

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, INC.

The Industrial City ECHOES

Newsletter No. 149 - March 2020

Inside This Issue

Historical Society Museum	
2020 Special Exhibit	2
In Memory	3
Donations	3
Message from HS President	3
Plymire-Schwarz House	
Extended Hours	3
San Bruno Mountain Turns 50	3
2020 List of HS Members	4
New Members	4
South San Francisco's	
1908 Incorporation	5

2020 Calendar

March 16	General Meeting
April 20	Board Meeting
May 18	Board Meeting
June 15	General Meeting
July 20	Board Meeting
July 18-19 & 25-26	Victorian Tea
August 17	Board Meeting
September 21	General Meeting
October 16	Annual Dinner
October 19	Board Meeting
November 16	Board Meeting
December 21	General Meeting

General meetings are held at:

Magnolia Center, 601 Grand Ave. - 7:00 p.m.

Board Meetings are held at:

Society Museum, 80 Chestnut Ave. - 7:00 p.m.

Members are welcome to Board Meetings.

Members and non-members are welcome to General Meetings.



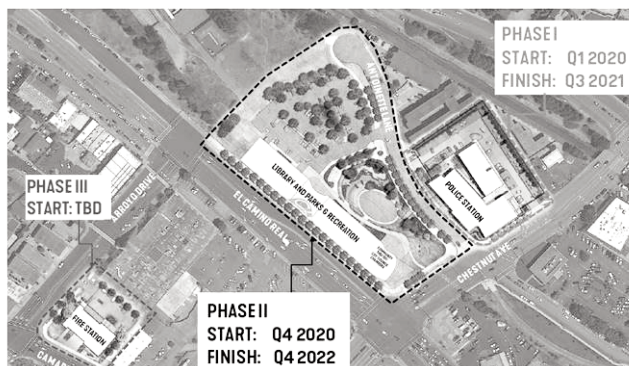
Program for March General Meeting

Monday - March 16, 2020 - 7:00 pm

Magnolia Senior Center, 601 Grand Avenue, South San Francisco

A presentation on the new **South San Francisco Library and Community Center** will be featured at our March 2020 meeting.

COMMUNITY CIVIC CAMPUS | COMPONENT MAP & CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE



This project provides a modern community hub and after-school destination at one the City's key locations, replacing the current main library and recreation center. The new 21st century state-of-the-art campus will bring under one roof many new amenities to support technology, arts, culture, education, and history. Assistant Library Director Adam Elsholz and Recreation & Community Services Supervisor Erin O'Brien will take us on a tour of our exciting and innovative project.

This program is free and open to members and non-members.

Cookie Reminder: Please remember to bring some treats to share to the meeting

St. Augustine Children's Choir
gave a wonderful performance for our
December Holiday Program.



Historical Society Museum - 2020 Special Exhibit

Our Music, Our Musicians, Our History

February – December 30, 2020

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

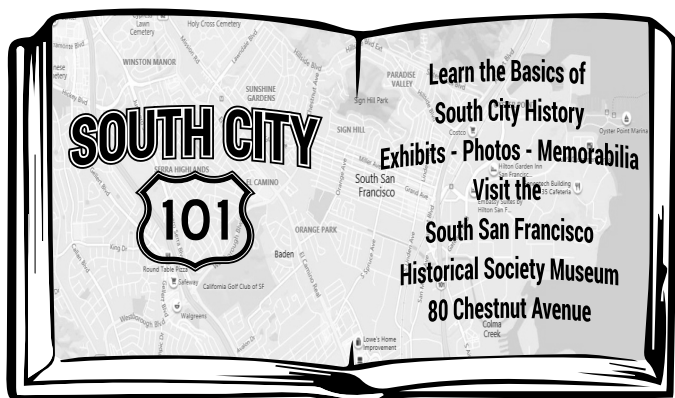
to visit the Historical Society Museum's 2020 exhibit highlighting the history of South San Francisco's early days of balls, dances, entertainment and celebrations. Many instruments used by local musicians are on display, including the Galanti Accordion played by Jeannette DeLuca Bertoldi, trumpet played by Milt Bronstein during World War II in Europe, a bass drum first played by the South San Francisco Industrial City Band in 1915, and a piccolo played by Humbert Baldini, which he brought with him from Italy in 1890. There is much to peruse, enjoy, and learn about our City's musical history.



The museum is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-4 pm, and the 2nd and 4th Saturday 1-3 pm. Be sure to stop by!



This exhibit was made possible by the generosity of Karl Rolih, the SSF Parks & Recreation Department, and the Elizabeth Ervin Memorial Fund. We are pleased to dedicate this exhibit in memory of Elizabeth Ervin (1919-2019).



Check out the Historical Society on Social Media!



/SSFHistSocMuseum
/historicalssf
/plymireschwarzhouse



@historicalssf
@plymireschwarzhouse



plymirehouse.org

Want to Become a Member of the Historical Society?

Just fill out this form and mail with check made out to:
Historical Society of
South San Francisco,
80 Chestnut Avenue,
So. San Francisco, CA 94080

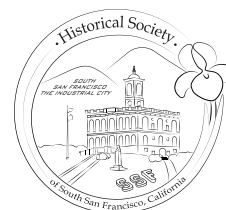
Name/Names/Corporation

Address

Phone #

Email

- ☐ Student\$5.00
- ☐ Individual\$15.00
- ☐ Family\$20.00
- ☐ Supporter\$25.00
- ☐ Corporate\$100.00
- ☐ Life Member\$500.00





In Memory

Adeline "Dolly" Barosso

Emanuele "Midge" Damonte

Anna Lily Germano

Richard Holt

Guido & Helen Rozzi

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Emanuele "Midge" Damonte

John & Elisa Noonan

Gus & Jo Xerogeanes

Lily Germano

Robert & Sylvia Payne

Roy Hansen

Alan & Julie Chimenti

Robert & Sylvia Payne

Jerry & Ginny Tilton

Bill & Jo Zemke

Richard Holt

Dan & Ruth DeNardi

Jeannie Mantegani

Frank & Robyn Risso

Alice Uccelli Marsili

Marian Marsili

Rose Parks

Wayne & Geraldine Joseph

Richard Spicer

Guido & Helen Rozzi

Steve Rozzi

Raymond Yoschak Sr.

Pedro & Eldie Gonzalez

IN HONOR OF DONATION

Lois Severi

Ray & Caroline DeNardi

GENERAL DONATION

Bill & Jo Zemke

MUSEUM DONATION

Eugene Hessler

Muriel Tourtesky

Message from Historical Society President

Happy New Year to all! 2020 is shaping up to be an exciting year. In addition to our Society's many great activities, this will be our City's celebration of the 100th anniversary of City Hall. The dedication of this building took place on Armistice Day, November 11, 1920. To commemorate this, the City is planning a day of activities downtown on Saturday October 3 and an open house at City Hall on Saturday November 14. Planning for these events is still in the very early stages and I have asked Julie Chimenti to join me in working in the City's planning process. I hope that you can participate in these celebrations and in sharing our pride in this beautiful building and our historic downtown. So, mark your calendars now and stay tuned for more details..

Bill Zemke



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S PLYMIRE-SCHWARZ HOUSE

In addition to our regular Wednesday hours (2:00 - 4:00) the Plymire-Schwarz House will be now be open the second Saturday of each month (1:00 - 3:00) beginning March 14.

Take a step back into time and come by Saturday for a free tour of South San Francisco's own historic jewel!



San Bruno Mountain Watch Turns 50!



After 50 years of advocacy work to preserve San Bruno Mountain, we have over 3,600 acres of open space providing ecological diversity and many opportunities for education, exercise and appreciation for the cities surrounding this remarkable natural landmark. In March 2020, San Bruno Mountain Watch will kick off 2 months of celebratory events, including a presentation by Director Ariel

Cherbowsky at the SSF Main Library, 840 West Orange Avenue, at 6:30pm on Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Join San Bruno Watch supporters to hear about accomplishments over the past 50 years and plans for the next 50 years. The 2-month celebration concludes with a formal gala on May 2, at Genesis Towers in SSF.

Check the website for all of the upcoming events: <https://www.mountainwatch.org/>

We Appreciate All Donations!

Donation envelopes are available at the museum and the P-S House. Memorial donations will be listed in the newsletter. Donations can also be targeted and are much appreciated to offset the printing of the newsletter.

Thank you!

2020 List of SSF Historical Society Members

Many thanks to the following for your continuing membership. If you don't see your name listed, please consider renewing your membership today! Our Society depends on you.

JESSE & ELIZABETH ABELAR	DE NARDI	JUDY ALBONICO KRAUS	FRANK RISSO FAMILY
DOT ABRAHAMSON	MARIE & RONALD DERENZI	STEVE & GLORIA LAGOMARSINO	MICHAEL ROCCHETTA
JEANETTE ACOSTA	FRANK DRAGO	ALICE LEARY	RICHARD ROCCHETTA
MARK ADDIEGO	BARBARA ERVIN	BARBARA & LARRY LEUSING	KATHY RODGERS
MEL ADDIEGO	VIRGINIA ERVIN	JOAN LEVY	JOAN ROGERS
MARY ANDERSEN	PETER ESCHELBACH	NORMA LOMBARDI	KARL ROLIH
ROSEMARY ARMANINO	PATRICK ESTEBAN	LOIS MARES	CAROL ROZZI
CHRISULA ASIMOS	DONNA & NORM FARIA	MARIAN MARSILI	STEVE ROZZI
TONY BACHLE	DENISE FERNEKES	DIANE MARTIN	ROZZI PRODUCTIONS
DANIEL BAKER	PAUL FORMOSA	EVELYN MARTIN	VIVI SARANTITIS
ANN BALDASSERONI	VINNEY & DANIELLE FORNESI	LOU & MARY MASINI	IOLE SARI
LANDO BALDOCCHI	TOM & PAT FOURIE	KARYL MATSUMOTO	MANOLA SCOVEL
DELORES BALESTIERI	CHRISTINE FOWLER	ROBERTA MATTEUCCI	JAMES SEUBERT
ALFRED BANFIELD	CHARLES FRACCHIA	GIANNA GIUSTI MC CUNE	LOIS SEVERI
MARYANNE JENNINGS & BILL BARTH	ARDELL FURUTA	LISA MC CARLEY	SCOTT & CAREN SEVERI
BOB & NANCY BARTOLI	MIKE FUTRELL	MICHAEL & MARCIA MELONI	NICOLE SHEA
BETTY BATTAGLIA	RICHARD & ELAINE GARBARINO	MICHAEL & SHARON MENESINI	DONNA SMITH
ROY & ROSE BAVA	PATRICA GARZOLI	COL ROBERT & BARBARA MOJICA	MAGGIE SMITH
JOHNNY & ALEECE BEAULIEU	LAURA GIGI FAMILY	GENE MULLIN	VIRGINIA REILLY SMITH
LYLE BECKMAN	ROBERT GIORGI	FRAN MURPHY	VALERIE SOMMER -W.O. LIBRARY
RICHARD & JEANNETTE BERTOLDI	MR & MRS GEORGE GIUSTI	LORRAINE MURPHY	MARK SORENSEN/DANELLE CICCARELLI
SANDRA BIANC	MARY GIUSTI	JACK MURRAY	JOAN STORKEN
CHRISTINE BIANUCCI	GERMAN GONZALEZ	DOLLY NAVARRO	RAMONA TAMAREDIS
ERIC BLOOM	PEDRO & ELDIE GONZALEZ	ELISA NOONAN	MARC & KELLY TEGLIA
LYNN BOLDENWECK	CAROL GOODRICH/DARBY REID	LISA NORMANDY	REV GARY THOMAS
SAM BONANNO	JOANNE & DAVID GORDON	VIRGINIA O'BRIEN	GINNY & JERRY TILTON
RICH BORDI	JEAN GRAHAM	JANE OCLASSEN	LYNNE TONDORF
EDWARD & ROBIN BORTOLI	DON GRANT	MONICA OCON	CATHERINE TUMILTY
JOANNE BORTOLI	JANINE GREENWALD	MAUREEN O'CONNOR	THE UCCELLI FAMILY
EUNICE BRABEC	FRAN GUEVARRA	MARCIANA O'HALLORAN	JOAN VINA
SHIRLEE BRASCHI	GINA GUGLIELMONI	MARY O'KEEFE	KEN & VI WEBER
BILL & ELEANOR BREITE	PRADEEP & KUMKUM GUPTA	BERTHA ORESTI	DINO & JOSEPHINE XEROGEANES
BRUCE BRAIN	ESTHER GUTIERREZ	BERNICE CHURCH OWENS	LORI YOCK
JACQUELINE BUCKLEY	CISCA HANSEN	EDNA PACHECO	MARIE YOCHAK
KEN & DOROTHY BUHAGIAR	PAT HATFIELD	DEE ANN PARON	RAY & TANA YOSCHAK
RICHARD & SALLY BUSALACCHI	JUNE HEISE	MARIE PATEA	JO & BILL ZEMKE
ROBERT & JOSEPH CARCIONE JR	GENE HESSLER	ROBERT & SYLVIA PAYNE	
DAVID & MARGIE CASAGRANDE	CAROL & RALPH HINTON	JOHN PENNA	
NANCY CASAZZA	MARINA HORN	MARIANNE PETRONI	
ADELE CASSINELLI	EUGENIA HOVLAND	EDITH ANN PIRAZZI	
BASIL & BARBARA CAVALIERI	DIANE HUDDLESTON	STEVE & ANNETTE PITOCCHI	
ALAN & JULIE CHIMENTI	ROBBIE HUERTA	SANDRA POBE	
LOLA CLARK	MARY HUTCHINGS	POLETTI REAL ESTATE CO	
TRISH COLOMBO	NORMAN HYNDING JR.	JOHN PROUTY	
GAIL DAVISON	CHESKA TORRES IBASAN	DON & LINDA QUIGLEY	
DAN & RUTH DE NARDI	RICHARD & BARBARA IRLI	CHRIS & DELIA RAMOS	
RAYMOND & CAROLINE	LESLIE JENSEN	SHARON RANALS	
	MARIANNE JOHNSON	RON & LISA RAQUEL	
	RUTH BOOTS JONES	SYLVIA RAQUEL	
	JACKIE KIOUS	RUTH REIMCHE	
	SONNY KOYA		

New Historical Society Members

Ardell Furuta
Cheska Torres Ibasan
Scott & Caren Severi
Lori Yock

South San Francisco's 1908 Incorporation

We are planning to celebrate our Historic 1920 City Hall later this year. But what caused little South San Francisco to incorporate in 1908?

In 1888, the Miller and Lux Cattle empire at Baden was waning after the death of Lux just as Gustavus Swift came West. He was a leader in the American meat industry and he came to investigate the possibility of starting a market and packing center near San Francisco. He found this area perfect for the meat business. It was only ten miles from the center of San Francisco and offensive odors would blow out into the Bay.



Swift started the Western Meat Packing Company in partnership with several other eastern meat companies. Following his success with South Boston and South Omaha, Swift decided to call this location South San Francisco. He brought Peter Iler from Omaha as his agent to handle things. Iler purchased land, including the former Lux Ranch.

Iler continued buying land under the name of The South San Francisco Land and Improvement Company. This company was made up of wealthy investors, including Swift's son, Iler himself, Miller and others. The Company held its first meeting in February 1891. They had a broad agenda. They planned to provide a deep water channel and railroad access for industries. They promised sewers, water pipes and concrete sidewalks for every residential lot. They made improvements in the area and boosted the reputation of South San Francisco as a place to live as well as a place to locate industry. W. J. Martin and E. E. Cummings were to carry out the objectives of the company, and eventually Iler returned to Omaha. In 1894, the company built a modest school, serving elementary through high school students.

In 1893, Martin succeeded in landing Steiger Pottery Works as the first new industry in South San Francisco. By 1895, South San Francisco was a family community with a population of 671; the majority of the men worked in the meat packing plant. There was also a transient male population of workers from other nearby communities and those staying in boarding houses and hotels. With this male population came an abundance of saloons and other establishments that gave South San Francisco a reputation for being a pretty rowdy town.

Fuller Paint was the next industry to locate in South San Francisco in 1898, followed by Pacific Jupiter Steel. Other early industries moved in. In 1906 the SSF Land and Improvement Company reached an agreement with Selby Smelting Company to build a huge smelting plant at Point San Bruno that would employ 3000 men. They sold land to Selby at less than one quarter of its market value. The recently negotiated relocation of the railroad was completed, putting the new line right next to South San Francisco's

Industrial area.

When neighboring communities found out about the Selby deal, a groundswell of opposition developed. The wealthy estate owners on the peninsula as well as San Franciscans objected to the by-products of a smelting plant. They felt it would harm the people and the environment. Along with the farming community, they formed the Home Protective Association and hired two Stanford Professors to press their case. These professors argued that the smelter would destroy the County with pollutants. They calculated the amount of sulfur dioxide as well as arsenic that would be produced daily. They pointed out that the wind at San Bruno Point offered only partial protection, and that fog and rain would compound the problem. South San Francisco's other industries also came to oppose Selby's plant. They feared that somehow their taxes would increase.

San Mateo County's Board of Supervisors got involved. They passed an ordinance in January 1908 that effectively prohibited a smelting plant being located anywhere in the County.

South San Franciscans were not ready to give up, however. They voted in March to incorporate into a city which would then not be restricted by the County ordinance. The town was to include the Selby property, the rest of the industrial area, and Tanforan Race Track.

The County had to agree to the act of incorporation, however. The Supervisors voted 4-1 to grant this accord, but they drew the city limits to exclude the Selby property as well as Tanforan. The rest of the industrial area would still be inside the town limits. September 3, 1908, the locals voted 218 to 36 to accept the compromise. The town now had a population of 1,989 and had 14 major industries as well as 18 saloons. It joined San Mateo and Redwood City as a new city. Selby's smelter was never built.

The South San Francisco Land and Improvement Company sued Selby Smelting and Lead Company for \$1,730,411 in damages because they did not build as agreed. They had sold the land below value to Selby because of the deep channel docks and other improvements they were expected to build. Selby countered that they had spent much money in preliminary work before the opposition prevented them from building.

Other industries did move in to South San Francisco and the city flourished. Steel, in the form of seven different manufacturing plants, became the dominant industry, bolstered by two World Wars and California's post-war building boom. Even shipbuilding occupied the deepwater berths during the wars. This lasted until the mid 50's.

Then South San Francisco inadvertently began a deindustrialization move. In the center of its industrial area, there was a solid rock hill 150 feet high covering 80 acres. The Utah Construction Company was granted a permit to blast away the hill, using the debris as landfill for nearby marshland. Development in this new area was restricted from having smokestacks or excess noise or pollutants. Cabot, Cabot and Forbes built a light Industrial Park. By 1958 there were 170 businesses located here. Traditional industry ultimately fled. Western Meat, Fuller Paint and Bethlehem Steel closed. Genentech, established in 1976, became the first Bio-Tech corporation to locate in South San Francisco because the rent was cheap. Today there are over 200 Biotech companies located in what is still The Industrial City.

by Joan Levy 12/2019



The Industrial City ECHOES

Historical Society of South San Francisco, Inc.
80 Chestnut Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080

NON-PROFIT
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
San Bruno, CA
Permit No. 750

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

Historical Society of South San Francisco

Board of Directors

PresidentBill Zemke
First Vice PresidentDave Casagrande
Second Vice PresidentRich Irl
Recording SecretaryDenise Fernekes
TreasurerJulie Chimenti
Financial SecretaryDonna Smith

2018-2020 Directors

Jeanette Acosta, Sam Bonanno, Ruth DeNardi,
Gene Hessler, Valerie Sommer

2019-2021 Directors

Lynn Boldenweck, Nancy Cassasa, Diane Huddleston,
John Penna, Ginny Tilton

Ex Officio Members

Roy Bava, Diana Ferrari, Mary Giusti,
Sylvia Payne, Ginny Tilton

Plymire-Schwarz Steering Committee

Director: Dave Casagrande
Ex Officio: Roy Bava
Jeanette Acosta, Julie Chimenti,
Mary Giusti, Gene Hessler, Donna Smith

Museum Committee

Director: Sylvia Payne
Lois Severi

The SSF Historical Society is co-sponsored by the SSF Parks & Recreation Dept. It is through the City's generosity that many of the Society's goals are accomplished.

Contact & Location Information

Historical Society of South San Francisco, Inc.

80 Chestnut Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Historical Society Museum

80 Chestnut Avenue
650-829-3825
Tues & Thurs (2-4:00 p.m.) and
2nd & 4th Saturdays (1-3:00 p.m.)
Please call if you are interested
in volunteering at the museum.

History Room / Grand Avenue Branch Library

306 Walnut Avenue
650-877-8533
By appointment only.

Historical Society's Plymire-Schwarz House

519 Grand Avenue
650-875-6988
Wednesdays (2-4:00 p.m.)
2nd Saturday (1-3:00 p.m.)
beginning 3/14)

Memberships Expire December 31

Membership runs on a calendar year expiring annually on December 31st.
Membership is \$15.00 per person - \$20 per family.
If you are interested in becoming a new member contact the society at 650-829-3825 or
Mail your check to:
South San Francisco Historical Society
80 Chestnut Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080

ECHOES: 650-829-3825 • ssfhistorical@gmail.com

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