

Milpitas Muse

May 2016

The Milpitas Historical Society Newsletter

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"Our Jewel in the Silicon Valley"

To what does this title refer? Come learn the answer at Milpitas Historical Society's next meeting, on Wednesday, May 11 at 7:00 pm in the Auditorium (Multipurpose Room) of the Milpitas Library, 160 North Main Street.

The program for this meeting will be a talk and film about "Agnews, Our Jewel in the Silicon Valley," by Kathleen Lee, a writer, filmmaker, and longtime volunteer coordinator at Agnews Hospital. She will tell us about the founding of the tiny former town called Agnews, which was incorporated into the city of Santa Clara in the 1980s, and how it came to be. The film will also provide the history of the institution first for the mentally ill and later for the developmentally disabled, for which it is best known.



The above historical photograph of Agnews Hospital was taken before the 1906 earthquake that damaged the structure and killed over 100 patients.



The water tower at Agnews, (shown at left) is a familiar landmark. Agnews Developmental Center closed in 2009 and residents moved to other facilities. It was built by the California Conservation Corps under the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939. Please join us for this informative presentation about a little city that might be new to you. Meetings are free and all are welcome.

And More Field Trips!

The Milpitas Historical Society's field trip to the Harris-Lass House Museum on Saturday, April 23, was another success, a beautiful place with memorable things to see inside and outside of the house, made all the more interesting by our exceptional tour guides Mary Hanel and Bob Byrd (our speaker at the 2016 Installation Dinner). If you were unable to join us at this tour, we recommend you schedule a visit to this beautifully curated historical site at your earliest convenience.



Jan Hamburger, Harriett McGuire, Mayvid Maclay, Mary Hanel (docent), and Mike Pelizzari at the Harris-Lass House

Visit to the Agnews Museum

The Milpitas Historical Society has arranged another field trip, this one to visit the Agnews Historic Cemetery & Museum located at 1250 Hope Dr. on **Friday, May 20, 1-2 pm**. The State of California closed the Agnews State Hospital West Campus in 1995, at which time its brick Visitors Center building was moved to the cemetery site to be restored and turned into a Visitors Center for the cemetery that was newly renamed the Agnews Historic Cemetery. The Agnews Museum remembers the people who worked and lived at the "Hospital for the Chronic Insane," later the Agnews State Hospital and later still the Agnews Developmental Center from 1888 to 2009. Artifacts and photos of the past are displayed for the public to view. You can sign up for this tour at our May 11th Milpitas Historical Society meeting or you can call Harriett McGuire at 408-262-7979 to sign up.

We will meet, as we usually do now, behind the Red Lobster Restaurant at the Milpitas Town Center on Calaveras Blvd. Meeting time will be **12:30 pm**.

Continuing the Milpitas Park Name Saga

Last month, this newsletter reported that a park once slated to be named after **Captain Calvin Valpey**, (1806-1880) was instead going to be named for **O. H. P Vennum**, who was the first Justice of the Peace for Milpitas Township and a prominent farm owner.

However, in an unprecedented move, the city rejected the PRCRC's suggestion of the Vennum name and made the decision to name the park for **Larry Itliong** (1913-1977), a Filipino-American labor leader who was important in organizing Filipino farm labor.



Larry Itliong
Workers Union (UFW).

Larry Itliong rose to prominence in 1965 when he was among the organizers of what became known as the Delano Grape Strike, which was one of the first times when Mexican and Filipino workers struck together. That strike brought about the creation of the United Farm

Workers Union (UFW). Itliong was one of the main people featured in the recently released film "The Delano Manongs," about the pivotal role Itliong and other Filipino leaders played in that important event, which was shown last October at the Milpitas Community Center. However, that was the only connection Itliong had with Milpitas.

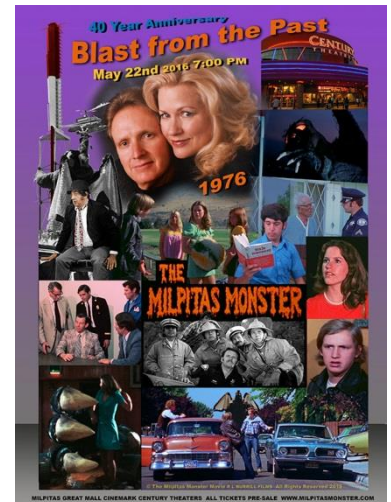
Don't Miss This Year's International BBQ

The annual Milpitas International BBQ and Festival takes place this year on Saturday and Sunday, **May 21 and 22, 10 am to 6 pm**, offering plenty of drinks, food, shopping, entertainment, and overall fun for the family.

This year, on Saturday only, the Milpitas Historical Society's Frontier Days Jail, a veteran of city festivities dating back to the 1960s, will again be on display at the Society's booth (a fun photo opportunity). There will also be interesting historical artifacts on display and Milpitas books and other Milpitas memorabilia for sale.

Here Comes That Milpitas Monster Again!

There will be another 40th year anniversary showing of the new director's cut of our local cult classic, "The Milpitas Monster," by local photographer and filmmaker Bob Burrill, on Sunday, May 22nd at 7:00 pm at the Century Theaters in the Great Mall. Some tickets are still available at the *Milpitas Post*.



Pre-sale tickets are \$10. Proceeds will benefit Milpitas High School. Get your tickets while they last! And be sure to see the trailer with Krazy George at the bottom of the page at milpitasmonster.com!

Milpitas Historical Society Board Meetings

Ever wonder what the Milpitas Historical Society Board of Directors does at their meetings? If you are interested, you are welcome to attend these Board meetings, which are held on the first Wednesday of the month (except July and August) at 1:30 pm in Group Study Room A in the Milpitas Library. The next meeting is Wednesday, May 4.

Milpitas Historical Society Contact Information

You can contact the Milpitas Historical Society:

- by phone at (408) 320-9587
- by mail at 160 N. Main Street, Milpitas CA 95035
- by email at tmhs@milpitashistoricalsociety.org

Here's the new website for the Milpitas Historical Society: <http://milpitashistoricalsociety.org>, with information about the society and upcoming events.

The traditional Milpitas history web page is here:

<http://www.milpitashistory.org/home/index.html>

Milpitas Historical Society
160 North Main St.
Milpitas, CA 95035

First Class