



NOTICIAS de NUEVO ALMADÉN
NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW ALMADEN
QUICKSILVER COUNTY PARK ASSOCIATION

FALL 2024 ISSUE 143

**40th Annual New Almaden
Pioneer Day Celebration**

CELEBRATING THE ORIGINAL MINE

**Lunch
Friends
Raffle
Recognition**

**Fun
Family
Stories
Community**

11 am-2 pm ◀▶ Saturday October 12, 2024 ▶▶ \$15
New Almaden Community Club – 21727 Bertram Rd.

Must Email info@naqcpa.com to reserve or call
(408) 688-4150

New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association
<http://www.newalmaden.org/>

President's Message - Veronica Jordan

Welcome to my first newsletter as NAQCPA President! In January I replaced our outgoing President, Tere Johnson, to whom we give a big thanks for reviving NAQCPA and serving as President for two years. Thank you, Tere! Also a big thank you to board members who have served NAQCPA and New Almaden history for many years: Mike Cox, Sue McLain, Mike Boulland, Ron Horii, Art Boudreault and Richard Williams.

We have two new additions to our board, Scot Hayes and Charlie Cox. Their skills and expertise round out our crew. Scot's family moved to Almaden when he was a toddler and he now works on the maintenance crew for Quicksilver Park. His knowledge of the park system and willingness to help where needed comes in handy! Charlie lives on

Almaden Road; his deep knowledge of early mine history is unparalleled. He's our consigliere for legal issues and a secret weapon in our boomer struggles with tech.

PIONEER DAY 2024 will be held at the New Almaden Community Club on Saturday, October 12, 2024. We celebrate the 200-year anniversary of Secundino Robles' "discovery" of the original cinnabar cave mined for centuries by the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.

My introduction to NAQCPA and the force that was our late President, Kitty Monahan, began a few weeks before the 2011 Pioneer Day celebration. For my mother's birthday in mid-September, we made a visit to the Casa Grande Museum. We had taken only a few steps through the front door when Kitty appeared; I only knew who she was from news articles. "Oh there you are!" She exclaimed, "I've been meaning to call you. We've named the adit at the new outdoor museum after the Tobar family. Can you get your family to come for the unveiling on Pioneer Day? Make a speech? Oh, and a photo board would be good too."

I didn't know if she was talking to me or Mom, and as I later found out, it probably didn't matter, she just needed a yes from one of us. Mom, who knew Kitty from past Pioneer Days, didn't fall for it, but she'd raised me to be helpful. Startled by a near stranger's request but unable to say no, I responded "Uhhh...yes?"



Several generations of Tobars pose in front of the Tobar Adit on Pioneer Day October, 2011 (photo by board member Ron Horii). That year the outdoor museum was officially launched thanks to the initiative and labor of NAQCPA board and volunteers. Our late President, Kitty Monahan, stands between Jerry Tobar and **current NAQCPA president, Veronica Jordan**

It was quite an honor for my family to have something named after them in Almaden! My grandparents, Virgie and Jim Tobar, along with six of their children and many grandchildren, lived continuously on Almaden Road from the mid 50s to the mid 80s. In the early 60s, Grandpa, who was born in Spanishtown, founded the Hacienda Civic Club.

As the unofficial “Mayor of New Almaden” (before Kitty’s time), Grandpa Tobar organized events like Almaden Days and the Easter egg hunt and got the first Community Club built. For Almaden Days celebration (it used to be three days!) he assigned my teenage aunts and uncles to clean around the old store and Baker’s Bar (before they burned down in the 70s) and he made me and my sister “princesses” for the Miss New Almaden float in the Almaden Days parade of 1964. That first Saturday in September, Patty and I, ages four and five, sat perched on the edge of Grandpa’s flatbed truck, our legs dangling over the edge. Decked out in matching pink dresses, we waved to the crowd as Grandpa (slowly!) drove us and Miss New Almaden along the parade route.

The Tobar adit debut was in three weeks from when Kitty made her requests; I had to move swiftly! Calls went out and on Pioneer Day we had 50 family members from around the state and Oregon gather for the unveiling. My cousin gave a speech about our family history in Almaden, the photo board was a hit, and the Tobar family had a grand time!

Back when we met in September, I asked Kitty when NAQCPA held meetings. “Do you want to be on the board? You’re on!!” What would Grandpa say? I gave Kitty an enthusiastic yes!

Pioneer Day has always been a day to celebrate and reminisce about the mine and the families that lived on the hill or near the Hacienda. As we recall our shared past, I would also like us to remember two key museum volunteers and NAQCPA members, **Jim Beseau and Dennis Moran**. Sadly, both passed away in recent months.

Jim Beseau was a master woodworker and a dedicated Quicksilver Park and NAQCPA volunteer. Jim created and contributed thousands of wood toys for Play Like a Miner days, Living History Days, Fall Fest and other park events. Jim crafted a detailed Hütner-Scott Furnace model and a unique mining diorama, both of which can be seen at the Casa Grande Museum.



Jim Beseau with his wife, Kathy Kessler, at Casa Grande showing the toys Jim made.

Jim fashioned distinctive souvenirs over the years for NAQCPA events. Besides his wood and labor, Jim used his own money to buy logo stamps he applied to his many offerings. Jim was often assisted at events by his wife Kathy, another devoted volunteer. He truly was such a kind man, and we will greatly miss him. Our hearts go out to Kathy for her loss.



Jim Beseau at Casa Grande showing how to do woodworking to visiting children; his wife, Kathy, stands at the next table.

We remember **Dennis Moran** his humor, kindness and for his amazing array of talents. He and his wife, Mary, were long-time volunteers at Casa Grande and in New Almaden. Together the two were accomplished artists and teachers who loved to engage the community in learning, history, and fun.



At Pioneer Day in 2012, artists and docents Dennis and Mary Moran explain how they designed and made new figures for the outdoor museum exhibit. (Photo by Ron Horii.)

There are so many photographs of Dennis at park and NAQCPA events, drawing caricatures, singing and playing his guitar and helping at events. He and Mary created the metal replicas of working miners displayed at the outdoor museum. They led tours of the museum and Almaden village along with hosting many arts and crafts sessions for families and children. For all who knew him, Dennis' passing leaves a great void in our community. Our condolences to his dear wife, Mary, who has also been our friend.



At the Casa Grande re-opening, Dennis Moran draws a caricature of Eugene Tobar, who as a young man, worked with his father and brothers to mine cinnabar. For many years, Dennis had a business drawing caricatures at the San Jose Flea Market. (Photo by Ron Horii.)

“We are a Team” - Celebrating 30 Years of Preserving Local History



Last May, the Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance honored NAQCPA board member, Mike Boulland and his wife Dorene with their Distinguished Preservation Service Award.

These last 30 years, Mike and Dorene have done much to preserve and disseminate the history of our Valley, through their work with NAQCPA, Friends of Santa Teresa Park, The Mount Umunhum Radar Tower and the Friends of New Almaden Ting. Most recently, Mike has been the driving force to restore the Hacienda Cemetery, the final resting place for many quicksilver miners and their families.

While Mike serves as front man for the Boulland operation, everyone who knows the couple recognizes Dorene as the behind-the-scenes navigator who keeps the Boulland household on a steady course. Dorene has for many years been a generous host to NAQCPA Christmas parties and helped with numerous events for both parks at Almaden and Santa Teresa. Most importantly, Dorene ensures that she and Mike maintain their health and take time to enjoy their “retirement.”

“Our first adventure began when Mike taught California History to 4th-graders,” Dorene said at the awards ceremony. The two became involved with saving the historic ‘Bear Tree Lot’ at Santa Teresa County Park. They acted to conserve a piece of quickly disappearing county history for future generations of park visitors.

“We found that this site, which holds significant historical stories and legends, fascinated our minds and sparked a deep passion in us to preserve our local history that children love to hear,” Dorene said. As Mike told it, he and his fourth graders, with Dorene’s support, took many field trips to research the Bear Tree and the park that was once home to the Bernal family. The children learned history first hand by investigating local buried treasure stories and exciting characters from the past, like Kit Carson and Joaquin Murietta.

Together, Dorene and Mike have restored two century-plus old homes on Almaden Road, the first being the Hauck House, built by the Barron Forbes & Company in the late 1840s. The second is their current home, “La Casita de Adobe.” The Boullands painstakingly brought back both dwellings from bygone days to their original glory, “as a testament to our dedication to preserving our local and national history,” Mike said.

On that delightful night last May at History San Jose Park, Mike and Dorene told the awards audience that “Today, we realize our search for treasure is right in front of us. We value the work we have done with all our family members, other volunteers, park and city staff, and lifelong friends who have shared the same treasured desire to safeguard our local history for future generations.”

NAQCPA especially thanks Dorene and Mike for their enthusiasm and long service to our county history.

Wednesday Work Crew Continues Hacienda Cemetery Restoration



For nearly a year now, many helping hands have worked to restore the Hacienda Cemetery on Bertram Road, across the creek from the backside of Casa Grande. The final resting place for quicksilver miners that was established around 1850 had become a bit dilapidated. Former cemetery neighbor Eric Johns had labored for many years, occasionally with aid, but mostly by himself, to keep the grounds and graves in some kind of repair.

After Eric moved to Benicia last February, Mike Boulland picked up the baton and enlisted the help of NAQCPA’s Wednesday Work Crew, including Bruce

Bartlett, Scot Hayes, Michael Cox, Charlie Cox, Dennis Boulland and Rich Robertson. Ron Horii has stopped by with his camera to document the work. NAQCPA President Veronica Jordan serves as liaison between the Wednesday Work Crew and the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County, who own the cemetery.

With a “the more, the merrier” outlook, the work crew has been delighted to accept assistance offered by nearby neighbors who wanted to get in on the “fun,” including Cal Lantrip, Ron Soto, Vince Leeburn, Dave Smith and Phil Sandars.

With many thanks from neighbors on Bertram Road, the guys removed the old plastic pickets inserted in the chain link fence that borders the street sides of the cemetery. In their place, they installed new reflectors that make the fence easier to see at night.

In a happy occurrence, park visitor Guy Occhipinti volunteered his time and skills with a chainsaw to remove dangerously leaning trees. Dennis Boulland, Mike’s brother, lent his trailer to haul brush to the dump. Our latest recruit, San Jose State student Emily Hatheway, is handy with a paintbrush, and will use her artistic skills to revamp the interpretive sign on the graveyard’s hill side.



And thank goodness for Scouts! Eagle Scout Declan MacNeil rebuilt a grave crib. This fall, Eagle Scout Connor Kraje will install a reflection area and bench. Scouts BSA Troop 582 from Saratoga, organized by Imogene Koch, weeded the cemetery last January. The girls not only cleared prickly vegetation using their own tools, but they also hauled away the debris. We are fortunate to have Troop 582 back next month to conduct a fall cleanup.

Together, the crew is about a third way through fixing and/or rebuilding thirty-six grave cribs. Emily Hatheway will repaint old wood markers and Cal Lantrip will letter new headboards made from old growth redwood donated by Dennis Boulland. Next spring Scouts will clean the stone grave markers. Plans are in the works to install an interpretive sign on the creek side of the cemetery, which

has never had one. It is going to be busy next year, but we hope to have the restoration completed by Pioneer Day in October 2025.



A big thanks to all who have helped, and to the Santa Clara Pioneers who have funded material purchases as well as a monthly lunch for the crew.

Bell Tower Gets A New Coat of Paint



The bell tower at the Hacienda entrance to Almaden Quicksilver Park has been newly repainted thanks to a county contractor. The replica tower was last covered in a glistening white after its construction in 2016 by NACQPA volunteers led by Bruce Bartlett and County Parks' crew.

The new look matches Casa Grande's exterior, being a little more cream than white, and the once rustic door has been painted a beautiful forest green. Bruce Bartlett has given it two thumbs up. "It looks good. The painters did a good job!"



The original bell tower was constructed just inside the main gate to the Hacienda Reduction Works, about 100 feet north of the current park entrance on Almaden Road across from Almaden Way. Built on the order of then mine manager James Randol, its purpose was to summon locals to put out fire. Randol's notion was prompted by a conflagration that started in the kitchen of the New Almaden Hotel situated along the Alamos Creek across from the Vichy Soda Spring and spread to the adjacent buildings, in the early morning hours of August 6, 1875.

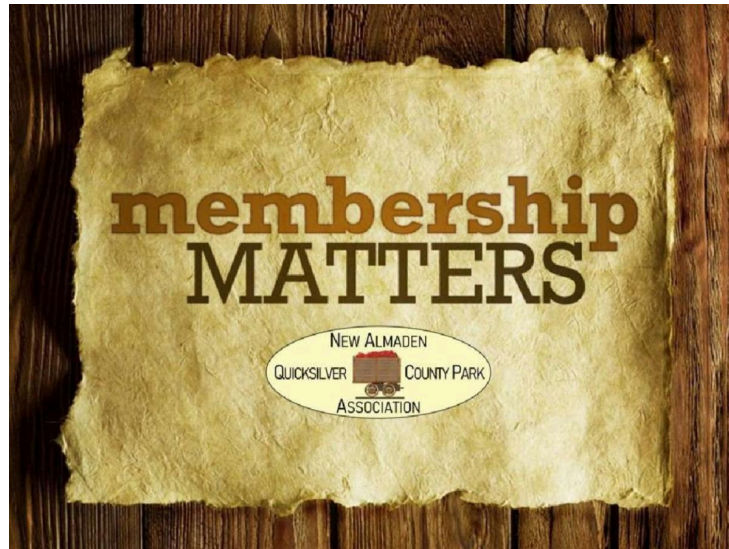
The Weekly Alta California reported that the fire had been nearly contained when the fire hose from water tanks in the furnace yard burst and the flames spread to the adjacent buildings. The inferno wasn't stopped until after it also burned the connected Adobe Hotel, the large hay barn behind it owned by the mining company, and the hay barn of stage owner Eugene Baric, who lost an estimated \$450 in hay and lacked insurance. The bridges to the Vichy Soda Springs and what is today Almaden Way also ignited but the flames were subdued. Randol believed the fire to have been arson and offered a sizeable reward to find the perpetrator.

The fire was stopped from continuing down Almaden Road by pulling down the burning Adobe Hotel and barn that was in today's Bulmore Park along Almaden Way. To prevent a future disaster, Randol organized a local bucket brigade and ordered construction of a system of fire hydrants and a bell tower. The clang

from the hefty brass bell chimed loud enough to be heard on the hill, drawing a larger army of helping hands to haul water buckets and dose flames.

In addition to the bell, which was used to alert the bucket brigade, the tower housed a hose cart. After the original tower was felled by the ravages of time, NAQCPA became the custodian of its antique bell, which later inspired the rebuild. Thank you County Parks for maintaining the tower!

Support your NAQCPA Family



New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association (NAQCPA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public benefit corporation and 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 are tax deductible and subsidize our Quarterly Newsletter, annual Pioneer Day, and many special projects we undertake throughout the year to enhance Almaden Quicksilver County Park for generations to come.

For those who have not renewed their NAQCPA membership in the last year, we would greatly appreciate your renewal fee of \$15.

[Click here to join, renew, or donate online with naqcpa.square.site](https://naqcpa.square.site)

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NAQCPA 40th Annual Pioneer Day: Saturday, October 12
Santa Clara County Parks Events: [Parks Upcoming Events](#)

Contact Us:

New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association

A California 501(c)3 Corporation

P.O. Box 124

New Almaden, CA 95042

Phone: (408) 688-4150

Email: info@naqcpa.com

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