



# South County Historical Society

## Heritage Press

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### Curator's Corner

by Jan Scott



The big news of the month is that we are moving forward with a facelift for the Meat locker, our “temporary-going-on-forever” Society office next to the Arroyo Grande Butcher Shop in the Village. Old-timers remember renting out space in what are now our offices.

The best thing about the Meat locker is the climate control. It couldn't be better, which has something to do with having no windows and twelve inch walls. No chance of a leaky faucet either. No running water. But for several years now we have watched our neighbors spruce up and we have simply sat, with our lavender-colored storefront, looking for all the world like an orphan. Or as one of our members put it, “Your doorway looks like the missing tooth in a smile.” I worried about our looks, but didn't know we could paint. . . . We can.

Our gracious and generous landlady, member **Carole Hizey**, signed all the paperwork for us to proceed as we wish.

We're hoping to qualify for a Façade Improvement Grant from the City (Arroyo Grande) to help defray our costs after we go to the Architectural Review Committee to get approval for our colors and sign. It should be beautiful when we're finished. And trusty John Bryant will be heading up the work crew.

**F**rom the desk of JIM BERGMAN

As the newly elected Ways and Means Director, I look forward to serving the Society in its fund raising programs. I must admit that I have little experience in this new role but my enthusiasm to do a good job is high.

My main strategy, up to this moment in time, has been to lurk behind the scenes and observe the workings of the Society and its members on an organizational and individual level. If I have learned one thing from this process, it is that the Society is supported by a dedicated group of highly talented, socially diverse, generous and caring individuals who want nothing more than a Historical Society and museum facilities that they can be proud of and share with others. I believe that these qualities have been the reason behind the success of the South County Historical Society since it's founding in 1976.

After pondering this observation for a while and consulting with trusted individuals, it seems logical that the effectiveness of the Society's fund raising projects could be maximized if we mimic the diversity of our members. In simple terms, the Society should build upon its current successful fund raising ventures and create additional programs based upon the varying participation and economic levels of our current supporters and the entire South County community.

In addition to seeking diversity in our fund raising activities, I have recently discovered that it is critically important to have definitive organizational projects and goals and a successful means to communicate these objectives to potential donors and volunteers.

With these guidelines in mind, the Board of Directors is in the process of discussing a potential planning exercise, which could help the Society assess the current community environment, available human and monetary resources as well as re-establish, re-visit and re-focus past goals and potentially develop new and exciting projects to preserve and share our history.

I look forward to an exciting planning opportunity and invite advice or suggestions from Society members. Feel free to call me at (805) 473-9757 or e-mail to [jamesabergman@hotmail.com](mailto:jamesabergman@hotmail.com).

***Fandango Lessons?***  
**Dana Adobe docent, Barbara Watson, is looking for a few good people who want to learn the fandango! You will also get to participate in the Dana History Day Festival coming up soon.**  
**If you're interested, give Barbara a call at 929-8261**



*Our Prez will be recuperating for the next few months—so the 'Korner' will await his return. Our prayers for a speedy and complete recovery are with him.*

### Kirk's Korner



## From the Docents Desk

by Jane Line

March is Women's History Month

according to my calendar. Add to this annual event the newly signed California Assembly bill expanding the California History Museum's coverage of women in California's history, and I just couldn't pass it up the opportunity to highlight two of California's women this month.

This first piece is a result of my birthday being on February 18. I share this date with Margaret Phoenix Harloe, a California native, born and bred! Margaret's contribution to California was focused largely in the Arroyo Grande Valley, though she was descended of the Springfield, Illinois, Kinney family and the Phoenix family who had recently emigrated from England.

Margaret's daughter, Norma Harloe, invited me to attend the Margaret Harloe Elementary School birthday party this year - the 111<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her mother's birth. My compliments to all at that wonderful school! They certainly know how to throw a party!

### MARGARET HARLOE DAY at Harloe Elementary, February 18, 2005

*There is a special day,  
It's only once a year.*

*Come on everyone,  
Stand up and cheer.*

*Now raise your hands and  
Shout har-hey!*

*For it's Margaret Harloe Day!*

Written by Bryant Vann, 1<sup>st</sup> grade  
Margaret Harloe Elementary

February 18 is a very special day at one of our local elementary schools. Each year the teachers and children throw a birthday party - complete with balloons and cake - in the cafeteria to celebrate their school's namesake. For several days leading up to the birthday party, the children pride themselves on learning the stories associated with

Margaret Harloe's life.

Each year, Principal Juan Olivarría, invites Margaret's daughter Norma to attend the party and visit with the children. Norma is also a long time teacher in our area and oversees the our Society's Student Tour Program each year.

But some of you may wonder who Margaret Harloe was and why did they name a school for her? Delta Newby, a long time teacher at Harloe Elementary, and author of the book *A Real Lady*, tells the following story.

"Margaret Eliza Phoenix was born February 18, 1884, in Casmalia, California. She was the fourth child of Charles Phoenix and Emma Kinney Phoenix. In time, there were eight more children born to Charles and Emma. It was a large close family with five girls and seven boys. Phoenix Canyon, east of Arroyo Grande, and identified as such today, was settled by Charles's brother, William. Together these two brothers had 23 children who celebrate family reunions still today!

When "Maggie" was six years old, the family moved to Arroyo Grande and built their home at 417 Traffic Way (where Heacock Welding is located now). Family stories reveal she loved reading and basketball and was "a little bit of a tomboy!"

She graduated from Arroyo Grande High School in 1902 and took the County Teacher's Exam. She was hired to teach in the Rinconada one room schoolhouse in Santa Margarita, riding her bicycle five miles to school each morning and evening. She always said "it was the longest five miles because there were no fences"... she was afraid of the bulls!

In 1905, after teaching for two years, she entered UCLA Normal School and received her teaching credential. She taught the next few years in Tustin and Arroyo Grande.

By 1912, Archie Marcus Harloe, son of Isaac Sparks' daughter Flora and Captain Marcus Harloe of San Francisco, was successful in catching Margaret's eye. They married and moved to Taft, California, where she taught school from 1912 to 1915. In 1915, their first son, Leo Marcus, was born. In 1921, a second son, Archie

Matthew, was born in Bicknell, California.

In 1925, the young couple traveled back to Taft to help Maggie's brother for the week-end and tragedy struck. Archie died of sunstroke at the age of 48, leaving a young family and Margaret expecting her third child.

Mrs. Phoenix had been adamant that her daughters get an education! For Margaret, this proved to be providential. She returned to the Arroyo Grande Valley and taught one semester at Oso Flaco - alongside three of her sisters! On March 22, 1926, a daughter Norma was born. Margaret raised her family on Traffic Way in the Phoenix family home teaching for 32 years until her retirement in 1958. At the time of her retirement, Margaret had taught for a total of 41 years - the mark of a true teacher.

In 1955, the Arroyo Grande School District was looking for a name for their new elementary school to be located at the corner of Fair Oaks Avenue and Halcyon Rd. School Board member, Asa Porter, suggested the school be named for Margaret Phoenix Harloe. And so it was.

Margaret lived 23 years after the dedication of Harloe Elementary but her name lives on the lives of thousands of children who have attended Margaret Harloe Elementary. The American flag that hangs in the school cafeteria today was given by Margaret in memory of her son, Archie, a U. S. Marine."



# *Ramblings from Ross—Director of Information Services*

## **Our Official Logo**

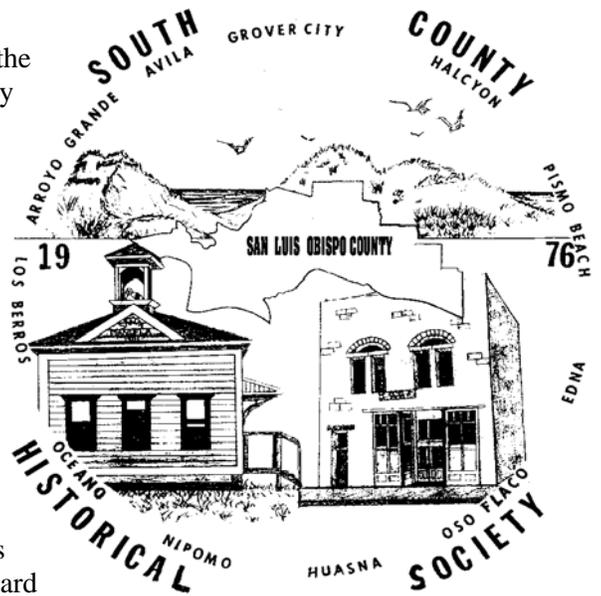
This logo was adopted by the Society in the early '80s and depicts the areas of the southern portion of San Luis Obispo County represented by our Society.

Edna represents the northern boundary—the Huasna to the East—Nipomo to the South—Pacific Ocean to the West and encompasses all the communities within.

While we are fortunate there are other 'project specific' groups such as *Friends of Price House*, *Oceano Depot*, and *Dana Adobe*, South County Historical Society represents the 'logo' area in its collections and historical preservation.

We have grown over the years in membership (now at 500+), and have expanded our display capabilities (now in four—soon to be five museums), and we will continue to highlight more areas of the South County in our collection activities.

We welcome donations of any historical data or materials representative of South County history. You may contact any of our board members, or our Curator, Jan Scott, if you would like your gifts to be considered. In accordance with established museum practice, we make every attempt to protect and preserve and maintain accurate provenance of all our artifacts using up to date museum software described below.



## **Accessioning Your Historical Gifts**

*Past Perfect Software for Museum Collections (PPS)* is the computer software used by our Society and most major museums throughout the world. This relational database system handles descriptive cataloging, loans, exhibits, membership, research, lexicons, imaging and reporting.

To "Accession" is to receive, record and catalog a gift of one item or a collection of items from a donor.

Once a gift is determined to be of significant historical value, it is assigned a permanent two-part 'accession' number. This number is based a single donation, which is defined as one or more items donated at the same time by the same donor. Successive numbers are assigned throughout the year to each gift/donor. For example, a gift from Jim Doe (the fifth gift received in 2005) would be assigned the accession number of 2005.005. Each item within the gift would then be assigned a number sequentially—the first item is numbered 2005.005.001, the second 2005.005.002 and so on. These numbers are permanently affixed on each of the items.

Each of the items is then 'catalogued' into one of four catalog types: Object, Library, Archive, Photo. The name of the item is based on the *Revised Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging*.

Every item is then digitally photographed or scanned and the image assigned the accession number of the item. If necessary, a detailed description of the item including measurements, weight, material content is noted. A storage location is assigned to each item. All of this information is then transcribed into the computer database and image(s) stored. In the case of archival data (printed or hand-written documents), digital scanning with OCR (optical character recognition) stores editable text.

Sounds pretty simple? NOT! Determining the 'catalog': - is a postcard an archival document or a photo? (depends on which side is historically significant); is a pamphlet of 40 pages a booklet or a book?; is the material cotton or linen?

The time involved in cataloguing each item can vary from 3 minutes to 3 hours (an OCR scan of a 3-column newspaper article may take up to 30 minutes—and we have thousands yet to scan).

Once recording is complete, research of the entire database is facilitated by search tools within the software. And a big advantage to preservation is that with computer imaging, the original photo, archive or object does not have to be handled during research..

*If you would like to help in this fascinating task, contact me—Ross—489-2885*

## Her Mentor Was An Albatross



The Autobiography of  
Pioneer Pilot Harriet Quimby

Henry M. Holden

My second piece deals with a woman who lived for a while in the Arroyo Grande area but became a citizen of the world. Jean Hubbard introduced me to this remarkable woman by lending the following book to me.

*"Harriet Quimby was born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, lived a few short years in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and had dreams for women that almost transcended the 21<sup>st</sup> century."*

Not in her wildest dreams would Harriet Quimby have imagined airplanes with jet engines flying from Los Angeles to New York in five hours. Or that these planes would carry their passengers in air-conditioned cabins with custom armchairs, pillows, movies, fax machines and vintage wines!

Barely 80 years after she became the first American woman to earn a pilot's license, these things are a reality! But the story of Harriet's break with the traditions of Victorian America went even beyond learning to fly. She chose a career in journalism over marriage and family, she drove a car, learned to use a typewriter, and broke records in the early days of aviation history.

Harriet was born in Michigan in 1875, the second daughter of William and Ursula Quimby. By 1884, Arroyo Grande records show that the Quimbys owned a small farm in the Valley. When his farm failed, William took a job with the Steele brothers, who had a large dairy farm operation in the area. William Quimby's name is found on the register of the local Odd Fellows Lodge #258, now the main museum for SCHS.

Ursula Quimby's belief in women's emancipation had a profound effect on her youngest daughter, setting the stage for Harriet to enter the 20<sup>th</sup> century and fulfill her dreams. Dated August 2, 1911, the Aero Club of America, 297 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y., sent the following to Harriet - *"Madam: We take pleasure in informing you that....you were granted an aviation pilot's license by the Aero Club of America.....Should no other advice reach us in the next few days, you can accordingly consider yourself the only woman to have qualified (to fly) a monoplane (in America)."*

*"Regarding the landing made by you at the close of your first distance test ...at this date, there can be no objection to your landing being referred to as an 'American record for monoplanes.'" Harriet was on her way!*

In April, 1912, Quimby was the first woman to fly the English Channel. Prior to taking off on such a dangerous flight, she was handed a compass by her instructor and given a brief explanation of how it worked. Harriet left Dover that day in a 50 horsepower Bleriot monoplane (which she had never flown before) and two instruments: a watch on her wrist and a compass she had never used. She landed safely a little over an hour later on a beach in Normandy *just 24 hours after the unsinkable Titanic went down in the Atlantic Ocean.* Harriet had accomplished her goal but fate had intervened. The world's headlines favored the tragedy; but in smaller print,

the *New York Times* condescendingly stated, *"The feminists should be somewhat cautious about exulting over Miss Quimby's exploit. A thing done first.....does not prove equality."*

However, by July, 1912, she was at the peak of her career. Everyone loved her. "Harriet is the prettiest girl I have ever seen. She has the most beautiful eyes....is a tall, willowy brunette, and when she wears her long cape over her satin plum-colored flying suit, she is a real head-turner," her friend and fellow aviator Matilde Moisant said. Management of the Boston Air Meet agreed to pay Harriet \$100,000 to participate in their event for one week.

The fragile airplanes of the day would sometimes break up in flight and failure of the unreliable engines caused many accidents and fatalities. But Harriet was proud of her flying record and was scheduled to fly a new, high-powered, two passenger Bleriot machine in the Air Meet.

On July 2, 1912, Harriet and her passenger met their death. The plane began to buck like a bronco, tossing her passenger overboard, then went perpendicular to the earth. Quimby's body was catapulted from her seat. Autopsies revealed that Quimby died on impact and her passenger had drowned. Her funeral in New York was well attended and she was given much credit for contributing to the advancement of flight.

Was her death preventable? Probably. A month before her death, Harriet had written a column illustrated with photographs showing the latest in aviation improvements. One photo showed a shoulder harness being worn by some of the European pilots - an early version of the seat belt apparatus in today's cars.

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### Field Trips

**Thursday, March 31, 10 AM**, Santa Manuela School parking lot. Trip to Atascadero to the Thorne sisters "museum" barn, "History of American Spinning and Weaving."

**Wednesday, April 13, 10:30**, the Dana Adobe, Nipomo. Private tour given by Barbara Watson and the Dana docents.

Call Jane Line, 481-6510, for head count and directions. Rain cancels.

## Norm Hammond

presented a fascinating program about Oceano, it's history and development at our March General Meeting.

His research about the area culminated with **Harold Guiton**, who had collected photographs and historical information about Oceano. Harold was actively involved with most of the organizations in Oceano. When the railroad decided to abandon the Depot, Harold headed up the preservation—which took nearly 25 years of his life. When he passed away, his daughter, **Linda Guiton** approached Norm on continuing the work of her father. Going through books, tapes and photographs, it was realized that a great deal of information was lost when Harold passed away. But with the combined efforts of Linda and Harold's wife, **Glenda**, the book *Oceano, Atlantic City of the West*, was completed. The book, dedicated to Harold with the forward written by his daughter, Linda, was finally completed after about three years. The cover was based on an old Chamber of Commerce flyer promoting the area as the Atlantic City of the West.

Oceano grew around the development of the railroad and the depot. Some of the prospects of growth were based on a suspected huge deposit of bauxite in the dune area, as well as the beautiful beaches..

Sometimes referred to as Cienega, and Deltina, the area took on the name of Oceano, the name that appeared on a map of the area in 1893. In 1993, a centennial celebration firmed up the slogan "Gateway to the Dunes".

An archeological report, by Bob Gibson, at the 101/Halcyon dogleg, disclosed that the Chumash were walking the area before the pyramids were built.

Coffee Rice, 'the man who owned Oceano', realized the railroad was coming and bought up much of the area and donated the land for the depot. His mansion still exists there, known as the Coffee Rice House. His daughter, Sadie Rice—was recorded as the first airplane passenger.

An Oceano Land & Harbor Company map shows how the lagoon used to go straight into the ocean, and plans for slips to be built—and sailing ships in the distance.

Attempts were made to make the Pismo /Oceano beach become the Daytona Beach of the west in 1931. The deteriorating Oceano Pier was removed to make room for the route. Barny Olfield tested the run, and due to the offshore winds, Daytona style racing would not be feasible. Limited to a 183 cubic engine class, the race took place—and set 130 mph record for that engine type, on the beach. (The current speed limit on the beach is 15 mph).

The book contains a multitude of maps, old shipping labels, and recipes.

Norm then showed movie clips taken by Harold Guiton of the dunes in the late 40's and early 50's: Old dune buggies and Model A's are shown traveling the beach from Pismo Beach to Mussel Rock and on low tide drive under a natural rock bridge; and of the demolishing of the last of the Beach Pavilions in 1961.

The **Oceano Depot** is now a museum and open to the public.

His book, *Oceano, Atlantic City of the West*, is available at the Depot and at Heritage House Museum.



## AULDING HISTORY HOUSE

Jean Hubbard, Curator

We have discovered who installed the benches along the pathway at Paulding History House. They were the work of **Michael Ellison** for his Eagle Scout Badge. His brother, **Maverick**, would like to duplicate his gift and then we will place a plaque for both of the boys on their respective benches.

The **Questers Club** have asked to use the patio for a 'picnic in the yard' on the 26th of April, and Al Spierling will share his memories of *renting from Ruth*, and then they will tour the House and our other museums.

**Bob Brown** has submitted the final application to the State requesting that Paulding History House be given an historical site designation.

**Bob Trybom** and **Bill McCann** will be installing roll-type window shades on the lower floor of the House to provide protection from the sun to the artifacts on display.

My thanks and appreciation to **Jeanne Frederick** and others for continuing with our ongoing projects at the House during my recuperative period.



Publicity and Web News

Vivian Krug—

Publicity Director

### We're In the News! One more time!

The Coast News ran a great story on Kirk's special Mayor's Commendation for his vision and completion of bringing a new Museum, "The Barn", to Arroyo Grande.

Once again, Thank You Kirk!

### Strawberry Festival

It's that time of year once again for those luscious red berries and Arroyo Grande's largest festival. This year we are expecting close to 100,000 people to visit our fair city. The Arroyo Grande Strawberry Festival was named the place to be on Memorial Day Weekend by Sunset Magazine. As one of California's largest and premier Festivals on the Central Coast, it is an opportunity for the Historical Society and its members to showcase our museums to our citizens and visitors.

The Village Improvement Association is also looking for our participation in this year's festivities, so if you would like to be involved and want to join in on the fun, please let me know. The Strawberry Festival is scheduled for May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

### IOOF Hall Update

Over the past few weeks I've had several opportunities to watch some of the restoration work being done in the IOOF Hall. Beautiful old door hardware is being cleaned and restored, the walls are being re-plastered and some of the painting has begun. Photographs of this work will soon be on our web site. Fundraising, Publicity and other related projects are being discussed and our grand opening is becoming a reality. We're looking for a few people to help on the IOOF Hall committee and we're still looking for old photographs of the IOOF Hall, photographs of past IOOF members, IOOF activities and any other AG IOOF related stories to add to our web site and to use for publicity as we draw closer to our grand opening. Please contact me if you have anything you think we can use.

### Web Stats

This year we've had **2,199** visitors to our web site, that's about 25 visitors per day!

Our web site also continues to grow. Coming soon..... pages dedicated to the IOOF Hall so you can watch the progress up to the Grand Opening anticipated for sometime this summer.

Also coming soon, Antique Show 2005 photographs in our photo album section.

### Last Chance

If you haven't yet signed a quilt square to be sewn into the First Arroyo Grande Commemorative Friendship Quilt you need to contact me right away!

Friendship Quilts were popular during the Victorian era. They were made from scraps of cloth and were turned into colorful blankets and covers. Quilting Bees where several women would come together and quilt, were very popular. Friendships formed by these woman while spending hours together quilting were often memorialized with personalized messages stitched onto small squares of cloth and placed into the quilts.

A modern version of this friendship quilt is being made by our local Quilting Association with the help of **Patty Christian** and will be donated to the South County Historical Society as a historical artifact for display in our museums. If you would like to sign a square, the cost is \$1.00 per square. The quilt will be sewn together over the next several weeks and will first be displayed in the Historical Society window on Branch Street and it will then be moved into one of our museums.

### Your Newsletter On Line

Don't forget, you can view your Historical Society Newsletter, the Heritage Press in full living color on our website located at [www.SouthCountyHistory.org](http://www.SouthCountyHistory.org)

### Contact Me.

If you want to participate in any of our upcoming events or have information I can use for publicity or on our website, I'm easy to reach by Phone 458-3321 or Email: [Vivian@emotionscards.com](mailto:Vivian@emotionscards.com)

**Stay connected!** \_\_\_\_\_ Viv



## **SOCIETY MEETINGS**

The board meets on the **3rd Wednesday** at 7:00 p.m. in the  
Arroyo Grande Parks & Recreation Building.  
Members are Welcome

## **GENERAL MEETING**

held on the **2nd Tuesday** at the  
**Hiawatha Lodge, 3065 Temple, Halcyon**  
**at 6:30 p.m.**

Bring your table settings and a dish to share.

**APRIL 8, 2005**

**Gary Hoving,**  
SLO County Deputy Sheriff,  
author of '*Journey of Justice*'  
Will review the history of local law enforcement

*Visit our Society's Website*

**WWW.SouthCountyHistory.Org**

*Don't forget—as a member, you can view the Heritage Press  
in full living color on the website.*

## **Patrons of the South County Historical Society**

**DOC BURNSTEIN'S ICE CREAM LAB**

**MORLEY & PAT FARQUAR**

**CAROLE HIZEY**

**PAT LOOMIS**

**HOWARD & AILEEN MANKINS**

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**SOUTH COUNTY REALTY**

102 Bridge Street, Arroyo Grande—481-4297