

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:
**SEARCHING FOR GOLD
 IN MILLBRAE**
 BY TOM DAWDY



I have spend many hours in the last few years searching for "gold" in Millbrae. Not the kind that goes for over \$1,000 per ounce, but information on Millbrae's favorite soda fountain of the 1950's & 60's – the "**Brick 'o Gold**". Everyone that lived in Millbrae during the time "The Brick" was open will tell their story about what they loved when they went there. The Brick 'o Gold was located at 441 Broadway, the current home of **Round Table Pizza**.

Store proprietor **Howard Cobb** was also a piece of Millbrae's gold. Everyone had their favorites at "The Brick". For most of the kids and candy lovers, it was the best selection of penny candy on the Peninsula. You could order burgers, shakes, and malts at the counter. Many people
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**PRESIDENT'S REPORT
 JOHN MUNIZ**

Friends and fellow members,
 Well, Spring has sprung in Millbrae with winds howling through the canyons and hills as usual. I am looking forward to a great summer of fun at the Millbrae Historical Society. I am really looking forward to the opening of the beautiful, new **Safeway** store in Millbrae. Have you noticed that the old murals of the early Millbrae

settlers, which used to be in the front of the old Safeway store, are now up on the El Camino side of the store? Our new Safeway store will definitely be the highlight of Millbrae's downtown shopping district and a mecca for Peninsula residents. Remember, "Shop Millbrae".

The Millbrae Historical Society now has a new "historian", a man who is the living history of Millbrae, born



and raised in Millbrae, opened a business in Millbrae and resides in Millbrae. Did you guess who the lucky guy is?? Our very own, **Tom Dawdy**. Congratulations Tom, your star is on the rise!
 (continued on Page 2)

P R E S I D E N T ' S R E P O R T

(C O N T I N U E D F R O M P A G E 1)

Our annual field trip is scheduled for **Friday, September 13**. This year we will be headed for Niles (a district of Fremont), to take a tour of the world famous **Niles Es-sanay Silent Film Museum**. The Museum offers a way to rediscover America's movie pioneers and see their remarkable work in an authentic setting – a theater where Charlie Chaplin and Bronco Billy saw themselves and their contemporaries on the screen. We will be given a guided tour of the Museum, see a silent movie, and take a walking tour of the historic sites in Niles. We will car pool and have a non-hosted lunch in Niles. Mark your calendars for September 13 for a day of Old West fun!

Our annual **Docent Lunch** will be held on **Sunday, September 22** at the El Rancho Inn Terrace Café. Members who volunteer as museum docents are hosted for lunch courtesy of the Millbrae Historical Society. You may bring a non-docent guest at extra cost. Assistant Curator **Dorothy Semke** is in charge of reservations; more information will become available as the date draws closer.

Speaking of Dorothy Semke reminds me of our annual **Millbrae Historical Society Yard Sale**, to be held on **Saturday, August 10** in front of the Museum. The **Friends of the Millbrae Library** will also be holding their used book sale on the same day. If you have gently used items that you would like to donate to our Yard Sale, please contact Dorothy Semke or bring the items to the Museum on Saturdays between 12:00 and 4:00 pm. Our Library and Museum will be offering great bargains on gently used books and household items. Looking forward to seeing all our neighbors and friends at the Yard Sale!

The Millbrae Historical Society held its annual **Officer and Trustee Installation** on St. Patrick's Day, **Sunday, March 17th** in Library Room A. I am honored to return as your President commencing my fourth year.



Pictured left to right: Swearing in you new officers, **Millbrae Mayor Gina Papan**, President **John Muniz**, Vice-President **Paul Larson**, Secretary **Alicia Espinoza**, Treasurer & Train Museum Director **Vern Bruce**, and Parliamentarian **Mary Vella Treseler**.

Congratulations to our Officers and Trustees who protect and enhance the history of Millbrae! Thank you to the members who helped out by bringing refreshments and goodies. Thank you **Joe Teresi** for a wonderful presentation on the history of the Lincoln Highway.

Friday Night at the Movies is back in full swing after a winter break. If you like watching vintage movies on a large screen, come on down to the Millbrae Museum on the third Friday of each month at 7:00 pm and check out a movie produced in Hollywood's Golden Age. Our next showing on **Friday, June 21** will be the greatest musical every made, 1952's ***Singing in the Rain***, starring **Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor** and a 19-year-old **Debbie Reynolds**. On **July 19th**, 1951's ***Show Boat***, and **August 16th**, the last of the great musicals, 1958's ***Gigi***.

The Millbrae Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a **Millbrae Chamber Walk** on June 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th, from 12:00 to 1:00 pm to encourage folks to get out and walk and patronize Millbrae businesses. The Chamber will be walking down Broadway using our Millbrae Historical Society **History Walk** brochures as a guide. Meet at the City Hall fountain and start walking!

Many of you have commented on the exterior condition of the Millbrae Historical Society Museum. It is in pretty bad shape and in dire need of a paint job. The west and south sides, exposed to the sun most of the day, are in the worst shape. I have written several letters to the City of Millbrae Department of Public Works requesting that they paint the building. I will continue to keep you posted on the status of this matter.

Check out **Millbrae Machines**, the **Millbrae Lions Club** second annual car show, on **Saturday, August 17**. Broadway in Millbrae will be closed to traffic from Taylor Blvd. south to stage over 150 classic cars that will be entered in the car show. This free show starts at 8:00 am.

The Mother of all barbeques is fast approaching! You know, the annual **Millbrae Historical Society Fourth of July Barbeque** on **Thursday, July 4th** in the Chetcuti Room. Our wonderful guest speaker will be **Lt Ed Barberini**, from the Millbrae Bureau of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department. I hope to see all our friends and neighbors at our wonderful Fourth of July celebration!

I close this message in memory of my two friends and members who we recently lost, former Mayor and City Council member **Nadia Holober** and **Ted Newby**.

John Muniz
MHS President (2009- present)

VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PAUL LARSON

As of this writing I just arrived back from a wonderful trip to Vancouver, Alaska, and Seattle.

Starting off with **Vancouver, British Columbia** - a beautiful, clean and very walkable city. A brief history: The original settlement, named Gastown, grew around a sawmill and a nearby tavern, both established in 1867. Growing to become the township of Granville, with the announcement of the arrival of the railroad it was renamed Vancouver and incorporated as a city in 1886. By 1887, the transcontinental railway was extended to the city to take advantage of its large natural seaport, which soon became a vital link in a trade route between the Orient, Eastern Canada, and London. As of 2009, Vancouver is the busiest port in Canada, and the most diversified port in North America. While forestry remains its largest industry, Vancouver is well known as an urban center surrounded by nature, making tourism its second-largest industry. Major film production studios in Vancouver and Burnaby have earned Vancouver the film industry nickname "Hollywood North".

Leaving Vancouver we took Amtrak down to **Seattle** and boarded our ship headed to the "Inside Passage" of the Alaskan Panhandle. I would describe what I saw of Alaska as a landscape of vertical mountains jutting straight up from sea level, high above either side of our ship, and narrow waterways that curve endlessly among nature's cathedrals and icy glaciers. It was unusually warm with no rain and temperatures in the upper 60's. The small amount of real-estate is squeezed tightly between the water and mountains.



Our first Alaskan stop was **Ketchikan**. Ketchikan's history dates back to 1883, when a man named Snow built a salmon saltery. By 1900 the fishing trade was flourishing with a population of 800, and the town was incorporated. We learned that



many of the original town luminaries were "ladies of negotiable affection". Today the main industry is tourism. Pictures don't do this place justice, and it looks just as it did in the early 1900's.

The next stop was the state capital, **Juneau**. The area was known to the natives for fishing until gold was discovered in the 1880's. After the gold boom settled down, then hard rock mining took over. Tourism is a major industry today. We took an amazing sky tram straight up from the town to the mountain top.

Overall I enjoyed my experience very much. Now that I am back from my trip, I look forward to seeing you and telling you all about it!

All my best to you, your family and loved ones.

Paul Larson
Vice-President
Millbrae Historical Society

MILLBRAE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES



Title

Singing in the Rain

Showboat

Gigi

WHAT: Come watch classic movies from the Golden Age of Hollywood.

WHERE: Millbrae Museum
420 Poplar Avenue

Bring your own popcorn and a spouse or friend for a fun Friday night on the town!!

Year	Star	Date and Time	
1952	Gene Kelly	06/21/2013	7:00 PM
1951	Howard Keel	07/19/2013	7:00 PM
1958	Leslie Caron	08/16/2013	7:00 PM

TRAIN MUSEUM NEWS

ELIZABETH FURBER, EDITOR
VERN BRUCE, REPORTER

We have been busy sprucing up the Train Museum lately. Volunteer **Ralph Domenici** donated his time and the use of his pressure washer in order to clean the museum building and grounds. As a result, the building looks new, and the concrete looks like it could glow in the dark! **Ralph and Joseph Bonavia** also attached plastic netting onto our existing metal fence to greatly reduce the amount of leaves and debris being blown into our site.

Work is also progressing on the **Civic Center** railcar. As the wet weather has subsided, we are continuing to repair/re-seal the windows. This is a slow process of cleaning, repainting, and replacing



rubber gaskets, etc. on each of the 22 windows on the car. Six of the 22 windows are now completed, and we expect to get most of the rest done by next winter.

Please come down to the Train Museum to visit if you haven't been down recently!



SEARCHING FOR GOLD IN MILLBRAE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

ordered Howard's drink creations like "Green Rivers" or "Millbrae Bombs". If you stopped by in the morning, Howard would be in the back frying up some fresh donuts. I know someone out there has photos of the Brick 'o Gold in their basement, attic, or some old scrapbook. The photo in this article features Howard Cobb on roller skates in 1958 serving ice cream to some

hungry Millbrae kids. If you find a photo, please call me at (650) 588-5400. I will scan it and give it right back.

On another note, I want to say I'm extremely honored to be appointed the new MHS Historian, taking over one of Alma's jobs that she has performed so wonderfully for many years, Tom.



FAREWELL TO LLOYD LARSON SEPTEMBER 20, 1922 - SEPTEMBER 6, 2012

Lloyd Larson was a long-time member of the Millbrae Historical Society. Born in San Mateo, he spent his younger years in Millbrae, where he excelled in athletics, music, and academics. Following graduation from **Burlingame High School** in 1940, he started his studies at **San Mateo Junior College**. He joined the US Navy during World War II, serving his time in Idaho, Maryland, and San Diego training recruits as their Company Commander. Lloyd resumed his education in 1946, earning bachelor's and master's degrees from **San Francisco State University**. That same year, he married

Jean, his wife of 52 years.

Lloyd accepted a teaching position at an elementary school in Kelseyville in 1952. In addition to teaching, Lloyd served as an avid coach of several sports at the school. Over 17 years, his teams were remarkable, including basketball teams with win streaks of 51 and 33 games and dominant track athletes who found success at the Junior Olympics. He later coached baseball at Kelseyville High School as well as local Little League and softball teams. Coach Larson had concern for all of his players, making sure that they all got playing time

and offering ample encouragement.

Lloyd was an outstanding classroom teacher who moved into the role of a school principal in 1962 and later retired in 1982. Lloyd later moved to Capitola with his second wife Margaret, who was from Millbrae.

Lloyd is survived by his sister **June Lyerla**, a Lifetime MHS member. Lloyd and June are the children of **Ethel and Bert Larson**, early Millbrae settlers who moved to a home on Poplar Avenue in the Millbrae Villa Tract in 1919. Bert was a delivery driver for the Millbrae Dairy.

CURATOR'S REPORT
 ALMA MASSOLO
 DOROTHY SEMKE

We were saddened by the recent loss of **Nadia Holober** and **Ted Newby**. Our deepest sympathies to the families of Nadia and Ted.

Bob Matheson, chairman of the Mills High School Class of 1962 Reunion, presented President **John Muniz** with a commemorative photo of the *Coast Daylight* train #24 in appreciation of the hospitality extended to the group during their stay in Millbrae. It has been hung in the **Fran Baxter Room**.

Mr. and Mrs. Denis O'Halloran were the highest bidders on a raffle prize donated by **Marge Colapietro** for the *Spirit of Aloha* fundraiser for the Millbrae Community Youth Center. The prize was lunch with Marge, a visit to the Millbrae Train Museum, and a ride on the 1929 Ford delivery truck. They were very pleased with their visit.

Kirby Brown, whose grandfather worked at the **West Coast Porcelain Works**, has written books on the factory and is still researching and discovering new material. He is willing to make a presentation to us about the West Coast Porcelain Works. Residential development in Millbrae began in 1919, when the factory opened and created plentiful jobs. He has donated a beautiful black ashtray that features the West Coast logo. It can be seen in the display cabinet in the Museum dining room.

Chris Himmel is one of our newest members. His father was very active in Millbrae government and the community during the incorporation efforts of the 1940's. Chris helped out by serving as a Museum docent. We are sorry that he has moved to Florida, but he promises that he will keep in touch and will visit us.



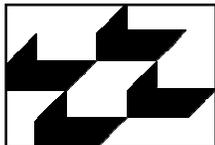
President **John Muniz** has donated a beautiful vase that belonged to his family for over 100 years. We thank you for enhancing our museum!

An unknown guest donated a watercolor painting of the **16 Mile House** by artist **Gladys Fies**. She was a well-known member of the Western Society of Artists, the San Carlos Fine Arts Association, and the Santa Clara Watercolor Society. Her impression is a little different, but beautifully created. It is hanging in the Museum for your viewing.

Alma Massolo, Curator
Dorothy Semke, Asst. Curator



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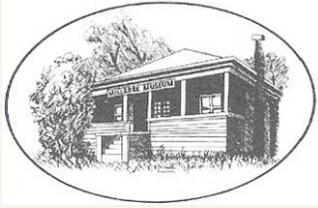
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MHS OFFICERS—2013

John Muniz, President
Paul Larson, Vice-President
Alicia Espinoza, Secretary
Vern Bruce, Treasurer
Alma Massolo, Curator
Tom Dawdy, Historian

Joe Teresi, Newsletter Editor

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

Thursday, 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.

Saturday, August 10: Annual Millbrae Historical Society Yard Sale, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm,
Millbrae Museum, 420 Poplar Avenue.

Friday, September 13: Field Trip/Lunch at Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum in Fremont

Meet at Millbrae Museum, 420 Poplar Avenue, at 8:45 am

- Reservations required— call Joe Teresi at (650) 455-4887.

Third Fridays of the Month: *MHS Friday Night at the Movies*

Millbrae Museum, 420 Poplar Avenue. See schedule on Page 3.

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