

FAIRFAX PARLOR NEWS

OCTOBER 2025

President Madsen Resigns, Eric Bowen Becomes President

During his term as president and for a couple prior years, Brother Bill produced an excellent newsletter and assisted in changing to e-mail dues billing. We thank him for his service.

The resignation means that First Vice President Eric Bowen steps up to parlor president and Chris Wand takes the first vice president chair.

The second and third vice president chairs are vacant, pending nominations in October and election in November.

Old Timers' Night October 15

We'll be celebrating our Annual Old Timers' Night with a dinner at our clubhouse on Wednesday, October 15.

That's the night we will honor our 50-year and 25-year members and our parlor past presidents with a free meal. Others pay \$25.

No-host cocktails are at 6 p.m., with dinner at 7:30.

Please make reservations with Kevin Courtz at (415) 717-4018 or kcbscourt@aol.com.

Christmas Dinner Coming!

As we write this in mid-September, you're probably not thinking about Christmas—but that holiday is fewer than 100 days away!

This year's parlor dinner will be held at St. Rita Hall on Saturday, December 13, catered by the fantastic Debbie Ghiringhelli.

There'll be complete information in our November newsletter.

Editor's Column

Our congratulations to new President Eric Bowen on a fine job of running his first meeting. Decor reigned, with each item of the agenda presented properly. Resolutions were made, seconded and voted on without controversy.

Please come to our October 1 meeting; we know you will be pleased that Fairfax Parlor has achieved proper behavior at our sessions.

You may be waiting for your membership cards. We ask your patience. Each one has to be printed (after determining how many years the recipient has been a Native Son); then enclosed in plastic. After that, we have to print each mailing envelope separately. Previously, we could produce mailing labels, but when the downstairs office was changed to the Canon Club office, the computer with the label program was removed and we can not longer make labels.

It's not too early to think about Christmas. Our dinner on December 13 is the highlight of each year. Mark your calendars now!

CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 1 – Business meeting, 7 p.m. Nominations of parlor officers for the 2026 term. Bar opens at 6.

Tuesday, October 14 – Lunch. Bar opens at 11 a.m., lunch at 12:30.

Wednesday, October 15 – Old Timers' Night Dinner honoring 25- and 50-year members and parlor past presidents. Bar opens at 6 p.m., with dinner (free for honorees) at 7:30.

Tuesday, October 28 – Lunch. Bar opens at 11 a.m., lunch at 12:30.

Wednesday, November 5 – Business meeting, 7 p.m. Election of parlor officers for the 2026 term. Bar opens at 6.

Date to be Determined: Petaluma-Nicasio Parlor #183 Annual Turkey Feed, Hermann Sons Hall, Petaluma.

Help Wanted!

We need to fill some positions to complete our group of parlor officers and committee people.

Here they are:

Second Vice President is charged with organizing dinner meetings at locations other than our clubhouse.

Third Vice President is charged with providing snacks after business meetings.

In fact, most of the duties of the second and third vice presidents are handled by others, although the third vice president usually provides the snacks by ordering pizza.

We'd love to see some of our newer ladies and gentlemen get involved!

Newsletter Editor. While we're happy to once again produce the parlor newsletter, age is creeping up and we need someone to take complete charge.

Know Your State?



Only California marks its state highways with a sign shaped like this.

Can you guess what's behind this shape?

Answer on page 3.

“Manor Dads” Can Cook!

In its early years, Fairfax Parlor was populated with men originally from San Francisco, many of whom were first-generation native-born Californians, sons of Italian immigrants.

Most of them spent their childhood summers in Fairfax, as it was common for folks who lived in San Francisco to build a small summer home in our town. Mom and the kids would stay in fogless Fairfax for the whole summer; dad would stay in San Francisco during the week, but after work on Saturdays which stopped at 1 p.m. (most businesses had a five-and-a-half day work week) dad would catch the ferry from The City to Sausalito, then ride the electric train to Fairfax and spend the rest of the weekend in our town.

Their sons who joined the parlor were known as “The Manor Mafia.” Names like Arrigoni, Bianchini, Caturglie and Guidi abounded. And could those sons cook!

Now there’s a new Manor group, a group which we have named the “Manor Dads,” because most of them have children in school here. And they too can cook, as proven with the fine luau dinner they prepared for the parlor on Wednesday, September 17. Starting with maitais and appetizers, they featured pulled pork and side dishes.

This time, they’re not all Italians. Our thanks to Mark Biggins, Nick Cereghino, Kevin O’Heir, Kyle Lee and Frank Moresco. You’ve started a great tradition and we hope to enjoy future meals from you.



The “Manor Dads” made good use of our kitchen when they prepared the September 17 luau.

Local Parlor Dinners

Santa Rosa

Santa Rosa #28 will hold a dinner on Tuesday, October 14, at its hall at 3318 Stony Point Road, Santa Rosa. Social hour is at 6:30 p.m., with dinner at 7. Menu consists of salad, lasagna and French bread. For reservations, call or text (707) 291-3646.

Petaluma-Nicasio

Petaluma-Nicasio has dinner on the second Wednesday of every month at its hall at Hermann Sons Hall, 860 Western Avenue, Petaluma. Information is available from Kris Nelson, (707) 332-2376, krisnelson183@gmail.com.



Deceased Member Plaque Available

We honor members of Fairfax Parlor who have gone to the Grand Parlor on High with a plaque. The plaque contains the members name and has a Bear Flag and other information. We will present the plaque to a survivor of the member or, if the survivor requests, we will place the plaque on the parlor wall with plaques of other deceased brothers.



Grand President Gary Padgett will award a belt buckle to every member who sponsors two or more new or reinstated members during his term. The buckle depicts the first view of what the pioneers saw as they entered the Golden State. It was originally called Truckee Lake and changed to Donner Lake in 1846 after the ill-fated Donner Party.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! OCTOBER

Number in parentheses is years in Order, whether in Fairfax Parlor or a transfer from another parlor.

Thomas Cefalu – 1st (27)
 Paul Herrerias -2nd (27)
 John Pesce – 3rd (19)
 John Perrando - 3rd (14)
 Ron Granucci - 5th (29)
Dave Rohner - 6th (52)
Frank Egger – 7th (61)
Charley Monte – 10th (68)
 Dan Trimble - 11th (38)
 Claudio Casartelli – 12th (7)
Randy Tavenner – 12th (48)
 Michael Crane – 12th (1)
 Chuck Trimble -14th (34)
 Pete Batanides – 14th (33)
 Shane Smith - 14th (22)
 Ted Van Midde - 14th (21)
 Otis Guy – 14th (18)
 John Vermeulen - 16th (18)
 Paul Robinson - 17th (9)
 Dan Hanley - 18th (41)
 Willie Danz - 18th (9)
 Chris Clark - 18th (3)
 Christian Siegenthaler-19th (20)
 Shane Winslow - 21st (9)
Mike Curry - 21st (51)
 Bill Addy - 23rd (21)
Alan Andersen - 24th (53)
 Reggie Vance - 25th (28)
 Paul Souza - 26th - (44)
 Joe Morrison, Sr. - 27th (10)
Robert Arrigoni – 29th (62)
 Scott Lafranchi – 30th (16)
 Paul Coleman – 31st (10)

Dues, Membership Cards

We're still working on fixing the problems with the dues billing system. The latest development is a list of members who may or may not have paid their dues. Each of these will receive a bill; those who have paid but are on the list should send proof of payment (cancelled check, bank statement, etc.); we urge those who have not paid to do so.

We are slowly producing membership cards and have mailed the first 100 to our brothers. We are working alphabetically; if your last name is near the bottom of the alphabet, please have patience!

ANSWER

The sign is shaped like a miner's shovel, in honor of the Gold Rush which shaped California.

TALES OF THE CITY

Brother Chris Wand has vivid memories of growing up in San Francisco. He shares his story with us. -Ed.

By CHRIS WAND

A Real Job

After the San Fernando Earthquake revealed the weakness of school building codes, much of the main building at Galileo High was condemned during summer 1971. A split schedule was instituted because of classroom shortages. My classes started at 8 and ended at 12:30 in my P.E. elective, playing tennis on the new courts built atop the Hyde Street reservoir. Tennis was an expensive sport. I refused to buy new clothes to play it, so I showed up in my Can't Bust Em longshoreman pants and Ben Davis work shirt. My worn out Vietnam combat boots, Ray the Hippie gave me, provided ankle support.

I Get a Job

The free afternoon meant I could get school credits through the Work-Study Program. My job was in the Marina at Ratto Housewares on Chestnut Street. I had to arrive at the store by 1 p.m., carrying my school-supplied saxophone and the homework books that I never read. Ma had expertly sewed an apron of muslin cloth on the old black-and-gold Singer sewing machine we ended up with after her mother got it for a wedding present in a small Illinois town way back in the 1920s.

Marie, the widow of Red Ratto, the founder, owned the store. She was a very pleasant lady who wore sweaters, big square plastic glasses, and had a helmet of hair like Leslie Gore. Her manager Bart was a thick-wristed fellow who liked to play jokes on Marie, such as blow smoke on the glass shelves after she'd just cleaned them. Richie, my supervisor, was a skinny fellow with a blonde mullet, a mustache and he bobbed his head like a pigeon when he walked. He chain-smoked Marlboro Golds at work. Something about his attitude toward life, refusing to take it seriously, reminded me of my half sister, Toni.

They had both grown up in times of plenty in the 1950s and still had an arrogant expectation that America owed them a living. They both used the word "whatever" a lot. Richie was a great teacher. He showed me how to

restock shelves, make want-lists for reordering items and do what was necessary around the store, using the kind of skills they didn't teach in school. He taught me how to cut window glass to size. With a tiny steel wheel on a tool, I crumbled a line of powdered glass along a straight edge. Then with the little ball at the other end of the tool, I tapped along the line and it cracked. There was something medieval, mysterious and dangerous about it.

I Keep Learning

Richie was serious about the work, but couldn't care less about seriousness. We duplicated keys on a cutting machine sitting on a sheet-metal table for the lucky people who had apartments. Richie used a paint-brush to sweep the brass key grindings into a mayonnaise jar and saved it for recycling, a new concept that I really liked. After I read an ad for Reynolds Aluminum in *Life Magazine* that talked about the environmental advantages of recycling aluminum, I began saving the new all-aluminum soda cans, even digging up some buried in our yard after our garbage service was cancelled for non-payment.

Old Mr. Brawner, the bookkeeper, was from the German part of Texas, having come to San Francisco on a Merchant Marine ship decades earlier. He slobbered on the unlit cigar held in his mouth in a rubber holder that looked like something accountants put on their thumbs to handle papers. He was a lonely old man. He moved slowly and was emphatic in his opinions about whatever he talked about. I tried not to cross him. He sat on a padded chair with creaking springs in the back office and tallied numbers on an adding machine which produced long strips of paper that he rolled up, rubber banded and filed away on a shelf.

Store With All Kinds of Things

The typical purchase at Ratto's was a few yards of contact paper, for lining shelves, which I measured and cut from one of the wide rolls hanging on a rack, a white Corning Ware porcelain baking dish with little blue flowers on it; perhaps some kind of kitchenware like a spatula; or a can of Brasso. I'd dust, sweep, straighten merchandise and restock items on shelves from cardboard boxes of Pyrex ware, Revere pans, West

Bend coffee urns and other inexpensive, well made housewares. Everything was stamped "Made in the U.S.A." Afternoons I escaped to Hunt's Donut House to get paper cups of coffee and pastries for everyone in the store.

Chestnut Street Village

Chestnut Street was like an isolated white village in San Francisco. Most of the people there were second and third generation Italians who had moved out from North Beach, as had Ratto's Hardware, originally located on Columbus between Union and Stockton. Lots of crucifixes were worn. People seemed more comfortable around each other than did those in North Beach.

The Presidio army base nearby provided many of the street's customers, often wearing their uniforms. There were delicatessens, a Woolworth's variety store, and several groceries that specialized in Italian luncheon meats. Women on the street looked like they took the time to get dressed carefully. Some younger women did their hair and wore dresses and carried shiny leather handbags, some-

thing that Beatnik and hippie women never did.

The Usual Customer

Ratto's usual customer was a middle-aged woman who wore a long white raincoat even in the dry season. I wondered if they had all moved into the Marina District in the 1920s as young women, and where their husbands were. They usually lived in an apartment on the nearby confusing maze of diagonal and curved streets with Spanish names right behind Chestnut. Out of superstition, fear, or whatever, I never once have set foot on or learned the names of these streets on the artificial land of the filled-in marsh where the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition had been held.

Customers talked to Marie about the neighborhood beauty parlor, card games and her late husband in the slow, measured, confident voice and relaxed attitude of women who have known each other a long time. In the back room of the store where we could all talk to each other without putting on a public face, plank shelves were shiny and black from a half century of

paint cans, boxes and hardware sliding back and forth. A window looked out into the sweet sheltered green island of back yards in the middle of the block where the old Italians who lived there had placed lemon trees, roses, stone fountains and statuary.

After the store closed at six, I retracted the awning, walked to the bus stop where kids from Marina Jr High and Galileo's late afternoon session surrounded me. Two options: The 30 Stockton, then transferring at Hyde to the cable car, or the 22 Fillmore to Union Street and transferring to the 41 bus. It was safer to take the 30 toward Chinatown with mostly Chinese kids than it was to ride the 22 Fillmore which climbed Pacific Heights, passed through The Fillmo' then ended up at the housing projects on Potrero Hill. I could usually get extra punches on my carticket by folding, fraying away old punches with a fingernail, or washing it in the laundromat machines. 17 punches on a 10 punch car ticket was my record.

TO BE CONTINUED



Brother Joe Tassone, fifth from left in the above photo, produced Hawaiian shirts with a Native Sons subject for sale to parlor members. Many of our members purchased them, wearing them—appropriately—at our September 17 luau dinner.

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