



### Upcoming HSSR Events *always free admission!*

August (date TBA): Congressman Mike Thompson  
September (date TBA): History Hunt  
Westside Tour (date TBA)

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## Remember When: 1959

*from the point of view of a high school senior*

by Rick Blaine

I felt a chill that dark Saturday night when we said goodbye. I looked in her eyes and said nothing, but both Linda and I knew that on Monday we wouldn't be together. We'd been going steady for a long time, almost three months. How could life be so cruel as to separate us as we began our senior year in high school?

Looking back, the answer was simple: my senior year was at SRHS and Linda's was at Montgomery High, the new school. Until the fall of 1958, SRHS was the only public high school in Santa Rosa. Maybe the split wasn't truly dramatic, but it sure was different.

Linda said going to Montgomery and leaving her friends behind was like a family breaking up. Montgomery had no lawns, no landscaping, no student body officers--not even a school mascot. I sadly realized that some of my oldest friends were now attending a different school. Because of the new attendance boundaries, they had no choice.

Despite different schools, Linda and I continued to do things together. The Press Democrat published a weekly column called "Teens about Town" that kept us up to date on events at the two schools.

I no longer drove Linda to school. I took three other girls instead. To get to class it seemed like all the senior girls piled into someone's car. Across town, Linda drove her mother's Ford Anglia to school, but it was cramped when she wore those crinoline skirt things that she'd soaked in starch. Even sitting down became a major event. Linda also wore those fashionable straight wool skirts and, of course, she rolled her socks down just so, to just above the ankle.

The guys wore Levi's and pegged pants, and some were pegged so tight you wondered how they got into them. The White House at Fourth and B had them on sale at two pair for \$7.50. They also wore white buck shoes they bought at Smith's Shoes on Fourth or Montgomery Village and Pendleton wool shirts at Keegan Brothers or Rosenberg's.

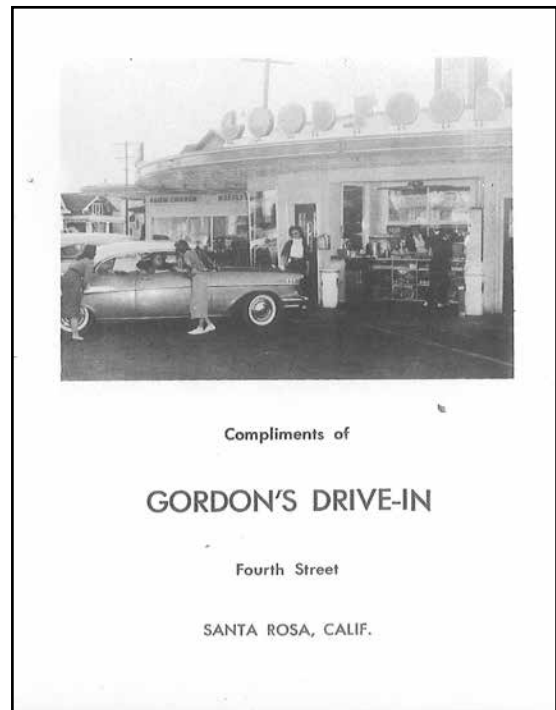
Santa Rosa's television sets had a choice of three San Francisco channels in 1959: KRON (channel 4), KPIX (channel 5) and KGO (channel 7). We watched a lot of westerns, including *Wagon Train*, *Broken Arrow*, *Wyatt Earp* and *Have Gun, Will Travel*. The televisions were black and white, and with a good antenna, we didn't have "shadows."

Linda liked to watch Lawrence Welk, Bob Cummings and Roller Derby. If I didn't have a date with Linda on a Friday night, I watched the Friday Night Fights, sponsored by Gillette Blue Blades. But my favorite was Peter Gunn—the epitome of Ivy League—and how about Lola Albright?

After football games Linda and I and another couple (double date) cruised in my '55 Chevy around the Courthouse and up Fourth Street past Stanroy's, Mailer-Frey, Sawyer's News, Rosenberg's, and the Tower Theater to Gordon's Drive In, where we'd drink cherry or lemon Cokes--if there was a parking space. Or we'd go to the Teen Canteen on Third Street (above the telephone company).

To drive Mom's or Dad's car on a weekend gave some escape, but for status during the downtown cruise, you needed your own car, washed and highly waxed. If it had some custom parts, so much the better. Better yet if the parts were bought at Bing's Speed Shop on Santa Rosa Avenue.

*...continued on next page*



*Gordon's Drive In, 1959*

# President's Message

by Mike Grace, HSSR President



What an excellent start the HSSR had to 2015! Our first event was a mid-January evening at the Sonoma County Museum for a private viewing of the Hole in the Head Exhibit, led by History Curator Eric Stanley. Over 40 HSSR members enjoyed the discussion and the wine, beer and appetizers. Many of them remained afterward and chatted in groups for a half hour or so. Through hosting such events we have discovered that we are

making new friends and adding members who enjoy our activities and look forward to the next one—and so are we.

At the end of February we hosted a presentation at the Sixth Street Playhouse on Neighborhood Diversity, playhouse use generously funded by Larry Bertolini and Western Farms and organized by board member Nick Tipon. Representatives from five ethnic communities—Lou Bertolini, Marie Sugiyama, George Ortiz, Jim Gray, Judy Cheung, Jack DeMeo, Nancy Wang and Kathy Dowdall--discussed coming of age and life in Santa Rosa during the 1940s and 50s in a talk moderated by Gaye LeBaron. They shared stories, both good and bad. Once again, attendees met before and afterward to meet and talk with friends new and old. Many of them looked forward to more talks on diversity and stories of growing up in Santa Rosa, so I think we will pursue the topic.

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*...Remember when, continued from page 1*

We drove mostly Detroit iron, even though the imports were making an appearance. Veale Volkswagen boldly opened a dealership on First Street and Santa Rosa Avenue, on the banks of Santa Rosa Creek. You could buy a Bug for \$1,595 (no haggling over price) and get 32-45 mpg. A new Chevy at McDonald's cost \$2,570. They liked to haggle.

I worked at Roger's Hamburgers on Mendocino for \$1 an hour (no cash register and no order numbers—did the math and memorized the customer) to earn money to buy school clothes and gas for the Chevy. Gas cost 19 cents a gallon at Brownie's Mohawk on Third and B or 24 cents at the Texaco on Mendocino and College.

We watched movies at the California or the Roxy on B Street or the Village Drive In on Reservoir Drive (now Summerfield).

## Historical Society of Santa Rosa Board of Directors

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Our agenda for the rest of year will so far include a talk by Congressman Mike Thompson in August, A tour of Santa Rosa's Westside sometime in the fall, and another Historical Hunt in September. Stay posted by looking at the HSSR website [www.historicalsocietysantarosa.org](http://www.historicalsocietysantarosa.org) for event updates. We also will send emails to society members to let them know about events.

One bit of business: If you haven't renewed your membership, please do so right away. Your participation helps us continue our events, and we thank you for your support.

I want to acknowledge and thank Gaye LeBaron for her support and participation in our Historical Talks, once as the speaker and twice as the moderator. We couldn't have succeeded without her.

As venerable board member Dan Markwyn stated recently, it feels like we have found our "mojo" as an organization. I agree. We have worked hard to secure topics and speakers and have fun in the process. We are pursuing what we think makes sense in our events and activities, and we invite your input. Let us know what you think. See you at our next event.

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Linda liked Gigi and we both were frightened by the story of nuclear destruction in On the Beach. The next day, Sunday, we drove to Salmon Creek and stood watching the waves and thinking about the end of things.

Highway 101 was not yet elevated, though the stop lights were gone. Before I'd go on a date with Linda, a service station attendant washed the windshield and checked the oil as he filled the gas tank for \$3.00. Santa Rosa's population was 37, 500. At the intersection of Hoen and Yulupa, Hugh Coddling wanted to build another subdivision and shopping center.

Our senior year in high school culminated in a joint SRHS/ MHS prom at the Vets' Memorial. Linda and I went to the prom together, and she came to my graduation and I went to hers. 1959 was a memorable year for us, the year of the big split, truly a unique year.

What happened to Linda? We went to different colleges, so it was hard to stay together. Today, she's married, has four kids and teaches elementary school in Ponca City, Oklahoma. Me? I became a lawyer with a good memory. Ask my clients.

*Visit the HSSR web page!*

[www.historicalsocietysantarosa.org](http://www.historicalsocietysantarosa.org)

Find us on Facebook and YouTube

## Some Santa Rosa Datum

Long before today's wine and vineyard boom, Sonoma County's agricultural focus was very diverse. Charles Juilliard planted the first commercial orchard in 1876 on the south side of Santa Rosa Creek. The property today is Juilliard Park and hosts a number of events on its grounds.

Also in 1876 construction began on Lake Ralphine when Mark McDonald bought the water company and invested in real estate. The lake is named after his wife, Ralphine North McDonald. He named McDonald Avenue for himself.

In 1896 the followers of Christian Socialism attempted communal living on Mark West Creek. The attempt, called Altruria, soon failed, and the Santa Rosa Improvement Club, promising improved roads to the site and a bonus of \$2,500, lured Oakland's Dr. W.P. Burke and his sanitorium to the location. Burke promised to include "Santa Rosa" in the name of the facility, but he did not because the club failed to deliver. The Burke Medical and Surgical Sanitorium Company grew and prospered on its own.

Company E, Santa Rosa's unit of the state militia, adjunct to the National Guard, was called to action when the United States entered World War I in April, 1917. The company's captain was Hilliard Comstock, whose family home still stands on Mendocino Avenue and after whom one of Santa Rosa's middle schools is named. He later served on the Santa Rosa school board and as superior court judge.

In 1915 Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone together visited Luther Burbank at his home on Santa Rosa Avenue.

Workers at the California Packing Company's cannery on Third Street were required to swear to a loyalty oath in 1918. The brick walls of the cannery stand still today.

If you needed gasoline in 1924, you could choose from 20 different stations in Santa Rosa and you'd pay 11 cents a gallon. If you bought a brand new Ford Runabout to burn that gas, you'd have paid \$265.

In 1926 John Rosseter hosted a birthday party at his Wikiup Ranch for Disguise, his twenty-nine-year-old stallion, who had sired thoroughbreds that won more than a million dollars. Guests came from New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco—and Santa Rosa.

George Greeott's father bought a large ranch on Chalk Hill Road in 1928, the year George graduated from Santa Rosa High School. George later bought the ranch and became a successful fruit grower, winemaker, real estate developer and inventor. A radio cabinet he made while a SRHS student sits in the school's museum. George passed away in 2014, just shy of his 104th birthday.

The Doyle Scholarship program at Santa Rosa Junior College began in 1948 through the trust created by the Exchange Bank's Frank Doyle and his wife Polly O'Meara Doyle. To date more than \$30 million has been awarded to deserving Sonoma County high school students.

## Newsletter Submission Guidelines

The Historical Society of Santa Rosa is looking for articles to fill the pages of its newsletter. Submissions can range from research about the history of Santa Rosa and its people to personal reminiscence and anything in between. Photos accompanying text are especially welcome.


While payment is not available, writers can experience the joy of seeing their names in print and sharing their work with a wide audience of readers.

Please submit articles without anchors and in unformatted text. A length of 500 to 1,000 words is desirable. Please submit photos separately from text but do provide identity of subjects and other relevant information. Send submissions to [mdaniels@sonic.net](mailto:mdaniels@sonic.net)

All submissions are subject to editing and become the property of the HSSR. All photos will be returned. Next deadline is July 1.

## HSSR Welcomes New Members

Robert and Teresa Breazeale  
Douglas Bower  
Rick and Paulette Gomes  
Bob Lorg and Kathy Grace-Lorg  
Penny Hopkins  
Pete and Greta Larsen  
Jane Maurer  
Dinae Rappold  
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*Smith's Shoes, Fourth Street, 1959*

*Santa Rosa High School Echo*

Ed. Note: The following excerpt is reprinted from “The Carrillo Family in Sonoma County: History and Memories” by Alma McDaniel Carrillo and Eleanora Carrillo de Haney. One in a series.

## The Carrillo Family in Sonoma County: Names and Places

Historians have traced the spelling of the Carrillo name to 1260. It is often misspelled with one “r” or one “l,” but the liquid Castilian double “l” is preferred.

Research on the Carrillo family has been neglected until the last few years. We would like to relate a portion of the history, especially that in Sonoma County. The Carrillo family has been referred to as “The Carrillos of San Diego,” but this family played important roles in California from San Diego to Fort Ross.

In order to clarify the beginning of Cabeza de Santa Rosa, one must go farther back into California history. A particularly large amount of confusion surrounds the repetition of the name Joaquin in the Carrillo family. There were really two distinct branches of the Carrillos from Baja California who were cousins, and both had sons named Joaquin.

Joaquin Victor Carrillo, Jr. was the son of Joaquin Victor Carrillo, Sr. and his wife, Magdalena Marron de Carrillo. Don Joaquin Jr. was born Feb. 2, 1793 in San Jose del Cabo, Baja California. He was a gifted violinist and a soldier in the California Military Corps. The pay was very low and because of his military service he was ineligible to receive land grants from the government. Regardless, in 1809 Don Joaquin Victor Carrillo Jr. married Senorita



*Dona Maria Ignacia Candelaria Lopez y Arballo de Carrillo*  
*Sonoma County Library*

Maria Ignacia Candelaria Lopez y Arballo. The first mission in California (Mission San Diego de Alcalá) was the scene of this marriage. They lived in the Presidio Hill area for many years. Their thirteen children were born and baptized in San Diego.

Dona Maria Ignacia Candelaria Lopez y Carrillo was born in San Diego on January 31, 1793. Her parents were Juan Francisco Lopez and Maria Felicianita Arballo de Gutierrez, who came into California with the Anza expedition. Senora Maria Ignacia and Don Joaquin Carrillo, Jr. lived happily with their children until sadness came with the death of Don Joaquin in 1836. He was buried in the cemetery on Presidio Hill.

Following family tradition, Dona Maria Ignacia never returned to her home after the funeral ceremony of her husband. She had nine remaining children to love, protect and support. Three of her older daughters were married and lived in North-

ern California. The Senora naturally wished to go to one of her daughter's homes. Maria Francisca Felipe Benicia Carrillo had married General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and lived in Sonoma, about 700 miles north of San Diego.

Senora Maria Ignacia planned the trip with horses, pack mules and carretas loaded with her worldly possessions. Her children who made this long trip were Maria de la Luz, 23 years old, Joaquin, 16, Jose Ramon, 15, Dolores, 12, Julio Maria Tomas, 12, Juan, 11, Marta, 10, Juana de Jesus, 7, and Felicidad de la Augusta, who was 3. It seems impossible that two of the children were the same age. Our records show that Dolores was born in January and Julio in December of the same year.

The family stayed in Sonoma for about one year and then moved to a large acreage in the fertile valley on the banks of Santa Rosa Creek. This was desired because she would live near her daughters. Senora Ramona Carrillo de Pacheco de Wilson and her husband Captain Juan Wilson owned the Los Guilicos Rancho; Senora Josefa Carrillo de Fitch and her husband Captain Henry Delano Fitch owned the Sotoyome Rancho.

Sonoma County should be very grateful to the Carrillo family for three of its important cities—Santa Rosa, Sebastopol and Healdsburg—are located on three ranchos owned by members of the original Carrillo family in Sonoma County. The fourth, Rancho Los Guilicos, never had a city on it. The city of Sonoma also has ties to the family since Francisca Benicia Carrillo married General Mariano Vallejo, and she and her family helped historically and socially to build that city.

On September 30, 1841, Senora Maria Ignacia obtained a Mexican land grant signed by Governor Manuel Jimeno. It contained



*The Carrillo Adobe, ca 1930s*

*Sonoma County Library*

two square leagues or over eight thousand acres. The corners of the property were marked with a pile of rocks or by a cattle brand or mark carved on a stump or a tree.

The senora happily felt the possession of this fertile valley and mountains was a beautiful new life for her family and herself. She was the real “Mother of Santa Rosa.”

# The Story of the Church Built from One Tree

by William Montgomery

A Baptist Church was established under an oak tree in the Sonoma County town of Franklin in the early 1850's. By the time Franklin was abandoned for the new town of Santa Rosa after 1854, a rough wooden building had been constructed and that building was moved to the new town and placed at the corner of Ross and B Street.

Twenty years later in 1873, the congregation had grown and had the funds to put up a new, handsome Carpenter Gothic structure. When the order for lumber was received by a mill in Stumptown (now Guerneville), the manager decided to fill the request with wood from a 16' diameter redwood which had just been cut down. The wood was received and the Church built. One of the carpenters was the father of Robert Ripley of "Believe It or Not" fame, and his mother was a parishioner.

In 1901, the Church members were surprised to receive an affidavit from the Guerneville mill testifying that the building had been constructed from a single redwood log. Shortly thereafter they commissioned a new stained glass window with the legend "the Church Built From One Tree". That window still graces the wall of the Church. Once Robert Ripley became a famous cartoonist, he featured the building where he had attended Sunday school in one of his "Believe It or Not" features. The building was damaged in the 1906 earthquake and rebuilt with a belfry tower 40' shorter than the original.

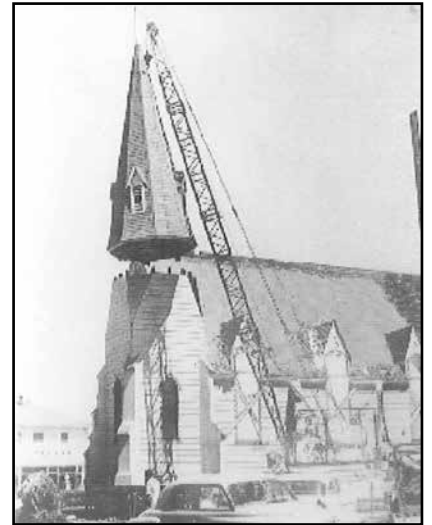
The building served its function as the First Baptist Church of Santa Rosa until the 1930s when a new building in a new location was proposed by the church. At that time, Robert Ripley entered negotiations to buy the building and open it as a memorial to his mother. His first efforts were futile, so he tried again in 1941, but World War II interrupted that effort. He re-opened negotiations in 1947. The agreement was almost complete when Ripley died suddenly in 1949.



*The Church Built from One Tree at its original location  
Sonoma County Library*

By 1959, the congregation was in a new building at Sonoma and Yulupa avenues, and the City acquired the site for a parking lot. When the public heard that the famous building was to be torn down, they raised sufficient money in a campaign led by the Press Democrat to move it to two lots on Sonoma Ave adjacent to Juilliard Park. It was sited so the front door faced the park. Several uses were tried for this new building, culminating in an agreement with Ripley International to showcase some of Ripley's oddities and some of his personal history in the building. The Museum was lightly attended and never paid for itself. In 1998, Ripley International declined to update the exhibits, so the museum was closed and most exhibits returned.

How to make the building a valuable and self supporting part of Santa Rosa became an issue. A study in the 1980s recommended relocating the structure. A later study considered that and much other information in years of committee meetings, public meetings, and council hearings. Because of poor visibility, no parking, and neighborhood conflict, the new study recommended relocation. A site at Sonoma and Santa Rosa avenues



*Readying the church for its move to  
Juilliard Park  
Sonoma County Library*

was reviewed, but a location in the front of Juilliard Park was preferred. Concern about users parking on Charles Street killed that idea. Ultimately, a site was chosen at the foot of D Street in Sonoma Avenue Park across from City Hall. There, the historic landmark would be highly visible, could use off hours City Hall parking and would have little neighborhood conflict. That project almost commenced, to the point that, in 2004, a property trade was made with a private lot in the park to facilitate the Church's sitting. Unfortunately, city revenues began to decline at that point, and available funds were used to rehabilitate the badly deteriorated structure at its existing site.

Now beautifully rehabilitated, the building is rented by private groups and used for city activities. However, because of the problems with the site and with uninvited guests disturbing rental activities, it has not fulfilled its potential. Hopefully, the City will ultimately move the building, turn it around to face Sonoma Avenue, and create a viable community center and beautiful downtown landmark as a focal point at the south end of D Street.



# Murder on Fourth Street

by Rod Sverko, Retired SRPD

For years and years, from the 1950s through the mid-70s, Santa Rosa's Fourth Street from Courthouse Square to Farmers Lane was the favorite route of the weekend cruise for teenagers in their "show cars." At that time gasoline cost just 30 to 40 cents a gallon, so cruising didn't require a big chunk of a teen's spending money.

As the teens drove up and down Fourth, police officers witnessed beer drinking, fighting and a lot of speeding (23109a CVC -Exhibition of Speed). Officers were assigned to motor and traffic units to maintain control of the street.

Early on there were just two high schools, Santa Rosa and Montgomery, and the teenage population was still small. A can of beer and a fight were about the most serious violation officers handled. Normally, officers would pour out the beer, send the kids home and call their parents. If they were under 18, they'd be taken to the station and released to their parents. The kids who got into fist fights usually were friends the next day.

The town grew in size and things changed. On a Friday night in November of 1974, cruising and loitering came to an abrupt end. A murder occurred in the 800 block of Fourth Street (east of E Street) as a 17-year-old male was shot and killed while standing on the sidewalk. A 17-year-old suspect was arrested the next day, and the murder weapon, a .25 automatic, was recovered and identified.

This killing was the first evidence that the innocent pastime of cruising was turning intense and violent. It initiated changes in the design of Fourth Street between E Street and the Square. Cruising, as a result, moved to Petaluma for a time, then to College Avenue and then to Mendocino Avenue before it ceased.

The City Council soon enacted an anti-cruising ordinance. That legislation along with heavy enforcement with CHP assistance put an end to the cruise.



800 block of Fourth Street, looking west in 1959

Sonoma County Library

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