

Peninsula Panorama

By George Whitesell



Current revival of the "Roaring Twenties" fads, foibles and music on the Peninsula is interesting to anyone who was around and taking notice during that fabulous period.

But a lot of the stuff being peddled as belonging to the 20's is strictly phony.

That is particularly true of the music which is a mixture of tunes that actually range from before the turn of the century to the early forties.

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Musicians of today apparently never look at the copyright dates on the music. They just label any older tunes as being from the 20's and give them a corny, ricky-tick treatment in the belief they are doing what was done in that decade.

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The facts are otherwise.

America's top pop composers were writing what are now known as "standards" in those days. These were tunes that have survived because they had strong melody, solid beat, and lyrics that were written to have meaning.

The 20's were also the hey-days of the great arrangers who, for the first time, were giving jazz the big-time treatment previously accorded only to classics, operetta and show tunes.

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It was an era of big dance bands and big pit bands.

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Vaudeville was still the nation's top entertainment, off Broadway, and top acts included the 40-piece Leviathan band and other big "flash bands" like Henry Santrey's.

The real trademark, musically, of the 20's was the big "oompah" background of whole batteries of sousaphones and the heavily pronounced beats provided by the suddenly rediscovered banjo.

It is really impossible for a three to five man combo, with nothing but a thumped bass fiddle for foundation, to recreate the music of the 20's which was not only loud, but big.

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Perhaps what leads moderns astray on this is listening to old phonograph records of those days. These sound thin and garish, but this was the fault of old acoustic recording techniques which could take in only a small range of what they were recording.

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Modern singers think they are duplicating the sound of the 20's with shrill, reedy voices. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Top female vocalists of the 20's almost uniformly had voices of heavy timbre and richness, many of them downright husky. Those who know will recall the voices of Helen Morgan, Hannah Williams, Ruth Etting and exuberant Mammie Smith.

There were a few freak voices late in the 20's, the best remembered being that of Helen Kane, the Boop-Boop-a-Doop girl who did trick numbers like "I Wanna Be Loved By You" and "I Faw Down and Go Boom."

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Male voices were definitely not those of reformed rock and rollers.

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They, too, were "big" voices of singers who would have scorned the artificial bolstering of a microphone.

Singers like Al Jolson and Harry Richman really "belted."

Those who heard Van and Schenk will never forget their vocal work which is never again likely to be equalled.

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Many of the other current imitations of the 20's are weak and insipid.

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Dancers doing what they consider to be the Charleston appear to have no notion that the real Charleston had scores of complicated routines and was far more than a fast shuffled time step.

Imitations of costumes of the 20's are all patterned after the cartoons of John Held. It apparently has not occurred to moderns that Held was doing broad burlesque and that many of the great Paris and London costumers were turning out beautiful dresses and frocks in the 20's just as they do today.

Nobody seems to remember that it was in the 20's when the Latin craze first swept the nation and the Latin tango beat was sophisticated to a high degree.

But if the imitations of the 20's are weak, perhaps it is just as well. Where, now, would we find anybody robust enough to drink bootleg whiskey "hot off the needle" and that great beverage of the 20's, bath-tub gin. You had to be tough in the 20's.

PENINSULA SECTION

The Times

SAN MATEO TIMES AND DAILY NEWS LEADER

SECOND FRONT PAGE

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SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1961

3rd Crusade Report Due On Thursday

The United Crusade of San Mateo county will hold its third report luncheon of the 1961 campaign Thursday noon at the Hilton Inn, International Airport. Don M. Galbraith, 1961 campaign chairman, has announced that the meeting will feature reports from the residential division. Headed by Mrs. E. E. Eyre Jr., of Atherton and Mrs. Richard Cornuelle of San Mateo, the division includes almost 10,000 volunteers who are conducting a house-to-house canvass in all communities of the county. The division has a county-wide goal of \$209,158.

S. M. Police, Fire Bonds All Sold

Sale of the remaining \$10,000 of the \$920,000 municipal bond issue for the San Mateo police and fire department improvements was adopted unanimously by the city council last night.

It is the last of the bonds to be sold to pay for the public improvements.

Also approved was a request by Police Chief Martin C. McDonnell to pass a resolution prohibiting parking at any time on the west side of South Delaware street in front of the entire frontage of the new police headquarters. Deputy Chief Henry Kohlen said some 100 off-street parking spaces are available on the property.

A resolution allowing the chief to destroy old police department records was also passed.

Councilmen adopted a resolution accepting the chain link fencing at the Municipal Golf course and Beresford park, and at Councilman Robert C. Garvey's request "no trespassing" signs are to be installed on the fence at the golf course.

Agreements to permit the continuation of the use of elementary and high school facilities by the city park and recreation department were approved. City Manager Arthur B. Sullivan praised the school districts for their "outstanding co-operation" in the use of facilities for community recreation by the city department.

Referred to tonight's study meeting was a proposal from Planning Director Evert Kincaid to incorporate the cost of compiling property owners' lists for zoning applications in the new filing fee. Also continued for a special study session was Kincaid's recommendation on the maintenance of the Third Avenue approach to the San Mateo-Hayward bridge as a result of the development of Foster City.

The suggested naming of Dr. William Justice to the city library board, proposed by Miss Winifred Burke, former principal of Turnbull school, was filed for future reference by the council. There is no vacancy on the board at present.

Charles Gensler was appointed unanimously to the city parking committee, replacing Joe Vignassa who has been named to the mayor's parking committee of some 17 members. Mayor Hugh Wayne pointed out Vignassa's experience as a member of the similar committee will be of "inestimable value" to the larger body now at work drafting a comprehensive off-street parking plan for the downtown district.

The League of Women Voters' letter opposing location of a mayor's office in the city hall was filed as Mayor Hugh Wayne expressed his appreciation for the League's interest and said the matter would be taken up at a study meeting, possibly tonight.

Gregory said a previous contractor on the job had not carried out his agreement and assured that financing was in the offing. Residents in the area have complained. Councilmen warned satisfactory construction must be undertaken by within six weeks.

The board filed two out-of-town letters of protest to the \$50 permit fee imposed on amateur or ham radio operators in the city's new zoning code and referred the matter to City Manager Arthur B. Sullivan. He is to contact local ham operators interested in the problem and arrange a meeting to clarify the problem. Councilman Clyde West pointed out in caucus session that considerable confusion exists on the issue that operators believe the fee is a license. It is not a license fee, but a permit fee, necessitating a hearing on all new installations in the city, mainly to control erection of amateur radio station towers, it was stressed.

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Dedication For Parking

SAN CARLOS—This city's two newest parking plazas will be officially dedicated here in ceremonies Thursday morning at 10 o'clock.

City officials, including members of the council, planning commission and traffic commission, as well as merchants and Chamber of Commerce officials, will take part in the ribbon cutting ceremonies at Laurel, Walnut and Cherry street entrances to the new lots, which recently were complete as additions to the existing downtown parking lots.

Mayor George Seager will give the dedicatory address.

To facilitate use of the parking plaza, red stripes indicating the one-way entrances to the plazas have been painted on the streets in the downtown area.

Farm Hill Luncheon Due

REDWOOD CITY — Farm Hill Women's club has scheduled a luncheon to be held at Redwood Joe's at Mol's Bowl at 12:30 Wednesday. Marine Corps Col. Richard Paige, Retired, will speak to the group on "Communism—What it is and how to recognize it."

Helen McCreagh is in charge of reservations for the luncheon.

Varian Will Filed, No Valuation

REDWOOD CITY — Sigurd Fergus Varian, multi-millionaire inventor and head of a Palo Alto electronics firm, left his estate to his survivors and to charity. The total value has not been specified.

The distribution of his fortune is set forth in his will, which was filed for probate in superior court today.

Varian, 60, co-inventor of the klystron tube, which led to the development of radar and other electronics devices, was killed in an airplane crash off of Mexico October 13.

Three Weeks Old His will, dated September 27, 1961, disposes of his separate property and his half of community property.

Varian willed all of his personal property, the family home and property in Mexico to his wife, Winifred H. Varian, 22 Aliso way, Menlo Park.

He left one-eighth of the remainder to his daughter, Mrs. Lorna V. Van Linge, 130 North Castanya way, Menlo Park, with the stipulation that the amount be not less than \$375,000. The same amount was left to his son, John O. Varian, of Bradley, Monterey county.

Part to Charity Of the remainder of the fortune, one-third was left in trust in two equal shares for the benefit of the son and daughter and their children. The two-thirds share of the remainder was willed in trust to the Sigurd F. Varian and Winifred H. Varian Charitable Foundation.

Crocker-Anglo bank is named trustee to administer the charitable trust. Attorney Nathan C. Finch said Varian did not specify which charities should be benefited and that determination will be in the discretion of the trustee.

Bank Sign Approved By Council

The Bank of California, currently under construction as part of a six-story office building at Fourth Avenue and El Camino Real finally won its sign variance last night as the city council approved the location of a sign on the Fourth Avenue sign of the building and two marquee signs.

The variance grants an extra sign to designate the building and allows it to go in excess of what is permitted by the city's sign ordinance.

City Attorney Arthur Harzfeld ruled the council had the authority to clarify the original variance granted the applicant. However, councilmen argued over whether the variance which originally applied to an R-3 zone, still held since the property has been rezoned to E-2, professional administrative use, under the new zoning code and sign restrictions applying to the zone must be imposed.

Belgian to Tell of Mart

The story of European development of the common market will be told to Burlingame Lions when they meet at luncheon Thursday.

Heinz A. Jacobs, a Belgian citizen, will describe his experiences as a businessman in Belgium, and the need and purpose of the common market.

Jacobs, born in Germany of Belgian parents, graduated as a structural engineer. During the war, he invented processes to make raw material from old tires and operated a rubber plant. He is now the owner of a plant manufacturing copper and brassware.

Although Jacobs is not an economist, his experience in the manufacturing and export field enables him to speak with authority on the needs of Europeans today in the development of the common market.

Jacobs is now spending some time in the United States and is working in South San Francisco as a research and development engineer.

Property Owners Meet Thursday

SAN CARLOS — The monthly meeting of the San Carlos Income Property Owners association will be held on Thursday following dinner at Ed's Chuck Wagon.

Guest speaker for the evening will be A. R. Beardsley, superintendent of San Carlos school district, whose topic will be "What Your Dollars Buy in Education."



REAR ADMIRAL Leroy V. Honsinger, Commander of the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, will discuss "The Development and Building of the Polaris Submarine," Friday at the Benjamin Franklin hotel. The luncheon meeting, sponsored by the San Mateo Chamber of Commerce, is open to the public and members of veterans organizations from throughout the county.

Unveiling of New Chimes Is Saturday

MENLO PARK — New chimes will be dedicated and a commemorative plaque for the new chapel will be unveiled at Veterans Day exercises scheduled for November 11 at the Veterans Administration hospital.

This observance will culminate a project inaugurated early this year in which all veterans' organizations in San Mateo county have contributed.

Organizations participating were: Veterans of Foreign Wars and their Ladies Auxiliary, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the World Wars, Marine Corps League and their Ladies' Auxiliary, AmVets, Jewish War Veterans of the United States, Veterans of World War I and their Ladies Auxiliary, and the United Spanish War Veterans.

The master of ceremonies will be Birger J. Rudquist, administrative assistant to the hospital chief of staff. A color guard will open the observance at 11 a.m. A Veterans Day address will be given by the Reverend Donald F. Lehman, minister of East Palo Alto Community church.

Engineer Smith pointed out that BART's grade separation plan for San Mateo is the main point of criticism. "It's almost impossible to destroy so much valuable property as they propose. . . I believe they could reduce the loss greatly by elevating the rails. . ."

Commuter Earl Bachman told the council, "I've been a commuter for 20 years. I've read about this rapid transit. I can't see any great improvement for the commuter. As it is, I leave here at 6:52 a.m. and get to my office at 7:40 a.m. I'd like to see the council pass the resolution opposing the rapid transit district."

Malcolm T. Vance, chairman of Veterans' Day in San Mateo for many years told the board, "I've lived in San Mateo 25 years and in the Bay Area for 50 years. The SP is taking off trains. Why spend a billion to help their featherbedding? I say vote no and give the supervisors the necessary backbone to withdraw from this so-called Bay Area Rapid Transit System."

Coast Petitions Filed

REDWOOD CITY — Petitions calling for the incorporation of a city to include the coastal communities of El Granada and Princeton were filed here yesterday with County Clerk John A. Bruning.

If incorporation is successful, the as yet nameless city will be San Mateo county's eighteenth.

The petitions, a stack of papers 3 1/2 inches high, were brought to Bruning's office by attorney Norman Meadows. Bruning said he would turn the petitions over to the county board of supervisors today and it was expected that the board would order them checked by Assessor Ralph Woodman.

Petitions Set In order to force the scheduling of an incorporation election, the petitions must contain the signatures of at least 25 per cent of the property owners within the boundaries of the would-be city, and the signatures must represent at least 25 per cent of the assessed value of the land.

If the petitions are found to be sufficient, a public hearing will be scheduled by the board after

S. M. Council Opposed to Transit Plan

The San Mateo city council delayed adoption of a scheduled resolution asking the county board of supervisors to withdraw from the Bay Area Rapid Transit District last night, after a telegram was received from Councilman Roy Archibald in Washington, D.C. requesting a two-weeks' delay to give him time to study the final Transit district report.

The telegram was brought to the council's attention by Bay Area Rapid Transit District Director Thomas F. Casey.

Councilman Robert C. Garvey pressed for a vote commenting, "I hate not to vote on this tonight . . . the rules of timing operating the transit district are immutable . . . and the movements of boards and councils are so ponderous that I'm afraid we'll wake up at the last minute and find out we didn't act in time."

Motion to delay was unanimously passed, however, at Councilman West's urging. He emphasized the board should extend the courtesy to the absent member, and declared the entire council should be present to act on the resolution.

Mayor Hugh Wayne insisted, "I think we should vote tonight." A tie vote was indicated until Councilman Al Wisner asked what the result would be if he opposed the motion. It was explained it would be lost. He voted to approve the continuance.

Oblige Archibald Garvey emphasized, "I think it's important for everyone to understand that the only reason in the world we have postponed this action tonight is to oblige Councilman Archibald and to get all five members' vote."

Further discussion of the issue earlier brought Director Casey before the board to emphatically urge a delay in the adoption of the resolution and to get the county board of supervisors to demand that the transit district engineers review specific protests on the physical plan and make necessary changes, then follow with a withdrawal. He conceded Councilman Garvey's point that although studies could be made, it did not mean changes in the plan would result.

City Manager Arthur B. Sullivan quoted from a recent Times editorial, urging withdrawal from the transit district which had pointed out this county has already paid out \$540,833 for engineering studies for the district and is paying another \$160,659 this year.

Chamber Vote Chamber Executive Director Ken Brown urged the board to take a vote. He said, "We feel the county, as they have indicated in a letter to you, wishes your opinion on this matter. I think the sooner they know the position of San Mateo as the largest and most commercial center, the better."

Asked for his opinion by the council, City Engineer N. B. Smith also said that he believed it is "a pretty late date" to seek district revision of plans for San Mateo.

Engineer Smith pointed out that BART's grade separation plan for San Mateo is the main point of criticism. "It's almost impossible to destroy so much valuable property as they propose. . . I believe they could reduce the loss greatly by elevating the rails. . ."

Commuter Earl Bachman told the council, "I've been a commuter for 20 years. I've read about this rapid transit. I can't see any great improvement for the commuter. As it is, I leave here at 6:52 a.m. and get to my office at 7:40 a.m. I'd like to see the council pass the resolution opposing the rapid transit district."

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Discussion on plans to extend Miller avenue and to widen and improve Willow street was continued until an adjourned meeting next Monday at 5:30 p.m.

In other actions, councilmen: Rezonned several lots in Peck's subdivision to permit construction of new apartment buildings.

Adopted an ordinance, annexing the Parkwood Community Methodist church.

Turned down a series of applications for a series of billboards on Orange, Railroad and Spruce avenues.

Leg Fracture After Crash

REDWOOD CITY — Fred Albert Baker, 21, of 3340 Middlefield road, suffered a compound fracture of the right leg shortly before 8:30 o'clock last night when his motorcycle collided with a car on Charter street just west of Spring street.

Police said Baker's eastbound motorcycle struck the rear of a westbound car operated by Isaac Evans Lane, 50, of 706 Charter, who was making a left turn into the driveway of her home. Baker was treated at Sequoia hospital and transferred to Community hospital.

The boundaries extend from the northern boundary of the city of Half Moon Bay to the community of Moss Beach. It includes the county-owned airport and Pillar Point but, because the western boundary is at the mean high tide line, the proposed city does not include the new breakwaters.

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Trailer Crash Injures Woman

The wife of a Hillsborough insurance agent was hurt yesterday when her car collided with a big truck-trailer rig on Bayshore freeway in Burlingame at the Broadway connector.

The victim, Mrs. Eva Surkin, 33, of 500 El Arroyo road, was treated at Peninsula hospital.

Highway patrolmen said Jerome L. Surkin, 48, changed lanes because of a highway work crew and his convertible collided with the truck-trailer operated by Glenn A. Eklund, 22, of Oakland.

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