



Historically Speaking

Morgan Hill Historical Society

Established 1971

Our Mission is to “preserve and share the history of Morgan Hill, and its environs, to inspire a sense of community.”

Published Quarterly

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★ A New Year ★

MEDIA UPDATE

Robin Shepherd

History Makers
A Documentary Film Series

Our *History Makers* docuseries is making an impact! Our first feature-length film received rave reviews from the community at its September 2021 debut at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse as part of our 50th anniversary celebration. The film recounts the founding of the Morgan Hill Historical Society and the accomplishments of its dedicated volunteers in preserving two landmark historic buildings and creating the Centennial History Trail, resulting in what is now our local history park, Villa Mira Monte. Local community leaders are calling it a “must see” for all residents of the Morgan Hill area.

We are proud to share that *History Makers* 2021 has been selected for screening during Local Filmmaker’s Day at this year’s Poppy Jasper International Film Festival on April 7th at 5 pm. Visit www.pjiff.org for ticket information and [follow us on Facebook](#) for festival details. If you can’t attend PJIFF 2022, you can watch the film on our website: [MHHS MEDIA - History Makers](#). Meanwhile, our filmmaker team has begun work on the second film in this series, which will offer a fresh perspective through untold stories of our region’s history. Stay tuned for details. The *History Makers* docuseries is made possible by a grant from a generous local family.



We’re excited to report that our newest *Stories from the Past* documentary will make its debut on March 13th. Each film in this series features diverse and often surprising firsthand accounts from folks with deep roots and memories of the Morgan Hill area “back in the day.” Our 2020 *Stories from the Past* film was a big hit with its online presentation, hosted by our friends at the [Morgan Hill Library](#). The film screening was followed by a lively panel discussion with John McKay (Morgan Hill City Council), Connie Ludewig (San Martin Neighborhood Alliance), and Krista Rupp (Visit Morgan Hill). If you haven’t seen any of the fine films in this series, you can watch them on our website: [MHHS MEDIA - Stories from the Past](#). As always, we remain responsive to evolving City and County COVID guidelines, and we’ll post more about our March 13th film soon. Thanks for your patience. Watch for details in our regular emails and on social media.

The Winter 2022 issue of [gmhTODAY magazine](#) is coming to your computer and local newsstands in mid-January. Be sure to check out our regular column, *Historically Speaking*. The latest column features an article on El Toro, the iconic landmark that makes Morgan Hill’s skyline both picturesque and memorable. Get the facts and enjoy the musings of our local geologist extraordinaire, Peter Anderson. Seriously, no one can talk about rocks and WOW a crowd like Peter can! His knowledge of local geology—which is of course a tangible part of our history—makes him a favorite speaker at Villa Mira Monte year after year. It’s a safe bet that you’ll learn something new when reading Peter’s article on El Toro. We are grateful for his many contributions to the Morgan Hill Historical Society over the years.



NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Roger Knopf, rknopf@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

As I watched the Rose Parade and reflected on the positive statements delivered by commentators and messages on the floats, I was reminded of our Rotary Club president who said that she would be leading with “a spirit of kindness.” A friend, at a New Year’s Eve zoom gathering, asked us to “find the goodness in all of us in the coming year.”

I then thought about our Society and what we can do in 2022 to advance our Mission. Using the Reinhardt/Lauridsen strategic evaluation process of “MORE, BETTER, DIFFERENT” to review our effectiveness, I will focus on three of our operating committees.

First, I’d like to commend the work of the **Membership** committee, chaired by Kathy Sullivan, in support of our mission. The number of members has grown, as have the funds generated through membership. MORE is always good, but not sure if anything DIFFERENT needs to be done.

The **History and Education** committee continues to collect, preserve, and present the history of our greater community. The Museum, under the direction of Kathy Devine, has ever-changing interesting exhibits. Additional activity has been the hosting of cultural events, such as Día De Los Muertos altars. The opportunity here is MORE resources in the form of volunteers and donations to enable greater community exposure to our culture and history.

Probably most important in terms of the long-term advancement of the Society in our community is the work of the **MarCom** (Marketing & Communications) committee. Under the leadership of Kathy Sullivan and her team of competent volunteers, they share our activities with the community through a website, blogs, social media, and quarterly newsletter. Grants have funded the production of films, including “History Makers” and “Stories from the Past.” Of course, there is always the opportunity to do MORE with additional volunteers and financial support.

Looking forward, I do not see the need to do anything DIFFERENTLY, just the opportunity to do MORE of what we have been doing well. In addition to the values expressed in the first paragraph, I pledge that the Society will advance our mission with transparency and accuracy as we collect, record, preserve, and present the history of our environs.

To all, wishing you a Happy New Year.

**Our Mission: To preserve and share the history of Morgan Hill,
and its environs, to inspire a sense of community.**



Support MHHS with Your Membership

Kathy Sullivan, Membership Chair

History is *perpetual*. Capturing, preserving and sharing our local history is a *perpetual* job that requires *perpetual* support from our entire community. Your support of the Historical Society is more important now than ever, what with our inability to hold fundraising events during the pandemic.

We very much appreciate the generous 2022 membership donations received to date. If you haven’t yet joined or renewed your support for this year, we encourage you to go to the Membership menu on our website. You may either join online or print and mail the membership form. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Sullivan, ksullivan@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com

The True Spirit of Black History Month



We owe a lot to Carter Godwin Woodson, a dedicated teacher and scholar of Black history. In 1915 he co-founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History to promote the collection, publication, and study of African American history. In 1926 he established Negro History Week, choosing a week in February in recognition of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln birthdays. Woodson's grand vision was to preserve and share an authentic history of Americans of African descent. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and the tradition eventually grew into Black History Month. Woodson had planted the seeds for

development and incorporation of Black history into school curriculum and the formation of Black History clubs.

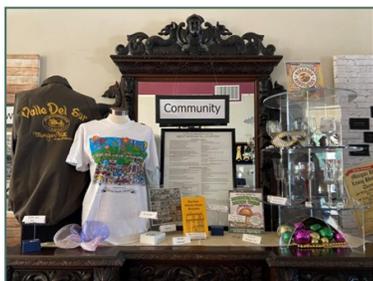
According to Howard University History Professor Darryl Michael Scott, by the 1940s Negro History Month was recognized in Woodson's home state of West Virginia; and in the 1960s, community leader Fredrick H. Hammaurabi brought it to Chicago. In 1970 Kent University students organized a month-long celebration of Black history; and six years later, Black History Month gained federal recognition when President Gerald Ford asked the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

Our thanks to the MHHS Black History Project team who inspired this article.

(Resources: woodsonmuseum.org, zinnedproject.org, history.com).

Above: Carter G. Woodson statue in Washington D.C. Photo by Scott Abbott.

50th Anniversary Exhibits



If you haven't seen the exhibits yet, there is still time to experience the excellent displays created by museum director, Kathy Devine, for the Historical Society's 50th Anniversary. Our masked docents will be excited to welcome you to the Morgan Hill House and share the history with you.

★ COVID Saga Continues

The unknowns surrounding this virus and its variants continue to limit our planning for programs and events. Because our highest priority is the safety of our volunteers, members and visitors, we do not anticipate any events for at least the next few months. Continued monitoring of the CDC and County guidelines will help us determine when we can safely have large public, indoor, and in-person programs and activities. For updates please refer to our bi-weekly email newsletters. If you are not receiving them, send your name and email address to info@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com

★ **Villa Mira Monte continues to be open on Saturdays, 10am – 1pm, for docent tours of the Morgan Hill House and the Historical Museum. Masks are required.**

★ 2021 Philanthropy Honoree Mary Cox

Margo Hinnenkamp, Volunteer Chair



The MHHS Board of Directors unanimously voted to select Mary Cox as our 2021 Community Foundation Outstanding Philanthropist of the Year. Mary was honored at the Philanthropy Night dinner in November.

Mary has been a dedicated volunteer and docent for more than 10 years. She has faithfully committed one Saturday each month to being a docent at Villa Mira Monte where she enthusiastically guides visitors around our property while sharing the history of the buildings and the fascinating stories of the original owners, Morgan and Diana Murphy Hill.

One of Mary's favorite volunteer duties has been being part of our popular annual Holiday Teas that have been traditionally held the first weekend of December.

Mary has participated in the teas since their inception in 2011 and has enjoyed watching this event grow to be one of the most colorful, fun and profitable activities in our annual calendar.

We were happy to honor Mary as our Philanthropist of the Year in 2021, and we look forward to enjoying her presence, support, and positive outlook for many years to come.

To watch the excellent video of Mary that was shown at Philanthropy Night, click below:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A7yJri8DvOSV5mWeknVR8V9-IFIkPbIE/view?usp=sharing>

★ From the Volunteer Corner

Margo Hinnenkamp, Volunteer Chair

Dick Leonard, one of our faithful docents, has lived in Morgan Hill since 1954. He attended Burnett and P.A. Walsh schools, and is a graduate of Live Oak High School. He appreciates the small-town feel that still continues here and finds it impossible to go anywhere in town without running into at least one longtime friend.



Dick decided to become a volunteer at Villa Mira Monte with the encouragement from Susan Ferris, a high school friend and a longtime member of the Historical Society. He had attended countless Founders' Day dinners and other MHHS activities over the years, so he was already very familiar with our organization.

He really enjoys learning new things about our city's history through the exhibits that Kathy Devine, museum director, creates, and he loves to share this knowledge with our visitors. Dick's favorite room in the museum is the kitchen with all of its antique treasures. He says that it seems to be a favorite of our visitors as well.

We appreciate Dick's dedication to our organization and are grateful to have him as a vital member of our docent team. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact [Margo Hinnenkamp, margohin@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:margohin@morganhillhistoricalsociety.com)

??? DID YOU KNOW ???

In George Washington's day there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both arms and legs. Prices charged by artists were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be included. Arms and legs are "limbs," therefore painting them would cost the buyer more.....hence the expression, "Okay, but it will cost you an arm and a leg."knowing the hands and arms are more difficult to paint!

October Events at Villa Mira Monte

Kat Chavez Napoli

The Morgan Hill Historical Society hosted two successful events in October 2021.

The 2nd Annual Youth Mariachi Competition and Picnic

The 2nd annual Youth Mariachi Competition and Picnic was held on October 2. A surprising and welcome 72 young mariachi performers competed in front of over 250 audience members. There was overwhelming support for the talent of these various groups. In addition visitors could view an exhibit in the museum that included Mariachi Vargas ensemble photos, typical instruments, and the famous *traje*, the traditional costume that performers wear.

Dia de Los Muertos



Later in the month, the 2nd Annual Dia de Los Muertos was held October 30 - 31. Five community altars were constructed representing the four essential elements: Earth, Wind, Fire and Water. Visitors could leave mementos of family members and friends who had passed away as a way to honor and celebrate their lives.

Both of these events were funded by a generous grant from the Santa Clara County Historic Grant Program and were supported by dedicated Historical Society volunteers.

NEXT YEAR

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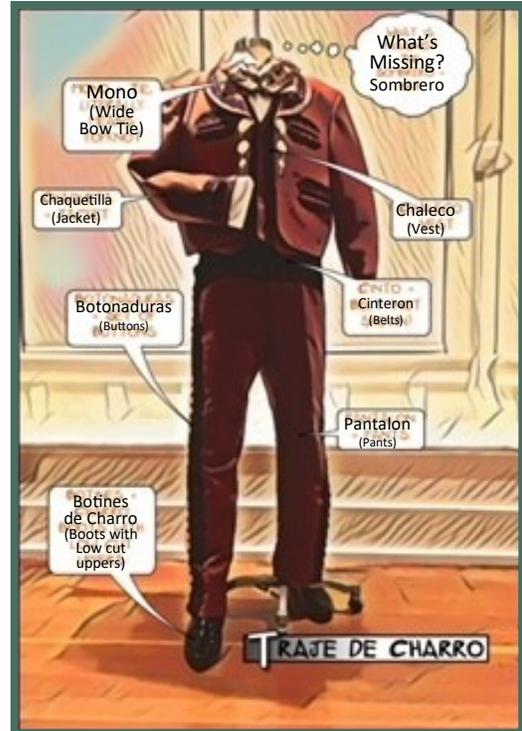
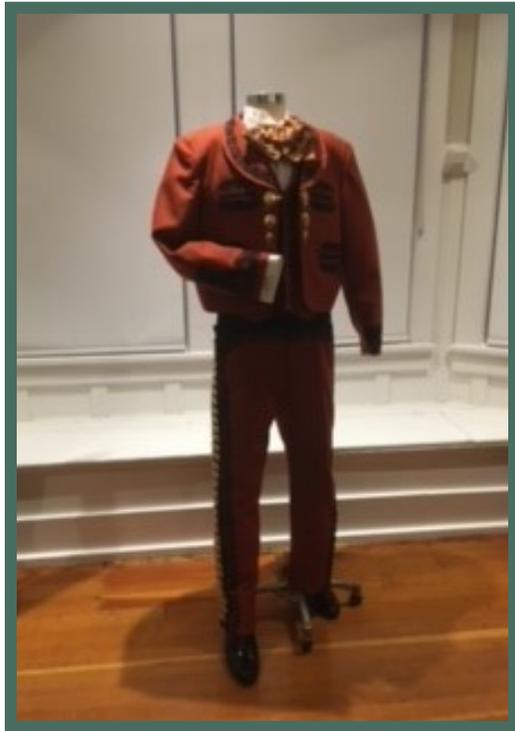


OCTOBER 30 & 31, 2022



In Memory of Judy Little

We are sad to report that former Morgan Hill resident Judy Little passed away on November 24, 2021, not long after moving to Arizona with her husband Murv to be near their son. Judy played an important role in Morgan Hill history as a member of the Sister Cities organization. She and Murv dedicated many years to building a student exchange program with Morgan Hill's Sister City in Mizuho, Japan. They would bring the Mizuho students to Villa Mira Monte for tours to learn about the history of our city. She and Murv were long time members of the Morgan Hill Historical Society and were dedicated volunteers with the Friends of the Morgan Hill Library. Judy will be missed by many in our community who enjoyed volunteering with her and Murv over the years.



The Traje de Charro

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MORGAN HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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