



# NOTICIAS de NUEVA ALMADÉN

## NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ALMADEN QUICKSILVER COUNTY PARK ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2022

ISSUE 136

### Welcome to NAQCPA's first E-Newsletter

NAQCPA has transitioned to a new electronic newsletter that will greatly reduce preparation and distribution time and cost. We are sensitive that some of our members are not necessarily "computer savvy" and we will make provisions on a limited basis for traditional mailing of printed newsletters.

### President's Message



Changes are a normal part of life, but few predicted a day when Kitty would step down as President of NAQCPA. Well, that day has come, and I was both humbled and honored when she asked if I would take over as NAQCPA President. Upon NAQCPA Board confirmation, I assumed President responsibilities in February. Kitty will remain on the Board where we can take advantage of her wealth of knowledge and experience. I'm sure all will agree that Kitty's contributions to New Almaden historical preservation transcend mere words. For a little lady, she leaves huge shoes to fill, but I'm confident, with the help of our talented NAQCPA Board, dedicated volunteers, and loyal members, we will continue NAQCPA's great work and mission.



I grew up in the Almaden Valley and am a descendant of Cornish miners who lived in Englishtown. My great grandparents, James Job and Eliza Kessell, were married in New Almaden on June 20, 1903. As a kid, I remember hearing family stories, passed down through the years, about life "on the hill" and still enjoy my great grandmother's Cornish pastie recipe. I have been a NAQCPA and County Parks volunteer for many years and have grown to love the NAQCPA culture. I currently serve on the Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission and co-founded the newly formed Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance. I look forward to helping lead the oldest and most respected County Parks Association in Santa Clara County.

In just a few months we have established a new NAQCPA leadership team, created new ways to communicate with our membership and community, developed a new volunteer work plan with County Parks, and are planning the return of Pioneer Day after a two-year Covid related absence. We're making good progress and have many new ideas that will continue NAQCPA's legacy.

I look forward to serving as your President and will always make myself available to hear your ideas and suggestions.

Tere Johnson  
408-406-3001  
terenaqcpa@gmail.com

## **NAQCPA Board and Officers**

President - Tere Johnson  
Vice President - Michael Cox  
Treasurer - Art Boudreault  
Secretary - Lisa Laymon  
Board Member - Kitty Monahan  
Board Member - Sue McLain  
Board Member - Ron Horii  
Board Member - Richard Williams

## New Almaden Fun Fact

Ever wonder how streets get their names? In 1886 the South Pacific Coast Railroad built the Camden Branch, a link between Campbell and the quicksilver mines at New Almaden. The line was abandoned in the 1930s, but Camden Avenue follows the same route today. The street gets its name from the first three letters of Campbell and the last three letters of Almaden.



## Greetings from Michael Cox

Hello terrific and friendly NAQCPA members and friends,

I am so happy to see the Association humming along thanks to the efforts of so many great people. The Association is strong, and the new electronic newsletter and internet outreach is working. Thank you for supporting this change. It has been a tough couple of years.

I am indeed honored and humbled to be serving as the Vice President for the Association. I hope I can accomplish some good contributions and serve our members and friends well.

I am looking forward to seeing folks at Pioneer Day in October. Meanwhile, I will be volunteering at the museum on Fridays as my schedule allows. Drop by and say hello. I love to see folks and talk about New Almaden.

Congratulations, deep thanks, and applause go to Tere Johnson and his tireless dedication to getting the association going again and bringing back core Association activities. In addition to this, Tere serves on the Santa Clara County Historic Heritage Commission and recently co-founded the Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance, seeing to it that our own Bruce Bartlett was recognized for his preservation efforts and, last but not least, ensuring Kitty Monahan received a well-deserved lifetime achievement award from the Preservation Alliance as well as special commendation from the County Board of Supervisors. Whew! Tere's mining ancestors at New Almaden were surely high achievers and hard workers.

The renewal of the Association after over two years of interruption due to the pandemic brings back memories of the Association's founding. I can recall learning about someone named Kitty Monahan in 1976, while I was in my senior year of high school and busy getting ready to enter San Jose State as a geology undergrad. At the time, I was immersing myself in New Almaden's documented history, as well as its underground workings. In 1977 I started working as a volunteer at Connie Perham's New Almaden Museum. Before I met Kitty in person, I recall wondering who she was and why a high school math teacher thought she had something to say about mercury mines and miners. Those of us intimate with the mine and its works tended to be a bit possessive, jealously guarding it and its not-so-secret secrets.

When I found out Kitty was going to form a Park Association and serve as its President, I was envious and a bit annoyed too. At some point Kitty came to the museum and we met. It did not take long before I knew Kitty was not only the right person for the job, she was the only person. I recall well the first formal general meeting of the Park Association at Forbes Mill in Los Gatos in 1983. I still have my notes from the meeting. Kitty was elected President unanimously. There was no question or contest. You will read lot's more about Kitty and the Association history and activities in this and future newsletters.

I hope I can contribute some regular articles. For one thing, I need to keep folks up to date on the saga of the environmental activities at the mine. These activities will never end because too much job security is tied up in the issue. All this wag can do is watch and cheer or jeer from the sidelines as circumstances dictate.



This fall, maybe, County Parks will have to spend much money to remove and encapsulate some small remaining piles of burnt mercury ore that are scattered around the Hacienda.

Meanwhile . . . it is summer, and that means the long dry season. I will leave folks with these thoughts on the matter from the late Mary Hallock Foote, who lived on "the Hill" for one glorious year in 1876 and published the words below in "A California Mining Camp," Scribner's Monthly Magazine, February 1878:

"During the long months when drought sits heavy on the land, the water-tank is one of the idyls of the Cornish Camp. It is a sort of club at which congregate all the stray dogs, donkeys, sad-eyed cows (who subsist, at this season, chiefly on hope deferred), boys with water-pails, red-shirted teamsters, and "wood-packers" with trains of jaded mules; there is nothing dubious in the nature of its benefits, and of all who gather there none depart in bitterness, unless it may be the small Cornish lads, who carry away two heavy pails and a sense of injury natural to the spirit of youth under such circumstances.

"Three times a day the motley crowd gathers, but I like it best at sunset, with a flushed sky overhead, against which the figures are dark; gleams of trickling water; the straw hat of a teamster, or a gaunt gray donkey, catching the waning light, while evening shadows brood already in the hollows of the mountains and deepen the mystery of the canon beyond.

"Past the store and the water-tank the road winds still upward and passes out of sight round a spur of the mountain. It leads to the Mexican camp and into an entirely different social atmosphere. The village lies all in broadest sunlight, unrelieved by tree or shelter of any kind except here and there the shadow of a rock in which, perhaps, stands a donkey, with drooping ears and hanging lip, motionless in a patient reverie."

## Your Newsletter

As we develop our new E-Newsletter, its focus is for your benefit and enjoyment. With that in mind, always feel welcome to let us know *what's important to you*. In addition to NAQCPA updates, what kind of stories would you like us to provide - New Almaden history (both mining and post-mining)? Almaden Quicksilver County Park updates? Nature pictures of the area? Drop us a line and share what you would like to see:

[naqcpa.almaden@gmail.com](mailto:naqcpa.almaden@gmail.com)

A white rectangular sticky note is pinned to a bright yellow background. The note has a blue pushpin in the top right corner. The text on the note is written in a bold, black, serif font and reads "What's Important to You?".



New Almaden Quicksilver  
County Park Association  
Public group · 120 members

## Got Facebook?

Join our new Facebook group for NAQCPA updates and interesting stories. Click on the link to access our Facebook group:

[New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association | Facebook](#)

## Bruce Bartlett and Kitty Monahan honored

Bruce Bartlett and Kitty Monahan were honored for their many historical preservation contributions at the inaugural Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance Historic Preservation Awards Night held on May 21 at History San Jose Park.



Bruce received the **Distinguished Preservation Service Award** for his outstanding preservation project leadership at Almaden Quicksilver County Park Quicksilver County Park. Bruce has dedicated countless volunteer hours over the last 20 years designing and coordinating several historical preservation projects to enhance Almaden Quicksilver County Park, including the Hacienda Outdoor Mining Museum and Bell Tower replica. Bruce is a long-time member of NAQCPA's Volunteer Team that continues to enhance Quicksilver Park for the enjoyment of park visitors for generations to come.



The first ever **SCCPA Preservation Lifetime Achievement Award** was bestowed upon Kitty for her numerous and far-reaching preservation achievements. She led the New Almaden Quicksilver County Parks Association for 40 years, served on the County Historical Heritage Commission, Parks Commission, Umunhum Conservancy, and countless other preservation and ad hoc groups for nearly 50 years. Kitty's passion and dedication to local historic preservation have truly been an inspiration to all who know and appreciate her.

## New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association Website

Be sure to check out our website managed by our amazing webmaster, Ron Horii, for pictures and stories that chronicle NAQCPA's history:

[www.newalmaden.org](http://www.newalmaden.org)



## News from the Volunteer Front by Bruce Bartlett

As with everything else at the beginning of the pandemic, the Wednesday Crew shut down operations. We managed to stay in touch with one another, checking in to make sure everyone was healthy and safe. After a few months, we cautiously began to gather on alternate Wednesdays, cleaning up around the Blacksmith Shop and the NAQCPA container and discussing future projects. Then Kitty resigned as NAQCPA president and everything stopped once again.

For a while, there was uncertainty and confusion, not knowing if we were going to be able to continue. When Tere took over as president, things began to return to normal and we once again started to make plans. Some Wednesdays there are two of us, some days four. So far, we've managed to: cover the graffiti at the chimney and at the rotary furnace; build a crank mechanism to demonstrate how the shotgun feeder works at the outdoor exhibit; cut down the weeds at the Blacksmith Shop, the Outdoor Mining Exhibit (twice), and the Rotary Furnace. Currently, we are rebuilding the tunnel at the Blacksmith Shop for Play Like a Miner on July 9<sup>th</sup>.

Kitty, we really miss your guidance and your enthusiasm, but you can rest assured that we will continue your legacy of help to the park and to all who visit. You are truly one of a kind.



The four main volunteer contributors who meet on Wednesdays at Almaden Quicksilver County Park are Bruce Bartlett, Rich Robertson, Scot Hayes and Mike Boulland. NAQCPA and Santa Clara County Parks owe these gentlemen a debt of gratitude for their many years of time and service towards helping make the park one of the finest in Santa Clara County.



## BioBlitzes at Almaden Quicksilver County Park

by Ronald Horii

What's a BioBlitz? A BioBlitz is a community science event where participants try to find and identify as many living organisms as possible within a specific area in a given time period.

Participants include scientists, naturalists, families, students, teachers, and other community members. They use the iNaturalist app or website to record and upload observations. The data is added to a global biodiversity database, which is used by scientists and policy makers worldwide.

BioBlitzes in the South Bay have been led by Stanford entomologist Merav Vonshak, who has a website on them: <https://www.bioblitz.club/>. They have been held in many places, including Almaden Quicksilver, where they have started in the Mockingbird Hill Staging Area, organized by Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful.

The last one was held on 3/19/22: <https://tinyurl.com/57fhkku>. I helped lead a group on the New Almaden Trail. We saw many native plant species, as well as insects and fungi. From that event, 1,301 observations were uploaded to [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org/), which included 234 species.



### About the Author

Ron Horii has been a dedicated volunteer for Santa Clara County Parks, New Almaden Quicksilver County Parks Association and Friends of Santa Teresa Park for over 20 years. He is always at-the-ready, with camera in hand, whenever his photography skills are needed. Ron is the webmaster for our NAQCPA website and serves on our Board of Directors.



## 38th Annual Pioneer Day

NAQCPA's annual Pioneer Day is a time to remember and celebrate the glory days of the New Almaden Quicksilver Mine. After a two-year Covid hiatus, this year's Pioneer Day will be even more special: we will recognize Kitty for 40 years of NAQCPA leadership, pay tribute to NAQCPA leaders who have passed in the last two years, and hear from Richard Williams, a descendent of Cornish Quicksilver Miners. Join us on **October 8th, 11:00 am, at the Casa Grande in New Almaden.**



**The old gang is getting together again!**

**New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association**

# PIONEER DAY 2022

**Saturday, October 8, 11:00 am**  
**Casa Grande, New Almaden**



- **Quicksilver History Hike** - July 24, 9:00 AM at Almaden Quicksilver County Park (Woods Road entrance) - [Upcoming Events - Parks and Recreation - County of Santa Clara \(sccgov.org\)](#)
- **New Almaden Day & Jump-In Parade** - September 10, 11:00 AM at the New Almaden Community Club, New Almaden - [New Almaden Community Club](#)
- **38th Annual Pioneer Day** - October 8, 10:00 AM at the Casa Grande, New Almaden

## Join the NAQCPA family

NAQCPA is the oldest park association in Santa Clara County. Established in 1983, NAQCPA exists to promote the protection and enhancement of the historical, recreational, and natural resources of Almaden Quicksilver County Park.

Membership fees and donations help subsidize our Quarterly Newsletter, annual Pioneer Day, and many special projects we undertake throughout the year to enhance Almaden Quicksilver County Park.

We are grateful for our membership financial support and invite new members to join the NAQCPA family.



### NAQCPA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership:

- One-year new membership or renewal - \$15

Donation:

- Donation amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAQCPA Membership Form and check may be mailed to:

New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association

P.O. Box 124, New Almaden, CA 95042

**We thank you for your financial support!**