



THE VILLAGE

Thank You, Peter!!!

President's Message

Hello everyone — As some of you already know, this will be my last note to you as president of the SBCHS. After a good long while pondering, I decided that it was indeed time for me to step down from the position as president, as well as to leave the Board of Directors. It is time for me to step aside and allow "new blood" to carry the ball for another decade. All will have new ideas, hopes, ambitions, and dreams, and most of all, ENERGY!

Long ago I was one of those people who drove by the park on Hwy 25 and always looked over through the trees wondering what the heck was going on in there. I knew the Museum was in town but had never been inside that building.

I mentioned to a member that I was interested in joining the society and wanted to know more. We met and took a ride out to the park. After taking a twisty trail in the 4-wheel-drive truck and crossing water, tall grass, rocks, and whatever, we ended up on the other side of the Tres Pinos River and began to drive into what was the park itself. There was nothing but weeds waist high everywhere you looked. A few old buildings stood out, but the Saloon, the Garcia House, and the Wood Cabin were not much to look at. The paint on the other buildings and some roofs were in need of repair.

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Weibe Family Portrait

Hear more and view family artifacts at the General Membership Meeting on Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. at the Museum

New Park Addition



Dassel Family Tank House being moved to the Historical Park. Would you like to help with restoration?

GENERAL MEETING - Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. - Historical Museum, 498 5th Street, Hollister
PROGRAM—Weibe Family Presentation AGENDA—Election of Officers, Approval of Bylaw Changes

Questions or comments? Email us at donpidd@svn.net or call 831-902-9349

President's Message cont.

It was amazing, but I remember thinking "this is very cool," it had so much potential. The Dance Hall really stood out with no front steps, just an old railroad tie to enable one to jump onto the porch.

"Hey Peter, thanks for all you have done and in advance for all I know you will continue to do for the park and the society.

From one Dane to another, you are an OK guy." - Doris Skow

I was invited to the next board meeting where I met with the members, and we all visited a bit. I signed up and that was it. Before I knew it, I was out at the park looking around to see what needed to be done. So much! The blue tarp over the Garcia House was in shreds as the roof was mostly gone; all the old carpet inside was wet and mildewed. The Saloon was in need of being secured to protect it from the elements, and the Wood Cabin was just a pile of boards.

The Sullivan House, School House, barn and Ferrando House were all in need of one thing or another. A bit later in the spring, Fish and Game installed the low wa-

ter crossing, just as they had done for several years before that, only to remove it at the beginning of October and leave the park useless for another winter allowing the weeds, rattlesnakes, and rodents to take over. Each spring the cycle would start all over again.

I remember also that first spring, Janie, Verona, Stan, Ira, Carol, Wes, Mark, and I and a few others started in on the several weeks' task of weed, rattlesnake, and rodent abatement. Janie would make her burritos, Verona would bring great snacks, and we all would share the good food and laugh, joke, and tease one another. What a good time.

It seemed like just a few months had passed and I was asked if I would like to take a seat on the board, and then it seemed only a few more months passed and I was asked if I would consider becoming president. All of this happened within a year. Many things were organized, new ideas popped up, and a new energy was flowing within the board as well as the society. One thing led to another over the next few years, events began to take place, and a new research room at the Muse-

um was developed by Verona and Wes. I learned that funding for a permanent bridge in the park was available and had almost reached its expiration period. The money came from FEMA because the storms of 1996 and 1997 washed away the little culvert installed by Fish and Game as a temporary way to gain access into the park for a few months of the year. Those funds amounted to \$1.2 million, which would pay for the new bridge at no cost to the SBC taxpayer. After much work, we were able to complete all the paperwork that allowed the process of building the bridge to begin. Once the bridge was completed, a whole new world opened up. Things began to happen both at the Museum and the Historical Park. Boy Scout troops came to take on projects for Eagle Scout badges, 4-H groups came to lend a hand for credits. Hunter safety courses were held in the Dance Hall.



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2012 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Don' forget to pay your 2012 dues. You can now pay online at our website www.sbhistoricalsociety.org or mail your dues to

498 5th St., Hollister, CA 95023

History of Soap

Before the coming of settlers, Indians used roots or plants for soap. Some of the plants used were yucca and soap-root. Some of these plants grow in San Benito County. The

roots of the plants were scrapped or crushed and put into a closely woven net or basket. This was moved about in hot water until the water was quite soapy. Hair washed in this soapy water would glisten in the fire-light. The Indians taught the Spanish people to use these soap plants.

Most of the early ranchers made their own soap at home. They used fat and lye and cooked them together. The fat was usually tallow from cattle. They lye was made by pouring water through a keg of oak ashes. The ash lye was caught in a



pan at the bottom of the keg. The tallow and lye were boiled together to make soap. When they wanted to make hard soap, the fat was mixed with soda and made into soap.

Jose Maria Sanchez had a soap factory in San Benito County. He had a land grant in northern San Benito County. His soap factory was located near what is now known as Soap Lake. His partner was Thomas O. Larkin.

The soap was made in a large kettle taken from a whaling ship. This kettle would not hold as much soap as Sanchez liked to make at one time. He built something like a barrel to fit into the kettle. This gave him room to make a large batch of soap at one time. Soap was made here until 1848.

By Peter Sonne (With excerpts from San Benito County Long Ago, 1950.)



Peter, your enthusiasm and dedication to the San Benito County Historical Society has not gone unnoticed. I appreciate all you have accomplished in the past several years. Our biggest achievement was the Bridge at the Historical Park. Your hard work with the County and State officials became a great asset for our community. Also the endowment fund through the Community Foundation will ensure one form of income for the Historical Society for years to come. Thank you for your leadership, constant involvement and infectious laugh for the past years, your shoes will be difficult to fill.—Regards, Janie Lausten

BYLAW CHANGES FOR VOTE AT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON DEC. 7 AT 7 P.M.

Article V, Section 1 shall be changed to read: *The Board shall consist of 9 Directors, at least four of which shall be the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer*

Article V, Section 4 shall be changed to read: *...or prior to the November Board meeting.*

“ BILL”

“Bill” an African-American, was an interesting character in early San Benito County who lived in Tres Pinos. His real work was driving a four-horse team from Tres Pinos to New Idria. He was very gentle and kind to animals. The ranchers often had him help break and train their horses. Bill enjoyed life and had a lot of fun. He sometimes rode a grey donkey. He was so tall and the donkey so small that Bill’s feet almost dragged on the ground.

He often came to Hollister and took his donkey right

into the saloon with him. He made the men in the bar very happy by playing on his banjo and singing for them.

Bill was a trick rider and rode in every parade. As he usually rode barefoot, his big feet and toes added much to the amusement of the people, Bill, his grey donkey, and his banjo kept people along the parade route shouting with laughter. Bill, as late as the 1950s was still remembered by old timers in San Benito County.

By Peter Sonne (With excerpts from San Benito County Long Ago, 1950.)



Don and Deana Pidd were honored as this year’s recipients of the 2011 National Philanthropy Day Award. The event, which honored 50 other nonprofits from within San Benito County, took place on Tuesday November 15, at San Juan Oaks. Don and Deana were chosen be-

cause of the many long hours they put in restoring the Garcia House/Visitor Center and well as planting new gardens, working with various scout troops, 4-h projects and much more. In the short year and a half they have been with us as caretakers at the park, their work and dedication has proven to be a wonderful asset to the entire community. Congratulations Don and Deana. Also in attendance for the evening to offer support for the two D's were Kerry Tobias, Mr and Mrs Delbert Doty, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Levy, the honorable Tom Breen and Peter Sonne'. Past recipients are Norman Dike, Janet Brians, Janie Lausten, Mark Rianda, Earlene McCabe, Delbert Doty, Aurelia Bozzo and Verona Flint.



Visit the Historical Museum

498 Fifth Street

Hollister, CA

Saturdays

9 a.m.— Noon

**GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP
MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 7th
7 P.M.**

**HISTORICAL
MUSEUM**

LIVE LOCAL? GIVE LOCAL!

President's Message cont.

New roofing was installed on Sullivan House. The Saloon was restored, and the



Wood Cabin was erected and is now our Drug Store.

The society was in the newspapers several times each month and on local TV news with our events. Membership increased. Many, many volunteers have come and gone over the years. Some have stayed such as Delbert, my right-hand guy at the park for years. He alone took on so many projects, it was incredible. Board members were equally busy in other areas. It has come full circle now with the addition of Don and Deana Pidd. They are the new energy, the new force, which will continue to drive the society into the next decade.

Without them and Delbert and Josie at the park, my thoughts of the visitor center would still be in shambles; a walking trail around the park and up onto the bluff would still be nothing but weeds and snakes. I have met so many folks over the years, have made so many new friends that I can never begin to thank the community for giving me that opportunity to "get involved" and carry on the dreams of Jack O'Donnell, Dick Hill, and Fred LaSelve. I never would have watched my good friend Norman Dike out climb me on roofs and never have laughed at his stories, or enjoyed Aurelia Bozos's wonderful creampuffs, or



teased Frances Palmtag into coming to our general meetings.

I have left out many names, but you know who

you are and you know how much you are appreciated. Perhaps we can meet up from time to time and talk and laugh about all those great early days. I encourage you all to be more involved with the park and museum, both physically and financially. Your board will continue to do the best job possible to ensure that your grandkids and so forth will enjoy our rich history. My thanks go to all the board members who have worked with me over the years to help make a difference.

Best wishes for the future
— Peter Sonn 

"Dear President Peter,

Congratulations on your "retirement" and thank you for all of your effort and dedication to the San Benito County Historical Society."

President Sheila (San Juan Bautista Historical Society)

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.

[Delbert Doty](#) at 628-3396 or

[Don Pidd](#) at 902-9349

"Peter Sonne - Thanks for many years to the San Benito County Historical Society!" - Danny Corral

FROM THE RESEARCH ROOM

Open second Monday of every month — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

MARIA BARRETT PERA

A. M. Thompson and his wife Frances Headworth Thompson moved their young family from Michigan to San Benito County in the 1870's. Their youngest child, Lena Thompson Magladry was born in San Benito County in 1889. Mr. Thompson purchased 600 acres in Panoche and farmed grain and other crops. While digging a well by hand in 1891 he was killed when a heavy bucket of dirt came down on top of him at the bottom of the well. Mrs. Thompson sold the farm and moved her family in with her husband's sister and family, W. H. and Hannah Stone in the Mulberry District and eventually bought a house and moved to Hollister.

Lena graduated from Hollister High School in 1908 and received her teaching credential from Thompson's Business College, which was then located on Third Street in the vicinity of Ranchers Feed location today.

Upon receiving her teaching assignment at Antelope School, Lena made arrangements to board with the Oscar Hodges

Family. She would take the train from Hollister to Tres Pinos and then catch the stagecoach headed to New Idria Mines. It was at a community dance at the local school house that Lena met Grover Magladry who was working for a construction company on the Cannon and Wiggle Tail Grades. They were married July 1, 1915. Lena was 26 and Grover was 45.

Lena was my grandmother.

My Grandma Lena would tell us wonderful stories about growing up in rural San Benito County, riding her horse to school with her sister Ivy, about her Aunt Hannah Thompson Stone who was a housekeeper for Colonel William Wells Hollister, about her Uncle William Harrison Stone who was in a gunfight over disputed land ownership and shot and killed his neighbor Cornelius Waters in 1888, and about her and Grover buying property and starting a chicken ranch on what became Magladry Road in the Fairview

District.

My name is Marie Barrett Pera and I'm the second of four siblings born to Frances Magladry and Dave Barrett. I grew up with my brother and two sisters on various rural ranches around the county, mainly the Double J Ranch near the San Benito Lateral in South County. I'm married to Mike Pera and we live on 50 acres in North County that was purchased in 1916 after Mike's grandfather immigrated to the U. S. We have an affliction called "collecting old stuff" and "remembering when". We always love learning something new about San Benito County and are constantly amazed at how closely connected some families are to the local history.

Being a member of the San Benito County Historical Society seems like a natural thing to do.



San Benito County Historical Society

498 Fifth Street, Hollister, CA 95023

MEMBERSHIP: To become a member or renew your membership, fill in your contact information (please include your email to receive Society updates) and check the membership level that applies. Please make checks payable to "San Benito County Historical Society." You can also pay at our website: www.sbchistoricalociety.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zipcode _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Membership Levels:

- Individual \$20 - \$29
- Family \$30 - \$49
- Premier \$50 - \$99
- Organization \$100 - \$149
- Corporate \$150 - \$299
- Lifetime \$300 - \$500
- I would also like to contribute to the SBCHS Endowment Fund
 - \$25 - \$49 \$50 - \$99
 - \$100 - \$249 Other \$ _____

I am interested in volunteering to help in one of the following areas:

- Docent Gardening Building Restoration Cataloging Research
- Antique Farm Equipment Restoration Landscaping/Gardening Displays Videography
- Photography Fundraising Social Media
- Other _____

I am available _____ hours per _____ day per _____ week per _____ month