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Newsletter

LAMPPOST

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Restaurant Scene

by Max Hauser

In February, **Nori Nori "Craft Handrolls"** opened at 124 Castro, replacing **Afuri Ramen + Dumpling**. The restaurant's rear section, pending at this writing but "getting close," could open in May as **Nikuya Japanese Steakhouse**. A staffer I spoke with was clearly enthused about the range of its planned menu.

738 Villa's **Café 86**, a chain coffee-tea-dessert shop featuring ube (purple yam) specialties, opened in February.

Café Terrace opened late March, 975 W. Dana, with display case of colorful pastry creations and an espresso bar. One of the owners told me it's an independent business with a "brunch" theme. The site previously housed Yakko Sushi (remembered in this newsletter, May 2022).

"Coming soon" at press time: **Limón Rotisserie**, 800 California at Castro.

Sushi Arashi remains pending at 240 Castro (formerly Kappo Nami Nami), per a license-change notice dated late January.

236 Castro, last home to **Umai Sushi by Mervyn's**, remains vacant with a "For Lease" since late last year.



A History in Prohibition: Gemello Winery

by Kevin Ferguson

John Gemello, my great grandfather, was a man of perseverance. In his twenties, he cultivated a vineyard in Piedmont, Italy. But he grew tired of the harsh winters wiping out his crops. This happened three out of four years. Finally, he decided to leave it all behind, for this hardly known New World in Northern California. He had read letters from friends and former Piedmont neighbors who had blazed the trail before him that this Santa Clara valley was a great place for wine makers.

He set sail for America in 1912, arrived just before Christmas and landed a job at the Almaden Winery soon after. In 1917, he partnered with two others in running a small orchard and vineyard on the Montebello Ridge in Cupertino. Two years later, they were able to sell at a good profit due to the high price of fruit following World War I.

Life was good.

Then, in 1920, Prohibition hit, banning the sale of alcohol.

He was forced to pivot, selling vegetables door-to-door. But Gemello never gave up his vision of running his own winery in the Santa Clara valley.

In 1924, a friend tipped him off that a ranch was for sale in Mountain View. The owners were Louis and Arthur Martel, the grandchildren of Henry Rengstorff. It intrigued him. So much, in fact, he recognized the 31-acre site west of El Camino as the perfect location for his grand plans.

The following year, he made a trifecta of deals to make it happen: selling

his interest in a Campbell farm and a Mountain View truck farm, and borrowing some money from a friend.

The deal was made, establishing the 31 acres west of El Camino (near what is now Rengstorff Ave) for what would become the Gemello Winery for the next six decades.

Prohibition ended December 1933. A month later, John Gemello and his 17-year-old son, Mario, opened for business.

The Gemello story is explored in depth in a forthcoming book, *Rain on the Monte Bello Ridge*, a memoir about health, aging and winemaking.

To read early release chapters for free, go to: gemello.substack.com/ •



Grandpa Mario &
Great Grandfather John Gemello

Safety Corner

Cooking Safety Tips

by Robert Maitland, MVFD\

Cooking brings family and friends together, provides an outlet for creativity and can be relaxing. But did you know the leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking? Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove.

By following a few safety tips, you can prevent these fires.

- Smother flames on the stovetop by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- Get out and call 9-1-1 if you have any doubts about extinguishing a small fire.

See: www.nfpa.org/Public-Education

- If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, do not use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food.
- If you leave the kitchen for even a short time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while the food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire—oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains—away from your stovetop. •



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Building Profile

Shake, Rattle and Roll in Old Mountain View

by Jerry Steach

This past April marked both the 117th anniversary of the great 1906 earthquake and, eerily, National Richter Scale Day, which commemorates the birth of Charles F. Richter, the “father” of seismographic measurements. Richter wasn’t quite six years old when the massive, 8.2-magnitude 1906 seismic event shook, rattled and rolled the region, from Santa Rosa to Santa Cruz. Nonetheless, he’d grow up to become a renowned seismologist and physicist, and in 1935 created the Richter Scale, which became the standard for measuring earthquakes’ intensity.

Mountain View wasn’t spared that 1906 earthquake’s wrath, despite being far from the epicenter. While no city residents were killed, fortunately, there was substantial damage to residential and commercial buildings, many in Old Mountain View. Among those hit hardest was the Ames Building, at 169 and 175 Castro St., whose entire back side crumbled (see photo, courtesy of the Mountain View Historical Association). It was painstakingly rebuilt in the following years.

The Ames Building was first erected in 1903 by and named for Mountain View teacher, author and penmanship expert Prof. Daniel Titus Ames. Due in part to the earthquake-caused damage to the building, Ames lost most of his life savings, though he eventually recovered financially. As he rebuilt the Ames Building, where he lived until his death, he infused it with a blend of architectural types. Ames passed away not long after his namesake structure’s rebuilding was complete. Over the subsequent years, it’s been home to a range of businesses – a hardware store, a newspaper, a grocery, and various restaurants – and housed residents in its several apartments, while a succession of owners made upgrades to the building’s facade. Its most-recent retail occupants were Mountain View Lock and Key and the Jehning Family Lock Museum. (As of this writing, an as-yet-unnamed food-service business is reported to be the Ames Building’s next street-level tenant).

Of course, countless other Old Mountain View structures, both commercial and residential, also were adversely impacted by the 1906 earthquake, but the Ames Building stands out largely due both to its historic role in the city’s commerce and its resilience – rising from the rubble to become an integral part of Downtown Mountain View for more than century. •



Ames Building - Old Mountain View

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Art in Mountain View

Going For All The Marbles: Artist Don Joslyn

by Don McPhail

The late artist Don Joslyn installed his young marbles player in 1990, at the front of Kaiser-Permanente on Castro Street. It's a bit of a stretch to link the agile Mountain View youngster, with his cap turned-around and a slingshot handy in his back pocket, with the majestic Nez Perce (Nimiipuu) warrior who guards the courthouse in Lewiston, Idaho. They are created by the same skilled artist, and each evokes a notable reaction.

The marble-shooting boy prompts little admiration — except from oth-

er young competitors from that era; while the Nez Perce rider inspires. The bronze sculpture is an idealized image of a peaceful Native American, and the marble shooter is a realistic bronze of a kid with marbles and a skateboard. Does the artist contrast his vision of a heroic nation with his own modest youth?

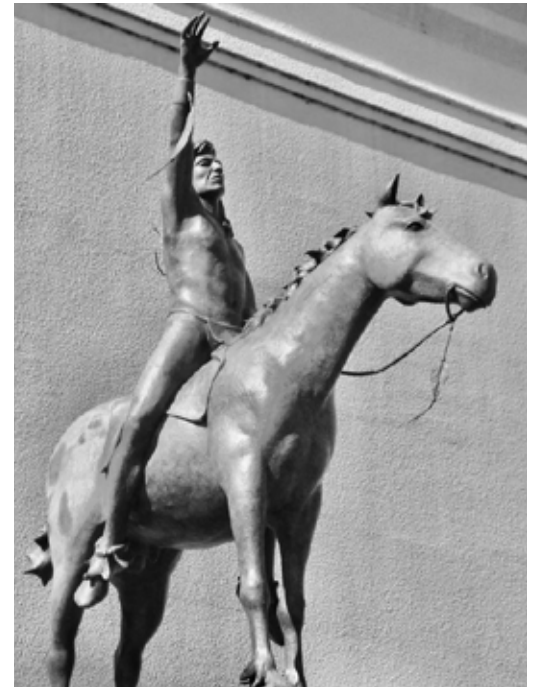
According to Don Joslyn's obituary in the Lewiston Tribune, Joslyn displayed "...his spirit and sense of humor, which was as unique as each of his paintings, sculptures, friends, fly-fishing flies,

teaching styles, or pieces of wisdom that were truly symbolic awakenings."

Donald Dixon Joslyn died in 2007, at the age of 65, at his final home in Eagle Point, Oregon. In his short life he was an award-winning teacher, and honored citizen, winning leadership tributes and named an Outstanding Educator of America. He came to the Bay Area in 1974, teaching for 23 years at Mission College. •



Going for All the Marbles by Don Joslyn



Indian Summer by Don Joslyn



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Upcoming Events

Mercy-Bush Park

MAY 21
Sunday

A Scavenger Hunt
(in the neighborhood)

JUN 3
Saturday afternoon

The Wheels Party
A neighborhood ride with a party vibe

JUN 16-17
Friday - Saturday

CERT Shake Out
More details on omvna.org

JUL ?
Details to Come

Summer Potluck

AUG 26
Saturday afternoon

The Ice Cream Social
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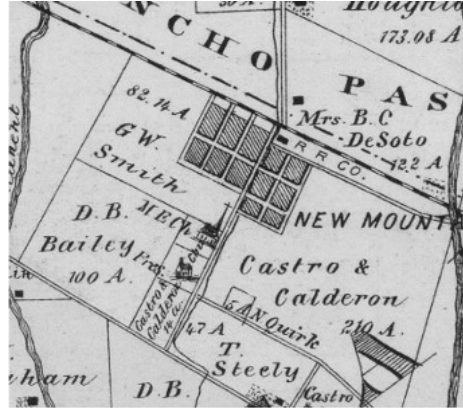
Community events of the
Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association (OMVNA)

Mountain View History

George Washington Smith: Early Old Mountain View Land Owner

by Susanne Martinez

The 1876 map of Old Mountain View shows that a portion of land on the west side of Castro Street, running from the railroad tracks to about Mercy Street, was owned by George Washington Smith.



George, born in Kentucky in 1838, was a blacksmith by trade. According to his obituary, he made his way to San Francisco at the age of 24 with \$18 in his pocket. Like many other early Old Mountain View land owners, he spent some time in the gold mines and then in 1865 settled in Santa Clara County. He combined general farming and his blacksmith business on the plot of land he owned in the heart of what is today Old Mountain View, which was then sometimes called "Mountain View Station."

Smith was active in the expansion of the surrounding area. An April 1874 article from the San Jose Mercury News said, "Business at this place is looking up. Improvements are going on all around. The noise of the hammer and saw is heard on all sides. People are just beginning to realize that Mountain View Station is destined to be one of the most important business points in the county... G.W. Smith has enlarged his blacksmith and wagon shop, and has now one of the most complete and extensive establishments of the kind in the county." Another 1875 article described Smith, who had invested in a local foundry and machine shop, as "a man of means."

Today, Mountain View's police headquarters in addition to many homes and small businesses are located on land once owned by George Washington Smith. •

What's Up

Update on New Development in Old Mountain View

by Robert Cox

MTC grant: Finishing a revision of Mountain View's Downtown Precise Plan within the next two years has been a goal of many Council Members. To help fund this, city staff applied for a grant from the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). This was expected to be a routine item which did not require council discussion. But the staff report revealed the specific conditions of the grant: mandatory 2-3 times up-zonings for both office and residential projects. Staff had asked MTC if the Castro Street historic retail and restaurant district could be excluded, but MTC declined to allow for this.

Many Mountain View residents, concerned that accepting the grant could signal the end of the historic district and worsen the jobs/housing imbalance that caused the current housing crisis, wrote letters to the council, and spoke at the council meeting. They asked that the grant application be terminated or suspended until public outreach could be conducted. A few residents, however, urged acceptance of the grant speaking in favor of much higher densities for

Music on Castro

A new music series will start May 3 on Castro Street and run through early fall. Every Wednesday from 5 – 6:45 p.m. singer/songwriters will perform live music while the community shops and dines downtown. Performances are currently scheduled on the 200 block of Castro Street.

Where: Downtown Castro Street

Opinions expressed herein are not official positions of the OMVNA Steering Committee or its members unless otherwise stated.

Contact the newsletter team at: editor@omvna.org

Submissions for our August 2023 issue are due by July 19, 2023

Continued on page 7

Public Library

Spring Events at MV Public Library

by Kyle Hval, library.mountainview.gov

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May

In celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, Mountain View Public Library is offering a variety of programs for all ages showcasing different facets of Asian cultures.

Wednesday, May 10

Miss Renee will perform stories, rhymes and songs in Mandarin and English in the Children's Room Octagon. For ages 2-5.

Saturday, May 13

Enjoy an afternoon concert of Indian classical music performed the Apoorvaa Deshpande Collective. The group will perform music that showcases different Ragas (or musical scales) from India and vocalist Apoorvaa Deshpande will offer historical insights about the rich lineage of Indian classical music.

Saturday, May 20

You're invited to a morning of music with the Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra, featuring talented young musicians, who will perform traditional Chinese music with authentic Chinese instruments.

Saturday, May 27

Professional art instructor Pauline Tsui is offering a Chinese brush painting workshop for ages 12 and up. Pauline will teach simple techniques and demonstrate how to paint flowers and small animals. Learn about the symbolic meanings of the Four Noble Flowers and how they inspire strength, resilience and kindness.

Author Talk with Dennis Lehane

You're invited to an exclusive conversation with *New York Times* bestselling author Dennis Lehane on Tuesday, June 6. He will discuss his latest novel, *Small Mercies*, and answer questions about his writing process, his illustrious career as



a novelist, his work in film and TV and much more. Following the discussion, a brief question and answer session will be held with attendees.

Four of his novels—*Live*

Continued on page 7

Notes from the Chair

May 2023 Update

by David Lewis

Development still appears to be proceeding apace, courtesy of always optimistic office developers, a state legislature that believes in trickle-down housing, and a state agency (ABAG) forecasting enormous population growth in the area, despite decreasing population in all of the Bay Area counties, including Mountain View.

The City Council recently turned down a \$1.2M grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, that would have committed the city to a large increase in the density of office developments downtown, along Castro Street, potentially lining it with 5-6 story office buildings. Mountain View approval of this grant, and accepting the funds could have led to massive office projects along Castro Street, since office developments are less work and more profit for developers.

A development project on Hope Street, for a combined boutique hotel/office project approved years ago, will cause the loss of 150 parking spaces for 2-1/2 years during construction, on top of the problems caused by all the construction trucks and equipment for the project. The developer, Robert Green, is not required to do anything about the 2-1/2 year loss of these parking spaces, a block

Continued on page 7

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MTV Eventors

That Morning with all the Eggs...

by Joan Thunderbuilt

It was a damp and bright Sunday morning. Petrichor filled the air. Fifty-six HIDERS woke to find an April Fool's rain shower had marched through the neighborhood while they were asleep. Rain or Shine it said! So they commenced to hide 48+ eggs in each of their yards.

At 9 am the five different colored maps were ready and emailed to the hundreds of registered HUNTERS. The final configuration had been a spectacular puzzle for the gamemaker. Equal parts math and maze.

It's 10 am – Go time. The rules were clear. Stick to your route, and pick up one egg at each location on your map. There were 10-12 locations for every hunter. Some HIDERS even had bonus surprises.

I loved watching the little children discover the eggs!

—HIDER

The day had a few hiccups. But the overall consensus was fun for all. If you missed out participating, plan on it next year. It is pure joy hidden in a plastic egg.

My kids LOVED IT!

—HUNTER on Green Route

The statistics:

207 HUNTERS + 56 HIDERS + 5 Routes + 126 Families + 2688 Eggs = thousands of giggles and smiles in the neighborhood.

A special thank you to the HIDERS for without them, this event would not be possible. And a huge shout out to the HIDERS who rallied their neighbors to create clusters (we are talking about you Loreto, Eldora, Ehrhorn and Oak streets!).

If you liked this event and want to participate or help create more community connections, check out the Old MTV EVENTORS online at omvna.org for the upcoming events calendar and more. Email us Social@omvna.org.

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The Saga of 600 Fairmont Ave

by Mary Hodder, February, owner (with Falk) 1992-2023

600 Fairmont Avenue at View Street was originally the second story of Fanucci & Sons' commercial building located at the NW corner of El Camino Real and Castro Street. Built in 1920 or so in 1938, they cut off the upper story of the Spanish Revival building, purchased the lot at 600 Fairmont located two blocks away, and moved it where it stands today as the Fanucci's "retirement" single-story home.

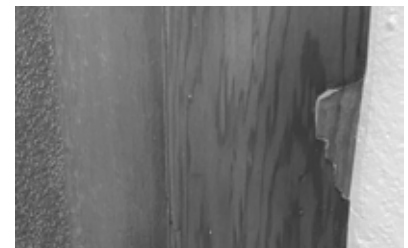
The Fanuccis added a garage to the property (this from conversations with Fanucci grandchildren who grew up on View Street). As a second floor, the building appeared to have an open center room balcony and stairwell down to the first floor. Transforming it to a single story house, the center room was created with oak floors in 1938, in contrast to the douglas fir floors through the rest of the rooms. There is still a cutout in one piece of door-trim that looks like stair railing, and there was an old chandelier fitting at the ceiling with a 60s pink ball light through the 90s, with the upper of two three-way switches. With the center floor open, the chandelier probably lit the lower story from above. This center room has six doors opening into it, from apparently the former offices. Each door has eight large panes of translucent glass for privacy, allowing light into the otherwise windowless room.

Underneath the house in the crawl space we found numerous center ceiling light canopies on a few pieces of stucco, and some old knob and tube wiring, along with the original metal jacks used in 1938 to move the house.

There is a very large spacious bathroom probably installed in 1938, in a former office. A former owner removed the clawfoot tub for a 60s pink one, but we put a new cast iron 1938 style one back in the same place under the windows. And the original office's bathroom is still the smaller bath today.

See photo of the front of the house with new windows and front door, and replaced stucco and weatherproofing. Outdoor hardscaping includes decomposed granite with granite stone borders. The first load of granite stones (weighing twenty-ish lbs) was reportedly acquired for free by "Bosco" in the early 70s when SF's Market Street was redone. We added additional granite cobblestones as other older streets in SF are dug up and sold every few years. The stones are unique from Yosemite / Hetch Hechy. Given that Mountain View has 5% ownership of Hetch Hechy it feels nice to have them here at our house as another link to Mountain View history.

That we know of there have been five owners: Fanuccis, Bosco, Widmans, Slacks, and Falk each bringing this unique historic gem forward through the last century of adaptive reuse and modernization while maintaining original architecture and craftsman style. •



2023 OMVNA Steering Committee

Chair:	David Lewis	Subcommittee Chairs
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Secretary:	Jamsheed Agahi	Residential Parking: Robert Cox
At-Large:	Max Hauser	Jamil Shaikh
At-Large:	Lorraine Wormald	Old MTV Eventors: Kristin Bailey
Newsletter:	Susan Bickford	Advertising: advertising@omvna.org
Community Liaison:	Jamil Shaikh	Next Meeting: July 24, 2023

Profiles

Library Gratitude

by Carol Lewis

One Mountain View (MV) institution made the COVID years much more bearable. We shouldn't forget to thank that most honorable place, which continued to operate amid the post-Covid turbulence of massive economic and social change.

Our Mountain View Public Library made our lives brighter when social contact was at a minimum. Books took us on vacations that were scrapped, and made possible contact with new characters, places, and events far more personal and involved than on other platforms.

Our library found ways to provide us our book requests outside and safely, in carefully placed bags outside the library entrance, having taken the library staff hours to find the books, package them safely, wheel them outside, and wait patiently, for customers to arrive for their books.

The book pickup center became a gathering place to see fellow humans of all ages collecting their reading material, with brief social interactions and a sense of community during a time of extreme isolation.

The library refused to close down and instead found a safe way to keep its doors open and us with a steady supply of reading material. We owe the MV Library, and all such libraries, a deep, heart-felt thumbs-up! •

Notes from the Chair

Continued from page 5

from Castro. We also have a large project, replacing the old Wells Fargo bank building, at Church and Castro, that will cause massive problems (noise, traffic, parking, air pollution, etc.) for the immediate area for years.

Traffic, and ever more egregious traffic violations are more of a problem, with very little evidence of any traffic enforcement by our financially constrained MVPD. We have nowhere enough human police officers to enforce all the rules, and a reluctance to go to more automatic systems like speed cameras, red-light cameras, and license plate readers.

On the COVID front, it appears the pandemic is waning, with a few last gasps. We now have a new Omicron subvariant, Arcturus, XBB.1.16, moderately more infectious than the current champion, XBB.1.5, with about 75% of new infections locally. We are down to about 1-2 deaths per week in Santa Clara County. Infections have dropped dramatically, and the wastewater numbers are down to the Low-Medium range. There's still COVID around. Caution is still advised. A second Omicron-specific booster shot has been approved for those over 65 and those immunocompromised, and is certainly worth considering, along with mask wearing in crowded indoor situations. •

What's Up

Continued from page 4

office and residential near the Castro Caltrain station. The council voted 4-1 to not move forward with the grant proposal, signaling that Mountain View should chart its own course for the future of the downtown.

Housing Element: At the same council meeting, the council adopted revisions to its Housing Element proposal. The revisions included a 20% reduction in park fees for new developments, and elimination of minimum parking requirements for major areas of the city including: the Old Mountain View, El Camino, San Antonio, East Whisman, and Moffett areas. Proponents of the changes argued this would reduce construction costs, while opponents noted that it would increase developer profits while putting greater strain on our city's infrastructure. Council voted 6-1 to accept the changes, hoping that the state will be satisfied and approve the Housing Element. With no approved Housing Element, Mountain View is required to accept "builders' remedy" projects, which do not conform to the city's zoning standards. Five such projects have been submitted by developers in the last few months. •

Library

Continued from page 5

by *Night; Mystic River; Gone, Baby, Gone;* and *Shutter Island*—have been adapted into films. A fifth, *The Drop*, was adapted by Lehane himself into a film starring Tom Hardy, Noomi Rapace and James Gandolfini in his final role. Lehane was a staff writer on the acclaimed HBO series, *The Wire*, and also worked as a writer-producer on HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*. •



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