

South County Historical Society

2009 Board of Directors Elected November 11, 2008

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Welcome New Board Members !

Ed. Note: This is an abbreviated newsletter this month, regular columns and features will resume with the December Newsletter.

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South County Historical Society

Heritage Press

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Railroad Days are Coming to Arroyo Grande!!!

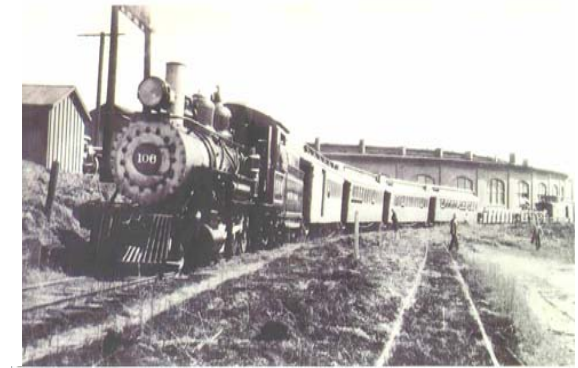
Families are invited to the 2nd Annual Railroad Days Celebration at the historic IOOF Hall in Arroyo Grande between 10 AM and 5 PM on Saturday and Sunday, December 6, 7, 13 and 14. Model trains, storytelling, and films combine with holiday snacks and historic photographs with a IOOF Hall backdrop replicating the historic Oceano Train Depot. A sale of Oceano Dunes photographs and a raffle to win a trip to the Railroad Museum in Sacramento are also planned. The events are sponsored by the San Luis Obispo Model Railroad Association and the South County Historical Society.

"We had such a great response last year with nearly 800 hundred people over two days that we decided to have the event over four days this year," according to **Craig Rock**, Exhibit Director of the South County Historical Society. Rock said the event is free but a \$2 donation is suggested.

Train and history buffs will enjoy a special (On30) train set-up on the Pacific Coast Railway which historically started in Avila, passed through San Luis Obispo and Arroyo Grande and ended up in Los Olivos. Other train setups include "N", "O", and "G" scale trains many with Christmas themes.

The Exhibit Committee of the Historical Society will be working with the Oceano Depot Association in replicating sections of the Oceano Depot which served the freight and passenger traffic of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Photographs of the Oceano Dunes by Santa Barbara photographer **Robert Werling** will be displayed and available for sale. Historic photographs by Virgil Hodges, on loan

from the **Bennett-Loomis Archives**, will also be on display as will photographs by **Billy Mounts** of the Arroyo Grande Camera Club of the 1950s.



—Photo from Loren Nicholson Collection

The winner of the raffle, a benefit for the SLO Model Railroad Association, will take away two round-trip train tickets to Sacramento, tickets to the State Railroad Museum, dinner for two, and a one-night hotel stay. Raffle tickets are \$5.00 and can be purchased at the event or in advance. The actual raffle will be held at another Model Railroad Day at the Oceano Depot on Sunday, January 25. More information at www.slomra.org.

The schedule will be the same each day with storytelling and films at 10 AM, history talks by **Loren Nicholson** at high noon (on December 6, 7, and 13 only), and model trains running from 11 AM to 5 PM. For more information call the South County Historical Society at 489-8282.

**You Are Cordially Invited to Our
Second Annual Christmas Party**
 South County Historical Society's IOOF Hall
 128 Bridge Street
 Village of Arroyo Grande
 Sunday, December 7
 4-8 PM*
Champagne, Chocolate and Cookies
 *Time Coincides with "Elegant Evening in the Village"

ARROYO GRANDE CAMERA CLUB

A Personal recollection by Billy Mounts

(This is written in response to an invitation from Craig Rock, South County Historical Society, and is a subjective recollection rather than an exhaustive historical document.) Ed. Note: Photos by Billy Mounts are on display at the IOOF Hall through December 14, 2008

Norman Brown, mid 20th Century Postmaster of Arroyo Grande, was also known as "Mr. Photography" in his era. He had been a fireman in his earlier years, during which time an injury left him with partial paralysis of the lower extremities. He ambulated with crutches. This physical limitation may well have allowed him to hone his photographic skills into sharpness. It was perhaps the crucible that tempered him into excellence. Norm viewed photography as a union of art and science and he became a master of each. His photographic studio/darkroom was the setting for creation of the Arroyo Grande Camera Club, of which he was the prime mover.



—Photo by Billy Mounts

Norm's teaching skills attracted members, primarily from the Five Cities area, but also from San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria. The group consisted of 12-15 members who met the first Tuesday of each month. His teaching style was both didactic and lab oriented. For example, discussion of a specific topic was followed by a trip into the adjoining darkroom for a practical demonstration. The Club had been extant for a period of time when I became a member in 1956 and the club continued for more than ten additional years following my tenure of more than ten years. My recollections cover only a mere sliver of the Club's history.

In group sessions, Norm emphasized the art of pictorial composition and how to "read" a picture. He felt a good print should have a center of interest, appropriately placed. In the better print, one expects to find a full range of the grey scale with rich black and brilliant white tones at the extremes (all prints of that era were black/white). The best images were captured at "the decisive moment." Outdoor pictorial, or creative, photography is ideally done during early morning or the late afternoon sun, at a time in which the lengthening shadows add a dimension of depth and avoid shadows of the midday sun. In the camera, he taught the importance of tripod use, the relationship between aperture size and depth of critical focus field and he demonstrated the effect of altering shutter speed. Norm would say, "The secret of a good print resides in a good negative." To this end he taught, "Overly expose in the camera and underdevelop in the dark-room."

The purpose: to obtain detail in the shadows without blanching the highlights. He was a master technician in manipulating the photographic enlarger where the amount of light exposure is either intensified or subdued by the art of "dodging" and/or "burning." These tidbits of photography were held by Norm as "rules of thumb" to be followed until such time they are mastered. Artistic license then allows journeyman latitude for creativity. Norman Brown was a journeyman in whom the art and science of photography were encrypted into his very marrow. As a means of implementing newly learned skills and techniques, Norm assigned a topic each month for Club competition. These topics: portraits, landscapes, seascapes, still life, dune shots, children, animals, industrial, agricultural, etc. Members prepared a finished, mounted print for competition, each of which was critically judged by Norm or one of the more advanced students. These sessions were most instructive as one progressed from 8" X 10" prints through 11" X 14" and finally to 16" X 20".

Norm invited several to become active in an advanced Club, "Tierra de Los Padres" (Land of our Fathers) affiliated as a member of "The Photographic Society of America (PSA)". The group met at Norm's studio/darkroom on the first Saturday each month at which time four 16" X 20" salon prints were selected to represent the Club for national competition. Norm regularly received high ratings. The remainder of us might occasionally receive an honorable mention. The Arroyo Grande Club sponsored the National Competition on one occasion. We received prints from throughout the United States. Boris Dobro, renowned photographer and instructor at Brooks Institute of Photography, served as judge of the event.

Occasionally, Norm would take his show on the road. When he was invited to discuss pictorial photography with a group of military (Naval) personnel stationed near Cambria, he asked me to join him, which proved to be a memorable and worthwhile evening.

Active members of Tierra de Los Padres during my time: Porter Hart, Pharmacist, Pismo Beach; Maynard Murray, Oceano Ice Co., Oceano; Stan Byrd, Vegetable Broker, Pismo Beach; Billy Mounts, Physician, Pismo Beach; Robert Guiton, Realtor, Oceano; Norm Brown, Postmaster, Arroyo Grande; and several members, two from Santa Maria, whose names are not recalled.



The fact of names beyond my immediate recall emphasizes the point that we should note in detail such past events before they, too, "into the dust descend." The past is prologue: those who ignore it are destined to repeat. ■

—1902 Box Camera SCHS Collection from Mrs. B Dixon Conrad. Mahogany box with bellows and brass fittings.

Arroyo Grande Harvest Festival Bake-Off was a complete success! We had 66 entries this year with some great volunteers (Jessica and Dianna from AG High School were awesome!) It was a beautiful day. Last year we had 43 entries, and the year before that there were 26 entries! I'm already thinking about next year.....smile! —*Teresa Kelly-Nixon.*

PUMPKIN SPECIALTY BREAD

Sponsored by *Trader Joes & David's Blue Ribbon Honey*

1st Place: Hazel Kucera, AG
2nd Place: Sandi Ferrio, AG
3rd Place: Bev Rhodes, AG

PUMPKIN TRADITIONAL BREAD

Sponsored by *Branch Street Deli*

1st Place: Breanna Thompson, AG
2nd Place: Gina Phillips, AG
3rd Place: Hazel Kucera, AG

HARVEST GONE WILD

Sponsored by *Friends of the AG Harvest Bake-Off & Verena's Go Gourmet*

1st Place: Sandi Ferrio, AG (Carmel Apple Bread)
2nd Place: Courtney Clark, AG (Pumpkin Streusel Coffeecake)
3rd Place: Connie Mooney, GB (Pumpkin Lemon Cookies)

AUTUMN PIE REVIEW

Sponsored by *Lunds*

1st Place: Gloria Clark, AG (Walnut Pie)
2nd Place: Hazel Kucera, AG (Peach & Apple Pie)
3rd Place: Connie Mooney, GB (Pumpkin Chiffon Pie)

ZUCCHINI TRADITIONAL BREAD

Sponsored by *Chili's Grill & Bar*

1st Place: Gina Phillips, AG
2nd Place: Marcia Teresi, GB
3rd Place: Traci Clark, AG

ZUCCHINI SPECIALTY BREAD

Sponsored by *Miner's Ace Hardware*

1st Place: Sandi Ferrio, AG
2nd Place: Hazel Kucera, AG
3rd Place: Bev Rhodes, AG

FALL BREAD SWEEPSTAKES WINNER

Sponsored by *Applebee's*

Sandi Ferrio, AG

COUNTRY CANNING COMPETITION

Sponsored by *San Luis Farm Supply*

1st Place: Janet Knollenberg, AG (Pickled Dilled Green Beans)
2nd Place: Breda Doherty-Louie, AG (Apricot Jam)
3rd Place: Mark Smith, AG (Raspberry Vanilla Jam)

APPLE PIE EXHIBITION

Sponsored by *Advantage Answering Plus*

1st Place: K.J. Prince, AG \$100 winner (Caramel Crumb Top Apple Pie)
2nd Place: Bridget Johnson, AG \$50 winner (Nana's Scottish Apple Pie)
3rd Place: Dennis & Annette Fesler, AG (9 inch Apple Pie)

NOTE: 2008 Memberships are Due for Renewal!



Individual.....\$15.00
Couple.....\$30.00
Family w/children under 18\$40.00
Sustaining (Individual).....\$100.00
Life (Individual)\$500.+

Corporate Memberships
Platinum... \$5,000.
Gold....2,500.
Silver.....\$1,000.

Check your mailing label on the back page: if the date ends in 12/31/08 your membership will expire on that date and you need to renew with a check. Fill out information blank below & mail with your check in the envelope provided with this newsletter. Dates ending in 99 & 2020 are Life Members.



MEMBERSHIP SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY RENEWAL

NEW

Name (s) * _____

Address * _____

Home Tel: * _____ Work Tel: _____ Email: * _____

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

Please mail check or money order payable to **SOUTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO Box 633, Arroyo Grande Ca 93421.**

If you wish to receive a copy of the Membership Directory by mail, please add \$2.00 donation to your check to cover the cost.

NOTE: (*Starred information will be printed in annual Membership Directory distributed to members unless you indicate otherwise.) Please print legibly. Our eyesight isn't what it used to be. Thank you for your continuing support of the Society!