

MOUNTAIN

REVIEW

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

MOUNTAIN VIEW HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Volume XV

Issue 3

Summer 2026



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IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

1776

Sharing The Spirit

1976

2026

Reflecting on
Americas 250th



Sunday, August 9, 2026 4:30 p.m. Los Altos History Museum Details: Page 7

REGISTER ONLINE: <http://mvhistory.eventbrite.com>



This newsletter is published four times a year by the
MOUNTAIN VIEW HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 P.O. Box 252, Mountain View, CA 94042
www.mountainviewhistorical.org

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**Upcoming Walking tours of
 Downtown Mountain View**

<http://mvhistory.eventbrite.com/>



President's Message

By Pamela Baird
 MVHA President



Pamela Baird

This year the national, state and local celebrations and commemorations recognizing 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence have been modest or insignificant.

This started me wondering about other milestone anniversaries- 1826, 1876, 1926 and 1976.

In 1826, about 11 million people lived in 24 states, almost all east of the Mississippi river. The 50th anniversary, or jubilee, was marked with many small local events, including speeches and bonfires. A celebration was held in Washington DC on July 4, primarily marked by a special program in the chamber of the House of Representatives. Listeners were encouraged to look to the past and to the future of our country. In an odd coincidence, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, original signers of the Declaration, died on July 4, 1826.

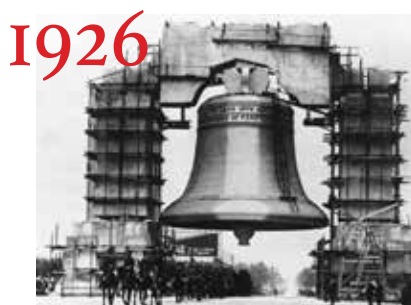
The centennial anniversary in 1876 was marked with nationwide celebrations. The population had grown to about 45 million people living in 38 states.

The centerpiece of the 100th anniversary celebrations was the Centennial Exposition (May 10- November 10), in Philadelphia, where the original signing occurred. It was attended by an estimated 10 million visitors from the US and abroad. Proudly displayed was new technology, including the type-writer and telephone. Those attending were introduced to novelties such as root beer, popcorn, and bananas.

After a ceremonial reading of the Declaration of Independence, Elizabeth Cady Stanton pushed forward to present the Declaration to Acting Vice-President Thomas W. Ferry on the Rights of Women. She was not authorized to speak at the Exposition. Women distributed printed copies of their declaration to those attending.



In 1926 the Sesquicentennial of the signing was observed. Again,



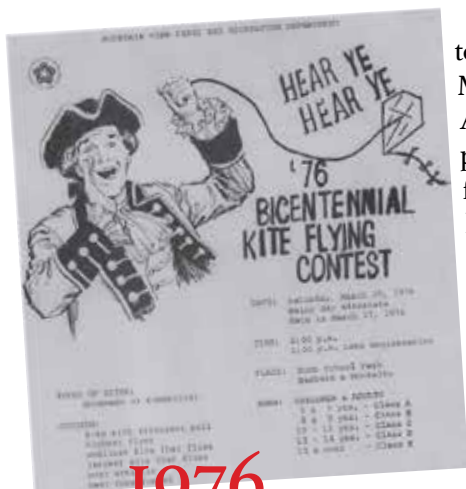
an Exposition was held in Philadelphia. One the of the most impressive attractions was the gateway entrance to the Exposition – an 80-foot replica of the Liberty Bell that people, cars, and trucks passed under to enter.

—continued on p. 3

President's Message —continued from p. 2

President Calvin Coolidge spoke to an estimated 200,000 visitors. In his speech he noted “The historical importance of this immortal document is measured by the progress of the Republic”.

The Bicentennial in 1976 had wide support across the nation. A national effort to recognize the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration was led by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA), which was funded by congress. 284 national programs covered a wide range of civic and cultural topics. A 26 car American Freedom Train brought a stirring documentary to 138 cities on an epic 24,000 mile journey. Nearly 100 sailing ships paraded through New York Harbor over the Bicentennial weekend — the largest gathering of world navies in history.



1976

And even though July 4th has passed, we can still celebrate the founding of the country throughout this year. Perhaps learning more about the Declaration and quiet reflection would be the best way to mark the 250th anniversary of our nation.

Cities that established programs could qualify to be designated as an official Bicentennial city. Mountain View qualified for the designation. A committee was started in March of 1975 to plan the many events scheduled for 1976. A kite flying contest, special city medallions, a rodeo, lectures, fire hydrant painting and a special day long 4th of July celebration were among the programs created.

Learn more by attending the August 9 MVHA history event.

This year the lack of local, state and national commemoration activities does not lessen the important concepts of the Declaration and how it launched the founding of our country.

Treasurer's Report

Through Q2, 2026

—*Anthea Chung, Treasurer*

Treasurers Report Second Quarter Ended June 30, 2026

The Association remains in a strong financial position. As of June 30, 2026, we have \$81,952 in total assets, no liabilities, and continue to maintain healthy cash reserves.

Year-to-Date Results

Year-to-date, we generated \$3,732 in revenue and incurred \$1,236 in expenses, resulting in a net operating surplus of \$2,496. Membership dues remain our largest source of revenue. Our largest expense category continues to be Marketing and Events (\$830), primarily newsletter printing and postage, which supports member communications.

Budget vs. Actual (Through June 30)

Through the first six months of the year, the Association has achieved 72% of its annual revenue budget (\$3,732 of \$5,210) while spending only 20% of its annual expense budget (\$1,236 of \$6,240). Overall, the Association remains in a strong financial position and is tracking favorably against budget.

Respectfully submitted,
—*Anthea Chung, Treasurer*
Mountain View Historical Association

Membership Report

Two annual members have upgraded to the lifetime membership category—Carol Donahue and Debbie Kundrat. New members are Steven McMoyler, Joyce Larsen (who also donated \$100) and Leigh Winter.

We appreciate your support.

To join, or renew, you can always mail in the form (see page 9) with a check or visit—

www.mountainviewhistorical.org/memberships/

Please consider becoming a lifetime member. It's easy and you won't have to remember to send your dues each year!

Membership dues help us with our ongoing expenses—hosting meetings, newsletter production, mailing costs and insurance.

History Happening Now

June 11, 2026

On a very hot June 11 afternoon eight new historic art panels were officially dedicated. Located on both sides of the train station, the panels represent a two year journey led by Anita Rosen. It was a complicated endeavor because three agencies were involved.

In her speech at the ceremony Rosen said “Caltrain owns the land, Mountain View owns the building and VTA is the tenant.” Anita Rosen heads a non-profit organization called Arts Mountain View. The group aims to install art installations on public and private buildings in Mountain View.

Created by artist John Patrick Thomas “Mountain View through Time: Eight Windows into our History,” the panels depict local history as well as flora and fauna. The Mountain View Historical Association and the Visual Arts Committee consulted with the artist and Anita on themes and details.

Each panel has a QR code that explains the content of the panel. A majority of the funding came from a grant from VTA, 30% from the city and a small remainder from Arts Mountain View.

Members of the MVHA board attended the dedication ceremony.



MVHA Board Members, L-R: IdaRose Sylvester, Robert Cox, David Salinero, Pamela Baird and Carol Donahue

Mountain View Los Altos School Board Trustee Catherine Vonnegut hails from a prominent Indianapolis, Indiana family which valued both business acumen and education. Interestingly enough, Catherine's father, George Lewis Vonnegut, was a second cousin to Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., best-selling author of Cat's Cradle and Slaughterhouse-Five.

Catherine's and Kurt's common ancestor, Clemens Vonnegut, was born in Muenster, Germany, in 1824. Originally apprenticed to an importing and banking house in Muenster, he later became a traveling salesman, and in 1851 he was entrusted with establishing trading posts in America. On one trip to America, he decided to visit an old friend, Charles Volner, who had immigrated to Indianapolis. Charles persuaded Clemens to settle down in Indianapolis.



Clemens Vonnegut and Katarina (Blank) Vonnegut

Company. Clemens and his four sons were to make their living in this business. A man of broad interests, Clemens also founded the Indianapolis Free Thinkers' Association, the Indianapolis Turner Verein (an athletic association), and the German-English School Society, which promoted the teaching of German in the local schools.

Catherine's great-grandfather George, and her grandfather Carl, the son and grandson of Clemens Vonnegut, also worked in the family hardware business. Tragically, Carl died at the age of 36, leaving a widow Marjorie, and two children George (Catherine's father) and Nancy. Carl's surviving brothers Erwin and Ralph, helped support Carl's family. Financial hardship helped cement George's reputation as a frugal man. He also became a metallurgical engineer, after having graduated from Purdue University.

George married Jean Ann Bates, a Butler University beauty queen. They had two daughters, Catherine and Marjorie. Noticing Catherine's aptitude in math, George proposed that Catherine attend his alma mater,

In 1853, Clemens married Katarine Blank, a German immigrant from Baden. Then in 1857, Clemens

founded the Vonnegut Hardware

Purdue. Catherine earned a B.S. in math, then an M.S. in Computer Science. It was in grad school that she met her future husband, Gary Winiger. Gary and Catherine relocated to the Bay Area, where Catherine worked at

Control Data and Argo Systems.

Gary and Catherine married in 1979.

Their son Evan was born in 1987.



George Lewis Vonnegut and Jean Ann (Bates) Vonnegut, Catherine's parents



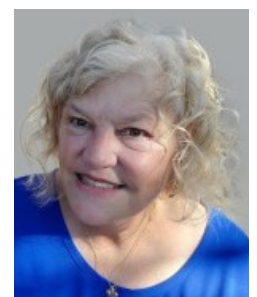
Catherine, her son Evan, and author Kurt Vonnegut
Catherine's advice to young people is to get a foundation in academic fundamentals while growing into a thriving, successful person in all aspects of your life.



A lock from the Vonnegut Hardware Store

Catherine's first foray into volunteering in local education came when she helped establish the computer lab at the old Mountain View High School on Castro Street. She later became a leader in the Mountain View High School Parent Teacher Student Association.

She has been serving as a Mountain View Los Altos Trustee since 2018, and is now running for a third term in District 3. She is proud of the school board's recruitment of top-notch staff and establishment of wellness centers for the students.



MVLA Trustee Catherine Vonnegut

100 Years of Kiwanis in Mountain View

By Mark Lindberg

On August 8, the Kiwanis Club of Mountain View will celebrate its 100th anniversary with a Gala at the Don Giovanni Restaurant in Mountain View. This will be an opportunity to remember a century of community involvement and to honor the many current and past members whose dedication has made a lasting difference in the lives of others.

The club was founded just a few years after the first Kiwanis International Club was established in Detroit, Michigan, in 1919. From those early beginnings, Kiwanis has grown into a worldwide service organization with clubs throughout the United States and many other countries.

As Mountain View evolved from a small agricultural town into a center of innovation and technology, the Kiwanis Club remained committed to



its mission of service. Through the efforts and generosity of its members, the club has supported local charities, community programs, and countless volunteer projects including scholarships for graduating high school students.

Today, as it begins its second century, the Kiwanis Club of Mountain View continues its tradition of serving the community, improving the lives of children and families, and carrying forward the spirit of service that has defined Kiwanis for generations.

Spring program RECAP:

Settlers & Saints The Naming of Streets in Mountain View

Robert Cox and Melanie Kaye shared the origins and historical significance of many of Mountain View's well-travelled avenues at the Mountain View Public Library on May 3rd.

The talk included a brief quiz for attendees to test their "street smarts" by trying to identify photos of streets from the 1950s and earlier.

Examples of their findings presented on May 3 at the Mountain View Public Library are shown at right.



**Test your Street Smarts.
Name the street in this photo.**



Santa Rosa Avenue honors St. Rose of Lima Canonized 1671, the first person from the Americas to be canonized by the Roman Catholic Church

Santa Rosa Avenue

Sullivan Drive



John Grove Sullivan, b.1824 County Limerick, Ireland, Came to California in 1847. He and his wife, Ada (Kenna) Sullivan donated land on El Camino Real for the first St. Joseph's Church, in 1868. And we still drive along Ada, Alice, Gladys and Stella.



Whisman Road

John W Whisman, proprietor of the Willigrove Inn. In 1849, he started the first stagecoach line in California, between San Jose and Yerba Buena (San Francisco).



Easy Street



In 1912 William Seppich bought four acres on Dean Street to build a home. After seeking a fortune in various failed ways, he petitioned county supervisors to rename his street. His request was granted and he could at last claim to live on Easy Street.

Back and Forth in Time

A popular program developed in 1976 by the MV Bicentennial Committee was the establishment of a time capsule. Originally envisioned to be buried on the 4th of July in Rengstorff Park, it was later decided to have it buried on January 1977 so that all of the Bicentennial efforts (articles, artifacts, products, memorabilia, etc) could be included in the capsule.



Above:
The Bicentennial Commission, headed by former mayor Joe Cusimano, makes selections to include in a Time Capsule.

Far Right: The Time Capsule being "buried."

The committee invited contributions from residents, civic groups, schools, city departments—including the Fire and Police Departments—as well as NASA, Moffett Field, and Lockheed and other companies. Support was widespread, with people donating items and suggesting objects for the time capsule.

People were encouraged to think about what items would be of interest to residents in fifty years. They were also encouraged to think about what they would have found interesting from fifty or one hundred years ago.

So many items were contributed that a large capsule needed to be used. Its dimensions are 39" long, 20" wide and 23" deep. The sides are 1.5" thick. The committee consulted with NASA about the best way to seal the contents.

Jean Holtzclaw, the city historian, oversaw the collecting of items. Many objects had a Bicentennial theme. The 1976 yearbook from Mountain View, Awalt and St. Francis High Schools, were selected, as was items donated by

students at Bubbs Elementary School. Notable items included a letter from the White House and the Bicentennial Flag that flew over Moffett in 1976. Local and national newspapers published on July 4 were included.

A wide selection of other items was provided — early maps of Mountain View, a copy of the 1902 incorporation paperwork and other city documents. A few churches included histories of their congregations. Civic groups, such as Kiwanis, the Oddfellows and the Eagles provided a review of their organizations. The permits issued for the painting of the fire hydrants was also included.

Planning for the actual burial of the time capsule was thorough. It was decided to have the time capsule placed outside the entrance to the Library instead of the Community Center. The ceremony was the last official action of the city's Bicentennial committee, which was headed by former Mayor Joe Cusimano. The burial took place at noon on Friday January 7, 1977. The Fort Ord Army Bicentennial Color Guard Unit posted the colors. The band from St. Francis High School provided the music.

A fun component of the time capsule was the inclusion of information from the last two children (Joshua Lee Craig and Tracey Lorraine Bagley) born in Mountain View in 1976. These two babies, both born on December 31, (now grown adults) are to



be invited to the 2026 unveiling of the capsule. We don't know if they have been contacted.

It was stipulated that the capsule be buried for 50 years, at which time it would be unburied in 2026 in a ceremony open to the public. The contents are to be placed on display in the library and then resealed for another 50 years. At press time, it is not known when this will be. There is information on the city website —

<https://www.mountainview.gov/our-city/about-mountain-view/city-history/time-capsule>. The Parks & Rec Department, city staff and the MV Library are planning the unveiling ceremony. Watch for updates from the city regarding the unveiling ceremony.



Join us August 9 as we continue to commemorate 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. We will meet at the Los Altos History Museum to have a private viewing of the special exhibit

"The Spirit of 76-reflecting on America's 250."
Afterwards Amy Ellison, Director of Exhibits, will speak about the exhibit and the concepts that it covers.

Pamela Baird will discuss previous events on the 4th of July and how Mountain View

celebrated all year long for the Bicentennial in 1976.

The event starts at 4:30 and will end at 6:00. There is no charge to attend, but you must register to attend.

If you renew or join as a member of the MVHA, you will receive the “Milestones-Centennial of Mountain View” book. Written by local author MaryJo Ignoffo, the book sells for \$20 at our events. Please register at <http://mvhistory.eventbrite.com/>.

Sunday, August 9, 2026 4:30 p.m. Los Altos History Museum



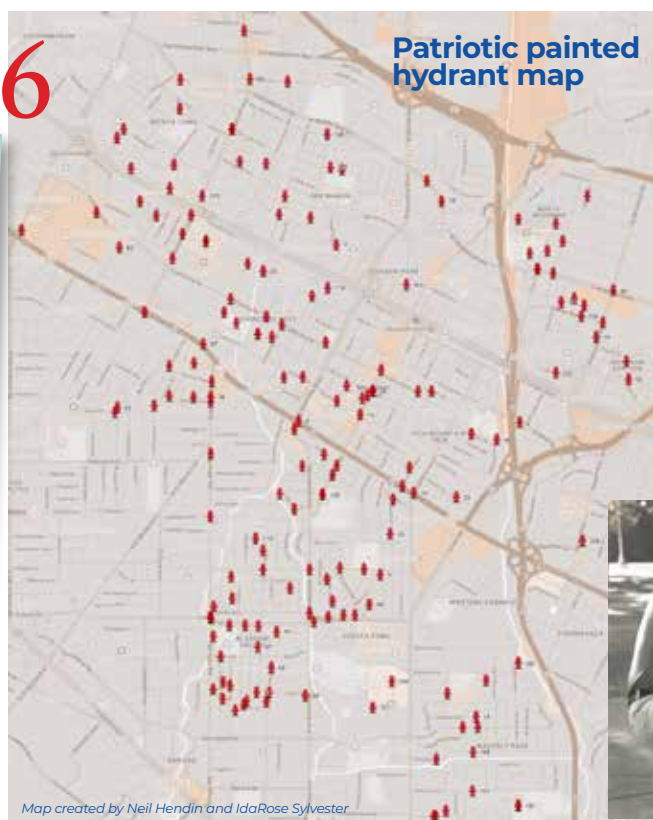
Color Me Patriotic! 1976



The 1976 Bicentennial call for hydrant artists

One of the programs that was popular (and fun) during the Bicentennial in 1976 was painting fire hydrants with a patriotic theme. The endeavor garnered widespread support nationally and locally. The project was primarily a decentralized, grassroots phenomenon driven by local civic groups, Cub Scouts, and garden clubs rather than a federal program. Because of this, it is not known how many hydrants were painted, but it is estimated that tens of thousands were painted nationwide.

Called "Paint a Plug," the program was locally organized by members of the Mountain View Bicentennial Committee. Led by Grant and April Huberty, the Committee developed a program where ultimately about 180 fire hydrants were painted in Mountain View. This figure represents over 20% of the fire hydrants located in Mountain View at the time



Map created by Neil Hendin and IdaRose Sylvester



To participate a person needed to get a permit at the Community Center on Rengstorff Street. The location of the hydrant was selected. The fee to paint one hydrant was \$6.00, \$17.76 for three or \$19.76 for four. The needed paint (up to five colors) was included with the fee, along with two brushes, a drop cloth and a “wet paint” sign.



Suggested themes or individuals were included with the paperwork. Those painting hydrants used their creativity to paint soldiers, historic figures, and even Abraham Lincoln.

In Mountain View participants ranged in age from 3 to 83. Scout troops, families, senior citizens, church

groups and businesses all participated.

A map showing the location of the painted hydrants shows a wide distribution of the artistic endeavors. The Blossom Valley News (no longer published) and the San Jose Mercury News, as well as other local newspapers published articles about the hydrant program.

First Presbyterian Church of Mountain View celebrates 175 years of Ministry

by Cindy Newman

From March to October 1850 a wagon train traveled 2,000 miles from the Midwest to a tiny settlement on the banks of Stephens Creek and El Camino Real. The travelers sought to spread the word of God, not fill their pockets with gold. The settlement became

known as Mountain View.

On April 4, 1851, three residents (all Cumberland Presbyterian ministers) formed the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It was the first Protestant congregation between San Jose and San Francisco, and one of only two Presbyterian churches on the Pacific Coast.

In 1860 the first church building was constructed at the corner of what would become Castro & Mercy (now City Hall) on land donated by Maria Trinidad Peralta de Castro. She also gave adjacent land for use as a cemetery for all faiths (now Pioneer Memorial Park).

—continued on p. 9

The Presbyterian Church through the years



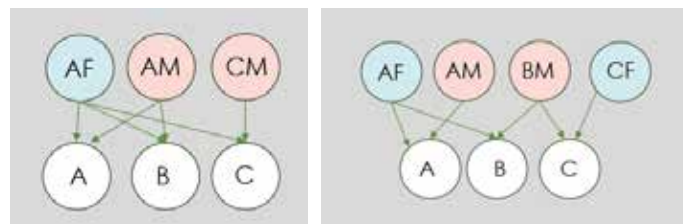
Finding Your Family History

DNA Matches and Chromosome Browsers

In previous articles, we have noted that DNA services, like those provided by Ancestry or MyHeritage, can help fill out your family tree by providing shared matches (Ancestry term) or DNA Matches (MyHeritage term). Two profiles are shared matches if they share a segment of DNA along some chromosome. This indicates that the people represented by those profiles share a common ancestor.

An important question in genetic genealogy is: “If profiles A and B are shared matches and profiles B and C are shared matches, do the people represented by A, B, and C share a common ancestor?” The answer is: “Not necessarily.”

To see why, consider the diagrams below. In the first diagram, profiles A and B represent two siblings with father AF and mother AM. C is a half-sibling of both, sharing a father with A and B, but with a different mother CM. Here the people represented by profiles A, B, and C have a common ancestor: their father AF.



Now consider the second diagram. Here, the people represented by profiles A and B have a common ancestor, their father AF. The people represented by profiles B and C have a common ancestor, their mother BM. But the people represented by A and C have no common ancestor.

Is there a way to tell if three profiles A, B, C represent three people with a common ancestor? Yes, if you have access to a chromosome browser. To see how a chromosome browser works, let’s look at what it shows for the relationship between me (Robert Cox), my first cousin Larry Cox, and our third cousin Franklyn Cooke. (We all share a pair of common great-great-grandparents: George and Sarah (Ward) Cox.)

The chromosome browser shows the DNA segments in common between Robert and Larry in the upper line for each chromosome. It shows the DNA segments in common between Robert and Franklyn in the lower line for each chromosome. Along chromosome 5, there is a circled segment which Robert, Larry, and Franklyn have in common. This is DNA proof that Robert, Larry, and Franklyn share a common ancestor. (I’m showing only the first 5 or 23 chromosomes to keep the diagram simple.)



Unfortunately, while MyHeritage does offer a chromosome browser, Ancestry does not. This is because Ancestry has a much broader customer base, and Ancestry believes their average customer would not be interested in tools to do such advanced genealogical research.

—continued from p.8

This building was destroyed in a fire in 1911. Members were able to save the new organ, pews, pulpit, and the Dale bell with the help of others from nearby St. Joseph's Church. The congregation built a much larger church. This building survived until 1948, when it was declared unsafe and condemned. A third building was constructed in 1951 on the same property bounded by Castro, Mercy, Franklin and Church.

But in 1959 the decision was made to move to the corner of Miramonte & Cuesta, where the congregation remains today. The location was formerly part of the 165-acre Benjamin T. Bubb ranch.

A celebration of 175 years in ministry was held on Sunday July 19, starting with a 10 a.m. worship service and followed by a 11:30 a.m. event that showcased the Dale Bell and a replica of the pump organ. Historical artifacts of church history were displayed.

MVHA congratulates the First Presbyterian Church of Mountain View for the many decades of ministry to our community.

Who loves Ice Cream? Our Founding Fathers!

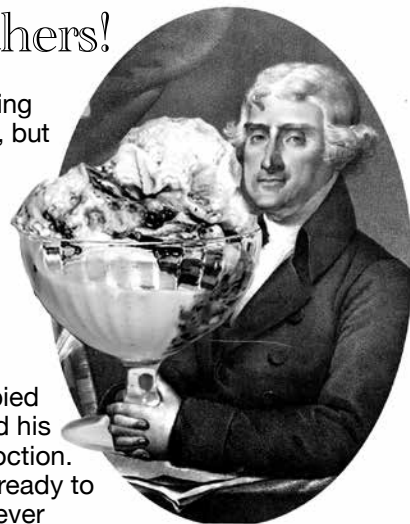
We think of ice cream as something that needs electricity to be produced, but all one needs is ice to cool the egg custard base. Other methods, such as a hand cranked paddle that churned the mixture in a metal container, can be used to freeze the mixture.

Thomas Jefferson acquired a taste for ice cream while serving as ambassador in France. He hand copied a recipe for vanilla ice cream. He had his staff at Monticello prepare the concoction. Ice houses on the property kept ice ready to be used for making ice cream whenever Mr. Jefferson wanted a dish.

George Washington's love of ice cream was well known. He purchased elaborate molds used to shape ice cream, some in the shape of a basket of fruit. Martha liked to add pureed fruit (from their farm) to the mixture.

James Madison also was a lover of ice cream. His wife Dolley famously served a wonderful strawberry ice cream creation at President Madison's second inaugural banquet at the White House in 1813.

So when you next celebrate the 4th of July- add a cup of ice cream to your menu—you will be remembering the founders in a very tasty way.



MEMBERSHIP FORM 2026

The MVHA welcomes new members! You can also join/renew online at **www.mountainviewhistorical.org**. The MVHA is a tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), Tax ID 94-6115407. Membership is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

☐ New Membership	Name(s) _____
☐ Membership Renewal	City _____
☐ Household Annual Membership \$30/year	State _____ Zip Code _____
☐ Individual Lifetime Membership \$300	Phone _____
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Please make checks payable to:
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Thank you

SUMMERFALL

Calendar 2026 Summer

July 26

Downtown Walking Tour 2 pm

<http://mvhistory.eventbrite.com/>

Centennial Plaza (at the train station)

July 27-31

Viewing of MV inventors panels

in the MV City Hall Rotunda

August 9

The Spirit of 76 and more 4:30 pm

Summer history event

<http://mvhistory.eventbrite.com/>

Los Altos History Museum

August 23

Downtown Walking Tour 2 pm

<http://mvhistory.eventbrite.com/>

Centennial Plaza (at the train station)

October 4

Palmita Park & the Minton Legacy 2 pm

Mountain View Public Library

November 1

Wineries of Mountain View 2 pm

MV library

LOOKING BACK: IMAGES FROM THE ARCHIVES



Painting fire plugs in patriotic themes was a popular program in Mountain View during the 1976 bicentennial. Shown is April Huberty, co-chair of the hydrant sub-committee. She is painting a hydrant located on Walker Drive to represent Paul Revere. See more information inside the newsletter.



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REVIEW
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HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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