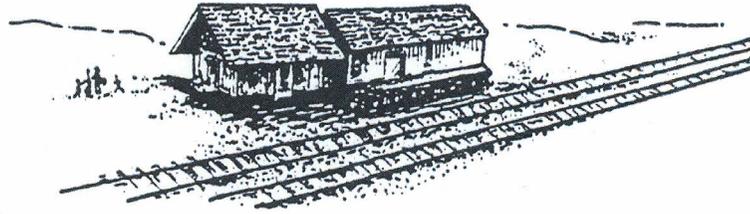


**NEWS & NOTES**  
**FROM THE**  
**COLMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION** **Founded 1993**



1500 Hillside Boulevard, Colma, California 94014  
(650) 757-1676

[colmahist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:colmahist@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.colmahistory.org](http://www.colmahistory.org)

October, November, December 2017

Newsletter #119

### **CHA President's Message**

Fall is here and winter will soon be upon us! We celebrated Autumn with our **Annual Fundraiser Dinner on Friday, September 29**. It was a lovely evening of fellowship among friends and neighbors. Please see more details later in this newsletter.

**Our last 2017 Quarterly Membership meeting will be on Tuesday, October 24 at 6:30 PM at the Museum.** The program will be a re-enactment with music of several radio programs sponsored by Olivet Cemetery and aired on Radio Station KYA in late 1935 and early 1936. The scripts were found in the papers we recently received on Olivet Cemetery. Sharing Colma history with you! This will be followed by our delicious buffet.

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, our **Vice-President Ed Graham** hosted six members of the **California-Nevada Railroad Historical Society** for a tour of **Colma's Museum**. Their primary interest was visiting the restored Colma depot and the freight shed. They were impressed with our exhibits. Ed has created many of the exhibits related to transportation in the train depot. The California-Nevada Railroad Society was founded in 1937 and has been involved in preserving railroad history over the past 80 years. Their current president, **Donald Holmgren**, presented CHA with a copy blueprint of Funeral Cars No. 1-2-3 from the United Railroads of S.F.

**Helen Fisicaro**, CHA member and Colma mayor, brought a writer from the BBC by to show her some of Colma's history. We're expecting an online story in the near future.

**We have two new office computers and monitors and a scanner.** Richard and Michael Rocchetta with help from Patrick Yu, IT expert from Colma's Public

Works Department (CSG Consultants), researched and selected the new equipment. I'm sure you all know that new computers are a challenge as well as, eventually, a blessing. **We send a BIG THANK YOU to Colma's Public Works Department (CSG Consultants) for allowing Patrick Yu, their IT expert, to help us in this process.** We are eternally grateful for his patient and expert help. **And we all must THANK RICHARD AND MICHAEL for their patient and extremely dedicated and competent management of this process. Be sure to mention this to them when you see them.**

**We thank Vaughn and Glorianne Jones for serving as CHA Program Chairs for the past two years.** This is a fun position. Please consider volunteering.

**Wishing you a bountiful Thanksgiving and joyful Holiday Season and a prosperous and Happy 2018.**

*Maureen O'Connor*

### **FUTURE EVENTS**

- **October 24, Tuesday, 6:30 PM, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly meeting.** Colma Historical Museum. "Olivet Memorial Park Radio Programs with Music and Song, Winter 1935"

- **November 4, Saturday, 1-4 PM. Historical Society of South San Francisco Plymire-Schwarz House Holiday Champagne Reception and Boutique.** [events@plymirehouse.org](mailto:events@plymirehouse.org) for more information.

- **November 19, Sunday, 1-4 PM. Historical Society of South San Francisco Open House** celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. 80 Chestnut Ave., SSF

- **Cypress Lawn Walking Tours, Lectures.** Check website. [www.cypresslawnheritagefoundation.org](http://www.cypresslawnheritagefoundation.org)

## **Board of Directors**

Maureen O'Connor	President
Edward Graham	Vice President
Richard Rocchetta	Secretary
Margy Baldwin	Treasurer
Frank Maffei	Member
Earl Harper	Member
Esmeralda Harper	Member
Michael Rocchetta	Member
Pat Hatfield	President Emerita
Dorothy Hillman	Treasurer Emerita

## **Committee Chairs**

Maureen O'Connor	Newsletter Editor, Dinner Chair, Tea Co-Chair
Richard Rocchetta	Museum & Office Manager, Fundraiser Event Operations
Michael Rocchetta	Restoration Expert Technical Consultant
Diana Colvin	Membership Chair
Pat Hatfield	Tour Coordinator
Sue Hudson	Hospitality Chair Tea Co-Chair
<b>Volunteers Needed</b>	<b>Program Chair(s)</b>
Susanna Hnilo	Garage Sale Chair
Connie O'Leary	Website Manager

## **Docents**

Margy Baldwin, Jason Deguzman, Ed Graham, Earl Harper, Esmeralda Harper, Pat Hatfield, Maureen O'Connor, Marianne Petroni, Michael Rocchetta, Richard Rocchetta

## **Volunteers (ad hoc)**

Iris Beilan, John Goodman, Al Hipona, Judy Hnilo, Marianne Petroni, Joe Silva

## **Museum Hours**

Tuesday through Sunday – 10 AM to 3 PM

Mondays – Closed

## **Quarterly Meetings** – at Colma's Historical Museum

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in February ----- 2 PM

Last Tuesday in April ----- 6:30 PM

Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup> -- Annual birthday 6:30 PM

**Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup> ----- 6:30 PM**

## **Help With Our Meetings**

We appreciate additions to our refreshments and we welcome gifts for the drawings held at our meetings. Questions? Call the Museum (650) 757-1676.

## **Tours of Our Cemeteries**

The Colma Historical Association gives museum and cemetery tours on request Tuesday-Sunday. A donation for the tour is appreciated. Call to reserve a tour date - (650) 757-1676.



## **PATRICIA HATFIELD**

### **CHA President Emerita & Docent**

by Maureen O'Connor and Pat Hatfield

As all of you well know, Pat Hatfield was CHA's founding president and served in that office from 1993 until 2015. She is still an active docent, tour coordinator, reservations and seating coordinator, and expert resource for us. Pat is a marvelous and thorough record keeper, the perfect person for establishing the acquisition and archiving protocols for our association.

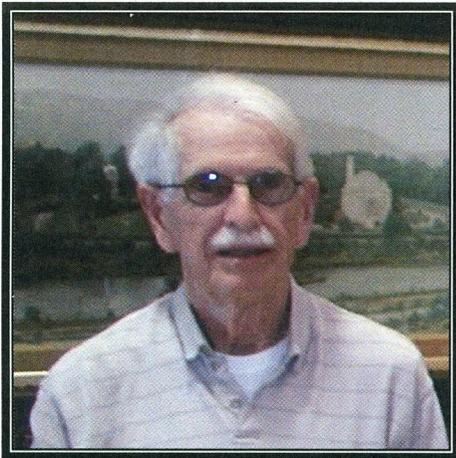
Pat, a third generation San Franciscan, was born in the Richmond District. She truly embodies the international ancestry common in San Francisco having English, Irish, Spanish and East Indian ancestors. Pat remembers riding the bus past Laurel Hill and Calvary Cemeteries during the disinterment process in the early 1940s.

She met her husband, David, during her junior year in high school. They were engaged her senior year and found the "perfect house" in Colma in September 1950. David had to move in immediately because he could not afford to make both house and rent payments. Pat said he wasn't moving into "their house" without her. So they were married with special approval from Washington High School's Dean of Girls three months before she graduated. He had to sign her final report card!

Pat and David raised their three children in Colma, two girls and one boy. There were 52 kids on their block of D Street. She has fond memories of neighbors and neighborhood gatherings and "the cemeteries were our parks. I never wanted to move. I have lived here 67 years. I feel so safe and happy here in Colma." Some of Pat's scrapbooks of the early days in Colma are in the CHA library. Be sure to check them out.

Pat has always been active in the community, contributing in so many ways to its character and development. She was a Girl Scout leader for eleven years, and she fearlessly chaperoned them on many field trips including one to Washington, DC. She worked for JC Penney and has been their JCP Retiree President for 22 years. She was the Senior Program

coordinator for Colma for three years and is a member of five other local historical groups. She has traveled widely with her Gal Pals group and participates in many Colma Recreational Department activities. She plays canasta every Monday afternoon. "I attend almost all Town Council meetings as I am nosy as to what is going on! I care very much about this unique town." And we care very much about you, Pat. You are a treasure!



### **ED GRAHAM**

#### **CHA Vice-President & Docent**

by Maureen O'Connor and Edward Graham

Ed joined CHA in January 1994 because CHA was working to save the Colma depot. He's one of CHA's railroad experts. Ed has been in love with railroads since his childhood and has held leadership positions in a number of railroad buff organizations. When he was 15 Ed started a summer job with the Southern Pacific railroad. He continued working summers in high school and while studying Civil Engineering at Stanford. During his last summer, 1949, he worked at the Colma Station in the building that is now one of our museums. Ed remembers that "Agent Bradley said it was the best place to work on the railroad." His position paid \$12/day, a good wage in 1949. "I earned a total of \$830.57, which, after taxes, was adequate to finance my tuition and books for the next academic year at Stanford University." (Those were the days!)

Ed was born in Palo Alto and grew up in Redwood City and Menlo Park. He worked 38 years for Cal Trans. One of the major projects he worked on was the Bay Area Transportation Study of 1968-1978. This was the forerunner of the Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation System.

Ed's grandparents lived in a house just north of the entrance to the Hoy Sun Cemetery on Hillside Blvd. (It was recently torn down making room for cemetery development.) He and his cousins wandered the cemeteries and farms during their visits.

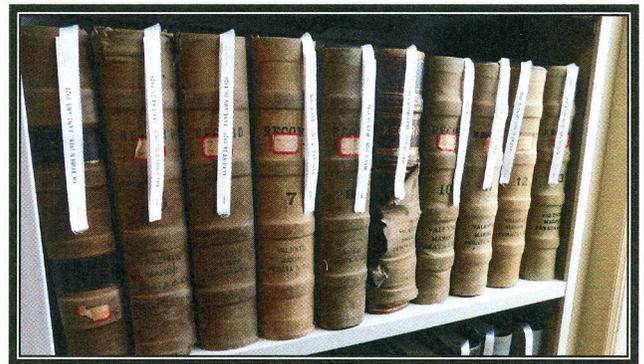
Ed is an excellent and engaging writer. His article "Working for the SP During the 1940s" is featured in The Ferroequinologist, A Journal for Students of the Iron Horse, August 2017. It includes a detailed history of his summer of 1949 working in Colma.

CHA is fortunate to have Ed as Vice-President of the Board of Directors.

## **RECORDS OF THE VALENTE, MARINI, PERATA & CO. FUNERAL HOME**

**By Richard Rocchetta**

Recently, the Colma Historical Association was contacted by Stephen Taylor, fourth generation owner of the Valente, Marini, Perata & Co. Funeral Home in San Francisco. It had previously been announced that this long established business would be closing at the end of July. Mr. Taylor wanted to know if the Colma Museum would like to house their funeral records going back to the start of their business. Of course, we were honored and could not turn down such a valuable donation.



The Valente and Marini Mortuary was established in 1888 on Stockton Street in San Francisco's North Beach district. Valente, an undertaker, originally operated a small funeral parlor with his partner Julius Godeau. The business was facing bankruptcy. A young man, Frank Marini, was able to find investors and helped revitalize the business. When the 1906 Earthquake and Fire happened the company's horse-drawn livery and transport wagons provided emergency rescue vehicles. Some interesting facts come out of this tragedy: as the fire approached the area, Frank Marini buried the company's records in Washington Square Park. When it was safe to do so, he then dug them up! They were intact. And while waiting to rebuild the mortuary, Marini operated the funeral home out of the basement of the San Francisco home of banker A.P. Giannini. In 1925 they opened a second funeral home in the Excelsior District and eventually closed the North Beach location.

After the retirement of Godeau and Valente, and the death of an original investor, Giovanni Perata, Perata's son was hired and eventually became a partner. One of his daughters married a man named Taylor. Their

son, Stephen, is the person who contacted CHA and offered their records.

The records, consisting of 63 volumes covering the years up to 1993, are available to those who are doing genealogical research on their family. The records after 1993 are on the company's computer and will be made available to us in the future. An index of all those who had their funerals performed by the business will eventually be accessible on the website of the San Mateo County Genealogical Society.

*(Information from "Valente, Marini, Perata & Company" italoamericano.org by Nickolas Marinelli.)*

## CELEBRATING AUTUMN!



We welcomed Autumn with our Annual Fundraiser Dinner on Friday, September 29. **This event is underwritten by Helen and Dennis Fisicaro and we are most grateful for their long time support. Helen Fisicaro and Carol Tanzi** once again created our Silent Auction and Drawing Prizes. **Chef Dennis Fisicaro** served up his famous spaghetti and meatballs menu along with a delicious salad and bread. **Frank Maffei and Dan Cross/Pacific Cheese Co.** joined together to provide the antipasto. Colma's former police chief, **Bob Lotti**, secured a donation of It's Its for dessert. **Richard Rocchetta** provided wine and **Michael Rocchetta** provided sodas. **Fifteen Future Business Leaders of America from Westmoor High School Daly City and a student from Mercy High School SF** were our very able table servers and **Denise Kelly** was their outstanding coordinator. **The Don Garibaldi Family and Tom & Pete of Half Moon Bay** showered us with pumpkins of all sizes and flower bouquets.

**Additional business donors were: Broadmoor Property Owners Assn., Colma Community Center Staff, Commerce Holding Co., CSG Consultants, Cypress Amloc Co., Cypress Abbey Co., Garden Chapel, Lucky Chances Casino, Planet Fitness, and V. Fontana & Co.**

**Individual Donors and Volunteers were: Margy Baldwin, Bianca Caserza, Jim & Janet Fisicaro,**

**John Goodwin, Earl & Esmeralda Harper, Pat Hatfield, Al Hipona, Sue Hudson, Mary Morales, Maureen O'Connor, Patty Simpson, and Darlene Washington.**

We also wish to thank all those who bought tickets and attended as well as all who donated items for the Drawing, the Silent Auction, and the Boutique and those who purchased Drawing tickets and participated in the Silent Auction and Boutique. We could not do this without the support of our dear friends and community.

Please see pictures on the last page.

Income from this event: total income \$7253; expenses \$781.64; profit \$6471.36.



## Welcome to Our New and Renewing Members

**Business** – Cypress Abbey Co., Cypress AMLOC Land Co., Cypress Golf Driving Range

**Family** – Susan Brissenden-Smith, Dave & Margi Casagrande, John & Silvia Goodwin, Blaid Molloy, Louis & Dianne Pitto, Guilio & Lorraine Sbragia, Ken & Patty Simpson

**Individual** – Lori Burns, Joe Rinaldi

**Patron** – Carole Hutchins, Pat & Denise Kelly

**Senior Member** – Jerry Azzaro & Anna Kauffman, Michael & Jackie Belli, Diana Colvin, Ellen Crawford, Ron Doyle, Elizabeth Ervin, Jim & Janet Fisicaro, Leo Gagnon, Mike Gerrans, Vaughn & Gloriann Jones, Dave & Mary Hatfield, William & Mary Healey, Robbie Huerta, Mineo Kuniyara, Arthur Massaglia, Jill Miller, Mary Morales, Ellen Newman, James O'Brien, Cathy Pantazy, Richard Rocchetta, Doris Sangalli, Donna Smith, Maggie Smith, Bill Stipinovich, Judy Stone, Richard Stone, Shirley Stone, Carol Ann Taylor, Vicki Vitalie, Chris Zanoni

**THANK YOU**  
FOR YOUR  
**SUPPORT!**

## Recent Gifts to the Museum Related to Colma

- **Helen Fisicaro** – Kodak Professional TRI-X camera, shorthand books, Handbook for Secretaries, and a limited edition book on the California fruit industry for our library and camera collections.
- **Wilfredo De Guia** – Wire fence stretcher (also called barbed wire stretcher) and post driver for our farm display in the freight shed.
- **Pat Hatfield** – “Cool Grey City of Love”, a book by Gary Kamiya for our library.
- **Donald Holmgren** – copy of a blueprint of United Railways funeral cars No. 1-2-3 for our Colma transportation archives.
- **Stephen Schafer** – Autographed copy of “A Place For All Time-The History of Ivy Lawn Memorial Park & Funeral Home and photos by Stephen Schafer for our library.
- **Mr. & Mrs. John Shinn** – 17 vintage books showing building plans for houses and home construction (including plans for Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward homes that could be ordered from their respective catalogs) for our library.
- **Carol Tanzi** – Vintage scrapbook from the 1930s for our library.
- **Stephen Taylor** – 63 volumes of records from the Valente, Marini, Perata & Co. funeral home, wooden writing board that was slid in between pages of the large record books, two sets of “gold plated” keys to a Cadillac hearse that were delivered to the funeral home, metal sign with funeral home name that would be on one side of a funeral coach, and one glass “Home Embalming Jar” (part of a home embalming kit). Record books are for our archives and funeral artifacts for our cemetery room.

### DESKTOP SCANNER FOR SALE

HP Scanjet 4890 desktop scanner capable of scanning photographs, negatives, and slides. Compatible with Windows XP and Windows 2000 operating systems only. Excellent condition. If interested, contact CHA, 650-757-1676.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

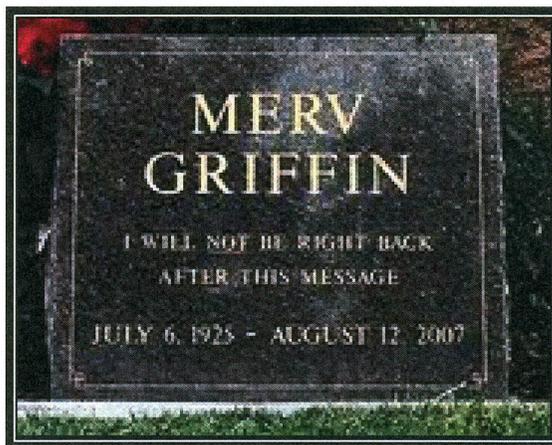
Please remember to renew your membership if you haven't already. Membership is from July through June each year.

## VETERANS VILLAGE UPDATE

Mercy Housing thoughtfully invited us on a walk-through of the structures that will be torn down or remodeled at the Veterans Village site. We found two items of historic value that would be appropriate for the museum. One is pictured below and now you can see it in the Cemetery Room above the doorway into the library. It is a sign from Holy Cross Cemetery requesting people to refrain from putting artificial flowers on graves. (The policy has since been changed.) We will also receive two original light fixtures from the pump house when the interior renovations begin.



## GRAVE HUMOR



### “I will not be back after this message.”

Merve Griffin was born in San Mateo, CA. He attended San Mateo High School. His first appearance was on KFRC (San Francisco) radio. One of his final wishes was the inscription above on his grave stone. He is buried in West Memorial Park, Los Angeles.

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“History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it.” Winston Churchill

**COLMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**  
1500 Hillside Boulevard  
Colma, CA 94014

**YOU ARE INVITED!**  
**4th Quarterly Meeting**  
Tuesday, October 24, 2017  
6:30 PM, CHA Museum

TO:



**“CELEBRATING AUTUMN”**  
**CHA’S ANNUAL FALL DINNER**

