

THE RECORD



BURLINGAME HIGH TURNS 100

BY JOANNE GARRISON

FALL
QUARTERLY:
Whifler on Whifler

See page 5

Burlingame High School opened in the fall of 1923 to great fanfare. The competition between the City of Burlingame and its older sister San Mateo had been heating up. So when San Mateo High (est. 1902) then operating out of buildings near the current Mills Hospital, started to become seriously overcrowded, Burlingame boosters passed a bond for the

construction of their own school. Designed by the prominent architect William H. Weeks, the school was the pride and joy of the community when it opened as "San Mateo High - Northern Branch." Not to be outdone, San Mateo High soon began plans to erect a new building of its own on Delaware, designed by the local architect Colonel Ernest L. Norberg. When San Mateo's new building opened in 1927, Burlingame's school, the former "San Mateo-Northern Branch", was renamed Burlingame High. The 1920s were a time of great competition between the two cities. Between 1920 and 1925, Burlingame's population nearly tripled to 11,500—surpassing San Mateo's population of 7,000—and Burlingame was riding high. Burlingame boosters even renamed San Mateo Drive to California Drive after it crossed into

Burlingame. This intercity competition has never really ceased and was, and is most often evident in the Little Big Game held each November (This year's game will be held on November 4 at 11 am at San Mateo High).

Indeed, for the first half of the twentieth century, the only two schools in the San Mateo Union High School District (SMUHSD) were San Mateo and Burlingame High Schools. However, in the 1940s World War II and the sale and development of



Without a high school of their own, Burlingame students are shown riding the bus to San Mateo High School in 1918



Special 40-Line electric streetcar transports students in 1947 (photo by Walter Vielbaum)

the Mills Estate spurred another population growth on the Peninsula, and in 1950 Capuchino opened. Before that time, students living in Millbrae and San Bruno took a special 40-line trolley (shown above) to Burlingame High. Extra curricular activities, such as music, sports and



limits to attend Burlingame High. There have also been calls to close Burlingame High—once in the early 1970s, and once in the late 1970s due to declining enrollment. However, both of these attempts were met with fierce resistance from a proud community of neighboring citizens and alumni.

Today, Burlingame High continues to enjoy a

strong reputation for excellence and a loyal alumni base (see adjacent article “Notable Alumni, Faculty and Boosters”).

For more about the 100th anniversary events scheduled for Friday and Saturday, October 13 and 14, as well as where



to order your 100th anniversary merchandise, please see burlingamealumni.com

journalism have always been a hallmark of Burlingame High. In the 1930s, it was reported that students were “so enthusiastic about extracurricular school organizations that limitations had to be imposed on activities’ schedules to prevent fatigue.” As the population on the Peninsula continued to grow and shift and new schools were added to the SMUHSD’s umbrella, additional changes were made to the residence boundaries for Burlingame High; for example, when Mills High opened in 1958, all students residing north of Hillside Drive were assigned to the new school. As a result, residents of the City of Burlingame were divided between the two schools for almost 50 years until the SMUHSD reversed those boundaries in the early 2000s, thereby allowed all students living within the city



Director Brose directing the BHS Marching Band -Little Big Game, 1981

Notable Alumni, Faculty, and Boosters

Burlingame High has always prided itself on providing an excellent well-rounded education. Thus, it should come as no surprise that its alumni have excelled in a variety of areas, ranging from sports to the arts and activism.

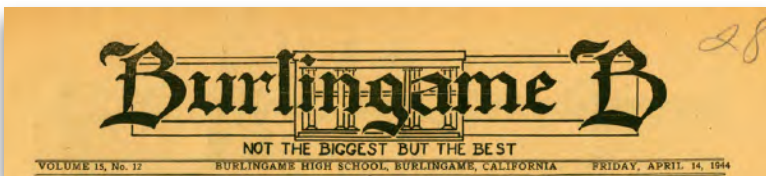
Notable alumni have ranged from Track and Field athlete **Benjamin "Blazin' Ben" Eastman** who set six world records in track between 1932 and 1934 to business mogul **Marc Benioff** who founded Salesforce. And although neither graduated from Burlingame High, we can assume that mid-century genre-bending author **Shirley Jackson** as well as **Jeanne Phillips**, the niece of and co-contributor to the Dear Abby column, honed their writing skills during their years of attendance. Alumni also contributed to the entertainment world: They included Bing Crosby's daughter, **Mary Crosby** – star of longtime TV series "Dallas", to **Richard Morris**, who wrote the TV series The Loretta Young show and won a Writers Guild Award for his Best American Musical, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, as well as notable figures in the field of broadcasting, including **Diane Dwyer**, **Peter Cleaveland** and **Jim Dunbar**. Cartoonist **Bill Amend** developed his craft while working on *The Burlingame "B"* student newspaper,

while budding photographer **Norton Pearl** worked as school yearbook editor while also capturing images of the community. Other graduates were known for their activism such as **Robert Lee** who as Student Body President led the effort in 1946 to convince the Burlingame City Council that a recreation center was needed for the community's youth, and **Edward Roberts**, who in 1962, after polio rendered him a quadriplegic, became the first severely disabled student at the University of California Berkeley and was a lifelong advocate for greater wheelchair access. Lastly, **William A. Whifler**, co-founder of the Dept. of Architecture at CSM in 1967 and architect of Burlingame's City Hall met his future wife Jean when they were both students at Burlingame High. (Our next quarterly will be on Whifler's significant projects in the area, presented by his son Graeme, who is now a LA-based screenwriter, producer and director, specializing in rock videos and horror films (see page 5).. Behind the students helping them to achieve their full potential were long-time faculty, administrators and local residents such as music teachers, **Elmer Young** and **Laurence Short**, English teachers such as **Linda McLaughlin**, and **Glenn Morgan**, and administrators such as **Larry Teshara** and coaches like **Steve Picchi** (who turned around a losing women's basketball team and transformed them into State champions). Long-

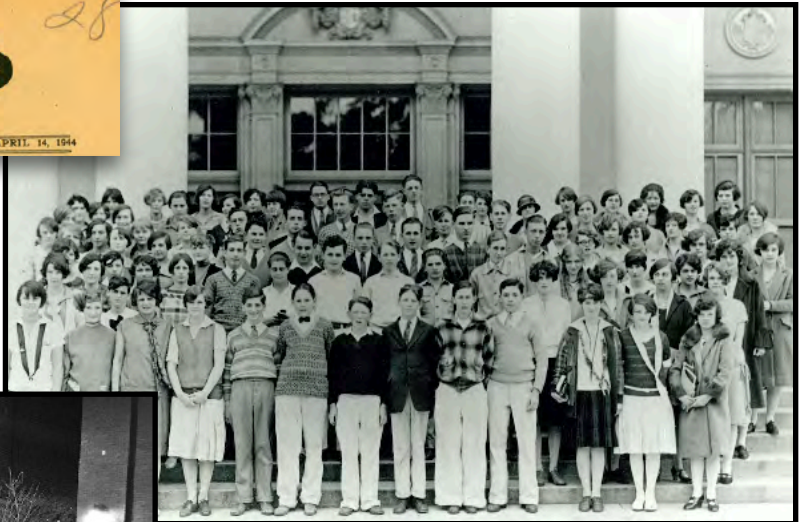


Dean of Boys - Victor Mangini poses with Alice T. Beeman - Dean of Girls in the 1960s

projects in the area, presented by his son Graeme, who is now a LA-based screenwriter, producer and director, specializing in rock videos and horror films (see page 5).. Behind the students helping them to achieve their full potential were long-time faculty, administrators and local residents such as music teachers, **Elmer Young** and **Laurence Short**, English teachers such as **Linda McLaughlin**, and **Glenn Morgan**, and administrators such as **Larry Teshara** and coaches like **Steve Picchi** (who turned around a losing women's basketball team and transformed them into State champions). Long-



term community sports boosters and announcers such as **John Horgan** (who has just authored the book on San Mateo County sports legends, "Cradle of Champions") have also played a key role in the school's legacy. The



BHS class and student activities in the 1930s and 40s



BHS Marching Band on Burlingame Avenue at Holiday Parade in 2018

school's address, 1 Mangini Way, honors **Vic Mangini**, a popular and longtime educator at BHS and 4-time Burlingame mayor. Local business people have also contributed much to the school. The considerable athletic facilities can be traced to the generosity of businessman **Peter Umland**, and for years **John Chiapeli** supported the BHS band through annual fundraisers, often given at his Burlingame Garden Center. And none of the aforementioned persons would perhaps be remembered without the work of the Burlingame Alumni Association that serves as de facto historians for the school. Leaders in that



BHS Theater performance - photo by George W. Manz



organization have included such names as **Blanche Duffey, Mike McQueen, Carl Kuhe, JoEllen Ellis and Rusty Knudsen**. Of course, the challenge with listing names of people who have contributed to 100 years of history at Burlingame High, is that one is guaranteed to miss someone. So if you know of a person or story worth remembering, please send the name and information to the Burlingame Historical Society, P.O. Box

144, Burlingame CA 94011, so that the story and person can be remembered and preserved in our community archive.



Whifler on Whifler -

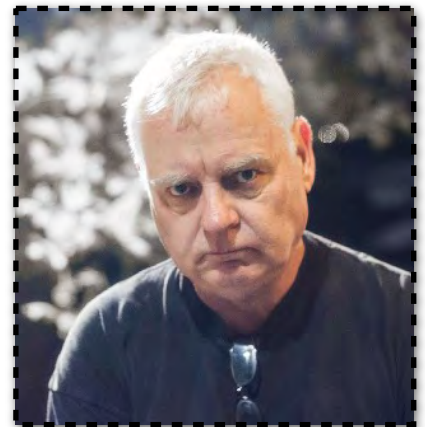
*Burlingame's little-known mid-century modern master architect **William Whifler's** works revealed in image, video, and stories by his writer/director son, **Graeme Whifler**.*

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, October 19th** when we will be treated to a visual and narrative overview of the significant works of mid-century architect and Burlingame High graduate, **William A. Whifler**.

In 1967, Whifler co-founded the Department of Architecture at the

College of San Mateo. Burlingame City Hall and the Burlingame residence located at 1544 Drake Ave. that has recently been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, are just two of Whifler's notable works in the area.

Whifler's son **Graeme Whifler**, a noted LA-based screenwriter and director (known for his rock videos and horror films), will present the story of the architect's life and legacy and growing up in the Whifler household. **Don't miss it!**



Graeme Whifler



We begin at 6:30 pm in the Lane Room of the Burlingame Public Library, Thurs. Oct. 19, 2023

Many of our members have been aware of our perennial struggle to identify additional office- and storage space for our growing archive that now represents close to 50-years of collecting.

*On behalf of the Board of the Burlingame Historical Society, I'd like to express our gratitude to the **Dewey Land Company** (Richard Dewey, Ryan Guibara, and Suzanne Zaro) for their extraordinary generosity to the Burlingame Historical Society. Together with **DivcoWest** they are providing us with longterm (and free!) space in their newly constructed office building at 250 California Drive, next to the historic Burlingame Avenue Railroad station. Though a longer-term project, this additional space will make it possible for us to reorganize the collection so that it will be more easily accessible.*

Acquisitions:

Many thanks to Jennifer Pfaff for several vintage photo postcards of various sites in Burlingame and Hillsborough, including a 1930s-40s image of a eucalyptus-lined Burlingame Avenue in the vicinity of Dwight Road to SF Bay (*lower left*), St. Matthew's Military School (*upper right*), and a newly built St. Paul's Episcopal Church (*lower right*) on El Camino Real; **Mark Lucchesi and Ray Tyler** for podcasts of Terri Boesch, Paul Regan, Ryan Offield, Sam Malouf, Anthony Tansimore, John Catania, Doc Scheppler, and Emily Beach; **Leslie McQuaide** for a transcription of the Jackie Speier interview on April 14, 2023, and **Chris Voon** for a transcription of the Jack Van Etten interview on April 25, 2023; **Sally Meakin** for a photo essay: *Cart Caravan* (2018) describing various places and historical sites in Hillsborough; **John Horgan** for a signed copy of his new book "Cradle of Champions: A Selected History of San Mateo County Sports" ©2023 published by SMCHA; **Michael J. Shembri** for a 1966 Block B Sweater from BHS; **Irene Preston** for numerous items associated with her long ownership of Preston's Ice Cream and Candy (1997-2023), including paraphernalia given to her by the original owner, Art Preston; **Jim Shypertt** for misc. digital items, including a 2019 photo-essay about the San Mateo County Mosquito & Vector Control District Open House; **Linda Field** for multiple digital images of Burlingame, including of tree removals and equipment on Burlingame Avenue (eastside), as well as a poster image announcing the Preston's Grand Reopening Party (1170 Broadway) on August 19th.



Kip Hall at St. Matthew's Military School (top) depicted when located on 80-acres in lower Hillsborough. The institution was established by Rev. Alfred Lee Brewer and operated from 1865 to 1915. Brewer's son Rev. William A. Brewer became rector at St. Paul's Episcopal church (above) and was a Hillsborough Mayor.

Welcome new member:
Brian Tobin - Individual

In Memoriam:
David Chai
Merle Ackerley Wolfe

Cradle of Champions:
A Selected History of San Mateo County Sports
 by John Horgan



Available for purchase at the San Mateo County
 History Museum beginning July 10th
 75 stories, 135 photos - \$19.99

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Calendar:

**Burlingame Hillsborough
History Museum 1-4 pm 1st
Sunday of the month***

***Note: Currently Closed.**

We are reconfiguring our display
area. Please check our website for
updates.

NEXT EVENT

Thursday, October 19th 6:30pm

“Whifler on Whifler” presentation
by movie producer - director Graeme
Whifler

(see p. 5)

**Please remember us
in your trust or will!**

President’s Message:

It’s going to be a big fall for Burlingame High School; many of our members attended the beloved high school and have donated artifacts to our collection since our inception in the mid-1970s.

As a San Mateo High School alumna, the Bearcats remain my sentimental favorite; I confess being able to still sing our catchy “Fight Song”—(*Orange and Black we Honor...*) that I always preferred to Burlingame’s, much to the chagrin of my *Panther* children.

When I was very young however, I distinctly remember drives near the stately campus on Carolan Avenue behind the vast expanse of green lawn with big trees, where in my fantasy world, I imagined it as a college campus for the “big kids”; I decided I definitely wanted to attend. With its

gracious crescent-shaped drive leading up to the still-stately edifice, it’s not a surprise that it was featured in the 1996 film *Dangerous Minds* rather than the Carlmont High School campus in Belmont upon which the original novel “My Posse Don’t Do Homework” by LouAnne Johnson was based.

The high school’s real contributions, however, go far beyond film backdrops and notable alumni—too numerous to name. As is the case with most high schools, it is in the quality and devotion of the many teachers, coaches and other staff members who have made lasting impressions on generations of young adults who in turn carried these with them into adulthood.

‘See you on Friday October 13th from 6-10pm at the Lorton Avenue BHS block party!
-Jennifer Pfaff

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