

Santee Historical Society

Historical Happenings

Volume 9, Issue 1

January • February • March 2017



Santee Historical Museum

at the Barn

9200 Magnolia

Open every Tuesday

except the 2nd one of the month,

from 10 to noon...

and the 3rd Saturday of each month
from 10 to 2 pm.

**Come visit...
everyone is welcome!**



P.O.Box 710636, Santee 92072



www.SanteeHistoricalSociety.org



Santee Historical Society



TheSanteeHistoricalSociety@gmail.com



619.449.2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carol Crafts, President
Robin Neece, Vice-President
Arli Wolfson, Secretary
Gary Strawn, Treasurer
Alan Thompson, Facilities
Irene Holstein, Sunshine

President's Message



Carol Crafts

Remember the Historic Flood of 1916? One year ago we were anticipating the 100 year flood to re-occur. Well, it didn't happen and our drought continues. With the County Supervisors Grant, this year we installed rain gutters and water collecting systems and now as the rains do come we are prepared.

Our Christmas Open House featuring the 4-H Petting Zoo and Santa Claus was a resounding success. More than 200 visited us that day.

Our Santana Students have increased their participation at the Barn. Flower beds which will include herbs and vegetables typical of 1900; a butterfly garden and a hydroponic garden are being developed.

Our Board is once again fully staffed with the addition of Robin Neece as Vice-President and Gary Strawn as Treasurer. Tricia Luke has begun interviewing people who have contributed to the success of the Santee Community. If you are or know of someone who is or has been important to our area please contact us. Let's preserve those 'family stories'.

We still need help working on our archives, scanning slides and yearbooks. With enough help we are planning to have the barn open Monday – Friday, as well as the 3rd Saturday of each month. Do you have two hours (11:30 – 2:30) to come host the museum? We will train you and it is fun meeting new people.

I look forward to another successful year of preserving local history and meeting you at the Barn.

Carol

Your continued membership means so much to us!

The Santee Historical Society has changed its membership year to Jan. 1 - Dec. 31. All memberships (except existing life-time) are due this month.

For your convenience we have enclosed a self-addressed envelope. Please take a minute to renew your membership according to the amount listed on the envelope flap.

Your membership fee is tax deductible.

Just insert your check, tape it shut and add a stamp.

Thank you!

Upcoming Events

January 2017

Barn Open	Tues 3	10-12
Open House	Sat 21	10-2
Barn Open	Tues 17	10-12
Barn Open	Tues 24	10-12
Barn Open	Tues 31	10-12

February 2017

Barn Open	Tues 7	10-12
Open House	Sat 18	10-2
Barn Open	Tues 21	10-12
Barn Open	Tues 28	10-12

March 2017

Barn Open	Tues 7	10-12
River Kids		
Discovery Day	Sat 11	10-2
Open House	Sat 18	10-2
Barn Open	Tues 21	10-12
Barn Open	Tues 28	10-12

April 2017

Barn Open	Tues 4	10-12
Open House	Sat 15	10-2
Barn Open	Tues 18	10-12
Barn Open	Tues 25	10-12

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS



**AZTEC & BARON
INSURANCE AGENCY**
John Linden
7560 University Ave, Ste A
La Mesa, CA
619-667-2677



CYNTHIA WHITNEY CPA
Certified Public Accounting
619-971-0733
Cynthia@cpacynthia.com



FOSSETT DENTISTRY
8770 Cuyamaca St. #1
Santee, CA 92071
619-488-8387



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Gluten Free Bakery
9730 Cuyamaca #A
Santee, CA 92071
619-321-8307



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Santee, CA 92071
619-448-8768
lloydcollision@att.net



LUCIA T. MAGNETA
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Santee, CA 92071
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www.missionrealtygroup.com



SANTEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
10315 Mission Gorge Rd.
Santee, CA 92071
619-449-6572
santeechamber.com



SANTEE SCHOOL DISTRICT
9625 Cuyamaca Street
Santee, CA 92071
619-258-2300
www.santeesd.net



SANTEE GROCERY OUTLET
9759 Mission Gorge Road
Santee, CA 92071
619-258-2577
santee@groceryoutlet.com

We Need Your Story

There are so many stories of families that lived or worked in Santee that have not yet been heard or written. They may have been among the prominent of our community, or have been one of the quiet families that simply lived here. The mere presence of any family in Santee contributed to the city's growth, culture and economy. Every person that ever lived here contributed in some way!

Please contribute your family's story to the Santee Historical Society and helped preserve your family's history.

There are several ways you can do this:

You can write the history yourself.

You can make an appointment with the SHS office and we will help you start your family's history.

In some cases, we will record your history for posterity.

Just remember...

All families that lived in Santee contributed to its history somehow.

Help us preserve the stories.



Meet our new Vice President



Robin Neece grew up living in ten different states because of her fathers employment. Eventually her family settled in San Diego. She and her husband, Bo, moved to North Park in 1988, loved it, but needed more room for toys. So east was the direction to go. So in 2007 they moved to Santee. They love it here.

"We enjoy the easy accessibility of the freeway, the towns family oriented events, and that we found all the space that we needed, plus living in a town with an Interesting history. And what better way to learn more about Santee then by joining the Historical Society."

She and Bo have been very involved with Tierra Del Sol 4 Wheel Drive Club of San Diego for many years. They put on an annual event, Desert Safari, every March by the Salton Sea. All proceeds go to help keep public lands open for public use. She

volunteers every Tuesday at the historical society and is now vice president. She is looking forward to learning more about this wonderful city.

Meet our Volunteers



Auf Al Gharbi was born in 1961 in Baghdad, the controversial capital of Iraq.

"I was the only brother of five sisters. When I was very young, I was forced to work to support my family. However, I was diligent in school, and I qualified for admission to the Faculty of Civil Engineering / University of Technology in Baghdad. I graduated in 1983, and became a civil engineer. I served in many governmental positions, starting as a resident engineer, progressing up to a project manager. I later established my own construction company in Iraq. In 2006 I left Iraq with my wife and children going to Egypt because of the bad conditions in Iraq. I established a company there in the field of construction. Looking for better life for my family, in December 2015 I decided to immigrate to the United States I work as a volunteer in Santee Historical Society in computers, and also got a job later in the PCG (Public Consulting Group) as a

Computer Lab Assistant. My real happiness comes when I help others and make them happy. One of the reasons I volunteer at the Historical Society is that I consider that every human is a history and we have to respect this history."

Awf has been working with us helping to computerize our Santana High School yearbooks. Someday we hope to get copies of the West Hills yearbooks to digitize them as well. Awf is wonderful to work with. Next time you come to the barn, ask to peek your head into our workroom and say 'hi' to Awf.

Tricia Luke grew up in San Diego, and has lived in Santee since January, 2010. Growing up in North Park, her early impression of Santee was that it was a town of cowboys who drove big, dusty trucks. Since moving to Meadowbrook Estates, she has come to appreciate the community and its convenience and friendliness.

Tricia works as a technical writer at a local tech company. Being a writer is what attracted her to volunteer with the Santee Historical Society. She read on the AARP web site that the Society was looking for someone to interview long-time Santee residents and write-up their stories. Having been a technical trainer, writer, and long-time Toastmaster, Tricia found the opportunity to interview people and write their stories enticing. She has completed articles for two esteemed local residents, Chuck Brack and Irene Holstein, and is looking forward to the next assignment.

Because of her background in technology, she also volunteered technical support whenever she can help. Although she still has a day job and can't attend every function, she is looking forward to staying involved with the Historical Society and in the community.

Please be sure to give Tricia your warmest welcome next time you see her.



Santee - the First City to Recycle its Water



Santee was a quiet little town with a feed store, blacksmith, Railroad station and a lot of farms. A farmer could get his water from the San Diego River in the winter, and in the summer a 50 ft well would supply all the water needed. The water would be pumped from the well and used as flood irrigation for their dairy cows, grapes and fruit trees.

All was fine until the El Capitan Dam was put in. After the dam was finished, the existing wells dried up and as they drilled deeper and deeper, the water quality became poorer and poorer. More and more farmers moved out leaving only a few dairy farms in the Santee area.

The new business in Santee became the sale of homes. By the end of the 1950's, in Santee alone, the typical month showed 300 new houses being built worth \$4,000,000. But there was a problem. With the rising population, the demand for water rose, also. The main source for water was now the Colorado River! And along with the expanding water need, the population explosion also meant there was also an excess of waste water.

Luckily for Santee, along came Ray Stoyer. Ray was originally from Pennsylvania. After WW2, he owned a San Diego home appliance store. In 1956 he sold his business and went to work for the new Santee County Water District. In 1959 he was working on the problem of Santee's waste water. Santee had a sewage water treatment plant. It first cleaned out the solid material and then purified the remaining water leaving it only partially cleaned.

This "cleaned" water was dumped in the Sycamore Canyon Creek. But in 1959 the regulations changed raising the purity standards. The treatment center was no longer up to the standards and the water could no longer go into the Creek.



Ray L. Stoyer, the manager of the Santee County Water District had to come up with a solution. Santee was too small to come up with the money for a modernized water treatment plant that would satisfy the new requirements.

There were two immediate solutions. San Diego offered an invitation to run Santee's waste water thru their treatment plant and then dump the still polluted water into the Pacific Ocean. It would be very expensive and San Diego wanted a 40 year, open ended contract.

Ray Stoyer realized that the price of water from the Colorado River was going to continue to go up. He also realized that, if properly treated, sewage water was not as polluted as the average person thought it was. He knew that if he could solve the problem of the waste water he may also find a source for water usable for irrigation, washing cars, and other things. This would be less water needed to be bought from the Colorado.

Stoyer told the story of walking along the Sycamore Canyon. He saw the mining operation of Bill Mast. There were excavated beds of up to 1,000 feet wide and 12 feet deep. Stoyer envisioned lakes in place of those gravel pits. The canyon would be a great site for a series of man-made lakes. The area would use the water from the sewage treatment and becomes a recreation area.

Stoyer convinced Mast that the freshwater lakes would attract people to buy or build homes in Santee. In addition, Mast could use the lake water to irrigate the golf course Mast had wanted to build. Mast agreed to give his used sand and gravel pits to the town. The donation of the land helped Stoyer convince the Board to reject the invitation from San Diego and to use the lakes to help with the town's water and sewage problem.

In 1961 the Lakes was opened to the public. 10,000 people flocked to the Lakes on opening day. The concern regarding the acceptance of the public of

recreational use of reclaimed water was found to be empty. Everyone was eager to play in the waters. A club called the "Argonauts" found the lakes perfect for their radio controlled model boats.

Over the years various government agencies and scientists came to Santee to test the waters of the Lakes. In 1965 virologists concluded that these were no water borne viruses in the water, and swimming was allowed in one of the lakes. In May 1965, nine year old Jimmy Lowery swam in a new pool in the

Lakes. He became the first "official" swimmer in reclaimed sewage water in the United States.

Ray Stoyer was a pioneer of reclaimed water. Along with the establishment of the Lakes, Stoyer is also responsible, as Santee Chamber of Commerce President, of the acquisition of the Chamber offices on Mission Gorge Ave. In 1969 Stoyer left the town of Santee to work on a carefully planned community on the Irvine Ranch north San Diego. Edward W. Houser took Stoyer's place with Gale Ruffin as his assistant.

THE SUNDAY STAR
Washington, D. C., November 21, 1965

Californians Swim in Water Reclaimed From Sewage

By ORR KELLY
Star Staff Writer

On June 3, last, 9-year-old Jimmy Lowery slipped through the gate, ran across the sand and plunged into the water of the new swimming pool at Santee, in the arid hills east of San Diego, Calif.

To get there, he had passed a sign which warned (perhaps "bragged" is a better word):

"This swimming facility has opened a new field of recreational opportunity for the American public. It is supplied with reclaimed water."

Every drop of water in the pool had passed through the Santee sewage treatment plant a few weeks before.

To Jimmy Lowery and the 3,226 others who used the pool last summer, and to the 50,000 persons who used the three recreational lakes filled from the same source, where the water came from didn't seem to make any difference at all.

Outgrowth of Idea

For Ray L. Stoyer, manager of the Santee County Water District, the opening of the swimming pool was a significant victory of mind over matter.

John C. Merrell Jr., project

officer for the Public Health Service's water pollution control agency, who visited Washington last week, told how Stoyer, a promoter's promoter, had started five years ago with nothing but an idea and an unsightly gravel pit—which happened to belong to someone else.

The developer of Santee, he said, needed water to irrigate the golf course which was to be one of the attractions of the bedroom community, about 17 miles from downtown San Diego.

Stoyer agreed to furnish him with water from the city sewage plant if he, in turn, could use an ugly gully that ran down beside the housing development.

Rich in Nutrients

The developer agreed and now gets nearly half a million gallons of water a day to water his golf course—water that would otherwise cost \$30-40,000 a year. The fact that the water, after standing in a settling pool for 30 days, is still rich in nutrients just helps to make the grass green and lush.

Stoyer, meanwhile, sent bulldozers to scoop four lake beds out of the gully.

Then he pumped the water

from the settling pond up the hill above the lake beds and let it run down through an old stream bed.

Lakes Beautified

An elaborate series of checks on the quality of the water in the lakes was made. At first, people were permitted to look at the water. Trees and grass along the edges made the lakes attractive.

Gradually, the 13,000 residents of Santee were permitted to get closer and closer to the water. They were permitted to picnic along the shore. Then they were allowed to go boating. Fishing was permitted and, after careful checks, people were allowed to take the fish home and eat them.

But the final proof Stoyer needed to prove that his idea was sound to get approval for people to swim in the reclaimed water.

An area was walled off from one of the lakes and the bottom coated to prevent mud from clouding the water. Elaborate tests of the water were made. And finally, in June, Jimmy Lowery jumped into the water, followed by a horde of other youngsters.

Our Most Recent Events

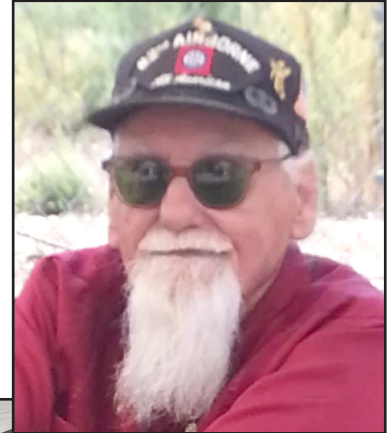
WWII Love Songs

On October 15th, following the SHS General Meeting, we invited the general public to join us for a performance by Mike Chamberlin. You might know him as ESPN's water-sports analyst, but as an ex-rock 'n roller and Viet Nam Vet, Mike Chamberlin's first love is singing. Some of the greatest love songs of all time came from the early 1940s and the call to arms.



His performance, a combination of music, sing-a-longs, humor and storytelling, featured the love songs of World War II. It was a smash hit with all that attended.

Having a WWII veteran in attendance made it that much more special.



Lantern Crest

On Wednesday, November 30th we hosted the Second Annual Visit from Lantern Crest's Memory Care Unit. They were joined this year by a group of students from Santana High School. Mary, from Lantern Crest, entertained by playing the piano.

There was singing, hot dogs and camaraderie galore.

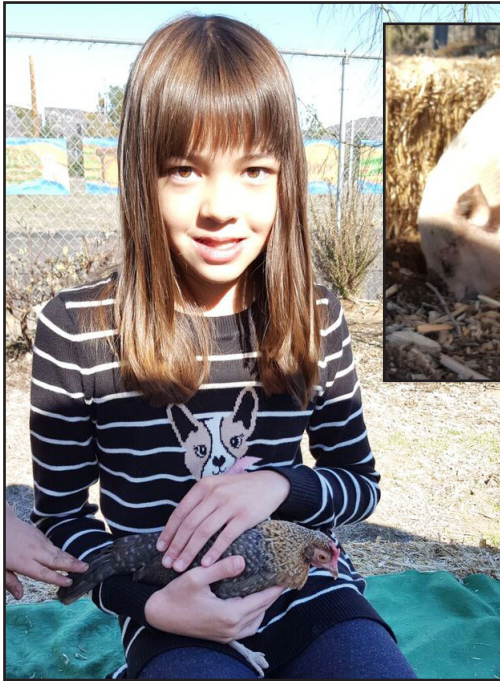


We are encouraging Lantern Crest to become a member of the Santee Historical Society and be even more involved with the museum, and in preserving the City's history.

Christmas Open House

Our Annual Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 3rd was a wonderful event... greater than we ever expected it to be.

The Sagebrush 4-H's Petting Zoo delighted the children, who then got to sit on Santa's lap and tell him of their Christmas wishes. There were wonderful Holiday goodies to eat and drink. We estimate that we had at least 200 visitors to the Barn, and many more that just stopped to see the animals.

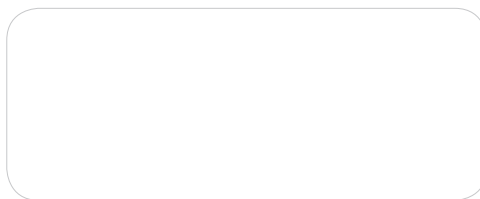




PO Box 710636
Santee, CA 92072

Carol Crafts, President
Robin Neece, Vice President
Arli Wolfson, Secretary
Gary Strawn, Treasurer
Alan Thompson, Facilities Engineer
Irene Holstein, Sunshine Committee

*Printing courtesy of Bob Newton
of Town & Country Printers*



Looking for a good time?

The Santee Historical Society has been busy with new acquisitions, new displays, and continuing research. We are a fun group and enjoy the camaraderie that comes with working on a worthy cause.



We need people to help with things like painting benches and display cabinets, archiving newspaper articles about Santee, and greeting people at events. Your help will allow us to continue participating in Santee events such as the Santee Street Fair and Tree Lighting.

Please volunteer some time... even a few hours a month would be a big help. We welcome new ideas and energy. Call us at 619-449-2024, leave a message, and we will return your call, or email us at thesanteehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Come on by... we are open 3 Tuesdays a month
and at least one Saturday.
If you see the 'Open' flag flying, we are here!



Look for our 'OPEN' flag
as you drive by the Barn
on Magnolia Avenue