

# The Novato Historian

Spring 2025

Volume 49 Number 1



December 27, 1961—Novato Advance—Aerial photo shows the wide swath that the proposed 101 freeway would have emboveled out of downtown Novato. The white lines in the photo depict the right-of-way. The state estimated that 10% of the downtown area would be destroyed by condemnation, including the Novato theatre.

**President's Corner**

**The House of Grandmother Zunino**

**Oldest House in Novato 1523 S. Novato Blvd**

**Novato Township Story**

**Novato Family History Day**

**Trumbull Orchard Once Largest**

**Agusto F. Pacheco**

**Novato—50 Years Ago**

**The 2025 Novato Historical Guild annual membership payment was due in January** 1

**General Meeting March 15**

## The Novato Historian

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To collect, preserve, and make reasonably available to the public, exhibits and information related to the history of the Novato area.

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## President's Corner

Susan Magnone

President, Novato Historical Guild

Happy Historian New Year. As traditional for a "New Year" I'll look ahead.

Going Forward: For the Guild, the year 2025 is about building upon and improving the successes accomplished in 2024. In January, the board revised our strategic plan and set priorities. One of the priorities is to be more visible in the community. Here are some ways we will do that:

- Family History Day, 3rd annual event. This event is becoming a signature event for the Guild. It's held on the Civic Green on a Saturday in October.

-More public tours. The cemetery tours were a big success. Now we want to add walking tours of Old Town Novato and Hamilton Field.

-Redesign the Guild's website to be easier to read, user friendly. A committee is working on this project and it will go live by June. (Fingers crossed)

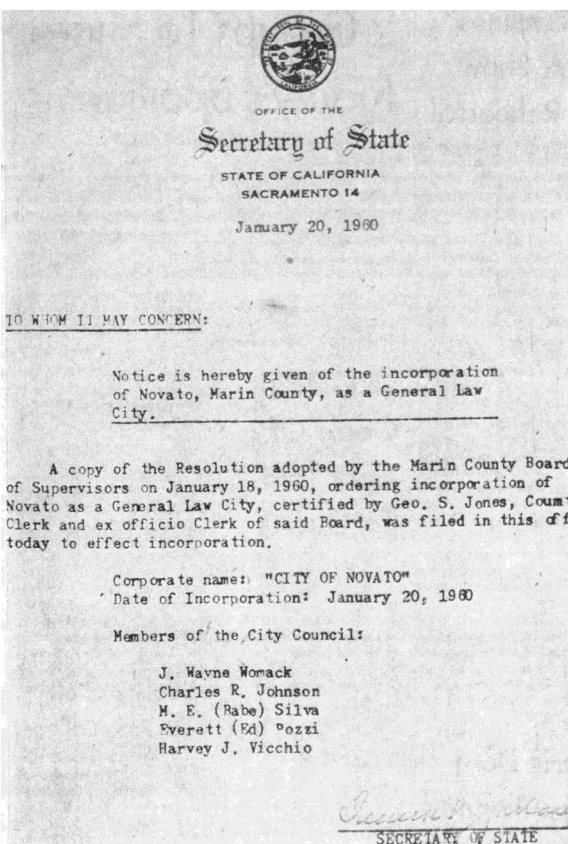
-Presentations to organizations. We have a new presentation called "Museum Work". It's about the tasks that are needed to operate our two museums. Sort of a behind the scenes look. The presentation is 25 minutes plus questions. So, if you need a speaker for your organization contact us. We still do presentations on the history of Novato and Hamilton.

The operation of the museums is always a top priority. Both museums are exploring how we can use technology to share our history at the museums and online. If you would like to help, please let us know.

The Novato Historical Guild is looking ahead to preserve and share our history.

Susan Magnone

[info@novatohistory.org](mailto:info@novatohistory.org)



## Novato Turns 65 On Jan. 20th

THIS IS THE DOCUMENT signed by the Secretary of State, Frank M. Jordan, that officially indicates Novato became a city on January 20. The original is on file in Sacramento and copies were received by the new city yesterday. The city council had hoped to stave off cityhood until next week when it would have been more fully prepared, but the county clerk of Marin County, George Jones, insisted that Novato become a city immediately,

# The House of Grandmother Zunino

Novato Advance November 20, 1974 page A-2

"To the editor:

My grandmother was born in a little town in Genoa, Italy in 1889. She is 85 years old. She was 16 when she got married. Her husband's name was Angelo Zunino. She had to walk many miles to do her laundry. Four of her children were born in Italy, Pete, Gusie, Ann and Geneo. Her husband was a shoe cobbler in Italy. Times were hard. So, he came to America to look for work. He opened a shoe repair shop on Grant Avenue where Mac's (Now Buck's) Saw Service is today. Zunino's Shoe Shop is the oldest family business in Novato. After one year he sent for my grandmother and their four children to come to America, by boat.

It took many days to get here. It took her a long time to get used to this country. She only knew Italian, and people here spoke English. Later on she could speak it. They moved in a two story 12-room house on Reichert Avenue. They had chickens, ducks, pigeons, parakeets and many other animals. They got eggs from their chickens and sometimes they killed some chickens to eat.

They grew a vegetable garden every year. And she still has one. She is a very good Italian cook. In America she had two more children. Their names are Leo and Julius. Leo is my grandfather. And Julius is my uncle. My grandfather took over the shoe shop when my great grandfather died.

My father works there too. Her house is one of the historical houses in Novato. My uncle lives with her. Her garage is big, and it has a hay loft in it.

In her house she has many antiques many years old. In her drawers she has many crocheted linens and many other things she made over the years. Her house is 60 years old.

In her basement she keeps all of her home canned food. She keeps a lot of her food in a screened-in cage, called a cognetta. Up until a few years ago she washed her clothes in a washtub. And instead of pouring the water down the sink she threw it outside to water her plants. She has an automatic washing machine now.

My grandmother still dresses in the same wash day clothes that she had been using when she washed with a washtub and scrub board. She wears two old dresses, and an old apron, and an old sweater with the elbows out, a pair of rubber boots, and a bandana just to go out in her garage and push the washing machine button on automatic.

Even though she's old and not too good in health she still keeps up her household without any outside help. After 60 years in her house having raised all of her children in it the city of Novato wants to kick her out to make way for a new civic center.

Bobby Zunino 1020 Seventh Street."

Editor's Note: "Mrs. Zunino is actually Bobby's great grandmother, but he familiarly calls her his "grandmother."

Asunta was born April 30, 1888 and died on June 30, 1975 Mrs. Asunta Zunino, who had lived in Novato for the last 62 years, was a native of Italy. She was born April 30, 1888 and married Angelo Zunino in Genoa, Italy in 1905. The couple came to the United States and settled in Novato in 1912.

Mr. Zunino was a shoemaker by trade and founded Zunino Shoe Repair in Novato. Mr. Zunino preceded his wife in death, and the shoe business he started is currently run by his son and grandson.

Mrs. Zunino had been in poor health the last few months. She had been an active member of the Sylvan Circle of Druids in Novato for the last several years.

Survivors include three sons, Antone, Leo and Julius Zunino all of Novato: two daughters, Anne Teresa Crowley of Petaluma and Asunta Perada of Daly City, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



1913—Angelo Zunino in his original shop located at 707 Grant

## Ernie Zunino remembers a simpler time

'Everybody knew everybody'

July 30, 1997 Advance C-13

by MARY CONNELL Staff Writer

In the Novato of Ernie Zunino's youth, everybody knew everybody.

On summer days when the grass was good and dry, he and his daredevil pals, holding on tight to big sheets of cardboard, slid down the death-defying hill above Railroad Avenue.

The corner lot at Grant and Machin, now the site of All American Printing, was thick with blackberries, all the better to hide the secret forts used by Ernie and his friends.

Zunino, now 54, also remembers taking Arthur Murray dance lessons at the Novato Community House.

"I was the only kid in dancing school with brown shoes," Ernie said. He rectified the problem by dyeing his





1984—Shows Ernie Zunino, left; Charlene Zunino and Leo Zunino

shoes black — on the kitchen linoleum at home, leaving a coal-black outline of the job. He also took piano lessons from Mrs. Borloz. "I was not one of her best students," he says.

Ernie is the third generation of his family to own and operate Zunino's Shoe Repair in Novato. His grandfather, Angelo Zunino, established the shoe repair shop in about 1910 on Grant Avenue between Scott and Reichert. The shop's second home was also on Grant, but closer to Redwood Boulevard. His father, Leo Zunino, moved the business into its present building in 1955. "I roller skated out on the sidewalk," Ernie said, adding that he used the screen door of a neighboring business to stop. "Novato always folded up at night, like all small, rural towns," Ernie said. "There wasn't much of it and it was really nice."

Born in 1943, he enjoyed the Novato of the '50s, when "I used to take my bike and ride out to Stafford Lake to fish, or to the Bugeia Ranch to hunt for rabbits." Small-town life had its drawbacks, however. "You couldn't get away with much," Ernie recalled. "I used to think my stepmother had eyes in the back of her head. But it was just that everybody knew me and would tell her." That was never so true as the time he was sliding down the Railroad Avenue hill and decided to throw a rock at the train caboose.

"I broke a window in the caboose and my uncle—the engineer—saw it. I got in trouble." Still, Ernie says he "never did too much wrong because otherwise I couldn't go hunting or fishing."

There was an extended family to watch out for kids. Two of Ernie's aunts worked at DeBorba's Ice Cream Parlor—"where they had a slot machine." The ice cream store was located in the part of DeBorba's building on Grant Avenue that now houses Shelley's Place.

From the time he was 12, he was helping out in his father's business, "sweeping the floors, drilling holes in the counter and pounding nails into anything that would hold one." His stepmom, Thelma Zunino, operated Thelma's Kitchen, a lunch counter and soda fountain, for a number of years. He remembers the shop's "banana splits and black and white sundaes."

It takes some doing to imagine Novato before gridlock on Highway 101 (Highway 101, then followed what is now Redwood Boulevard). Novato before left-turn lanes. When the expanses of Ignacio and San Marin were dairy ranches. The county public works corporation yard was on the McIntosh property—now the site of the Novato Seventh-day Adventist Church. Indian Valley was "country."

Ernie's shop at 904 Grant Ave. is a crossroads of sorts. Old-timers come in and share the news and observations on the weather.

"Grant Avenue is Mayberry," says Ernie's wife, Charlene, who has worked side-by-side with her husband for the past 20 years. "Everybody visits everybody." Their vantage point affords the Zuninos the opportunity to observe, compare and contrast today's events with those of the '50s and '60s.

He remembers how beautiful Hamilton Air Force Base was, with its gracious buildings, lawns, palm trees and stately Main Gate.

"I grew up with all the kids at Hamilton," Ernie said. They had no problems getting along.

Novato started growing dramatically in 1951 and 1952, with the construction of homes along Center Road.

When Ernie was a kid, he says, you could buy just about anything you needed in Novato.

"We had a couple of good sports shops here in those days. Every dime I made went to those sports shops. I had to buy new fishing lures or guns."

When he and Charlene, a native of Petaluma, married in 1962, "We could buy everything we needed here."

As the town grew, people began shopping at the new malls in San Rafael and elsewhere.

Downtown Novato, like the Main Streets of thousands of



towns across the country, lost a number of businesses in the 1970s and 1980s.

Ernie isn't as optimistic as some people about the city's plans for revitalizing downtown. "I think they'll just mess it up," he says.

Times have changed. Ernie and Charlene are now doting grandparents.

Once upon a time—in the '60s when their two boys were young—they spent many July evenings before deer season opened taking drives out to Indian Valley or Lucas Valley or Marshall, "to see how many bucks we could see," Ernie said.

Their grandchildren, 3 and 8, have more high-tech toys. Novato, Ernie says, "has become a very expensive place to live if you don't already have a house."

Even in Novato, Ernie and Charlene are feeling the effects of international trade and the influx of cheap shoes, particularly from China.

Changes in shoe design and manufacturing, coupled with what Ernie calls, "our throw-away culture," have closed the doors of 5,000 shoe repair shops in the U.S. in the past four years.

Ernie blames the situation on officials in Washington.

**Mayor Pat Eklund recognizes Zunino Shoe Repair and Ernie and Charlene Zunino**

On October 22, 2013 at the Novato City Council meeting beginning at 6:30 pm, Mayor Pat Eklund along with the entire Novato City Council will recognize Zunino Shoe Repair, Novato's oldest family-owned business, along with Ernie and Charlene Zunino who operated the business until 2013.

In 1910, Ernie Zunino's grandfather, Angelo who was an immigrant cobbler from Italy, opened Zunino's Shoe Repair on Grant Avenue between Reichert and Scott which was just a few doors down from Captain Hiribarren's Novato House Hotel where he was renting a room. A year later, he sent for his family to join him in Novato.

Leo, Angelo's son, began working at the cobbler's shop at 12 years old and took it over at age 17 years old after Angelo became ill. Angelo continued to manage the business, but Leo did all the work including moving the business to 904 Grant Avenue in April 1957. Zunino Shoe Repair became Leo's after his father Angelo retired in 1935.

Leo's son, Ernest 'Ernie' started working at Zunino Shoe Repair at an early age and used the extra money to buy fishing and hunting equipment. After graduating from high school in 1960, Ernie worked during the day for the County of Marin and moonlighted at night and on weekends at his father's side at Zunino Shoe Repair. Even though Ernie loved his 'out-of-doors' job with the County, he wanted to be his own boss. In 1966, he came back to the shop where he worked for over 47 years – retiring in 2013 with his lovely wife, Charlene.

At times, 2 generations of Zunino's worked side-by-side as cobbler's. Even though Leo turned over Zunino's Shoe Repair to his son, Ernie in 1977, Leo worked there 3 days a week. Ernie learned by doing – "My grandfather made my dad watch, that how he taught him," Ernie said. "But my father taught me by allowing me to do it. My father was a great shoemaker and a great man."

Angelo's skills as a cobbler in Italy, were passed down to the generations that operated Zunino Shoe Repair for 103 years in downtown Novato. "As many Novatans know" said Mayor Pat Eklund, "Zunino Shoe Repair was not just a place to get your shoe repaired. It was the social hall, community center, a gathering place for all ages and a place to hang out."



"The Novato community will miss Zunino's Shoe Repair and Ernie and Charlene who worked tirelessly repairing anything that came through their doors" commented Mayor Pat Eklund, "and, they never turned away a customer who couldn't pay". Zunino Shoe Repair was the heart and soul of downtown Novato and will be missed by many!

1974— Asunta Zunino, in front of her home on Reichert Avenue, would fight with City Hall over their Civic Center plans to destroy her home. She would win the fight, but passed a year later. She was 86 and lived in Novato for 63 years. Ten years later the house was rebuilt as an office building, and only three of the original exterior walls were used in the process. Although twice as large as the original, the office matches the architecture of the original home.



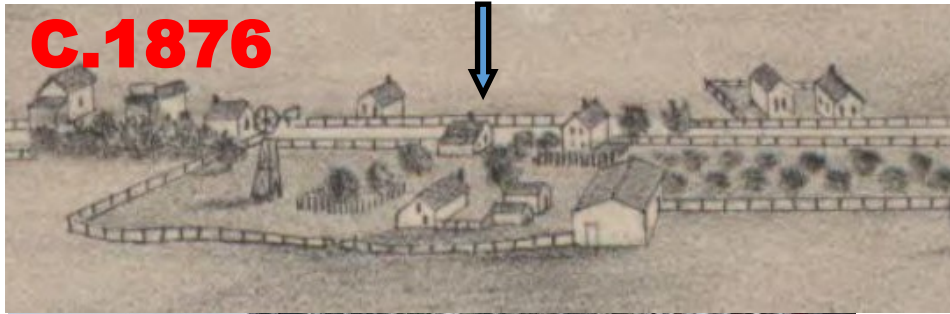
2013—Charlene, Ernie and Daisy—Photo by Mike Read



June 1984—The rebuild of the Zunino house.

# Oldest Building In Novato

## 1523 South Novato Blvd



July 26, 1952 IJ by Elizabeth Sonn reported "The first frame houses in Novato built by the Pacheco family on the corner of Rancho San Jose. No exact date is given for the houses. The larger house, in the background was probably the residence or living and sleeping quarters in Spanish times and the smaller house used for cooking, preserving, as it was early California custom for the Indians to cook over an open fire in the yard or in a separate building and carry the food to the main house. The older residents say that the building were there long before 1856."



Novato Advance June 9, 1961 on the death of Miss Edith Connell, 69, would die at this home on 1523 South Novato Boulevard. Miss Connell was born on the property where the old Connell home, built in 1849 still stands. The house in which she was born is no longer standing.

March 14, 1973 Marin IJ— The Novato Human Needs Center, a volunteer organization meeting social needs, has moved into its new quarters, an old home at 1523 South Novato Boulevard. The center moved into the building Monday and will use it for office space, a distribution center for the supplemental food program and as a base for other social agencies.

By Dan Azevedo—Connell House—The original occupants of the home was Richard and Joanne Connell and their two children Sharon and Rickey. To enter the Connell property you used a driveway entrance from South Novato Blvd. and continued onto the property to park in or in front of the garage. Family and friends generally entered the house through a door into the kitchen located on the side of the house to the right of the garage doors. As you entered the kitchen a doorway to the left led to a large rumpus (family) room. This room was probably an addition from the original house. This room contained a fully stocked wooden bar with stools and also a pool table. This room is where the family entertained friends, especially the infamous Friday night poker games. A small dining table and chairs was located in the kitchen. Straight out from the kitchen was the living room which had a large picture window that faced South Novato Blvd. The front entrance to the house was located in this area. Left of the kitchen was a hallway with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The home originally had a lot more property in the front before Novato Blvd. was widened. These remembrances of the home were shared by Dan Azevedo who was a close friend of Rickey Connell and spent many fun hours inside the home.

The building was leased from the City of Novato for one year at \$300 a month, according to Diane Ryken, a center director. The city bought the home last year for eventual extension of Hill Road, but no date has been set for that extension. When the center opened last year, it was temporarily at 1200 Grant Avenue and then it moved to another temporary home at the United Methodist Church.



Dan and Rickey Connell with Red Ryder (who the BB Gun is named for) who was the Grand Marshall for the Western Week-End parade in the late 50's just in case you wanted to use it.

## Tales of Hamilton Field

A new display at the Hamilton Field History Museum features several Oral Histories that have been collected over the years from service personnel stationed at Hamilton. These stories allow us to look back in time and see how the base has evolved and hear the recollections of those based here.

For instance, pilot Ed Tanner describes his experiences during WWII including a plane crash that led to him spending over two years in a German prison camp. Arthur Harman, a Tuskegee Airman, shares his experiences flying in WWII and Korea. Henry Quan recounts how his family owned China Camp before it became a state park in 1979 and how his mother brewed beer that he and his brothers would take to servicemen at the Air Rescue station (Corregidor Two) in San Pablo Bay.

The display also includes "The Making of a Museum," which describes how the Hamilton Field History Museum came to be, and an Army Corps of Engineers video documenting the considerable environmental cleanup required before the former base could be transitioned to civilian use.

The Oral Histories are stored on individual Thumb Drives and may be viewed in the library on the lower level of the museum.

The museum is open Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 12 pm to 4pm.



Brian Crawford and Dewey Livingston examine a map at the Survey Map & Special Collections Annex.

## March 15th General Meeting

By Isabella Cook Pacific Sun

The Novato Historical Guild is inviting Marin's citizens to take a trip down memory lane—a road trip, to be more specific.

It's time to buckle up for an upcoming expert-led lecture entitled "Billboards, Bars and Motels: 1950s Roadside Marin," courtesy of local historian Dewey Livingston.

For those who don't know their roads, Highway 101 is an expansive stretch of street that spans most of the West Coast. In Marin County, Highway 101 plays host to locals, commuters and just about anyone else traveling in, to or through the area via the freeway.

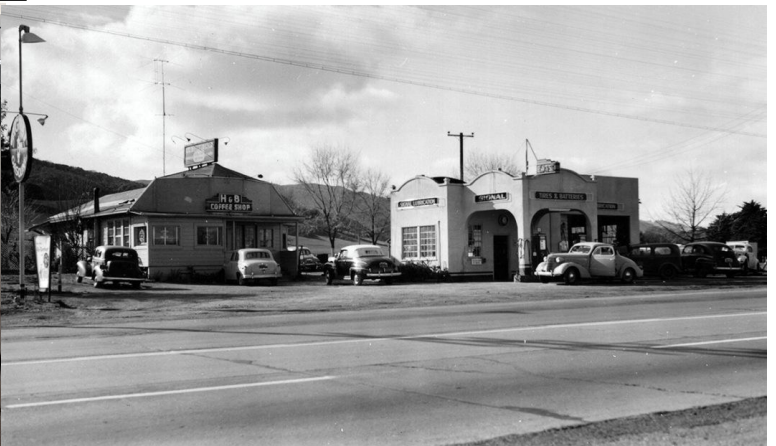
The Golden Gate Bridge connects Highway 101 to Marin, and it is at that exact border where the highway takes on the new title: "The Redwood Highway." This moniker celebrates the plethora of redwood trees that frame the drive up Highway 101 through Marin and northward for the next 350 miles.

A lot can change in less than a century, and the Novato Historical Guild has the photos to prove it.

The "Billboards, Bars and Motels: 1950s Roadside Marin" quarterly meeting will be led by Livingston, whose lifetime of expertise in local history will lend valuable perspective and insight. One could say that the roadside history in the mirror is closer than it appears.

Livingston's interest in Marin's history began in the late 1960s while he was still a student at Larkspur's own Redwood High School. In 1985, Livingston became an archivist and curator at the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History, a career move that eventually transitioned into his role as the Western National Park Service historian. Now, Livingston works in the Anne T. Kent California Room as a map archivist.

All of Livingston's experience and enthusiasm for Marin's most-used road will add some life to the lecture, bringing long-gone (but not forgotten) roadside landmarks, establishments and more into the present through photos and stories. Some places where lecture guests can expect to make pit stops along the journey are The Meadows, Bill's Station at Black Point, Club Rio, Joe's X-Road and Dave's Village Inn.



*PIT STOP* The all-but-forgotten H&B Coffee Shop features in the upcoming Novato history lecture, 'Billboards, Bars and Motels: 1950s Roadside Marin.' Photo courtesy of the Novato Historical Guild.

# 2nd Annual Novato Family History Day a Big Success

By Barry Smail

An estimated 400 persons participated in the Novato Historical Guild's Second Annual Family History Day on Saturday, October 26. The event was held on the Civic Green, next to the Scott House. The biggest group of attendees comprised parents and children dressed in Halloween costume who emerged from City Hall after attending one of two Halloween magic shows. Many families tarried on the Green to take in the history exhibits before proceeding to Grant Avenue to collect their treats from Old Town merchants. It was all part of the Downtown Novato Business Association's annual "Safe Trick or Treat" event.

Among the dignitaries who attended were Novato Mayor Mark Milberg, and City Council Members Pat Eklund and Kevin Jacobs. Dr. Tracy Smith, Novato Unified School District Superintendent, was on hand to staff her NUSD booth.

Among the exhibitors were four Novato families: The Baccaglios (arrived in 1852) represented by Mimi Baccaglio Nunes and Kathy Powers; the Frosts (1914) represented by Kathrine Frost Novak, her father Harlan, mother Marita, and cousin Carolyn Estelle (Rose) Panush; the Clarks (1894) represented by Victor Clark and his children, Lucy and Andrew; and two Vietnamese families (early 1980s) represented by Vinh and Kim Luu, and Larry Lieu.

Novato History Museum Manager Susan Magnone described Novato Family History Day as "a unique coming together of Novato old timers and newer residents, both young and old, to celebrate our shared history."

"It was a joy participating in the Novato Family History Day event with my parents and cousin. I connected with old friends, and loved sharing the experiences of early Novato days as the 'vacation' destination for my great grandparents, their family, and friends," said Kathrine Novak, daughter of 97-year-old Harlan Frost, who has resided on Feliz Lane since 1936.

In addition to the Novato Historical Guild, six Novato community organizations had exhibits: Novato Multicultural Advisory Commission, Novato Unified School District, School Fuel, Hamilton School Mothers' Club (a Hispanic group), North Marin Community Services, and Marin Indian Alliance.

Leroy Sims, who served as president of the Boys Club in 1978, and Alan Dunham, Boys Club board member during the same period, helped staff the North Marin Community Services (NMCS) booth and shared stories about their organization's early days, before it merged with the Novato Human Needs Center to become NMCS. "The event was incredible—I had such a blast," current NMCS Board Member Cris Jones declared. "I watched a father and his son chat about the Boys Club. The dad was reminiscing about his friends who helped build it, while the son shared memories of going there himself. Such a special moment."

Sara Torres, Guild member and one of the event organizers, said "Family History Day has become a great family tradition. It brings together the community of different ages, ethnicities, and cultures. It is an honor to be a part of this great event as we learn more about the history of Novato and its residents who have lived here for generations."

"We had such a nice time," said Stephanie Erickson of "School Fuel". "I think this is a great event for connecting with the community. We gave away about 200 free books."

Vinh Luu, who fled Vietnam in the mid-1970s and settled in Novato several years later, said "as a participant in Novato Family History Day, I realize how diverse we are." Novato Family History Day was organized by Guild's Hispanic Outreach and Family History Day Committee. Members include Susan Magnone, Maria Aguila, Sara Torres, Grissel Magana, Sandra Lua, Barry Smail and Teresa Saltzman. Committee members designed and distributed interactive family history kits for children (in English and Spanish), and Novato History Museum docents in period dress answered questions posed by adults and children.

The City of Novato, Novato Unified School District and North Marin Community Services co-sponsored the event. The Guild wishes to thank Tom Young of Pini Hardware, and Cheryl Paddock of North Marin Community Services for lending their canopies.



Victor Clark and daughter Lucy



L-R Mimi Baccaglio Nunes, Kathy Powers, granddaughter of Joseph Baccaglio, and Family History Day coordinator Barry Smail





Hamilton TK-8 School—Mother's Club



L-R Larry Liu and Vinh Luu representing Novato's Vietnamese community.



L-R Alan Dunham, Mayra Arambula, Cristine Jones and Leroy Sims. North Marin Community Services.



Teresa Saltzman, representing the Marin Indian Alliance. Teresa also served as Family History Day co-coordinator.



L-R Bill Glass, Kathrina Frost Novak and Mike Silva



Staffing the NHG booth were Susan Magnone, Sharon Azededo and Laurie O'Mara

# History In North Marin

## Trumbull Orchard Once Largest

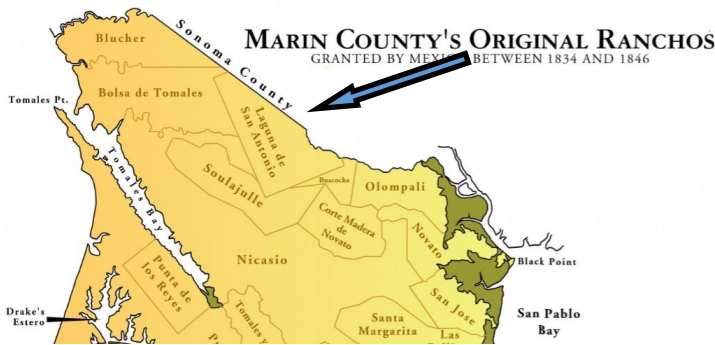
By CHRIS and ED MANNION

Novato Advance February 25, 1957

"That's the Sweetser and DeLong ranch house all right, and what I remember most are the horses and the mules. They swarmed like bees where all those houses are. The big orchard extended all along the road to the south and on up there a ways were the vineyards."

Pat Talamantes, descendant of early Spanish Californios, was doing the talking during a Sunday afternoon ride down Novato Boulevard and memory lane.

The "ranch house" referred to is the old Trumbull mansion, now owned and refurbished by Mr. and Mrs. John Novak. Largest in the state, perhaps in the United States, was the orchard that spread along the west side of the road, while the vineyards lay where Western Estates and Novato Gardens are building homes. All were part of the Novato ranch that covered 15,000 acres by the time Francis DeLong bought out J. R. Sweetser in 1879. Vast land areas are also a part of the Talamantes family background, Pat's mother belonging to the Bojorques clan of Northwest Marin that once owned 25,000 acres of the original Rancho Laguna de San Antonio, covering the Chileno Valley region to Two Rock.



### Sold For \$200

"My mother sold the last of that grant on the corner of Marshall and Chileno roads for \$200," Pat said with a sigh, "but that was long ago and you want to hear about this DeLong ranch."

"One of the stories I remember here concerns a couple of smart mules. I was working with Ed Palmer, we used to sleep in a barn on the other side of the ranch house and one day we were using mules to plow a vineyard. Toward noon a dinner bell rang. Ed and I tried to finish our furrows but those mules would go nowhere except back to the barn to eat."

"The other ranch hands told us the mules were smarter than we were!"

Pat, who will be 79 on his name-saint's birthday, March 17, said he later worked the Marin valleys and hills as a buckaroo for Brown & Brandon, owners of five or six ranches. He used to ride as far as Pt. Reyes to bring back cattle.

Now retired in Petaluma after serving as township constable for 16 years, Pat Talamantes obviously enjoyed revisiting the North Marin area and scenes of his youth.

### Old County Road

When Pat was a kid the town of Novato was concentrated along the "old county road" where the new Nave Shopping Center is located. He pointed out "Constable

Tom Sutton's house" across the road from the telephone company and was surprised to see "the Scown home" still standing at 1416 South Novato Boulevard, now occupied by the Robert Gauts and their five children.

The Scowns are listed in an 1888 directory as proprietors of a hotel and saloon, but the place established a spot in history as early as March 15, 1872, when the body of Henry Jones, Novato's first postmaster, was found in a horse trough in front of the building. The murder was listed as unsolved.



*The Scown Home otherwise known as the Connell Home—Hotel. Richard Connell would die October 2, 1871 while he was building the Hotel. Mrs. Connell would marry Adolphus Scown on February 30, 1876. This building would be torn down in March 1963 one board at a time. See below picture.*



Motoring south along Novato Boulevard, Pat expressed amazement at the number of housing developments along the way. He recalled he had ridden horseback countless times on the road that was the only highway then, and added:

"You know, this stretch from here down to the 101 intersection was a pretty scary place during prohibition. The liquor traffic was heavy, you could see flashlights blinking all around, and there were several hi-jackings and shootings."

What Pat wanted to see mostly was the site of the old Pacheco rancho south of Ignacio where he spent part of

his early boyhood. He pointed to a field near the Galli sign as the spot where a school stood and remembered a Miss Cluver as his first teacher.

#### Foundations Seen

Salvatore Galli, proprietor of the well-known fine food establishment, was cooking when the history hunters interrupted him but paused to help Pat refresh his memory. Galli said the Pacheco abode stood in the center of the driveway foundations can still be seen—and that another school was located on one end of adobe house. The latter burned in 1916, a large nearby barn in 1935. A part of the present restaurant was once a rancho buggyshed.



*Adobe hacienda built by Ygnacio Pacheco soon after he arrived in Marin County in 1838 was destroyed by fire in 1916. The adobe stood where Galli's restaurant was located. These are the ruins after the fire as seen in 1916. The adobe structure contained four large rooms and was later enlarged.*

Outside, Talamantes walked around pondering the changes of 70-old years. "I couldn't have been more than six years old," he mused, "when two mountain lions killed 20 hogs on this ranch. A couple of days later I was playing with a friend back in those hills when we came face to face with the two cats. Thank God they were as scared as we were and ran into the brush.

"Now I find it a happy coincidence that Mr. Galli has a restaurant on this spot because there some great Spanish barbecues were held in the old days."

"What's a Spanish barbecue? Well, first you line a pit with rocks, then build a fire over them. The fire is removed when the rocks are red hot and into the pit goes a heifer or steer wrapped in burlap sacks. Cover the pit with dirt. "The next day you invite 200 or 300 friends, and everybody has barbecued meat, tortillas, beans, and dance the fandango."



*Galli's restaurant*

## Agusto F. Pacheco

San Francisco Chronicle April 23, 1893  
PROMINENT NATIVE SONS.

AGUSTO F. "Gusto" PACHECO.

A Genuine Native Son and a Prominent Citizen.



How hard it is for us to realize that only about forty-seven years ago San Francisco, this great, rapid city of ours, this metropolis of the wonderful Golden West, was an insignificant little village, containing mostly adobe houses and bearing a pretty Spanish name that is now almost forgotten – Yerba Buena. There are still a few living who remember the place as it was in its romantic simplicity, in its serene peacefulness, ere the American flag in 1846 had been raised triumphantly in its

little plaza, and the progressive Yankee, under Captain Fremont, had taken possession of it and the entire province, driving the Mexican authorities out and driving out, too, the romance, the sentiment of the dear old Spanish race. But most of the Spanish pioneers are dead; many of them, however, have left children and grandchildren, who, though thoroughly American, are proud of the fierce, noble lifeblood that flows in their veins. The worthy subject of this sketch, Agusto F. Pacheco, is the son of an old-time Spanish gentleman who came in his early youth to California from Mexico and was of pure Castilian descent. California at that time was under Mexican government and Signor Pacheco became a soldier, joining the Mexican troops then stationed at Yerba Buena.

Under the laws of Mexico, a Governor of California had the entire control of municipal affairs and administered justice pretty much according to his ideas of the subject without being tied down to precedents and formal principles of law. He could make grants of building lots within the town boundaries to intending settlers, and really, in general, his right of administration, excepting in cases of extreme importance, either civil or criminal, seems to have been limited only by his power to carry his decrees into effect. When the Americans seized the country and till peace should be declared, or a formal constitution adopted, they were obliged to make use of the existing machinery of local government and the customary laws that regulated it. They accordingly everywhere appointed Alcaldes, or Chief Justices, or Chief Magistrates, of towns and districts, and instructed them to dispense justice in the best manner they could, paying always as much regard as possible to the national laws of Mexico and the provincial customs of California. Though Signor Pacheco had been a faithful Mexican soldier he was chosen by Governor Fremont to fill one of these positions. He remained for quite a while a California Alcalde, and so upright and honest, so thoroughly reliable, always in the dispensation of the privileges of his office was he, that he gained the respect and admiration of all who knew him or knew of him. His descendants are justly

*Continued on next page*



Pacheco family c.1905

proud of his memory.

The mother of Augusto Pacheco was a native of California, but of noble Spanish descent. She was a member of the well-known Duarte family, who were among the very earliest settlers in California. She was born in San Francisco, then Yerba Buena. The Duarte home at that time was situated where the Presidio is now. Mrs. Pacheco's name was Maria Lorita. She died a year ago in the sixty-third year of her life, a remarkably well-preserved woman. Time seems to have dealt lightly with all her family; he is 73 years of age, and strangers will hardly believe he is fifty-five, so well does he carry his years.

Agusto F. Pacheco was born in 1859 in Marin County, on the famous Rancho San Jose, where most of his happy, care-free, childish days were passed. This vast estate, the Rancho San Jose, was one of the old Spanish grants, and was the legacy of the Pacheco pater-families to Agusto and his three brothers. It is one of the wealthiest estates in California and includes in its vast territory 12,000 acres of the most productive and valuable land in this State.

Agusto F. Pacheco is a man of superior education. He received his education in California, being a graduate of the famous institution of learning, Santa Clara College. This college is conducted by the Jesuit Fathers, and most of our most brilliant native sons have been educated in it.

Mr. Pacheco is a member of the N.S.G.W., Mount Tamalpais Parlor, Number 64. The Native Sons of the Golden West have manifested the high esteem in which they hold this worthy native son by conferring on him, at different times, every office within the gift of the organization.

In politics Mr. Pacheco has always been one of the most ardent workers of the Democratic party. He has taken a most active part in the political affairs of his native State. During the late campaign he was indefatigable in his work for the man who now occupies the Presidential chair. Though one of the most enthusiastic members of the Democracy he has never allowed party lines to bias his mind against a candidate of the opposite party. He is, even in politics, just to an extraordinary degree.

Prejudice does not guide him nor blind him, neither does it prevent him from acknowledging the qualifications and integrity of any man. He has been frequently urged to become a candidate by his many

frequently urged to become a candidate by his many Democratic friends and admirers, who recognize his sterling worth and feel that in a prominent political position he would be the right man in the right place, but with a genuine unselfishness that is one of the chief characteristics of his remarkably strong individuality he has always declined the honor in favor of some one who by experience and hard political labor was, he considered, more justly entitled to such a position.

Mr. Pacheco, with his family, lives in a beautiful home in San Rafael, (his house was at 1321 4<sup>th</sup> St which is now T&B Sports at the corner 4th and D St.) that lovely little city across the bay, which is one of the favorite places of many of California's wealthy people. He was married in 1885 to Miss Corina Clark, one of the belles of Marin County. She was a beautiful girl to whom maternity has brought additional charms. She is a daughter of Robert B. Clark, a prominent citizen and a pioneer resident of Marin County. This happy couple are the proud parents of four children, little Agusto, a remarkably bright lad of six years, and three very pretty little girls, Lorita, Gertrudis and Olivia.

Mr. Pacheco's father first met Captain Fremont in the spring of 1846, when Fremont had been ordered to California by President Polk to protect American settlements from the Mexican troops. Fremont, recognizing his worth, was friendly to him during the short time he was president of the independent State, and when California was proclaimed a Territory of the United States and Fremont was appointed Governor, he endeavored in every possible way to show his appreciation of his Spanish friend. Agusto Pacheco tells some very interesting incidents that occurred during his father's and Fremont's friendship.

#### November 15, 1929 – Sausalito News

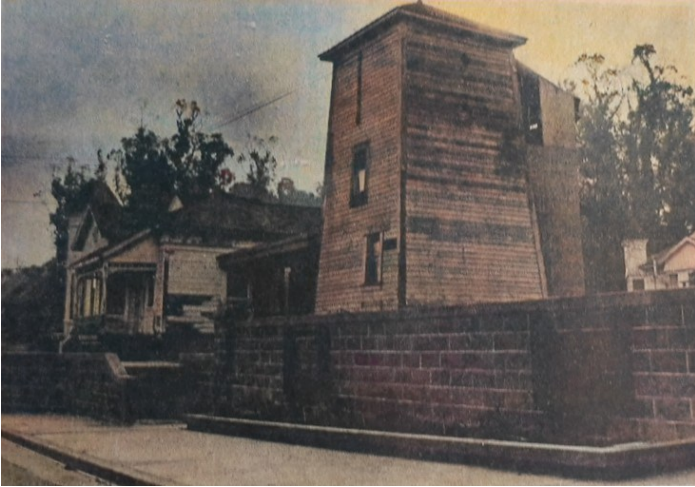
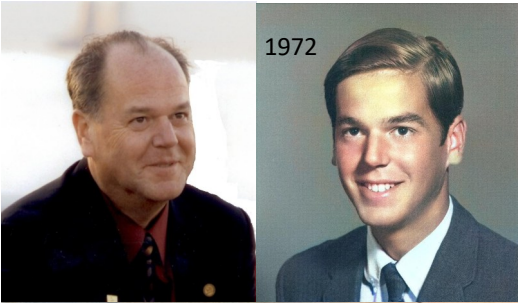
**Agusto F. Pacheco** Born in Marin 70 Years Ago, Is Dead  
 Marin lost one of its oldest native-born residents in the death at San Rafael Wednesday of Agusto F. **Pacheco**, 70 years of age. He was the son of Ignacio **Pacheco**, after whom the town of Ignacio was named, and who settled in this county in the days of the Spanish governor in 1830 on the old San Jose rancho land grant where his family was raised. Pacheco's uncle, Romualdo **Pacheco**, was Lieutenant Governor of California in 1871 and succeeded to the Governorship in 1875 on the death of Governor Booth. The **Pacheco** family is connected with the Pacheco's of Contra Costa County and the Valencia family of San Francisco. **Agusto** lived to see the end of the great rancho, which has been sub-divided and sold, and for thirty years he was a guard at San Quentin prison. He is survived by his widow, Corina **Pacheco**, and two sons, Augustus Jr., and Benjamin **Pacheco**, and by three daughters, Loretta, Olivia and Irene **Pacheco**, all schoolteachers in San Rafael.



# Novato – 50 Years Ago

(January, February & March 1975)

Michael Read




Landmark Associates is remodeling the old house to accommodate offices, including the Novato Chamber of Commerce which expects to move in by mid-February.



Councilman Fred Ruegg took Councilwoman Dorothy Young as his wife in a civil ceremony in the Marin courthouse. Here he places the ring on her finger as their witnesses—Sandra Karlovic and Don Leaf—look on. At left are Judge Henry Broderick, who officiated, and the bride's daughter Tiffany, 11.

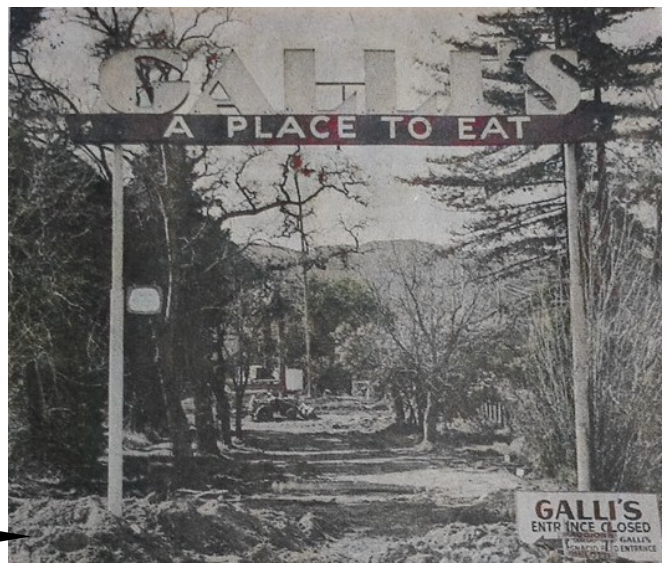


Unless renovated and saved in the near future this historic building at the corner of Sherman and Grant Avenue will be lost. The building in its time served as a grocery store with a social hall located on the second floor. During the Silent Movie era a company used to film movies in Novato and used the building for on-location shooting. The building is assessed at \$375 and the land at \$7,375. Anybody have any ideas?

For 35 years this sign, reading "Galli's—A Place to Eat" has been an Ignacio fixture. But it will soon come down, according to Frank Galli, and the driveway off Highway 101 will be abandoned to make room for 52 townhouse duplexes call "Ignacio Gardens" built by the Ignacio Company. Access to Gail's restaurant has now been diverted to Ignacio Boulevard. 



College A and College B at Indian Valley Colleges are 80 percent complete and should have no problem meeting an occupancy target date of August 1.



## Join the Novato Speaker Series at the Jonas Center!

The Novato Speaker Series is an ongoing program that brings together a diverse range of speakers from various fields and backgrounds to share their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives with the community.

We have an incredible lineup of speakers planned for the upcoming months.

### Thursday, April 24, 2025

Eric Schmitt is a senior correspondent for The New York Times who covers national security issues. He is co-author of "Counterstrike: The Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against Al Qaeda." For more than three decades, he has covered military and national security affairs for The Times and has made two dozen reporting trips to West Africa, Pakistan, Iraq & Afghanistan. He has a bachelor's degree from Williams College and attended Harvard University's Executive Program on National and International Security. He earned a Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University. Mr. Schmitt has shared four Pulitzer Prizes. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Reared in the San Francisco Bay area, Mr. Schmitt now lives with his family in Fairfax, Va.

Mark your calendars! Each event will be held on a Thursday evening, with doors opening at 6:30 PM. The speaker presentations will begin promptly at 7:00 PM and conclude at 8:30 PM. Tickets can be purchased on our website. [Novatospeakerseries.com](http://Novatospeakerseries.com)

We invite you to opt into our newsletter to stay connected with our community and receive regular updates on our speakers. Join us as we explore inspiring and thought-provoking topics together.

We look forward to seeing you at the Novato Speaker Series!

## Welcome New Guild Members

### Novato Historical Guild Membership Report March 2025

#### Individual Membership

Melanie Mociun  
Sara Torres

#### Family Membership

Ilene & Miguel Campas

#### Life Membership

Kathrina Novak  
Elizabeth & Martin Sleath

If you have questions about membership, call or email  
Lorne Magnone  
415-897-4320

[lornemagnone@peoplepc.com](mailto:lornemagnone@peoplepc.com)

### Volunteer Opportunities:

The Novato Historian has an opening on the Editorial Board. If you like writing and/or editing this is the position for you. Please contact the Guild at [info@novatohistory.org](mailto:info@novatohistory.org) or ask for Michael Read at 415-717-1412.

## Please Support Our Guild Business Members:

A.D. Scott Building  
Andrew McAghon Landscaping  
Bank of Marin  
Creekside Bakery  
H & J Tire  
Indian Valley Golf Club  
Novato Chamber of Commerce  
Marin Color Service  
Marin Landscape Materials  
Mclsaac Dairy  
Marianne's Painting  
Nave Enterprises  
Novato Builders Supply  
Novato Grove Druids #113  
Pini Hardware  
Red Barn Productions  
Steve Ussery, Realtor  
The Bluffs at Hamilton Hill  
Valley Oak Wealth Management  
Valley Memorial Park Cemetery & Funeral Home

## Novato Advance now on line at Newspapers.com

Bill and Adele Jonas Center, 1800 Ignacio Blvd. #19 Novato

[Novatospeakerseries.com](http://Novatospeakerseries.com)

Thursday 6:30pm Doors Open & Socialize— 7:00 Speaker

April 24th—Eric Schmitt—America's role in conflicts around the world.

July 24th— Keena Turner—Secret behind the 49ers Super Bowl championship run.

## In Memoriam

### THE GUILD EXTENDS SYMPATHY TO

Joe Wilfert and family on the loss of  
Roy Wilfert

Laverne Avella and family on the loss  
of Joseph Avella

The Melendy family on the loss of  
Richard "Dick" Melendy

### 2025 Board Meetings

Second Tuesday of the Month  
Margaret Todd Senior Center  
1560 Hill Road  
Time: 1:30 – 3:00 PM

Jan. 14	July 8 (field trip)
Feb. 11	Aug. 12
March 11	Sept. 9
April 8	Oct. 14
May 13	Nov. 11 at HFHM
June 10	Dec. 9

#### Membership Meetings

March 15	City Hall	10 – 12
June 21	City Hall	10 – 12
Sept. 13	Hamilton	10 – 12
Dec. 13	City Hall	10 – 12

Guild members are welcome to attend the Board meetings. Please check with the President, Susan Magnone at (415) 892-8458, in case a meeting has been changed.

### MEMORIAL GIFTS

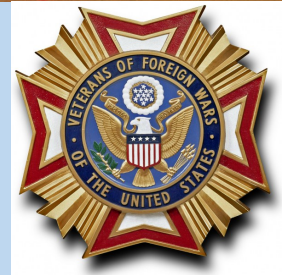
You may make a gift of appreciated securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds) to the Novato Historical Guild.

#### MEMORIAL PLAQUE GIFTS

You may honor a friend or loved one by having their name engraved on an individual brass plate on the Memorial Plaque in the Novato History Museum. Please call the Museum at (415) 897-4320. Each plaque costs \$250 per person named.

Your gift may be tax deductible. Donors should contact their tax advisor regarding tax deductibility.

### "BUDDY" POPPY



Since 1922, the "Buddy"® Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW community.

Story in the next quarter of the Novato Historian

Petaluma Weekly Argus  
Ad—December 12, 1869



### Contact Us

#### Hamilton Field History Museum

Manager: Ray Dwelly  
Museum phone: 415-382-8614  
Email: [Hamilton\\_museum@att.net](mailto:Hamilton_museum@att.net)  
<https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonFieldHistoryMuseum/>

#### Novato History Museum

Manager: Susan Magnone  
Museum phone: 415-897-4320  
Email: [info@novatohistory.org](mailto:info@novatohistory.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/NovatoHistoryMuseum/>

### Membership Form

Please mail checks to Novato Historical Guild. P.O. Box 1296, Novato, CA 94948.

Yes, I want to join the Novato Historical Guild and help preserve Novato history!

New     Renewal

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership       | \$30 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership           | \$40 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, individual | \$350     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, joint      | \$500     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business membership         | \$75 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free for 90+                |           |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Additional donations? \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in volunteering? \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

## December 14th General Meeting

"Billboards, Bars, and Motels: 1950s Roadside Marin" was to be the topic of a talk by Marin County Historian Dewey Livingston at the December 14 Quarterly Membership Meeting, but Mother Nature intervened. Before his talk began, power went out at Novato City Hall—and throughout the City. The outage was caused by a storm with high winds that arrived the previous evening, leaving multiple downed wires and trees, flooded roads, and inoperable traffic signals. The massive Redwood tree with lights, directly across from City Hall, at the corner of Sherman and De Long and bedecked with Christmas ornaments, crashed onto the roof of the Simmons House during the meeting.

Livingston had to improvise. Without his PowerPoint



presentation, he switched topics and spoke extemporaneously about the Survey Map & Special Collections Annex of the Anne T. Kent California Room. Located at 1600 Los Gamos Drive in Lucas Valley, the Annex opened in 2015, when the county purchased a collection of maps, surveys, subdivision plans, ledgers and field notes dating back to the mid-19th century and needed a place to safely store the historic artifacts. Livingston volunteers there. Guild members are invited to visit the Annex, which is open Thursday afternoons from 1-5. Please provide advance notification by sending an email to [dewey@deweylivingston.com](mailto:dewey@deweylivingston.com), and [californiaroom@marincounty.gov](mailto:californiaroom@marincounty.gov). Livingston will speak on his original topic at the March 14 membership meeting.



### Volunteer opportunity

The hospitality committee is looking for volunteers to assist with set-up and refreshments at the Historical Guild's general meetings. The Guild hosts four general meetings a year which offer a great opportunity for members to gather and enjoy presentations from some very interesting speakers. Assistance is needed from 9:00 a.m. until noon for each of these meetings. If interested please email [info@novatohistory.org](mailto:info@novatohistory.org), or call the Novato History Museum at 415-897-4320.

## ★ YOU ARE INVITED ★

General Membership Meeting ~ Novato Historical Guild

**Saturday, March 15, 10:00am to Noon**  
**Novato City Hall**

**"Billboards, Bars, and Motels: 1950s Roadside Marin."**

*Dewey Livingston presents a visual feast of post-war Marin highway attractions. Traveling north along Highway 101, visit the Marvel Mar, The Meadows, Club Rio, and other long-gone places—all doomed by freeway widening.*

Anyone interested in Novato History is welcome to attend.

We look forward to seeing you there.

**Novato History Museum**

**815 DeLong Avenue**

**(415) 897-4320**

**Hamilton Field History Museum**

**555 Hangar Avenue**

**(415) 382-8614**

### COME VISIT AND BRING A FRIEND!

The Museums are open three days a week -- Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday - Noon to 4 p.m.  
Closed Major Holidays