



# HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of* MORRO BAY

February, 2019

## *President's Report*

hi Everyone:

There's always a lot going on! Seems only yesterday we were mourning the loss of the Finicky Fish boat building, but that was well before the holidays. That episode did get us to thinking about getting a permanent museum for the Historical Society, so expect to hear more about it in the future. We are actively working on it.

In the shorter term, we have several things in the to-do jar:

**Franklin Riley Park:** As you know we received a \$2,000 grant from the city's Tourism department to help pay for a design of the park. By next newsletter we will have more progress to report on our work with Gardens by Gabriel, one of the foremost garden designers and installation companies in Morro Bay.

**Hidden History:** Thanks to Cathy Novak, we are working on a series of 4 more Hidden History interpretive panels for the Embarcadero.

**Historic Preservation:** As included in the updated draft General Plan, we have started a collaboration with the city to develop a historic preservation program.

These bigger projects fit in around our on-going work on collections and education.

Speaking of education, please join us Sunday, February 24 at 4 pm at the Presbyterian Church (lower level) for a presentation on the power plant. That plant is why everyone who's ever been to Morro Bay knows exactly what you're referring to when you say "3 stacks and a rock." Come to the meeting and share your thoughts about what we should do with the plant.

One more way you can help: share your photos. We don't want to physically keep them, but we would like to get digital copies of them. Please contact us.

Thanks for your support, as always.

*Glenn Silloway*  
President, HSMB



**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MORRO BAY MISSION STATEMENT: THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MORRO BAY IS A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION WHOSE MISSION IS TO PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORY OF ESTERO BAY BY COLLECTING, PRESERVING, EXHIBITING AND INTERPRETING THAT HISTORY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE REGION, AND NATION BEYOND, TO AUDIENCES OF ALL AGES AND INTERESTS.**







# A Historic Preservation Program

We've written about this before, but the project is heating up. As you know, the city's updated General Plan contains specific action elements leading to the creation of the 1st Morro Bay historic preservation program.

There are a number of steps to go through, but in the end the program will benefit both all residents and visitors, and the individual property owners whose buildings and spaces are included in the program.

Our very 1st step is to start a conversation within a small group of people with backgrounds in architecture, history, city planning, building and development, and cultural artifacts to get an outline of the program. This group will begin a rough draft of a 1st ordinance, consistent with our vision of "Preservation and Progress", and maybe start the process of identifying potentially historic buildings and districts.

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## Hidden History Panels

As we speak, the Historical Society is working on two new Hidden History interpretive panels to be installed at the site of the Boatyard and Otter Rock (845 to 875 Embarcadero), which are being redeveloped. These leaseholds both have interesting histories that will help us tell the story of Morro Bay. (For an example, see the Hidden History panel about the trestle bridge, below.)

Again: if you have information or photos of these old parcels, please let us know. Who knows? You might have the most important historical element for one of these panels.

The Boatyard site was a busy part of Morro Bay's working waterfront from the 1950's forward. It contained the ways that allowed large boats to slide into a cradle at slack high tide to be hoisted up to the level of the Embarcadero surface. Rails allowed the dry docked boat to move toward the street, and even eventually across the street, for maintenance. The facility was also used occasionally to launch new boats including the Golden Swan shown in the photograph.



Adjacent to the boatyard was the machine shop, a place where the mechanical and machined parts of boats could be repaired or manufactured. It was housed in a metal building that had been moved from San Luis Obispo, where it functioned as the OK Rubber plant.

We thank Cliff Branch and Cathy Novak for supporting our work on these panels.

# November General Meeting

About 85 members and their guests honored our veterans at a General Meeting held on Veterans Day in November.

A color guard of US Marines presented the flag.

The chorus of Singing for Hope from Los Osos sang a medley of patriotic songs for the audience.

Joe Dunlap, our guest speaker for the evening gave a presentation on the Amphibians Training that was done at Morro Bay Harbor. He presented photos from that era of Morro Bay, the entire town and the area down at the harbor and bay where our military trained and also lived. The training took place on ships outside the harbor, small ships inside the harbor and combat training on the dunes.

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## Jack Smith to Facebook friends

Sometimes when you grow up, and grow old in a small town, you see little parts of your youth disappear. Today I was driving past the house that my old friend, and cross country skate companion, Jeff French grew up in. I spent a lot of time there, hanging out, shooting baskets, playing horse and one on one.

For the last forty years whenever I drove by Jeff's old home I would slow down and glance over to make sure the old basketball hoop was still there, it always was. Over the years the paint on the backboard had peeled and the cool red, white and blue net had faded, but it was always there. Seeing it would make me smile and think of all the times our group of friends had gathered there to not only shoot hoops, but to just be together, teenage friends and teammates, talking about everything and nothing. Over the years that group has been scattered by the winds of fate, but the hoop remained... until today. The new owners have removed it, of course they couldn't know of the memories that old hoop and slap of asphalt harbored.

I still play in an old man's basketball league, so does Jeff. We play on different teams these days, which will never seem right to me. I wonder if he knows his old hoop is gone, perhaps I will tell him...but maybe I won't.



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# "People Create Places"

Can you believe that it has been nearly 20 years since the Y2K concerns at the turn of the Millennium? It is not without notice that we are nearing 2020 as time marches on. How we view our community and the people and events that create a sense of place for all of us comes from our own history and experiences.

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce has been celebrating some of the residents and community members that have helped to create our sense of place for 43 years! We are sharing the list of residents that were selected as Citizen of the Year going back to the first one, Bill Payne in 1975 and Living Treasure going back to 2002. In future issues of the Historical Society Newsletter we hope to highlight and celebrate some of the achievements of the people on the lists that helped to create our history. If you have information or photos of any of the people who are on the lists and would like to share the stories you have, please contact the Historical Society on our website at: <http://historicalmorrobay.org/contact>

## Citizen of the Year

1975 Bill Payne  
1976 Ruth Woll  
1977 Lois Rowland  
1978 Dorothy Birkhead  
1979 Jim Froggatt  
1980 Sophie Hill  
1981 Milton Levy & Lila Keiser  
1982 Edgar Smith  
1983 Jane Bailey & Phyllis Dorn  
1984 Grace Melton  
1985 Bob De Somer  
1986 Richard Haidet  
1987 Dan Reddell  
1988 Ed & Marina McCracken  
1989 Don & Mary Jane Puett  
1990 Ed Biaggini  
1991 Vivian Doubleddee  
1992 Rupert Chowen  
1993 Bill Yates  
1994 Chuck Clark  
1995 Gari Cave  
1996 Carla Borchard



1997 Nick Mendoza  
1998 Arby Kitzman  
1999 Pat Albertini  
2000 Anne Keyes  
2001 Janet Whitlock  
2002 Doug Reddell  
2003 Jeff Jones & Joe Loven  
2004 Grace Poletti  
2005 Roger Evey  
2006 Mary Hwass-Hay  
2007 Father Ed  
2008 Bill Peirce  
2009 Barry Ross  
2010 Richard Hannibal  
2011 Joe Salamacha  
2014 Ken Vesterfelt  
2015 Susan Stewart & Sharon O'Leary  
2016 Bonnie Johnson  
2017 Jan Goldman

## Living Treasure

2002 Grace Melton & Dave Tope  
2003 John Lemons  
2004 Jack & Elaine LaLanne  
2005 Wachtung "Botso" Korcheli  
2006 Bertha & Dean Tyler  
2007 Bud & Rita Anderson  
2008 Sherry Haynie  
2009 Hank Roth  
2010 Marianna Frost  
2011 Mike Dominguez  
2012 Wilmer Tognazzini  
2013 Dan Reddell  
2014 Marlene Peter  
2015 Nancy Castle  
2016 Delores Jorge  
2017 Lori French  
2018 Lu Chi Fa (Gordon Lu)


# 'His Story'

By Shelagh Considine

The high school I attended had a very large history department. There was one history class that was always filled to capacity. I had to find out why.

Mr. Clark did not call his class 'history'. He called it 'His Story'. He did not make you memorize dates of famous battles or events. Rather he told you the story of the events that led up to them, the intrigues and the ramifications, with the results and its importance to history later.

You sure remembered the dates of all those events because you knew the fascinating stories behind them!




Chris Kline on the "Trestle Across the Bay" November 1946 Photo: Neil R. Kline

## Explore the Hidden History of Morro Bay



The Hidden History Project tells stories of Morro Bay's past, often revealing truths that are right in front of our eyes if we only knew what to look for.

Discover additional interpretive panels with descriptive Hidden History stories of **Morro Bay** at various locations throughout the city.

Visit [www.historicalmorrobay.org](http://www.historicalmorrobay.org) (the HSMB website) for more information about trestle bridge.



The remaining remnants of the trestle bridge Circa 1950 Photo: Neil R. Kline



[historicalmorrobay.org](http://historicalmorrobay.org) [morrobayhistory.org](http://morrobayhistory.org)

## A Bridge to the Sandspit

**Look across the Bay.** Can you see the tiny remnants of a wooden trestle bridge that once connected the place where you are standing to the sandspit?

The Navy built the bridge in 1942 as part of its efforts to create a functional Navy base in Morro Bay harbor. The harbor was rebuilt as a Navy Section Base to support small deepwater "mosquito" patrol boats, with a safer entrance, better docks, and a more usable staging area.

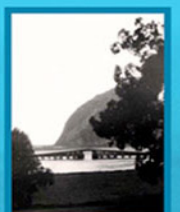
Exactly why the Navy built the bridge is a mystery.

The trestle bridge was a handy asset when the Section Base was converted to an Amphibious Training Base in early 1944. It allowed soldiers and small vehicles to cross easily to the sandspit for training, and was used by the Coast Guard for nighttime beach patrols.

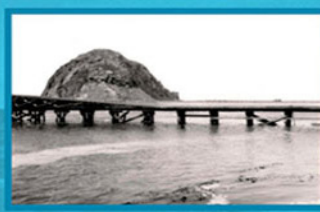
Photographs show that the bridge was originally a sturdy flat surface, but was too low to allow boats into the south bay. Probably within a year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers modified the bridge to allow small boats—possibly landing craft—to pass under.

The Navy permitted civilians to use the bridge beginning in 1943. Local residents recall crossing the bridge in a pickup after the war ended to go clamming—the pickup allowed them to carry more clams.


After the war, the new safer harbor built by the military attracted commercial fishing boats in large numbers. These bigger boats could not pass under the trestle bridge, so it was taken down to allow access to the southern portion of the Embarcadero.




View from the bluff above what is now the Embarcadero. Circa 1945. Photo: Historical Society of Morro Bay.



View from shore looking west showing added ramp to raise height. November 1946. Photo: Neil R. Kline.



View looking towards shore as the Lucky Lady approaches the trestle. Circa 1943. Photo: Neil R. Kline.



Trestle Bridge to Pointeola. November 1946. Photo: Neil R. Kline.

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Cheryl Schuette <[cherylls@gotypist.com](mailto:cherylls@gotypist.com)>

**Subject:** Fwd: Morro Bay 1948

Have you seen this? Really cool, and before more of the Rock was blasted away to finish San Luis jetty, looks like. Before PGE, some of the naval pier/bridge still in place; before dredging finished adding to the Embarcadero area; White Point before the museum, etc.

<http://youtu.be/0uV19w0Og9A>



# Time for another story of Somewhat Old Morro Bay.

This one with a personal connection.

by Joe Dunlap

When I was a senior in high school, (class of 66) I somehow became interested in cars, and decided that I wanted to make a career out of maintaining and repairing them. This, in spite of the fact that I came to that realization far too late, probably April of 66, to enroll in Auto Shop classes.

I believe the shop and the course were started that fall, or possibly the year before.

So, what to do? Where to start at this late date. Well, like so many other young men of my age, I started first tinkering with my 58 Chevy Sedan Delivery, and at some point, someone suggested it might need a valve job, because of the awful clatter emanating from the valve cover when it was running, not to mention the haze of blue smoke from the tailpipe that followed me wherever I went. So, borrowing tools from my fathers leather bag, I set about removing the cylinder head, and immediately discovered one cannot remove head bolts with a 3/8" ratchet and socket. I was going to need something much larger.

The now-forgotten-someone who suggested this project suggested I might be able to borrow a 1/2" breaker bar and socket from a fellow who had a garage just a couple of blocks from my house. That garage, The Auto Clinic, is still extant. It is on Quintana Road now under the banner of Todds Garage, just east of the traffic circle, and it was run by an old fellow named Ed Spivey. (Thanks to Cathy Costa Ryan for her help in retrieving his name. I had long forgotten the name, but certainly not the man.)

Ed was a remarkable man. I don't know how old he was, but at the age of 17, he seemed as old as Methuselah to me.

In every encounter with him, he was always dressed in what seemed like the same dark brown, oil and grease stained overalls and welders skull cap, and always seemed to have his

head under a hood when I walked into the shop. But what was amazing, was the fact that the man was worked on a crutch! I don't know what his ailment was, but that crutch seemed permanently secured in his armpit, and he worked like a man half his age.

When I asked to borrow the tools, I asked if he could also grind the valves and seats in the cylinder head for me, and he cordially said yes, and proceeded to ask me if I had a "head set." Of course, I not only did not, I had no idea what a head set was. At that point, he took the time to explain that I needed a head gasket, which was part of a larger set of gaskets that would need to be replaced, and then went on to give me more tips about other things that would need attention on my "Stovebolt" six-cylinder Chevy.

To move the story along, suffice to say, I managed to get the head back on, and it ran well enough, although the blue smoke from the tailpipe became even worse. Some of you with an automotive background can certainly guess why.

While Mr. Spivey was indeed a kind fellow, helping out a floundering noob like me, his shop, on the other hand, was a different story. At that time, there was no concrete driveway. In fact, there was no concrete floor. Oil soaked dirt covered every square inch of the place. In this day and age, we have a name for a shop like that, though I shall refrain from using the term here. Let's just say the working conditions were somewhat less than ideal.

So, fast forward six years to 1972. I have a year and a half of auto tech courses at Cuesta College behind me, as well as three years, nine months, six days and 12 hours of service in the US Navy behind me, and have returned home to Morro Bay. I have enrolled once more at Cuesta College under the GI Bill and am working toward my degree in Auto Technology. As my classes don't begin until the afternoon, I decided to see if I could land at least a part-time job in a garage, to sharpen my skills at the same time. Remembering Mr. Spivey's kindness, I decided to pay him a visit.



*Time for another story of Somewhat Old Morro Bay.*  
*cont* \_\_\_\_\_

I drove down to his place and parked out front, and immediately noticed a change. Six years on, the place now had a concrete floor, and was relatively clean. On entering, I asked for Mr. Spivey, but the gentleman there said "He doesn't work here anymore." The new fellow, Dan Kallenberger, had move to Morro Bay from Los Angeles and bought the place from him. As we talked, I explained my situation, but he didn't need anyone at that time. I told him, I will work for you for nothing, just for the experience, and he accepted my offer. At that point, I asked him about the concrete floor. Had he had it put in when he bought the place? His answer, while inevitable, still shocked me.

"No," he said. "I uncovered it. It was buried under 2 or 3 inches of oily mud. Not only that, but I found a grease pit, covered over with railroad ties that were buried under the mud as well."

I worked for Dan for about four months before moving on to greener pastures, but did stay in touch with him until he retired sometime in the 80s.

Today, Todds Garage carries on under the same roof. The color has changed from dark brown to a grey over brown with a red stripe, but I'm sure it carries on in the tradition of the small town garage, keeping the locals vehicles running and, I hope, helping out the kid who wants to learn how to fix cars.

P.S. I am just about certain that Todds is the oldest, continuously operating garage in Morro Bay. It certainly dates to the 1950s, if not at least the 40s.



## Calling All Photo Collectors

We recently learned about one very rich source of photos of Morro Bay, stretching all the way from about 1940 to about 2010. That is truly exciting! And reminds us once more that we need to capture those photos for our digital archive for safe keeping.

The process is pretty simple. HSMB would set up a kind of production line, at your home or at our office, and begin to organize and photograph your images. We will assign a number to every photo, along with all the descriptive information we can get, and keep both your image and the details about it in a single digital file. Eventually, we will have a big database of images from Morro Bay's history for your enjoyment, and to support research.

The idea of photographing your old photos might seem redundant, but it actually gets us a high resolution image we can print from (maybe for a Hidden History interpretive panel, for example). Since the digital revolution makes storage so easy, we can build our database with a lot of our history and store it on a memory stick that fits in your pocket.

These photos of yours could support lots of our projects and programs. We could create displays illustrating pieces of our history, and put them in public spaces around town, for example.

We hope you can help.



*Please join us in preserving the history of this town . Members received discounts on books, free admission to presentations, and the pride of knowing we have contributed to this towns' heritage.*

info@historicalmorrobay.org [please print]

Name(s) or Company \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

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