

## Morgan Hill Historical Society

Published Quarterly

July 2019

### History Conversations



Date: 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the Month  
 Time: 10:00-11:30am  
 Location: Hiram Morgan Hill House at Villa Mira Monte

### Members, Sponsors & Volunteer Thank You BBQ



We hope you will be able to join us as we thank you for your support. On July 24th social begins at 6:00 pm and dinner will be served at 7:00 pm.

Date: Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>  
 Time: 6:00-8:00pm  
 Location: Villa Mira Monte  
 RSVP: [info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com) or leave a message at (408) 779-5755

# Historically Speaking

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

### Founders' Dinner – Celebrates 50 Years!



Date: Saturday,  
 September 7<sup>th</sup>  
 Time: 5:30-8:30pm  
 Location: Community &  
 Cultural Center

Make sure to mark September 7th on your calendars so you can attend this Community event that celebrates our history and those who helped make it. We will be featuring the 6th edition of “Stories from the Past” – a must see. As the date nears, additional details will be posted on our website.

### Annual Community Picnic



Free annual event. This year we will have a new feature: Youth Mariachi Competition. More details inside.

Date: Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Time: 10:00am-2:00pm  
 Location: Villa Mira Monte  
 RSVP: [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)

### Downtown Historic Walking Tour



Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the Month  
 Time: 10:00am-12:00pm  
 Location: Meet at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Plaza near Monterey Road & 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

# Co-Presidents' Messages

## Co-President, Bill Briggs



Bill Briggs  
Co-President

### **Preserving the Past with a Vision of the Future**

By William Briggs, Co-President

The Romans had a god, Janus, who looked forward and backward at the same time. By definition, an historical society looks back on the history of its region. But for the Morgan Hill Historical Society, the most important focus now has become our future.

Our local history is the story of successive waves of peoples, from the original indigenous inhabitants, to Spanish explorers and missionaries, Mexican rancheros, Anglo settlers and gold-seekers, and early-day farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers of many backgrounds.

But today, Morgan Hill has changed. It still retains some of its proud agricultural heritage but it has also diversified into a modern technology and commerce-based region. Our population has grown and many of the old families with ties to the past have moved to the shadows.

The Morgan Hill Historical Society, in partnership with the City of Morgan Hill, seeks to preserve our rich and varied heritage, to guarantee old-timers and newcomers alike feel proud and included in our continuing story.

However, to continue our mission, we need to achieve a level of sustainability that will allow us to expand our historical, archival, educational and community-building efforts. To be good stewards of our past, we need to ensure having adequate resources from many sources. In a competitive public sector, that's a big challenge that will require wide support. And that's why The MHHS will be spending a lot of its time and energy looking to the future as well as the past.

## Co-President, Kathy Sullivan



Kathy Sullivan  
Co-President

### **Mount Umunhum Almaden Air Force Station Tour**

By Kathy Sullivan, Co-President

Basim Jaber, historian, co-founder of the Umunhum Conservancy, and chief authority on the Mount Umunhum Almaden Air Force Station lead an excellent tour for Board members of the Morgan Hill and Gilroy Historical Societies in April.

We want to share this opportunity with you. Because there are limitations on dates and group sizes, we will compile a list of those interested in a tour to be arranged sometime this fall. Email Kathy Sullivan at [ksullivan@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:ksullivan@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com) with the names, emails, phone numbers for all interested parties and we will compile a list and contact you when we proceed with tour plans in late summer. There is no fee for the tour, but donations to the Umunhum Conservancy are appreciated.

Bring a lunch to enjoy on site. The tour starts at the summit where you will enjoy an educational experience as you learn about the history of Almaden Air Force Station, Mt. Umunhum, and much more. See fascinating photos dating back to when the US Air Force radar station was in operation during the Cold War. The history presentation is followed by a fact-filled walking tour of the summit area. All ages are welcome. Wheelchair access and ADA parking available. Dogs are not allowed on Mt. Umunhum.

# 2019 Save The Dates

Morgan Hill Museum & Hiram Morgan Hill House

Open Hours

Fridays 1:00-3:00pm

Saturdays 10:00am-1:00pm

•

History Conversations

1st Saturday of the Month

10:00-11:30am

•

Historic Downtown Walking tour

2nd Saturday of the Month

10:00am-12:00pm

•

Summer Picnic

Saturday, July 20th

10:00am-2:00pm

•

MHHS Thank You BBQ

(for members, volunteers, donors and community partners)

Wednesday, July 24th

6:00pm Social

7:00pm Dinner

•

50th Founders' Dinner

Saturday, September 7th

5:30pm

•

Fall Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 23rd

6:00pm

•

Holiday Boutique

Friday-Sunday, November 1st-3rd

10:00am-5:00pm

•

Holiday Teas

Friday & Saturday, December 6th & 7th

11:30am

## Property Management

Villa Mira Monte is looking very majestic with the new roof and fencing. More maintenance activities are planned for this summer and fall: painting the House and Museum exteriors; repairing the House veranda flooring and support posts; and repair work on the Museum porches. A significant portion of these projects are being funded by City and County grant funds. The roses have been magnificent this year. Stop by and enjoy them and the manicured gardens while you relax and reflect on history.

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## Alice In Wonderland Mad Hatter's Children's Tea



Ann Bueno

Committee Co-Chair

Alice and her friends had another successful children's tea. Fun was had by all with croquet, chess, games, face painting, balloon animals, portraits, raffle items of fun children's experiences, and of course tea. Over a hundred guests were served a delicious assortment of tea delicacies. Candid and portrait photos taken from that day are available at:

<https://morganhillphotographyclub.shutterfly.com/pictures>

Alice and her friends invite you to save the date for next year's tea, Saturday May 2nd, 2020.

There are a few open spots left for the Gingerbread House making event scheduled for Saturday December 14th, 1 to 3 pm at Villa Mira Monte, as well as the Morgan Hill Police Department tour and pizza party scheduled for Saturday August 17th, 11 am to 1 pm. Please contact Ann Bueno for further information or to purchase tickets, [abueno@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:abueno@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com)



## Community Picnic

Don't miss this fun admission free event! Kicking off the event will be a Mariachi Competition for K-12 kids. Cash Prizes will be awarded for this colorfully entertaining musical experience. Graceland Musical Group will provide music for the remainder of the afternoon.

Kiwanis will sell hotdogs, vegetarian chili, chips and sodas at their booth. Mann Cellars and Paradise Valley will have wine for purchase and MHHS will have beer and water for sale. MHHS will provide free sweet treats. Alternatively, guests are welcome to bring their own picnic lunch.

Kid's "passport" activities include: W.E.R.C. birds on display; vintage fire truck, a stick horse ride on a Pony Express route; vintage art activities, balloons and face painting. With a completed "passport" kids get to pick a prize from the Old West Treasure Chest. Photos taken by the Morgan Hill Photography Club with free access via Shutterfly. Check our website for details.

## Native Garden Coming To Villa Mira Monte



Kat Napoli  
Director

The Morgan Hill Historical Society has been hosting "Living History" field trips for local schools in the Morgan Hill school district, as well as private schools, since 2011. The program serves 800—900 students and parents each year. During the 3 1/2 hour field trip, Morgan Hill Historical Society docents guide students through the Museum, the Morgan Hill House and the Centennial History Trail; the entire site is known as Villa Mira Monte. A docent visits the classroom prior to the field trip to provide in-depth information and hands-on activities related to the original Native American inhabitants, the Amah Mutsun.

As part of the field trip, the Morgan Hill Historical Society would like to honor and demonstrate how the land was used by the Native Americans long before the Spaniards, Mexicans and settlers arrived.

To that end, the Morgan Hill Historical Society successfully wrote a grant to South Valley Fleurs Garden Club to fund establishing a Native Garden on the site.

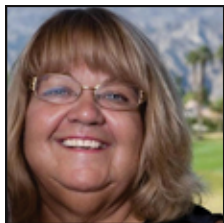
With encouragement from members of the Bay Area Open Space Council, and the Amah Mutsun tribe, the Morgan Hill Historical Society is in the process of planting a garden that will contain grasses, bushes, flowers and fruit that were used for food, medicine, hunting and fishing by the Native people.

The first planting of soap root took place on May 2, 2019 at the entrance of Villa Mira Monte. Master Gardener, John Jenkins, a member of South Valley Fleurs Garden Club, was on hand to offer advice, and direct and participate in the planting. He also planted deer grass at the front of entrance walkway on May 22nd.

Soap root was used by the local Amah Mutsun tribal members: they ate the young leaves, slow roasted the bulbs and ate them like potatoes, rubbed the bulbs to produce lather to clean clothes/baskets, roasted bulbs to produce a substance to glue feathers to arrow shafts, and to treat rashes like poison oak. Soap root was boiled in water to be used as a dye, it was a remedy for dandruff and the dried outer coats of bulbs were used as brushes. The MHHS Museum has examples of the brushes.

The Morgan Hill Historical Society wishes to promote using native plants that were used by the Amah Mutsun and has invited the University of California UC Master Gardeners, Santa Clara County, to our July 20th Community Picnic & Youth Mariachi Competition. The Master Gardeners have been asked to provide an informational table, manned by Master Gardeners, to offer information to members of the community to find out how to participate in creating their own new home gardens. The goal is to teach classes and provide guidance on the "how to" of growing fresh, healthy food for low income and/or minority community members inside their own apartments, homes and backyards.

## Morgan Hill Historical Society Field Trip Experience | Garners Awards

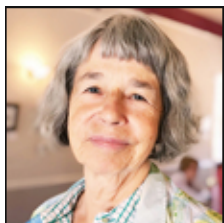


Margaret  
Rodrigues

On May 3-5, our own Field Trip Program received award recognitions at the Delta Kappa Gamma California Convention held at the San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront. Delta Kappa Gamma International is an organization of more than 90,000 key women educators in 18 countries and works to promote excellence in education. Terri and Tom Hennessey were honored for their community service with the field trip program. Tom and Terri Hennessey are two of the most valuable people helping to provide our interactive, child-centered visit to the Morgan Hill Historical Society's Villa Mira Monte. Terri works over time collaborating our program with Kat Napoli and the Amah Mutsun Trunk Show visit prior to the class's arrival for their field trip. Terri finds and schedules docents that ensure a successful and meaningful visit to the museum. She helps procure materials, supplies, and artifacts used in the program. And she runs and keeps up-to-date binders for our docents. Terri and Tom both set-up all supplies, tables, chairs, artifacts, costumes, and consumable materials used for the hands-on program. They both donate hundreds of hours to the program including Tom being our resident butler and kitchen butler, Mr. Tom. This field trip program would not happen without the Hennessey's devotion to its success. The local Chapter of DKG, Gamma Alpha, was honored to nominate Tom and Terri for the Service to the Community Award.

Our Field Trip Program began in the fall of 2010 by Loritta Bonfonte Johnson, Jennifer Tate, Margaret Rodrigues and her grandchildren, Cole and Caitlin Meusel. Over the years, the core group of retired teachers and community members have helped the program based on the Social Studies National Core Curricular Standards. The program includes activities that can be achieved by all students and can be expanded to involve deep, thoughtful questions and speculations. Therefore, this year it was awarded the At-risk Youth Award from DKG. We are very proud that our Field Trip Experience was recognized with two awards at the State Convention. We are always looking for new volunteers to help continue this worthwhile experience for the students of Morgan Hill.

### A Docent's Experience At Mount Umunhum



Sue Olt

Oh dear Newsletter readers, I must recount a recent adventure that you MUST write on your Bucket List!! Have you ever experienced Mount Umunhum? If no, then you absolutely have to visit this lovely, sacred place. On the summit of this mountain, the Amah-Mutsun people have celebrated the Creator for thousands of generations and still do. Umunhum translates to "Resting place of the hummingbird", a prominent creature in their creation story.

Forgive me, I do digress. The trip up to the summit is along a narrow, winding road with some blind curves; bicyclists also enjoy this road, so watch for them. Anyway, one eventually reaches the summit parking lot where there is a wonderful guide awaiting. In our case, it was Bashim Jaber, an extremely knowledgeable young man we followed for an hour, listening to facts and stories. He first recounted the history of the Almaden Air Force Station which occupied the site between 1957 and 1980. The radar tower, visible over the entire Santa Clara Valley and beyond, was part of the Early Warning Defense System; here they watched for incoming Russian planes during the Cold War. Airmen watched the radar screens for 24 hours a day, keeping our country safe. Family housing, a recreation center, commissary, and a swimming pool served the needs of those stationed here. Beginning in 2009, all buildings were demolished, hazardous waste materials cleaned up, and the land restored to its natural state. Even the native plants have been replanted from collected seed.

The Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve now takes care of the mountain, keeping it in pristine condition. The wildflowers, lavender, pink, yellow, are small due to the serpentine soil with few nutrients. The trees are plentiful and small also. The views are unbelievable; San Jose, Morgan Hill, Santa Cruz, Coyote Valley, and, on a clear day, the Pacific Ocean, are all visible. The ceremonial circle on the summit is still used by the Amah-Mutsun. If you visit on the right day, you can witness their celebratory dance. Just GO, you won't be sorry!! Learn more at [www.openspace.org/mountumunhum-sierra-azul](http://www.openspace.org/mountumunhum-sierra-azul).

## Historic Downtown Morgan Hill Trivia Quiz



Margo  
Hinnenkamp  
Director

Our monthly walking tour of historic downtown Morgan Hill promises to provide you with plenty of historic trivia to amaze your friends and family. Whether you are a long-time Morgan Hill resident or have recently moved to our splendid city, there is something for everyone on our downtown walking tour.

Here is a quiz for you:

1. Which of these buildings was formerly known as the Bank of Italy?
2. Which of these downtown buildings was the center of an elaborate celebration in 1926 honoring the Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden?
3. Do you recognize a former hardware and feed store from 1902?

Our fascinating downtown is filled with stories from the colorful past of our city when it was a tiny town surrounded by ranches and orchards.

Plan to join us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Plaza just outside Coffee Guys and take a trip into Morgan Hill's intriguing past.



### Board of Directors

- Bill Briggs, Co-President
- Kathy Sullivan, Co-President
- Karl Bjarke, Vice President
- Ron Kumar, Treasurer
- Roseanne Oty, Secretary
- Andrea Bazeley, Director
- Bob Foster, Director
- Margo Hinnenkamp, Director
- Kat Napoli, Director,
- Nancy Reynolds, Director
- Ellie Weston, Property Manager



## ***Memories of a Small Town Girl, Growing Up In Morgan Hill, California***

by Jean Pinard, 167 pages, 2018 \$15

Imagine sitting on the front porch swing with your favorite grandmother, listening to her stories about growing up in the 1930s and 1940s in a small, rather rural, town. She tells you all about her family, her friends, what they did, and the mischief they got into in the “olden days”. This is the feeling you get reading Jean Pinard's book.

## ***Wineries of Santa Clara Valley***

by Bev Stenehjem, 127 pages, 2015, \$20

From the Introduction: “The wineries of Santa Clara Valley have a rich history, dating back to the 1700s. First came the Spaniards (1777), then the Frenchmen (mid-1800s), and finally the Italians (1880).” “Immigrants from around the world, following the American dream, were soon lured to the Santa Clara Valley for its rich soil and ideal growing climate. These immigrants brought centuries of wine making traditions, passed down through the generations. This book highlights the stories and photographs of eight of our Santa Clara Valley wineries whose histories date back to the 1800s.”

The wineries depicted in words and photos are Guglielmo Winery, Ross Vineyards and Winery, Hecker Pass Winery, Fernwood Cellars, Solis Winery, Fortino Winery, Morgan Hill Cellars, and Kirigin Cellars. “This historical collection of photographs is a fascinating account of how the sacrifice and indomitable spirit of these people made a lasting impact on the wineries of Santa Clara Valley.”

The photographs of the families are wonderful!

## ***South Santa Clara County***

by Sam Shueh, 127 pages, 2008, \$20

This book is a pictorial history of the South Santa Clara County towns of Morgan Hill, Gilroy, and San Martin. The photographs also depict Coyote, Madrone, Pacheco Pass, agriculture, trains and depots, schools, and celebrations and events. “Sam Shueh has been documenting the changes in southern Santa Clara County for the last 30 years. Many of the vintage images are from Shueh’s personal collection. Others are rare postcards – rare because most of these communities were sparsely populated then and are still rural today and not often captured in postcard format.”

Come check this one out – especially the photo of Beth Wyman on p. 69! If you have lived in Morgan Hill for awhile, you know Beth.

Growing up with two younger sisters before and during WWII in Morgan Hill, meant close and lasting friendships developed within the community. The times meant rationing and scarcity of things we consider essential today – like gasoline! Relatives were always around and everyone helped each other, whether it was taking care of each others children, giving a family a place to live, or a job.

I think Jean’s story is one typical of her times. At 12 she and her sisters and friends worked picking prunes all summer for her parents’ friends. She babysat, learned to play the piano, and had a great deal of fun playing games with friends.

Her story is also about her evolution from a little girl wanting to please her father to a strong woman who graduated from San Jose State College, and eventually becoming a teacher at Walsh Elementary and Principal at Burnett School and, later, Nordstrom Elementary.

Old family photos chronicle the growth of Jean, her sisters, and their friends. Now 91 years old, Jean writes at the end of her book, “I have discovered that life is full of unexpected wonders, and I look forward to my next surprise with anticipation.”

Look for Jean on the dance floor, doing the Charleston, at the Prohibition Party at Morgan Hill House on June 22!

# Thank You To All Our Business Sponsors

We at the Morgan Hill Historical Society thank all the many individuals and businesses who help us preserve the history of our community through events at Villa Mira Monte. Throughout this newsletter, you'll see the advertisements for the wonderful businesses who have donated generously to our mission. If you might wish to join these businesses and help us through sponsorship, please feel free to contact us at [info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com). Your donations are tax deductible.

## The Valley of Heart's Delight

### Mike Monroe

Santa Clara Valley Historian & Naturalist  
[mike.valleyofheartdelight@gmail.com](mailto:mike.valleyofheartdelight@gmail.com)

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## Prohibition Party Proves To Be A Roaring Good Time!



Nancy Reynolds  
Director

MHHS brought history to life at our 5th annual Speakeasy: Prohibition Party on Saturday, June 22nd. Once again, Hiram & Diana's country home was turned into a secret speakeasy with entry by password only. 120 flappers and dolls donned their best attire and danced the night away to jazz music of the era while sipping hand crafted Prohibition era cocktails. The French 75 and Jack Rose were the biggest hits of the night. Several guests went home with exciting raffle prizes and maybe even a new friend or two. We thank our community members and businesses (too many to mention but check your email blasts and social media for public acknowledgments of these fine people) for donations to this event that helps MHHS support preserving and sharing local history. A link to photos and videos of the evening can be found on our website.

### In Search of Docents

Are you enthusiastic about keeping the colorful history of Morgan Hill alive?

Would you enjoy sharing this history with visitors to our unique historic homes? If you answered "yes", then we offer you an opportunity to take an active part in a dynamic organization of dedicated volunteers.

The Hiram Morgan Hill House and the Morgan Hill Museum are open each Friday and Saturday for a few hours in order to showcase our properties and to allow visitors to explore our beautiful homes and garden. We need to have enough volunteer docents to make this possible. Serving as a docent is fun and easy. We provide the training for you.

All you need to do is let us know that you are interested in learning more about the docent experience and be willing to share a few hours of your time monthly or bi-monthly.

If you enjoy volunteering with others who are passionate about local history, then please contact us. We truly appreciate all of our dedicated volunteers. Contact: Margo Hinnenkamp, [margohin@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:margohin@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com)



### City Partnership

We thank City Staff members, Chris Ghione, Maureen Tobin, Nichole Martin, Jennie Tucker, and others for their work with our team to provide services that support Villa Mira Monte and MHHS events. We appreciate the work of Norma Bussing and Brigitte Crawford – Library, Cultural and Arts Commissioners (LCAC) – as they work with MHHS to explore opportunities for support.





Morgan Hill Historical Society

BBQ! Wildlife Zoo!  
Kids' Mariachi Contest!



# Community PICNIC

*Saturday, July 20, 2019 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.*

*Villa Mira Monte - 17860 Monterey Road, Morgan Hill*

## Entertainment

Youth Mariachi Competition with prizes, 11 a.m. to 12 noon; judging and prizes at 12:30 p.m. • Wildlife zoo, live exhibits • Vintage kids' games and prizes • Restored fire engine • Stick pony rides • Face painting • Live country western music by Graceland • and more!

## Lunch

Purchase fresh-cooked BBQ and sides or bring your own picnic  
Soft drinks, wine, beer available • Wine tasting by Mann Cellars  
and Paradise Valley Vineyards

## Historic Site

Docent tours of Hiram Morgan Hill House and museum



Visit "Community Picnic" at [www.morganhillhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.morganhillhistoricalsociety.org)





Morgan Hill Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1258  
Morgan Hill, CA 95038-1258

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## **Become a Member of MHHS**

Join those who care about preserving our heritage and enjoy learning about our area's history. Your membership dues help support us in preserving archives, creating exhibits, producing field trips for school age children and other educational events for all ages, hosting member meetings and producing this newsletter.

### **Annual Membership Options:**

#### **Individual \$35**

Quarterly newsletter, Historically Speaking, Invitation to quarterly member meetings including July Appreciation BBQ, member only events and free admission to educational events.

#### **Family \$50**

Above benefits for all immediate family members.

#### **Patron \$150**

Above benefits plus: Recognition in MHHS newsletter, Historically Speaking.

#### **Business \$250**

Above benefits plus: Business card size ad in Historically Speaking.

#### **Enthusiast \$500**

Above benefits plus: Acknowledgement in our recognition window.

#### **Maecenas \$750**

Above benefits plus: Private wine tasting and tour of VMM. Two complimentary reservations for Founders' Dinner.

#### **Benefactor \$1000**

Above benefits plus: Invitation to special Benefactor Event.