

JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY GUILD OF DALY CITY - COLMA

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT MARK



We have a great new speaker for our May general membership meeting. Bob Calhoun is a local historian and author who will share tales of the Penny Bjorkland case and his family's connection to it. Who was Penny Bjorkland? Attend and learn all about the three M's: murder, mayhem, and mystery. If time

permits he'll also discuss another femme fatale with connections to Daly City, a certain gal you might have heard of going by the name Patty Hearst. This is sure to be another fantastic presentation you won't want to miss.

At the May meeting we will vote on a board of directors as we do every two years. I can report that we received no inquiries from individuals expressing an interest in running for the board. Therefore, the current officers and directors have agreed to run for re-election. The Guild recommended slate appears on page 3.

Finally, for those who like to promote history, please consider a new first class commemorative postage stamp currently for sale at many post offices. The following is taken directly from the USPS web site:

"The U.S. Postal Service celebrates posters of the Work Projects Administration, striking and utilitarian artwork created during the Depression by the Poster Division of the WPA Federal Art Project. This booklet features 20 stamps of 10 different designs originally created to support the civic-minded ideals of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Program. Each stamp features a vibrant example of the posters conceived and printed in workshops across the nation under the WPA, a broad-reaching program that provided millions of jobs during the Great Depression. Poster images are from Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, WPA Poster

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HISTORY EVENING

**Wednesday, May 17th
at 7 pm**



Local historian and author
BOB CALHOUN

presents

***DANGEROUS
WOMEN!***

**101 Lake Merced Blvd, Daly City
Doelger Center Cafe**

Free to the public - Everyone welcome!

Refreshments will be provided by **Mel and Abby Margolis, Roy and Sue Figone, and Marcus and Grace Gonzalez**. Thanks also to our Hospitality Chair, **Annette Hipona**, assisted by **Grace Gonzalez**.

Collection. Antonio Alcalá served as the art director of the project and designed the stamps with Maribel O. Gray.”



DALY CITY WPA & DEPRESSION ERA HISTORY...

1932 - Franklin Roosevelt elected to the Presidency. A few days before the 1932 election, President Hoover drove through Daly City on his way to his hometown of Palo Alto. Children were let out early from school to view the motorcade. Hoover was jeered by some parade viewers who were frustrated with the hardships of the Depression who threw vegetables at the presidential limousine. Roosevelt won by nearly a 4 to 1 margin in Daly City.

1933 – The Daly City Council asked all who could afford it to pay an extra 25 cents with their water bill to aid the unemployed.

1935 - Groundbreaking ceremonies for the Cow Palace were held on 25 acres of land in Visitacion Valley. The original founders were C.H. "Bert" Sooy, a SF lawyer; George J. Giannini, a wholesale fruit and produce merchant; R.B. Henderson, a SF city official; Thomas L. Hickey, a San Mateo County Supervisor; Robert P. Holliday, newspaper publisher; Charles S. Howard, automobile dealer and sportsman; R.B. Krobitsch and Ernest Drury, hotel men. Sooy raised more than \$1,900,000 from federal, state, local and private interests. Work was begun in 1935 and completed five years later with mostly WPA labor. One newspaper reporter complained "While people are being evicted from their homes, a palace is being built for cows." The name "Cow Palace" stuck and the dedication of the new Cow Palace took place in the fall of 1941, featuring the first Grand National.

1935 – The stately 2-story Jefferson School built in 1892 is demolished and replaced by a one-story building built with WPA funds called "Little Jeff" at the same site.

The building was later used as a repository for books and a storage place. It still stands today.

1935 - Mission Street Widening Project widened Mission Street from the county line with San Francisco to Market Street in what was then Colma. All buildings on the East side of Mission were moved back approximately 65 feet. The entire streetcar line through Daly City was shifted and new pavement was laid over the center lines on Mission Street.



Masonic Temple with Cupola at the Top-of-the-Hill, early 1900s

1935 – The Crocker Masonic Temple (formerly Knowles Hall) was destroyed by fire. Daly City lost a notable landmark, a large two-story wood frame building with signature cupola. Rebuilt in 1936, the building still stands at the Top-of-the-Hill.

1935 - The state extended Alemany Blvd. west by 1.7 miles from Junipero Serra Blvd. to Skyline Blvd. The Coast Highway was finished a year later, originally called State Route 56. Alemany Blvd. was later changed to John Daly Blvd. in 1973.

1936 –The second City Hall is erected on the site of the original City Hall, which was demolished. The new City Hall is a Works Project Administration (WPA) undertaken as part of the national strategy to increase employment during the Great Depression.

1936 - John Marchbank donated Vista Grande Park to the city, setting the groundwork for what would become the Daly City Recreation Department ten years later. In 1938 the WPA (Works Project Administration) took over expanded recreation at the park. The Daly City Recreation Department was not officially created until 1946.

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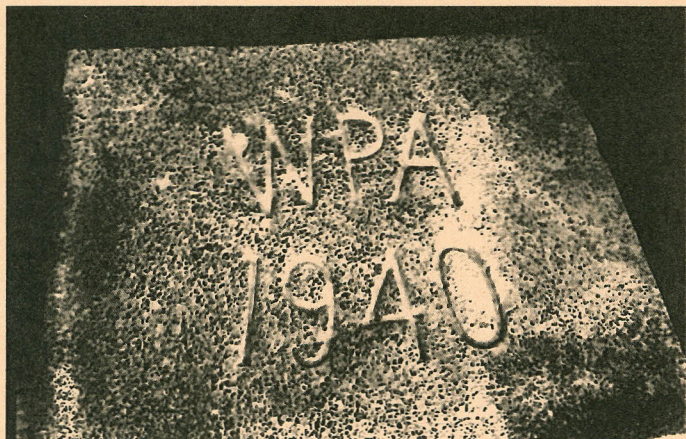
1938 The original one-room John Daly Library building was moved back against the rock quarry when the library was expanded as a WPA project with a front addition in Art Deco style. The cost of the building addition and furnishings was approximately \$5,000. Councilman Henry Sundermann, chairman of the library committee, was lauded for his efforts. This was the only library in Daly City for over 41 years and it now houses the History Guild's Daly City History Museum.

1938 - National Auto Ford at 7370 Mission offered a new Tudor sedan for \$729.

1939 - The business district on the southern end of Mission Street, formerly known as Colma is annexed to Daly City. The population of Daly City reached 12,000.

1939 - The attorney general of California ruled that dog racing was illegal. This shut down the main industry in Bayshore City as had an earlier law shut down the Union Coursing Park on Mission Street in 1904.

Sidewalks were expanded throughout Daly City during the Depression Era. The last remaining piece of sidewalk stamped with "WPA 1940" was removed and donated to the museum by Gary Webber.

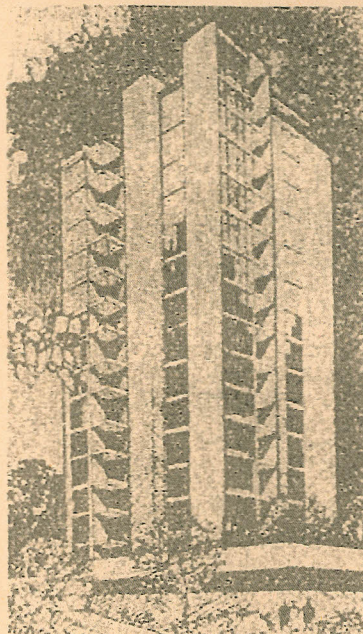


PROPOSED SLATE OF BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS, MAY ELECTION

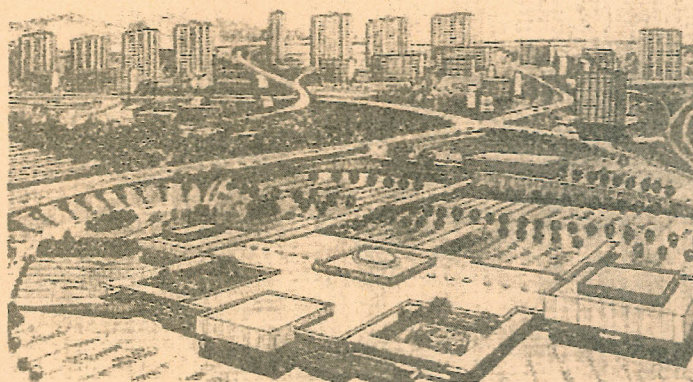
The History Guild Board of Directors have approved of the following slate:

Mark Weinberger, President, Richard Rocchetta 1st Vice President, Dana Smith 2nd Vice President, Algis Ratnikas, Secretary, Judith Christensen, Treasurer, Michael Rocchetta, Board Member, Marcus Gonzalez, Board Member.

Note: We take a little break in the summer, so the next *Tattler* and the next Guild meeting will be in September.



Architect Gilman Hoskins imagined the ambitious \$200 million Skyline Towers project. Photos from the *Daly City Record*, 1963.



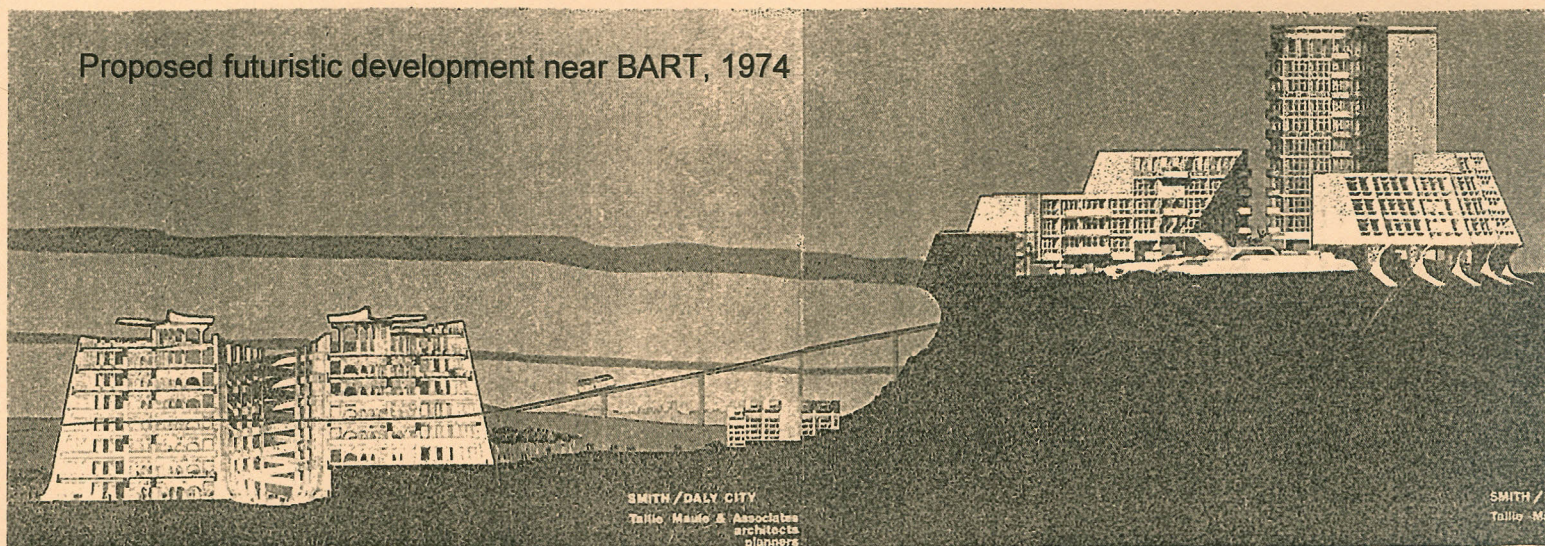
BUILDINGS THAT NEVER WERE

In 1963 plans were afoot for a row of 15-story towers along Skyline Boulevard known as the Skyline Towers. These high-rise apartments were only in the imagination of planners and were never built. Construction of the new Junipero Serra freeway and Hickey Boulevard were part of the development plans.

A 1973 letter between Daly City planners and the BART Director of Real Estate revealed plans for multiple buildings at the Top-of-the-Hill, some as high as 22 stories. The letter mentioned the advisability of removing lower income people in the area around BART

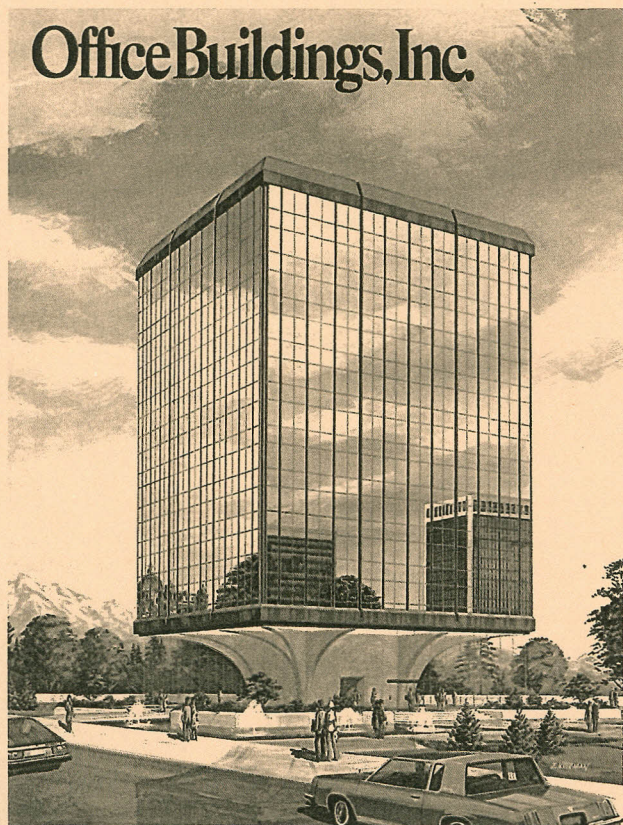
And replacing them with a higher income community expected to make better use of BART. The futuristic architectural plans shown above remind one of a *Jetson's* cartoon, depicting a monorail connecting the high rises to the BART station. An economic downturn and intense community opposition by the Original Daly City Protective Association stopped the plans to bulldoze homes and displace the current residents. Although the vast development was never realized, John Daly Boulevard was widened to accommodate this kind of massive development, destroying 50 homes in the process.

Proposed futuristic development near BART, 1974



In 1981 Daly City Redevelopment had plans for twin 12-story office towers on Junipero Serra Boulevard to be built by Office Buildings, Inc. (OBI). The project was halted by the Original Daly City Protective Association on the basis of improper environmental impact reviews. The City counter-sued to require ODCPA to turn over minutes and membership lists. Daly City lost that suit on the basis of constitutional privacy. This kind of action, a strategic lawsuit against public participation (SLAPP) is a lawsuit that is intended to censor, intimidate, and silence critics by burdening them with the cost of a legal defense until they abandon their criticism or opposition. The leader of ODCPA retired to San Jose and the organization declined until it was reinvigorated to fight the renewal of Redevelopment powers of eminent domain in 1999.

Office Buildings, Inc.



DALY CITY THEATER MEMORIES



A parade passes the Daly City Theater

Dear Daly City History Museum, I lived in Daly City in the 1940s and 1950s. I was wondering if you have any information on the old theater that was located just down the hill on Mission Street. I even recall checking out books from the library, which I think you are located in now? Best regards, Ed Coffey

Hi Ed, The Daly City Theatre at 6212 Mission Street opened on November 28, 1928. It had 1,250 seats. It was a victim of Drive-ins and TV. It was modernized in 1951, but to no avail. It closed on December 22, 1955 and was demolished in February 1958. (Editor: a small shopping center is now located behind the old Bank of America Building, where the theatre once stood.) I highly recommend Jack Tillamany's and Gary Lee Parks' book *Theatres of the San Francisco Peninsula*, an Arcadia Images of America book, about \$22. We had

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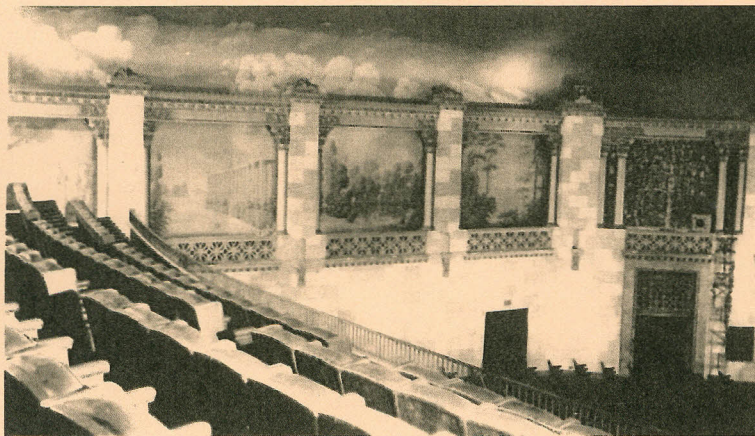
them both as speakers several years ago and they were GREAT!

www.arcadiapublishing.com/Products/9780738530208

Best, Mark
Hi Mark, Thank you very much for that information. My family lived in Daly City (Evergreen and Hanover) from 1936 to 1953 and the old theater was our favorite pastime. Saturday matinees would be sold out with the latest first run features. Separately, as kids we would play in the hills at the top of Evergreen on the road to the KRON tower. There was a farm up there that had no electricity but they had a very large vegetable patch. Just beyond his farm was a small US Army detachment that vacated in the late 1940s. We never knew what unit they belonged to. Then, in the early 1950s the Army Nike unit returned almost to the top of the KRON Tower. They lived in tents, but everything, including the missiles, were camouflaged... lost in time!

Appreciate all your great assistance! Best Regards, Ed.

Interior of the Daly City Theater



Hi Ed, Yes, we have information and some photos of the old theater. Feel free to visit. Mark

Hello Mark, I appreciate the invitation, but I'm now living in sunny Florida. Ed

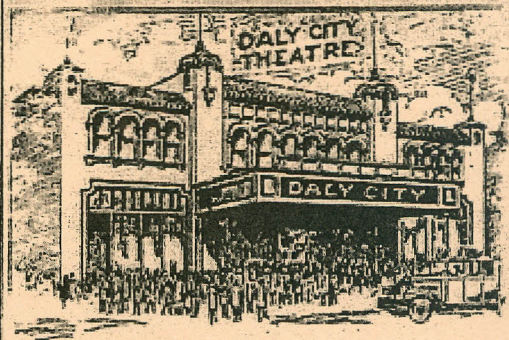
Note from Mark: The following is from Images of America--Theatres of the San Francisco Peninsula, by Jack Tillmany and Gary Lee Parks [Arcadia Press 2011]:

"The Daly City stood at 6212 Mission Street and opened on November 27, 1928. It was an example of an atmospheric theater, a style involving a smooth, vaulted plaster ceiling painted and lit to simulate a sky. The theater included hints of Italianate style with a bit of Gothic and Spanish as well. In the pit was the shrouded console of the two-manual, six-rank Robert Morton pipe organ. The Daly City had 1,250 seats. It performed well for more than 20 years, but ultimately succumbed to the drive-in and television. A last-minute marquee

modernization in mid-1951 proved too little too late. On December 22, 1955, the Daly City closed its doors for the last time. It was demolished in February 1958"

Editor's Note: When the Daly City Theatre opened it was owned by John Marchbank and leased to Edward B. Baron and C. A. Nathan.. A Robert-Morton theater organ size 2/6 was installed in the theatre. The first movies were silent and in black and white until 1929 when sound came to movies and they became known as "talkies." By the end of 1935, most movies were shown in color. The huge marquee of the cultural center of Daly City for nearly three decades was torn down by KTK wrecking company. It was the site of the town's annual Christmas party for many years sponsored by John Marchbank.

An illustration used in theater ads shows the large landmark sign above the building from the front.



DALY CITY THEATRE

NOW PLAYING—

WE DARE YOU TO SEE — TOGETHER

DRACULA

AND

FRANKENSTEIN

The Double Horror Show of the Century
Also **LATEST MARCH OF TIME—**
UNCLE SAM, THE GOOD NEIGHBOR
Color Cartoon
CASH NIGHT — Saturday

SUNDAY, MONDAY, TUESDAY, Dec. 18-19-20—
Edward G. Robinson in **I AM THE LAW** | June Lang and Lynn Bari in **MEET THE GIRLS**

Also an added attraction in technicolor.
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
With John Litel
DINNERWARE — Monday-Night

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, Dec. 21-22—
Joel McCrea and Andrea Leeds in **YOUTH TAKES A FLING** | James, Lucile and Bussell Glendon in **THE HIGGINS FAMILY**

GIANT TEN-O-WIN — Wednesday

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, Dec. 23-24—
BROADWAY MUSKETEERS | Weaver Brothers and Elvira in **DOWN IN ARKANSAW**

With Margaret Lindsay, Ann Sheridan, Marie Wilson, John Litel and Janet Chapman

KIDDIES — Win 20 Toy Steel Trucks — Sat. Matinee
CASH NIGHT — Saturday



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.

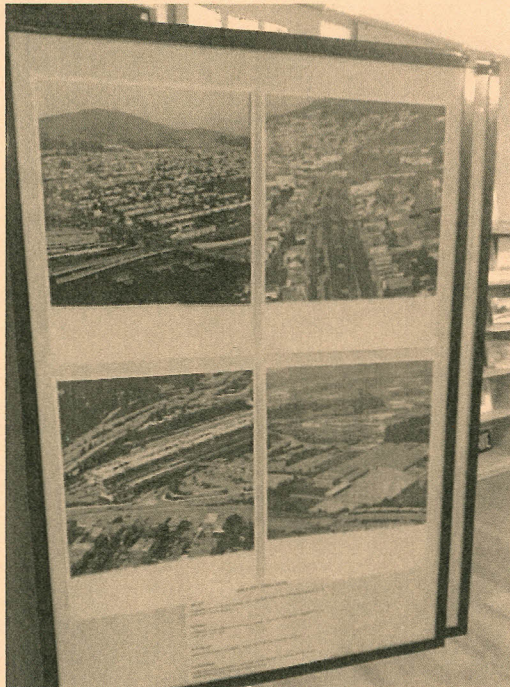


Please visit us on Facebook at "Daly City History Museum"

www.dalycityhistorymuseum.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Did you know that our museum has a vast collection of local aerial photographs? Come by the museum and take a look!



Colma Museum News – Saturday, April 29th the Colma Museum will be having a fundraising garage sale at the museum (1500 Hillside) from 9am-5pm. This is part of a city-wide garage sale day. The Historical Association will hold their 3rd Quarterly meeting on Wednesday, July 26 at 6:30 pm.



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
Memberships begin at \$25 per year.**

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

Your shared remembrances are appreciated.
Contact Dana by email or regular mail to the museum. Thank you!