
Thoughts from Agnes Yuseff
Background on the New Almaden Community Club

When John Carol and I bought our little house and moved to New Almaden in September 1954, we found many of the local residents were interested in the community. Everyone hoped that they could have a club. There was a simple feeling of friendship. Neighbors gathered at the Casa Grande (recently owned by Norman and Love Pope) and were made welcome for neighborhood gatherings that grew after a time into community club. Norman Pope was generous and liked holding family and community celebrations. My first memory of the Pope hall was a Christmas Party in 1954. Mr. Pope dressed as Santa and the children were lined up by size for the parade. Bud and Dorothy Minkle's second son Michael and our Carol were under 3 and Michael Minkle and Carol Yuseff were most "honored" to lead the line for happy older children to receive holiday candy from Mr. Pope. There was a piano and a feeling of fellowship that made us feel welcome in the village.

Many meetings were held through the years 1955-1956 at the Club Almaden. Everyone hoped that our group would be able to have land of our own and build a small building but no serious plans developed as I recall.

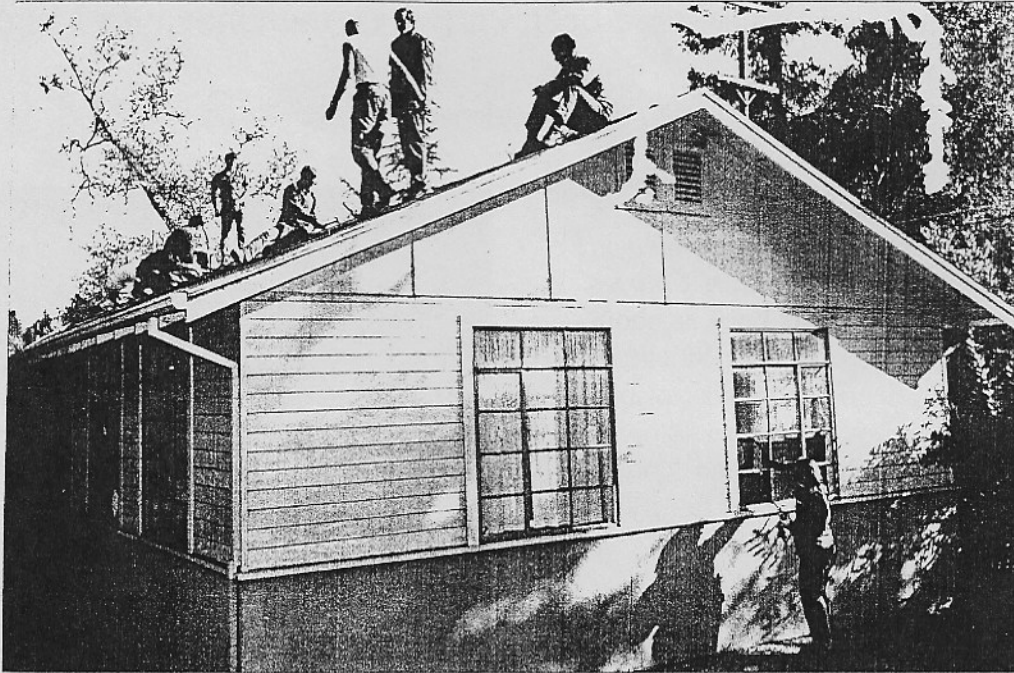
Then came a winter- perhaps it was 1956 or 1957 when our creek that ran along Bertram Rd. flooded. There were two streams as I recall that ran past the corner of Bertram behind and along the road. That time there was water flowing along the road and mud everywhere. The County flood control people I believe were the ones who cleared up the mud and filled the land with only one creek, the present one flowing along. There was a flat area that interested the group of neighbors as a possible spot for our club building we hoped. The Pope family continued to offer help aside from lending the use of Club Almaden for meetings and raising funds. The Club had three pools - two adult size pools and one small kiddies wading pool. (In those times, home pools were not being built and so Club Almaden profited). Mr. Pope permitted one summer day profit to the future "Club fund" and the idea of our own community club took root and funds began to grow from local donations.

The new land I recall was now owned by the County not by a single owner as there had been no wide plot of land there before the big flood and moving of the piles of dirt onto the land we now have with only one stream.

At this point Nat Gross and John Cannon and friends of Nat who owned a lumber company in San Jose on First Street, were semi retired. They had funds and best of all they were somewhat knowledgeable about building and could spend time.

Nat Gross spent the remaining years of his life on the project of "our own" Community Club and it did take years before that first building came to be built.

I do not remember the final date that the land was purchased but money was finally raised and lumber and labor of many residents went into it "our Community Club" These are events so long ago and my mind and memory are not fool proof now at 89.



NEW ALMADEN COMMUNITY CLUB, 1977. In 1924, the Almaden Improvement Club was formed to provide the community with a clean water system. After the name changed, this building was built in 1956, burned in 1982, and rebuilt in 1983. In 1977, members of the Air Force 682nd Radar Squadron stationed at Mount Umunhum, including Major Giles, Master Sergeant Fuller, Tech Sergeant Cuthbertson and Nancy Cotter, repair the roof. (Photograph by Tech Sergeant Neach.)

I have a few memories that I may add. I recall the first Christmas when the walls and roof of the building were finished we all held a first Christmas in the building with no side walls. Only rubber sheeting on the sides. It was not secure and some of the children fell through the sheeting on the sides. As we sang Christmas Carols. Our very first Nat Gross's Nathaniel Hall.

Other residents who are somewhat along in years can add what they recall, memories of those who labored and finally completed the Club House. Let us remember the fire that burned this first clubhouse and the people who remembered Nat Gross's Building and hoped to carry on with the name. Others also can add the help we have had when the Air Force helped to fix the roof and so many others too,

Agnes Yuseff

