



PAJARO VALLEY

Historical Association

Fall 2022

8th Annual Stay-at-Home Fundraising Raffle

By Ralph Jacobs

Our 8th Annual Stay-at-Home Raffle was held this year with the drawing October 26. Tickets were drawn at the Bockius-Orr house by Sue King and Audra Carson. The lucky winners were: Sandra Malatesta, Roland Rebele, Frances Delfino, Bill Hagins, Chuck and Ramona Allen, Rob Keener, Alice Bankhead and Helen Harness.

PVHA raised \$15,400 which will be used for the operation and maintenance of the Bockius-Orr house and Borina Archive. This was PVHA's only fund-raiser this year. A big thank you to all those who donated prizes and purchased tickets; and thanks to all those who worked hard to make this happen. 🍁



Top: PVHA volunteers and staff at the drawing

Lower left: Audra Carson and Sue King draw tickets



Annual Vintage Picnic Honors PVHA Icons

By Elijah Ezeji-Okoye

On July 2, over 180 community members joined PVHA in front of the Bockius-Orr House for our Annual Vintage Picnic. This year's event was held in memory of Judy Doering-Nielsen and Louis Arbanas, who passed away earlier this year and late last year, respectively. Our guest speaker, Edward Kelly, delivered remarks on the Kelly-Thompson Ranch, guiding

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The Kelly-Thompson Ranch home place, eastern foothills of the valley, circa 1871



Bockius-Orr House Up in Lights

By Jodi Frensley

Please be sure to drive by the Bockius-Orr House to see our holiday lights display. This year marks the first in PVHA history that the House and historic oak trees will be lit up for the holiday season. The display will last from November 1 through January 5. The lights are on from 6:15pm to 10:30pm each evening. May you all have a safe and blessed holiday season. ❧



PVHA

Preserving the History
of the Greater Pajaro Valley
Established 1940
Incorporated 1956

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Steve Bankhead's Writings Available

By Claudia Mize

Steve Bankhead, local resident and writer, passed away in February this year. His articles and opinion pieces appeared regularly in the *Pajaronian* and *Sentinel*. His family recently donated many articles that Mr. Bankhead wrote, along with pictures and numerous other things, to PVHA. We are now able to share these articles.

When reviewing his "Letters to the Editor," I came across a letter he wrote in 1985 after Frank Orr (editor of the *Register-Pajaronian* newspaper) passed away:

"I never met Frank Orr. I don't believe I had ever seen his picture until I saw one over the headline announcing his death. But I've read his words and mailed him mine for 15 years, and felt closer to him than to some people I've met a hundred times. I rarely disagreed with Mr. Orr, and when I did it was because I felt his opinion was perhaps too ethical for the real world. What a glorious way to be wrong! 'To the Editor' has always meant 'To Mr. Orr' and now the words will never be quite the same. The world of journalism has lost a humane and reasoned voice, and I've lost a dear friend I've never met." ❧

A History of Aromas



By Tina Baine

I am pleased to announce the publication of my book, *AROMASTORY: The Overlooked History of an Underdog Town*. If you are not that familiar with the rural town of Aromas (pop. 2,500), it sits on the meeting point of three counties on the eastern edge of the Pajaro Valley, and its history in full has never been published until now.

I've lived in Aromas for 27 years and was inspired to write this book after discovering a collection of photos, oral histories, and memorabilia gathered by the late Alzora Snyder at the Aromas Library. (Alzora Snyder was also a prominent researcher at the PVHA for 35 years.) Once I saw her collection it seemed vitally important to continue the research and make it available to a wider audience as a book.

In words and photographs, *AROMASTORY* traces Aromas's history from the drastically altered lives of the indigenous Motssum tribe after the arrival of soldiers and mission-

aries, all the way to the present. The town's initial ties to San Juan Bautista and the mission were soon eclipsed by those that developed with Watsonville after the Southern Pacific Railroad took a fortuitous right turn through Chittenden Pass towards the Pajaro Valley (and away from San Juan) in 1871.


Although Watsonville was a well-established city by the time Aromas was officially named in 1894, and Aromans routinely traveled there for supplies, entertainment, and secondary schooling, Aromas had resources that Watsonville needed as well. In the 1890s the *Pajaronian* extolled the possibilities of the "good granite" deposits in the "eastern part of this valley" after Santa Cruz County Judge J. H. Logan purchased a granite quarry in Aromas. Logan Quarry was adjacent to the railroad tracks and the earthquake-prone San Andreas Fault, the latter of which conveniently pre-fractured the rock, making it ideal for construction.

The newspaper urged that crushed granite could be used to upgrade the "disgraceful" condition of the city's streets.

The quarry (Granite Rock Co.) was purchased by Watsonville businessman Warren R. Porter and civil engineer Arthur R. Wilson in 1900 for \$10,000 in gold coin, just as demand for stronger, safer building materials was increasing. In 1903 the company was awarded a contract to build the Carnegie Library in Watsonville. And, after the 1906 earthquake demolished buildings in downtown Watsonville, it helped clear rubble and rebuilt the Pajaro Valley National Bank and St. Patrick's Church.

In the early 1900s, the "Aromas district" also became a key player in the agricultural production of the Pajaro Valley. Prominent Watsonville growers such as M.N. Lettunich bought land and built packing sheds, bunkhouses, and apple dryers along

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WORK IN THE APRICOTS

And Spend Your

VACATION at AROMAS

In Beautiful Monterey County
One hour's drive from Santa Cruz, Monterey and other Resorts

Swimming
Boating
Picnicking
Free to Workers



AROMAS DAM

Camp Grounds
Wood and Water
Free to Workers

Work Commences About July 15th

GOOD WAGES PAID

FOR PARTICULARS WRITE
Mr. C. E. Bulmer, Aromas, Monterey County, Calif.

PAJARONIAN PRINT WATSONVILLE, CALIF.

Pajaro Valley Historical Association • Fall 2022

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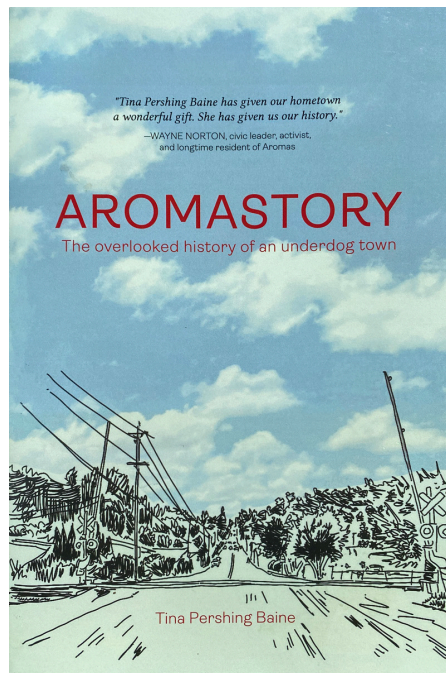
Aromas from page 3

the railroad tracks in Aromas, and the district's output was carefully tracked and reported in the *Pajaronian*. Although berries and apples were grown in the flat bottomland along the Pajaro River, vast orchards of apricots were planted on the hills. Aromas soon became the largest producer of apricots on the Central Coast.

As the town grew, so did its buildings. The community constructed a larger schoolhouse in 1895 (designed by William Weeks), a Baptist Church in 1901, a Yeoman social hall in 1904, and a Grange Hall in 1922. One hundred years later, the Grange is still the town's main gathering place, and in 2019 Aromas had the largest membership in California and the eighth largest in the nation.

When the apricot orchards began to decline in the 1950s, Aromas was forced to reinvent itself. Infrastructure was needed to sustain the growing population, even if many residents had to go elsewhere for jobs. Fire and water districts were created and had their share of fiscal concerns, power plays, and controversy.

In the 1990s, when the majority of Aromas residents decided that the Pajaro Valley Unified School District was not serving their children as well as a smaller district could, they created their own, partnering with another small town to create the Aromas-San Juan Unified School District. In 1998 the first senior class graduated from a new campus, Anzar High School, named for the family that owned the original land grant, Rancho Las Aromitas y Agua Caliente, from which the town derived its name.



Under the jurisdiction of three separate counties, Aromas has always struggled to be recognized and supported. Those struggles likely draw certain kinds of people to Aromas—do-it-yourselfers who are tough and resilient. We enjoy our town's relative isolation as well as our close proximity to the urban regions surrounding

it (except for the traffic, of course). My book is about the people who have been passionately drawn to this little town and have kept it going, and how Aromas fits into the larger story of the beautiful coastal region of the Monterey Bay. 🌿

For information about where to purchase *AROMASTORY*, which includes over 250 vintage photographs and illustrations, visit aromastorythebook.com



Tina Pershing Baine is a PVHA archive volunteer and has been a columnist and photographer for the Santa Cruz Sentinel and several other newspapers.

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at Jalisco's

By Claudia Mize

PVHA hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in the patio at Jalisco's Restaurant in August. Board President Chuck Allen gave special recognition to our two interns: Alina Aguilar and Naomi Whitmer. Both Alina and Naomi started volunteering while in high school. Their internships started after they graduated. Alina is now a senior at UCSC majoring in astrophysics and interning in the Physics department

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History of Watsonville's First Methodist Congregation

By Marilyn Hyde
Church Historian

The Methodist congregation in Watsonville was established in 1852, when Rev. D.A. Dryden preached in a grove of cottonwoods and conducted a marriage ceremony on the banks of the Pajaro River. This was believed to be the first American wedding in the Pajaro Valley. The following year, Rev. Elihu Anthony of Santa Cruz was appointed to organize the area Methodists and serve as the first pastor. He was a Circuit Rider and preached once every two weeks. In those days, church members were divided into classes with lay leaders, and they met weekly to promote spiritual and welfare concerns. Meetings were also held outside of Watsonville, including in Oak Grove, Springfield, the Salinas River, and Green Valley.



The first Methodist sanctuary was built on Main Street, not far from the town plaza. A separate Methodist Church South was also constructed. The two congregations combined after the Civil War. In 1873, a new church, costing \$6,000, was dedicated at the corner of Third and Rodriguez Streets. The Sabbath School Aid Society, run by the ladies, hosted regular Thanksgiving dinners at the town skating rink to raise funds. With hundreds of worshipers through the years, the church provided such opportunities as choirs and orchestra, Sunday classes and potlucks, the Epworth League for high schoolers, and camping at Monte Toyon Methodist Camp in Aptos.

The Freedom Community Methodist Church was organized in 1948. The buildings of the former Freedom School were purchased by the Monterey Bay Missionary and Church Extension Society for \$30,000 to serve as the church. The first worship service was held on February 1st of that year. The Freedom congregation was active

until 1998 when declining enrollment prompted closure. Interested members joined the Watsonville congregation.

In 1948, the location of our current church property at 229 Stanford Street became available, and a building fund was begun. Local members and their friends volunteered to help construct the church, thus reducing the cost. Our congregation officially moved into the western wing of our complex on April 25, 1954.

The current sanctuary was completed in 1963. The interior features biblical symbols in stained glass in the entry (narthex) and along the walls of the sanctuary. ✠



Picnic from page 1

us through over 150 years of its history from 1851 to present.

We extend our thanks to the numerous volunteers who helped make our event possible. A special thank-you to Ed Kelly and the Kelly Thompson Ranch for your wonderful and enlightening speech and for sharing some of your amazing family history and photos with us. ✠



Ed Kelly



Memorials

Judy Doering Nielsen

- Kathleen Moore and Gino Stefanini
- Mark and Carol Pista
- Edward and Jean Kelly
- Cathy Moresco
- Janis Brautovic
- Thoma Mitchell
- Linda Pavlovich
- Georgeanne Eiskamp

Lou Arbanas

- Paul and Rosalie Vlahutin
- Cathy Moresco
- Ed Von Runnen
- Jeanette Crosetti
- Diana Casini Keith
- Lorraine Jurach

Steve Bankhead

- Order Sons of Italy in America Lodge # 2016
- Charles and Anna M. Pedrazzini
- Lester Pedrazzini
- Patty Lockett
- Diana Casini Keith

Dolores Mullikin

- Mabel Cole

Mickey Crumpton

- Dave and Claire Baum

Richard Baum

- Dave and Claire Baum

George Clark

- Dave and Claire Baum

Mark Ruso

- Dave and Claire Baum

David Williams

- Robert and Mitzi Williams

Frank Prevedelli

- Jeanette Crosetti

Janet Bell

- Diana Casini Keith

Anna Louise Radin

- Louis and Geneva Ivanovich
- Dan Carrillo
- Lorraine Washington
- Doris Goon
- Dominic and Martha Muzzi
- Harold Hyde Family
- Arthur Bruzzone
- Mark and Carol Pista
- Patricia Lester

Diane Cooley

- Dan Carrillo
- Manuel and Anne Wycoff Carlos
- Melanie Kett Wirtanen

Mas Hashimoto

- Dominic and Martha Muzzi
- Jim and Shirley Spain
- Bette Ludden
- Melanie Kett Wirtanen

Epifania Tavaréz

- Dominic and Martha Muzzi

Luann Niebling

- Linda Pavlovich
- Martin Drobac

Betty Allen

- Jim and Shirley Spain

Sue Rau Matasevich

- Jim and Shirley Spain

Marilyn Jeanne Johnson

- Jim and Shirley Spain

Linda Gordon

- Linda Pavlovich

Patrick Carey

- John and Judy Eiskamp

Muriel Hauer

- Claire Etienne

Peter Hauer

- Claire Etienne

Bernice Palmtag

- Hugh and Pat Hudson



Donations

General

- Brandon and Trisha O'Connor Kett
- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Gerry Martin

Research

- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Gina Gallucci
- Linda Pavlovich

Garden Fund

- Frank and Vita Pritchard



Ways to Donate

- Become a member
- Upgrade your membership level
- Make a general donation to the PVHA
- Make a donation to our endowment funds: The Historic Preservation Fund or Archive Fund, both established at the Community Foundation

Message from PVHA Board President

As we all speed through our 2022 calendar year, it is a pleasure for me to be a part of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association Board of Directors, and to serve as president.

Our vibrant team of approximately 40 volunteers do so much each week. They continue to help with the development and organization of the archives and Bock-

ius-Orr house, while assisting people far and wide who come in-person, or on the Internet, seeking information about family history, past community activities, historic properties and rich information pertaining to our great Pajaro Valley.

Our membership and paid financial budgets are thriving thanks to the consistent, dedicated

work from volunteers, board members, and particularly our office administrator Jodi Frensley.

Our 2022 active year has flown by and everyone is busy planning for the coming Holiday Season and the 2023 calendar year. Thank you and God bless you all! 🌟

Happy holidays,
Chuck Allen



Welcome New Members

- Linda Wilshusen and Rock Pfothenhauer
- Kelly Anderson
- Annete Jackson
- Haesin Hong
- Shirley Ivelich
- Lee Waggener



Welcome New Volunteers

- Fred Chamberlain
- Angelina Demeloy



Membership Renewals

April

- Margaret Amrhein
- Ed and Kathleen Banks
- Jean Boeddiker
- Judy Burick
- Dan Carrillo (Pajaro Valley Printing)
- Sarah Chauvet
- Sandra Davidson
- Nita Gizdich
- Catherine Helmick
- Laura Hofmeister
- Sandy Jurach
- Brandon and Trisha Kett
- Betsy Ehm Lobay
- Dan and Ann McGrath
- Geneva Mehl
- Kathleen Moe
- Cathy Moresco
- Kathleen Moore
- Barney and Marlene Radovich
- Alex Solano
- Gino Stefanini
- John and Carol Tietz
- John and Mary Altier Walker
- Samuel and Terese Wright

May

- Tina Baine
- Dave and Claire Baum
- Alvin and Ruby Beilby
- Allen and Betty Bjur
- Nancy Buoy
- Stephanie Bulich
- Eileen Byers
- Mablel Cole
- Don Cooley
- Barbara Corrigan
- Nita Gizdich
- Hugh Hudson and Family
- Edward and Jean Kelly
- Carol Large (Large's Metal Fabrication, Inc.)
- Patty Lockett
- Gerry Martin
- Leon and JoAnn Mattingley
- Cathy Mello
- Kathy Oliver
- Priscilla Partridge and David Kikuchi
- SACO
- Gary and Patricia Thwing
- Charles and Spomenka Zaninovich

June

- Nancy Bilicich
- Rita Christiansen
- Marilyn Fanucci
- Kenneth and Anne Horner
- Lorraine Jurach
- Roseann Kalich
- Mark and Cathy Lauesen
- John and Megan Martinelli
- Mary Ellen Martinelli
- Thoma Mitchell
- Steve and Jerry Stringari
- Nancy Van Galder

July

- Alice Bankhead
- Nancy Bilicich
- Manuel and Anne Wycoff Carlos
- Hans Claus
- William and Cloy Codiga
- Joe and Natalie Costa
- Marvin and Elaine Del Chiaro
- David and Frances Delfino
- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Gayle Ivanovich

- Mike and Bertie McElroy
- Kathleen Moore
- Dominic and Martha Muzzi
- Bill and Tanya Passey
- David and Maryann Bulich Schnitter
- Dr. David South
- Jo Ann Vear

August

- Rosemary Anderson
- Virginia Avila
- Bill Beecher
- Rita Christiansen
- Bob Dickie
- Martin Drobac
- John and Judy Eiskamp
- Frank and Corrine Griswold
- Roseann Kalich
- Glenn and Collen Kramer
- Robert and Janey Leonardich
- David and Steffany McCabe
- Bob and Renee Mello
- Dennis and Laurie Osmer
- Susan E. Pelis
- Mark and Carol Pista
- Rita Pope
- Diane Robey
- James Scurich
- Tony Scurich (Scurich Insurance Services)
- Tom Simmons and GeriAnne Simmons

September

- Dave Bachan
- Betty Bobeda
- Catherine Coward
- Georgeanne Eiskamp
- Linda Erbe
- Claire Etienne
- Gina Gallucci
- Craig and Dana George
- Teri Wempe and Guy George
- Doris Goon
- Bill and Anita Hagins, P.V. Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Dist.
- Helen Harness
- Ralph and Susan Jacobs
- Shirley Kane
- Elizabeth Ludden
- Julie Oliver (C&N Tractor)
- Greg and Suke Pavlovich

- Frank and Vita Pritchard
- Ricardo Rocha (RV's Computers)
- Susan Scurich
- Steven and Kristin Smith
- Harry and Clarice Wiggins
- Melanie Kett Wirtanen

October

- Nancy Codiga
- Theresa Cordoza
- Carl and Fran Dobler
- John and Margaret Gallagher
- Dr. & Mrs. Philip K Gillman III
- John and Frances McGrath Kovarik
- Donna Bendell Otto
- Les and Joyce Roth

New Look for PVHA Newsletter

That's right. It's again time for a little nip and tuck for our newsletter. Coming out of isolation into our post-pandemic world, even our newsletter wants to spread its wings and fly! We hope you like the changes—we do! 🦋



Luncheon from page 4

at the university. Naomi is taking a gap year and continuing to help in the archive, working on summaries of oral histories. She plans to study to be an archivist. Ralph Jacobs gave special recognition to Jodi Frensley for all she does. The luncheon was well attended, the food was delicious, and it was great getting together. 🍷



Email Your Newsletter?

PVHA would like to know if you would prefer your newsletter emailed? If so, please send your email address to info@pajarovalleyhistory.org and ask to put you on our newsletter email list.

*Want to join now or need to renew?
We'd love to have you become a member of PVHA.*

Membership Form

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal: Membership Expiration Date _____

☐ Donor \$50 ☐ Supporter \$100 ☐ Benefactor \$250 ☐ Patron \$500 ☐ Corporate \$ _____

☐ Other Donation \$ _____ to be used for _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

We also accept VISA and Mastercard

Please make checks payable to PVHA

P.O. Box 623 • Watsonville, CA 95077

Or join via our website at www.pajarovalleyhistory.org

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