

THE TATTLER

JOURNAL OF DALY CITY HISTORY GUILD MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT MARK

For our May 12th general membership meeting we are pleased to welcome Constance Smith, Secretary of the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz. She is an authority on the Rock during its Civil War era use as both a fort and prison. She will share how and why Fortress Alcatraz was built. Topics include the Gold Rush, SF local lore and women's history. Born in Texas and hailing from the deep south, Constance has been a historian since 1988 and was a battlefield re-enactor for 25 years. She graduated San Diego State University and did post-graduate work at U.C. Irvine.

To quote from the Friends web site: "Alcatraz was dedicated as a National Park in 1972 because of its military history as a Civil War fort and later as a military prison. The Friends of Civil War Alcatraz was founded in 2002 as a non-profit organization to support the National Park Service in interpreting the 70-year military history of Alcatraz.

To date we have: maintained the existing cannon and carriage; performed cannon drills for the public; provided volunteers to interpret the Civil War history of the island; organized Living History events on the island; raised funds to donate to the Park Service for uniforms and items for interpretation; given presentations to the island's interpretive staff about the island's military history. Our volunteers meet people from all over the world who are interested in knowing the early and formative years of the Island's history." Please visit their web site for additional information, <http://www.friendsofcivilwaralcatraz.org/>

Having received no inquiries of interest to serve on the board for 2021-2023, your current officers and directors have agreed to stand for re-election. The proposed slate: Mark Weinberger, President; Rich Rocchetta, First Vice-President; Marcus Gonzalez, Second Vice President; Judith Christensen, Treasurer; Algis Ratnikas, Secretary; Michael Rocchetta, Director; Dana Smith, Director.

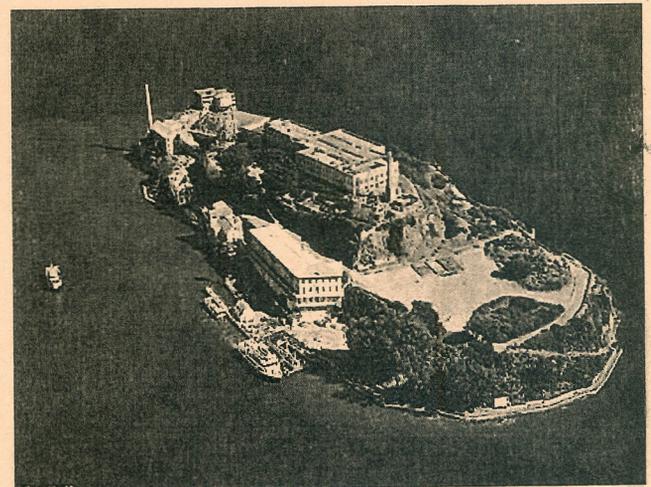
ZOOM LECTURE AND MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19

7 PM

Constance Smith

Secretary of the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz



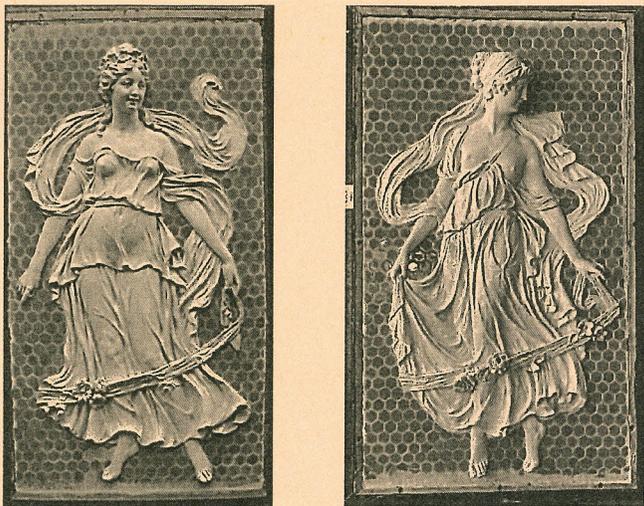
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Note: Mark Weinberger will send an email invitation about one week before this meeting. Please save his instructions on how to view and participate. If you are unsure whether we have your correct email, please inform Mark at: events@dalycityhistorymuseum.org

Of some interest might be an update on the recently closed San Francisco Cliff House. While the Golden Gate National Recreation Area owns the property, the contents including the vast treasure trove of Sutro Baths', Playland, and other memorabilia was privately owned by the Hountalas family, which operated the restaurant for almost 50 years. In early March an auction was held for everything. The Western Neighborhoods Project, also known as Outsidelands, is a historical organization that mobilized very quickly and raised in excess of \$150,000 to acquire as many of the artifacts as possible. They did a yeoman's job in securing most of the iconic items that they set out to get. Thanks to their rapid mobilization, such works as the Whitney totem pole, Playland wooden cowboy, Sutro Baths' bathing suits and lockers, famed grizzly bear statue, Italian muse porcelain tiles that adorned the Baths, and much more were saved. In this way much if not most of the Cliff House collection remains intact and not scattered across the country. Plans are underway to figure out how best to display this remarkable history for the public's benefit. You can follow updates at <https://www.outsidelands.org/>

Once Daly City reopens, we will endeavor to reopen the museum safely and responsibly so that folks can visit again. As we move closer to that time, we continue to wish one and all good health and safe living.

Our extended condolences to the family and many friends of Bianca Caserza, a valuable member of the History Guild, the Colma Historical Association, and our community at large. She was such an important link to our past.



Made of Italian porcelain in the early 1890s, these bathing Italian muses welcomed visitors to the Sutro Baths, and were acquired at auction by the Save the Cliff House Art Collection group. (Courtesy Western Neighborhoods Project)

BIANCA CASERZA 1926-2021

Died Friday, April 9th at home in the care of her daughters. Graduate of Jefferson Elementary School, Jefferson Union High School, University of California,

Berkeley where she completed her undergrad work in modern languages in three years, graduating in 1947. She obtained her teaching credential, an MA in Italian in 1950 and later her library science certificate from San Jose State University. She served as a member of the Italian Catholic Federation Branch 19, past President of the Holy Angels Women's Guild, Hillside Homeowners Improvement Association, valued member of the Daly City History Guild Museum & Archive, the Colma Historical Association, San Mateo County History Associates and San Bruno Branch of the American Association of University Women. Over the years, Bianca enjoyed travels with Lou and later with her daughters. After she retired in 1981, Bianca enjoyed attending classes at The Fromm Institute at the University of San Francisco for twenty years. In recent years, Bianca enjoyed attending classes at the Doelger Senior Center in Daly City.

Note from Marianne Petroni: She was the last person that I know that knew M. PAULINE BROWN. Her husband was tutored by Mrs. Brown. M. Pauline Brown was going to be honored in Redwood City at the county museum, but the pandemic began and the event was canceled. Bianca had planned on attending. Mrs. Brown, loved by all who knew her, taught in Daly City-Colma schools for nearly 30 years. She was recognized throughout San Mateo county for her excellence as a teacher. After her death in 1959, The local school board paid tribute by naming one of the new schools after her." M. Pauline Brown School opened in 1960 on Eastmoor Avenue in Daly City.

Note from Editor: Bianca Caserza was one of the stars of our centennial video. With her ongoing donations, she frequently enclosed notes encouraging me as the volunteer editor of the Tattler. I printed her most recent note in the March 2021 Tattler. She was such an accomplished woman. Excerpts from the Pacifica Tribune below highlight her remarkable life and that of her family as early Italian immigrants.

LONGTIME DALY CITY RESIDENT BIANCA CASERZA ARRIVED FROM ITALY IN 1928

By Jean Bartlett, *Pacifica Tribune*, October 25, 2011

In April of 1920, Bartolomeo Ratto and his sister Teresa arrived in what is now Daly City, but was then a part of Colma. They came from Italy in search of opportunity. Already they had cousins and a younger brother in the area. Their uncle, who had also come to California, perished not long before their arrival — a victim of the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919.

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“My father sent money for my mother to come here,” said long time Daly City resident Bianca Caserza, née Ratto. “They were engaged... In those days it took five years for an immigrant to receive their first citizenship papers and so in 1925, Bartolomeo headed to Italy to marry Giuseppina. While he was there he learned that his new bride could not return with him to California until he had his final citizenship papers... In 1927, Bartolomeo became a citizen but his wife wanted to wait until their daughter was two before she headed out West. In 1928, mother and daughter left the town of Stella San Martino. They arrived in Colma/Daly City on July 25, 1928. Bianca was 25 months old. “My father was so proud because he had traveled by steerage with his sister,” Caserza said. “But his wife and daughter were able to travel second class.”

Back then there were a lot of farms and ranches in the area and Bartolomeo was a foreman on a 150-acre ranch. The ranch was located close to what is now Skyline Plaza (Southgate and Eastmoor Avenues). Caserza noted that one of her father's partners in the ranch was the father of Floyd Gonella, Ed.D, San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools (retired.)

“On the ranch we grew cabbages, cauliflower, potatoes, spinach, Swiss chard and a little later — artichokes,” Caserza said. “We had horses, chickens, rabbits, a hog and at one time we had a cow. There were also a great many creeks on the property. It was a marvelous place for my brother and I to grow up.”

“I went to Jefferson Elementary,” Caserza said. “I did not go to kindergarten. We were 2.5 miles from the school and at that time there was no bus service.” It was Bianca's mother who got the school bus going. “My mother knew the president of the school board, Mr. Louis Nava, who had a meat shop on San Pedro Road,” Caserza said. “She told him, ‘my daughter is not going to be walking to school.’ And by golly the bus service was started and it came from Half Moon Bay, with passengers, and picked me up.”

“I learned English at the age of 6,” Caserza continued. “I spoke the Genoese dialect until I went to school. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Bianca, her future husband Lou Caserza was growing up in a different neighborhood of Daly City, the Abbey Homestead neighborhood (where the PG&E substation is now).

“We were up by Skyline and didn't get down there much but occasionally we visited one of my father's friends, a member of the Pisani family, who rented a little ranch from the Lagomarsino family in that area.” Lou Caserza was born on Ivy Street near City Hall in San Francisco. When he was a month old, he and his parents and his older brother John arrived in Daly City in a horse drawn carriage. Lou's father, Dionizio Caszera was in business

with his two brothers and they owned greenhouses where Susan B. Anthony Elementary School is now...

“While my mother worked at the ranch cooking three meals a day, 365 days a year for both our family and the men who worked at the ranch, in Italy she had been a psychiatric nurse,” Caszera said. “She was very much for my having an education as well as my staying at Berkeley and getting out in the world a bit.”

Caszera spent her first year and a half out of college, teaching at Albany High School. Following this she taught English to freshmen and sophomores at Jefferson High School for seven years. In February of 1950, her folks had bought a house on West Moltke Street (the last home built on West Moltke). Bianca lived with her parents until she married in 1956.

Bianca met Lou Caserza at an Italian Catholic Federation dinner-dance... They married in 1956 at Holy Angels Church in Colma... Lou — who was a mechanical engineer (he retired from Bechtel after 34 years in 1984) — and Bianca raised three daughters, Rosemarie, Catherine and Elizabeth...

“I worked at every high school in the district except Serramonte,” Caserza said. This included being a librarian at Oceana, Jefferson, Westmoor High School and Terra Nova. She retired from Terra Nova in June of 1982. From 1978 through 2000, Caserza served on the Daly City Library Board of Trustees, many times as an officer. She was very active in Project Read. Her literary related projects earned her Daly City Commissioner of the Year honors in 1994...

“When we moved into our home, the neighborhood was mostly Italian,” Caserza said. “Now we have all kinds of nationalities and I just love it.

Note: Dr. Floyd Gonella died January 4, 2021 at the age of 87. He was born in Colma, the son of Italian immigrant parents who were farmers. Dr. Gonella had an illustrious 50-year career in public education, including serving as Superintendent of Jefferson Union High School, Ravenswood School District, and San Mateo County Superintendent of schools. He was active in preserving Italian history and he and his wife Margaret created the Daly City Youth Center, among many charitable activities. He was known for his attachment to his family dogs.

KEN REITZ, MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PAYER AND JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

By Richard Rocchetta

Daly City and Jefferson High School in particular have produced many star athletes over the years. In baseball, a 1940 graduate, Don Mossi, pitched for the Cleveland



Ken Reitz and Arthur Hermosillo as co-captains of the Jefferson High varsity baseball team pictured in the 1968 Jefferson High yearbook.

Indians in their championship year of 1954 and was an All Star. During my years at Jefferson, there also was an athlete who went on to become an excellent baseball player, Ken Reitz.

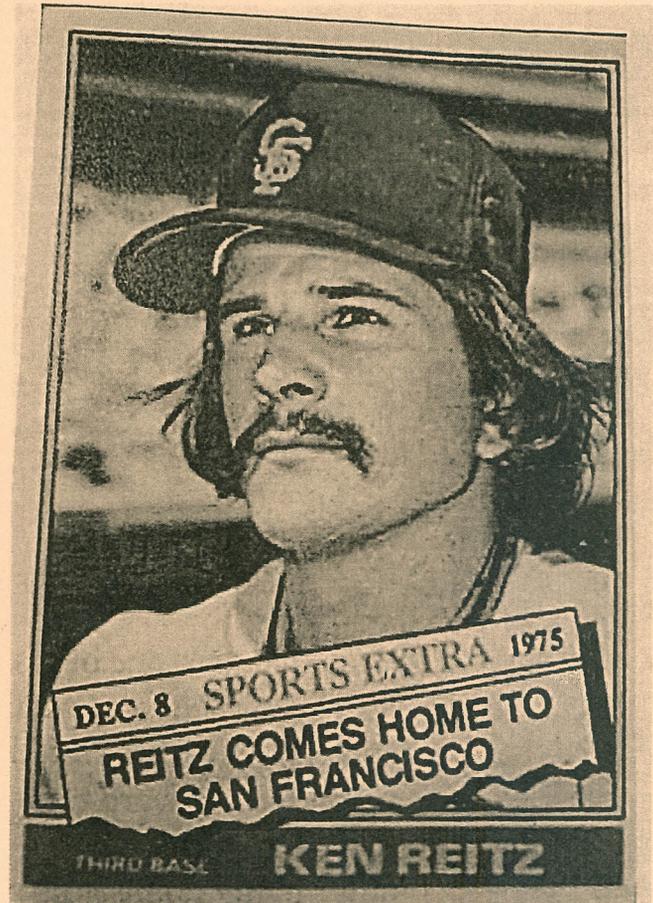
Reitz played 11 seasons in Major League Baseball for the St. Louis Cardinals, San Francisco Giants, Chicago Cubs and Pittsburgh Pirates from 1972 to 1982. He won the Gold Glove Award in the National League for third basemen in 1975 and was an All Star for the NL in 1980. He retired with the highest all-time career fielding percentage for National League third basemen at .970 after leading the National League in fielding percentage a record six times. He ranks ninth-best all time in all of Major League Baseball for fielding percentage. He was nicknamed "Zamboni" as he could pick up any ball that came near his position.

He was born in San Francisco and graduated from Jefferson High School in 1969. He played on the varsity baseball team as well as other sports for the school. After graduating in 1969, the St. Louis Cardinals of the National League drafted him. After a few years in the minors, he made his major league debut in September of 1972. In 1975 he appeared in 161 games for the Cardinals and won the Gold Glove for his defense at third base. In December of 1975 he was traded to his hometown team, the San Francisco Giants.

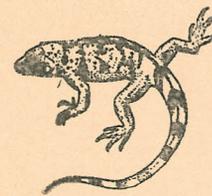
(As a personal note, my family and I were there on Opening Day in 1976 when he was presented on the field with his prior year's award). A little over a year later, Reitz was traded back to St. Louis. In December of 1980 he was traded again, this time to the Chicago Cubs. In late 1981 he was traded to his last ML team, the Pittsburgh Pirates and ended his career in June of 1982. His lifetime batting average is .260, he hit a total of 68 home runs and had 548 runs batted in during the 1,344 games he

played. A very respectable career. Ken Reitz passed away on March 31, 2021 at 69 years of age.

When he came to the Giants, Reitz said, "I used to see about 50 games a year here (at Candlestick Park), sometimes cutting high school classes...". Yes, another Jeff High Grad who made it good in professional sports.



A baseball card when Reitz came back to play for the San Francisco Giants.



MEMORIES OF THE GULLY

by Marcus Gonzalez

No one knows how it got the name, but we always called it "the Gully." In the early 1960s, the Gully was a wild open space for kids in the middle of Daly City/Broadmoor.

When the Stoneson Brothers and Henry Doelger developed Broadmoor and Westlake respectively, post-World War II, they left pockets of open space between the subdivisions. Erosion was a factor for both builders as they advanced to hillsides marked for construction. The Gully was a bypassed borderland, too steep to build on, and completely sealed off by Pinehaven Avenue in Westlake, and Foothill, Maddux, and 87th streets in Broadmoor.

If you lived along these streets, access to the Gully was as easy as jumping your backyard fence. For the rest of us, our passage through this wall of homes was the alley of a house just on the Broadmoor side of 87th.

Once you jumped the fence, you walked out into steep, hilly country. The Pinehaven side is the widest part of the Gully. Heading eastward, the area tapers gradually until you reach a point of adjoining backyards between Maddux and 87th. The land was a mix of native shrubs, grasslands, and some tall trees that must have been planted by the early farmers in the area. One tree had a rope swing and another held the ancient remains of a treehouse. I often wondered who had had the guts to climb that high to build it.

Reptilian life thrived in the Gully. The western fence lizard, or blue-belly lizard, was a common sight, and we delighted in poking through the bushes for them. The San Francisco garter snake (now an endangered species) could also turn up. This was well before raccoons made a local comeback, so predators were fewer.

As a borderland, the Gully brought together kids from different schools. This was the height of the baby boom, and kids were everywhere. My friends and I went to school in Westlake, and a lot of unknown kids were in the Gully, probably from Our Lady of Mercy or Garden Village. But we didn't ask too many questions about school. We were all there to explore, have fun, and run around this adult-free wilderness.

The Gully is best viewed from the corner of Southgate and Maddux, just next to Westlake Baptist Church. Though many of the children who explored its slopes are now grandparents, the Gully looks as unchanged and wild as ever.

VERTICAL FARMING... AN AGRICULTURE INNOVATION

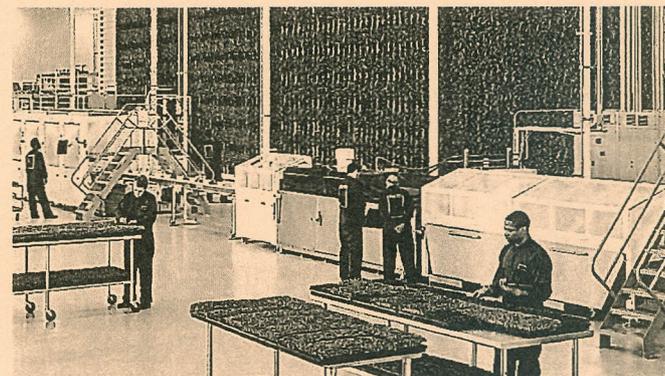


Cabbage on the way to market in the early 1900s

Editor's Note: We are familiar with the agricultural beginnings of this area first settled by Irish farmers and dairymen, followed by Italian truck farmers who provided vegetables and flowers to San Francisco. The railroads

also shipped produce, notably cabbage, across the country. Later, many Italian farmers changed to pig farming as more profitable, using slop from San Francisco restaurants. Many early farming families became land-rich when farms changed to suburbs after WWII. Now a new agricultural movement is developing nearby in South San Francisco, alongside the world-famous biotechnology industry. A recent guest relocated to begin a new job in SSF. I assumed he was in biotechnology, but soon found out he is in another high-tech field, vertical agriculture. My refrigerator is now full of his gifts of produce grown without sunshine or soil, harvested by robots! (And I thought our recent Zoom computer meetings were futuristic...)

Workers packing products at Plenty's vertical farm Tigris in South San Francisco.



Plenty is an agtech startup founded in 2014 that is reinventing farms and farming at its biggest and most automated indoor farm in South San Francisco called Tigris. The new farm holds rows and rows of tall green walls, which alternate with walls of bright LED lights. Harvesting is done robotically year-round. While Tigris is specifically designed for leafy greens, CEO Matt Barnard reports that the company has test-grown nearly 700 varieties of plants within the last year and is experimenting with plant protein.

While the energy costs are higher than a traditional outdoor farm, Plenty's business model is based on distributing only in a farm's immediate region with plans to implement solar and wind power at future farms. The company also claims Tigris uses less than 1% of the amount of land and less than 5% of water compared with conventional outdoor farms. The newest company venture in Compton, California which is expected to begin production in 2021, condensing 700 acres of farmland into a 95,000 square foot warehouse. "It is very impactful from a climate change perspective," Shireen Santosham, Plenty's head of strategic initiatives, told CNN. "Eighty to 90% of water used around the world is for agriculture". Industry leaders all over the world have idealistic visions of solving future food shortages, while hopefully creating viable economic ventures. There are over 60 vertical indoor farming companies in the United States and this is worldwide phenomena



**DALY CITY HISTORY GUILD MUSEUM
& ARCHIVE**

6351 Mission Street Daly City, CA 94014

650/757-7177

Open Tuesdays and Saturdays from noon to 3 p.m.



Please visit us on Facebook at "Daly City History Guild Museum & Archive"

www.dalycityhistorymuseum.org

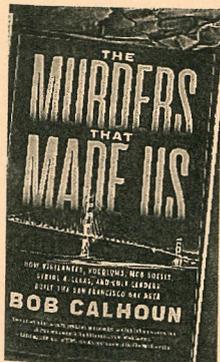


FIRST CLASS MAIL



Rob Keil, author of "Little Boxes" on the history and architecture of Daly City's Westlake, sent this message: "After 3 years of work, I'm excited to announce the publication of my

second book, "Art Fitzpatrick and Van Kaufman: Masters of the Art of Automobile Advertising". When Art Fitzpatrick and I became friends in 2010, it was the beginning of the process that would lead to this book 11 years later. I have created a book preview at <https://www.fitzandvan.com>



"Murders That Made Us" by Guild member **Bob Calhoun** has just been published telling the 170-year history of the Bay Area through its crimes and how they intertwine with the city's art, music, and politics. Since 2015, Bob has recounted the most gruesome and lurid local events in his regular *SF Weekly* column, "Yesterday's Crimes."

GUILD OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

- Mark Weinberger, President** 650/757-7177
president@dalycityhistorymuseum.org
- Richard Rocchetta, Vice-President**
- Marcus Gonzalez, 2nd Vice-President/Museum Director**
- Judith Christensen, Treasurer**
- Algis Ratnikas, Secretary**
- Directors: Michael Rocchetta, Dana Smith**

Ken Gillespie (1924-2011), President-Emeritus, Bunny Gillespie (1926-2017), Secretary-Emerita, Grace and Marcus Gonzales Hospitality Crew

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

**Daly City History Guild Museum & Archive is a
501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization
Memberships begin at \$25 per year.**

Tattler Editor & production: Dana Smith
(dana@vikingsmith.net)

In January the Board renewed all memberships at no cost through 2021. None the less, members sent generous donations reported in last edition's Gratitude Report. New donations: \$100-150 Paul Grosshans, \$50 – 99 Ruth Hill, Suzanne Holton