



# Milpitas Muse

March 2011

The Milpitas Historical Society Newsletter

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## County Archives to Be Highlighted at March Meeting

Our March meeting will be held in the Auditorium at the Milpitas Public Library on Wednesday, March 9, 2011, 7:00 to 8:45 PM.

Our speaker for the evening, Trista Raezer, will give us an overview of what is available at the Santa Clara Archives, what the Archives does, and what are some of the more interesting things they have.

The Santa Clara County Archives is the repository for historical records of county government. Opened in 2006, the Archives was established in accordance with the Archive Policy adopted by the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors in September 2004. The Archives collects, preserves, arranges, and describes historical records transferred to it by County agencies so that they may be made available to the public as a center for research and information about Santa Clara County and to foster an appreciation and understanding of the county's history and development. More information about the Archives and its collections can be found at <http://archives.sccgov.org>

Trista Raezer has been the Archivist for the Santa Clara County Archives since September 2010. Previously she served as the Assistant Archivist for two years. She has also worked for the Santa Clara University Archives and the San Jose State University Special Collections. Ms. Raezer received her BA in History from Western Washington University, and her Masters in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Archives from San Jose State University.

After the presentation, the business part of the Milpitas Historical Society meeting will deal with two important issues:

- (1) Discussion for possible action about the Alviso Adobe and disbursing a large sum of money
  - (2) Discussion about possible sale of assets owned by the Society
- Only members may participate in these decisions.

Light refreshments will follow the meeting.

## Historical Society's Installation Dinner



At the annual Installation of Officers and Board of the Milpitas Historical Society, which was held at Omega restaurant on Thursday, February 17, Mayor Jose Esteves administered the oath of office to the newly elected officers and Board members

**Dave Cortese** (See photo on page two.)

After remarks on the importance of our history by Santa Clara Valley Water District Board Member Richard Santos, Santa Clara County Supervisor Dave Cortese gave a brief but fascinating overview of the history of his family in our area, beginning when his grandfather, Vincenzo Cortese, arrived from Italy as a young teen in the Santa Clara Valley, worked canneries and on leased farmland and eventually became a prosperous farmer, landowner, and model citizen.

A family friend designed this poster in his memory.



Photos Courtesy of Robert Burrill

## Laguna School

The Laguna School building is located at the intersection of Felter and Calaveras Roads. The school was established in February 1865 to serve the families of ranchers in the Laguna Valley. The original trustees were J. S. Dooley, Hiram Pomeroy, and W. S. Gaines.

Apparently, the school went through some economic hard times. The *San Jose Mercury* noted in May 1866 that the school was \$3.86 in "the red," unlike most of the other schools in the county. At some point, perhaps in the 1880s, the school was enlarged by adding a cloak room onto the front façade.

Teachers who worked at Laguna School in the 1880s included Rosalie O'Brian, P. Henning, Emma Watkins, George Kraft, T. W. Whitehurst, and Stella Herndon. The trustees included J.W. Greenfield, Alfred Felter (for whom the road is named), H. H. Flagg, and Michael Hughes. This Michael Hughes may have been the same person credited with building the first frame house in Milpitas in 1852.

In 1943, the school was closed when enrollment dropped below the required five students. Naomi Pinard was the last teacher.

In 1949, local rancher Mildred Beans purchased

## Laguna School, c. 1880s



Photo courtesy of Bill Hare

the Laguna School for \$575.

Mrs. Beans modified the building to use it as a barn, a use that was continued by subsequent owners until 2000.

The school was threatened with demolition in 2000. In an attempt to save it, the Milpitas Historical Society initiated an effort to relocate the building. However, the new owners, Bill and Jennie Hare, decided to not demolish the building and expressed an interest in its restoration.



Photo courtesy of Rosalynda Thorn

Milpitas Mayor Jose Esteves installing the 2011 Milpitas Historical Society Officers and Directors. Shown, from the left, Mayor Esteves, President Steve Munzel; Vice-President Harriett McGuire; Secretary Catherine Pelizzari. Directors: Bob Keely, Archives; Bob Burrill, Historian; Bill Hare, Landmarks; Peggy Horyza, Membership; Treasurer Kraig Bunnell, and Joanne Souza, Hospitality. Out of the frame, to the right, is PRCRC Liaison, Rebecca Villalobos.

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**First Class**