

## Morgan Hill Historical Society


# Historically Speaking

Our mission is to "preserve and share the history of Morgan Hill, and its environs, to inspire a sense of community."

Published Quarterly

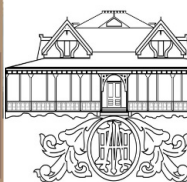
April 2019

### History Conversations



*History Conversations*

MONTHLY LECTURE SERIES  
COVERING A VARIETY OF  
TOPICS ABOUT LOCAL  
HISTORY.



### Second Annual Children's Tea

Please come join us for tea, fun, and games!

Boys and girls of all ages (accompanied by an adult) are invited to the 2nd annual tea to meet the Mad Hatter and other fun characters. Children are encouraged to dress up in the style of Lewis Carroll's classic children's fantasy book.

The second annual "Alice in Wonderland Mad Hatter's Children's Tea Party" will be held Saturday May 4 at 11 o'clock in the morning at Hiram Morgan Hill House, 17860 Monterey Road.

For information, contact [bueno@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:bueno@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com). Make your reservations now because this event sells out. Tickets are \$40 per person and can be purchased by going to [morganhillhistoricalsociety.org](http://morganhillhistoricalsociety.org)



## 2019 Prohibition Party



Our 5th Annual Prohibition Party fundraiser is slated for June 22. We have the fabulous Zinfandel Stompers booked to play Dixie-land Jazz music from the 1920s and 1930s. This is a wonderful night under the stars at historic Villa Mira Monte. The Hiram

Morgan Hill House is turned into a speakeasy and dance lessons are available for all.

We love to think of this event as Morgan Hill's most fun party. We hope you can join us at this year's Prohibition Party. It's a great way to dress up in costumes from a fascinating time in American history and dance under the stars at Villa Mira Monte.

### Downtown Historic Walking Tour



Dates: Second Saturday of the month

Times: 10:00am to 12:00pm

Location: Meet at Third Street Plaza near Monterey Road & Third Street

# Co-Presidents' Messages

## Co-President Kathy Sullivan:



Kathy Sullivan  
Co-President

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce the new directors recently appointed by your board in October and November of 2018. We are facing challenging and exciting times and these directors bring diverse cultural and professional backgrounds that will enhance the society's sustainability in preserving and sharing the history of our community. Their bios are included in this issue.

Welcome:

**William "Bill" Briggs, Co-President**

**Karl Bjarke, Vice-President**

**Jaime Fonseca, Treasurer**

**Robert "Bob" Foster, Director**

**Ron Kumar, Director**

**Rosanne Oty, Director**

We thank them for their commitment to preserving and sharing our community history!

## Co-President Bill Briggs



Bill Briggs  
Co-President

Our local history is a fascinating tapestry of the many cultures and traditions which have made this area what it is today. From the original indigenous inhabitants of our valley, the Spanish explorers and Franciscan missionaries, the Mexican rancheros, Anglo gold-seekers, San Francisco society patrons, ranchers, orchardists, and Asian immigrants, we have evolved into a vibrant multicultural community. Our diversity grows as new cultures add new texture to our tapestry. Each group has its own story to tell and together we have a lot to celebrate.

Governance of the Morgan Hill Historical Society is not a responsibility to be taken lightly. Like most other all-volunteer nonprofits, the governing board of the Morgan Hill Historical Society is currently experiencing all the challenges of growth and sustainability. Maintaining the jewel that is Villa Mira Monte with its two historical buildings and park-like property is a major undertaking. Coupled with a mission to extend our historical heritage into the community and the local schools, it is an expensive—proposition. Many of our board members have selflessly done double and triple duty for many years on all the associated activities. Recently, the Board has attracted several new members with diverse talents to lead the Society into the future. We're establishing better-defined priorities and developing the strategic plans to implement them.

But we face many challenges. Our need for volunteers is ongoing. Resources never seem to be adequate and we need to find new avenues of funding. Because the Historical Society serves as steward for what is ultimately a City resource, the partnership with the City needs to be strengthened. Our regional marketing efforts need to be enhanced to attract visitors from throughout the Bay Area and beyond. We'd like to see our Museum archives more properly curated in controlled conditions with more exhibit space and be more widely used by researchers. None of these efforts will come easily or soon.

We owe enormous thanks to our dedicated volunteers and a big thank-you to all our members and community business partners. And we recognize that we are building on the dedication of all those who have worked for the Society over the years, just as we build the future of our community on the fascinating legacy of the past.



# 2019 Save the Dates

## History Conversations

First Saturday of the month  
10 to 11:30am

•

## Downtown Historic

### Walking Tour

Second Saturday of the month  
10:00 to 12:00am

•

## Membership Meeting

April 24 6 p.m. Social, 6:30 p.m. Meeting

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## Spring Children's Tea

Saturday, May 4, 2019

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## Prohibition Party

Saturday, June 22

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MHHS Thank You BBQ (for members, volunteers,  
donors and community partners)

July 24 6 p.m. Social, 7 p.m. Dinner

•

## Community Picnic

TBD

•

## 50th Founders' Dinner

Saturday, September 7, 2019

•

## Membership Meeting

October 23

•

## Holiday Boutique



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## Museum Open Hours

Dates: Fridays 1:00-3:00pm &  
Saturdays 10:00am to 1:00pm

Location: 17860 Monterey Road, Morgan Hill CA 95037

Enjoy touring 2 homes that are over 100 years old. Learn about Hiram Morgan Hill and Diana Murphy Hill's history in the Morgan Hill area. The Morgan Hill Museum houses many artifacts and exhibits pertaining to the history of the area and significant individuals who spent time here. The

Hiram Morgan Hill House was once the country home of the Hills and is currently listed on the Registry Of National Historic Landmarks. Also located on the property are the Centennial History Trail and Rose Gardens. The site, known as Villa Mira Monte, is open from dawn to dusk most days.

For more information, to schedule a group tour or to volunteer, contact us at [info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com)



## Wine Tasting Discontinued

Sadly, the last dates for wine tasting at VMM will be April 6 - 7 and June 1 - 2, 12:00 to 5:00 both days. Please join us this weekend to thank the participating wineries for over two years of treating the community with the pleasures of their wines.

Claude & Evelyn Solanas, Paradise Valley Vineyards, [paradisevallyvineyard.com](http://paradisevallyvineyard.com)

Ruth & Mike Mann, Mann Cellars, [manncellars.com](http://manncellars.com)

If you are a fan of their wines, visit their websites for ordering information.

Ruth & Claude, we have very much enjoyed the partnership and wish you the best!

## Holiday Tea Fundraiser was a Fantastic Success

Even though Christmas is well past, we want to thank the Holiday Tea Committee for once again raising over \$10,000 to support educational programs and the preservation, maintenance and operation of Villa Mira Monte.

Thanks to the committee, Edie Atkins, Madeline Bottari, Gayle Lewis, Linda Withrow, Margo Hinnenkamp, Sue Olt, Ellie Weston, Kathy Sullivan. And of course, we could not have done this without the many volunteers and high school students who work the days of the teas.

Our deepest appreciation for all you do.



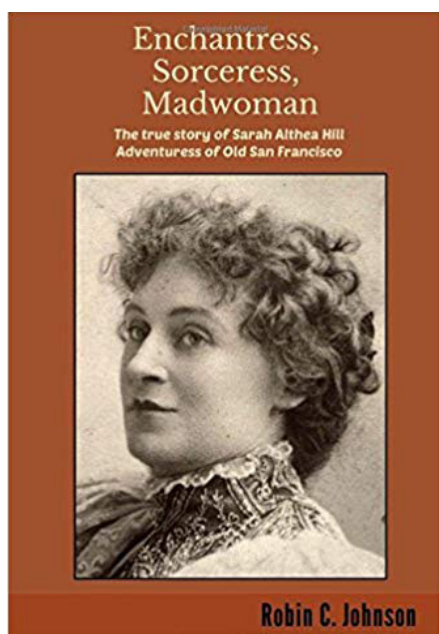
# Morgan Hill House Book Nook

For those of you who enjoy a good book, snuggled under a comforter, on a cold, rainy day like the ones we've been having, read on.

Discover *Enchantress, Sorceress, Madwoman* by Robin C. Johnson, published in 2014 by California Venture Books, 230 pages, \$20.00. This book recounts the life, loves, and trials of Sara Althea Hill, sister of our own Hiram Morgan Hill. After the death of their parents, these siblings, in their 20s, moved to San Francisco from Missouri in 1871. They participated in the active San Francisco social life, with the goal of becoming rich. Diana Murphy was Hiram's ticket to that goal; Sara had to work a little harder! After several romances with wealthy men, Sara at last attracted the attentions of Senator William Sharon. After a fairly short courtship, the Senator and Sara signed a marriage contract, not to be made public for two years – the Senator's request. Then things get really interesting! After the two



Sue Olt  
Director



years had passed, the Senator, having meanwhile moved on to other romantic interests, denied having signed that contract. Sara sued him for breach of promise, among other things. What followed were eight years of Court battles in State, Federal, and the Supreme Court. The accounts of witnesses' and Sara's testimony are based on Court records and salacious newspaper accounts of the time. Never one to tell the truth if it didn't suit her, Sara had an amazing ability to coerce friends and associates into lying for her case. A few of those "witnesses" had later perjury trials of their own. I won't spoil the ending for you. I will just say, "Be careful what you wish for!" (This would make a spectacular movie script.)

*A Visual History of Pacific Congress Springs, Saratoga*, by Sanders & Bookman, published in 2016 by San Martin Press, 91 pages, \$29.95. The authors' Preface reads, "Based on postcard images and original photographs, this book traces the history of the Pacific Congress Springs from the time of the discovery of the mineral waters by European settlers in the 1850s to the resort's closure in 1932, and of its more modest neighbor, Azule Mineral Springs". Congress Hall, one of the "premier resorts" on the West Coast, was first built in 1865 near McCartysville, later to be renamed Saratoga. In 1881, after several owners, the Hall was enlarged to 63 rooms, \$2.50/night. There

was a grand ballroom, and a separate children's dining room. Guests could enjoy hunting, fishing, and the "waters". Because these waters contained the same minerals and in the same proportions as those of the famous Congress Springs in Saratoga, NY, McCartysville was renamed Saratoga, and the rest is history. The Hall burned in 1903 and the resort became a daytime park until 1932 when it was closed altogether. The mineral waters continued to be bottled and sold after the fire. The postcards and photos of the time are wonderful and illustrate a wonderful by-gone era.

*A Children's Discovery Book about Morgan Hill, California*, by Cynthia Miller, 2010, 64 pages, \$11.00. This delightful book, for children 5-12 and their parents, includes activities based on natural scenic areas and activity centers in and around Morgan Hill. Informative and fun, find out about Anderson Lake, Coyote Bike Trail, El Toro, Downtown Farmers' Market, The Grange Hall, the Community and Cultural Center, and the Aquatics Center. You will never again be at a loss for somewhere interesting to take your children, or maybe just yourself! Also included is a list of streets and schools and the people they are named after.

*The Mineral Springs of Santa Clara County*, by Ian Sanders, published in 2010 by San Martin Press, 149 pages, \$29.95. The author's preface reads, "I would...like to think that the presentation of this visual history of a contradictory time at the turn of the 20th Century – a time of elegance and simplicity, of opulence and hardship – will be of interest to both residents of, and visitors to, the iconic region known the world over as Silicon Valley, California". Resplendent with postcards and photos taken at the time, this book describes the main resorts of Alum Rock Park, Gilroy Hot Springs, Madrone Soda Springs, and Saratoga's Pacific Congress Springs. In these resorts, lodges offered dancing and games in the evenings, hunting and fishing during the day. Open only for daytime activities, these smaller springs offered hunting and fishing: Azule, Banta Spring, New Almaden Vichy Springs, Santa Teresa Spring, and Soda Spring. In addition to bathing in the water, these resorts also bottled their waters for sale. Makes you want to do some exploring around Santa Clara County!

## What a Great Opportunity...



Margo Hinnenkamp  
Director

We warmly welcome all members who would like to join our esteemed group of docents.

Our wonderful docents are the people who make it possible for the Morgan Hill House and the museum to be open to the public on Fridays from 1-3 PM and on Saturdays from 10 AM to 1 PM. All of our docents agree that it is such a

rewarding experience to meet new people and to share the history of our city and our beautiful historic properties.

No prior experience is required to serve as a docent because we provide all the training you need and the more time you spend at our facilities, the more you will learn.

The time commitment is completely up to you. Many docents sign up for a monthly shift and others work more or less frequently. It is completely up to you.

If you have questions or are ready to sign up as a docent, please contact: Margo Hinnenkamp, 408-782-1712 or [margohin@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:margohin@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com).

## Rotary Grant



Thank you, Rotary Club of Morgan Hill, for your generosity!

Rotary Club of Morgan Hill is a significant MHHS community partner. MHHS was awarded a 2019 Rotary Grant for \$1,150 to purchase a new stove and microwave. The old units did function properly. These appliances are used for the Living History Field Trip Program when students enter the Hiram Morgan Hill House as servants to prepare tea cakes to serve at Diana Hill's tea. The students then exit the kitchen, don their social attire and enter the house as Lady Diana's guests for tea where they learn the social customs of the day.

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# Villa Mira Monte Improvements & Projects

Thanks to County and City grant funds, and a healthy dose of Historical funds:

The Hiram Morgan Hill House has a beautiful new roof and the doves that were originally perched on points of each gable have returned.

The chimney chase has been restored as a project during the south wall renovation. Along with new water tight colored glass windows flanking the chimney on the second story.

The wrought iron fencing makes a striking statement to identify the site. Elec-

tronic gates open automatically at dawn (7:00 am) and close at dusk (9:00 pm) to secure the site during hours when Villa Mira Monte is closed. Gates will be closed during private events.

Security cameras have been installed and provide for 24-hour surveillance with video backup to capture any unwanted activity. Oh, the driveway! Thanks to volunteers from SCAPA (South County Pilots Assn.) the drive was finally graded and leveled out with new base rock. MHHS paid for the base rock, and SCAPA donated the manpower.

Expanded parking area thanks to Chris Ghione, Scott Creer and the City of Morgan Hill for grading, rolling and trucking in pavement shavings from Monterey Road to create a great parking surface.

The couple hundred rosebushes have been trimmed and sprayed and we now await the enjoyment of their beautiful blooms coming soon. This spring we will begin improvements to the front lawn areas.

Kathy Napoli is leading a committee including Native American tribe resources to begin planting a native garden this spring. The garden will serve as an educational tool for field trips and once established, offer the ability to demonstrate the harvesting of grasses and herbs, and crafts such as basket weaving.

## 2019 Projects Coming Up

This summer the Hiram Morgan Hill House veranda floor and pillar bases will be replaced.

Porch railings on the Morgan Hill Museum will be replaced.

Painting both the houses on the site is scheduled for this year.



*Busy Schedule?  
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## Membership History Makers Drawing Winners

Our deepest appreciation to all 2019 members who submitted their paid memberships before the December 31st, 2018 deadline and qualified for the History Makers Prize Drawing. Congratulation to the winners:

Susan Williams  
Richard & Anne Leininger  
Joan Marfia Lewis  
David & Patricia Sebald  
Robert & Lori Mains  
Rob Bettencourt

*Thank  
you*



It's not too late to send in your membership, no matter what level of membership you select. All funds support Historical Society preservation and educational programs and events. If you don't have the handy mailer sent to you in November, you can print a form from and pay for your membership right from our website: [morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](http://morganhillhistoricalsociety.com).

Thank you so much for your support in preserving Morgan Hill's local history for now and for future generations of our city's residents.

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## Field Trip Tours Begin Again

By Margaret Rodrigues

On March 1 our Morgan Hill Historical Society Children's Field Trips began for the spring semester

Our program is highly successful and thoroughly enjoyed by both parent chaperones and the children. It is interactive, educational, hands-on, and interdisciplinary. We have some tremendous volunteers that make this program happen. However, we are in desperate need of adding a few more docents so we can continue to offer this award-winning opportunity to the youth of Morgan Hill.

We have worked tirelessly in developing a program that not only highlights our founding families, but is also based on the National Social Studies standards. All information a volunteer needs to know is found in our Docent binder which Terri Hennessey has compiled. We will have anyone interested in volunteering to shadow us prior to committing. We have scripts, set-up and take down descriptions



and activities all planned, stocked and with examples.

You don't have to be a teacher to help us out. The reward for volunteering is a child's smile, a big thank you, new friends and a knowledge that you have helped preserve the history of Morgan Hill for the next generation.

The Valley of Heart's Delight

**Mike Monroe**

Santa Clara Valley Historian & Naturalist  
[mike.valleyofheartsdelight@gmail.com](mailto:mike.valleyofheartsdelight@gmail.com)

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# Looking Back at 2018's Accomplishments

By Kathy Sullivan

What successes did the Morgan Hill Historical Society achieve in 2018? Here's a list of what we accomplished last year with the team of great people we have--let's keep up the good work!

- Expanded the Board of Directors by six persons
- Roof, windows and south wall of the Hiram Morgan Hill House renovated thanks in major part to a grant from the Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission
  - Funds for the City of Morgan paid for a significant portion of the security cameras and wrought iron fencing and gates installation
  - Partnered with former Eagle Scout Matt Pearce and current Eagle Scout Chris Dzek, both with Troop 799, to repair the storage shed
  - Expanded VMM parking area thanks to the City of Morgan Hill
  - Morgan Hill Rotary Club grant paid for a new stove and microwave used for school field trips.
- Expanded Media coverage: Safeway Shopping Cart Ad, Facebook, improved website and local calendars
- Community engaging: volunteered at the Friday Night Music Series and the Taste of Morgan Hill
- Conducted field trips for approximately 800 local students and in-class trunk shows with approximately 500 students
- Hosted an Amah Mutsun Tribal Meeting
- Hosted the Bay Area Historic House Museums (BAHHS) group for a meeting and tour
- Hosted ten History Conversations (First Saturdays) to share local history with the community
- Hosted monthly Wine Tastings at the Hiram Morgan Hill House
- Staged nine exhibits in the Morgan Hill House and the museum
- Produced monthly Pop-up Exhibits at the Morgan Hill Library
- Conducted monthly Historic Downtown Walking Tours (Second Saturdays)
- Participated in the LCAC's Art a la Cart event
- First Alice in Wonderland Mad Hatter Children's Tea
- Speakeasy Prohibition Party
- Hosted the Morgan Hill Photography Club's photo exhibit
- Partnered with Kiwanis Morgan Hill to serve food at the Villa Mira Monte Community Picnic
- 49th Annual Founder's Dinner
- Holiday Boutique
- 9th Annual Holiday Teas



Photo by Susan Brazelton

Friends of "Alice" enjoy a moment of laughter with her at the 2018 Mad Hatters Tea Party in May.

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## City Partnership

We thank City Staff members, Chris Ghione, Maureen Tobin, Nichole Martin, Jennie Tucker, and others for their work with our team to provide services that support Villa Mira Monte and MHHS events. We appreciate the work of Norma Bussing and Brigitte Crawford – Library, Cultural and Arts Commissioners (LCAC) – as they work with MHHS to explore opportunities for support.

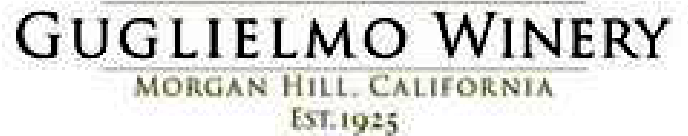




# Thank You To All Our Business Sponsors

We at the Morgan Hill Historical Society thank all the many individuals and businesses who help us preserve the history of our community through events at Villa Mira Monte. Throughout this newsletter, you'll see the advertisements for the wonderful businesses who have donated generously to our mission.

If you might wish to join these businesses and help us through sponsorship, please feel free to contact us at [info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com). Your donations are tax deductible.



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### Become a Member of MHHS

Join those who care about preserving our heritage and enjoy learning about our area's history. Your membership dues help support us in preserving archives, creating exhibits, producing field trips for school age children and other educational events for all ages, hosting member meetings and producing this newsletter.

#### Annual Membership Options:

##### Individual \$35

Quarterly newsletter, Historically Speaking, Invitation to quarterly member meetings including July Appreciation BBQ, member only events and free admission to educational events.

##### Family \$50

Above benefits for all immediate family members.

##### Patron \$150

Above benefits plus: Recognition in MHHS newsletter, Historically Speaking.

##### Business \$250

Above benefits plus: Business card size ad in Historically Speaking.

##### Enthusiast \$500

Above benefits plus: Acknowledgement in our recognition window.

##### Maecenas \$750

Above benefits plus: Private wine tasting and tour of VMM. Two complimentary reservations for Founders' Dinner.

##### Benefactor \$1000

Above benefits plus: Invitation to special Benefactor Event.