



Historically Speaking

Morgan Hill Historical Society

Established 1971

Our Mission is to “preserve and share the history of Morgan Hill, and its environs, to inspire a sense of community.”

Published Quarterly

October 2021



Morgan Hill Historical Society Celebrates 50 Years



On September 11the Historical Society welcomed community members to an **open house** at Villa Mira Monte. The event was organized to share our 50-year history and thank the community for their support. The Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce provided a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Speakers shared highlights on local history: Mike Monroe, Peter Anderson and Beth Wyman.

Docents led tours of the House, Museum and History Trail. The NNQ (No Name Quartet) serenaded attendees between activities. It was a very special day.



L-R: Kevin Phillips, Malisha Kumar
Cecelia & Gary Ponzini
John Horner & Brittney Sherman (standing)



Amber & Phil Frederick



“No name Quartet” with Peter Anderson & Friends

September 12the first **History Makers** film had a very well attended “premier showing” at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse.

See the film overview on page 4.



Museum Director, Kathy Devine,

created some excellent **displays** for our anniversary open house that showcase the work of the Historical Society. The exhibits in the Hiram Morgan Hill House will remain up for several months or until we have a rental event.

Be sure to check them out when Villa Mira Monte is open for docent tours on Saturdays from 10 am – 1 pm.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Roger Knopf, rknopf@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com

Happy 50th Anniversary, MHHS!

We have accomplished a lot in the past 50 years, most importantly saving the historic site of Villa Mira Monte, the Hiram Morgan Hill House and the Acton farmhouse as our community museum. We also established the Centennial Trail and archived lots of local history. We are grateful for the creation of our historic film series; "Stories of the Past" and "History Makers." I am thankful for our members and community partners who make our work possible through their generous contributions. Our fabulous volunteers take those financial resources, add their time and talent and deliver educational and social programs that complement and benefit our entire community. Thank you to you all. Here's to another exciting and productive 50 years!

Board Election

Because of the pandemic and its restrictions on meeting and gathering, I have suggested we forgo this year's election, which will save considerable dollars printing and mailing ballots. The work of the Board has been evaluated and simplified, and the present Board is functioning well in this restricted environment. The greatest need of the Historical Society now is volunteers to serve in the many functional areas of the day-to-day operation of our great organization. The following experience areas would be most welcome: governance, information technologies, financial, fundraising and donor management, marketing, social media, membership building, event planning, and property management. Filling these areas of responsibility is especially important, as we look forward to getting back to a "more normalized" schedule. If you are interested in joining our operating staff of volunteers or as a Board member or have a suggestion of someone who might be appropriate, please contact Roger Knopf.

Ron Kumar - We Appreciate Your Service



After serving a three-year term on the Board as treasurer, Ron Kumar has submitted his resignation effective August 31, 2021, citing his increased professional and family commitments and responsibilities. He, his wife Gini, and their two sons moved here in 2015, seeing Morgan Hill as a great place to raise their family.

Ron was a pleasure to work with and a significant asset for our organization. As Board treasurer since September 2018, he brought much expertise with his 30+ years of experience in finance, as well as knowledge of policy and procedures, information technology, website/social media, and working with other boards. We thank Ron for all he has done for the Historical Society and the Morgan Hill community.

Special Thanks to the Edward Boss Prado Foundation

We are very grateful for a \$1,000 donation from the Edward Boss Prado Foundation Board of Directors that provided enough funds to sponsor the entire two-day anniversary weekend and its special events. CEO Cecelia Ponzini and her board are very supportive of nonprofits that provide educational opportunities, inspire our community to learn and contribute to our local history.



2021 UPCOMING EVENTS

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS ALTARS

Kat Chavez Napoli, Director

The 2nd annual Dia de los Muertos event will be hosted at Villa Mira Monte on **October 30-31, 10 am - 3 pm**, to help preserve the cultural tradition of setting up altars to honor loved ones who have died. Community members will be invited to participate by placing ofrendas (offerings) on the altars in memory of their family members. The event is supported by a grant from the County of Santa Clara Historic Grant Program.



OCTOBER 30 & 31, 2021

HOLIDAY EVENTS

December 11, 2021, 3:30-5:30

Morgan Hill Library

Screening of "Stories of the Past 2021"

(See pages 4 & 8 for details)



Due to continuing COVID unknowns, 2021 holiday events are not being scheduled. We sincerely hope that next year we will be able to resume our popular boutique in November and the December Tea.

Thank you for your patience and support.

BLACK HISTORY PROJECT

Our new group held a preliminary meeting and continues to look for people interested in discussing, researching and documenting stories of Black people who have helped shape the history of our community and the greater South County area. If you are interested in joining the group, or have information to share, contact Kathy Sullivan at:

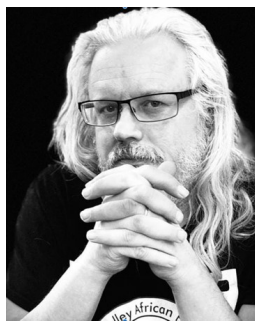
ksullivan@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com

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History Makers A Documentary Film Series

The first of three new films under the series name *History Makers* debuted at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse on September 12 to rave reviews. Our sincere thanks to writer, director and producer, Robin Shepherd of Selah Productions; cinematographer and film editor, Nils Myers of 152 West Productions; and Julie and Pat Belanger of 111th Aerial Photography. The feature-length film provides a compelling look at the Historical Society's half century of accomplishments beginning with its founding in 1971, renovations of the Hiram Morgan Hill House and the History Museum, and creation of the Centennial Trail in 2006, along with decades of community programs and events crowned by the annual Founders Dinner. Robin Shepherd's development of this new collection of documentary films is being funded by a grant from a generous South County Family. Due to popular demand, this year's film will be screened again at one or more community venues and made available for viewing online.

<https://www.morganhillhistoricalsociety.org/2021-history-makers>



Stories From the Past 2021

December 11, 3:30 - 5:30pm
Morgan Hill Library

Stories from the Past Docuseries

We are looking forward to the debut of our newest docuseries, ***Stories from the Past 2021*** on **December 11, 3:30-5:30pm**. This year's storytellers will leave you feeling nostalgic for the good old days of downtown Morgan Hill.

Once again we're partnering with the Morgan Hill Library to host our virtual film screening and panel discussion followed by Q&A. Last year we had a sold-out crowd on Zoom and Facebook with great feedback. Attendees joined from across Santa Clara County. Those who completed our audience survey were entered for a chance to win great drawing prizes donated by our wonderful community partners.

Visit our website to view past films free on-demand.

<http://www.morganhillhistoricalsociety.org/stories-from-the-past>

gmhTODAY - October 2021 Issue

The Historical Society is proud to be featured on the COVER of the October issue of *gmhTODAY* magazine. The cover image was donated by longtime Historical Society member and supporter, Sue Brazelton, one of Morgan Hill's most talented photographers. The issue includes a feature story on our 50th Anniversary, as well as a profile on Beth Wyman written by Robin Shepherd for our regular column, Historically Speaking. You can find it at: <http://gmhtoday.com/> or find print copies at popular Morgan Hill and Gilroy downtown locations beginning **October 1, 2021**.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Kathy Sullivan, Director

Memberships provide substantial support for the preservation, maintenance and operation of Villa Mira Monte, as well as the community events and educational programs that support our mission to preserve and share the history of our area, including Coyote, Madrone and San Martin.

In October we will be mailing letters and forms for 2022 membership renewals. Membership levels and fees will remain the same. If you want to be proactive, you can go to our website now and submit your payment, which will be good through 2022. Please invite family and friends to join us.

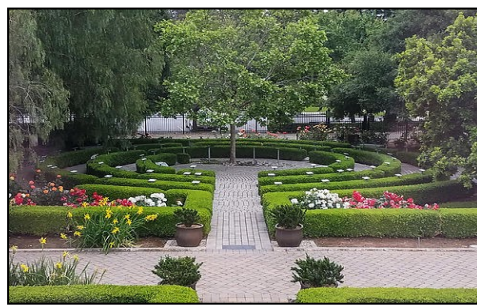
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HIRAM MORGAN HILL HOUSE



MORGAN HILL MUSEUM



CENTENNIAL HISTORY TRAIL

??? DID YOU KNOW ???

Historical Facts from the 1500's and on . . .

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell.....brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom of carrying a bouquet when getting married. Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice hot, clean water first, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all, the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it.

Hence the saying, "don't throw out the baby with the bath water!"

IN MEMORIAM - MHHS MEMBERS



William "Bill" Harry Adams 1943 – 2021

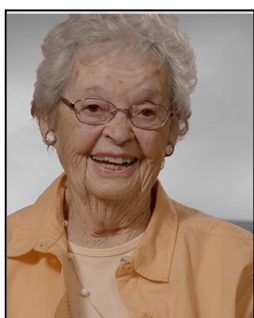
Bill Adams was a fifth generation Californian and Morgan Hill native. He was raised on the family farm in the Uvas Road area. He attended the one-room Llagas School, Live Oak and Cal Poly. He was a San Jose firefighter, although ranching was his passion. He was also a story teller and poet. He was a longtime member of the Morgan Hill Lion's Club and a past Historical Society Board member.

Anna Vernetti Friebel 1930 – 2021



Anna moved to Morgan Hill when she was 12. She was a graduate of Live Oak High School and received a business degree from San Jose State. She taught in MHUSD from 1958 – 2003, the year she was awarded Teacher of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce. A champion of music education in schools, she was an active booster of the Live Oak Emerald Regime Band. She was a devoted member and friend of the Historical Society and frequently helped with the Founders Dinners.

LaGina Turney Metcalf 1922 - 2021



LaGina moved to Morgan Hill in 1954, where she and her husband Clarence raised their two daughters. LaGina served as a MHUSD school secretary for 27 years and also worked for more than 30 at the Uesugi Farms Pumpkin Patch. In 1993 she was honored as Morgan Hill Woman of the Year. She was a dear friend and a longtime, committed member of the Historical Society. LaGina is featured in our *Stories from the Past* film (2020).

[Watch LaGina on our website.](#)

Cecile Duerner Benz 1927 - 2021



Cecile was born in San Francisco; the family moved to Morgan Hill where she attended Live Oak and then Westmont College in Santa Barbara. In 1950 she married Danny Benz. For 65 years they lived in Morgan Hill and raised their three children. Cecile had a zest for life that was infectious and a great sense of humor. She was a true friend of the Historical Society. She worked in the Benz Construction office but her true love was her family and travel.

Visit our website <http://www.morganhillhistoricalsociety.org/stories-from-the-past>

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Ellie Weston, Property Management

Handicapped Parking

Two handicapped parking places, located at the north side of the Morgan Hill House, have been paved and signs posted to designate these spaces to better serve our disabled members and guests.

Native American Garden

Sue Villanueva recently approached the Property Management Committee and Kathy Napoli to volunteer for the Native American garden project. She will provide expertise on designing and planting the expanded garden located near the Museum.

Sue has taken soil samples from the garden area to determine needed amendments prior to planting. The roses in that space will be relocated to other parts of the property. A new concrete paver walkway will be installed this fall. Planting and irrigation plans are being developed.

Sue is past president of the South Valley Fleurs Garden Club, member of the Morgan Hill Garden Club, and an avid gardener. She has also volunteered at the Ann Sobrato and Central high schools' horticultural departments. We are very grateful for her time and expertise.



GAILLARDIA FOR BASKETS



SAGE
FOR MEDICINE



INDIAN PAINTBRUSH
"CASTILLEJA"
FOR BASKETS



BEARGRASS LEAVES
FOR BASKETS

MORGAN HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Stories from the Past

A Film Screening & Discussion
with
Special Guest Speakers

Saturday, December 11th
3:30 - 5:30 pm

A virtual event co-hosted with the
Santa Clara County Library District
(Zoom and Facebook Livestream)

Morgan Hill Historical Society

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