



South County Historical Society Heritage Press

Volume 9, No. 7

September 2005

Curator's Corner

JAN SCOTT

Assistant Curator, **Joe Swigert**, and I have been trying to catch up on accessioning artifacts the Society has been given.



Some of you have finally received your thank you letters for things that were donated last January. We try to keep things from slipping through the cracks, but it's an imperfect process and we are doing our best. Thank you all for your patience.

We have also discovered that some of our Staff Reference Library is missing, books gone without being signed out. We'd be grateful if you'd check your shelves to see if any of our research books have ended up there by mistake. Many thanks.

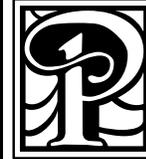
I forgot a big thank you last month to **Clara Madsen**, who hemmed curtains for the Meatlocker windows and sewed tons of our hanger pads for vintage clothing pieces. We are always looking for old mattress pads which we share with Paulding History House. We are also always looking for people who will cut the pads to fit over the hangers. Clara will sew for us, but can't handle cutting those pads. If you can help or donate pads, please call Joe or me.

A thank you to **Ken and Carolyn Huffine** who spent a day painting the inside wall at the Meatlocker to create a friendly interior to match our friendly exterior. Now if we could just find a way to keep people from walking in.. We're looking so inviting we have a steady stream of guests wondering what there is to see inside. When they discover it's only a workroom, they're truly disappointed.

We need one or two people who would be willing to take an hour or so to do touch-up work on the outside of the Barn. Some of our wood has cracked, leaving exposed unfinished wood. We need to get it sealed before the rains come. If you can manage an hour, please contact Charles Porter.

Another oversight from last month: **Tom Reding** who donated labor for the wonderful signs that Ross Kongable created to be displayed at the Schoolhouse and Heritage House on days when Paulding House is open. **Tom** also donated labor for the ten signs made for the Society's activities at the Harvest Festival.

And, **Margaret Haak**, trusty Museum Committee member, I hope you're doing well as you're reading this. We miss you and are keeping your computer seat warm until you can return. Until then, all love and prayers go your way, and also to your beautiful family keeping watch at your bedside.



PAULDING HISTORY HOUSE

Jean Hubbard, Curator

Paulding History House honors past Grand Marshals of the Harvest Festival

Chuck Fellows and his wife ran a shuttle from downtown to the Crown of the Hill. Many others found their way to Paulding History House where they were greeted by the Paulding Committee: **Jeanne Frederick, Bob and Dee Trybom, Al Spierling, Jean and Payton Bryan and Jean Hubbard.**

On the flower decorated patio, a special welcome was accorded ten of the Past Grand Marshals and guests. Tea and Cookies were served and a special tour of the house was conducted by Committee members.

Ida Mae Grieb and **Thelma Conrow** represented the Class of 1936, **Drs. Ken and Gaby Levine, Edith Wood** and friend **Carol, Herman and Helen Olave, Dick and Maxine Blankenburg** and **Jean Hubbard** were the Past Grand Marshals who joined Festival Representative, **Vivian Krug** as Supervisor "Katcho" gave the 2005 Grand Marshals, **Tom and Edith Runels** a beautiful commemorative plaque.



My Memories of Avila and the Lighthouse

By Jens Wagner as told to Jane Line

I was born in San Francisco in 1932 of immigrant parents. My father, Jens Otto Wagner, was born near Hamburg, Germany. He met my mother Phyllis in Wellington, New Zealand, and they immigrated to the United States in 1931. My father was a sailor. He began sailing as a youngster, eventually achieving the position of Chief Marine Engineer.

In 1936, at my mother's request, my father stopped sailing as a marine engineer for various steamship lines and took a job with the U. S. Department of the Interior in the Lighthouse Service. His first post was St. George's Reef off the Pacific coast near Crescent City, California. This particular lighthouse was often referred to as "The Widomaker" due to its rugged location.

In 1937, my parents, now with two young sons, left St. George's Reef bound for duty in San Luis Obispo County at the Lighthouse Station in Avila Beach, California. We traveled down the coast by bus, arriving in time to meet our furniture which had been shipped by sea. To our surprise, we found that we would be joining two other families, the Morehouses and the Lewises, already in residence. Together there were six children calling this lighthouse station home. We lived there for approximately two years.

The Avila Lighthouse Station compound consisted of three buildings, a cistern, and a white-washed henhouse. The main building with its tower was the Morehouse residence and is still there. The other building, a duplex, was home to the Wagner and Lewis families. Built at the end of the 19th century in the Craftman style, our part of the two-story duplex had three bedrooms on the upper floor and living quarters below. In the early 1940s, the Lighthouse Service was transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard to consolidate surveillance and protection of the Pacific coastline. In order to make room for more housing, our home was pushed over the cliff and the Coast Guard built the barracks which are there today. The third building is still there and housed the foghorns.

Everything to do with a lighthouse needs to be kept functioning properly at all times. Our fathers worked 8 hour shifts. This provided the necessary 24-hour rotation required to carry out the duties and responsibilities of operating and maintaining the fog

horns and the tower light. Diesel and steam power were available for running the equipment which was all started manually. The tower light was kept clean and lit all the time. The foghorns had different sounds to identify our location for ships at sea. My bedroom was about 100' from the foghorn building and I learned to sleep through just about anything! I don't remember any accidents or rescues while we were there and that original Fresnel lense, I think, now belongs to the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society.

Most of the families living in Avila at this time were fishing families or families associated with Union Oil of California. Names that I remember are the Martins, the St. Johns, and the Gilmans. I also remember a native American Chumash who lived like a hermit near the current PG&E gate. Though he was reclusive, somehow my folks got to know him. He gave me a present once - an old coffee grinder. It would be a nice treasure today if I knew where it was!

The Wagners always walked everywhere unless we could catch a ride on the old small gauge railroad. From the lighthouse, we would walk down the side of the hill to approximately where Fat Cat Restaurant is today, then follow the tracks into Avila. The railroad tracks belonged to the Pacific Coast Railway and Steamship Company built 1873. It was still the transportation of that day. The Roundhouse was on Lower Higuera in SLO. From there, traffic was diverted to the two rail routes, carrying passengers and produce either from San Luis Obispo to Avila or south through the Village of Arroyo Grande to Los Olivos. The old PCR tracks, I believe, were ripped up during WWII to provide steel for the war effort. Some of the rolling stock was still around in the late 1940s and two of the passenger cars had been converted to an ornithological museum.

There were three piers then, as now. The business district was located in the area of the first pier where the Yacht Club is today; the second pier belonged to Union Oil for loading and unloading and the third pier is where the restaurant is now. The original first pier was probably built by John Harford who had also built one in the Spyglass area, but weather destroyed that one early on. The Old Custom House, the Canet General Store, the Post Office, a boarding house, and a bar or two were located near the first pier. In those days, the Old Custom House was a sandwich shop and ice cream cones were 5 cents! The Post Office was located in the

Avila Market. Alice Canet was the postmistress and proprietress of the Market. From her, we used to get a "billie" can - equivalent to one gallon - of fresh milk from the Creamery in SLO. Fresh milk was a treat as our usual milk was canned, evaporated milk. We also bought meat at the Avila Market. And sometimes Dad would go out at night with the commercial fishermen. If the catch was good, he would come back the next morning with a couple of big fish - salmon, albacore, sometimes halibut and cod.

Dad also had a garden on the lighthouse bluff. One year he grew 900 head of cabbage which he took into town and bartered for an old 1928 Model T coupe and 100 pound sack of potatoes. We thought it was a great deal because the Model T had a rumble seat and we got to eat a lot of the potatoes! Dad planted the rest. There was good soil up there on that bluff and I've heard there are wild vegetables growing there today....perhaps remnants of my



Dad's old garden. There may also be descendants of some of Mother's cats. Mother loved cats and at one point we had over 25! We also had raccoons and skunks.

Avila was a close knit community although we had no church. We went to St. Paul's Catholic Church in Pismo or the Old Mission Church in San Luis Obispo. Our first Christmas there, Dad made a Noah's Ark for me. The lid lifted up so that the hand carved animals could be placed inside. "Noah" was a character cut from a coffee can label of the day. It was all quite wonderful!

In 1938, I started first grade at the two-room Avila Schoolhouse about two blocks up the hill from town and the beach. Mrs. Lawrence was my teacher and taught the first four grades. Mrs. Ruda, our principal, taught the upper grades. We usually had 25 - 30 children in school. If the weather was inclement, sometimes my Dad would lower the long boat into the water and we would navigate across the Bay to the first pier.

In 1939 or 1940, when the U.S. Coast Guard took over the Lighthouse Service, my father did not want to have a commission so we moved to San Francisco. There he took a job with the War Department as a stationary steam plant engineer on Angel Island.....

To be continued!

Editor's Note: The Avila Schoolhouse is still on its hill above town. However, now a part of the San Luis Coastal School District, it has been determined to be lacking in historical value and is scheduled for demolition. The SLO Coastal School District plans to build townhouses on the property, reserving three for school teachers in the District.

Main Street—Avila Beach—late



Publicity and Community Relations by Vivian Krug, Publicity Director

Arroyo Grande Police Department Community Advisory Council

The Santa Manuela Schoolhouse and Barn Museum played host to the Arroyo Grande Police Departments Community Advisory Council. The Twenty Two Council Members agenda included regular business and an excellent Homeland Security presentation regarding the San Luis Obispo Airport, by Joan Reilly, Deputy Federal Security Director with the Transportation Security Administration. They all enjoyed a catered lunch in the Barn and toured the Museums after adjournment of their meeting.

It was a great pleasure to host the Arroyo Grande Police Department and the dedicated Advisory Council Members who help in the process of keeping the community we all enjoy safe for us all.



As mentioned in my last column we, the Society, have been doing quite a bit of cross promotion with the Village Improvement Association (VIA) to promote tourism here in Arroyo Grande. An ad placed in the Westways Magazine in July has resulted in over 500 inquiries about the Village of Arroyo Grande and our Museums. The VIA has sent a package including a Village and Historical Society brochure to each of the 500 inquiries. Yet another positive result of team effort!

We continue to Support our Troops

There are many men and woman from the South County currently serving our Country and far from home. With the efforts of the **Pismo Coast Association of Realtors** and Society member, **Linda Osty** a "get out your favorite cookie recipes and start baking for our troops campaign" took place to support our troops and coincide with the anniversary of September 11th. Thank you, to those Historical Society members who baked cookies that were sent to our troops. And thank you to **Linda Osty** for putting together the event.

Web Stats

Our web site has gone wild! As of last month's newsletter we had 8,393 visitors to our site this year. That was already 3,000 more than all of last year (total visitors in 2004, 5,366). As of today, we've now had 10,295 "unique" visitors (that means this number does not include anyone coming back a 2nd time!) No doubt this huge increase came from the multitude of articles about the Society's involvement with both the Country Western Dance Festival and the Arroyo Grande Valley Harvest Festival. Which brings us to:

We're in the News!

If you've been reading our local newspapers, listening to the radio, watching TV and surfing the internet, you probably noticed that we have received countless stories, quotes and mentions over the past month. If you missed any of these stories, copies of the articles will be posted on our website in the coming weeks.

BACK TO OUR ROOTS WITH HARVEST FESTIVAL 2005!

by Jane Line and Vivian Krug

If you missed Harvest Festival this year, you shouldn't have! Large gateway signs on each side of Heritage Square decreed you were "Entering the Old West" and so you were! (We thank **Sam Burton** for the engineering on that gateway sign project!)

Inside Heritage House Museum, you would have found **Doris Gullickson** and her friend **Ann Pilling** hand quilting a beautiful child's crib quilt, new resident **Judith Dunlore** entertaining on her hammered dulcimer, **Danica Leonard** and the **Adams** sisters churning butter on the back porch. Docents **Beth Garner**, **Mary Ann Feller** and **Don Gullickson** kept order and answered questions. It was delightful to see how everyone enjoyed the museum exhibits.

The gardens of Heritage House were the staging for our Membership Chaircouple, **Mike and Colleen Drees**, who manned a Membership Booth and passed out water for \$1. They oversaw the Old West Today re-enactors who were camped in a vintage western setting, thanks to the talents of **Jane Maxwell Campbell** and her painted western townsite backdrop. Add the Old West Today's goldminer's tent, saloon, and mean-looking Hoosgow and you begin to get the picture! The re-enactors provided visitors with skits on how "it really was" if you cheated at cards, stole the miner's gold nuggets, or displeased the Sheriff. They were great!

In the Heritage House Gazebo, you would have seen local actor and A.G. resident, **John Clemo**, playing Mark Twain, reciting from Twain's writings on his visits to California. Very entertaining and John even looks like Mark Twain! John works at Doc Burstein's Old Fashioned Ice Cream Lab so if you saw him, tell him how much you enjoyed his performances.

If that wasn't enough, the Heritage House parking lot was the staging center for an old-fashioned hayride, complete with authentic covered wagon and two beautiful Percheron horses. Resting under the shade of the trees when not on a ride, these horses and their wagon took you back in time without a doubt. They were from the **Harris Stage Line Co. in Templeton**.



Inside the Barn, you would have seen SCHS member **Gary Hoving** and his exhibits of historical badges and lore surround the county's law enforcement history. Gary is a professional in every way and we are so grateful to him for his participation. Local resident and gun collector, **Sam Cotton**, would have wowed you again this year with his incredible collection of the Guns that Won the West. Sam is an expert gunslinger and always walks in the



Harvest Festival parade, shooting his black powder guns, and looking so authentic you would have run for cover! Gary and Sam are a show unto themselves because everyone is captured by their collections.

Outside the Barn there was a genuine Soapbox where Snake Oil Salesman **Chuck McLean** and assistant **Breann Murphy** entertained folks from with a lecture on the Bone Dust Theory of Behavior. What a crowd pleaser these two were and you would have noticed the children hanging around them.



Woodie Guthrie (enacted by **George Walker**) used the Soapbox from time to time during the afternoon to entertain folks with the classic American music that made Woodie a legend in his own time. Nearby you saw **Bill Doose** and **Sam Burton** whittling masterpieces. Did you think to ask for a lesson from those two?

In the Schoolhouse parking lot, you would have found the **A. G. Kiwanians** grilling sausages right next to new SCHS member **Marianne Buckmeyer** and our Roastin' Ear Corn Booth. This allowed you to satisfy your hunger pains while you listened to the Soapbox performers. Marianne was helped this year by member **Teri Kelley-Nixon** and **Marsha Stemmons**. The corn was provided by J.J.'s Market (member **Gordie Foy**) and was delicious. The ladies sold 480 roasting ears making a whopping \$700 for our kitty. Love those gals!

Alongside the hedgerow, SCHS member **Barbara Freel** ran the Costume Accessories Booth, selling boa feathers, mustaches, cowboy hats, stick horses that galloped and whinnied if you squeezed their ears. You could have bought your red long johns from Barbara and sidled over to **Ross Kongable's** Souvenir Photo Booth. Ross would have photographed you and your kin inside the Butterfield Overland Stage Line stagecoach, another masterpiece by Jane Maxwell Campbell. Ross and helper **Gus Berger** were easy too, accepting gold nuggets for payment if you were short on cash!



Member **Betty Guthrie** kept this booth out of chaos while hubbie and A.G. City Councilmember **Jim Guthrie** helped park all the vintage tractors and fire vehicles coming in from the parade! Member **Jerry Kaufman** was splendid in his vintage fireman's outfit alongside his restored vintage A.G. fire truck. Jerry was also selling his book on the history of the Arroyo Grande Fire Department. You might want to check it out - he's in the book!



Our Historical Society sponsored, again this year, the official Harvest Festival Costume Contest. We had six costume categories and 28 participants. Working this contest were **Edie Juck** and **Ethel Gilliland**. As the word spreads, we believe the contest will get bigger and bigger. Judges **Betty Guthrie, Barbara LeSage, Barbara Main, and Beverly Haynes** completed their tasks on Sunday afternoon.



See all the winners' photos in the window of the SCHS admin offices (*The Meatlocker*) in the Village.

Santa Manuela School was the setting for three old fashioned Spelling Bees with words tailored for Grades 3 & 4, 5 & 6, 7 & 8. School marms **Kathleen Sullivan, Kathleen Jenson, Norma Harloe, Anita Garcia, Lia Kalpakoff, Martha Saari and Rossi Berger** kept those spellers spelling 'til there were two winners from each group. School marm **Norma Burton** was sick, poor thing. The 1st place spellers won a \$10 gift certificate from Doc Burnstein's and the runners-up won a \$5 gift certificate. Everyone received a bright red Participant's Ribbon!



As always, you would have noticed some of our folks helping all the time, in every capacity. What would we have done without **Charles Porter, Doug LeSage, Chet and Jackie Thomas, Joe Swigert, Chuck and Linda Fellows, Martin Line, Juan Jazo, Edward Diable, Jim Bergman** (Ag Pavilion), plus our favorite young tractor drivers, **Kyle Perez and Paul Driggers**.

I hoped you might have noticed that we worked hard this year to make signs that can re-used each year. That depended on the talents of **Ross Kongable and Tom Reding**, so we are indebted to them for a goal accomplished. Our signs were gorgeous!

Chuck Fellows' white van shuttled folks from City Hall to Paulding History House and you'll read more about that from Jean Hubbard.

While **Olaf Shipstead** was carrying members back to their cars in a golf cart, Chuck Fellows



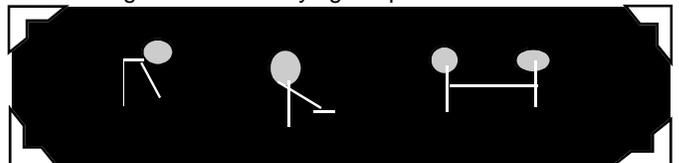
and his white van shuttled folks from City Hall to Paulding History House. Read more about that from Jean Hubbard

As you see, there were over 50 volunteers from the

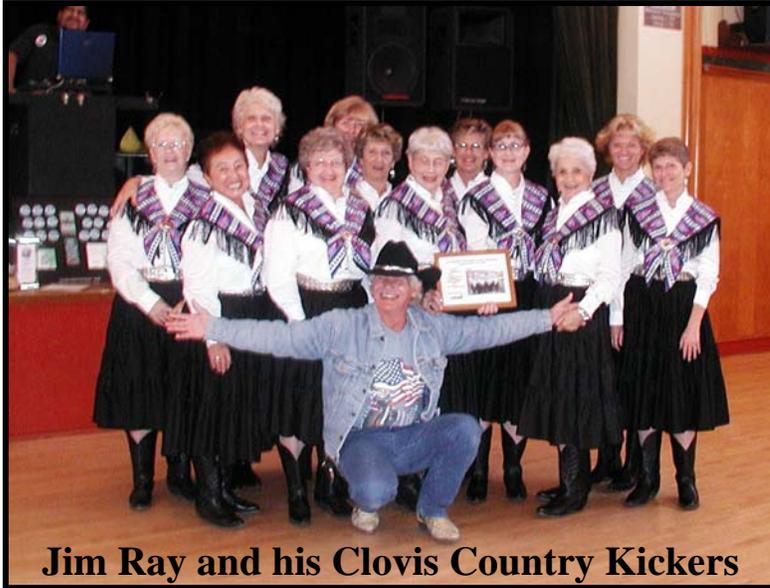
South County Historical Society which made the "OLD WEST" a memorable, popular, and successful event in our **Heritage Square**.



Hours after the crowds had gone home and in the pitch black of night remained the last of the Harvest Festival committee sweeping up straw, folding up cows and pigs, stacking tables and chairs, gathering delineators, washing out cow milking containers and removing all traces of days gone past.



Pictured hard at work are **Steve Adams, Doug Perrin, Jim Dickens and Vivian Krug** "returning" the hands of Arroyo Grande time to present 2005 until next September, 2006 when **Doug Perrin and Vivian Krug** take over where **Steve Adams and Debbie Sidenberg** left off as the Harvest Festival Chairs and turn back the clock once again.



Jim Ray and his Clovis Country Kickers



Learning the West Coast Swing



Learning the latest Line Dance "Tricky"

The **15th Annual Country Western Dance Festival**

held Sep 9-10-11, was tremendously successful as far as participant response was concerned, but far below expectations of attendance and net proceeds for the Society. Net proceeds from the event were \$1,507.00

Of the barely 200 paid attendance, 20 were from the local area, one from New Zealand, 3 from Maryland, 2 from Canada, the rest from Northern & Central California, Utah, Nevada and Arizona.

As in years past, we maintained the size of the event and presented over *90 Dance Workshops* in six different venues Friday afternoon and Saturday, which involved over *35 Dance Instructors* from around the Western US and Canada, plus *10 competition Judges.*, then on Sunday, held the *Team Competition and Awards ceremonies at the Vets Hall in Pismo.*

AND the event went smoothly due to the generous support of our

55 Volunteers

Gordon Bennett	Diane Moriano	Janice Maher
Manetta Bennett	Gus Berger	Dorothy Graham
Jack Beigle	Rossi Berger	Ruth Kodaj
Marya Kindig	Pearl Cole	Ken Huffine
Glenda Guiton	Elsie Reis	Carolyn Huffine
Martin Line	Sam Burton	John Adams
Jane Line	Norma Burton	Bill Doose
Eric Nelson	Sandra Cabassi	Agnes Herbold
Polly Nelson	Edie Juck	Mike Drees
Helene Morrison	Dede Dizney	Colleen Drees
Kathleen Jensen	Mary Lou Fink	Lia Kalpakoff
Sharon Moran	Doug LeSage	Arletta Truesdale
Linda Zorger	Barbara LeSage	Don Stepnitz
Linda Shephard	Rosita Carder	Bill McCann
Beth Garner	Laura Swall	Paulette McCann
Donna Fisher	Barbara Larsh	Kirk & Jan Scott
Bea Kongable	Gary Docherty	Vivian Krug
Diane Krasje	Jack Maher	



**2005 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
Directors and Committees**

President.....**Kirk Scott**.....481-4435
 Audit Committee: Kirk Scott, Jane Line
 Programs.....Charles Porter
Ways & Means— First VP.....**Jim Bergman**.....473-9757
 Books & Publishing.....Linda Shephard
 Tour Bus Coordinator.....Barbara Freeland
 Antique Show & Sale.....Doug LeSage
 Annual Rummage Sale.....Jan Scott
 Christmas Walk.....MaryAnn Feller
 Wedding/Social Coordinator.....Doug LeSage
Membership—Second VP.....**Michael & Colleen Drees**.....489-0295
 Volunteer Coordinator
Recording Secretary.....**Edie Juck**.....773-4689
Corresponding Secretary.....**Martha Saari**.....474-8031
 Historian & Sunshine.....Ethel Gilliland
Treasurer.....
Publicity.....**Vivian Krug**.....458-3321
 Community Relations
 Webmaster
Paulding History House Curator.....**Jean Hubbard**.....489-1701
 Paulding Committee.....Jean Hubbard
Museums Curator.....**Jan Scott**.....481-4435
 Assistant Curator.....Joe Swigert
 Heritage House.....Joe Swigert
 Santa Manuela Schoolhouse.....Marj Wolters
 The Barn.....Jim Bergman
Property Management.....**Charles Porter**.....929-1014
 IOOF Building Committee.....Howard Mankins
 Vehicles.....Edward Diable & Chet Thomas
 Gardening—Heritage House.....Barbara LeSage
 Gardening—Santa Manuela Schoolhouse.....Jane Line
 Gardening Paulding History House.....Jean Bryant
Docent Leader.....**Jane Line**.....481-6510
 Docent Supervisor.....Joe Swigert
 Heritage House Coordinator.....Jeanne Frederick
 Paulding House Coordinator.....Jean Hubbard
 Santa Manuela School Coordinator.....Kathleen Sullivan
 Barn.....Joe Swigert
 Student Tours.....Norma Harloe
Information Systems.....**Ross Kongable**.....489-2885
 Heritage Press Newsletter
 Computer Systems and Software
Parliamentarian.....**Kathleen Sullivan**.....489-8195
Society Information.....473-5077
Heritage House.....481-4126
Paulding History House.....473-3231
Santa Manuela School.....489-8745
The Barn.....489-8745

Website— www.SouthCountyHistory.Org

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mel Damski—474-9222
 791 Manuela Way, Arroyo Grande 93420

Jeff & Sherry Mosher—773-1318
 PO Box 69, Grover Beach 93483

Janet Laughter—(626) 974-0617
 PO Box 958, Temple City 91780

NEW LIFE MEMBER

Caroline Talley
 (daughter of Ryan & Christina Talley)
 Life Membership gift of her grandparents,
Bob & Karen Miller

CHANGES

Robert Way
 PO Box 18155, Panama City FL 32417

Get Well Wishes were sent to:

**Margaret Haak
 Ralph Beck**

Condolences were sent to:

Hilda Rosa
 on the loss of her brother

*From the Sunshine Committee
 Ethel Gilliland*

Dues Schedule—2005

Individual\$15	Family w/children under 18\$40	Patron (business/individual) ...\$200+
Couple\$30	Sustaining (individual)\$100+	Life (individual)\$500+

MEMBERSHIP SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RENEWAL NEW

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Home Tel: _____ Work Tel: _____ Email: _____

Type of Membership _____ Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Check No. _____

Please make check or money order payable to SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SOCIETY MEETINGS

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



PO Box 633
Arroyo Grande
CA 93421

GENERAL MEETING

Held on the **2nd Tuesday** at **6:30 pm**
at the Hiawatha Lodge, 3065 Temple, Halcyon
Bring your table settings and a dish to share

OCT 11, 2005

“Sharing Santa Maria’s Yesterdays”
Phyllis Roddenberger

Presentation of Board of Directors Nominations for 2006

Our Phone Number for
Society information

473-5077

Please pass it along to everyone for general inquiries and information about the Society

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

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SOUTH COUNTY REALTY
102 Bridge Street, Arroyo Grande—481-4297