

# ***UNION CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM***

*Founded by Myrla Raymundo, MBA*

**3841 Smith Street, Union City, California 94587, Tel. (510) 324-3298**

**Three Components**

**(1) Museum & Artifacts, (2) Oral History (3) Preservation of Historical Homes  
Museum Board meets quarterly at the Museum at 7 PM**

\*\*\*\*\*

**VOL. 8 NO. 4**

**[www.geocities.com/ucmuseum/](http://www.geocities.com/ucmuseum/)**

**January 2007**

**Myrla Raymundo, MBA, Founding Editor/Writer  
e-mail: [ligfinio.raymundo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ligfinio.raymundo@sbcglobal.net)**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Union City Historical Museum is a non-profit organization committed to the preservation, maintenance and protection of, and the education of the public about the architectural, cultural, natural and historical heritage resources of the City of Union City.

**GREG STEWART  
Union City Police Chief  
By Myrla Raymundo**



### **Hail to the Chief!**

Greg Stewart, 51, is the new Police Chief of Union City.

Very tall and good looking and with the proper education for the job, he is the right person for the post vacated by

Chief Randy Ulibarri, who retired in December 2006.

Chief Stewart came to the City of Union City as an Animal Control Officer in 1975. In 1977, he worked for a year as a sheriff's deputy in Alameda County. He later joined the Union City force as a Police Officer in 1978.

He attended UC Berkeley and took up Engineering, went at Chabot College and San Jose State University and completed Criminal Justice Administration, attended Cal State Hayward for his BA in Criminal Justice Administration and finally at Cal State Hayward, received a Master in Public Administration.

Greg was born and raised in San Leandro and lives in Fremont with his family. He and his wife Laura have two daughters. Veronica, 23 and Adrienne, 15.

In instituting his strategic plans for the department, he said that he would continue the Community Outreach Policing, outreach to the community, internal improvement, reorganization in community section and professional standard unit. He sees to it that he keeps up with the growth of the city; provide the residents what they expect.

He said that with the high-rise buildings being planned for the city, it needs a different type of policing.

Community involvement is also important to Greg.

He is on the Executive Board of the Lions' Club, a member of the Knights of Columbus, Number 6288 at the Our Lady of Rosary Church in Decoto, a member of California Police Officers Association, a member of the California Police Chiefs Association, and a member of the Peace Officers Research Association of California.

We wish Chief Greg Stewart good luck in his lead of the Union City Police Department and the lead caretaker of the whole Union City.

More power to you, Chief!

**RENEE ELLIOTT**  
**City Clerk, City of Union City**

By Myrla Raymundo



Renee Elliott sits in a special place across the dais where the Union City Council sits during city council sessions. She is usually impeccably dressed and speaks in a very nice voice. She is very much approachable and is very helpful to visitors coming to the city hall.

Renee is the new City Clerk for Union City. As City Clerk, she serves as the City's legislative administrator, records manager, and elections official.

Renee has over 16 years of experience working in municipal government. Prior to coming to Union City, she served as the Deputy City Clerk for the City of Fremont. She was conferred the title of Certified Municipal Clerk in April 2003, and earlier this year she entered the Master Municipal Clerk Academy program administered through the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

Renee currently serves as a Trustee and Executive Board Member for the Northern California City Clerk's Association; is an active member of The

National Exchange Club; and, is working toward completing her degree in Human Development.

Renee lives in Fremont where she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, visiting nearby beaches with her grandson, flower gardening, reading, and taking long walks with her yellow lab, Rowdy. Renee has two grown daughters; Margot, a high school mathematics teacher, and Deanna, who lives in Antelope (near Sacramento) with her husband and two sons, Christian, age 6, and baby Elijah.

We welcome Renee Elliott as part of our city and we wish her good luck on her new job.

\*\*\*\*\*

**TERESITA GATAN**  
**Vice-President**  
**Union City Historical Museum**  
**By Myrla Raymundo**



Teresita Gatan, who is a Charter member of the Union City Historical Museum, is the organization’s Vice-President. To this end, she assists the President in seeing to it that the Museum becomes successful and be known to the whole

Union City and other places. She hopes to maintain the Museum as a destination.

Tessie, as we fondly call her, is a nurse by vocation. At this writing, Tessie is retired from her work. She worked as a scrub nurse for twenty five (25) years in San Francisco General Hospital and was a known Chief Shop Steward of the Service Employees International Union Local 250 (SEIU). As a shop steward, she fought for the rights of her co-workers at the government-led San Francisco General Hospital. This was a life-long commitment she took upon herself since starting her colorful career some twenty five (25) years ago.

Advocating for the rights of the small workers was a passion for this diminutive, but straight talking lady, known to some as the “Madame Butterfly” of the hospital for her sudden burst of speed in solving and promoting justice in a snap. For her, it was not just a responsibility, but also a covenant with God.

In 1970, Tessie left her husband, Marcos and their seven (7) children in the Philippines for a lucrative job in Bonn, Germany, which she had for about ten (10) years.

She left her ten-year nursing stint in a government immunization center in Guadalupe, Makati in the Philippines and pushed her luck abroad, not knowing that her journey in Germany would activate a sleeping, but raging desire to fight for the rights of her Filipino migrant colleagues.

While in Germany, she stood up to the West German Government, who immediately acted on their grievances of and interceded on the behalf of the thousands of Filipino nurses in Germany, who were having problems with stipends.

In 1980, her prayers were answered when she was reunited with her husband, Marcos, and her seven grown-up children in Oakland, California. She sacrificed her fat paycheck in Germany, in exchange for a much lower, but decent pay in the United States, to live again with her beloved family.

After a year, she moved her family to San Francisco, after accepting a nursing job in San Francisco General Hospital in 1981.

She then became a stalwart in every operating room of the hospital, while sharing her international nursing experience with many American doctors and nurses.

Tessie is a popular figure at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Union City. She is into a lot of parish work. She started the Simbang Gabi (Dawn Mass) at St. Anne's and some of the parishes followed the traditional Philippine custom. She did this for ten (10) years.

Tessie is a Baptism coordinator, a Pastoral Council member and in 2005, she was voted as "Mrs. St. Anne." She still holds that title to this day.

Last March 7, 2006, the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women, Mayor Gavin Newsom and the Board of Supervisors presented the Woman

Making History Award in a Ceremony to Tessie. She was one of the twelve (12) honorees.

Tessie was honored as a woman who has dedicated her life to advocating for public health issues. In addition to being an advocate for public issues in San Francisco, she is an active member of SEIU United Health Care Worker West (formerly SEIU Local 250.)

She is part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the City of Union City and is working on the Diversity Committee as Chairperson.

As a retired person, she still continues to do her community work in her city.

Tessie and Marcos Gatan have seven (7) children. They are Rosalia Gatan, RN, a supervisor at San Francisco Kaiser, Archimedes C. Gatan, Jacqueline G. Rockwell, Jean G. Liwanag, Aristotle Marcos Gatan, III, Julie Gatan Armstrong and Niel Augustus Gatan. They have 14 grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Her next move is to run as President of the Union City Historical Museum in the upcoming election.

Good Luck, Teresita (Tessie) Gatan!

\*\*\*\*\*

*Did you know that in Union City, there are a lot of interesting occurrences happening every minute of the day?*

*Next are some of the happenings in our city. From time to time, I will be writing about these interesting facts about Union City.*

## 50 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT UNION CITY

By Myrla Raymundo

1. It was in 1851 that Union City first sprang into existence. The name Union City came from the name of the Steamboat "The Union." owned by John Horner.
2. Union City is located on the banks of Alameda Creek near a point chain known as the Devil's Elbow.
3. The Costanoan Indians were the people who greeted the Spaniards who crossed the Union City plains in 1775. The Costanoan Indians lived in Indian villages ranged along Dry Creek.
4. Mr. J. M. Horner was the founder and the builder of the first warehouse upon the bank of the creek.
5. Alvarado was formed from original settlements Union City and New Haven.
6. Union City was formed from two original towns Alvarado and Decoto. Union City was a mass of land, with cauliflower and carrots and the beautiful gladiolas, for which the city is noted.
7. Alvarado was the first Seat for Alameda County in 1853-1855.
8. The biggest business in Alvarado was the Alvarado Sugar Factory/Holly Sugar.
9. The biggest business in Decoto was the Pacific States Steel.
10. Dry Creek Cottage, owned by the Meyers sisters and hidden for nearly 100 years, was named after the stream that curves S-like throughout four acres of landscaped grounds.
11. St. Anne's Catholic Church was founded in 1862.
12. In 1869, the first railroad line was put through Union City.
13. The Masonic Home in Decoto was founded in 1890.
14. Before the railroads, the primary way to send produce to San Francisco was shipping via Barron's Landing.
15. Before the Nimitz freeway was built, Alvarado Blvd. and Union City Blvd. were part of Highway 17.
16. Wah Sing Cheng, who emigrated to the United States from China, was one of the very first farmers in Union City.
17. Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church was founded in 1907.
18. Frank Borghi, Jr., a trustee of the Washington Union High School District and the New Haven Unified School District and director of the Alameda County water district for 32 years, was the Chairman of the Steering Body of the Union City Incorporation Committee in 1959.



Frank Borghi

19. Union City votes to incorporate on January 15, 1959. Population was 6000.
20. On January 26, 1959, the City of Union city council duties began in the Alvarado Fire Department building, now the Union City Historical Museum– Joseph Seane Jr., Joseph Lewis, Tom Kitayama, John Ratekin and Oscar Dowe. Tom Kitayama was unanimously elected mayor of Union City by the City Council. He has the longest political career in Union City. He occupied the position of mayor, planning commissioner and councilman.



The Union City Historical Museum

21. In May 26, 1959, the City of Union City hired first Fire Chief, Kenneth Garcia.
22. On July 30, 1959, the first City of Union City budget approved at \$300,013.00.
23. On August 27, 1959, Union City's Council veto's Cal State Union City site, College (Cal State East Bay) ended up in Hayward.
24. On September 22, 1959, City of Union City leased first City Hall at 309 H. Street.
25. On October 22, 1959, the local newspaper Union City Leader first edition came out. Dick Folger was the publisher.
26. The first Police Department was on H Street and Decoto Road and then moved to Whipple and Central Ave. In April 21, 1979, they moved to the new location in the Civic Center at Alvarado-Niles Road. In July 2000, Chief Randy Ulibarri was sworn in as the new Police Chief.
27. James Logan High School opened in 1960.
28. Union City expanded to 18 square miles. Hill areas annexed. Population reached 6,103.
29. The Union City drive-in opened in 1966.
30. Rev Adam G. Lopez, Jr. served as pastor of the Union City Apostolic Church since 1967.
31. Kennedy Community Center was built in 1971.
32. Union City BART opened in 1972.
33. City Bus Service "The Flea" started in 1974
34. Rev. David Joe Brown Sr. was the pastor of the Brown Temple, which started in 1974. His son Rev. Jerome Brown, Jr. followed his footstep.
35. In 1974, Centro de Servicios, headed by Jaime Jaramillo as Executive Director, and serving the Latino population, was established in Decoto.
36. Civic Center was built in 1976. It is located at Alvarado-Niles Road. Larry Cheeves is the present city manager.

- 37. In 1977 the Holly Sugar Mill was demolished.
- 38. Billy Agundez was the first boxer of Union City.
- 39. Gertrude Corchero was Union City's City Treasurer for 24 years.
- 40. A park located at 10<sup>th</sup> and G Streets in the Decoto District was named after Fred Castro on April 26, 1997. Fred served as a Park and Recreation commissioner for 32 years.
- 41. Myrla Raymundo founded the Union City Historical Museum in 1998. It is located in the old Alvarado Fire Department in the historic Alvarado area.



State Assemblymember Alberto Torrico, Founder/CEO Myrla Raymundo and Museum President Ben Elias.

- 42. In July 13 1999 was the grand opening of several stores and the Cinema Theatre in Union Landing.
- 43. A big hall at the Ralph and Mary Ruggieri Senior Center was named after Miles J. Price last March 21, 2000. He was one of the people who were instrumental in establishing the Ruggieri Senior Center.
- 44. In October 2003, Myrla Raymundo founded the Filipino-American Association

of Alameda County. The non-profit organization serves the Filipino Americans in Alameda County.

- 45. In 2004, new streets in new developments were named after our city leaders, both past and present, to honor their accomplishments in the City of Union City.
- 46. The AlmaVia of Union City, an assisted living and dementia Care Homes, opened in 2005.



- 47. Carlos Rodriguez is the new Fire Chief of Union City.
- 48. Oscar Munoz is the new Postmaster of the City of Union City.
- 49. Councilmember Manny Fernandez is the longest-term councilmember in Union City.



- 50. Mayor Mark Green is the present mayor of Union City.

## POLICE EXPLORERS



*Simmi and Harinder at St. Annes Parish Festival last September 2006*

In the Union City Police Department, we have police explorers.

Their duties are to assist other officers in the field, public relations in events such as parades, festivals, and ride along with officers.

The Explorer program teaches the basics of Law Enforcement that is required to become a Police Officer in the future. They are between the ages of 14 through 21 and want to pursue a career in law enforcement.



Harinder Kaur, age 19, has been associated with the Union City Police Department for seven months and is currently a college student at Cal State East Bay.



Explorer Simmi Sangha, age 16, has been affiliated with the Union City Police Explorers Post #298 for three (3) years as a police explorer. She is a third year at James Logan High School and wants to pursue courses in criminal justice and school psychology.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It has been six months since I took the rein as President of the Union City Historical Museum.

Many good things are happening in the Museum. The Chairpersons and members of the different Strategic Plan Committees are working on their respective projects.

We continue with our work of preserving Union City's rich culture by educating the public about the Museum.

**Grants** – Myrla Raymundo, Chairperson - The Institute of Museum and Library Services-IMLS and the California Cultural and Historical Endowment grants will be resubmitted next fiscal year.

**Fundraising** – Miles Price, Chairperson - The third annual Sweetheart Dance is slated for February 17, 2007. It will be held at the St. Anne Parish Social Hall at Cabello Street. Members of the committee are Tessie Gatan, Rorie Rabuy, Mike Christ, Rita Price, Ray Raymundo and Myrla Raymundo.

**Membership** – Hugh McNamara, Chairperson and Myrla Raymundo are continuously doing membership drives.

**Docents** – Ray Raymundo, Chairperson – The Museum is being continuously staffed by volunteers.

**Museum Newsletter** – Myrla Raymundo, Chairperson. The Museum Newsletter contains historical news and new happenings in the area. Please continue to send your articles to Myrla Raymundo for the Newsletter.

**Website** – Tim Swenson, Chairperson – Tim Swenson and the President are reviewing the Museum Website for further enhancement.

**Preservation of Historic Homes and Buildings** – Myrla Raymundo, Chairperson – Letters were sent to owners for possible historic designation of their properties.

**History Presentations** – Myrla Raymundo and Timothy Swenson - Continuous walk tours in the Museum and Presentation of History to visitors.

**Museum Artifacts** – Lupe St. Denis and Ray Raymundo – Chairpersons. – Continues upkeep of the artifacts.

Thank you for helping me and the Museum in the achievement of our objectives and goals. We will continue with our good works.

*BEN ELIAS*

## FOUNDER'S NOTES



### “THE ORAL HISTORY BOOK”

Important events in our lives and great happenings in our city come and go, but we see to it that we preserve this history of our city.

The Union City Oral History Book, featuring about 200 residents and city officials and staff in Union City, is almost ready for production.

A city is formed by a myriad of activities and by the people living in a city. I am featuring the Union City leaders and residents who shaped Union City into what it is today and who continue to work for the betterment of our community. Union City is now composed of diverse groups of people who continue to contribute to the building of the community and the City of Union City.

I spent hours and hours scheduling interviews, interviewing these people, taking their pictures and writing their beautiful and true stories.

You will read about their heritage, their contributions to our city and their future goals and hopes to make our city a great city.

This book is an important gift to the future. It is history preserved in a book that we will cherish for a long time and hope that our future generation will appreciate to read.

You will be enticed in reading about Tom Kitayama who has the longest political career in Union City. He occupied the positions of mayor, planning commissioner and councilman.

Read about Wah Sing Cheng from China who was one of the very first farmers in Union City.

You will note that Dick Folger was the publisher of the very first local newspaper in our city, the Union City Leader.

The Union City Council also has their stories to tell. Mayor Mark Green, Vice-Mayor Richard Valle, Councilmembers Manny Fernandez, Jim Navarro and Carol Dutra Vernaci talked about their work and accomplishments for the city.

Enjoy the stories of our Union City staff, City Manager Larry Cheeves, Deputy City Manager Tony Acosta, Department heads Mark Leonard and Mintze Cheng, Police Chiefs Randy Ulibarri and Greg Stewart, Fire Chief Carlos Rodriguez and the Union City's Finest.

Some long-time residents Antoinette Pinto, Ernest Machado and others also have interesting life stories to tell.

All these stories were preserved in the book, “The Union City Oral History Book.” It is worthwhile reading. It is all about the history of Union City.

**MYRLA RAYMUNDO**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Myrla Raymundo, MBA, Founder/CEO

**Officers FY2006 -2007**

Ben Elias, President  
Teresita Gatan, Vice-President  
Laura Manansala, Secretary  
Hugh McNamara, Treasurer

**Directors – FY2006-2008**

Mike Christ  
Miles Price  
Rorie Rabuy  
Myrla Raymundo  
Al Rose  
Joey Golaw

**Directors- FY2005-2007**

Lupe St. Denis  
Bruce Hevelin  
Timothy Swenson  
Al Minard  
Dom S. Filardo

**Past President**

Ligfinio (Ray) Raymundo

**LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP**

**Please consider being a lifetime member. Your name will be included in the Hall of Fame of the Museum.**

**MUSEUM DOCENTS**

We're calling on the Museum members to help us. If you're available on any of the days that we are open, please call the Museum.

**HISTORY PRESENTATION**

The history of Union City is being presented at the Union City Historical Museum on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Please come to the Museum and learn more about our city.

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

**FY 2005-2007**

Myrla Raymundo, Editor

Jo Ann Lew

Miles Price

Ligfinio (Ray) Raymundo  
(Layout Artist/Production)

**MUSEUM LIFETIME MEMBERS**

Phil & Leila Verzola  
John & Cathy Tester  
Timothy & Catherine Swenson  
Eva Kamakea  
Georgia Megue & Mike dela Cruz  
Ligfinio (Ray) & Myrla Raymundo  
Gina Lewis  
Reiner & Sheryl Glausch  
Al & Marsha Badella  
Barbara Scheifler  
William & Dorothy Hubbard  
Bob & Leslie Swartz  
Steve Miller & Diane LaMountaine  
Fernando & Helen Cabiles  
Allen & Simona Cecil  
Josephine Pando  
Frank, Jr. & Elvamae Borghi  
Angelo dela Cruz

**PRINTING OF THIS NEWSLETTER  
WAS DONATED BY DEVRY  
UNIVERSITY**