



Old Gilroy City Hall - 1905

THE SOCIETY PAGE

Newsletter of the Gilroy Historical Society

September 2022

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Membership Application

GILROY MUSEUM

195 5th Street • Gilroy, CA 95020
(408) 846-0446

HOURS:

Tuesdays and Thursdays
10AM - 4PM

First and Second Saturdays
10AM - 2PM

Email the museum at:
Gilroy.Museum@cityofgilroy.org

THE GILROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS:

AUTHOR KEVIN AKERS

THE DUNNES OF BRITTAS

A fictionalized account of the Dunne family of local history fame

Saturday, September 24 at 2pm
In-person at the Gilroy Library

Save your spot at scclid.org/Events
Walk-ins Welcome

Gilroy Library (408) 842-8207
350 W. Sixth St., Gilroy, CA

santa clara county library district

Kevin Akers was intrigued when he read a batch of old letters from his Irish ancestors. So he researched the genealogy, visited their ancestral home called Brittas, and wrote a fictionalized history of their endurance and immigration to California. James Dunne of Hollister was part of that story. His marriage to Catherine O'Toole Murphy in 1862, a Morgan Hill widow, united two wealthy landowners who greatly influenced the development of the Santa Clara Valley. They and their children (and former spouses) have an impressive marble monument in Old St. Mary Cemetery in Gilroy where they are buried.

Please join us at the Gilroy Library to hear this author talk about his research into the Dunne Family history. Gilroy, Morgan Hill and Hollister all share this history.

GILROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

www.gilroyhistoricalsociety.org (Follow the link on our website to reach our Facebook page)

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Lucy Solórzano		(408) 607-7722

Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 10 AM at the Museum, or an alternate outdoor location (due to Covid). Let us know if you would like to attend to share ideas.

MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

846-0446 ♦ gilroy.museum@ci.gilroy.ca.us

The following items are for sale with the proceeds going to benefit the Museum.

GHS Historical Footage DVD	\$ 5.00
GHS Gilroy 1950 DVD (55 mins.)	\$ 10.00
GHS Gilroy Museum Tour DVD	\$ 12.00
GHS Oral Histories DVD	\$ 10.00
Old City Hall Collector Spoon	\$ 1.00
Walking Tour Booklets	\$ 1.00
Packet Historical Homes Notecards	\$ 10.00
Single Historical Homes Notecards	\$ 1.00
Postcards	\$ 1.00
Souvenir Pencil	\$.25
Gilroy Museum Mouse Pad	\$ 10.00
Historic Home Prints by R. McGinnis	\$ 10.00/15.00
Tote Bags	\$ 5.00
Juan Bautista De Anza Booklet	\$ 5.00
<i>A Country Doctor in the Valley of Hearts Delight</i> by E. Barratt ...	\$ 5.00
<i>A Hundred Years of the Gilroy Hot Springs</i> by I. Sanderson	\$ 25.00
<i>John Gilroy</i> by Truda Cooling Nelson	\$ 15.00
<i>Gilroy's Old City Hall</i> by Woollacott, Pursell and Myer	\$ 5.00
<i>Images of Gilroy</i> by Claudia Salewske	\$ 20.00
<i>San Martin Then and Now</i> by D. Brodsky	\$ 20.00
Christmas Ornament (Globe)	\$ 10.00
Christmas Ornament (Ceramic)	\$ 10.00



When ordering from Amazon use **smile.amazon.com**, and they will send the Gilroy Historical Society a tiny percentage of your purchase!



Proceeds from Sales Directly Support the Gilroy Museum.

MUSEUM NEWS

WE WENT TO THE GILROY RODEO

Sometimes it takes a little prodding, right? Member **Ellen Marden** asked if the Society might have a table or booth at the Gilroy Rodeo. We said we could furnish some volunteers to staff it if she would help plan the display, using our stand-up display board. Ellen accepted the challenge with gusto and creativity! The Museum furnished enlargements of photos from our original rodeo, the Gymkhana (1929-1956). She designed the whole beautiful display, furnished artifacts like ropes, buckets, baskets and even the skull of a steer! We provided our banner and some newsletters, membership forms, post cards, and books.



Ellen Marden and our display.

On Sunday, August 14th we had a great location between the entrance and the arena, so all the guests passed right by our table. **Ellen and Connie Rogers** took the morning shift and **John and Sarah Kelly** took the afternoon shift. We talked to lots of interested folks and gave away many bright pink bookmarks with the Museum's days and hours. We were favorably impressed with the Gilroy Rodeo too! It was very well organized and executed, taking a page from the Garlic

Festival's experience. Many visitors were from out of town. Well done and very good exposure for the Society! Rodeo photos were by *Ellen Marden and Connie Rogers*.



Even Casey Tibbs and his horse Warpaint made it to the Rodeo!



Our western display table.

OUR SUCCESSFUL BOWL-A-THON

By Linda White

After a long hiatus due to the pandemic we finally were able to hold our 11th annual bowl-a-thon at Morgan Hill Bowl on July 16th. July turned out to not be the best time as some of our "regulars" were on vacation, others had birthdays for family members to celebrate, one had to drop out because of injury, and some others were just not ready to be around people yet. Despite this, with our 2nd lowest number of participants, we earned our 2nd highest profit of all time!!

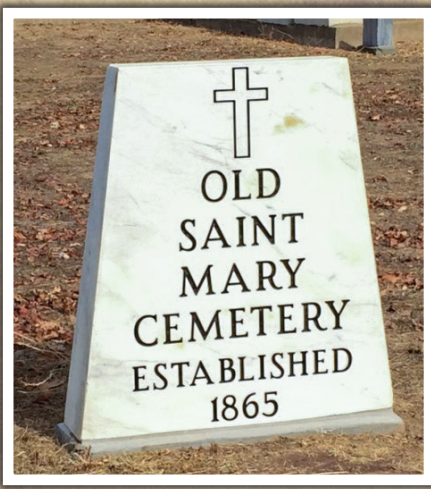


Sisters **Margene Peterson** and **Maureen Hughes** were responsible once again for bringing in the most donations. They were thanked with gift cards to Old City Hall. Margene also shot the high game, while Tawnie Grider had high series. Trisha Russ bowled 2nd high game and Linda White 2nd high series. Al Marseline ended up being the sole male bowling and received our award for both high game and high series.

We owe great thanks to several businesses and individuals for their donations of prizes for our raffle. They include **Old City Hall, Royal Nails, Bozzo's 76 Gas Station, Westside Grill, Nob Hill Foods, Tristan's Cookies, House of Bagels, Straw Hat Pizza, Home Depot, Jellyfish Seafood Bar, Milo's Meat Shop,** and **Board Members Eileen Cavallaro and Linda White.**

This year's income of \$8619.56 (bringing our lifetime total to \$64,384.67) will help us continue creating our Gilroy Heritage videos. Thank you, participants and donors, for your continued support.

MORE TLC FOR OLD SA



New monument erected in 2015.



A buried grave uncovered.



Rotary members cleaning up.

Dave and **Marianne Peoples** joined a large group of folks for our annual tour of Old Saint Mary Cemetery last November. An avid genealogist, Dave knew that a few of his ancestors/relatives were buried there. However, minutes into the tour, he realized there were more than a few.

Impressed with the 2014-2015 efforts of the ad-hoc "Friends of Old Saint Mary Cemetery" volunteers and donors who removed debris, trimmed trees, erected a new wrought iron fence, created and installed marble name markers for the cemetery and for our city's namesake John Cameron Gilroy; and the subsequent Rotary Club project to install two contemplation benches and build a pathway to them; Dave was also distressed that Old Saint Mary Cemetery was again in need of a lot of tender loving care. So many of the graves are unmarked, so many headstones are in disrepair, overgrown vegetation, tree leaf buildup and squirrel hole damage are everywhere.

Dave, Joanie Lewis, Rachel Perez, Cat Tucker, Evening Rotary, Knights of Columbus and **other volunteers** have accepted the challenge and began that TLC last April. Before it began Dave delineated most of the known graves



John Gilroy's son, Catarino.



Handwritten details.



Two pieces found at opposite ends of the cemetery!

SAINT MARY CEMETERY

By Dave Peoples and Connie Rogers

using Saint Mary Parish records and old plot map. During that effort he identified the graves of several of John Gilroy's family, uncovered a cement grave slab, found the graves of the parents (and he thinks the brother) of Ascension Solorsano Cervantes plus more than twenty of Dave's family relatives. With the help of **Mike Hughes'** woodworking ingenuity and abilities, and a generous donation from the Gilroy Historical Society, the team is installing wooden crosses with names and some genealogical information on most of the unmarked graves. Gilroy VFW member Ermelindo Puente, in recognition of the veterans buried there, will soon be erecting a solar-lighted flag pole near the South end of the Cemetery. This action team of volunteers will have their next workday on the morning of Saturday, Sept. 24th if you'd like to join them. **If you'd like to donate or get more info, email Dave Peoples at gcmrcntl@garlic.com.**

Mark your calendar for Saturday, Nov. 5th at 10am. Dave has promised to lead the tour and show off all the progress made. This is the oldest and maybe the most interesting cemetery in Gilroy. Cemetery photos were by Dave Peoples, Connie Rogers and Phill Laursen.



John Gilroy's new monument erected in 2015.



Stakes made by Mike Hughes.



James and Catherine Dunne monuments.



Mother of Ascension Solorsano.



John Gilroy's son, Nicodemus.



John Gilroy's grandson Catarino.

SOCIETY NEWS

THE GILROY GARLIC FESTIVAL PLAYBOOK; *For the Love of Garlic and Community*

By Larry & J Chris Mickartz

This book tells the story of the Gilroy Garlic Festival, which enriched the Gilroy community experience for over 41 years. The festival hosted over 4.4 million visitors and was a source of funding for many of the area's non-profit organizations—to the tune of \$12 million. Because of the festival, there was an influx of income into the local economy, approximately \$6-8 million annually. The festival put Gilroy on the national and international map.

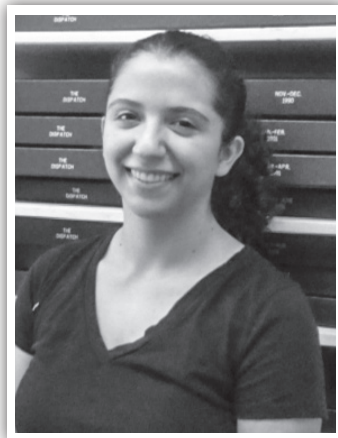
We hope that this 248-page memory book about the Garlic Festival will spark new ideas, energy, and direction for a revival of our beloved Gilroy Garlic Festival.

Get your book signed by the authors on Saturday, Oct. 1st from 10 AM to noon at the Museum!



FROM VOLUNTEER TO MUSEUM CAREER

By Susan Voss



Going into her senior year at San Diego State University, **Allison Ramirez** had the perfect plan: finish the last of her classes, complete an internship as a historical researcher and then leverage her experience into a full-time job. The Covid pandemic nullified any internship opportunities, so Allison decided that after graduation she would return home to Gilroy and earn some money for graduate school. Hoping to obtain some non-academic research experience, Allison approached the Gilroy Museum and inquired about volunteering. She shared her interest in doing historical research for the Museum, but little did she know that offer would lead to a new and expanded career path!

Volunteering is an excellent way to explore new things. Volunteering at a museum reveals the many ways public historians contribute to our understanding of community and the varied influences that shape our society. Now, that sounds commendable, but what do public historians actually do? Have you ever attended a park ranger's campfire talk, wandered through an art gallery, visited the Gilroy Museum (or any museum), read through an environmental impact report, or attended a Gilroy Historical Society sponsored event? Perhaps you've enjoyed the photographs from the City of Gilroy's "Throw Back Thursday's" web publication or attempted to trace your family's history? If

so, you've experienced the work of public historians whose varied job descriptions may be: historical interpreter, history, art, or film conservator or preservationist, museum professional, historical business consultant, archivist, researcher, or genealogist.

While Gilroy Museum volunteers don't have job titles, they still serve as de facto public historians. When volunteers engage in historical or family research, work on displays, serve on the Collection Committee, give Museum and walking tours, and catalog the Museum's collections, they function as Gilroy's public historians. All of these activities help to tell Gilroy's story and make its history more available to the community.

As a new Gilroy Museum volunteer, Allison's research skills were immediately put to the test. Volunteers are currently auditing the Objects Collection, one of four main collections that comprise about 20,000 different artifacts housed at the Gilroy Museum. Due to storage space constraints, the Museum needs to evaluate and eventually eliminate redundant artifacts, and the business machine collection was a place to start that process. Accustomed to researching broad historical topics, Allison's skills were now narrowly focused on 18 business machines ranging from 1880's typewriters to 1930's adding machines. As a result of her research work and final report, the Collection Committee could make informed decisions on artifact retention, and the Museum's Objects Collection benefited from new, detailed information on its artifacts. Allison even identified a typewriter collectors' website that may provide a future outlet for the Museum's duplicate machines!

In the process of doing detailed research, Allison found she enjoyed learning about historical objects, and that led her to investigate the range of opportunities associated with a museum career. Allison Ramirez is now a brand-new graduate student in San Francisco State University's Museum Studies program! Despite her scholastic commitments, Allison is determined to continue as a Museum volunteer. Her skills will be employed to inform and expand the Museum's knowledge of its artifacts and of local history. As Allison embarks on a museum career, we wish her every success in becoming a professional public historian!

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Old Gilroy City Hall (1905)

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