



In a Five Cities-Times-Press Recorder story, dated June 3, 1971, written by Dick Blankenburg, Editor, headlined “*Millstone Dedicated in Memory of F.Z. Branch, First Area ‘Tycoon’*”, Dick reported that “a promise made 20 years ago was kept on Friday when the millstone from the old Branch family mill was dedicated.”

### Looking Forward

By Jane Line, President

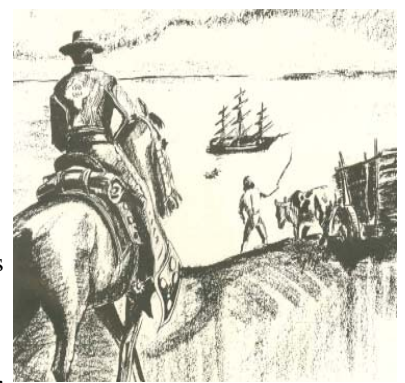


Twenty years earlier, F.Z. and Manuela Branch’s grandson, Fred Jones, relocated the only remaining millstone from the old mill site off Branch Mill Road to the base of the flagpole at the new Arroyo Grande High School. It was a grandson’s way of honoring his grandparents, the first white settlers in the Arroyo Grande Valley and the donors of the land for the city of Arroyo Grande. And, while the dedication may have been slow in coming, then-AG mayor, Kenneth Levine, made the most of it by setting aside the 28th day of May, 1971, as “Branch Day”. Today, with the renovation of the AGHS campus, the old flagpole has been torn down. The school district has indicated a willingness to showcase the millstones in accordance with the Branch family’s wishes. This is where the magic begins!

Working with **Jean Hubbard** and **Anita Jones Garcia** (Fred Jones’ daughter), our Board of Directors has asked the school district to allow SCHS to relocate the millstones to Heritage Square. Anita and Jean will be meeting with Jeff Ferber, the Arroyo Grande Creekside designer, for ideas. With encouragement from the City of Arroyo Grande, the goal is to create a permanent interpretive display using the millstones to show the settlement of the area through the efforts of one of the first “tycoons” in South County. With information from a letter the captain of the “California” wrote to Mr. Branch, we are showing you a drawing commissioned by Jean Hubbard many years ago. The drawing shows the ship carrying the millstones up from Mexico, anchoring at Cave Landing. Mr. Branch and his helpers stand by with hides and tallow waiting to be loaded for a trip around the Horn. Known as “California banknotes”, they will be sold in New England for leather goods and candles. **But there’s even more to this story!**



Only remaining Branch Mill millstone, August 2007. Photo by Sandy Arnold



Above: Artist— George Pasion  
Copy of drawing from SCHS Archives

There is great synergy swirling locally around Mr. Branch and his story. SCHS member, **David Saari**, has completed a draft manuscript on Branch. That manuscript is now being reviewed by our Book Committee for publication.

Recently, **Jean Hubbard** was asked by Branch Elementary School to go through some old papers in their possession in order to trace the history of the school’s origins to coincide with the dedication of a new mural recently added to their campus wall. We have agreed to see if their tribute to Mr. Branch can mesh with SCHS’s millstone efforts. The bottom line is that events are conspiring which may create another “Branch Day” in 2008!



**Maria Manuela Carlon Branch** 1815-1909  
**Francisco Ziba** 1802-1874  
Photos from SCHS Archives



That would be a good thing!  
If you would like to read more on the history of Francis Ziba Branch and his times, you can read some of the books and archives available in the

R. Santa Manuela Rancho, 1851  
Courtesy of Huntington Library  
Drawing by William Hutton  
Reproduction of drawing taken from SCHS Archives



Above. The two story Santa Manuela Casa that overlooked the Arroyo Grande Valley. An earthquake had damaged it beyond repair. In this 1895 photo it was fast melting into the earth from whence it came.  
Photo from SCHS Archives

Patricia Loomis History Library at 134 S. Mason, Arroyo Grande. Many of Mr. Branch’s endeavors left a legacy you and I enjoy today: in 1867, he platted the town of Arroyo Grande. If you would like to help on this project, call us at Ruby’s House, 489-8282.

## CALENDAR of ACTIVITIES

### Hours for the

Pat Loomis History Library &  
Resource Center At Ruby's House

**Tue-Fri**

**1:00 pm until 5:00 pm**

Or by appointment

Contact Craig Rock for information: 489-8282

### IOOF Exhibit Hall

Open

Fridays & Saturdays 1-5 pm  
128 Bridge St., Arroyo Grande  
Free Admission

### EXHIBITS

#### Current

#### September 29-December 31

The History of Avila

#### NEW EXHIBIT

#### November 3

Avila's Fishermen &  
Their Families

(Terry Farris San Filippo

worked with the Exhibit  
Committee on this display)

Read Pete Kelley's article on  
page 9 about Avila & Sea Otters in  
Central Coast history.

**October 25:** Tour —80 students — Dana  
Elementary School

**Nov. 3:** Paulding History House is OPEN  
Sat 12-3 pm

**Nov. 4:** Daylight Savings Time Change

**Nov. 5:** Paulding History House  
Committee Meeting—10:00 am

**Nov. 13:** 6:30 pm Society Gen. Mtg. at  
Hiawatha Lodge, 3065 Temple,  
Halcyon

**Nov. 14:** 7-9 pm Society Bd of Directors  
Mtg. 128 Bridge St,  
IOOF Hall, Arroyo Grande

**Nov. 22:** Happy Thanksgiving !

**Museums Open:** Heritage Hall, Barn,  
SchoolHouse: Sat. 12-3 pm Sun. 1-4 pm

**Dec 2:** Mark your Calendar for  
"Elegant Christmas in the Village" 4-8  
pm, and our 1st Annual SCHS Christ-  
mas Party, IOOF Historic Hall, 7-8 pm

## 2007 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### Directors and Committees

<b>President</b> .....	<b>Jane Line</b> .....	<b>481-6510</b>
Programs .....	Craig Rock	
<b>Ways &amp; Means- First VP</b> .....	<b>Jim Dickens</b> .....	<b>481-0540</b>
Books & Publishing .....	Linda Shephard	
Tour Bus Coordinator.....	Joe Swigert	
Antique Show & Sale.....	Doug LeSage	
Events Coordinator.....	Doug LeSage & Shelly Cochran	
<b>Membership—2nd VP</b> .....	<b>Michael &amp; Colleen Drees</b> .....	<b>489-0295</b>
Sunshine.....	Ethel M. Gilliland..	473-0175
<b>Recording Secretary</b>		
<b>Corresponding Secretary</b> ..	<b>Eddie Juck</b> .....	<b>773-4689</b>
<b>Treasurer</b> .....	<b>Gary Hoving</b> .....	<b>929-3106</b>
<b>Publicity</b> .....	<b>Vivian Krug</b> .....	<b>458-3321</b>
Webmaster.....	Vivian Krug	
<b>Paulding History House Curator</b> ..	<b>Chuck Fellows</b> .....	<b>481-3464</b>
Paulding Committee.....	Jean Hubbard	
<b>Museums Curator</b> .....	<b>Jan Scott</b> .....	<b>481-4435</b>
Assistant Curator.....	Joe Swigert	
Heritage House.....	Joe Swigert	
Santa Manuela Schoolhouse.....	Kathleen Sullivan	
The Barn.....	Orville Schultz	
Archives.....	Ross Kongable	
Library & Resource Center.....	Craig Rock	
<b>Property Management</b> ....	<b>Charles Porter</b> .....	<b>929-1014</b>
Vehicles.....	Chet Thomas	
Gardening—Heritage House.....	Barbara LeSage	
Gardening—Santa Manuela Schoolhouse.....	Juan Jazo	
Gardening—Ruby's House.....	Juan Jazo	
<b>Docent Leader</b>		
Docent Supervisor.....	Joe Swigert	
Heritage House Coordinator.....	Jeanne Frederick	
Paulding House Coordinator.....	Dee Trybom	
Santa Manuela School Coordinator.....	Kathleen Sullivan	
Barn.....	Joe Swigert	
Student Tours.....	Norma Harloe	
<b>Information Systems (Acting)</b> .....	<b>Dick Jackson</b> .....	<b>474-9618</b>
Heritage Press Newsletter...Editor.....	Bee Hodges.....	hodges39@sbcglobal.net
<b>Parliamentarian</b> .....	<b>Kathleen Sullivan</b> .....	<b>489-8195</b>
<b>Society Information</b> .....		<b>473-5077</b>
Heritage House .....		481-4126
Paulding History House .....		473-3231
Santa Manuela School .....		489-8745
The Barn.....		489-8745
Historic Hall.....		489-8114
Ruby's House.....		489-8282

Website— [www.SouthCountyHistory.Org](http://www.SouthCountyHistory.Org)

#### **Editor's Note:**

*In this issue of the newsletter, we are reproducing the end of the first letter, and all of the second of fourteen letters written by Dr. Paulding to his sister "Tene" when he first left his home and headed West. They will be reproduced chronologically as space allows in each newsletter issue, accompanied by his drawings and/or graphics. Readers may wish to save the letters and have the equivalent of a book. The series is entitled, "The Heritage Series: Dr. Paulding Letters", and is the work of the Book Committee, faithfully transcribed and retyped by Linda Shephard over the past few months. Jean Hubbard's introduction to the Series was printed on page three of our previous newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading Dr. Paulding's letters reproduced as he wrote them, without editing.*

## The Heritage Series: Dr. Paulding's Letters

*continued from page 6, August 2007 Newsletter*

### Paulding Letter #1 — 7'18'83

*...(Only think of going onto the stage of a Chinese theater. Yet that was not all.)*

We went behind the scenes. Saw the Great Grand Mogul donning his war paint. Saw the Chinese boy dressing up in woman's toggery for they have no actresses and he made a good looking young lady I tell you. We saw the "good devil" (?) stucco his face until his face looked like the devil himself and not very good one either. From here we went under the stage to visit the sleeping apartments. These actors get from \$600.00 to \$3500.00 a year and sleep like hogs. That lower floor was cut into two stories and it was not more than ten feet high. Down through the center of the room as originally built, for Chinatown is in the oldest part of San Francisco, there would run a hall and on each side little dens of rooms with as many Chinese in them as could lie down together. This much for actors with means to live nicely on. Only think of how the poor live. One place we passed down twenty six feet below the side walk which was cut into several tiers of rooms. The stench was fearful. Opium smokers laid around on every side drunk from the effects of the drug. We saw the place where Salina lived before she married the Englishman. "Salina lib here" said the girl. "She mally Englishman. Hab heap loy money."

We went through the Murderers Alley where the bad Chinamen live and where there have been many murders. We went to the Joss house and worshipped the different Joshes. There was also a "good devil" there, but Mr. Bethel said they did not show him much respect for they would sometimes let his lamp go out and did not often burn any punk before him. There was the Josh of Business. All the ceremony required was to buy some Josh punk and burn it before him. Then there was a deep vase full of sticks. You shake them and then draw one out. On it is written what kind of business you must follow. The God of Medicine dispenses in the same way. You draw your stick and you get a prescription written on it. There is one the Chinese say is like our Virgin Mary. Only women consult this oracle. There is also Confucius' effigy and a trinity consisting of the God of Peace, the God of War and the other I forget, but the three sit together. Near the door is the Sentinel god who keeps out the evil spirits. Before each is a table and two sticks about 6 or 7 inches long and an inch thick, flat on one side and round on the other. You wish to try your luck. You hold them up flat sides together and drop them. If one lays round side up and one flat side up it dictates the best of luck. They always fell that way for us when we tried it.

We went into the best Chinese restaurant where the highest merchants have their blow outs Something like a club house. It was an elegant place with fine carvings and inlaid chairs and tables. But only think of a chair with a marble seat. Cool this hot weather. Next we took in a Chinese grocery. Nothing in the store but some eggs and some candles that are of American production. There were dried duck, dried meats, dried oysters, shrimp and fish and game of different kinds, fish no longer than your finger nail. There were dried fruits of strange form and uncouth name, and eggs, yes, eggs from China. Only think of that. Coated over with half an inch of some black kind of plastering, they are nice and fresh inside and sell cheaper than the home article.

We visited a pawn shop. Saw there the swords the "Highbinders" or bad Chinese carry. Everything they use, or wear, was there stowed away. We went into a drugstore and saw a Chinaman make pills with a speed that would beat a machine. We went into a tailoring establishment where there were fifty sewing machines rattling. One set of men work all day and another all night and both occupy the same beds. A building that rents for \$100.00 per month will accomidate 500 Chinamen. Yet they talk of white men competing with such labor.

Well, I must close as it is growing late but the whole night would not be enough to tell you half of what I saw.

I have half secured a job and if I don't get the J. . B. can make a nice thing out of it and thirty six dollars for a phaeton buggy is not to be scoffed at . Hoping to hear from you soon, I will close with love to all

Ed L. Paulding  
Direct to San Francisco

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### Letter #2 San Francisco, Cal. 9-1-83

Dear Sister,

I have a habit lately of not letting any letters lie around long unanswered. If I did I would soon have a lot of them to answer, so I have nine correspondents and some of them have picked up my habit.

I was glad to be honored by a letter from Chataqua. I did not expect it. On my honor I didn't and now come school again its no telling when I'll get another. Yes, Tene it is hard to think it "for the best" to take a lower position in the school when you thought all was well and you looked forward to still higher honor. I would comfort you if I could and take all the "bitterness" away and cast it into the Pacific, but I cannot find the words with which to comfort but you have my heart felt sympathy rest assured.

(continued on next page)

## The Heritage Series: Dr. Paulding's Letters

(Letter #2 San Francisco, Cal. 9-1-83: continued from page 3)

I don't take the Helmut so I want the news.

Dr. and Anna Cochran sent me a note of invitation to call during the conclave but when I called they were out and the next morning when I called they were gone leaving a note of regrets and an invitation to visit them. I regretted missing them very much. They were here nearly a week too and after many inquiries used the mail as a last resort. They reported all well and doing well.

I was invited out to dinner today at Mr. Jimmie Robinsons. Now dinner is not served at seven in this country but at six. We had roast lamb vegetables etc. It was the first homestyle I have eaten since I left Jim's and I enjoyed it as only an old boarding house hanger on can. Mrs. R is a find cook and a splendid little woman. Her sister and sister's husband board with the R's. It is a real nice place to visit. Give my compliments to Aunt (is that the way we call her?) Becky and tell her so. They - the elder and Jim recommend one to settle in Oakland, and I rather think I will. The other R lives over there on a farm I believe. I cannot see my way to a settlement for some months yet unless I should get out of work and have to settle. I have contracted for more work but I fear it will not pay well. But an old shyster need not fear on the wages line so long as prices are six or seven times what they are in Cinti, I'll come out ahead yet. The trouble is I can't teach any helper to shyst it. He is too honest. He is one of the "poor whites" of Roxy and hails from Medina Co.O.

I've been in this house five or six weeks yet the landlady does not know me yet and I don't know her. I am very exclusive. I go to my room and I shut the door (a privilege you did not enjoy through July and Aug.) and read or write and if I want to go, I go and come with only a nod or a bow to the landlady and her pretty daughter and to the other lodgers. Yet she tries make overtures of peace, but I will not. I know by their looks that I am regarded as a mystery, but I enjoy my side of it. Though to tell the truth I do long for friends and companionship with an earnest longing. I'm so lonely and when I pick up a friend the job is done and I must pack off to renew the struggle again. When, oh when, is this to cease. Part 'tis true is due to restless nature but part is due to something back of nature. This may be Providence but I think it looks like fate. Providence is said to be so kind. Well it may be that I keep this kind of chastisement. I could bear it cheerfully if I saw the hand of God in it, but too often it looks like the hand of the enemy but since God permits him to be, He too is God's minister and labors for some good by us not understood.

I'm glad you wrote to Uncle Thomas. We should cultivate a more sociable spirit toward our relatives. You were misinformed about a big hotel Paulding at Denver. There is no such house and has not been and there were no P's living there.

I went out to see the sea lions at the Cliff House but got there too late to see them. Must go again.

It is warm weather now but not hot and people are predicting rain or an earthquake. I hope not.

Will write soon. Love to all. Ed

I may as well drop you a line so long as your letter is open and tell you of my bad luck. My visit to the Cliff House was so unsatisfactory last time having but five minutes in which to view the "wonders of the deep" that I thought I would go out this afternoon and see it again. I took the cable cars that run our Geary Street and they gave me a transfer to the steam cars or "dummy" as it is familiarly called, which run to the Golden Gate park; an elegant place well shaded and laid out into drives and walks and paterres of flowers, while in the hot-houses are all the tropical flowers and plants. From the park or rather through it for it reaches to the ocean three miles away, I walked to the Cliff House. I went down among the rocks hunting for a starfish. You know no marine view is complete without at least ten starfish scattered around on the beach to give it an air of richness in "still life". It is all a lie they are not so plenty. I wrote Hirons a very tedious letter telling him of a very tedious transfer of several miles I had hunting him a star fish. Well I went down to what is known as "sporting rock". The sea rolls in and being of mixed material the sandstone has given away to the action of the waves of centuries and the water booms up through the holes and dash its spray over the tops. Well I saw a starfish at last clinging to the rocks. I reached down - and got the starfish but clink! clink! clink! was heard and \$50 in gold went out of my vest pocket into the hole into twenty ft of water. Lost, irrevocably lost, and 'twas all I had.

Your loss at Chataqua in Bishop Warren will be our gain for the conference is to be held in the Howard St. Church where I worship, half a block from where I live. It begins on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Sep I believe. Give Sister Wiley my compliments for her Methodist greeting.

Now Tene, don't worry about me. That's a good girl for I will come out all right after awhile and don't worry about yourself for you will too. The hand who took away can give again and in much richer store.

Your loving brother Ed.



**Patricia Loomis History Library and Resource Center**  
-Craig Rock, Librarian and Resource Center Director



**The Avila Exhibit, September 30**  
**Formal Opening of the IOOF Hall**

More than a hundred people attended the grand opening of the IOOF Hall during the weekend of September 29-30. Visitors enjoyed the new Avila exhibit created by **Loren Nicholson** and **Terry Farris San Filippo**. The exhibit surveys Avila's history from the Chumash days to the present. Highlights include displays on the town's role as a transportation hub in early California history, its oil industry and related challenges, and Avila during World War II.

Our exhibit committee played a key role in editing and matting exhibit materials in the week prior to the opening. Special recognition goes to **Vivian Krug**, **Edie Juck**, **Pete Kelley** and **Jan Scott** for their assistance in making this exhibit happen. One of the key physical challenges was moving a whale try-pot from the Farris residence in San Luis Obispo to the IOOF Hall. The try-pot weighs several hundred pounds and we needed to use an engine hoist to move it into its temporary home. Other interesting artifacts include a six-foot model



Above: Terry Farris San Filippo seated on the left. Loren Nicholson in white jacket on the right.

of the Harford Wharf on loan from the County Historical Society. A diorama of Avila's stores and shops on the waterfront is also on display. If you want to view nearly a hundred photographs on Avila's history and find out what a whale try-pot really is, stop in and visit the IOOF Hall between now and the end of December.

If you have already seen the exhibit, stop in again in November and December. We will be opening the second phase of the exhibit on November 3. New exhibit material will focus on Avila's fishermen and their families. We may even have a model train display in December.

The IOOF Exhibit Hall, located at 128 Bridge Street, is open Fridays and Saturdays from 1 PM to 5 PM. The exhibit was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Avila Community Foundation.

—All photos taken by Craig Rock, Resource Center Director



Wanda Porter and Charles Porter

*Sincere condolences are extended to the families of:*

*Lucille Marshall-Baker, Life Member, who went home to be with her Lord on Sunday, September 23, 2007.*

*Lucille was preceded in death by her first husband, John Marshall, and by her second husband, Red Baker.*



*Marie Socha, Life Member.*

**Veterans History Project**

The Veterans Museum, in its new Interview Facility is collecting and preserving stories of men and women members of the Military Services in World War II and in the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf Wars. This program is sponsored by the Library of Congress. The interviewee will receive a DVD copy of the interview.

To set up your personal interview:

Contact:  
Jerry Deitz, Program Coordinator  
Veterans Museum  
801 Grand Ave.,  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Phone No: 805-543-1763  
email: ccvmus@gmail.com  
web site: www.vetmuseum.org



The Museum Wants You



## Museums Curator

-Jan Scott

absence. Our generous donor, **David Weir**, was present with his family for the event. There are still small adjustments to be made, but we have the old Oak Park school bell now instead of an old ranch bell in the belfry. Thanks to all who made it happen.

Welcome to November, with holidays galloping toward us.

But before we get there, a huge thank you to **Vivian Krug, Ross Kongable, Kathleen Sullivan** and **Joe Swigert** for overseeing the installation of our new school bell in my

But now, those holidays....

Every year we try to put our best foot forward to the community by decorating our museums as splendidly as we can. If you'd like to lend a hand on an enjoyable job that always leaves everyone full of holiday spirit, call **Joe 305-7940** or **Jan 710-1560** to see where you'll fit in. We have Heritage House, the Schoolhouse, windows at the Historic Hall. Even the Barn goes festive.

The decorating will be done at everyone's convenience the week following Thanksgiving. We'll also be putting in winter clothes at Heritage House before Thanksgiving, so if you'd like to help there, give one of us a call or e-mail me at [jans194@aol.com](mailto:jans194@aol.com).



***Congratulations to Sam and Norma Burton on celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary!!***

## **An armful of floral Bouquets to:**

**Chameleon Fabrics and Design** for their help in creating "our look" with lovely new table cloths for use in the garden for special events.

and

**Village Improvement Association** for the "good" partners they are to South County Historical Society, as we all work toward the greater good.



## **New Members**

**Madalene & Jack Farris—**  
**Stan & Jean Fiorentino—473-9943**  
**Ira Ghosh—474-4866**  
**Mary Loomis-Genthner—995-0965**  
**Howard Miller—772-5790**  
**T.J. San Filippo—543-1437**  
**Shizue Seigel & Ben Pease—415-221-0487**  
**Cynthia Snyder—708-1300**

## *Friends of Price House, Inc. 10th Annual Ice Cream Social*

**Sunday, Nov 5th, 2006**

Noon to 3:00PM

Price Historical Park

**Admission free - Ice Cream free**

Western or frontier outfits encouraged

Activities for the kids, Docent tours, Historic Home and Chumash Village

1:00 pm: 2007 Volunteer Awards

**Price Historical Park —Pismo Beach—1/2 mi past gate at end of Frady Ln Information Effie (805) 773-4854**

## **Food Facts!**

**Did you know that Summer Concert team brought in over \$7,000 in hot dog and lemonade sales this summer?**

**Did you know that the Harvest Festival Corn Booth brought in over \$450? That cute little popcorn machine brought in \$150 the same day!**

## Videographer Skills Needed

Although the Society is dedicated to maintaining and preserving history, it strives to be forward looking in technology.

We expect to be augmenting our collection of photo and print archives with video records. If you have the skills and interest to perform the following functions:



**Computer editing video footage into DVD** “albums” for archival storage and public access.

**Camera operation at events** and historical presentations. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Society’s activities, please consider pitching in!

**CONTACT DICK JACKSON** [hcrun@charter.net](mailto:hcrun@charter.net) or 474-9618

## Our Youngest New Volunteer!

### Siena’s Story

Each year about 800 third graders visit our historical sites for a morning of local history. Each year, Mrs. Woods from Ocean View Elementary faithfully schedules her group. This year a young girl dressed appropriately for the early 1900’s was part of her class. A few

weeks later, this same young girl accompanied her mother and younger brother on a visit to Santa Manuela School House as part of a field trip for the Cub Scouts. Shortly after that, I encountered her again at the Arroyo Grande Library



where she was signing up for the annual Summer Reading Program. Just a few days later, I saw her and her family again as they registered for our Parish Pictorial Directory. It was then that I learned of her interest in history and her desire to work at the School House. “How old do you have to be to be a docent?”, she asked me. Not having an answer, I called our President, and explained the situation and the request. “sign her up”, was the answer. And I did. The **Fiorentino** family are our newest Society members and **Siena**, 10 years old, and in fourth grade is the newest docent at the Santa Manuela School House. She works a full afternoon schedule one Sunday a month and portrays a young student of the early 1900’s. Drop by and see her in action. —**Kathleen Sullivan.**

## Volunteer Needed at Paulding History House Museum

### **Computer Operator**

Hours to suit  
(Free coffee, cookies and fun company)

Call Mario Tognazzini 481-5115

Jeanne Frederick 481-9546

## Nominating Committee Update

The following slate will be nominated for office at the Annual Meeting November 13. If you would like to serve on the 2008 Board of Directors, please contact Linda Osty, Lynn Titus, Vivian Krug, Chuck Fellows or Charles Porter at 489-8282.

### Slate of Nominees Board of Directors 2008

<b>President:</b>	<b>Jane Line</b>
<b>Ways &amp; Means -First VP:</b>	<b>Jim Dickens</b>
<b>Membership—Second VP:</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Corresponding Secretary:</b>	<b>Berneda Cochran</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Gary Hoving</b>
<b>Publicity:</b>	<b>Vivian Krug</b>
<b>Paulding History House Curator:</b>	<b>Chuck Fellows</b>
<b>Museums Curator:</b>	<b>Jan Scott</b>
<b>Property Management:</b>	<b>Charles Porter</b>
<b>Docent Leader:</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Information Systems:</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Parliamentarian:</b>	<b>Nancy Davis</b>

Regular Board meetings are held monthly except for June, July and December, unless otherwise called by the President or a majority of the Board members.



# SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 633, Arroyo Grande, Ca 93421

(805) 473-5077

www.southcountyhistory.org

## Call for Volunteers:

**SCHS** is completely run by volunteers like you and me, and we have lots of projects and committees that really can use your help. If you have an interest in preserving and sharing history, come join us in the fun! We are looking for volunteers in the following areas:

- Museum Docent (greeters, tours, sharing local history)
- Fundraising Events (staffing, concession stand, Antique Show, festivals)
- Museum Care (dusting, sweeping, loving care)
- Property/Building Care (handyman, honey-do's, gardening)
- Curator Assistant (artifacts, visual media, archival processing & care)
- Librarian Assistant (shelving books, visitor research)
- Exhibit Committee (putting it altogether)
- Oral History Committee (assist in collecting oral histories)
- Book Committee (book publishing, book sales)
- Technology (computer work, digital photography, videography)
- Administration (general office, clerical, newsletter production assistance)
- Board of Directors (One year Term)

If any of these areas interest you, please check the box, complete this form & return it to the above address, or call 473-5077 if you have any questions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you! We appreciate your interest and welcome your help!



## PATTERNS OF THE PAST

*Tidbits, Tribulations, and Tools for Survival*  
Column this month contributed by Pete Kelley

### THE SEA OTTER'S STARRING ROLE IN CENTRAL COAST HISTORY

According to the latest archeological research the Chumash have inhabited Avila environs for 20,000 years! Their management of the marine mammals was a primary key to their survival. As the struggle went — in those days the Grizzly Bear managed the Chumash! Much later the Spanish managed both the Chumash and the Grizzly Bear!

Why did the Spanish establish missions in the far flung regions of Alta California? Because the Russians were coming! Why pray tell were the Russians coming? Why, to hunt the sea otter for its pelt. Remember the Russians possessed Alaska, and their capital, Sitka, was just a few weeks' sail away. They established Fort Ross in Northern California and very early on had visited Avila at least twice! According to my research the first visit in 1805 was fruitful, they secured wood and water. Their second visit in 1811 was not as successful, as they were arrested by Spanish troops!

Contrary to common belief, these ships flew Old Glory and had Yankee skippers and crew! The hunters, Aleutian natives, were overseen by Russian bosses! The profits were split 50-50 between the Yankees and the Russians. The pelts were sold in Sitka. About 35,000 pelts were harvested in both Alta and Baja California during this period! Some of these Yankee skippers and hunters were early Central Coast settlers. Do names like Captain Dana, Wilson and Branch sound familiar? They all plied the otter pelt trade.

The otter had by then almost disappeared from Central Coast waters, when John C. Fremont appeared on the scene. Fremont 'liberated' California from the Mexicans with the help of Yankee fifth columnists like Dana, Wilson, and Branch. They supplied horses, haven and even money to help Fremont in his quest to dominate and conquer California.

So there we were: the Yankees managed the Mexicans, and the otters were gone!

Enter the Chinese who were a cheap source of labor for the Yankees. Soon immigration laws prohibited Chinese illegals from working. Some Chinese now had to work "off the books". Some began to harvest abalone. They would process the meat, put it in barrels and ship it to China. This fishery was very beneficial to the Chinese. But the abundance of abalone was due to the disappearance of its number one predator—the otter!

All this activity caught the attention of the non-Asian community. The manner in which the Chinese consumed these sea snails was not appealing to the Western palate. Soon a very important discovery was made. A German chef in Monterey decided to experiment with the gastropod. He tenderized it like veal, sautéed it in garlic and butter, and began serving it in his café!

The rest is history! A huge market for abalone emerged in California. Everybody wanted it on their menu. Around this time Japanese divers began harvesting the mollusk. An early first processing plant was at Port Harford—one of the first places where non-Asians worked for Japanese. The Japanese taught the Caucasians how to dive for the supple shell-fish in Avila and in 'El Moro' (Morro Bay). An industry was born—that halcyon era when abalone was king!

Avila and 'El Moro' survived the depression very well because of the abalone fishery and related businesses. For instance, processing plants thrived as did bars, mechanics, bars, boat builders, bars, cafés and bars. More commercial abalone were landed in Morro Bay and Avila than the rest of California combined! This bonanza continued until the early 1970's when—the sea otter returned! Now in this new millennium tourism is the number one industry. And what's the symbol for Central Coast tourism? Voila! you got it—the sea otter! Now the next time you see one of these marine mammals, one of those teddy bears of the ocean, one of those ravaging weasels—forget your misconceptions: think of the Chumash, think of the Russians, think of the Spanish, the Yankees, the Chinese, the Japanese, the abalone and all those bars!

—Pete Kelley



**Ed. Note: Pete Kelley volunteers on Tuesdays at Patricia Loomis History Library and Resource Center.**



## Community Relations, Publicity and Web News ~ October 2007

From the Desk of Vivian Krug

### In The News

#### A Donation for the Historical Society

On Monday October 8th, the South County Historical Society's Santa Manuela Schoolhouse got a new bell. The old bell from the Oak Park School that burned down in the late 1940's was hoisted up and placed in the South County Historical Society's Santa Manuela Schoolhouse.

The bell was given to the Society on permanent loan by **David and Kathleen Weir**. After the Oak Park school burned down the bell sat on the patio of Caspar Weir's Ranch for over 40 years.

Then in 1995 it was purchased by David Weir at an estate auction at the Caspar Weir Ranch along with many other items.

The bell was cleaned and refurbished, painted red and found a new home at Kathleen Weirs (David's daughter) restaurant, the Powerhouse Brewing Company in Sebastopol, California.

The bell was in the Brew Pub for over 10 years. When the Pub recently closed its doors, the Weir's found it fitting for the bell to be back in the South County and offered it to the historical society on permanent loan.



Above: C. 1920 courtesy of David Weir. L-R. Emma Weir and school mates, Ernest Scott and Jean McDaniel in front of Oak Park School. The bell (back) originally sat on a wooden platform.

The Weirs cleaned the bell once again and had it powder coated black ,and on Monday, October 8th, with several Weir family and South County Historical Society members present, the bell was hoisted up into the Santa Manuela Schoolhouse bell tower with the help of Coulton Construction. It rang again after 60 years in the South County. You can see and hear the bell every weekend at the Santa Manuela Schoolhouse in Arroyo Grande.

You can also hear the bell by visiting the Historical Society Website at [www.SouthCountyHistory.org](http://www.SouthCountyHistory.org) and click on "In The News". In the 2007 News section, you can view a video of the bell being hoisted into the belfry, as well as hearing a few words from David Weir. Another short video of the bell ringing for the first time in its new location is also available.



L-R: Vivian Krug, David Weir, Kathleen Sullivan, Ross Kongable



## Arroyo Grande takes a 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Win!

The Arroyo Grande in Bloom Committee celebrated a victory at the Heritage House Gardens on October 4<sup>th</sup> by coming in at Second Place after its first attempt in the national America In Bloom Competition. Coming in second behind Red Wing, Minnesota, was a major accomplishment for this team effort of volunteers comprised of many Historical Society members and other volunteers. The America in Bloom Judges rate cities of like size across the nation in eight criteria, one of which is heritage.

Plans are already underway for next year's competition and the Historical Society will once again play a large part in the competition. If you would like to learn more about Arroyo Grande in Bloom, visit the website at [www.ArroyoGrandeInBloom.org](http://www.ArroyoGrandeInBloom.org). If you would like to participate, contact **Jane Line** at 489-8282.

## Arroyo Grande Valley Harvest Festival

The 70th Annual Harvest Festival is now behind us. The event was a huge success as thousands of people enjoyed the festival beginning with the parade, and then the free entertainment, re-enactments and games throughout the festival grounds, including Heritage Square and the Historical Society Museums.



The Society participated in the Parade, once again sold popcorn and corn on the cob, acted as host for the Annual Costume Contest, the Children's Spelling Bee, and more. This year the Society also hosted a new competition, the Adult Spelling Bee.

You may have also noticed that the Society's Farmall Tractor was highlighted in this year's Harvest Festival logo. The Barn Museum showcased an elaborate Model Train display by the San Luis Obispo Model Train Association.

Vaudevillian **Bud Mercer** along with his son **Buddy** and local banjoist **Clay Watkins** performed in the Heritage Garden Gazebo. The Society Museums and Grounds were buzzing with festival visitors throughout the day. Thank you to all the Society Members who helped make the 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Harvest Festival a great success. The Festival is a true reflection of Community Spirit.

## Web Notes

Our web site continues to grow. This month we surpassed the number of visitors we had to our site all last year. We are now averaging sixty-seven visitors per day.

Send the historical society link, [www.SouthCountyHistory.org](http://www.SouthCountyHistory.org) to all your friends. It's a great way for people to get acquainted with the Historical Society and let them know all the exciting new events and things going on in our Society. Also available on our site are archives of every newsletter published since 2005.

## 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**



Arroyo Grande in Bloom Committee Members: Ron Kindig, Kevin Rocha, Tony Ferrara, Kristen Barneich, Jim Berman, Jane Line, Karen Franck, Bob Lund, Vivian Krug, Linda Shephard —Photo courtesy of April Charlton, Times Press Recorder.





# 2007 Annual

## Membership Meeting

Tuesday, November 13  
Hiawatha Lodge  
3065 Temple Street, Halcyon  
6:30 pm Potluck Dinner  
7:00 pm November Program  
7:45 pm Election of Officers  
8:00 pm Champagne Drawing

Celebrate an evening of food and fellowship!  
Lucky members will go home with their Holiday  
Champagne!  
Need a ride? Call us at 489-8282

Speakers: Charles Porter, Wanda Snow Porter, Patsy  
Snow Cutler

**“The Story of an American Family”**

### PATRONS OF THE SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PATRICIA LOOMIS  
KIRK SCOTT  
CAROL HIZEY  
HOWARD LOUIS  
MIKE GILLESPIE  
OSTY INSURANCE  
CHRISTINE HARVEY  
MIKE FAIRBROTHER  
MARTIN & JANE LINE  
BILL & CHERYL MILLER  
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