



San Benito County Historical Society

OCTOBER 4, 2011

EDITOR – DON PIDD

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept. 30-Oct. 2 – SBC Fair
- Oct. 20 – Board Mtg.
- Nov. 17 – Board Mtg.
- Aug. 25 – Board Mtg.
- Dec. 8 – General Mtg.

President's Message

By Peter Sonne

Hello everyone, we have had a busy summer beginning with our Tractor and Engine Show/ Barn Sale/ Membership Pot Luck lunch/ Wine and Food fundraiser as well as the Dance Hall fundraiser, all held at the park. Much work and planning went **a** into all these events. In between the events, a good deal of activity was taking place both at the park and museum.

Considering the lack of enough hands to make these events work, all came off pretty well and hopefully we will see them happen again next year, hopefully with more 'hands' to get down and dirty to help Delbert and Don pull them off with a bit less stress. Both Don and Delbert along with their real bosses, Josie and Deana did an outstanding job making it all happen. Lots of new folks came into the park for the

first time, as well as the museum in town, and a good handful of new persons signed up for SBCHS membership.

The Dance Hall event was fun and for those who attended, the general consensus was "are you doing this again next year we hope?" With some luck and those extra 'hands' we will indeed. My thanks go out to [\(Continued on Page 2\)](#)

Contents	Page
President's Message	1
Thank You!!!.....	1
"Raise the Roof".....	2
Research Room.....	3
Weibe Family	4
Wedding in the Park	5
Board of Directors.....	6

We Can't Do It Alone

Special Thanks To Businesses and Organizations Supporting Our Efforts

This issue of the San Benito County Historical Society is dedicated to those businesses and organizations who continue to support our efforts to meet our mission. I am sure that I have forgotten or missed someone and take full responsibility for this, but I want to assure you that this would not have been intentionally. If I have missed your business or organization, please let me know and I will include you in all future newsletters. I would especially like to thank the Pinnacle Newspaper for all their wonderful coverage of our events and activities.

- Don Pidd

YOU ARE WONDERFUL
AND GREATLY
APPRECIATED.

THANK YOU ALL!!!

San Benito Glass
Dassel's Petroleum
Hollister Paint Company
Hollister Tile & Stone
Abbott's Pro-Power
Home Depot
Community Media Access
Partnership (CMAP)
Hollister Firefighters Assoc.
Community Foundation for
San Benito County
Cal Fire
The Pinnacle Newspaper
Rabobank
Spice of Life Catering
Michelle Doty
David Grimsley
Postal Graphics
National Civil War Assoc.
San Benito Stage Company

SBC Chamber of Commerce
San Benito Co. Fairgrounds
Royal Oaks Feed & Tack
The Body Shop
BSA Troop 436
Women's Club of Hollister
Habitat for Humanity
Big Red Yard Service
RDO Equipment
Union 4H
E.D.G.E. & T. A., Branch 3
McKinnon Lumber
19th Hole
Flapjacks
Tractor Supply
Jayse Wine
Six Strings Winery
Teague Vineyards
Thomas Kruse Winery
Alicats Winery
Leal Vineyards
Guerra Family Cellars
Aimee June Winery
Calera Wine Co.
DeRose Vineyards

"THE VILLAGE"

A series of videos
exploring our past.

View At
www.sbchistoricalociety.org

"Raise The Roof"

A Fundraiser Enjoyed by All

Plenty of fun was had by all who attended our first annual BBQ/Dance Fundraiser to rebuild the Dunneville Dance Hall. Once completed the Historical Park will once again have a large event center for community, family, and organization gatherings. We hope to have the first stage of the project completed by next spring. The valuable members and volunteers who have donated time, money, and support have made this huge undertaking possible. Please enjoy these photos of the event.

HOPE TO SEE YOU AT FUTURE FUNDRAISERS



Buffalo Canyon Band entertaining the guests



Good food, good drinks, and good friends



Carriages on display for all to enjoy

President's Message

Continued from Page 1

Nick Calder for bringing in all the raffle prizes, promoting and allowing us to enjoy his wine at dinner.

Spice of Life catering put out just the best food, Wolfsen's Sausage and Meat from Gustine supplied those wonderful verities of their own sausage for us to enjoy, McAbee Feed made it happen with a large supply of hay bales for our use, American Electric gave us light and power for the bands with the use of a large generator, Dave Grimsley supplied us with portable lighting unit as well as inline lighting to mark the pathway to the cowboy and cowgirls room, Bolado park came through with a very large

tent as well as all the tables and chairs, Flapjacks Café and 19th Hole helped by selling tickets for us.

The small hand full of volunteers, Wes, Wayne and Dave were just the best with set up. I know I'm leaving out a few more folks and I apologize, I know Don will mention them in his write up. A huge thank you goes to Buffalo Canyon Band and the Flashbacks. Without their support and talent, it would have not happened at all. Thank you guys! Anyone looking for a band to perform at their next family reunion or business function, or to play at a nice get together of friends and family, contact Don Pidd or

me for their contact info.

Last but not least, thanks to all those folks who attended all our events and supported the SBCHS. Until next time, take care. – Peter Sonne

SAN BENITO COUNTY FAIR (We Won A 1st)

Hope you had a chance to visit our booth. Special thanks to Josie, Deana, Patricia, Delbert, and Sharlene for the award winning booth.



Taking a tour of the San Benito Historical Park in one of our many buggies.

To view this and other historical displays visit the [San Benito County Historical Park](#). For a tour contact Don Pidd at 831-902-9349

The Research Room

Exploring Your Past

We are overjoyed to have two new volunteers in the Research Room! Marie Barrett Pera and Nancy Libby Froistad are now assisting Verona Flint and Sheila Prader, learning about cataloging and about the many resources we have. We're putting their considerable talents to good use. Below we feature a bio on Nancy, and in the next newsletter we'll feature Marie. We welcome more volunteers in the Research Room. If you're interested, send us an email at research@sbhistoricalsociety.org.

Nancy says,

History was not a favorite subject of mine in grade school. However, along the way I'd have to say that my mother's love of history unwittingly rubbed off on me. Her dedication to discovering those missing surnames, finding out family lore, and preserving family treasures along the way was unwavering. Some of these were slowly presented to me and my siblings through the years in the form of framed family poetry or a great grandmother's buttons made into a bracelet, for example. The fascinating stories, photos, and family trees were given to us in the form of individualized binders, followed up by more pages to put in them as gifts on birthdays and Christmas. Every year that goes by, I appreciate those binders (and the work that went into them) more. How could the fascination of hearing about an infant being saved from an Indian attack by the bravery of a young boy sneaking away in the middle of the night with the infant not appeal? Or the fact that your great, great, great...grandfather served with George Washington? Or that you might be related to Queen Victoria through an illegitimate child that was sent to America? (Okay, that one doesn't have much proof behind it – just family lore – but it is still fun to contemplate!) If any of you watch the TV show "Who Do You Think You Are," you know that EVERYONE can find interesting stories in their lineage when they start doing some digging.

In recent years, doing research of grant deeds for my family has kindled my ever-growing fascination with the history of San Benito County. I've spent so much time in the Recorder's Office that when I go online to the San Benito Newspaper Abstracts I feel like I know Mrs. Such and Such who had tea at Mrs. Such and Such's home in 1888. Have you gone to the Newspaper Abstracts? They have such interesting insight into the day to day life of Hollister long ago. <http://www.newspaperabstracts.com/>

My interest is all-encompassing. A book my mother passed down to me showing the architecture of many of the big original homes in Hollister I find fascinating. The discovery of a shootout on family property over the harvest of a wheat field gives me a sense of adventure. A time capsule found in the foundation of our family home on Limekiln Road placed there by my great-grandfather in 1894 is precious. It contained newspapers from Hollister, San Francisco, and Maine (where he was originally from). I think it is wonderful that it was actually one of his descendants (not myself, unfortunately), more than 100 years later, that discovered it.

I would love to hear from those of you who have any knowledge of Libby or Day family history, or anything on the Limekiln/Cienega area. We all get together once a year for a family reunion and I would love to have some new stories to share. The Society is always interested in donations of historical material or recollections too, of course! You can contact me at gfroistad@aol.com.

I recently started volunteering in the Historical Society's Research Room. Sheila and Verona have been wonderfully patient in instructing me on the nuances of working there. I have completely enjoyed the time I have spent there, hearing the surrounding conversations about places and names that bring vague recollections which lead to more acute memories.

Although I am new to the Research Room, I believe I can bring some valuable assets to the projects there. Before starting my own business, I did legal research and paralegal work for three years. I have run my own record storage business, File Away Storage, in Salinas since 1989. During those years I have learned much about organization, indexing, and document storage. I'm hoping these skills will be put to good use.

It is easy to get distracted by all the interesting information at the Historical Society so I find myself putting my nose to the grindstone and forcing myself not to look too deeply, knowing I'll never get anything done if I start enjoying myself too much. I know that there is so much information there, waiting to be catalogued. The knowledge that a few hours of organizing and cataloguing can make information accessible to many people is what keeps me working hard. It would be so easy to get distracted and just meander and enjoy myself while I'm in there, but unfortunately, there are not enough hours in the day to allow that. I'm hopeful that the time I spend there will pay off in accessibility for others.

Each day that I get to spend there I leave with the sense of just having taken a vacation from my regular schedule. What a treasure! Thank you to all of those who have come before me and spent uncountable hours preserving as much as possible with the resources available to them. Without those individuals, so much more of our unrecoverable county's history would be gone forever.

Nancy (Libby) Froistad

[Research Room](#)

**Open second Monday of every
month, from 10 AM to 4 PM.**

Wiebe Family Survives Tragedy, Leaves Legacy

Sharlene Van Rooy, Museum Director

Donna Hagins of Hollister recently donated a collection of artifacts from the Wiebe Manufacturing Company of Hollister.

Established in 1946 after Walter Wiebe returned from WWII, with only a grammar school education, he was the mastermind behind many different inventions, mostly robotics and material handling equipment for the food and beverage industry, including the very successful Wiebe Harvester. At the time the company closed, there were 139 employees.

Walter came to Hollister as an infant in 1910 from San Luis Obispo County. His father Jacob A. Wiebe purchased a small ranch two miles north of Hollister and worked for John Johnson as a blacksmith. In 1912, the day after



*Anna Wiebe and her family circa 1914
Walter Wiebe is on the far right*

Thanksgiving, Jacob went to the Hudner Pit for gravel and was caught beneath a mass of falling earth and died. He left behind his wife Anna and four children (including Walter) and a baby daughter that was born five days later. Anna's brother Gustov came from San Luis Obispo to help work the ranch; they grew alfalfa, sold eggs, and churned ten pounds of butter a week.

Walter is the only one of his siblings that stayed in Hollister and in 1955 he opened the Wiebe Motel on the family ranch. He and his wife Ilene ran the business for many years while continuing to design and manufacture useful household item at Wiebe Industries, including the Dog Litter Disposal System, the Small "Doggie" Bedside Stairway, and a Universal Recreation Vehicle Handrail.

Walter died in 1987 at the age of 78 and his wife Ilene died in 2011 at the age of 92. They had no children.

MUSEUM

Open

Saturdays 9 a.m. – Noon
Sundays, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

[San Benito County Historical Society](#)

498 Fifth Street

Hollister, CA 95023

Office: 831-635-0335

[Email](#)

Website:

sbhistoricalsociety.org

CUSTOM MADE BUTTONS

We can make custom buttons to remember your special event. A portion of all sales go to the San Benito County Historical Society.

For more information contact

[Delbert Doty](#) at

628-3396 or

[Don Pidd](#) at 902-9349

A WEDDING IN THE PARK



Board	Of	Directors
President – Peter Sonne	Park Director – Delbert Doty	Director – Don Pidd
Vice President – Mark Rianda	Director – Janet Brians	Director – Paul McNett
Museum Director – Sharlene Van Rooy	Director – Jim Thompson	Director – Joe McMahon
Treasurer – Kerry Tobias	Secretary – Patricia Whalen	Membership – Helen Barnes