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Celebration of The Barn's 100th Anniversary

By Sophie Braccini



Former bartenders tell stories of life at the Barn, from left: Dave Fleuti, Scott Carr, John Hoover and Rusty Pauli. Photo Elizabeth Machado

out there; the train station was just across the street. The town was all orchards at the time, and us kids hanged out in the creeks and never got in trouble."

Julie Duncan remembered her time in Moraga some 30 years ago. "This was an old fashion meeting place where people met on Friday and Saturday night."

About 130 guests showed up at the Moraga Barn in September for a big celebration including former patrons, interested visitors, and three former bartenders, Dave Fleuti (Art's son), Rusty Pawli and John Hoover. Durkin presented the testimony he had already recorded, and added new ones on the spot.

Today, the Barn is the headquarters of Canyon Construction and has been completely restored, keeping its historic look, but including the most advanced sustainable features. It is still a place for parties, but most of them are held by private groups such as the Lamorinda Wine Growers Association.

If you have story about The Barn you would like to add, contact Bill Durkin at wtdurkin@hotmail.com.

When you talk to Saint Mary's Alumni from the '50s to the '80s, you're sure to hear stories about The Barn. The historical building still located in Moraga was the rustic gathering place when locals wanted to have a good ol' time. In celebration of its 100th anniversary, Moraga resident Bill Durkin has been recording stories from former Barn customers to give to the Moraga Historical Society for keepsake and future reference.

In the interviews, the name Art Fleuti, who was a long-time bartender, is mentioned frequently. He was a nephew of owner Hellen Hetfield who had her private quarters on the second floor of the Barn. "When you turned 21, the tradition was to go to the Barn where Art would sit you down and serve you a double shot of rum," remembers Bill Robert from more than 40 years ago, "then a second, then a third. But not before you turned 21, Art was pretty strict."

It seems that the Barn was a gathering place for the whole community, with picnic tables, a pinball machine and a jukebox. In the 1950s players from the 49er's would come to the Barn and Fleuti had a bus that would go to the game. "The Barn was unique," remembers John Baitx - who still lives on Baitx Street in Moraga. (Moraga residents will note many streets are named after these folks.) "Firemen hanged

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