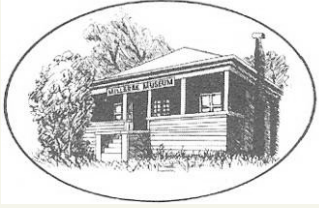
Supervisors issued a proclamation making the day "Tom Dawdy Day" in San Mateo County. Faye's dad, Frank Catania, has been running the Millbrae Chamber of Commerce's Farmers Market since the early 1990's.

In 2004, Faye and Tom had an opportunity to buy a building at 821 California Drive in Burlingame, just one mile south of Millbrae. In spite of the move, Millbrae is still their hometown. Their children Tracy and John Franco, like their parents, went through Millbrae schools and call this wonderful city their home.

In Memorium

The Millbrae Historical Society members were saddened to hear of the passing of **Richard Arthur English, Sr.** He was a great supporter and contributor. His donations included the 1925 Victrola, his grandfather's bugle used in the Spanish-American War, jewelry, and many family photos. Richard leaves a great legacy and history of family life in Millbrae. He will be terribly missed.

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—2009

John Muniz, President
Paul Larson, Vice-President
Lois Way, Secretary
Vern Bruce, Treasurer
Alma Massolo, Curator & Historian

Joe Teresi, Newsletter Editor

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

Sunday, March 15: Millbrae Historical Society Installation of 2009 Officers and Board of Trustees, 1:00 pm, Millbrae Library Community Room, 1 Library Avenue.

– Featuring “*First Recorded Description of Millbrae*” presentation by Mitchell P. Postel, President of San Mateo County Historical Association

Saturday, July 4: Annual Fourth of July Barbeque and Family Picnic, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, David Chetcuti Community Room, 450 Poplar Avenue

– Co-sponsored by the Millbrae Historical Society and the Millbrae Lions Club

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.

Millbrae Historical Society Museum Operating Hours

Millbrae Museum: Saturdays, 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm

Millbrae Train Museum: Saturdays, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm