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# THE LEFTOVERS

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## Putting El Sobrante on the Map: Leslie Claypool and Kirk Hammett



Our long-term board member and secretary, Lyle Miller, recently donated two original posters for the music groups Metallica and Primus. A musician himself, Lyle is very familiar with the work of these groups, both of which are still very active.

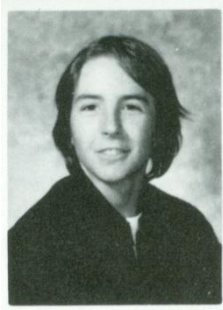


The primary interest of our society in these groups is their roots in our town of El Sobrante. Metallica was formed in 1981, and was joined by guitarist Kirk Hammett in 1983. Primus was formed in 1984, by Leslie Claypool, who is still leader of this group. Both Hammett and Claypool grew up in El Sobrante and both attended De Anza High School, where they met and gained an appreciation for each other's style and skill. Both would go on to achieve a high level of success and recognition in their musical genres, which were, and are, substantially different.

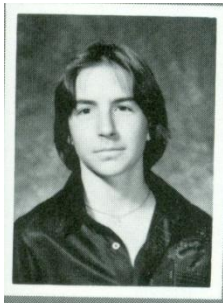
Metallica is generally classified as a "heavy metal" band, with Hammett as the lead guitarist. Their style has also been further defined as "thrash metal," "speed metal," and "hard rock." According to Wikipedia, their 1986 album, *Master of Puppets*, has been called "one of the best metal albums of all time." Since then, the band has gone on to become one of the most commercially successful bands of all time.

While also very successful, the band Primus, and its quirky brand of music, is not easily defined, which apparently, suits Claypool just fine. Some of the album titles exhibit this quirkiness, even playfulness: *Prawn Song*; *Sailing the Seas of Cheese*; *Pork Soda*; and *Tales From the Punchbowl*. Throughout the life of this group, it is Claypool who has had the most impression on the general direction, style, and character of the music.

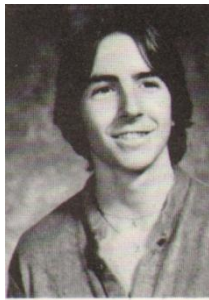
As noted, both Claypool and Hammett grew up in El Sobrante and attended De Anza High School. Claypool attended all four years at De Anza, from 1978 through 1981. Hammett, approximately one year older, attended from 1977 thru 1979, but, apparently, did not graduate from De Anza.



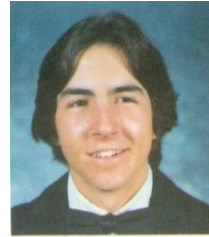
CLAYPOOL, L.



CLAYPOOL, L.



Claypool, L.

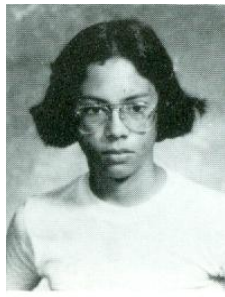


Leslie Claypool

Here we see Claypool's class photos from his freshman through his senior years at De Anza.



Hammett, K.



K. Hammet



HAMMETT, K.

Kirk Hammett, freshman through junior years at De Anza.

While Hammett does not appear in the senior class photos for 1980, he seems to have attended school at De Anza in 1980, as the following image appears to show.

## GUITAR ENSEMBLE

This photo appears in the 1980 De Anza yearbook, and shows Kirk Hammett standing at the far left, just above Keith Bee, Music Director.

Aside from the class photos from 1977 through 1979, this image appears to be the only one that shows Kirk Hammett participating in a school group activity. Les Claypool, on the other hand, seems to have been more active, showing up in several groups through his school years.



**Top Row:** Scott Leewright, Randy Powell, Chris Olsen, Joel Rutkowski, Mike McCormick and Stephen Phelps **2nd Row:** Kirk Hammett, Derrick Silva, Dan Watson, Mark Biederman, Ross Rice, Brian Sarchwell **3rd Row:** Cindy Johnson, Toni Ann Hinton, Kathy O'Drain, Pam Sargent **Bottom Row:** Mr. Keith Bee, Gina Phillips, Jeanne Botri, Lori Romano, Pam Scipi, Vicki Roberts, Margaret Lin, Carol Welches

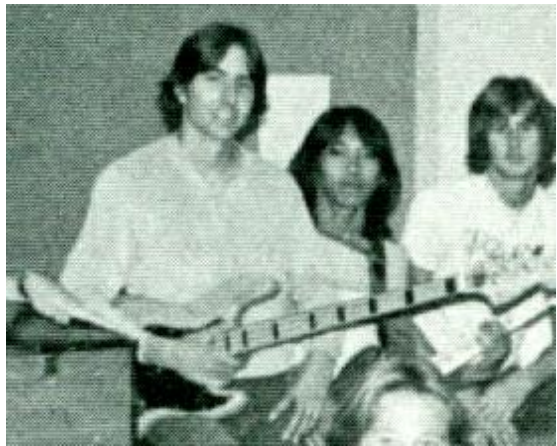
## JAZZ BAND



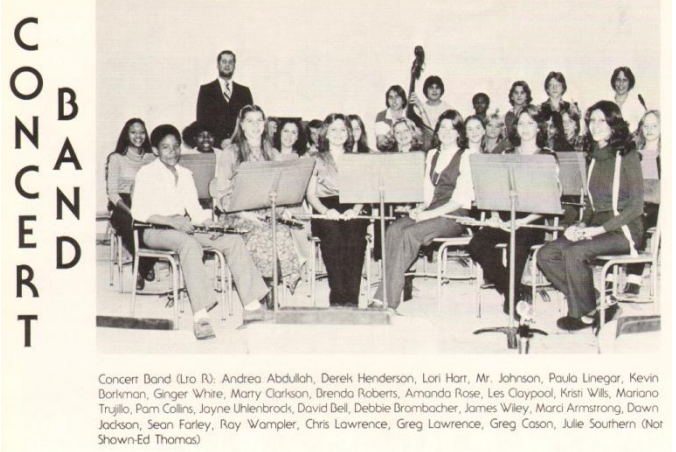
Standing: Mr. Johnson, Tom Hunting, Delmont Dlakenev, Willard Harmon, Robert Enos, Jerry Long, Sean McGroarty Seated: Jeff Koutz, Dret Hern, Greg Cason, Les Claypool, Johanie Washington, Tyrone Durks. Not Shown: Dominic Trujillo, Dan Watson

This image, taken from the 1980 De Anza yearbook, shows Claypool (sitting with right leg crossed over left) participating in the school jazz band, holding his bass guitar.

The image below shows Claypool in the school concert band. He is hard to miss, sitting at the very back of the group with the neck of his double bass reaching high above his head.



Claypool again appears as a player in the jazz band, in the 1981 yearbook, holding his long-neck bass guitar.



Concert Band (L to R): Andrea Abdullah, Derek Henderson, Lori Hart, Mr. Johnson, Paula Linegar, Kevin Borkman, Ginger White, Marty Clarkson, Brenda Roberts, Amanda Rose, Les Claypool, Kristi Wills, Mariano Trujillo, Pam Collins, Jayne Uhlenbrock, David Bell, Debbie Brombacher, James Wiley, Marci Armstrong, Dawn Jackson, Sean Farley, Ray Wampler, Chris Lawrence, Greg Lawrence, Greg Cason, Julie Southern (Not Shown-Ed Thomas)

Not only does Claypool appear in varied school music groups, he even shows up in this completely unmusical Student Forum group. This was during his senior year, in 1980.

## STUDENT FORUM



Top Row: L to R: Ronda Lynn Watson, Jeanette Valentine, Stone Chandler, Mark Honaker, Christie Idehara, Carol Jeha, Chris Cook, Middle Row: Veith Brudigam, Betty Jackson, Julie Familiar, Tina Hart, Lisa Cash, Karhy Tairano, Judy Jackson, John Throughton, Jill Lindstrom, Les Claypool, Pam Johansen, Colleen Cook, Cindy Williams, Christie Grove. Bottom Row: Nimbus Clay, Curtis Witt, Kendra Larsed, Sandy Schmidt, Ginger White, Brian Sanders, David Young

While Les Claypool is generally known for and associated with his very successful group *Primus*, he has had an exceptionally varied career, being a founding member of such music groups as *Blind Illusion*, *Claypool's Fearless Flying Frog Brigade*, and *The Claypool Lennon Delirium*. This last group included Sean Lennon, son of John. Claypool described Sean as a "musical mutant after my own heart." He created and performed for the comedy series *South Park*, wrote and directed the satiric film *Electric Apricot: Quest for Festeroo*, and wrote a novel called *South of the Pumphouse*. He has been married since 1995, has two kids, and operates a winery in Sebastopol, called Purple Pachyderm.

Claypool is known for his unique and eccentric sort of bass playing, which includes a slapping, tapping style described as “flamenco-like.” Having listened to a bit of his work, it seemed to me to be playful, creative, and very skillful. At bottom, this seems to be a man who is having fun and not taking himself too seriously.

Kirk Hammet and Leslie Claypool have been friends since they were kids. Hammet’s musical career began early. While still in high school. At the age of 16, he formed the band *Exodus*, along with a few other musicians, including guitarist Tim Agnello. In 1983 he joined the band Metallica and has been with this group ever since. In 2023 he, along with fellow musician James Hetfield, was named by *Rolling Stone* as among the “greatest guitarists of all time.”

While the fame of Kirk Hammett and Les Claypool has managed to elevate the general awareness of our small community, they are not the only locals to earn a certain level of fame, helping to light up our corner of the world. Among these might be included guitarist Mark Biederman, who happens to appear in the same De Anza Guitar Ensemble as Hammett (above). Lyle Miller knows Mark well; you can find Lyle’s interview with Mark in our Spring 2017 issue of *The Leftovers*, on our website. No doubt there have been many other notable residents of El Sobrante. Our town seems to provide fertile ground for the development of creative and unique forms of expression.

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## How San Francisco Got its Name

*Donald Bastin*



Recently, fellow local historian Roxy Miravalle and I gave separate presentations at our El Sobrante Library, in honor of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Anza Expedition into Upper California, which occurred at about the same time that our Declaration of Independence was written and broadcast to the world. The Anza expedition, as is well known, was led by Juan Bautista de Anza (left), a presidio captain in Northern Mexico. Anza’s name is well known in our area, and many of our residents attended the local high school named after him (including myself and my two daughters). In this issue of *The Leftovers*, and for the next two issues,

I will be writing about some of what are the not-so-well known stories that led up to Anza’s expedition of colonization. In this issue, I will examine the unlikely trail that led to the naming of the most prominent city in the Bay Area.

The story of the exploration and colonization of Upper California (from Baja California to just above San Francisco) begins with this man, José de Gálvez, who bore the title of **Visitor General**, sent from the court of Spain to do two things: generate more income from the colony of New Spain (Mexico) and do something about the foreigners (particularly Russians) nosing around the land claimed by Spain for 250 years, but never inhabited by the Spanish.



In order to generate money, one of the first things that Gálvez did was to initiate a lottery, which, probably not surprisingly, was very successful. To curb foreign interest in Upper California, he ordered that a plan of colonization be put together as soon as possible. As a base for the plan he adopted the time-proven Spanish formula, which included 3 groups: military, colonists, and missionaries. As we all know, the missionary component was supplied by the Franciscan Order. This choice would have been unlikely just a few years earlier, at a time when the Jesuit Order was probably the most influential in New Spain and already occupied the missions in Baja California, the jumping-off place for the expeditions. But as fate would have it, the Jesuit Order had run afoul of the Crown, having generated suspicion with their power, influence, and wealth. So in the late 1760s, the order

was expelled from the colonies and Spain itself, leaving the order of Saint Francis to occupy the Baja California missions and become the logical choice to lead the missionary movement of the initial expeditions of discovery.

On September 15, 1768, Gálvez wrote the following letter to Father Junipero Serra, Father President of the Franciscan Order: *“We have seen how, in happy prophecy, the old explorers gave the names of (saints) to the principal points on the coast above and below Monterey. The port where one of the new missions is now to be established . . . situated in thirty-eight and one-half degrees, they gave the name of the glorious patriarch **San Francisco**, and we*

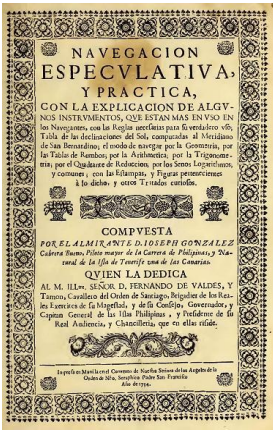
*must not change this very appropriate title”*. What on earth is Gálvez talking about? Keep in mind that, at this moment, no European (as far as is known) had ever laid eyes on the bay named after St. Francis. Gálvez knew about San Diego Bay and Monterey Bay, discovered by Cabrillo. Monterey Bay was, in fact, the principal goal of the first California expedition, led by Gaspar de Portolá, in 1769. But San Francisco Bay? As we know, that was discovered completely by accident by members of the Portolá expedition, early November, 1769.

The principal aim of the first expedition, led by Gaspar de Portolá and the Franciscan priest, Juan Crespi, was the occupation and colonization of the port of Monterey, which had been described by Spanish mariner Sebastian Viscaino in 1603 as a perfect harbor, “very secure against all winds” and “all that can be desired.” Viscaino was clearly exaggerating, eager to find favor with the Viceroy, the Count of Monte Rey, who had ordered the coastal exploration to find suitable harbors for the Manila Galleons. Viscaino sweetened the report by naming the bay after the Viceroy. Thus, when the Portolá expedition began its northward march in late 1769, it passed right by the bay it was searching for, as the real bay bore little relation to the glowing description provided by Viscaino. Continuing north, on October 30, the explorers emerged onto the coast at Point San Pedro, just below the present-day town of Pacifica. There, they looked out at what we know as the Gulf of the Farallones, but was immediately recognizable to Portolá and Father Juan Crespi as, wait for it,

## San Francisco Bay.



It was Sebastian Cermeño, captain of the Manila Galleon *San Augustin*, who gave the name San Francisco to the bay we know as Drake's Bay, in 1595. Like Viscaino, he was charged with locating suitable harbors for the south-bound Manila Galleons. The pilot, who sailed with both Cermeño and Viscaino, provided this description of the bay: *"On the northeast side, there are three white cliffs, very near the sea, and in front of the one in the middle an estero enters with a very good mouth without breakers."* This description was part of the Navigator's Guide, shown at left, published in 1734, and carried by Portolá and Crespi. This was the very same *San Francisco Bay* mentioned by Gálvez in his letter to Father Serra in 1768. This was surprising and very welcome news. The expedition had found the bay on which the Visitor General had ordered a mission to be built dedicated to the founder of the Franciscan Order. But it also made it clear that the port of Monterey was behind them, and it would take months to verify its location and finally establish a colony and presidio at that bay, despite its shortcomings.



Just a few days later, a small group of soldiers, and a party of deer-hunters both stumbled onto the great bay of San Francisco, which led to confusion for the next 5 years, as various parties of exploration would expend time, energy, and money on a fruitless campaign to find a land route to the "True Bay" of St. Francis. For a time, the south and north bays were seen as connected to the estero of Drake's Bay, but, at the same time, obstacles to getting there. Gradually, and, inevitably, the truth of what the Spanish had found, one of the great bays of the world, would become clear. Without any formal ceremony and without intent, the name San Francisco would be transferred from the small, rugged harbor nestled under Pt. Reyes to the bay and city of St. Francis.

## Proposed State College Site at El Sobrante

Roxy Miravalle

In 1963, a State College was being considered for Contra Costa County. It was part of the \*California Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960. Under this plan, Contra Costa would be one of several areas reviewed in 1965 to see if it qualified for a state college. The proposal goes back to 1957 when the State Department of Education was tasked with creating a report indicating where new state and junior colleges are needed most.

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors agreed to form a 20-member committee to determine the best location for a site for a state college in Aug 1965. Among the members selected for the committee were Walter Kohler and Ed Galli of El Sobrante. One of the first proposals for a suitable location was in an area within El Sobrante. By Dec 1965, it was suggested that "618 acres of rolling land between El Sobrante and Pinole may hopefully become the next California state college campus" as mentioned in the article. The new campus was to be located between May and Castro roads, two miles from Highway 40. Its location, it was hoped, would prevail over others put before the trustees due to the unique advantages it offered.

The Independent  
Thu, Dec 30, 1965 · Page 1

## State College Site Near Pinole Urged

Some 618 acres of rolling land between El Sobrante and Pinole may hopefully become the next California state college campus.

At least that's the hope of Richmond realtors, C. J. Ramsey and Bertone Realty, who submitted the proposal to use 202 acres of the Diablo Ranch and the 416 acre adjoining Cutler Laboratory property.

A year later, in Jan 1966, the Richmond City Council unanimously endorsed the proposal to establish a state college between Castro and May roads in the El Sobrante area. Their action followed a presentation by realtor Mike Fanning. The property would comprise 202 acres of the Diablo Ranch and 416 acres of adjoining Cutter Laboratory land. Price sought for the parcel is \$1,747,000.

However, although the Council was in favor of the El Sobrante site, they made a provision to designate a location in the Martinez area as the second choice.

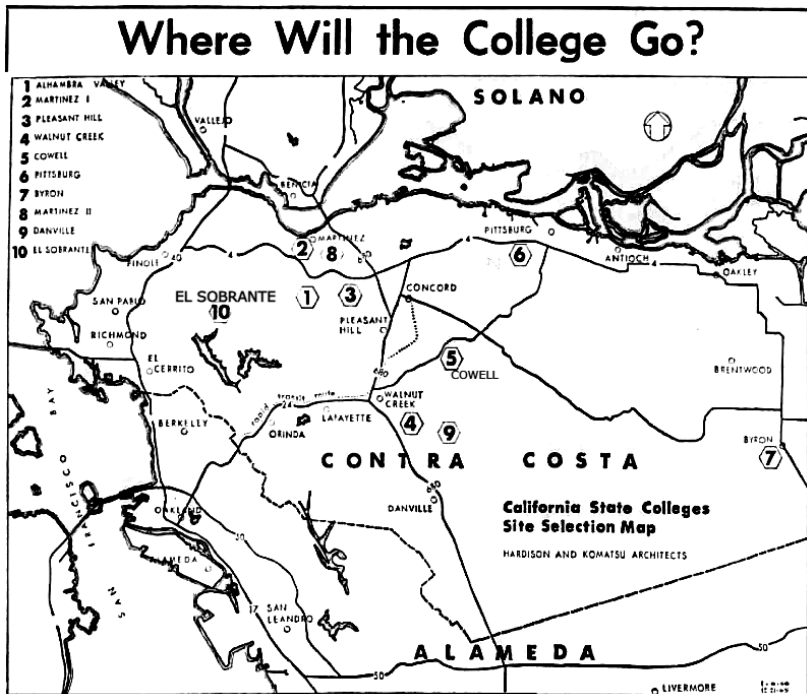
It was not long before other cities formed committees to submit their recommendations for the proposed state college. Some of the presentations given to the California State Colleges Board by many hoping to get their choice approved included Martinez, Pittsburg, Walnut Creek, Concord, Cowell and Pleasant Hill.

In a Jan 1966 article titled "Pinole Joins Bid For College Site" the term "University of Pinole" was used to refer to the college site there "that may yet become a reality."

The Pinole city council endorsed a plan to establish the proposed Contra Costa County state college on a 600-acre-plus site which borders on the southern edge of the city. Soon, San Pablo and Richmond joined this campaign for Pinole. In 1969, a site was purchased at Cowell as the site for the next state college as seen on the map as site No. 5. After much controversy over the location of the college site, and the decision of the trustees of the California State College System giving priority to San Mateo County, the property purchased at Cowell was not used as hoped. And, of all the recommendations submitted, unfortunately, El Sobrante was not selected as the site for a state college campus. To that end, in 1972, the proposal for a college site in Contra Costa was put off indefinitely.

Can you imagine what El Sobrante would have been like after a state college was built in the area? So many things would have changed. For example, possibly a new freeway on/off ramp to the Castro Ranch Road area or somewhere nearby would have to be approved and built for easy access to campus. That would require taking more tax dollars for a study of the feasibility of the plan and for the selection of a location without sacrificing the homes of residents who might live near a proposed freeway access. El Sobrante would eventually have an increase in population, and more businesses would want to relocate or open here, changing the rural, country-like atmosphere it has today. What are your thoughts? Post your comments about this article on our [FB group](#) page.

The [\\*California Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960](#) guided state college expansion during the 1960s, prioritizing other regions in the San Francisco Bay Area.



**STUDIES UNDER WAY**—Ten possible sites shown in above map for the new State College in Contra Costa County have been recommended to the Chancellor's Office of the California State Colleges. Feasibility studies of each of the sites will be made by Hardison & Komatsu, Richmond architects. Later this month, preliminary evaluations based on the feasibility studies will be reported to the Contra Costa County site advisory committee. Visits to proposed sites will be made in mid-February by the campus planning committee of the Board of Trustees of the State Colleges. A final decision on the location of the college is expected to be made by the Trustees in April.

## New Acquisitions:



These Pom-Pom “Pommer” outfits, for both football and basketball games, were donated by De Anza graduate, Jeannie Reginato, who wore them during her 1970-1971 year at De Anza. They are in near-perfect condition and are a very important part of the elements that help to tell the story of our high school.

*The Leftovers* is published quarterly. Articles for publication are encouraged, as are comments. See e-mail address below.

*The El Sobrante Historical Society is a formal nonprofit organization, and donations may be tax-deductible. We are dedicated to the preservation and display of the history of the community of El Sobrante. We depend on our members and local residents for the information, artifacts, and photographs that make up the society’s collection. Become a member and help out! It’s free and simple. Just visit the website, at [elsobrantehistoricalsociety.com](http://elsobrantehistoricalsociety.com).*

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### **Mission Statement**

*To promote the awareness and appreciation of El Sobrante Valley history through preservation and education, and chronicling of the community’s heritage for current and future generations.*

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**Roxanne Miravalle:** Vice-President; Historian and Writer; Genealogist.

**Steve James:** Treasurer; Membership and Communication Secretary; Researcher/writer.

**Lyle Miller:** Secretary; Community Liaison; Researcher/writer.

**Emil Munkres:** Director; Historian.

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