

THE RECORD

Burlingame by the Bay

November 4, 2019 is the 250th anniversary of Don Gaspar de Portola's "discovery" of San Francisco Bay. In honor of this important anniversary, Mitch Postel, President of the San Mateo Historical Association will share the significance of this discovery at our Fall Quarterly meeting (see page 3 for details). After being hidden by fog, rough seas and rocky shores for over 200 years, our Bay was discovered by accident. Portola was unimpressed. In his memoirs, Portola said he "did not linger there, nor did I see anything worthy of description there."

Today, it is almost unimaginable to think of the Bay without being impressed and wanting to linger at its shores. *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Harold Gillam began his 1957 book *San Francisco* by stating: "It has been said that all great cities of history have been built on bodies of water—Rome on the Tiber, Paris on the Seine, London on the Thames, New York on the Hudson. If this is a criterion for a city's greatness, surely San Francisco ranks in the first magnitude among cities of the world. For never was a metropolis more dominated by any natural feature than



Windsurfers enjoying the Bay near Coyote Point

Photo by Mark Hundley

together." Kamiya quotes conservationist Will Travis as saying that the Bay is "our Eiffel Tower, our El Capitan, our Big Ben. It is a visual icon which gives our region an identity as a place different from everywhere else."

Separated from our Bay front by a freeway, we can sometimes forget that one of the longest borders of Burlingame's irregularly-shaped rectangle is its eastern Bay shore.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 1 OF THE INSERT).



Egret in marsh

Photo by Mark Hundley

Mitch Postel on
250th anniversary of
Portola's Bay "Discovery"
Tues. October 22nd
7pm Lane Room
See pg. 3

San Francisco by its bay." In a recent essay titled "How the Bay Defines Not Just Our Region But Our Soul," another San Francisco writer, Gary Kamiya, reminds us that "the Bay provides us our regional identity: Without it, there would be nothing to hold this area

NEW ACQUISITIONS! With thanks to...

Russ Cohen for a color scan of an image from a slide film depicting the Burlingame Public Library in snow, likely from January 1962; **John Solbach** for information and photos related to his great-great aunt, "Iona" Senn Moulton (*below*), an accomplished violinist who gave concerts internationally until about 1917. Eventually she and husband Clarence Moulton settled in Burlingame (605 Concord Way); **Ray Tyler and Cathy Foxhoven** for the interview and digital recording of the June 14 oral histories of sisters Mae Lee Chan and Mayo Lee Chang, and that of Pastor Pete Garrison, and **Bobbi Benson**, for transcriptions thereof; **Lee Livingston** kindness of **James Potter**, for a photo (and names) of the Burlingame Police Department retirees at a 2019 reunion in Manteca, CA; **Jim Shypertt** for misc. printed matter related to Burlingame Rotarian activities, including a photographic "Capsule" of Rotary activities taking place from the 1920s to 2017, and for an undated print of a 1868 map depicting the *San Mateo Ranch belonging to the Estate of W.D.M. Howard*, origin is from the San Mateo County Historical Association Museum; **Rich McLinden** for a vintage paper hanger cover from Sterling Cleaners and a plastic garment bag from Simpson's Ltd. Men's Clothing store, undated; **Brad McCulley and Patti Flynn**, of the Burlingame Public Library for several volumes of the *Burlingame Advance-and Advance Star* newspapers that have recently been digitally scanned; **Jim Kelly** for a photo of an old sidewalk imprint: *Pepper Ave.* at

the southwest corner of Newhall Road and Forest View Avenue, 2010, and a detailed account of telephone development (1880s to late 1920s) and



Burlingame Library in blanket of snow, January 1962



Violinist Iona Senn Moulton

expansion into Peninsula Cities via El Camino Real, south to San Jose, that appeared in a *San Mateo Times* article, March 1, 1929; **Kevin Gardiner**, City of Burlingame, for Historic Resource Surveys by Page & Turnbull, Inc., conducted of 160 Pepper Avenue, 1548 Howard Avenue, 1543 Cypress Avenue, 1453 and 1457 Bernal Avenue; **Farris Horak** for misc. paraphernalia involving Peninsula cities, including a booklet documenting the construction of the Millbrae Avenue Overpass, 1997, and a Moon McShane's matchbook, 269 Primrose Rd., **Diane Elcan** for a small original painting of the Burlingame Railroad Station, painted at a *Paint Burlingame* event, August 29, 2010; **Joleen Helley** of Burlingame Parks and Rec. Dept. for several posters advertising *Art in the Park* circa 1990s and 2000s, and for a circa 1940s army cot, found in the attic of the Recreation Center; and **John Peterson**, kindness of **Karen Peterson** for misc. printed material, including several WWII issues of the *Burlingame Advance Star* between 1944-1945, and two *Burlingame Advance Graduation Supplement* editions from June 1949 and 1950.

FALL QUARTERLY MEETING: 250th Anniversary of Portola's Discovery of San Francisco Bay



(Painting above by Morton Kunstler, courtesy of San Mateo County Historical Association)

Since the 1520s, Spain had interest in exploring Alta California. Finally, in 1769, **Captain Gaspar de Portola** with 60 men accidentally discovered San Francisco Bay from Sweeney Ridge, close to Burlingame.

Why is this 500-year-old story important to California and American History? Come hear **Mitch Postel**, **President of the San Mateo County Historical Association**, discuss this discovery as historians commemorate the event that took place almost exactly 250 years ago. This is one meeting you won't want to miss!! **Tuesday, Oct. 22 at 7 pm in the Lane Room of the Burlingame Library.**

Many thanks to **Burlingame City Council** for their generous Community Grant that will enable us to upgrade our computer equipment, in particular to scan fragile documents. Thank you to **Kent Lauder** for all of his help facilitating Caltrain's approved removal of defunct safe from the Railroad Station office, and to **Paul Constantino** for his generous donation, and to **Jim Kelly** for research and information related to infrastructure on and around the Bay front. **ALSO**, heartfelt thanks to **Rich Terrones and Alicia Ader of Dreiling Terrones Architecture, Inc. Burlingame** and to **Peter Sung of Sung Engineering, Union City** for assistance and expertise related to the Gunst Carriage House.

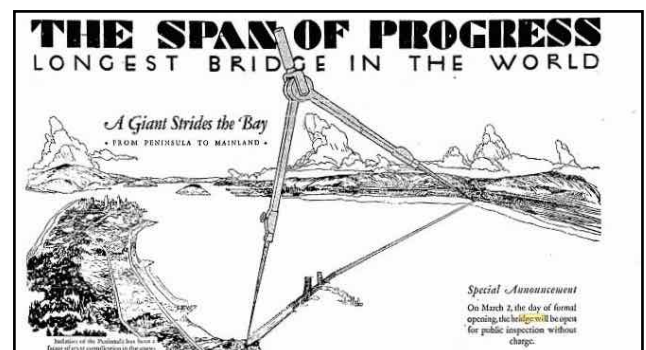
IN MEMORIAM: Corinne Preston

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Karen Crandall, William Crandall
Leslie Inokuchi
David Long

DID YOU KNOW?

At the time the "original" San Mateo Bay Bridge was built in 1929, local newspapers declared it to be the longest bridge in the world. When it was replaced in 1967 by a new bridge, portions of the old bridge decking were used to help create the Anza lagoon and shoreline necessitated by the filling in of Burlingame's bayshore. Large concrete remnants can easily be spotted at water's edge along the Bay Trail.



Address Service Requested - Time Dated Material

Calendar

QUARTERLY MEETING:

**"250 Anniversary of Portola's
Discovery of SF BAY"**

by Mitch Postel, President, SMCHA

Tuesday Oct 22 at 7 pm

Lane Room, Library

MUSEUM OPEN

1st Sun. of each month, 1-4 PM.

Oct 6, Nov. 3, Dec 1

Through Harry's Lens, opens FALL

Docents Needed!

No experience required.

Please call 340-9960 to volunteer.

*Please remember us
in your trust or will!*

THE BURLINGAME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FALL 2019, ISSUE 160

President's Message - *Jennifer Pfaff*

Admittedly, even as a "native", it has taken me many decades to fully appreciate the wonders of the Bay.

My first memory of the Bayfront has nothing to do with its natural setting, but instead was experienced from the inside of my family's 1960s Ford station-wagon. We'd pile into the back, getting "comfy" with a bunch of old blankets that wreaked of car oil, giggling as we watched movies at the Drive-In Theater, now the site of Facebook.

Another vivid memory was attempting to picnic in the grasses of Coyote Point, trying desperately to keep our food-filled paper plates from flipping over in the wind. (The short-lived Pacific City amusement park always comes to mind.)

If we were well-behaved, my mom would take us "up the hill" to visit the "wildlife" recuperating in make-shift cages at the San

Mateo County Junior Museum, the very modest 1950s precursor to CuriOdyssey.

For my high school prom the highlight of the evening was a (pricey) dinner at the long-gone Castaways Restaurant at Coyote Point, enjoying *Polynesian-American* fare while watching rows of airplanes from all over the world land perfectly at the airport. A number of restaurants, hotels and offices opened on the Bayfront during the 1980s. The expansion of the Bay Trail, various public-and private parks, and other water sport amenities have helped to redefine the area's recreational value in spite of the freeway that separates it from the rest of our city. Access to the Bayfront's open space seems more essential now than ever before.

Whether glistening for us in the setting sun, or twinkling with city lights after dark, Burlingame's Bay rarely ceases to amaze...

Current Officers 2019:

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VP - Museum - *Russ Cohen*
VP Technology and
Education -

Diane Condon-Wirgler

Treasurer and Newsletter -
Joanne Garrison

Oral histories &
Parliamentarian-

Cathy Foxhoven

Secretary - *Mary Griffith*

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Mary Packard

Social Media-

Cathy Baylock

Membership Co-Chairs-
Carl Martin and

Leslie McQuaide

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Martha May