



# Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071

January 2019

## Be Sure to Attend “California’s Historic El Camino Real Bell” lecture by John Kolstad on Tuesday, January 22 at 7:30 PM

Ring in the new year with a rousing talk by John Kolstad on “California’s Historic El Camino Real Bells.” The talk is part of the Saratoga History Museum’s local history lecture series. The lecture takes place January 22 at 7:30 PM at the Saratoga Foothill Club. A potluck at 6:30 PM precedes the lecture.

Drive along El Camino Real or Highway 101 and you will see the historic bells along

the highway.

Kolstad will discuss the history of the El Camino Real, the history of the bells, how the bells are made, and the fascinating story of how the company (originally founded in the 1900s) was brought back to life.

The bells have been in place since the early part of the century to mark the original route of "El Camino Real" from San Diego to Sonoma. The 700-mile-long El Camino Real linked California's 21 missions, which were founded by Father Junipero Serra and spaced one day's journey apart by horse.

The plan had been to place one bell along each mile of the El Camino Real Highway, in front of each mission. A goal of 450 bells was reached. One bell was

placed in front of each Mission and the balance were placed along the El Camino Real Highway. Since then over 586 bells were replaced on the 101 highway.

Kolstad, a popular speaker, owns Direct Mortgage and is the owner of the California Bell Company.

### Tasty Potluck

Come at 6:30 PM if you choose to participate in the potluck and bring food to share, your own utensils, plates, and beverage of choice. SHF will provide coffee and tea. The presentation starts at 7:30 PM.

### Get Ready

The event takes place at the Saratoga Foothill Club located at 20399 Park Place in Saratoga. It is free for members and a \$5.00 donation is asked for nonmembers. Join us!



# 2019 Off to a Great Start

SHF President Annette Stransky welcomes the following new board members:

**Barbara Marshall** will be the recording secretary for the board of directors. Barbara was raised outside of Boston. She is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with a graduate degree from the University of Vermont. Barbara lived in Europe several years while working with IBM. She has been a California resident for 38 years. Husband (the best according to Barbara) Norm is deceased and was formerly a UAL Captain. Barbara traveled the world with him. She has 3 adult children and 4 grandchildren. Barbara was a teacher for 25 years in Massachusetts, Vermont, and San Jose CA. She has volunteered at the Blossom Festival for 3 years and has been a museum docent for one year.

**Dr. Jo Rodgers** will be the Program Director. She is a biological anthropologist with extensive experience in cultural resource management of both prehistoric and historic sites. A California native, she was raised in Saratoga and resides, today, with her husband in her family's 1955 Anshen and Allen designed home. Growing up with a mother who owned an art studio/workshop in Saratoga, she was an active participant in the City's early years. She continues her engagement with Saratoga, today, as a member of the Heritage Preservation Commission. Dr. Rodgers is a Fellow in the American Anthropological Association and a longtime faculty member at West Valley

**contact us**

## Saratoga Historical Foundation

The mission of the Saratoga Historical Foundation is to preserve the unique history of Saratoga for the education and enjoyment of the community.

The Saratoga Historical Park is open from 1-4 PM on Fridays and Sundays and from 10-4 PM on Saturdays. For more information, i.e. group tours, you can call 408-867-4311 or e-mail

[info@saratogahistory.com](mailto:info@saratogahistory.com) or check the website at [www.saratogahistory.com](http://www.saratogahistory.com). Newsletter suggestions can be sent to the editor at: [annette@saratogahistory.com](mailto:annette@saratogahistory.com).

College. She retired in May, 2018. Jo and her husband George provided items for the Ohlone exhibit last year as well as recommended the speaker for the May 2018 program—Ann-Marie Sayers.

**Alexandra Nugent** will be the Architectural Preservation Director—a new position. Alexandra was born in New York. She has a BA in Secondary Education from George Washington University. Alexandra has two sons. She worked as a telecommunications consultant and as a secondary school teacher. Presently retired.

Alex is active in the Foothill Club as chair of the historic preservation committee, chair of the audio visual committee, on the projects and restoration committee. Supported SHF as liaison to HPC since April 2012. Provides audio visual support for events and lectures, McWilliams House Committee member, participated in events including Blossom Festival, estate sales, and Old Grandview Ranch Benefit.

**Rina Shah** will be the new membership director. She has lived in Saratoga since 1999 with her husband and two children. She is presently working as a City Planner for the City of San Jose. Has a degree in architecture from the University of Mumbai and a Masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning from San Jose State University. Rina has a total of 15 work years in architectural designing and planning. She has been on the Heritage Preservation Commission for four years. She has been on the SHF board for 3 years in the capacity of Social Director. In addition to her social director duties Rina took the initiative and produced India Showcase in 2015-2017 to promote awareness of the museum. She has been a museum docent since 2013.

According to Stransky, "We are very pleased to have these talented, enthusiastic people on the SHF board of directors. All four bring a wealth of experience and interest to their respective positions. We have many exciting events and programs planned for 2019 and welcome the new talent!"

Other board of directors include: Ray Cosyn, Bill Ford, Ernie Kraule, Linda Hagelin, Bob Himel, Jim Sorden, and Michael Whalen.

Stransky adds, "We are looking for two more positions—a Social Director and a Treasurer. If anyone is interested, please contact me or any of the board of directors to find out more information."



## UPCOMING Events

### January 11

Apron Strings and Vintage Things—new exhibit at the museum. Free.

### January 22

California's Historic El Camino Real Bells lecture by John Kolstad, 6:30 PM potluck, 7:30 PM lecture

### March 16

Bonnie Stone and Aprons, light refreshments at 1PM at the Saratoga History Museum. Free

### April 13

Blossom Festival at the Heritage Orchard and Civic Center 10-4 PM. Free

### March 26

Metro Gnomes, 6:30 PM potluck, 7:30 PM lecture at the Saratoga Foothill Club

### May 28

Save the date—the third of our lecture series!

## Apron Strings and Vintage Things— New Exhibit Opens



A new exhibit, "Apron Strings and Vintage Things" opened January 11 at the Saratoga History museum and runs through April 28. The exhibit features over 60 colorful aprons dating from 1870 to the present. Aprons have been around for hundreds of years—worn by both men and women for a variety of

reasons. Come take a look at these lovely aprons made from feed sacks, muslin, gingham and more with some even decorated with lace and elaborate stitches. Most of the aprons are from the collection of Bonnie Stone, Saratoga resident and SHF member. Judy Johnstone, also a Saratoga resident and SHF member, contributed two special hand stitched crazy quilts from 1906 that

have to be seen to be believed as well as two vintage turn-of-the century heirloom aprons.

Stone will give a presentation about aprons at 1:00 PM on March 16 at the Saratoga History Museum. She will be wearing her favorite apron and invites all attendees to come wearing their favorite apron. Stop by the museum at 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road to see the display and hear the presentation. The museum is open from 1-4 PM Friday, 10-4 PM on Saturday and 1-4 PM on Sunday. Admission is free.



**"California's Historic El Camino Real Bells" lecture by John Kolstad on Tuesday, January 22 at 7:30 PM**

See article on page 1 of this newsletter.

## Metro Gnomes Quartet Harmonize History on March 26



The Metro Gnomes quartet will take you on a journey as part of our 2019 lecture series on March 26. Through the world of close harmony the group will explain and demonstrate this art form, with wax-cylinder sound recordings, videos, and live performances. Learn how barbershop quartets helped sell early phonographs, and of the nationwide radio broadcast of the 1939 New York barbershop singing contest. Hear how, through careful blending, four voices can sound like many times that number.

Singing in the barbershop style is a vibrant tradition, with men and women of all ages enjoying the beautiful harmonies. The event will take place at the Saratoga Foothill Club at 7:30 PM with a potluck preceding at 6:30 PM.

# Musical Treat Just Around the Corner

You don't have to travel to San Francisco to enjoy classical music presented by a very good orchestra. The Saratoga Symphony performs a broad range of music to appeal to the most discerning music lover at the McAfee Center in Saratoga.



The orchestra started in the mid-1980's in Palo Alto as the Palo Alto Symphony. When it relocated to West Valley College in the early '90s, it changed its name to the Saratoga Symphony. It existed there as a class, with the musicians earning college credit until they had to find a new rehearsal and performance space.

According to Music Director Dr. Jason Klein, "We have given many noteworthy performances over the years, offering American premieres—or the first performance in over a century—of any number of exciting and dramatic orchestra works from the Romantic period. We have a core of dedicated and capable players, some of whom have been with the orchestra since its earliest days. This adventurous repertory, combined with more traditional fare, keeps the interest of orchestra members and audiences alike.



Their April 2004 revival of the Piano Concerto of Eric Zeisl was noted in the San Jose Mercury News as one of the Top Ten Classical Music Events of the season in the Bay Area.

Dr. Klein also provides entertaining introductions to the music, adding both historical and human

dimensions that delight both novice and knowledgeable audience members. He earned his doctorate in conducting from Stanford University and conducted the University of Utah Orchestras before



returning to California in 1987. In addition to the Saratoga Symphony, Dr. Klein was Music Director of the Youth Orchestra of Southern Alameda County and Associate Conductor of the Oregon Music Festival for well over two decades. Musicians are all volunteer and live from Gilroy to San Mateo. They appreciate not only the range of music but also the camaraderie. Many work in high tech, not surprisingly, and range in age from teens to 80s. They rehearse once a week for 2 ½ hours and give four performances during the season.

The orchestra does not charge membership dues or sell program advertising, and their concerts are free to attend, with donations gratefully accepted. The remainder of their annual budget is met by hiring out as the orchestra for the San Francisco Waltzing Society and, more recently, the Stanford Viennese Ball.



Upcoming performances include "Russia: Reality and Fantasy" featuring world-famous piano soloist Tamami Honma in Rachmaninoff's infrequently performed Piano Concerto No. 4 on January 27, 3:00

PM at the McAfee Center; Liszt's monumental Faust Symphony on March 17 at McAfee, and the "Delectable Delights," including Brahms Double Concerto, on May 5 at Lincoln Glen Church in San Jose.

Concerts are free, and a schedule can be found at [www.saratogasymphony.com](http://www.saratogasymphony.com).

## Tooting Your Own Horn

One of the more popular bands in the years following the Civil War were the “cornet bands,” with the instrumentation of these groups consisting of varying types of brass instruments collectively referred to then as cornets. What served them well in those pre-electrical days was that the cornet band could be heard over a great distance without amplification.

These local cornet bands provided the rallying symphonies for many Independence Day celebrations, as well as playing for various political rallies and other community gatherings.

Composed of farmers, merchants, ministers and school teachers, these early bands were mostly all-male with few exceptions in the late 1800s. Many of the participants of these early bands also shared the distinction of having served in the late Civil War.



Saratoga has a long history in the musical arena. In 1906 Charles Miller moved to Saratoga and organized the Cornet Band, Saratoga's first community band. Besides working in the San Jose Post Office he was an accomplished musician.

Practice sessions were held in the fruit drying yard of Earl Melone, the band's bass drummer.

The band played lively music at the Blossom Festivals, parties, dances, and even in the San Jose Rose Carnival. The band was also frequently solicited to play for political rallies.

What does a cornet sound like? Some say the trumpet. They both play the same notes and they sound virtually the same. In appearance, the trumpet looks a bit longer and more slender than a cornet. The real difference has to do with the way the tubing of the instrument flares. A cornet is more cone shaped or conical than a trumpet.

## The Times They Are A'Changin

You've probably noticed that both the very blue-Blue Rock Shoot and the Grover House have been removed and the area is protected by a boarded fence along Big Basin Way.

The plan for the Blue Rock Shoot (14523 Big Basin Way) is to include a restaurant, office and two residential apartments. The Grover House (14521 Big Basin Way) will include a wine bar/restaurant and one residential apartment.

In an effort to retain some of the historic ambience of Big Basin Way, and the historical building, the Grover House boards have been numbered and stored and are slated to be reassembled with the front façade of the building retaining as much of its original architectural style as possible.

The Grover House was originally built in 1895 by

David and Nancy Grover.

David was a retired farmer and his wife was active in the community. The charming house architecturally was indicative of

the homes of that time—small and compact. The house is on the Saratoga Heritage Resource inventory.

The Grover House during its lifetime was used for both residential and commercial usage. The house had some interesting occupants in its heyday including The Brass Knocker during what was known as the “beatnik” period of the 60s including music and poetry readings.” The Christian Science Reading Room, another occupant, provided a place to study, contemplate the Bible and read Christian Science literature. And at one time it housed Lillian Benson's antiques. Many still remember walking down the steep stairs to look at the sparkling vintage glassware on display while wondering if they could make it back up the stairs safely.



# A Woman's Work Is Never Done

Prize Winning Artist Bonnie Stone is always on the move and always with a bright smile.

And, yes, she even had a solo exhibition with the title, "Women's Work is Never Done."

The talented artist has exhibited her work around the US. But you might have seen her at the Saratoga Library on Saratoga Avenue supervising the installation of the many exhibits held in the lobby of the library. She approached the library to volunteer her expertise and services to organize the lobby displays several years ago to the delight of the library staff.

Says Stone, "I love this volunteer job so much I'd pay the library to do my job!"

Stone moved to Saratoga in 1967 with her husband,



Lee, and two daughters. She grew up in Chicago and while in high school attended classes on Saturday at the Art Institute of Chicago. She received her BFA from the University of

Illinois and did graduate work at the Institute of Design and Illinois Institute of Chicago. She later taught art for four years at a local high school in Illinois.

She has a passion for collecting and you can see some of her apron collection currently on exhibition at the Saratoga History Museum. "Apron Strings and Vintage Things" will run from January through April 28.

She has been collecting vintage aprons for many years. The fascination of aprons and the women who wore them can be seen in her many jewel-tone paintings. Vintage cookbooks are also part of her collection because she says "the books' recipes and ingredients can provide insightful historical information. A woman's identity is frequently delineated by her cooking skills."

"For many years, says Stone, "I have been fascinated with the domestic landscape—the intimate, every day world of women. The apron, a female icon, has

frequently appeared in this landscape in different contexts."

She continues, "A swirling apron, covered with complex patterns may serve as a strong design element. An apron with mysterious objects connected to the waistband or dangling from the pockets may suggest unfamiliar ceremony or ritual. When draped over the back of an empty chair or caught on a tree branch the apron almost seems to be an intimate narrator, perhaps suggesting previous ownership or hinting at future use. The possibilities are endless."

However, most of Stone's colorful watercolors deal with the changing roles for women, social reforms, and breaking traditions.



Stone's paintings have been widely exhibited on the West Coast and around the country. Her work is represented in the collection of the Art Institute

of Chicago as well as other prestigious public and private collections such as the Palace of the Legion of Honor, National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, New York Public Library and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

She has worked on many books with Palo Alto based author/printer/publisher Frederica Postman including *The True Collector*, *Fashion Statements* and *Amuse Bouche*. The books are limited-edition, primarily handmade works favored by collectors and museums. *Fashion Statements* appears in *The Book As Art*. Stone says, "These books were not illustrated. Many of your members will recognize Postman's name and her work."

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*The Yiddish Alphabet* is part of Stanford's Special Collections Library and *The Book as Art* part of the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

A visit to Stone's house is a visual delight of unique artwork including charming quilts hanging on walls, displays of women's hats, and other interesting art.

"Less is more when you collect and surround yourself with your collection" says Stone. "Lee and I rotate the items in our house. When you keep an item in the same spot for a long time you sometimes stop really seeing it—unless you have to DUST IT!!"

Stone says, "A friend once called my images intellectual puzzles which challenge the imagination. For many years I have explored Judaic themes, changing roles for women, cultural diversity, domestic icons, social reforms and breaking traditions. My visual narratives are often filled with complex patterns and colors along with the 'bird's eye view' perspective.



This view allows me to observe the entire scene while creating a more interesting composition. From time to time I will even discretely slip myself into the narrative so I can get a better look...."

Stone continues, "Recently I have introduced the shapes of vintage

mirrors which provide the viewer with a story within a story. These images may suggest different narrative possibilities for each viewer. Stimulating the imagination—what a concept!!"



With a quick smile, Stone sums up, "In the final scene of Stephen Sondheim's "Sunday in the Park with George," the artist says 'White. A blank page or canvas. His favorite. So many possibilities.' Just like Sondheim's character George, I am thrilled by the blank page...so many possibilities..."

## You are Invited

The Saratoga History Museum invites you to hear Bonnie Stone—a talented artist, curator, educator and illustrator—give a short presentation on aprons and enjoy a reception with light refreshments at the Saratoga History Museum on March 16 at 1:00 PM. Admission free. Wear or bring your favorite apron!!



## Keeping in Touch



SHF keeps you informed of new events with this newsletter but you can also receive e-mails. If you are not on our e-mail list, please go up to: [www.saratogahistory.com](http://www.saratogahistory.com) and click on the link that says "subscribe to our newsletter". Your e-mail address is used solely by the Saratoga Historical Foundation.

## Count Your Blessing Bench



SHF member Fred Gardner recently wrote to say he sat on the "Count Your Blessing Bench" in Blaney Plaza. Gardner notes he has fond memories of talking with Willys. The bench was created using funds raised by SHF to honor Betty and Willys.

## In Memorium

Bob Louden  
Amy June Jorgensen  
Allen Breed



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## It's Time to Renew Your Membership



If you haven't received your letter to renew your membership, don't despair—we're sending you a reminder!!

Your SHF membership helps fund programs, services such as this newsletter and more. We count on your membership each year to help us plan events for the year such as four free local history lectures; three free exhibits; six newsletters keeping you informed of events and programs; and a nice discount on most gift shop items. We give walking tours, outreach to the community with the Blossom Festival and more! Membership is a bargain. We are all-volunteer so your money goes directly for these services. If you have suggestions for programs, exhibits, articles for the newsletter, please let us know. E-mail [annette@saratogahistory.com](mailto:annette@saratogahistory.com).

## We're Not "Lion"-- It's Almost Time For Valentine's Day



February 14 is the day that nightmares come of that "card box" in the classroom and whether or not your classmates have sent you a Valentine. Take control of your destiny this year and hit the card shop or maybe use your computer to create your own Valentine. If you don't have someone special—brighten someone's day by sending a card and surprise him or her. A random act of kindness can be a wonderful way to start or end your day. And the day is historic! The first Valentine's Day was in the year 496 and celebrated by the Romans!