

JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY - COLMA

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT MARK

For our first meeting of the new year, we welcome back longtime Guild member and old friend Neil Fahy, who will discuss the geology of Daly City and the surrounding area. Neil is a retired geologist by profession and authority on the various strata that makeup Daly City. He will share his knowledge of the area and explain about past earthquakes that have had an impact in the area going back thousands of years to the more recent ones that many of us remember all too well. Come prepared with any questions you might have except, of course, for exactly when the 'big one' might hit as nobody knows for certain.

If you haven't already had a chance to return your 2017 dues, we certainly hope that you will shortly. It is your support, and only your support, that allows us to pay the bills and keep the Guild running. Operating a museum is not cheap, and we always do the best that we can on a shoestring budget. Perhaps you might like to consider renewing your membership at a different level of support. We have various categories to recognize your generosity, and at the end of the day it all goes toward sustaining the Guild. Whatever level of support is right for you we certainly appreciate your membership and regard for all that we do to preserve local history.

Stay tuned to learning about a couple of BIG projects we are still undertaking at the museum. We're running a little behind schedule but hope to have them completed very early in the new year. These will be the first major changes that we will have made to the museum in terms of new exhibits and technology since we debuted the Great Daly City Timeline a couple of years ago.

On behalf of our board of directors, I want to wish everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

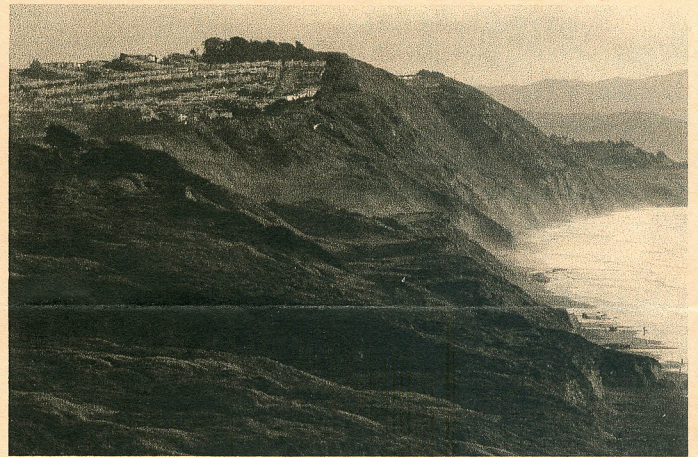
Here's to great historical happenings in 2017!

IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!

If you find a return envelope and membership renewal card in this mailing, it means we have not yet received your renewal membership. Occasionally we may make an error, so please contact our member chair if you think we may be in error. (Judith Christensen 650/756-3128). We hope to have all renewals complete by the month of January. Thank you for your continued support!

**DAYTIME
HISTORY MEETING
SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 2 PM**
101 Lake Merced Blvd. Daly City, Doelger Center Cafe

LIVING ON THE EDGE
An Introduction to the Geology of Daly City



Presented by geologist Neil Fahy

We live in a very special place - on the boundary of the earth's large Pacific and North American tectonic plates. Geology is in every view. Learn how the earth's plate movements and climate change affect your life. Plate tectonics and climate change are to geology what evolution is to biology; they are the driving forces.



**THIS IS THE
GUILD'S ANNUAL
PARTY! SPECIAL
FOOD AND DRINK!**
Treats Will be provided by Pat Hatfield and Dana Smith and Mark Weinberger. Special cake and bubbly

provided by the Guild. Thank you to refreshment donors and to our gracious Hospitality Chair, **Annette Hipona**, and her assistant **Grace Gonzalez**.

"LITTLE BOXES"... THE SONG, THE HOUSES, THE PEOPLE IN THE HOUSES

By Dana Smith

I recently came across the 1962 Malvina Reynolds song "Little Boxes," inspired by tract homes in Daly City. The song is a political satire about the development of suburbia, tract homes, and associated conformist middle-class attitudes. The song became a hit for her friend Pete Seeger in 1963 and the catchy tune became a staple for folk singers ever since.

Malvina and her husband were on their way Berkeley down the peninsula to La Honda where she was to sing at a meeting of the Friends' Committee on Legislation. As she drove through Daly City, she said "Bud, take the wheel. I feel a song coming on."

Little Boxes

Little boxes on the hillside,
Little boxes made of ticky tacky,
Little boxes on the hillside,
Little boxes all the same.
There's a green one and a pink one
And a blue one and a yellow one,
And they're all made out of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.

And the people in the houses
All went to the university,
Where they were put in boxes
And they came out all the same,
And there's doctors and lawyers,
And business executives,
And they're all made out of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.

And they all play on the golf course
And drink their martinis dry,
And they all have pretty children
And the children go to school,
And the children go to summer camp
And then to the university,
Where they are put in boxes
And they come out all the same.

And the boys go into business
And marry and raise a family
In boxes made of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.
There's a green one and a pink one
And a blue one and a yellow one,
And they're all made out of ticky tacky
And they all look just the same.

In the 1960s Americans began to question the belief that progress would lead to an ever brighter future. Loss of open

space, rapid extinction of species, human overpopulation, increasing traffic, pollution and fear of nuclear war and nuclear reactor accidents increased pessimism and activism. This was the frame of mind of 60s environmentalists like Malvina Reynolds on her memorable drive past Daly City. The famous Ansel Adams photograph (below) is still fodder for debates on suburban planning, environmental impact, architecture and esthetics, but it seems that Malvina got the sociology all wrong when it comes to the post-WWII housing boom in Daly City. While rising real estate prices may now make some of these neighborhoods "middle class," at the time this song was written they represented a revolution in US housing that allowed most working class families their first real chance at owning their own home.



An Internet magazine put out by the UC Berkeley School of Architecture (roomonethousand@gmail.com) recently wrote about the perspective at the time of intellectuals like Malvina Reynolds and how the song "Little Boxes" reflected the values of the time. "Reynolds, who had a PhD in English from UC Berkeley, fits neatly into the ranks of academics and intellectuals who scorned these new suburbs and all they represented. Even if her lyrics seem over-simplified today, a surprising number of contemporary critics of suburbia maintain a similar social and aesthetic disdain for suburban houses and their residents... blinding many observers to the diversity, complexity and nuances of suburban environments and lives. Perhaps this explains why Reynolds got her sociology completely wrong. The people who would initially inhabit the houses under construction were not the upper middle class, educated, martini-drinking lawyers and businessmen she depicted. They were blue collar and white collar families taking advantage of the last burst of the postwar housing boom, which made massive numbers of suburban single family houses, subsidized by government programs, available to a mass market of consumers at very reasonable cost. And, in fact, almost as soon as *Little Boxes* was written, actual events undermined its assertions. Daly City's identical houses and their presumably identical inhabitants began to change. In 1965, as the result of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which encouraged family unification, Daly City began attracting large numbers of immigrants from the

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Philippines. The 1968 Fair Housing Act opened up new markets in the suburbs [including Daly City's Westlake and Broadmoor Village] to formerly excluded ethnic groups."

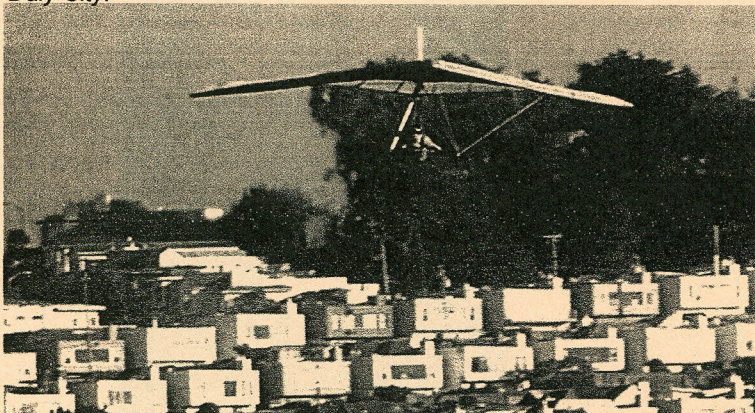
Recently, the Doelger built homes have been featured in the book *Little Boxes: The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb* by Rob Keil, former Westlake resident and a History Guild member. Keil's book has brought an appreciation for the architecture and innovations in housing in Daly City's Westlake District that, as Keil comments, "made it possible to build a house for about \$9,000 that was comfortable, stylish, and practically indestructible."

Contemporary blogger, Philips Schafer commented "I was pleased to see the Tom Lehrer [60s satirist] quote that *Little Boxes* was 'the most sanctimonious song ever written.' The song was a staple of folk music in the sixties. It was taken as a protest against conformity. I was always troubled by the song once I realized that it was the voice of the rich ridiculing people who bought houses that were mass-produced and that those people were probably thrilled to live in houses that were the nicest that they had ever lived in."

I remember my first view of flat-roofed boxlike houses stuck together with no space between houses. I had just moved to California from a small town in Washington State. It was a shock to me just as the "boxes on the hillsides" of Daly City shocked the sensibilities of songwriter Malvina Reynolds. The December 1965 issue of *Life Magazine* (displayed in our museum timeline exhibit) had a special double issue featuring "The US City, Its Greatness is At Stake." Paul Ylvisaker probably said it best in his article in this issue of *Life* magazine when he decried the loss of beauty and order in the expanding suburbs, while celebrating the democratic expansion of opportunity for the average American. "In a democracy the city to strive for is one in which diverse human beings can live freely together, respect each other's varying tastes and share the immense power of their differences."

SFist (a San Francisco Web site and blog posted this photo and comments: Daly City's "Little Boxes on the Hillside" on Jun 19, 2007

A brave soul uses a hang-glider to rise above the "conformity" of Daly City.



"At just one minute and three seconds long, the shortest song to ever chart nationally was "Little Boxes" written by folk legend Malvina Reynolds while in a car passing through Daly City. ' Ouch. You can listen to her sing it here if you want. But history has been kind to these Doelger houses if you believe the *New York Times*. These places even have their own book. [Robert Keil's book "Little Boxes"] How about that? We'll take a Doelger. Make ours green, or pink, or blue - it's all good."

Comments from Robert Keil:

"I think your article is really good. The only thing I might add is that the lyric stating that the homes are made of "ticky tacky" suggests that they are of low quality. Although it makes for a great lyric, this couldn't be further from the truth when it comes to Westlake's homes. They were built almost entirely of redwood, and the craftsmanship is of the highest quality. One would be hard pressed to find a better built tract home in the 1950s at any price, and the fact that so many of them remain in excellent condition almost 70 years after their construction is testament to that fact.

This is not to take anything away from Reynolds as a musician or a social satirist... she was obviously talented, and she did bring to light the issue of conformity that was pervasive in America in the 1950's. It was a point that needed to be made, but Daly City just wasn't a very good example."

Comments by Ctein, photographer and author (SF based thriller Saturn Run, co-authored with John Sandford) living on Skyline Drive in Daly City:

"[Henry] Doelger, inspired by Levittown, buys up the golf courses that then dominated the land here, and starts building tract homes. And all in all, they made Levittown look like it was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Doelger's personal tastes dictated all the designs (which were identical save for minimal variations)... Doelger also dictated what colors the houses could be painted (or repainted).

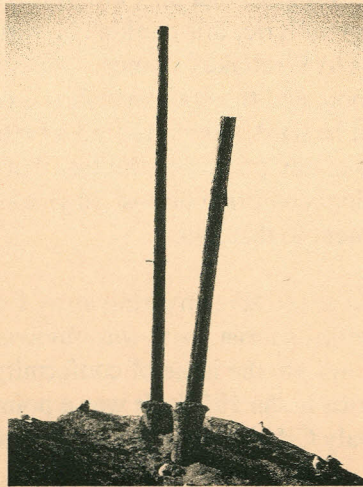
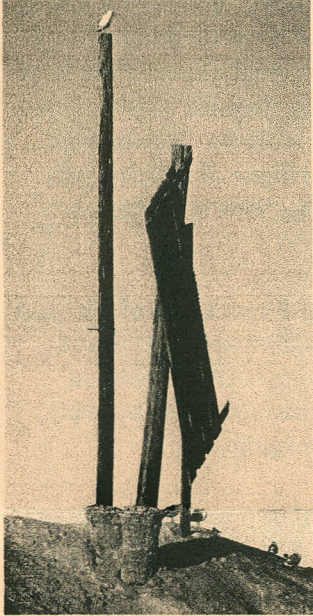
Doelger hated fences (he and Rob't. Frost might have had words), so no fences allowed on front lawns. Also, no planters, trees, flower beds, lawn ornaments. Just a lawn. With one exception. There was a palmetto tree planted in the middle of each lawn. Dunno why, guess he thought they added a touch of exotic. You were required to have one of these in your yard.

All of this was written into a covenant you had to sign to buy a house here and was enforced by a homeowners' association, which was empowered to collect annual fees from the owners and levy repair costs and fines if you painted your house a different color or killed your palmetto. The associations didn't go away until the 1990s. Talk about your central planning! People signed those covenants willingly. But here's the best part. This was a 'Restricted' community. For those too young to know what that means, it meant the covenant you signed asserted that you were of good white Christian stock and you

could only sell your house to the same... So, if you're thinking that Malvina was a bit harsh in her assessments, she coulda been lots worse. Like calling the good locals out for being the racists and religious bigots they were.

Me, I've always been amused by the song. I like it even better now that I live here."

DATUM POINT FOR WWII COASTAL ARTILLERY OBSERVERS FURTHER DAMAGED IN RECENT STORMS



The Mussel Rock Datum Point (covered in the last Tattler) suffered major damage during a storm just before Thanksgiving. All that remains now are two posts, the slats were blown down and washed away by the ocean. A subsequent search of area beaches did not turn up the remains of the slats that were lost.

Jeff Christner

MUSSEL ROCK INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AND RECREATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS MOVING FORWARD...

In early 2015 I collaborated with Daly City as a volunteer to develop interpretive signage on the history of the Mussel Rock landfill site. I had recently graduated with an MA Degree from SFSU in Museum Studies, with a focus on exhibit interpretation. In 1977 an archaeology team excavated the site of a coastal Indian village prior to bulldozing to make way for construction of Daly City's garbage transfer station. In 1978 The state Water Resources Control Board and the California Coastal Commission ordered the dump closed fearing the threat of water pollution of the ocean and the water board required Daly City to buy the dump site from Daly City Scavenger Company as a condition of the dump's closure. Since that time the site has required expensive remediation efforts to prevent ocean pollution and the site has been an undeveloped area known as the Mussel Rock Open Space Preserve. The area has been popular with hikers, dog walkers, and parasail enthusiasts. Now we can look forward to interpretive signs telling the history, geology,

and flora and fauna of the area some time in 2017. The contract for signs, picnic tables, and other improvements was recently approved by the City Council. - Dana

CONNECTIONS MADE THROUGH OUR WEBSITE

A couple of years ago, we were contacted by a young man in Europe who was tending the gravesite of a fallen Daly City WWII soldier, Christ Axel Christiansen, who landed at Omaha Beach in Normandy and lost his life between Dorff and Stolberg, Rhineland, Germany. He was buried at a cemetery in Henri-Chapelle, Liege, Belgium. His parents had lived at 6925 Mission Street, now the site of Mission Plaza. The adoption of military graves is now a common practice across the European continent, a practice which was started by a French woman soon after the Normandy invasion. We were recently contacted again by Christian Lonneux who tends the gravesite.

Hello,

I asked for help in my research in September 2014.

With the information you sent me, I found Wendy, the daughter of Axel (Christ A. Christiansen) and I have been in contact with her since June 2016 with facebook.

I heard from Axel's daughter, Cleo.

I sent to Cleo by post a photo signed by the superintendent of the cemetery of Henri-Chapelle and myself in gratitude for the sacrifice of his father.

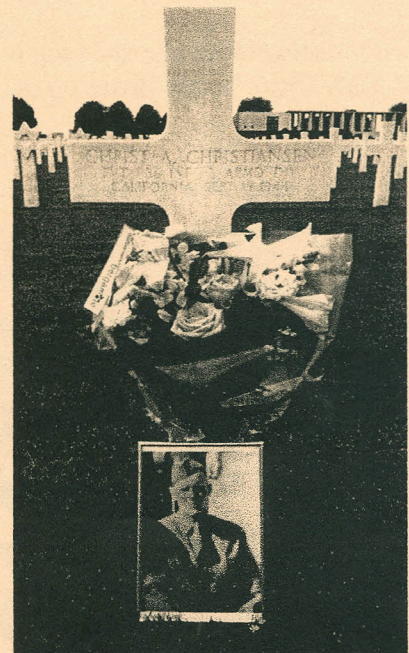
I saw that you have to publish my story and ask for help in your journal.

I thank you very much for your research because it is thanks to you that I found the family of Axel

I hope to accompany one day his family on his grave

Thank you very much and wish you a Merry Christmas

Christian Lonneux



A LITTLE MORE ON THE HEARST KIDNAPPING...


Michael Rocchetta scanned this original "wanted" poster of the kidnapping on display at the Colma Museum. Richard Rocchetta sent the following comment: "Memories from the '70s.....When I worked at JC Penney in Westlake in the 1970s there was a rumor that someone saw Patty Hearst in the store. We didn't think anything of it as we really didn't know that she was living in Daly City. The article in the last Tattler confirmed that she, indeed, was in Daly City at the time and it may have been true that she was in the store."

WANTED


SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT

37 - 74
BANK ROBBERY - ARMED
18 APRIL 1974


WARRANTS OF ARREST HAVE BEEN ISSUED FOR THE BELOW PERSONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE ARMED ROBBERY OF THE HIBERNIA BANK, 22ND & NORIEGA STREETS, ON MONDAY, 15 APRIL 1974. THESE SUBJECTS ARE TO BE CONSIDERED HEAVILY ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.




DONALD DAVID DE FREEZE
AKA "CINQUE" 11/26/43
5'9", 150 lbs., Blk/Brn




PATRICIA CAMPBELL HEARST
WF 2/28/54
5'3", 110 lbs., Lt Brn/Brn



NANCY LING PERRY
WF 9/19/47
5'0", 95-105 lbs., Brn/Brn



CAMILLA CHRISTINE HALL
WF 3/24/45
5'6", 125 lbs., Blnd/Blu



PATRICIA MICHELLE SOTYSIK
AKA "MIZMOON" WF 5/17/50
5'5", 135 lbs., Brn/Brn

INFORMATION FOR ROBBERY DETAIL
CASEY/GOYTON CASE 7402957

DONALD M. SCOTT
CHIEF OF POLICE

Original poster on display at the Colma Museum. Defreeze, Hall, Sotysik and Perry all died in a police shootout in Los Angeles in May of 1974. Hearst was captured by the FBI in September 1975, and the following year, she was convicted of bank robbery and sentenced to 35 years in prison. She was released early, in 1979, after President Jimmy Carter commuted her prison term.



THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY/COLMA

DALY CITY HISTORY MUSEUM

6351 Mission Street, Daly City, CA 94014

650/757-7177

Current Hours: Tuesdays and Saturdays from noon to 3 p.m.



Please visit us on Facebook at "Daly City History Museum"

www.dalycityhistorymuseum.org



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Colma Historical Association

1st Quarterly Meeting at 2 pm on Sunday, February 12 at the Colma Museum, 1500 Hillside Blvd.

"Tea of Many Themes" will be held on Sunday, March 11.

Information: 650/757-1676

Cypress Lawn Foundation

Free Lecture Series and Tours

All lectures begin at 2 pm at the reception center, 1370 El Camino Real. Light Refreshments.

January 15: *Funerals of Distinction – Elaborate and Memorable Farewells* by Historian Michael Svanevik

February 26: *San Francisco Cinema Rarities*

CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

Heishacker Zoo



Martin E. Hansen Collection

GUILD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Mark Weinberger, President

650/757-7177

president@dalycityhistorymuseum.org

Richard Rocchetta, Vice-President

Dana Smith, 2nd Vice-President/Museum Director

Judith Christensen, Treasurer

Algis Ratnikas, Secretary

Directors: Michael Rocchetta, Marcus Gonzalez

Ken Gillespie (1924-2011), President-Emeritus, Bunny Gillespie, Secretary-Emerita, Annette Hipona, Hospitality Chair

Board meetings are held as necessary and are open to the membership. Please contact Mark for further information.

**History Guild of Daly City/Colma is a
501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization
Membership is \$25 per year.**

Tattler Editor & production: Dana Smith,
director@dalycityhistorymuseum.org

Your comments and ideas are always welcome!

**YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT INSPIRES OUR
CONTINUED EFFORTS. THANK YOU!**