



UNDER THE GABLES

Volume XXIV, Number 4

Summer-Fall 2022



The Dance Palace, 1971 – 2021 (*and a bit*) and still going strong!

A new exhibit on display until mid-November 2022

JACK MASON MUSEUM OF WEST MARIN HISTORY

Inverness Way at Park Avenue, Inverness Phone 415-669-1099 www.jackmasonmuseum.org

NEW EXHIBIT:

In 1996 the Museum presented an exhibit on the first 25 years of the Dance Palace. This year the Dance Palace celebrated a deferred 50th anniversary – hence the 51 years in the title. Andrew Buckingham arranged to borrow materials gathered for that celebration and combine it with some images from the Museum for a new exhibit which will remain until mid-November and is open whenever the Inverness Library is open. It focuses on the early years and the transition to the “new” building.

ANNUAL REPORT TO INVERNESS FOUNDATION 2021/22

The Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History is a committee of the Inverness Foundation but we have our own membership list (dues from \$30/year on up). We had put up a new exhibit on Bear Valley Ranch in March 2020 when the world shut down due to COVID. When the Inverness Library reopened, we left this exhibit up for four months. Next we had an exhibit curated by Loretta Farley celebrating the 151st birthday of the Point Reyes Lighthouse. This exhibit just came down at the end of June and Meg and Gayanne have put up an exhibit on the 4th of July foot races in Inverness, which will remain through July.

Work in the Archives was suspended for a long time due to COVID but both financial and physical donations continued to come in to the Museum, most notably a large collection of material from the Takeshi Kameoka family who farmed peas on the Point Reyes Peninsula in the 1930s and early 1940s; eventually there will be an important exhibit from this material. In addition, we now have two new volunteer researchers using the Archives: Mike O’Shea is researching shipping and boats on Tomales Bay, and Courtney Linn is working on local architecture, following up on the work done by Mary and Ken Cardwell. Gayanne Enquist has returned to work in the Archives and we are preparing other volunteer opportunities.

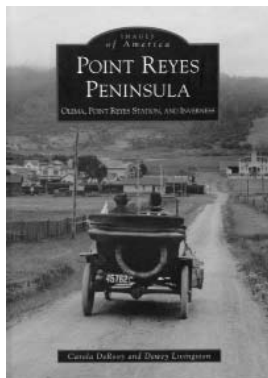
Respectfully submitted, Meg Linden & Dewey Livingston

RESEARCH IN THE MUSEUM ARCHIVES

Email research questions to research@jackmasonmuseum.org.

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP TO DATE?

If you are not sure whether you are up to date, please leave a message on the Archives phone 415-669-1099. You can renew on our website or by mailing your check to Box 94 Inverness, CA 94937.



“POINT REYES PENINSULA”

Copies signed by the authors, Carola DeRooy and Dewey Livingston are available at Museum Open Houses and from the Archives for only \$20.00. The proceeds benefit the Museum.

ON THE COVER:

Children’s concerts were popular at the old Dance Palace. Photo taken in 1985 by Dewey Livingston.

JACK MASON MUSEUM COMMITTEE OF THE INVERNESS FOUNDATION

Dewey Livingston and

Meg Linden, Chairs

Gray Brechin

Andrew Buckingham

Loretta Farley

Mike Parkinson

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Gayanne Enquist

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Vivian Mazur

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SPECIAL PROJECTS

Courtney Linn

Mike O’Shea

THE JACK MASON MUSEUM OF WEST MARIN HISTORY IS AN AFFILIATE OF THE INVERNESS FOUNDATION

This edition of
Under the Gables
is written by Leonard Tennyson,
Courtney Linn and Meg Linden,
and designed by
Dewey Livingston.

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THE DANCE PALACE: FIFTY ONE YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

We reproduce here some of the history written in 1996 by Leonard Tennyson for the 25th anniversary, augmented by some later items. This is nowhere near a definitive history. For that one needs to read Dance Palace Stories: How a Community Found Its Center and every single issue of the Point Reyes Light since 1971, since classes and events have been offered there ever since 1971. Photos courtesy of the Dance Palace Community & Cultural Center.

SEVEN YOUNG PEOPLE blew into Point Reyes Station in 1971 looking for a challenge. They brought with them talent, energy, and lots of confidence. One of them was Carol Friedman. She explained, "we were looking for a personal and an artistic 'home.'" So they founded the Dance Palace. It started in the "Old Palace" (the building was originally built as a general store by Pietro Scilacci in 1898, became the Palace Food Market before the new building across the street went up, and now houses Cabaline). Through the first winter, members of the young troupe nearly froze. No heat. They shivered, wore long johns, and badgered the landlords until they were persuaded to install heating. Despite low temperature readings, the pioneers put on events such as movies, dances, folk dancing classes for Tomales High School students and the first Holiday Crafts Fair.

Finances were an ever-present concern in the next years. Inspectors closed the building in 1972 for code violations. Local residents helped with rent money. It reopened with new wiring and other improvements. Then in July, Fourth District Supervisor Bud Barr hit pay dirt. He put together a \$5,000 County support package for the Dance Palace. That same year the Palace Players was born. It presented its first production, *Muzeeka* directed by Gene Ptak and Michael Jayson. Boom years for theater at the Dance Palace followed. Accolades for the Palace Players sounded throughout the '70s and '80s. "Theater is Alive and Well in West



Marin," trumpeted the Point Reyes Light as far back as 1975. Bay Area theater awards showered by Dance Palace for its outstanding musical and theatrical productions, including a premiere by Sam Shepard.

The mid-seventies saw the formation of the membership organization, Friends of the Dance Palace with annual dues of \$12 per person. The California Arts Council gave \$16,000 to the Dance Palace in 1976 and the next year the Dance Palace was incorporated as a full tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) non-profit community organization. Its first board of directors included Nancy Hemmingway, Carol Friedman, Lynn Murray, Wendy Friefeld and Michael Jayson. One hundred seventy-five people signed up as members in 1977.

In the first decade, Carol Friedman showed herself to be intrepid, innovative and devoted as she mounted fundraisers continually to bolster the shaky finances of the Dance Palace

Families burgeoned and by 1980 the Dance Palace began to focus on children's programs. A Dance Palace day camp started up serving 24 kids at the West Marin School. By 1996 the camp at the new Dance Palace served 226 children ages 6 to 15.

Summer stock followed summer camp. The next year, the first production of the Dance Palace Summer Stock Players was staged, William Inge's Picnic. Follow-up summer productions included Miller's The Crucible, Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, as well as Guys and Dolls, and Studs Terkel's Working.

THE TEN-YEAR MARK

1981, the Dance Palace's 10th anniversary, was celebrated in grand style. It was also the year of the lawsuit over the use of the Buck Trust money. Carol Friedman testified at the trial, which resulted in the formation of the Marin Community Foundation as trustee for all the funds to ensure that funds from the Trust were not diverted but went to Marin County recipients.

The increasing growth of the Latino community in West Marin underscored the need for English as a Second Language. In 1985, classes were established. Today the Marin Literacy Project offers ongoing ESL classes in collaboration with the Dance Palace, Marin Head Start, and the Papermill Creek Children's Corner.

GETTING READY TO MOVE ON

In 1983 a great opportunity arose: the Dance Palace Building was put on the market. The Board of Directors decided to try purchasing the property as a permanent home for the Dance Palace. Intensive fundraising efforts got underway. But owner, Alice Carrell, changed her mind and decided not to sell. Recollected Carol Friedman: "Alice's decision was devastating for us at the time but in the long run it was the best thing that ever happened."

The Parish of Sacred Heart Church at 5th and B Street in Point Reyes Station decided to sell their "beloved property" on which stood an old church. It offered to sell to the Dance Palace to ensure it would be used for community purposes.

The Dance Palace then undertook a long fundraising campaign and planning program. Groundbreaking took place six years later in May of 1989. Architect Jim Campe, with a small hired crew oversaw construction. Volunteer community residents plying their own specialties pitched in to make the building possible. "Be There" was the rallying cry. This message and a hammer printed in red on t-shirts appeared. Some of the original founders of the Dance Palace ballyhooed the building project by tap-dancing on the end of a flatbed truck in the 1989 Western Weekend parade to the tune of Don't Fence Me In. They were warmly greeted by the parade announcer as "our own local hippies." Jazz on the Half Shell, inaugurated that year, continued for many years as the Dance Palace's favorite fund-raiser – an oyster and music summer festival.

Before the end of the year, the Dance Palace moved into its brand-new building, a 4,700 square-foot structure made possible by the financial and volunteer contributions of more than 350 residents. Over \$750,000 had been raised in the campaign. The property today is owned without debt. By 1991, the entire project was finished with the construction of the lobby now used for art exhibits.

"TODAY" (as of 1996)

Weekly class and meeting usage of the Dance Palace increased by 60% since moving. Weekend use is up by 17%. The main space is fully equipped with theatrical lighting, professional sound board, acoustic panels and curtains. Now the next-door church building is being renovated to improve



Solo Dances by Carol Friedman where else but at The Dance Palace
Friday, October 4 / 8:00 p.m. / 3rd & Main / Point Reyes Station / \$1.00



lighting and prove better insulation. Both already are in almost constant use.

By 1991, membership was up 18% with 650 household Dance Palace members. The next year, a concert grand piano was purchased, initiating an ongoing series of quality classical and jazz concerts in West Marin. In 1994 and 1995, the Dance Palace was one of the six Marin agencies chosen to receive targeted funds from PG&E's corporate gift to United Way.

During the Mount Vision fire in October 1995, the Dance Palace served as a community meeting place, its space used for an emergency clinic an office for the Fire Department, and as a center for providing information and assistance to fire victims.

Over the years, the Dance Palace hosted performances and lectures by a wide variety of artists and experts. A sampling includes: political activist Angela Davis; poet Robert Bly; country western singers Tammy and Wynonna Judd (their first public performance was at the Dance Palace Talent Show); jazz musician Art Lande; folk singers Ronnie Gilbert and Ramblin' Jack Elliott; actor Peter Donat; cabaret singer Wesla Whitfield; the Flirtations; the California Cajun Orchestra; the Klezmerim; Duck's Breath Mystery Theater; jazz harpist Deborah Henson-Conant, the jazz storyteller Rhiannon. Classes and programs include aikido, yoga, aerobics, English as a Second Language, writing, singing, theater improvisation, African dancing and drumming, ceramics, acting and senior support discussion groups.

Over the past 50 years, more than 100 people have served as members of the Board of Directors.

The Dance Palace responds directly to expressed community needs and it reaches out to all segments of West Marin, encouraging involvement and communication at all levels. A multi-purpose organization, the Dance Palace operated as school, meeting place, theater and gallery. It serves as a unique model of community center providing a multi-faceted program on a small budget through the continued participation of committed volunteers.

Financial support for operating expenses and programs comes from membership dues and contributions, fundraisers, earned income and grants. Donors have included the Marin Community Foundation and the California Arts Council, as

Continued on page 11

Inverness By Design

Courtney Linn

The First Morgan House (Crow's Nest) 1895

BEN AND MATTIE MORGAN lived in Berkeley during most of the 1880s and 1890s. Ben Morgan (1841–1908) was a San Francisco attorney born in Virginia. He was active in California politics and an amateur actor. Daniella Thompson researched and determined that the Morgans' house at 2747 Channing Way was built circa 1881. It was torn down in 1920 and replaced by a fraternity house designed by the architect William C. Hays.

The Morgans originally built a house (the first Morgan House) on Inverness's Park Avenue in 1895. It was a simple two-story structure with a gable roof, board-and-batten exterior siding, and single-wall construction with open studs and no interior finish. The wood frame rested directly on the ground and used various tree roots as a makeshift foundation. Taking rusticity to a new extreme, several tree trunks served as interior posts. Like many Inverness houses of this era, the house acquired a name: Crow's Nest.

The Morgans began staying at Crow's Nest for extended periods of time no later than 1896. A San Francisco Call article from November of that year records that Mattie had rented out the Morgans' house in Berkeley and planned to live in Inverness. Daniella Thompson observed that they last appear in the Berkeley directory in 1897, suggesting they had left Berkeley to live full-time in Inverness about then. They lived a rich and colorful life. In a 1978 article for the "Point Reyes Historian," Jack Mason remarked that few Inverness houses could match Crow's Nest for its distinguished guest list, which

included many prominent Berkeleyans. Friends came to relax and enjoy hospitality. One guest from Berkeley wrote in the Crow's Nest's guest book in 1900:

Laborare est orare
Sang the monks of olden time,
But a snooze in Crow's Nest's windows
Lulls the weary Berkeley mind.



Interior photo of Crow's Nest circa 1900 with the interior tree trunks in the background. Standing in the center is Joseph Nisbet Le Conte ("Little Joe"). Seated from left to right in the center of the photo are Professor Joseph Le Conte, Mattie Morgan, and a man thought to be either John Muir or the local postmaster, Alexander Baily. Photo courtesy of the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History.

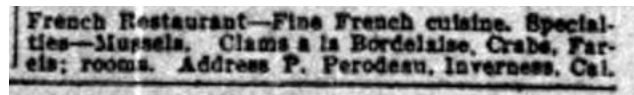


The new Crow's Nest. Photograph courtesy of Tyler Chartier.

Not all was bliss. A *Marin Journal* article from December 1902 reported that Ben Morgan had been shot in the arm by a fellow Inverness resident in a quarrel over a dog. The dog had reportedly attacked Morgan, and Morgan responded by beating it with a stick.

After Ben Morgan's death in 1908, his Inverness property was acquired by Elmer and Emma Myers of Berkeley. When the Myers' daughter, Hazel, married Dr. Chesley Bush in 1913, the couple began using Crow's Nest as their vacation home. Dr. Bush was the directing physician of the former Arroyo del Valle Sanitarium outside of Livermore and received honors for his work in helping to combat tuberculosis.

Mary Cardwell's notes on Crow's Nest, which are kept at the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History, suggest that at a later point, Crow's Nest was adapted for use as an inn and French restaurant



operated by Pierre Perodeau. Mr. Perodeau had come to Inverness to work as a chef for Auguste Chamot.

The Draper family (see Edgemont discussion below) later acquired Crow's Nest. The original house was demolished in 1999. It was too fragile to be renovated. Thayer Hopkins, an architect and grandson of Warren Charles Perry, the long-time Dean of the College of Architecture at UC Berkeley, designed a Shingle Style house to take its place. In the new structure, Hopkins repurposed the original house's redwood boards and the clinker bricks from the chimney. The new structure retains the gabled roof and other design elements from the original house.

The Second Morgan House (Edgemont) 1904

In 1904, the Morgans moved into Edgemont, a house that was designed and built by Berkeley contractor Leslie Roberts. It is a two-story, hip-roofed, with what Mattie Morgan termed "cladding shakes" for exterior siding and "cladding

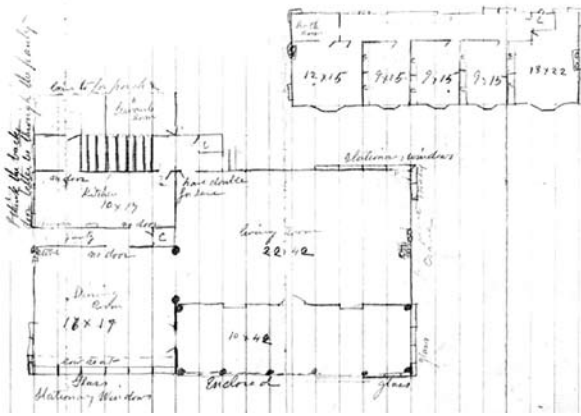


The enclosed porch at Morgan House circa 1904. Courtesy of the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History.

shingles" for the roof. The house is situated on the bluff overlooking Tomales Bay. In its design, Edgemont incorporates many elements of Berkeley brown-shingle houses of the era. Wide double doors open to a garden area. The interior features an open plan with a large (20 by 42 feet) living room oriented around a fireplace with built-in seating and redwood beams. A letter likely written by Mattie Morgan to Leslie Roberts specified many details for the house. She specified for example, that the interior wood be rough and stained like the Bernard Maybeck-designed Faculty Club at the University of California. She specified the use of "Klinker" [clinker] brick for the chimney and had on hand "madrone [wood] cut for [use in] porch-to-porch and between the dining and living room & any fancy trimming."

Mattie Morgan may have exerted significant influence over the ultimate design. Daniella Thompson believes the plan sketch on the next page may have been drawn by Leslie Roberts based on Mattie Morgan's directions.

The house specifications document lists Leslie Roberts' address as 1710 Fairview Street in Berkeley. Ms. Thompson's research identified a Missouri-born carpenter (later contractor) named Leslie Roberts (1873-1944). He lived in Berkeley beginning in 1900. The 1900 census records him living with his parents and four siblings at 2124 Ashby Avenue. Leslie's father was a farmer. By 1910, the father had died, and the family was liv-



Sketch (top) and an early photo of Edgemont House. Courtesy of the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History.

ing at 1710 Fairview Street. The 1916 Berkeley city directory listed Leslie and his widowed mother at 2715 Regent Street. By 1920, Leslie Roberts had become a fruit grower in Pajaro, Santa Cruz County.

The architectural historian Lucia Howard once described Berkeley Brown Shingles as a species of a “party house.” When built, Edgemont was a party house. It was described in the West Marin Star as “Mattie Morgan’s Sky Palace.” A visitor to the house from New Hampshire wrote in her diary how noble the house looked to her with its immense piazza running the length of the living room.

Mattie Morgan died in 1905, not long after construction was completed, and Ben Morgan died in 1908. Afterwards, Edgemont was acquired by Elmer and Emma Myers of Berkeley. As mentioned above, the Myers’ daughter, Hazel, married Dr. Chesley Bush in 1913 and settled into the adjacent Crow’s Nest.

Edgemont was purchased by the Draper family (Bill and Phyllis) in the 1960s. The Drapers undertook a major renovation of Edgemont beginning in 1996, again under the supervision

of Thayer Hopkins. The renovation retains essential elements of the original design and adds period-appropriate enhancements. One such enhancement is the stepped fenestration (see page 9 upper right), an architectural feature seen in several of Bernard Maybeck’s Brown Shingle designs. Every original brick was saved, carefully cleaned, and re-purposed in the new fireplace and chimney. The house had a great deal of darkened redwood in the wall paneling, moldings, and trim. All the wood was saved, carefully milled, and re-purposed throughout. The original baseboards, for instance, were over an inch thick, 20 inches high, and had 20 years of growth rings in every inch of board, indicating that the wood was harvested from a tree that was hundreds of years old.

The Drapers engaged Jim Lino Construction of Inverness Park for the construction work. It was the first of many collaborations between architect and builder. Mr. Lino and his team made the cabinets in the Dining Room by hand from salvaged wood and constructed the redwood mantel over the fireplace from a stash of original growth redwood that had been salvaged from railroad truss timbers. He also hand-planed the concave chevron pattern in the mantel piece with a plane handed down to him by one of his craftsman ancestors.

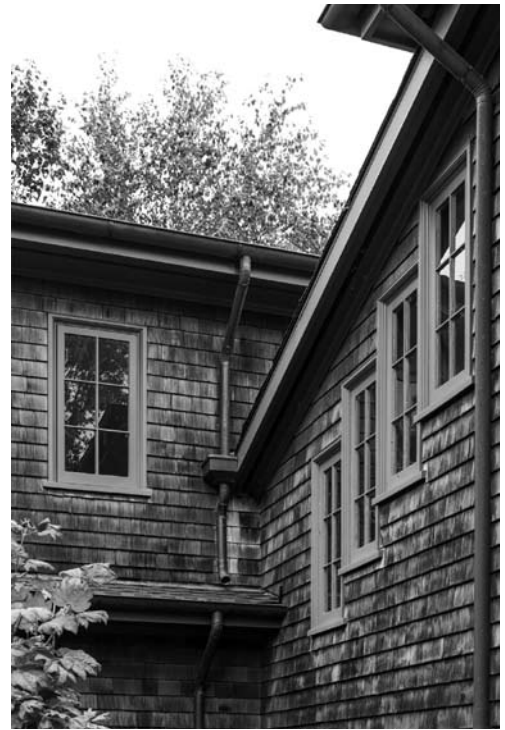
Reflecting on the Crow’s Nest and Edgemont projects, Mr. Hopkins credits the Draper family for their commitment to save and preserve the houses to the extent practicable. In an email, he remarked: “One of the things I loved about this collaboration—client-architect-builder—was that it replicated the essence of the Arts and Crafts movement—not just in the product but in the process: working out every detail together with respect for the materials and the craft, the ways things used to be done.”

Special thanks to Thayer Hopkins for sharing contemporary photographs of the Crow’s Nest and Edgemont houses and for information about the construction and renovation of each house. Thanks to Dewey Livingston and Daniella Thompson for their research and editorial assistance. Thanks also to Therese Dunn and Joanna Black at the Sierra Club for their assistance in identifying the people pictured in the Crow’s Nest (page 6).



The entry to Edgemont.

Photographs courtesy of Tyler Chartier



Edgemont's living room and fireplace.



How the Fourth of July Races Began

"The initials carved into so many First Valley alders were put there by little boys of long ago ... with penknives won in Fourth of July races." Jack Mason

By Meg Linden

THE FIRST 4TH OF JULY FOOTRACES were run in 1904 in front of the old two-story emporium Attilio Martinelli built in 1900 (now Saltwater and the Inverness Post Office) on the main street. Mrs. Julia Shafter Hamilton was one of prime movers in the start of this tradition as were Mr. A. F. Chamot, and Mr. C. H. Marwedel. An executive committee was established to plan the day. Their printed program showed that in addition to the footraces, "Literary exercises" (one assumes at least the reading of the Declaration of Independence and perhaps other things), boat and swimming races as well as in the evening bonfires and fireworks on the beach were held. Back then there were only six races, for men, women, boys, girls, young boys and young girls. Many variations on the races were invented over the years and many of them persist to this day. There have been sack races, three legged races (boys, girls, mixed) marshmallow races for the tiny tots, wheelbarrow races, tricycle races and other variations. There were prizes for the winners, in early days then included pen knives and Brownie cameras. In fact Jack Mason commented at one time that many of the priceless photos taken of the races were from those Brownies. Nowadays, the prizes are confined to ribbons for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places. In addition to the changes in the number of races and the prizes, the other major change was to move the races to Inverness Way in front of the firehouse on the 1960s. Traffic on Sir Francis Drake



This 1907 image is the oldest photograph of the 4th of July footraces that the Museum owns.



The women, dressed mostly in white, race down the street in 1911

Boulevard was too prolific to halt.

In July of this year, the Museum recycled an exhibit from 2004 which celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Inverness foot races. Some of the photographs from that exhibit were displayed and also eight beautiful color prints which Elizabeth Fenwick took in the 2008-2012 period and recently donated to the Museum. The Open House on July 4th was very well attended with 72 people dropping by for anything from a quick look to a thorough examination of each photograph and identifying some of the people for us.

TIMELINE

1872 – 150 years ago

1922 – 100 years ago

1972 – 50 years ago

Inverness 1972 – Supervisors adopted the A-60 formula that limited houses in West Marin to one per 60 acres.

Dr. Michael Whitt, president of the IIA said developers were active again in the watershed and “clearing of several lots has begun.” He suggested the town buy the watershed and the waterworks. In 1948 the price would have been \$20,000 – who knew what it would cost now.

David Plant purchased the old Martinelli grocery store in 1972. He also owns Rasmussen’s boathouse. The properties were sold after Charlie Mel’s widow Florence died on March 30, 1972. Lee Richardson and Ted Abrams bought the Garage. Vladimir Nevl bought the corner bar. Their son Dr. Howard Mel still owns the Chamot House.

Ted Abrams becomes partner of Lee Richardson in ownership of Drake Highway Garage.

John Mitchell a professional gardener started a small parklet around the Inverness Library

Mrs. Mery retired as Postmistress of Inverness. Her husband Michael Lawrence Mery was postmaster from 1936 to 1966. She started assisting him in 1948.

Inverness Improvement Association voted at December membership meeting to shorten name to Inverness Association.

Olema 1972 – Larry Marks plans to expand the Olema Campground with restaurant, Laundromat, convenience store, more camp spots and a recreation hall. Water is an issue will be on Planning Commission Agenda.

Ron Brandes bought the old Olema Hotel – plans (outlined in early 1973) to turn it into a series of shops run by seniors.

Point Reyes Peninsula 1872 – Fog signal building at the Lighthouse burned.

Point Reyes Station 1872 – Passenger steamer the *Monterey* under Captain McCallum left the foot of Washington Street every Tuesday at 4 p.m. and returned to the city on Wednesday evening

calling at Tomales and Paper Mill Creek [by current green bridge] which served Olema two miles distant. Information is from an ad in the Daily evening bulletin of Nov 12, 1872 but the service started earlier.

1922 - Jean Mason’s memory of her father boarding at Mrs. Dodge’s Point Reyes Hotel and her mother going up on weekends while looking for a house to purchase. She names various boarders including Harry Holly the banker and Edna Pierce who taught at Black School. Details including the toy Boston bull dog named Checkers.

1972 – The US Coast Guard had had an option to build housing at the Inverness Valley Inn but community protest was so vehemently against this and the Inverness Association voted against it in April so Coast Guard moved its quarters to PRS, breaking ground there on July 7, 1972.

James “Jimmy” Alberigi retired and closed his Standard Oil products distributorship.

Planning Commission approved the Martinelli Farms development, just north of PRS. Immediate appeal by Paul Kayfetz.

Puerta de los Reyes Bookstore (between brick bank & Angie’s) robbed.

Tomales Bay East Shore 1972 – Supervisors adopted the A-60 formula that limited houses in West Marin to one per 60 acres.

Compiled by Meg Linden

DANCE PALACE

Continued from page 5

well as many others over the years, some with continuing support and some for one-time projects.

Since 1996 the Dance Palace has continued to grow and develop. In 2008, Carol Friedman, one of the founders and the original Executive Director, retired. After an interim Director and extensive search Dan Mankin was chosen take over. He changed the logo and added “Community and Cultural Center” to the official name. At the end of 2016 the Board of Directors let him go and again after an interval of a temporary Director, Bonnie Guttman was chosen to guide the organization. The Community found its Center and has supported it ever since.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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www.invernessassociation.org

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The Dance Palace, 1971 – 2021
(and a bit) and still going strong!

A new exhibit on display until mid-November 2022

**The exhibit can be enjoyed
during Inverness Library hours.**