

Kentfield Greenbrae Historical Society

Historian

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www.kghs.org

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President's Message

The year was 1926. Calvin Coolidge was president. Henry Ford announced the 40-hour workweek. A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* was published and Al Capone was at the apex of his power. In Williamsburg, VA, the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg had begun.

Much closer to home, the citizens of Kentfield, indeed, all of Marin County, had something to celebrate: Marin Junior College (renamed College of Marin in 1948) welcomed its first students in August 1926.

The Kentfield-Greenbrae Historical Society is pleased to recognize COM's 90th anniversary by welcoming college president, Dr. David Coon, as the featured speaker at our March 17 Spring meeting. Please join us as we explore the rich history of this valuable community institution and look to the future of COM as it continues to serve the needs of the citizens of Marin.

Susan Morrow

President, Kentfield-Greenbrae Historical Society 2015-2016

Celebrating 90 Years of the College of Marin KGHS Members Meeting Thursday March 17

Please join us

KGHS Annual Members Meeting

Thursday, March 17 6-8 pm

Community Room at Jason's Restaurant
Greenbrae CA

Dr. David Coon, President of College of Marin,
will be our guest as we celebrate its 90th Anniversary
Program begins at 6:30pm

KGHS Pop Up Museum & Store Open Monthly...

The Kentfield-Greenbrae Pop Up Museum and Store

Stop by our NEW LOCATION...140 Bon Air Center
(next to David M. Brian)

OPEN the SECOND SATURDAY of each MONTH

from 11 am to 3 pm

Saturday, March 12

Saturday, April 9

KGHS will be displaying new historical posters, showing slides of vintage photos and selling:

*In the Heart of Marin: A History of Kentfield and Greenbrae
Historical Reflections, Oral History Projects*

NEW KGHS BIRTHDAY CALENDAR, along with other merchandise
for yourself, family and/or friends.

Merchandise specials available only at the store.

Kent History Club

Students at Kent Middle School can now be part of the new History Club established in conjunction with the KGHS. Over the next several months, various members of the Board will meet with them and share stories and information, training the students to be docents of the Kentfield and Greenbrae areas. The goal is for them to lead historical walking tours for those in the community who are interested.



*Dewey Livingston, Author showing 1900 topographical map of the local area to interested Kent History Club Students.
(Photo courtesy of Marilee Rogers)*

Membership Update

It's a new year...if you forgot to renew, it's not too late. If you know of people who would like to join, please forward this newsletter to them and encourage them to become a member.

DO IT ONLINE NOW before you forget! ... www.kghs.org

- \$20 - Students & Seniors
- \$30 - Individuals & Families
- \$50 - Business Membership
- \$100 - Patron
- \$250 - Benefactor *
- \$500 - Historian *
- \$1000 Lifetime*

* tote bags

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College of Marin, The Heart of the Community
... Dewey Livingston *(In the Heart of Marin p. 204-209)*

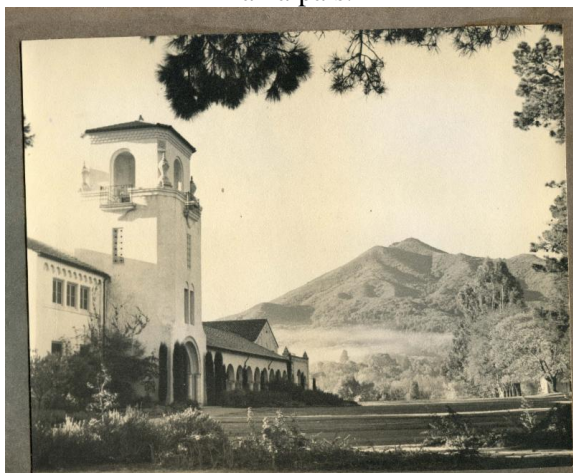
If any one entity can be credited with bringing area-wide significance to Kentfield, it would be the venerable and highly regarded College of Marin. When the college was founded in 1926 as Marin Junior College, Kentfield was continuing its long struggle towards respectability. Town leaders did what they could to boost the community and the establishment of the junior college put a positive focus on Kentfield that remains today.

Tamalpais High School principal E. E. Wood proposed the creation of a junior college in 1923. At that time there were two public high schools serving Ross Valley residents: San Rafael High School and Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. The nearest junior college was in Santa Rosa and as the move for a Marin college moved forward the location became key, requiring easy access from the two high schools and the county population in general. As it happened, George E. Butler had died in 1924 and his Kentfield estate at the crossroads was put up for auction...The Tamalpais High School District purchased the 13-acre estate (the lowlands had been sold to farmer Eugenio Corvi) for \$30,000 in 1924; the college purchased the property in 1928...



First classes held in Butler Barn and Mansion (Courtesy College of Marin Archives)

...Eighty-seven students showed up for the first day of class in August 1926, taught by seven teachers. They met in the former Butler mansion and soon the classes spread across the estate. The barn was used as the gymnasium and later the art and engineering schools. The first permanent building to be constructed was the \$37,500 Science Hall in 1927, which was followed by the central and iconic structure of the college for many years, Harlan Hall. The handsome and much-photographed Spanish-style stucco building featured a central courtyard, extensive colonnades and a tower that looked out on Kentfield and Mt. Tamalpais.



Iconic Harlan Hall was demolished in the 1960's to make room for modern campus buildings. (Bob Hough photo)

Within five years the faculty would grow to 17 and the student body to 652 including part-time students.

...The creation of the Tamalpais Centre in 1909 under Kent and his mother Adaline's supervision laid the groundwork for the future of at least part of the junior college. As soon as the Tamalpais Centre's management became aware that their socially ambitious institution was faltering, talk turned to development of a high school or possibly a college on the site. Tamalpais Centre's board sold the property, including the large building and 26 acres of low land, to Marin Junior College in 1927 (excluding the Adaline E. Kent School property and a small parcel reserved for the centre's Woman's Club). The college transformed the Spanish-styled auditorium into a women's gymnasium and classrooms...

...With a solid academic structure in place, sports and fitness were also an important part of campus life. The college adopted a mascot, the Mariner (depicted as a crusty old salt), and early competitive sports included baseball, basketball, football and crew. To accommodate the growing physical education programs, trustees purchased the level, 10-acre Eugenio Corvi farm property across the creek from the main campus. Here in 1931 they constructed a football field with bleachers and lights, tennis courts and a fine new gymnasium facing College Avenue. The basketball team coached by Irwin "Red" Diamond won the National Junior College Championship in 1948; the new sports complex on the Tamalpais Centre campus was named after Diamond when it opened in 1964. The old gym served students for more than thirty years until it was destroyed

in a spectacular fire on December 16, 1963...



New gymnasium on College Avenue (Newall Snyder Collection)

...As the student body exploded after World War II the college became crowded, but funding did not allow rapid expansion of the campus and facilities. Postwar students "took umbrage" at the word Junior and started a movement to change the name to College of Marin, which was accomplished in 1948. The campus began to slowly change, with new buildings and more parking lots. As the number of students increased through the 1950s and 1960s many of the old campus landmarks were replaced and much of the open space built upon. Nancy Danielson fondly remembered the beautiful campus before redevelopment: "The front lawn in the semi-circle was huge and beautiful, with the buckeye trees and the redwood grove over on the side and the chestnut trees. It really was gracious, a wonderful place. Of course that view, you can't beat it anywhere." ...

...The College of Marin experienced a building boom in the 1960s and 1970s. As the venerable old Spanish-style buildings became obsolete, they were replaced with modern concrete campus buildings typical of the time. The 1950s saw the construction of the Fine Arts Building, the Business Education Building and Olney Hall, which featured a large lecture hall. All of these have since been replaced. In 1964 the Tamalpais Centre was replaced with the physical education complex, and in 1966 the Fine Arts Theater was added to the older art buildings. That year the Student Services Center was built, offering a large space for students to gather and eat, as well as administrative offices. The Ward Austin Science Center and a large parking lot was built on the old football field in 1971, and the Learning Resource Center, including the College of Marin Library, was completed in 1973.



Newest buildings at College of Marin replacing Olney Hall. (Marilee Rogers photos)

"Without the college being there," said Kentfield native David Manahan, "Kentfield would have just been a crossroads. It was small, sure, but there was a lot of businesses there, a hardware store and stationery store, and a five and dime and bakeries, and a number of places to eat." As of this writing, two new state-of-the-art buildings, one for science and the other for art, have been constructed and an administrative complex is rising on the old Ross Landing-era Smith and Treanton properties on College Avenue; only Fusselman Hall remains from the Marin Junior College days. Today College of Marin is one of the premier junior colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area and attracts students from all over the country. Its presence in Kentfield has led the community from a sleepy suburb into a vibrant center of education and culture in the heart of Marin.

Membership Update ... continued

... You can also send a check: KGHS Membership, Box 236, Kentfield, CA 94914. Please include your name, level of membership, address, email and phone number. Included with your membership is the bi-monthly/quarterly newsletter, special invitations to member events and an invitation to volunteer on one of our committees.

**SAVE SATURDAY
MAY 7**

**COMMUNITY
MAY DAY
CELEBRATION AT
KENT MIDDLE
SCHOOL
11AM – 2 PM**

KGHS...What's going on?

The KGHS is very busy this Spring.

- We are currently developing curriculum for Third Grade students and sharing the local history through our slide show.
- A new History Club at Kent Middle School has begun (see below).
- Dr. David Coon, President of the College of Marin will be our guest at our members meeting on March 17 as we celebrate its 90th Anniversary. (see invitation)
- A Community May Day Picnic on May 7 (a mini version of the Centennial Celebration) is in the works with maypoles and music, displays and games, community booths and student work. **SAVE THE DATE.**
- The KGHS is developing an exhibit and lecture on California/Kentfield Artist George Demont Otis in conjunction with the College of Marin for this coming October.

Please pass this newsletter on to your friends and encourage them to join the KGHS. Your support will allow us to continue to enrich the lives of students and the community. This all can be done on our website www.kghs.org.

The KGHS Board of Directors

Susan Morrow, President

Lorelei Evans	Sarah Fletcher	Mary Gilardi
Ross McKenna	Sydney Park	Josh Rafner
Marilee Rogers	Paula Skov	Heather McPhail Sridharan
Kaki Jacobs Tusler	Richard Torney	Marlies Zeisler
Dewey Livingston, Author		

Get Involved!

We have many plans for this school year and would like to include you in them. We are establishing several working committees. If you are interested, please contact us!

...Events Committee: helping to organize and publicize member and community events such as the Painters of Mt. Tamalpais and the May Day Celebration.

...Research Committee: collecting more oral histories and generating the historical background of sites in the Kentfield and Greenbrae area...developing curriculum, creating walking tours...

...Membership & Outreach Committee: reaching out to local businesses and alumni to expand our membership

If you would like to be on one of the above committees, please send a message through info@kghs.org and we will get back to you.

Kentfield Greenbrae Historical Society
P.O. Box 236
Kentfield, CA 94914