

# Kentfield Greenbrae Historical Society Historian

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[www.kghs.org](http://www.kghs.org)

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## President's Message

Is there something in the water? If so, let's bottle it! After perusing the snapshot biographies of our panelists for our upcoming Members Meeting, I was struck by both the accomplishments and the character of these outstanding women—all rooted, in one way or another, in our communities.

In June, The Historian looked to the history of Kentfield and Greenbrae, profiling Adaline E. Kent, Elizabeth Thatcher Kent and Libby Smith: three individuals who made their mark on their communities as well as their nation. Savoring the present and looking to the future, we didn't have to look too far to find their contemporary counterparts, women who have impacted our communities, our state and our nation. While their talents and careers vary widely, there is one common thread that they share: all are committed to lifting others up and giving back to their world.

Susan Morrow

Co-President, 2017-18

## Fall Members Meeting!

**Please join us!**

**Wednesday, October 4 from 6-8 pm**

**Community Room at Jason's Restaurant**

**300 Drake's Landing, Greenbrae**

- 6-6:30 pm Coffee, cookies and conversation
- 6:30-6:40 pm KGHS update and business
- 6:40-8 pm Panel Presentation

### **Kentfield & Greenbrae Women Make a Difference**

Anna Pilloton moderates a panel of local women who continue to give back to the community:

- ❖ Andrea Schultz
- ❖ Emily Pilloton
- ❖ Laura Starrett Schmitt
- ❖ Liz Wilhelm Schott
- ❖ Rebecca Sylla

## Did you remember to renew your Membership?

If your KGHS renewal is due, you should have received a letter and remittance envelope asking for your continued support. It's also a good time to invite friends and neighbors to join. If you know of people who are interested in preserving and recognizing local history, please forward this newsletter to them and encourage them to become a member.

DO IT [ONLINE](#) NOW before you forget!

- \$20 - Students & Seniors
- \$30 - Individuals & Families
- \$50 - Business Membership
- \$100 - Patron
- \$250 - Benefactor \*
- \$500 - Historian \*
- \$500- Business Partner \*
- \$1000 + - Lifetime Membership\*
- \$1000+- Lifetime Business Partner \*

Or you can send a check:

**KGHS Membership  
Box 236,  
Kentfield, CA 94914.**

Please include your name, level of membership, address, email and phone number. If you use a credit card number, please include your CVV code (we left it off our envelope!) Included with your membership is the quarterly newsletter, special invitations to member events and an invitation to volunteer on one of our committees.

## ANDREA SCHULTZ

As the youngest of the four daughters of Neil Schultz, Andrea grew up in the first house built in Greenbrae. It overlooked what is now the Bon Air Center and where she presides as president and CEO of Greenbrae Management Inc. Andrea has a deep history with the community. She remembers playing as a child in the construction sites, taking silver disks from electrical boxes to use as play money, sliding down the grassy hills in cardboard boxes and building teepees out of the local anise. A favorite memory was driving around with her father to judge the annual Christmas decorations. She attended Greenbrae School, Kent and then Redwood before going to Washington State University to get a degree in Business Administration. Growing up in Greenbrae gave her the foundation of her values. It was a simpler time without the excesses of the modern world..

After years living in other parts of the country, Andrea returned to Kentfield to raise her children, and in 1990 began working for her dad at Greenbrae Management, the company she now heads. Her strong sense of responsibility to the community is apparent in her roles as chair of the Marin General Hospital Foundation's Board of Directors and also chair and president of the Schultz Foundation — a foundation that seeks to enrich the community through philanthropy and local events. She has sat on the Community Advisory Committee of the Bank of Marin since 2010. She has served on the board of the Marin Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the advisory board of Dominican University, fundraising chair of the Marin Row Association Junior Program and various roles within the Kentfield School District.



Andrea Schultz



Rebecca Sylla

## REBECCA SYLLA

A Marin native and the youngest of four, Rebecca Nelson Sylla grew up in Lucas Valley. She attended Lucas Valley School, Miller Creek Junior High and Marin Academy before completing an English degree at UC Davis.

Her parents' love of travel and adventure soon became her own. She enjoyed learning languages and spent two months in Guatemala and Mexico backpacking before her senior year in high school. A year abroad during college allowed her to travel through Africa and Europe where she continued to foster a love for different cultures.

Professionally, Rebecca's early career was spent in commercial production and special effects for television and film. While working for Industrial Light and Magic in San Rafael, she met her husband, Tom, and settled in San Anselmo. After the birth of their first child, the couple moved to Kentfield where they had two more children.

Over the years, Rebecca has volunteered with her children's schools and a variety of community ventures. She has served on boards, including the Marin Art & Garden Center, Pixie Park, and Marin Academy. She volunteered extensively within the Kentfield School District from 1999 - 2012, which included working on the school bond campaign; parcel tax renewal; parent-giving; overhaul and management of food programs; weekly subbing for front office

## KGHS in the Community... look for us

- Thursday, September 21: Pop Up Store Open 4-6 pm in Bon Air
- Sunday, October 8: Pancake Breakfast Kentfield Fire Dept. 7:30
- Saturday, October 14: Pop Up Store Open 10-2 Bon Air Classic Car Show

secretaries; and general support for classrooms/teachers/staff. She has served on committees in the Kent Woodlands Property Owner's Association (KWPOA) and created the Kent Woodlands Neighborhood Directory.

Currently, Rebecca is an independent video producer and also actively works to support and foster activities that help bring people closer together in her community. Rebecca, along with Mary Gilardi, is responsible for the wonderful video on George Demont Otis which was featured by the KGHS last fall.

## EMILY PILLOTON

Emily was born outside of Chicago, but moved to Kentfield in the middle of her Kindergarten year (She remembers vividly making lots of braids out of thick yarn in Mrs. Paddock's class, as well as sanding a wooden cutting board). She went to Bacich Elementary and then Kent Middle School '95, and Redwood High School '99. Her family lived in the Kent Woodlands area, way up the hill where she spent much of her childhood making things in the woods, crawling through the forest, and in nature.

Emily's grandmother, Margaret Lam, used to live on Sir Francis Drake near Ash Avenue, and she spent many afternoons at her house with her younger sisters, making dumplings or playing the piano or painting. She was a huge influence on her creative practice: she modeled a constant sense of curiosity and creativity in all media, and she was just the most compassionate woman on the planet. The work that Emily does now with young people, making and building things, stems directly from those hours she spent with her. She had a few incredible teachers over the course of her K-12 education who all pushed her beyond her intellectual comfort zone and helped her become a lifelong diehard learner. "To this day I crave learning, for the sake of learning; I am totally in awe of all the things around us and how they work. These teachers were the first who gave me permission to be a nerd and to encourage me to be curious about everything. It was because of their support of my learning in so many subjects that I eventually discovered architecture as a field where I could continue to learn about so many different disciplines: math, science, social sciences and culture, art and aesthetics, and more."



Emily Pilloton is a designer, builder, educator, and founder of the nonprofit design agency Project H Design and its sister program, Girls Garage. Using architecture and design as a vehicle for social justice, she works alongside youth ages 9-18 to bring to life public architecture projects that transform lives and communities. She has built a farmers market with high school students, a playhouse with and for the daughters of abused mothers, a school library by the hands of its own middle school students, and microhomes for a transitional housing agency. Her work seeks to change the authorship of our built environment and give power to the underestimated and marginalized, specifically young girls and communities of color. Emily holds a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from the University of California Berkeley, and a Master of Fine Arts in Designed Objects from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is currently a Lecturer in the College of Environmental Design at the University of California Berkeley, and is the author of two books, *Design Revolution: 100 Products that Empower People*, and *Tell Them I Built This: Transforming Schools, Communities, and Lives With Design-Based Education*. Her work is documented in the full-length film *If You Build It*.



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## LAURA STARRETT SCHMITT

Laura (Starrett) Schmitt grew up in Kentfield in the Murray Park neighborhood. She went to local schools graduating from Kent Middle School in 1977, Redwood High in 1982 and then to UC Berkeley. She still lives in Kentfield with her husband Tom Schmitt. Her three children are also graduates of the Kentfield Schools and Redwood High school.

Laura has always been an athlete. Starting as a highly competitive swimmer in HS she switched to focus running and competed in Track and Cross Country throughout her High school and college years. She is still competing in adult running events around the USA. She believes that she's received a lot of positive life lessons from running and has endeavored to pay that forward as a coach. She began coaching at Redwood, in 1986 while still in grad school and has never stopped. In 2009 she was inducted into the inaugural class of the Redwood Athletic Hall of Fame. Her overall approach to coaching is to nurture skills and competitive growth through consistent positive encouragement. Her success in coaching has proven this works, no matter the skill level. She feels all people (and especially our kids) have the potential to grow and improve all of their capabilities with the proper coaching support.

She's not only about running. In 1993 she founded the Marin Enrichment Pre-school program at Bacich Elementary and continues to be involved. Marin Enrichment is dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment through activities that are designed to meet the needs of each of its participants.

These days one of Laura's favorite places to be is running or hiking on the trails of Mount Tamalpias. She feels that it is a timeless place that hasn't changed much since she was a girl. We are all very lucky to have it both for recreation and access to nature as it should be.



Laura Starrett Schmitt



Liz Wilhelm Schott

## LIZ WILHELM SCHOTT

When Liz was born in 1957, her family was living in Sausalito. She, the fifth child, apparently caused the family to outgrow that house on North Street, and they moved to 214 Poplar Drive in Kentfield.

It was there that she lived a thoroughly idyllic life until leaving for college in 1975. Family lore includes frolicking at Pixie Playground, attending Ross Valley Nursery School when it was behind Eddie's grocery, shaking hands with Mrs. Murphy every day as she left Kindergarten at Ross School, and learning all there was to know about first grade from Mrs. Nelson. She then attended Dominican/San Domenico through high school.

Childhood then was a time of exploration and unstructured time. "I looked up at the Poplar trees and let my mind wander on more occasions than may have been healthy, and collected salamanders from the ditches along Laurel Grove. Our back fence neighbors on Hill had a tennis court with a backboard they let us hit against. We learned how to occupy ourselves and mostly stay out of trouble." She was also a horsewoman, and spent many years riding the trails of the MMWD.

After graduating from Santa Clara University and St. Mary's College in Moraga, Liz began what is now a 30-year career in education, culminating in her return to Kentfield as the district's superintendent. She lives in Sebastopol with her husband of 30 years, Perry Schott. They have two adult children, Francesca and Augie.

## Board of Directors

Susan Morrow, Lorelei Evans, Sarah Fletcher, Mary Gilardi, Julie Gondak, Ross McKenna, Sydney Park, Marilee Rogers, Heather McPhail Sridharan, Richard Torney, Marlies Zeisler