

May 2009

Vol. 28, No. 4

THE TATTLER

JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY/COLMA

Greetings from President Mark

Well friends, after waiting for what seemed like forever and undertaking a great deal of planning, we finally had our grand opening of the Daly City History Museum on Sunday, March 15. And what an event it was! Some of us worried that we wouldn't have enough folks to fill the two rooms, and we couldn't have been more wrong. We were busting at the seams! The board was overjoyed that so many people joined us on this truly historic occasion. At one point we came close to turning folks away; I kid you not! Don't tell the city but we absolutely exceeded our legal capacity, however, I think everyone including city officialdom was willing to look the other way on this one truly memorable day. It was estimated that we had 300 visitors for the opening.

If you weren't fortunate enough to join us for the museum inaugural, we have pictures which will be on display at our May membership meeting and hopefully on the dalycityhistory.org web site in the near future. (Some photos are included in this newsletter.) With the ceremony now behind us we can continue to move forward with making the museum fully functional and accessible. Our main focus for the long-term will be volunteer docent staffing and on-going fundraising to ensure the doors remain open.

I want to remind you, our loyal membership, that presently we are open each Tuesday and the first Saturday of the month from noon to 3:00 pm on both days. We would love to expand both days and hours of operation, but with no paid staff, we must rely on your good graces to help run the place. The Guild will be hosting a very brief and fun docent training, probably in mid-June, to explain the functions of volunteering a few hours of your precious time. We will have a sign-up sheet for volunteers at our May meeting and you can leave a message on the museum message line to express your interest and leave your contact information; our new museum phone number, **650-757-7177**.

The other critical area which is of ongoing concern is fundraising. With the responsibility of managing and operating a museum come expenses. Many of these are constant: insurance, utilities, small repairs, etc. Also, even though we now are open, we still have outstanding

HISTORY EVENING!

ADMISSION FREE!



WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

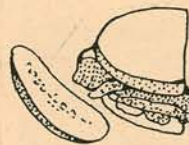
7:30 PM

101 Lake Merced Blvd., Daly City
Doelger Center Multi-purpose Room

Archeologist, Teresa Saltzman
presents
Native Costanoan (Ohlone) Culture

MAY PROGRAM

Our featured speaker for the May meeting will be local archeologist, Teresa Saltzman. Teresa has previously made a presentation on the local Native Americans and will be expanding on her original presentation. Teresa will be presenting a more "hands-on" type of demonstration and will be bringing some items for our members to actually touch and to make. Teresa recently examined the exhibit of artifacts from the Mussel Rock archaeological dig of 1972 on exhibit in our new museum. She will also be talking about the Mussel Rock area where a permanent Costanoan village once existed.



THANK YOU IN ADVANCE TO OUR REFRESHMENT DONORS:

Judith Christensen, Sandra Bolds, Joe Rinaldi, Jean Gallagher and all of you who bring additional special treats for this event! **Elinor Charleston** is our gracious hostess and Hospitality Chair.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Our next member meeting will be on September 16th.

Message from Mark, cont'd.

projects we hope to complete. At least five of them are tall orders: restoration of the original fireplace in the Gillespie Room [to be operational with a new gas fireplace]; installation of a small kitchenette; landscaping outdoor gardens with agricultural displays; and providing American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance with both the building entrance and restroom. Some of these larger projects only will be achievable through grant funding, but the other costs will have to be borne by the Guild using limited savings we still have and through ongoing fundraisers to be planned by our fundraising committee.

Thank you for your continued commitment and support of our efforts, and come by and see us soon!



Mark Weinberger greets the overflow crowd at the Grand Opening of our new Daly City History Museum

Photo by
Maureen O'Connor

THANKS TO ALL... Somehow it all came together for the opening...

Michael Rocchetta renovated the bathroom (with paint and tile he and brother Rich donated along with goods and services from **Caccia Plumbing**) and refinished the original library reception desk with help from **Gloriann Jones**; **Rich Rocchetta**, Russ Brabec, Marilyn Olcese and others rushed to set up exhibits in time for the opening; **Vaughn Jones** chaired the Grand Opening Committee; **Dana Smith** illustrated and produced the invitations; **Robert Brizuela** and **Al Hipona** power washed the building and installed granite signage; **Marilyn Olcese** organized decorations and front landscaping; **Marie Brizuela** made programs and worked with **Elinor Charleston** setting tables, making and serving refreshments; **Pat Hatfield** brought food and flowers from the Colma Museum; **Starbucks** donated coffee; **Nora's Patisserie** donated desserts; **John's Nursery** donated flowers and landscaping plants; **Marian Mann** signed-in guests as **Ken Gillespie** greeted; **Betty Schultz** promoted membership; **Judith Christensen** donated buttons, **Russ and Eunice Brabec** served beverages all day; Michael Rocchetta produced a laptop computer slide show; and **Mark Weinberger** was master of ceremonies. **Many joined in to make this day a tremendous success.**



"GHOST BLIMP" AT HOME IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NAVAL AVIATION, PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

(excerpted from Aviation Museum website)



With war clouds on the horizon, in 1940 the U.S Navy sought to expand its lighter-than-air fleet. Among the airships procured were those of the L-class, twenty-two of which were ordered by the Navy. Five of them were former members of the Goodyear advertising fleet, including the L-8 (operated under the nickname

Ranger by Goodyear), which was delivered to Blimp Squadron (ZP) 32 in March 1942 and assigned to patrol the waters off California, warning of the approach of Japanese submarines. The following month, L-8 was involved in an important secret mission. On 11 April, she launched from California with a 300 lb. load with orders to rendezvous with the aircraft carrier Hornet (CV 8). Reaching the carrier, the airship maintained position over her as the load was lowered to members of the ship's crew amidst the sixteen Army Air Forces B-25 Mitchell bombers spotted on the flight deck. The load carried by L-8 consisted of parts for the bombers which participated a week later in a war mission led by Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle.

On the morning of 16 August 1942, the L-8 departed Treasure Island, California, for a routine antisubmarine patrol. On board were Lieutenant Ernest Cody and Ensign Charles Adams, who set a course west out over the vast Pacific. After reaching their patrol station, they radioed that they were investigating a suspicious oil slick, the last anyone would hear from the blimp.

Hours later residents of Daly City, a suburb of San Francisco, saw the unusual sight of the L-8 descending towards them. It briefly snagged on a utility pole before crashing to the ground. Investigation revealed that the control car was empty, the suitcase containing classified documents still sitting behind the pilot's seat. In addition, a check of the helium gas valves showed that they were set precisely as they should have been. To this day, the fate of Lieutenant Cody and Ensign Adams remains a mystery.

The "Ghost Ship", which the L-8 came to be called, continued serving the Navy until war's end and then returned to civilian service as one of the famous Goodyear blimps. Donated to the Museum by Goodyear in 2003, it is refurbished to its World War II configuration.

Tattler Editor's Note: In 1993, a granite plaque commemorating the crash was installed at the old War Memorial Building by the Order of E Clampus Vitus. The plaque was re-installed in the upstairs John Daly Library in the new War Memorial Building in 2008. In 2007, L-8 was exhibited at the National Museum of Naval Aviation.

ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF GUILD OFFICERS

Where does the time go? Our May meeting will again see selection of HG Officers and Directors for another year. Betty Schultz, appointed by President Mark Weinberger as nominations chair for the HG, will give her report at the May 20th meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor with prior consent of the nominee. Election and installation of officers and directors will follow.



Ken and Bunny Gillespie at the dedication of the Gillespie Room at the Daly City History Museum

Photo by Joseph Curran



Samuel Chandler at the ribbon cutting (Mr. Chandler is author of *Gateway to the Peninsula, Official History of Daly City*, and served as City Librarian 1958-1983)

MEMORIAL DONATIONS SUPPORT OUR MUSEUM FUND –

Donations can be made in honor or in memory of loved ones. Checks may be sent to the Guild at 6351 Mission Street, Daly City, CA 94014. Please list the name of the person remembered, any comments you wish to pass on to the Guild, and the name and address of anyone you would like notified of your donation. A special page will be made in our Memorial Book on display at the reception desk at our Daly City Museum.

WALL OF FAME GIVES THANKS TO DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Four certificates decorating a wall in the museum recognize financial donors, donors of goods and services, volunteers, and charter members of the History Guild. A framed certificate on the reception desk lists donors to our special “floor fund.”



Our Thanks

RECENT DONATIONS

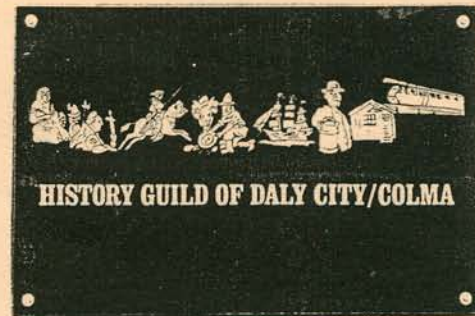
Recent generous donations of \$2,000 from **Elinor Charleston** and \$500 from the **Daly City Host Lions** have been received to support our new museum.*

Marilyn Olcese donated front, exterior lights and **A.S.F Electric** donated the installation, **Bernard Winn** donated copies of his book “*From the Top of the Hill*”; paper artifacts received from the collection of the late **Paul Tolovi**; **Mike Guisti** and **Dennis Fisicaro** donated two wooden folding chairs vintage 1920 from Jefferson Hall and the Colma Fire Department; band uniforms and three drums that were used in the Daly City Municipal Band that played from the 1930s to the late 1950s were delivered to the museum by Mike Stallings and his **Daly City Recreation Department** staff; **Robert Keil** built a rolling cart for our TV; we received certificates of congratulations on the opening of our new museum from **Congresswoman Jackie Speier**, **Assemblymember Fiona Ma**, the **Colma Historical Association**, **State Senator Leland Yee** and the **Town of Colma**.

(*Thank you to all donors – major gifts of \$500+ will be noted in the *Tattler*)

V. FONTANA & COMPANY DONATES SIGNAGE

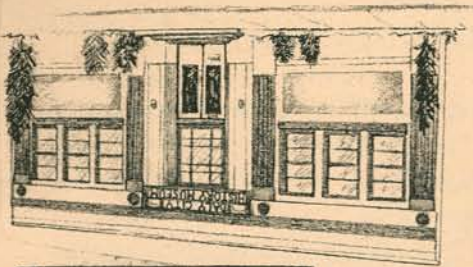
The Guild is truly grateful for two elegant granite signs on the front of the building and two interior plaques donated by Mark Fontana.



Grand Opening Crowd – estimated at 300!



Colma Historical Association Quarterly Meeting & Election - Tuesday, April 28th, 7:00 PM
Colma Museum, 1500 Hillside Blvd., Colma



New address!

6351 Mission Street, Daly City, CA 94014

THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY/COLMA



CENTENNIAL MEMORIES

By Ken & Bunny Gillespie,
Daly City Historians

As more and more pioneers came to North San Mateo County to establish homes, businesses, and a climate of security for their families, people with deep roots in their religion met to further their beliefs. Men and women of differing religious persuasions gathered regularly to worship together and offer support to one another in the blossoming community.

Among the earliest houses of worship established in what was to become Daly City was Congregation B'nai Israel, incorporated in June of 1909. Since 1906, families that survived San Francisco's devastating earthquake and fire had met in various locations through-out the north county, including private homes, establishing the first Jewish congregation on the peninsula outside of San Francisco. One location for ad hoc worship was a store front at the corner of Vista Grande and Miriam streets.

Giving evidence to their faith in the future, the congregation built a spacious two-story synagogue at 67 Los Banos Avenue, complete with a large resplendent art-glass Star of David over the entrance. The building quickly became the center for Jewish social and religious

activities. The local Daughters of Israel chapter played a large role in the social and charitable history of the synagogue, meeting regularly for sewing bees and fundraising projects to benefit their philanthropies. B'nai Israel's early membership roll included Mr. M. Menuhin, who served as superintendent of the local Jewish Educational Society. He was the father of the famed violinist Yehudi Menuhin. In more recent years, B'nai Israel worshipped at a modernistic synagogue on Annie Street. K/BG

GUILD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Mark Weinberger, President	415/750-1939
Richard Rocchetta, Vice President	650/992-9144
Marie Brizuela, Treasurer	650/755-7188
Dana Smith, Secretary	650/755-3432
Vaughn Jones, Director	650/756-6795
Marian Mann, Director	650/991-9386
Michael Rocchetta, Director	650/756-3960
Gloriann Jones, Director	650/756-6795
Ken Gillespie, President Emeritus	650/755-5123
Bunny Gillespie, Secretary Emerita	
Elinor Charleston, Hospitality Chair	650/755-8267

Tattler Editor & production: Dana Smith
Labels: Michael Rocchetta; contributors: Bunny & Ken Gillespie