

**PO Box 633
Arroyo Grande CA 93421**

**visit our website
www.SouthCountyHistory.org
Friend us on Facebook**

**email
INFO@southcountyhistory.org**



Non-Profit Org
US Postage Paid
Arroyo Grande
CA 93421
PERMIT 15

CONTENTS THIS ISSUE

Page 1	Event Schedules-Museum Hours
Page 2	President's Message
Page 3	Curator of Collections
Page 4	Pismo Beach Giuseppe's
Page 7	What's Growin' On in the Garden
Page 8	Spring
Page 10	Notes on Edna
Page 11	Hoosegow Reopening
Page 13	SLO County History Book
Page 14	Membership
Page 15	Summer Concert Schedule

MUSEUMS SCHEDULE

THE BARN
HERITAGE HOUSE
SANTA MANUELA SCHOOLHOUSE

Are open:
Saturdays from 12n to 3 pm
Sundays from 1pm to 3 pm

PAULDING HISTORY HOUSE

Is open:
1st Saturday of the month
From 1pm to 3 pm

RUBY'S HOUSE
(Pat Loomis History Library)

Is open
Monday thru Friday
From 1 pm to 5 pm

Group tours of any
or all of the museums
May be scheduled
By calling
805.489.8282

EVENTS SCHEDULE



SCHS Board Meeting
APRIL 15
Hoosegow Reopening
APRIL 25

Visit our website
www.southcountyhistory.org
Email:
info@southcountyhistory.org

May
8

DOCENT APPRECIATION TEA PARTY

It's time for the

Docent Appreciation Tea Party again!

Friday, **May 8 at 2:00** at the IOOF Hall on Bridge Street.

If you are a past or current docent or interested in becoming a docent,
please join us for tasty treats and a fun afternoon.

Please RSVP by May 2nd so we can plan the food, to *Linda Kime 489-1837*





Can it really be April?? The year is rushing toward summer when we will once again have our Summer Historic Theatre at the IOOF Hall. That is, we'll have it if I start getting serious about doing everything that needs doing before then.

HOOSGOW PARK will have its grand unveiling on April 25th. SCHS has been involved in the planning since the beginning, when KIRK SCOTT was President and working with the City on plans. President GARY HOVING is our liaison now. Eventually the Hoosgow building itself will get a permanent display and signage, but the new park is beautiful. It's at the top of Mason St, just to the left. Go take a peek.

DON GULLICKSON & BILL SMITH have given decades of work to the numerous building, re-building, and repair tasks at all of our properties, but they admit they're 'slowing down some', although we still beg them to come out when we can. FRED WILSON is giving them and us breathing room with his energizer bunny projects.

Don & Bill just rewired our lighting in the garden and removed old wiring that was an eyesore and not connected to anything. They had to dig a trench and get down on hands and knees in the mud. Don reminded me that he is 90 years young, but probably doesn't want to do anything like that ever again. So we'll try to keep them upright from now on.

DICK JACKSON, our Videographer extraordinaire, is looking for some help. Not only does he record all our summer theatre productions, he is facing increasing demands for his time doing Oral Histories. It seems like everyday somebody thinks of somebody else whose story we haven't recorded yet.

Left over from last summer, Dick is still trying to solve a syncing problem on *Do You Believe in Fairies?*. He's still working on Norm Hammond's Oral History, adding more pics for reference.

He says, "I am really behind, but I've done the taxes now and plan to get back to the editing. It is that which takes all the time. It would be great if someone else could do editing."

Do we have any interested parties? Dick says an experienced person would be wonderful, but that it isn't hard to pick up and play with. There are lots of different editing programs. He doesn't think his is the best. The best thing is to get in and try.

Call the office at 489-8282 if you're interested in either videography or the Oral History program.

Pismo Beach Giuseppe's "Greek" Legacy

By Paul Provence

Jean Hubbard wrote the following in the April 26, 1995 edition of the Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder.

"For many years, Plessas was Pismo's best"

PISMO BEACH — For years Plessas Tavern, at 891 Price Street, was internationally known, probably Pismo Beach's best known business.

Seafood was Plessas' specialty. His recipe for baked stuffed clams on the half shell, au gratin, was featured in the Los Angeles Times Food Section as late as 1985. However, by then, John Plessas was gone and Ernest Lazarus and his brother were carrying on the tradition and had been since 1947. Even so, he was often referred to as Mr. Plessas.

John Plessas came from the Island of Skopeless, Greece. He had served in

Africa during the Boer War and in the Merchant Marine service of Great Britain before settling in San Diego about 1900. He came to Pismo Beach in 1911 where he opened a dining room in the famous El Pismo Inn, leasing it from the Andrews estate. (A small section of the grand old hotel remains today in the Moose Hall.)



From the first, people were impressed with his dining room and catering service. After six years he moved to the El Mar Cafe. When it sold, he moved into San Luis Obispo and practiced his culinary arts at the

Axtell Hotel, owned by William Axtell.

Winfred Pratt, writing for The Pismo Times in 1945, said, "After staying away from Pismo Beach for a year, Mr. Plessas returned, determined to have a building of his own so he would no longer depend upon leasing from others, facing the possibility of frequently uprooting his business. He constructed the first stucco business on Price Street in 1920." In 1940, the cocktail lounge was added.

In 1920, U.S. 101 ran down Price Street and Pismo Beach was experiencing a building boom with cottages being built on the heights. Plessas quickly became host to a cosmopolitan group of people. William Randolph Hearst stopped as he motored to and from the castle and ranch. With him came the Hollywood entourage: Carol Lombard, Marion Davies, Clark Gable,

(Continued on page 5)

Gary Cooper, Joan Crawford and many others.

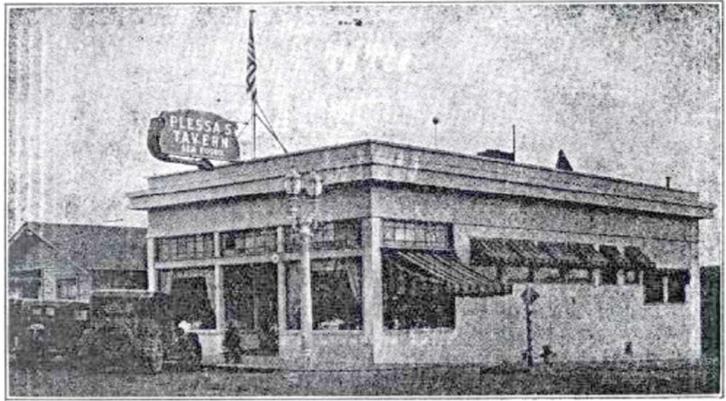
H o l l y w o o d filmmakers had also discovered the beach and the sand dunes. When a film was in progress, the stars and film crews often had dinner there.

The local people flocked to the restaurant to enjoy the food and the people watch. Such notables as Eleanor Roosevelt, Frances Perkins, who was the secretary of labor in Franklin Roosevelt's cabinet, the French and Greek consulates from San Francisco were also among those who dined there.

When Duncan Hines listed Plessas Tavern in his "Adventure in Good Eating," Plessas was really discovered. Duncan Hines took no ads in his book but listed restaurants entirely on merit. Magazines with national circulation began extolling his fine food and service in articles by guests who had enjoyed eating there on their west coast trip.

Plessas Tavern

Dismo Beach



Where You Are Always Assured Good Foods

While Plessas was an unassuming stucco building, the atmosphere on the inside was basic Mediterranean. The pictures on the walls were old county scenes and the heavy English Paisley carpet could have come from grandma's house.

In later years, when Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Cary Grant headed north for a Crosby Clambake at Pebble Beach, they would stop coming and going for dinner at Plessas.

John Plessas was always happy to talk about his restaurant and food. But, what was not so well known was the help

he gave many of his fellow countrymen. He sponsored many young Greek men, helping to set them up in business. In general he kept them under his wing until they felt at home in this strange country.

In 1947, Plessas Tavern changed owners without missing a step. Ernest and Theodore Lazarus, brothers from Albania, but who considered Greece their homeland, purchased the restaurant. Ernest Lazarus was better known since he ran the front while Theodore kept things running smoothly in the kitchen.

(Continued on page 6)

Even past 80, Ernest Lazarus could be found quietly manning the cash register. In fact, he was there in the spring of 1986 when liver cancer ended his life that December, at age 84.

He never dropped names but would talk about his famous clientele if asked. He chuckled about Doris Day always leaving her dogs outside. He had felt very honored when the late Chief Justice Earl Warren, who also dined there as governor, stopped by. The military, among them Gen. Mark Clark, had been his guests.

When Plessas Tavern closed their door it was the end of an era. No one could take the place of those three Greek gentlemen, quiet and unassuming, who knew how to cook and serve a good meal and keep things low key for their celebrity guests.

Writer's Note: Giuseppe "Joe" DiFronzo founded Giuseppe's Cucina Italiana (initially located in the Landmark Hotel) in Pismo Beach in 1988 as a senior project upon graduation from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The building that housed Plessas Tavern remained unoccupied until 1991 when it was purchased by Mr. DiFronzo. The building's exterior and interior were remodeled,

including the addition of a handmade brick oven that uses olive and almond wood. Joe also renovated the 100 year old wine cellar and also managed to bring back the historic bar to its grand glory of former days.

Additional touches to the present decor include historic panoramic photos (across from the bar) which were remnant decor from the former Plessas Tavern.

Giuseppe's is a 27-year-old established eatery that is known throughout the state for its dedication to true southern Italian regional specialties indicative to the Pugliese region of Italy, particularly the seaport town of Bari.

—eetoo—



San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum

National Train Day takes place at the Museum in San Luis Obispo on

Saturday, May 9th.

The museum will host a railroad swap meet, plus other events in the planning. For more information visit their website: www.slorm.com or call 805.548.1894.

What's 'Growing On' In the Garden!

If you haven't been to Heritage House Gardens recently, make it a point to stop by. **JENNY WEAVER** put an overall plan in place, but is now off being a first-time grandma. She had **Arroyo Grande in Bloom** working for us, clearing all the dead and overgrown plants and we're still waiting for the Cal Poly students she enlisted to produce their plans.



Meanwhile, **FRED WILSON** finished redoing the storage in the Karriage House next to Ruby's, building cabinets that finally organize everything in there. With that done, he tackled replacing the rotting fencing at the back of the garden before everything grew back to make the project more difficult.

The result is an absolutely beautiful disappearing (come see and you'll understand) new fence as a backdrop for our weddings and special events.

SANDY ARNOLD, Fred's daughter, has been charming the folks at **Mier Bros Landscape Products** on El Camino Real for flagstone that we needed in the garden. She's been ripping out Dusty Miller and placing paving where needed, while her dad (Fred Wilson) has been working with her to redo the gazebo.

STEVE ANSELM at **ANSELM PAINTING CO.**, in Arroyo Grande, sanded all of the old paint, repaired termite and water damage, primed and painted the rear porches of both the Heritage House and Ruby's. Paint was generously donated by **JASON SAWYER** and **JOE MORRISS** at **FRAZEE PAINT** in San Luis Obispo.

Once again, **SPRINKLER KING** has come to our rescue, installing a wonderful new drip system controller and repaired some of the drip lines so that the whole garden now has efficient and working irrigation.

The bottom line: the garden is looking wonderful. We still need many plants, but everything is coming along.

AND, we have a new gardener, **MARIE DADISMAN**, who is showing up every **THURSDAY**, at around 9AM to do whatever the garden is demanding be done that day.

If you like to do some puttering, weeding, or just giving encouragement, stop by on a Thursday morning with your good mood (and a trowel?) and say hi to Marie.



Spring brings to mind the fields of flowers common to the Arroyo Grande Valley. Following are excerpts from "Yesterday Today Tomorrow" Vol. 5-1981-89 written by Christopher Waller, grandson of L. D. Waller.

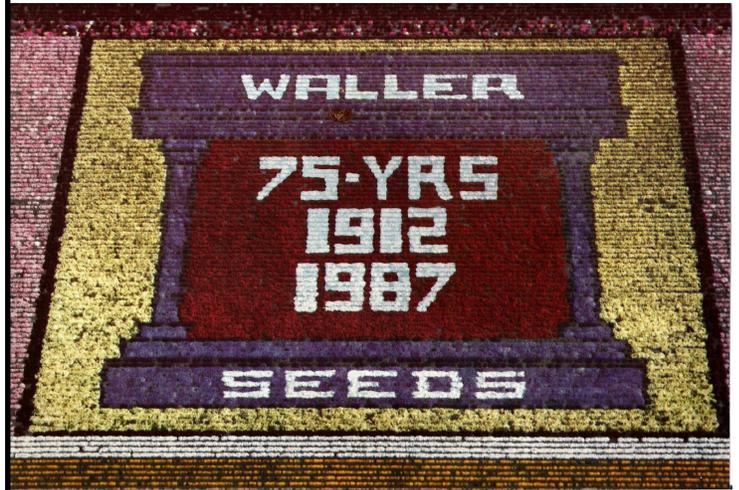
During the year 1905 Lionel D. Waller emigrated from England. By April 1906 he had secured a position with the Rawson Seed Company. During this time, stories of Routzhan's progress found their way back to the East Coast and prompted Mr. Waller to move out west in 1908.

Mr. Waller was hired by the *Routzhan Seed Company and was assigned to the care of the sweet pea ranch located in the Oso Flaco district.

After four years with the Routzhan Seed Company, Mr. Waller resigned his position to grow seeds on his own account. He teamed up with a medical doctor, Dr. Franklin and Frank McCoy.

Mr. McCoy later dropped out of the partnership and was replaced

by Paul Giacomini. After the end of World War I, Dr. Franklin quit his practice and went to work full-time as the company's plant breeder and head of production. The L. D. Waller Seed Company name was



changed to Waller-Franklin Seed Company. They leased 35 acres in Guadalupe for \$10 an acre. It was the original site of the office and warehouse.

The business grew and by 1929 they were farming over 2,000 acres which stretched from Los Alamos to Cambria. It has never reached that pinnacle again owing to varietal changes (sweet peas are



(Continued on page 9)

WALLER (Continued from page 8)

no longer the number one flower worldwide) and economic conditions.

In 1921, they bought the first piece of land in Arroyo Grande, the Gilliam 20 acres for \$750 per acre. This land was more than twice as productive as the Santa Maria land and the climate was warmer, enabling the company to enlarge its list of flower seed items to such as Asters, Zinnias, Delphiniums, Carnations, etc. They then bought the Routzhan piece (the same year Routzhan stopped farming) of 45 acres across the road and then the Seely 20 acres adjoining it. This gave the company two units in Arroyo Grande right near the corner of Highway One and Valley Road.

Two items of particular interest to the Waller family relate to two flowers; a delphinium and a sweet pea. The Connecticut Yankee Delphinium was so named by the Waller-Franklin Company after working with Edward Steichen, a renowned photographer, as a

tribute to Mark Twain who once lived in a town near Mr. Steichen and who wrote, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court".

The sweet pea, "Early Spencer Shirley Temple" was named after the child-actress in the early 1930's. Waller-Franklin received permission via a letter from Mrs. Temple to use Shirley's name. The letter is a memento in the family's possession.

The Routzhan Seed Company was established in 1903, and Routzhan became noted throughout the world as a seed man. The Routzhan Seed Company farmed land just east of Crown Hill, Oceano, Halcyon and the Oso Flaco area. The firm prospered until the floods of 1911 greatly damaged their crops and field. The firm continued in business until about 1920 when Mr. Routzhan closed the doors.

There are pictures of the Waller seed farm on line:

www.wanderingthewest.com/waller/wallerseed.html

Price Anniversary House

in Pismo Beach

Is now open for tours

by appointment

Call

Effie McDermott

805 . 773 . 4854





Patterns of the Past

From the Archives by Berneda Cochran



NOTES ON EDNA, CALIFORNIA (SCHS Archives 1983.036.002)

In 1894, the town of Maxwellton was drawn up, complete with street names and building lots. This town on paper was recorded in the San Luis Obispo County Recorder's Office.

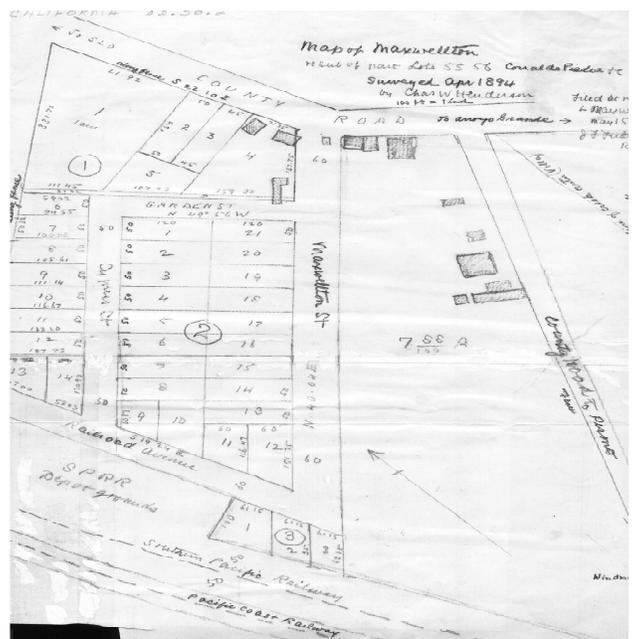
While the consensus of stories agree that "Maxwellton" was far too long a name for a town, the folklore does not agree on how the town became "Edna", instead. One story says that Maxwell changed the name to that of his daughter. On the other hand, previous to Maxwell's arrival in the area, the Steele Brothers ran a dairy and cheese making enterprise there, and they had a race horse called "Edna R." Still one more story has the town named after a Catholic nun. Sister Edna was one of two German nuns sent to the area in an attempt to stop the many fights and brawls that erupted from the three saloons.

Maxwell's original lots were so small, it took four of them to build one home in the 1970's. Though the streets are unpaved, all except one, are in existence today, ...as named and as located according to the 1894 map. There is a "Maxwellton" street and a "Cypress" street, with a short connecting street, "Garden" street. A home sits on the site of Maxwell's proposed "Railroad Avenue". The lots facing Cypress Street are as yet undeveloped but not uninhabited a flock of goats live

on Cypress Street.

The Edna area was originally part of the Corral de Piedra land grant so named because of the use of stone or rock corrals to keep the grizzly bears away from the stock. Between 1841 and 1846, 7 square leagues were granted to Jose Maria Villavicencia. The 34,000 acres of this rancho reached out to Islay Hill in San Luis Obispo, and to the Arroyo Grande Creek, as well as parts of Price Canyon.

Jose Maria Villavicencia was a military man. Born under the Spanish rule in 1800, his military career was served under the Mexican flag with General Alvarado. Much of his family life and rancho living would be under the United States flag. His family would later change the name to simply, "Villa", which had been Jose Maria Villavicencia's nick name to his friends.



THE HOOSEGOW REOPENING

CEREMONY APRIL 25, 2015

AT 10:00 AM

A place to relax and enjoy a view of the Dunes, the Hoosegow, located on Le Point Street above East Branch Street in the Village, now sits in a beautiful garden setting



Arroyo Grande in Bloom started work on the Hoosegow Park project in January, 2014. After spending 20 Saturdays (and some Wednesdays), most all of the overgrown brush and trees were removed. The City of Arroyo Grande put

in the ADA ramp and provided for the seating area in front of the Hoosegow. The Five Cities Arroyo Grande Rotary assisted in the preparation process. Finishing touches were completed with all of the planting, irrigation, fence building and spreading of Gorilla Hair over the whole park. Work will be completed the morning of April 25.

Hoosegow Park is a City maintained facility that is generally underutilized and not well known in the community due to its location



behind the Village core and its inaccessibility, both visually and physically. The park contains the historic Hoosegow, a jail facility that was built around 1906 and used for several decades based on scant references gleaned from a search of newspaper records. The jail was a short term holding facility prior to transferring prisoners to the County seat in San Luis Obispo.

The renovation project emphasized this resource as the focal point of the design by creating a plaza with seating around the Hoosegow and, in the future, providing an educational display on the interior of the structure. The park is currently listed on the Arroyo Grande Village Improvement Association history walk, but has been rarely visited due to lack of visible connection to the Village core. The planting

(Continued on page 12)



renovation provides color accents to draw visitor's eyes to the location and new vegetation that physically opens the site to views from the street. In addition, physical access improvements provide an important function by creating a new inviting entrance both visually and physically. New signage both provides recognition to participants and better identification of the park to the public.

Access Improvements:

Currently, the park is accessed from Le Point Street below the park. The renovation project provides a wheelchair accessible concrete ramp cut into the front slope. The path continues to ramp

up toward the Hoosegow transitioning to a decomposed granite pathway. Access from the upper side will be provided by new stairs.

Landscape Improvements:

Removal of the turf has altered the park to more passive uses and reduced maintenance and water requirements. Individual and group seating is provided by a seat wall around the plaza area to better highlight the historic Hoosegow and views from the park. The group seating in the plaza area adjacent to the Hoosegow will be available for



occasional tours for school groups led by docents of the South County Historical Society.

Planting renovation on the front slope discourages shortcuts with sharp barrier plantings and a low rail fence. The selected plant species are all drought tolerant and will reduce the overall water use by removal of the turf. The addition of new flowering tree species provides color accents to draw visitors to the location and the new groundcover plantings introduce a variety of colors and textures. The upper slope underwent vegetation clean-up to improve the health of the existing oaks. A new hedge on the upper park boundary provides privacy screening for the existing residences above the park. The existing light poles and drinking fountain remain.

SLO COUNTY HISTORY BOOK

The Tribune, in partnership with Pediment Publishing, the South County Historical Society and local historical organizations, is producing a pictorial history book on SLO County.

The book will publish in 2015 and will be released in time for the Thanksgiving holiday.

The style of the book will be a beautiful, hard-bound coffee-table book of approximately 144 pages. The book's time-line spotlights the "early years" in SLO County...the 1860's through the 1930's. The book will be organized in thematic chapters (i.e., Street scenes and views, schools and education, commerce, industry, public service, recreation and celebrations, transportation, etc).

Any individual providing a photo (or photos) for consideration, will be guaranteed

that at least one photo will be included in the book. All photos provided/used are for one-time use only in this publication. Each photo includes a photo credit following the photo's caption as specified by the individual and/or organization. In providing photos for consideration the individual and/or organization retains exclusive rights to its existing digital photos and/or those scanned from originals.

In giving permission to scan and publish photos, the individual and/or organization does not surrender its own right to give permission to others to scan or publish photos.

There will be a "Public Scanning" date announced soon so start looking for your families old photographs! Any questions, email Vivian at

vivkrug@gmail.com

DANA CULTURAL CENTER (formerly Friends of Dana Adobe)
in Nipomo hosting Saturday Speaker Series on
April 18, 2015, at 2:00 pm..

Dana Docent Penny Koines will bring to life the man we know from only one strange photograph, and what an extraordinary difference Henry Tefft made to the county and the state within just three short years.

Call

2015 Board of Directors

Gary Hoving	President
Paul Provence	Vice-President
Norman Baxter	Treasurer
Polly Nelson	Secretary
Jan Scott	Curator of Collections
Ross Kongable	Membership
Vivian Krug	Public Information
Linda Kime	Docent Leader
Joe Swigert	Property Manager
Jeff Kime	Information Systems
Erick Nelson	Parliamentarian

Museum Phone Numbers:

Pat Loomis History Library
"Ruby's House"
805.489.8282

IOOF History Hall
805.489.8114

Santa Manuela Schoolhouse
The Barn
805.489.8745

Heritage House
805.481.4126

Paulding History House
805.473.3231

SCHS VOLUNTEERS

Vol hrs for Feb.	822
Docent	49
Ashow	465
Year to date:	1,306

Annual Membership Dues

Individual	\$ 20.00
Couple	\$ 35.00
Family w/children under 18	\$ 40.00
Sustaining (Individual)	\$100.00
Patron:	\$200.00
Business, Organization, Individual	
<u>Life (Individual or Couple)</u>	\$500.00
May be paid in 12 monthly installments.	

The Society is structured as a non-profit organization 501(c)3 (Federal Tax ID 95-3539454) and depends solely on donations to continue its work.

You can help!

Write a (tax-deductible) check to the South County Historical Society, and mail it to:

South County Historical Society
PO Box 633,
Arroyo Grande, CA 93421-0633



2015 MEMBERSHIP — SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CHANGES?

NEW

GIFT

RENEWAL

Please print legibly.

Name (s) * _____

Address * _____

Home Tel: * _____ Cell Tel: * _____

Email: * _____

Type of Membership _____ Amount Enlosed \$ _____ Check No. _____

Please mail check or money order payable to SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
PO Box 633, Arroyo Grande Ca 93421.

* Starred information will be printed in the annual Membership Directory distributed to members unless you indicate otherwise here.

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES IN HERITAGE PARK



The Historical Society has the concession stand providing Hot Dogs, Lemonade and popcorn, soft drinks and Doc Burnstein's Ice Cream.

Volunteers are needed:

Hot Dog BBQ'er;
servers (4), cashiers (2).

Pick a date(s) and call
Rich Lasiewski 805.904.3173 to help
and enjoy great entertainment as well.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| June 7 | MONTE MILLS & THE LUCKY HORSESHOE BAND |
| June 21 | SLO TRUMPET ALLIANCE |
| JULY 4 | THE VILLAGE BAND (TRADITIONAL PATRIOTIC CONCERT BAND) |
| JULY 19 | UNFINISHED BUSINESS (60'S ROCK & ROLL) |
| AUGUST 2 | INGA SWEARINGEN & THE GUY BUDD BAND (JAZZ, BLUES) |
| AUGUST 16 | OPERA SLO PRESENTS "OPERA MEETS BROADWAY" |
| AUGUST 30 | CENTRAL CITY SWING (BIG BAND) |
| SEPTEMBER 13 | DULCIE TAYLOR HOSTS "DUETS FROM THE HEART FOR THE HEART" |