

Kentfield Greenbrae Historical Society Historian

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President's Message

Like almost everyone, the KGHS has been in hibernation but we are beginning to stir! The heavy rains at the end of 2021 and the Omicron surge kept us close to home instead of out in the community. But, just like all those daffodils dotting hillsides and gardens, we are ready to once again make our presence known and continue to share, educate and celebrate the remarkable history of the heart of Marin!

We are excited about getting back into the classroom and sharing our *Kentfield-Greenbrae Then and Now* slide show with the third graders. Their enthusiasm is contagious, especially as they recognize places in their neighborhood. As we write this message, we are planning the May History and Heritage Day in partnership with the Bon Air Center, celebrating 70 years since the first market opened. Mark your calendar for May 7, 2022, from 11-2 pm! Stay tuned for other upcoming KGHS activities: we have a host of other projects on the horizon and always look forward to your continued involvement and interest as we explore the historical nooks and crannies of days gone by!

Marilee Rogers
Co-president, 2021-2022



KGHS Board of Directors

Susan Morrow, Co-President; Marilee Rogers, Co-President, Heather McPhail Sridharan, Co-President, Tamara Hull Arnold, Lorelei Evans*, Mary Gilardi, Julie Gondak, Ross McKenna, Paul Smith, Rebecca Sylla, Richard Torney
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In Memory of Lorelei Evans KGHS Board Member

It is with great sadness that we share with you the loss of KGHS Board Members, **Lorelei Evans**. In her battle with cancer she always remained positive and involved. She was always enthusiastic about reaching out to our community and sharing the history that she found so fascinating.

Lorelei was a fourth generation Californian. Her great grandparents, Frederic and Caroline Burk, lived on Palm Avenue in Kentfield at the turn of the century. Fortunately, her grandfather, Frear Burk, and her great uncles regaled her with stories of growing up in Kentfield in the early 1900s and passed their love of history on to her. In turn, Lorelei found creative ways to share her passion for history with her second, fourth, fifth, and eighth grade students in the Larkspur Corte Madera Schools curriculum. She will be missed.



Lorelei and her famous doll house at a May Day Event. 2016

An Indelible Memory

Remo Galeazzi (1923-2017)

The Flying Wire March 2, 2011

It all started when the announcement was made by my sixth grade teacher that we would soon have a day off from school to be able to view an over flight of the famous airship, the *Akron*. This is only conjecture on my part, but in retrospect, I can only imagine that the school was notified of this momentous occasion so as to allow enough time for the interested parties to position themselves in the line of flight. It was, we were told, to fly over Kentfield, and then to San Rafael, over to Hamilton AFB, and probably then, back to its hangar at Sunnyvale. Its track over Kentfield was to be, miracle of miracles, almost directly above my house on #12 Cypress Avenue, and my joy knew no bounds!



USS Akron (Wikipedia)

Adjacent to our lot on Cypress Avenue was the property of the Dollar Estate, owners of the famous Dollar Line, a prominent shipping company. This property on a hill (in Iowa it would be called a mountain!) and the estate house was probably about three quarters of the way to the top, which was accessed by a winding one-lane road that started just up the street from where I lived.

Our Adaline E. Kent Grammar School consisted of three rooms back then, with Miss Jensen teaching the first, second, and third grades in one room, Miss Rhodes (later Mrs. Longly) teaching fourth, fifth and sixth grades in another room, and Miss Palmer, our principal, teaching seventh and eighth in the third room. The student body, the teachers, some mothers, and perhaps other interested parties were to meet at the foot of the lane on Cypress Avenue that led to the Dollar Estate. I can only presume that permission was granted by the owners for the use of the road as it would have been the only way for a rather large group to access the top of the hill. I know the hill well, as many of us kids hiked to the top often, using another route. As a matter of fact, that old hill was my private playground; that's where I hunted, picked mushrooms and wild strawberries, picked toyon berries, and stalked lizards. I also tossed my gliders from the bare slope directly in back of our property.

The beautiful part of this particular hill, and this was no doubt why it was chosen, was that the top was completely bereft of trees and shrubbery, so that the viewers would have an unobstructed view of this famous Zeppelin.

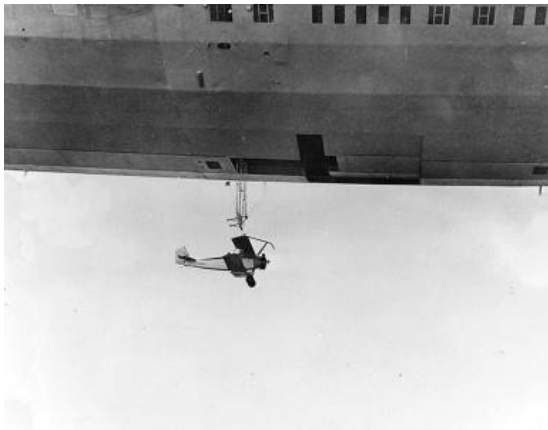
On the appointed day we all gathered at the foot of the lane that led up to the Dollar estate, and following a whistle blown by our principal, Miss Palmer, we began our trek up the winding lane, finally reaching the estate house. I don't really remember how we reached the top from there, as the lane stopped at the house, but I can surmise that the group wended its way through the foliage, finally arriving at the treeless top without undue stress. For us kids, it had to have been a piece of cake!



*The maiden voyage of Akron on 2 November 1931, showing her four starboard propellers. The engines' water reclaiming devices appear as white strips above each propeller. The emergency rear control cabin is visible in the lower fin.
(Wikipedia)*

We all spread out over the open ground and waited with great anticipation for the wondrous event that would soon be appearing before us, for without doubt, this would be a first for all attending. Remember, this was probably in 1932, and happenings of this magnitude

didn't happen very often, or maybe even ever, in one's life in those days. It was a clear, beautiful day, and as the approximate arrival time neared, everyone's eyes turned to the sky. The tree line was high enough so that the tops of the trees precluded spotting the airship from a great distance, and indeed, when it did appear, it seemed to loom above us like a giant silver cloud. It could not have been higher than a thousand feet or so from the top of our hill, moving slowly and majestically directly over our heads, its size and bulk overcome by the beauty of its aesthetically pleasing and beautiful form. As it moved gracefully above us, one could easily hear the muffled deep sound of its mighty engines, and clearly see the details of its cupola and all of its various appendages, a great silver titan of the skies shipping through space above us, creating a mental image that to this day, seventy five years later, I can still in my mind's eye, conjure up with great clarity.



N2Y-1 training plane beneath trapeze and T-shaped opening of Akron's hangar deck (Airships.net)

Many years later, flying to points south, such as Watsonville, I could see those two giant hangars off in the distance and they always evoked the same memory: that wondrous day on top of the hill above my house in Kentfield.

Some time back when I was building and flying peanut scale models, I had the opportunity to fly my models in one of the great hangars in Sunnyvale. The first time that I set foot inside the amazing structure, I was overcome by the vastness of the interior, and taken aback by its complicated internal structure. To think that at one time it held my Zeppelin! It wasn't hard to envision the might Akron nestled neatly into its giant nest.

The *Akron*, and its sister ship, the *Macon*, both came to a disastrous end. It's too bad, because even today, if they were around, there would be many eyes turned skyward.

Remo Galeazzi 1923-2017

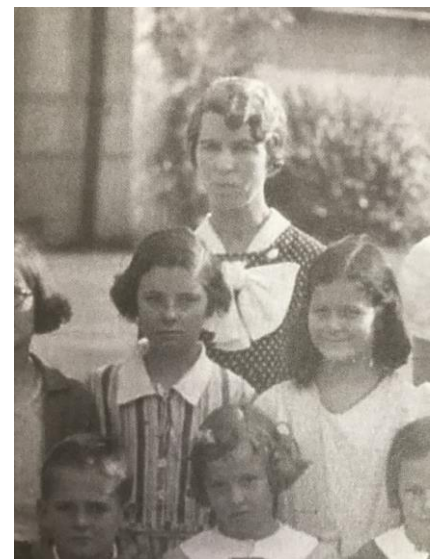
Remo was born in San Francisco and spent his childhood in Kentfield, graduating from Tamalpais High School in 1941. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and was a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge. He was a licensed airplane and glider pilot, and won numerous awards for his meticulous restorations of antique aircraft.



Cover carried on the May 1932 "Coast to Coast" flight and later autographed by the only three survivors of the April 1933 crash of USS Akron.

**The Legendary
Miss Palmer**
from *In the Heart of Marin:
A History of Kentfield and
Greenbrae*
by Dewey Livingston
pages 205-307

(Remo Galeazzi refers to the legendary Miss Palmer in his article. Oral history interviews were done by 8th grade Kent Students in 2013 reached out to many Kent Alumni for their memories, many of the earliest had impressions of Miss Palmer. For more stories: *Oral History Projects Kent Middle School 2013 & 1991*)



Miss Catherine Palmer

Of all the memorable people at Adaline E. Kent School during the first half of the twentieth century, Miss Catherine Palmer takes the prize as both most loved and most feared. Her former students tell of being alternately terrified, inspired, disciplined, and heavily influenced by this formidable and “old-fashioned” teacher. Miss Palmer was a fixture at Kent School for 39 years and her legacy is the proud and accomplished students she taught for generations.

Catherine Palmer came from pioneer North Bay stock. Her grandparents were the first to settle in the San Antonio district on the boundary of Marin and Sonoma Counties. She was born on August 12, 1897, in Petaluma, never married, and lived with her mother much of her life. She began teaching in Petaluma and Fairfax, taking a job at Kent School in 1922. Soon she was advanced to being the seventh and eighth grade teacher/principal, a dual position that required teaching four to six levels of students and overseeing the school...

Catherine Palmer believed in taking certain students under her wing but made sure all got the benefits of her teaching... Her pupils had to be on their best behavior at all times. “One of her requirements,” recalled 1937 graduate Remo Galeazzi, “was that no matter how often you passed her during the day, you said ‘Good Morning, Miss Palmer’ or ‘Good Afternoon Miss Palmer.’ If you didn’t you were called back, and you were made to do it. I didn’t resent it, and to this day I think that was an excellent thing to do.”

“Miss Palmer was strict,” recalled Norma Capella who was in her classroom in the 1930’s. “She wanted beautiful writing, and she’d say, ‘No, start all over again.’ She made you get your letters just right. She said ‘If you learn the right way, you’ll be happy in your later years,’ which is true.”...

“Miss Palmer challenged the students and made going to school interesting.” Said 1938 graduate Bill Neal...



*Miss Palmer and her two fellow teachers ruled over a large student body
(Remo Galeazzi Collection)*

“Miss Palmer was a power unto herself,” recalled 1941 graduate Tony Arnold. “She had taught my uncle Roger Kent and possibly Sherman Kent and was know as something of a terror to both of them... she was the power that was.”

She was a crusty old spinster-like teacher, a spirit to be dealt with. There were occasions when we were doing some sort of class

production, and the girls were to recite one thing and the boys another. The girls said, “Make sure to wash your hands and faces, and don’t forget your rears.” An exasperated Miss Palmer said, “Girls, stop.” “She had very fixed ideas on what was proper and what was improper. And students weren’t the only ones sent home.”

Giving back to the Community: Join, Renew or Make a Donation to KGHS

It's never too late to renew, join or make a donation:

- \$25 - Students & Seniors
- \$25- Non Profit organizations
- \$35 - Individuals & Families
- \$50 – Sponsor
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Please include your name, level of membership, address, email and phone number. If you use a credit card number, please include your CVV code.

