

## President's Message

The tumult of 2020 often feels overwhelming: the world continues to reel as it deals with an ongoing global health crisis. Our nation is fast approaching a pivotal election and long simmering issues of equity and justice came to a boil this summer, setting the stage for long-needed conversations. Here in California, fire has ravaged huge swaths of our state and our air quality was badly compromised for over a month.

Mental health experts are recommending a whole variety of ways to calm our minds: meditation, exercise, enjoying the great outdoors, to name just a few. The KGHS Board is offering one more option to sooth and relax our world-weary minds: a return to the beauty of mid- 20th century Marin as depicted in the paintings of George Demont Otis.

Please join us on November 12 at 6:30 PM for the KGHS Fall 2020 Members Meeting (via Zoom). We will return to the video presentation, *Visions of Marin: George Demont Otis, American Impressionist*, which premiered in October 2016. The retrospective, produced by Marin filmmaker Rebecca Sylla, with narration by KGHS Board Member Mary Gilardi, will be augmented with photos and remembrances of the 2016 Otis exhibition at the College of Marin.

(Mark your calendars now—we'll be emailing an invitation in the next few days!)

Stay safe and be well.

Susan Morrow

Co-President, 2019-2020

## Annual Members Meeting ... Webinar

### SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Members Meeting

Via Zoom Webinar

**Thursday, November 12 at 6:30 pm**

***Remembering George Demont Otis***

Webinar with Mary Gilardi and Rebecca Sylla

**Details & Registration will be posted on our website and sent to members [www.kghs.org](http://www.kghs.org)**

## Covid 19 Update

We hope everyone in the KGHS community continues to be safe and healthy. Signs of our ability to adapt to the Covid 19 virus are everywhere. People are being respectful by wearing masks and social distancing. Our markets (Woodlands and Mollie Stones) have been on the forefront of health and safety procedures. Restaurants and cafes have opened outdoor seating, curbside pick up and take out options. Outdoor drive-in movies have kept us entertained. Even our schools have cautiously opened to some extent, making it safe for children to be together to socialize and learn... 6 feet apart.

Please send us your stories and photos about how you and your family have adapted to the Covid 19 quarantines. We are creating history and will archive it for future generations. Send the information to [info@kghs.org](mailto:info@kghs.org) or mail it to KGHS PO Box 236, Kentfield, CA 94914.

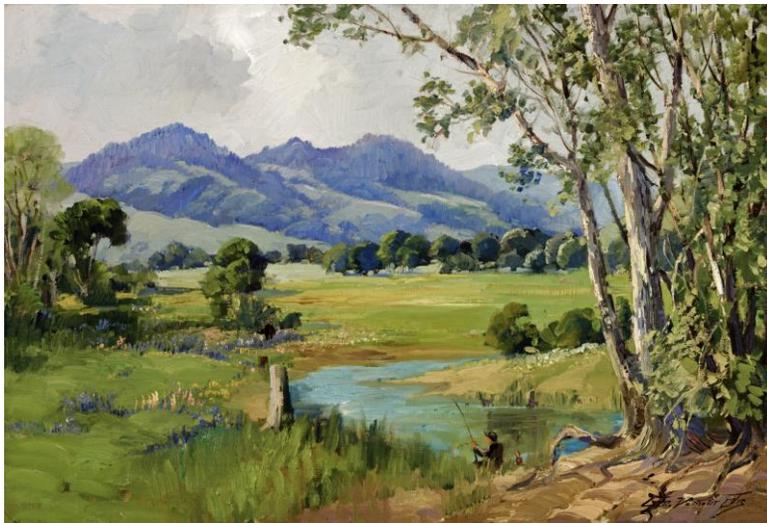
Be sure to include your name and a title and description for the each photo.

## We need your continued support!

It's never too late to renew or join! Renewal letters will be mailed in November. If you know of friends and neighbors who are interested in preserving our community and recognizing local history, please forward this newsletter to them and encourage them to become a member.

## Remembering George Demont Otis... From "*In the Heart of Marin*" by Dewey Livingston

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone. Our community has been focused on the devastating effects of Covid 19, the fight for equality and equal rights, the remnants of racism as reflected in the names of many of our landmarks leading to debates about changing names of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and Drake High School, the closure of schools and business, devastating fires and poor air quality... the list goes on. But one thing is certain, we live in one of the most beautiful places on earth, with Mt. Tam in our backyard, a mecca for artists, environmentalists and people who love the outdoors and nature. Looking back at the work of George Demont Otis reminds us of how fortunate we are, and how important it is to take a minute to look around us and the beauty of Marin.



*Lucas Valley Oil*

George Demont Otis was multi-talented, being adept at oil painting, watercolor, drawing, sculpture, woodcarving, printmaking and stained glass. He had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and beauty.

"During his long and colorful career spanning sixty-five years," wrote George Roberts in *American Artist*, "Otis painted in thirty-five states, creating a body of work which stands as a purely American statement by a completely American artist...."

Already widely known in the art world, Otis settled in Los Angeles in 1919 where he painted and worked in the film industry as a designer. Within a decade, he tired of the whirlwind life of Southern California and moved to San Francisco. In 1931, he married San Francisco businesswoman Clara Van Tine, and the next year the couple visited Marin County. Rounding a bend as they entered Kentfield on the new Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Otis saw a scene that caused him to stop the car and get out: Mt. Tamalpais with picturesque Corte Madera Creek in the foreground. As luck would have it, a "Lot For Sale" sign also appeared in the scene, and the Otises bought the piece of property. They considered Kentfield to be their Eden.



*Bend in the Creek*

At this time, Kentfield's waterfront retained the feel of nineteenth century Ross Landing. The still-wide creek meandered through town, with old shacks and sheds and barns on its banks. Large groves of eucalyptus trees towered over the neighborhood and children played in the creek. Most of the neighbors were Italian. George and Clara Otis would fit right in.

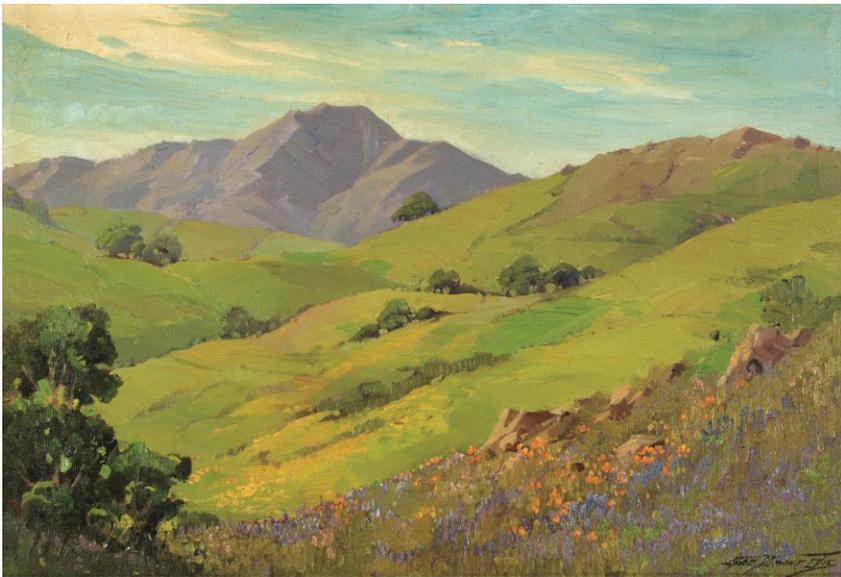
The couple crafted their own house at 907 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, an almost fairy-book cottage on the banks of the creek, with a studio and gallery, the latter open to the public. Clara was also a talented artist, weaver, ceramist and metalworker. "His home was a work of art with its stained glass windows and hand-crafted furniture, all made by Otis," wrote Roberts. "He was especially proud of a hearts-of-redwood carved staircase which depicted 152 varieties of sea life he had seen or caught."

Otis's grandniece Jessie Hartley vividly remembers regular visits to the house in the 1950s.

"Everything was handmade," she recalled. "Together the combination of all of her woven rugs and his carved daybed and the carved staircase and the big beautiful front table he made,

everything was the total arts and crafts life style, and for a kid it was the just most beautiful, homey, warm, colorful, exciting place you could be."

Otis's paintings are treasured for their color and spontaneity; his quick brushstrokes and thick application of paint "imparted a vigor and directness to his lyrical, evocative paintings," wrote Roberts, who also noted Otis's allegiance to local scenes. He painted all over Marin County, but Mt. Tamalpais was a favorite subject as was the creek in his backyard. A later Kentfield neighbor, artist and critic Ada Garfinkel, wrote about Otis's "ability to convey seasonal temperature and time and weather variations through hue and tonal contrasts...."



*Mantle of Spring*

In the spirit of fellow Kentfield resident William Kent, Otis believed strongly in appreciation and preservation of natural places. He supported the conservation movements throughout his life, providing art works, lecturing and exhibiting. In his last years he lent his talents in the campaign to create Point Reyes National Seashore, and two of his paintings were later displayed at the White House commemorating the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

(Full text can be found in *In the Heart of Marin: A History of Kentfield and Greenbrae* by Dewey Livingston, pages 186-187)

## The Mt. Tamalpais Florilegium Exhibition

Mary Gilardi (KGHS Board) Coordinator

The Mt. Tamalpais Florilegium is an exhibition of paintings and drawings of the flora of Mt. Tamalpais created by members of the Northern California Society of Botanical Artists (NCalSBA). The collection will be expanded over the next few years and will eventually document a large sampling of the native flora growing on Mt. Tamalpais, including many of its, rare and special status species. Our hope is that by showcasing the unique beauty of its flora, others will be

inspired to learn more about our mountain and join us in our efforts to protect it.



Calypso Bulbosa  
Fairy Slipper Orchid



*Douglas Iris*

Digital images of all of the art works will eventually be presented to One Tam and will be on their web site for use in their various educational programs and outreach to the community. The paintings in the gallery are hung by plant communities or habitats and are accompanied with educational information about Mt. Tam's natural habitats throughout.

This exhibition will be open to the public:

**Marin Art and Garden Center Studio Fridays and Saturdays from 10 am to 4pm, and on Sundays from 12- 4, through November 29, 2020.** Visit [maringarden.org](http://maringarden.org) to see a replay of the virtual opening reception of the exhibit, to

register for botanical art workshops, and to see and purchase the art online. Special Thanks to MMWD and ONE TAM for their support.

## Adaline "Addie" Kent Howard Sculptor 1900-1957

Adaline "Addie" Kent was born on August 7, 1900 in Kentfield, one of seven children of women's rights activist Elizabeth Thacher Kent and U.S. congressman William Kent. Her grandfather, Albert Emmett Kent, had purchased an 800-acre farm in 1871, which later became the town of Kentfield. It is Albert's wife and Addie's grandmother for whom Adaline E. Kent School is named.

She began her education at Vassar College before returning to the Bay Area to study at the California School of Fine Arts and later in Paris. She developed a sculptural style first akin to surrealism and was noted for her originality and invention. In 1930 she married fellow sculptor and painter Robert Boardman Howard. They had two girls, Ellen and Galen.

methodologies. Thus, in addition to ranging freely, the boys had animals, gardens, and fruit trees, and they were encouraged to experiment with plant propagation and animal husbandry.



Adaline "Addie" Kent Howard  
(Molly Schardt collection)



Presence (SFMOMA 1947)



Standing Lady  
(MAGC)

The first fifteen years of her career her art focused on the human body. Addie also took influence from primitive resources that originated in other cultures. Her sculptures remain an important part of surrealist and modern art because of her eye of interpreting the world and its forms. To Kent sculpting was an adventure into the unknown with meaning being attached to personal vision.

During the Golden Gate International Exposition (1939-1940), Kent produced a group of 20 statues called *Pacific Unity*, that were grouped around the *Fountain of Western Waters* surrounded the statue of *Pacifica* (*Court of Pacifica*) by Ralph Stackpole. Each cast stone statue was created to represent the four different population groups in the Pacific; North American, South American, Asian and Pacific Islander. In 1941 the US Navy took over control of Treasure Island (location of the former Golden Gate International Exposition) and removed all but

six of the statues. In 1994, six of the remaining statues were restored and put on display on Treasure Island at Building One. She also has works in the Whitney Museum and the Modern Art Museum in New York City.

Two of Addie Kent's sculptures are in the Memory Garden next to the Jose Moya del Pino Library on the grounds of the Marin Art and Garden Center. The first, known to many as *Reclining Lady*, is the longest lasting art installation at the Marin Art and Garden Center, residing in the Memory Garden since 1947. You will find it in the back of the Memory Garden. The second lady in the garden is known by the simple and descriptive title *Standing Lady*. She did not arrive at the Center until 1982 as a gift from Nancy Kent Danielson.

Tragically, on March 24, 1957, Kent died in an automobile accident while driving on the Pacific Coast Highway in Marin County.

(Dewey Livingston *In the Heart of Marin*, p. 216-217; Wikipedia; Fran Cappaletti, Ross Historical Society  
[Adaline Kent and Her Two Ladies](#))

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