



# Milpitas Muse

March 2023

The Milpitas Historical

Society Newsletter

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## Our March In-person Meeting: At and About Our Library!

Our March meeting will take place at 7 pm on Wednesday, **March 15**, which is actually the **third** Wednesday of the month, instead of our usual second Wednesday, (a scheduling change due to our speaker's availability).



Architectural historian Krista Van Laan will be speaking to the Historical Society about architect Frank Delos Wolfe of San Jose, the man responsible for the design of the Milpitas Library, which was

once the Milpitas Grammar School. Krista originally spoke to the Historical Society in 2016, when she gave a presentation on Wolfe's Prairie-style architecture, including the 1915 Rensselaer-Smith/DeVries house across the street from the Milpitas library. Her new presentation covers Wolfe's Spanish Revival architecture and how its popularity spread across Santa Clara County. Krista is the author of three books on local architectural history, including *Frank Delos Wolfe: California Prairie Architecture*, *Wolfe & Higgins: Master Architects of the Spanish Revival*, and *Schiele Subdivision & Alameda Park* (co-authored with Kay Gutknecht). She will bring copies of these books to sell.



We will have a social time afterwards (as we usually do after the meetings), so you can catch up with friends and find out what's going on, although, sadly, the county is still forbidding food being served at these meetings. Masks are still required to enter the library.

We hope to see you there!

## We Made the Front Page!

The Milpitas Historical Society's annual Installation Dinner was not only a very pleasant social occasion for members of the Milpitas Historical Society but was also featured on the front page of the Milpitas Post, thanks to the beautiful photography of local photographer Mylene Stolpe, who took the three photos in this article.



*2023 Officers and Board of Directors (left to right): Joanne Souza, History Chair; Catherine Pelizzari, Vice President; Joseph Ehardt, Treasurer, Archivist, PRCRC Liaison, Education Outreach Coordinator; Bill Hare, President; Carolyn Tiernan, Secretary; Danny Cosper, Special Events; Jathin Ullal, Membership*

Our new Mayor, Carmen Montano (left), and Vice Mayor Evelyn Chua (right) presented the Society, represented by President Bill Hare (center), with a Certificate of Commendation for our work in preserving the history of Milpitas.



Mayor Carmen Montano then surprised the banquet attendees with a thrillingly beautiful rendition of "America the Beautiful."

After the dinner and ceremonies, members and friends were able to share, connect and reconnect in warm conversations.



### Weller Lane

The street that gives access from Abel Street and Main Street to the north end of the Milpitas Library parking structure, and to the library itself, is Weller Lane, named for Joseph R. Weller, (1819-1915), an early Santa Clara County and Milpitas pioneer.

Weller was born in New Jersey, taught school and studied law in New York State, and in 1850 left for the California gold fields, but ill health (acquired while crossing the Isthmus of Panama) kept him from effective gold mining, so he came to Santa Clara County, where he eventually bought land at the north end of Milpitas, and grew hay and grain and had a dairy. In 1855 he organized the Milpitas School District, and was appointed one of its trustees. The Joseph Weller (formerly Sunnyhills) Elementary School in Milpitas was named for him, in honor of the work he did to promote the education of Milpitas students.

Weller Lane was also named in his honor. For a long time, palm trees that had grown on his ranch and that were moved to Milpitas streets, stood on the property

adjoining the library on the east side, but slowly these palms died off until only one, already dead, was left standing. And then one of February's windy rainstorms finally blew over the last of the Weller palms.



### O Beautiful for Snowy Hills



On February 24, an unusually cold storm brought snow to the Milpitas hills closest to the city, at lower altitudes than had been seen in decades. Due to our usual weather patterns, the snow only lasted a few days on the closest hills but the scenic beauty of our snow-capped hills was something to remember.

### Our Society's Contact Information

You can contact the Milpitas Historical Society:  
- by mail at 160 N. Main Street, Milpitas CA 95035  
- by email at [tmhs@milpitashistoricalsociety.org](mailto:tmhs@milpitashistoricalsociety.org)  
- at our website: <http://milpitashistoricalsociety.org>

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

**First Class**