

The Society Page

January 2013

JOIN US FOR LUNCH
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9th at 1:00 P.M.
at The Milias Restaurant



This restaurant is the 2012 winner of our Historic Commercial Building Architectural Award. Owners Adam Sanchez and Ann Zyburra have completed a wonderful restoration of this long-time Gilroy favorite. After lunch they will tell us about their discoveries and show us the historic artifacts they have on display.

Lunch is \$25 per person, including beverage, dessert, tax and tip. Choose from:

- Shrimp Louie Salad (served with soup)
- The Milias Steakhouse Sandwich (choice of soup, salad, or fries)
- Chicken Salad Sandwich (choice of soup, salad, or fries)
- Bacon, Lettuce & Tomato Sandwich (choice of soup, salad, or fries)
- Grilled Chicken Breast Club Sandwich (choice of soup, salad, or fries)
- Pesto Penne (choice of soup or salad)

Salad dressing choices are Citrus/Tarragon, Pear, or Balsamic Vinaigrette, Ranch, Blue Cheese, or 1000 Island.

Select Minestrone or Market Soup (Chef's choice for the day).

Choose Iced or Hot Tea, Coffee, Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, Root Beer, or Club Soda.

Please reserve your seat and place your order with Linda White, 408-847-2861, by January 29th.

Put this one on your calendar now!

3rd ANNUAL BOWLATHON

Our 3rd Annual Bowlathon will be held Saturday, January 26th, at Gilroy Bowl, 7554 Monterey Street. Join us for some fun and a chance to raise money for the Museum Endowment Fund. Entry fee is \$25 and includes 3 games, shoe rental, and buffet snacks. Everyone receives a token of participation, and awards will be presented for high scores and most pledges. Form a 4-member team or sign up on your own and let us put you on a team. If you aren't up to bowling yourself, pledge to sponsor someone who IS bowling. If your ARE bowling, have your friends and family sponsor you. Print out an entry form from the link on our home page or pick one up at the Museum. Turn in your entry to Linda White, Connie Rogers, or the Museum by January 16th, and bring your completed pledge sheet with you to the event. For more information contact Linda, 408-847-2861, or linda104@charter.net.

MORE ABOUT THE MILIAS

The famous Central Coast architect William Weeks designed this elegant hotel in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, also sometimes called Mediterranean style. It was built by James Patterson in 1922 at an astonishing cost of \$250,000. The next year William Weeks followed up by designing the matching Ellis Garage across the street, built by William Radtke. The Tucker Studebaker Company, an auto dealership, first occupied that building.

But back to the Milias. Its owner, George Milias, Sr., came to San Jose from Yugoslavia in 1881. He owned a successful restaurant there for ten years, before operating the Milias Chop House on the same site as the hotel. Several smaller businesses, including the Gilroy Brewery, occupied the site prior to construction of the hotel, which was built of reinforced concrete. The hotel had a fine restaurant on the ground floor and a popular roof garden with private party and dining facilities. In the 1920s tea dances were held on the roof. A great novelty for Gilroy was the elevator allowing easy access to all three stories. Because Highway 101 ran past the front door and was the main auto route between San Francisco and Los Angeles, the hotel was a popular oasis and many famous people stopped for lunch or stayed overnight. Adam Sanchez can tell us who they were!

The Milias Family owned a cattle ranch on Pacheco Pass. The restaurant served as a meeting place for the Gymkhana Committee,

our rodeo from 1929 to 1956. Across the street was Hall's Western Wear, featuring the famous rodeo champ, Casey Tibbs and his horse, Warpaint, on the marquee. Above the bar in the restaurant today we can still enjoy a large frieze with western artwork. You can see how Gilroy's cowboy and western phase was exemplified in the Milias and has been continued today with the recent renovation/restoration.

The family was socially prominent and active in civic affairs. George Milias, Jr., served as Mayor of Gilroy from 1940 to 1954 and again from 1956 to 1958. His son, George Milias III was our Assemblyman for several years, later becoming Deputy Director of the Fish and Game Commission in Washington, DC.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

We love our volunteers! They bring a lot of skills and enthusiasm with them on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The lead volunteers, **Betty Kelly** and **Tom Howard** are especially appreciative. Betty's treat for the volunteers is to plan and execute this annual Christmas luncheon at the Willey House. She had help from Board members **Barbara Biafore**, **Maureen Hunter**, **Karen Pedigo**, **Eileen Cavallaro**, and **Connie Rogers**, and fellow volunteers June Bell, Tom Howard and Marian Niyama. We all enjoyed the delicious food and each volunteer received a small Starbucks gift certificate. Guests were Nils Myers and Mattie Scariot from 152 West Productions, producers of our wonderful new DVD, **Elizabeth Barratt**, and **Susan Voss**. Tom's treat was to scan an antique Christmas card and send it to our volunteers with his best wishes. He also provided the following year-end report to the guests. Our new Museum DVD was shown at the end of the luncheon and several copies were purchased as Christmas gifts.

Betty Kelly is scheduled for hip replacement surgery in January, which will create a big gap in our volunteer schedule. Thank you especially to **Bill Faus** and **Carol DeSantis** who have volunteered to share her Tuesday Lead position for three months.

We have several openings for volunteers and encourage you to put in an application with the City. It takes a few weeks for processing since each volunteer must be fingerprinted and cleared first, so don't wait! Go to the City website at www.ci.gilroy.ca.us and fill out the application. Be sure to check the box that says "Museum" when asked where you'd like to work!

MUSEUM ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2012 by Tom Howard

In 2012 the Gilroy Museum was open 112 days. During that time we had 1448 visitors, 387 of them were school children participating in a tour. Volunteers contributed 2612 hours and 52 people enjoyed the 8 monthly walking tours.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Removal of accessioned materials from files used by the patrons. Copies were then made of pertinent items and inserted back into files our patrons use. The original accessioned materials are now being catalogued and stored in our archives downstairs.
2. Photograph collection in the research room was inventoried and each accessioned photo was scanned and entered with its catalog description.
3. Production of the Museum tour video. Filmed by 152 West Productions (Nils Myers and Mattie Scariot) with grants from Gilroy Rotary and Gilroy Foundation and starring Barbara Bottini as tour guide.

MINOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Creation of a digital copy of the birds-eye view map so that we can offer them for sale again. The original "blueprint" (a large mylar type negative) was donated by Edith Edde many years ago. A donation from Christine Flautt's son, Jim Flautt, made this expensive undertaking possible.

CONTINUING PROJECTS

De-accessioning and sale or disposal of over 2000 books from our bookroom.

FUTURE PROJECTS

I would like to train two or possibly three volunteers in the operation of the Past Perfect database. Once trained, they can begin doing cataloguing that will expand the access to our collection.

Thank you especially to **Elizabeth Barratt** and **Claudia Salewske** who donate part of their earnings from the books they authored to benefit the Museum.

THE GILROY MUSEUM - THE DVD

Our new virtual Museum tour has been getting good exposure. On October 9th it was presented to the City's Physically Challenged Board of Appeals in the City Council chambers. Mayor Pinheiro also attended the showing and praised it generously at the next City Council meeting. Later that month **Phill Laursen** showed the DVD to seniors at Live Oak Day Care. **Phill** said the showing was "a solid success and prompted a good discussion afterward. Many memories were shared and people commented on Barbara's

excellent narration."

Later **Phill** loaned his copy of the film to Val Lopez, Chairman of the Amah Mutsun band of Ohlone, with the request he share it with Ed Ketchum, the band's historian. **Phill** wanted them to see the quality of film Nils and Mattie made and to envision how wonderful it would be to have a film about the Mutsun.

THANK YOU MUSEUM SUPPORTERS

We are eternally grateful for our most generous supporters. We have received many checks both large and small and as of Christmas Eve have deposited \$4500 in our Endowment Fund with the Gilroy Foundation. A full list of 2012 donors will appear in our next issue. It is very gratifying to have our efforts at the Museum validated. We are making good progress towards our goal of hiring a part-time professional director.

OLD ST. MARY CEMETERY by Connie Rogers

We are inching towards making a plan to improve Old St. Mary Cemetery. **Kris Hernandez** of the Gavilan DAR Chapter (and now a Society member also) and I met with Debbie Pelliccione, office manager at St. Mary Church. St. Mary parish is the owner of this historic cemetery which opened in 1866. We came away with the impression that the church wants to be a partner in improving the cemetery. They've received frequent complaints from the neighbors about trash dumped along the adjacent alleys. We have contacted the Habing Family Funeral Home which maintains all the cemeteries in Gilroy. They also have indicated a willingness to help and we hope to meet with them in January.

Some of the needs and ideas we have discussed so far include: trash pickup inside and out, tree pruning and some removal, a nicer gate with an identifying sign, improved fencing, better monument for John Gilroy's grave and possible repair of other monuments which have been damaged by earthquakes or vandals. This will take more than just volunteer labor. Careful planning and yes, funding sources, will be required. That is why we are going slowly. If you would like to be consulted or involved, please contact Kris or me.

This cemetery is one of the oldest in Santa Clara County and contains the graves of Father Hudson, founder of the parish, Jose Maria Amador, Mexican land grant holder for whom Amador County is named, and many of our Irish pioneer families. One of the most prominent persons in the cemetery, Catherine O'Toole Murphy Dunne, has a very impressive marble monument including the graves of her first husband, Bernard Murphy and their son, Martin J.C. Murphy. Also included is her second husband, James Dunne, his first wife and their children. Catherine was the owner of Rancho La Polka and benefactress for whom St. Catherine's parish is named. The cemetery is definitely worthy of designation as an historic site. It is a shame that its rather hidden location and the passage of time have contributed to its neglect. We hope to form a community partnership to remedy that!

WE GET LETTERS

Some of the most interesting things about volunteering at the Museum are the research requests, donations of artifacts and letters from people with roots in Gilroy and the surrounding area. Often they add an interesting perspective or facts to what we know. Here are a few recent samples:

A phone call from William Coops of San Jose. He wanted information about BeGe for an article he was writing for the Caterpillar Historical Society. Mr. Coops said their hydraulic pumps were used in Caterpillar tractors and heavy equipment around the world.

A letter from Beverly K. Herdman of Fayetteville, OH. Her husband's great grandmother was Catherine O'Toole Murphy Dunne. She said Catherine was involved in California water rights laws. Mrs. Herdman's mother worked for a California Supreme Court Judge, McComb, who knew all about that case.

And two nice letters and contributions from Pete Lombardi of Kailua, Hawaii. He is the great, great grandson of Henry Miller, the Cattle King. He included some lovely hand-drawn maps of the Castro Valley Ranch and Miller's ranch house in Los Banos. Pete and his sister Lisa grew up in San Francisco, but their mother used to put them on the train (Del Monte passenger train) to go to Gilroy, where their grandmother, Gay Nickel McNear Carpenter, would pick them up at the station. They spent much of their summers with their grandmother, exploring the ranch, and have very fond memories of it. Pete especially enjoyed **Phill Laursen's** many photos of our annual meeting at the Castro Valley Ranch last June which are posted on Shutterfly.

THE END