

Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071

December 2021

New exhibit about love opens January 14-- We're also working on a great line-up of lectures and events for you-- Be sure and renew your membership so you don't miss any of the upcoming events!!

New Exhibit About Love

"Love Is in the Air" -- a new exhibit opens at the



Saratoga History Museum on January 14.

Much to see.

The new exhibit covers some of the ways people celebrate Valentine's day around the world. The exhibit includes the history of Valentine's day as well as a

collection of vintage Valentines. The display is sure to bring back memories of creating valentines out of paper doilies and sampling "savory" white paste!

How others celebrate!

Find out how other countries celebrate Valentine's day. As an example, in Argentina they celebrate



Valentine's day but they also have a longer celebration known as "Sweetness Week" in July. During Sweetness Week, friends and lovers exchange kisses for a candy! Bulgaria celebrates "San Trifton Zartari" which means "day of winemakers." They

celebrate with a glass of wine or two from local winemakers. You don't have a special someone? In Estonia, February 14 is "Friend's Day" honoring friends and significant others. If you don't have



someone special you can take a ride on the "Love Bus"-- kind of a blind date on wheels. Singles board the Love Bus at various stops throughout the day and wait onboard hoping to meet that special someone. And, of course, February 14 is Paul Masson, famous Saratoga vintner's birthday--come find out othe Saratoga traditions.

Be sure to visit the gift shop.

Buy your special someone or treat yourself to a local history book, pretty notecards, or the gift of Saratoga Historical Foundation membership while visiting the museum.

Come see the exhibit!

Drop by and see the exhibit at 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road in Saratoga. The exhibit will run January 14 through March. The museum is open from 1-4 PM Friday, 10-4 PM Saturday and 1-4 on Sunday. Free admission. For more information go up to www.saratogahistory.com or call 408-867-4311.

California's Historical Markers Feature Forged by Saratoga Man



Longtime Saratoga resident John Kolstad has spent much of the 21st century working to preserve and restore the wellknown Mission Bell Markers that have graced California's El Camino Real and other historic places of interest for the better part

of the last century. *

The original markers were designed by Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes in the early 20th century to identify the 700-mile route traveled by the first Spanish-speaking immigrants to California. The poles recall the shape of the shepherds' crooks used as walking sticks by some of the travelers. Each of these poles holds an 85-pound cast-iron bell—evocative of the early California missions.

The original ones also held directional signs and mileage to the next city. That was because in the early days of the automobile, there were no other



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 Saturday. For more information, i.e. group tours, you can call 408-867-4311 or e-mail info@saratogahistory.com. Be sure to also check the website at www.saratogahistory.com or see us on Facebook at facebook.com/saratogahistory. Newsletter suggestions can be sent to the editor at: info@saratogahistory.com.

road signs in the state. Installed in 1906 and paid for by various Federated Women's Clubs, these early Mission Bell Markers became California's first highway signs. Mrs. Forbes, director of the Historical Society of Southern California and a Women's Club member had to start her own company, buy her own foundry and forge her own bells. In the course of this, she became the only woman bell maker in the United States.

Simple in design and beautiful in execution, many of the markers and their original bells were lost to theft and new highway construction by the time the state took on their care in 1959. In the year 2000, Saratoga resident and local businessman John Kolstad began a quest to find just one of the old bells for his garden. He tracked down what remained of Mrs. Forbes' California Bell Company to its third owner, octogenarian Joe Rice, in La Crescenta, California.

"He had old bells, company files, and bell molds floor-to-ceiling in his garage," Kolstad says. "I made him an offer and bought what remained of the company."

Keith Robinson, now retired, was then the principal landscape architect for Caltrans and worked with Kolstad to restore the old markers. With the help of federal grants, Kolstad helped Robinson and Caltrans produce 585 new Mission Bell Markers up and down the old El Camino—from Sonoma to San Diego—many installed just in time for the markers' 2006 centennial. Cities like Gilroy ordered extras to identify their landmarks. Kolstad's accomplishment has been reported on throughout the state, including in a 2019 prepandemic "in real life" lecture he gave to the Saratoga Historical Foundation.

Californians love these signs so much the bells are still frequently stolen off their poles. Yet, their popularity is not universal. The City of Santa Cruz had three of the markers within the city limits, on city land and in recent years the city council voted to remove all three of them at the urging of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, which found the bells a reminder of the mission era and offensive. Two were taken down. The third one was scheduled to be removed in August 2021. But, the night before the removal ceremony, the bell was stolen off its pole.

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As you drive the old routes traveled in the 18th century by the first Spanish-speaking immigrants to California, see if you can spot these interesting and provocative markers along the roadways throughout California. Thanks to one Saratoga man, these iconic signs stand as reminders of the turbulent California story along our green and golden landscape.



This Mission Bell Marker, nestled beneath a redwood, can be spotted as you drive south on El Camino Real at El Monte Avenue in Mountain View. Photos provided by Robin Chapman.



This shows the bell in front of Mission Santa Ines in Solvang.



Another bell can be found at Mission San Antonio de Padua and located in Jolon, CA.

It is not necessary to do anything of dubious legality to acquire your own California bell. Kolstad sells them on his web site at californiabell.com

Robin Chapman is a Santa Clara Valley native and is working on her third book for The History Press. It is scheduled for publication in 2022.



While ordering flowers for Betty Peck's 100th birthday when the florist heard Betty's name he said, "I know Betty! She was my kindergarten teacher. She was wonderful." Betty's birthday on December 18 was filled with calls froms friends and lovely cards.

A Special Exhibit!

Stop by the Saratoga Library and see a special exhibit, "The American Scene" --artwork of the 1930s and 40's depicting social issues and regional concerns of the times. The exhibit, located in the lobby, was originally scheduled for 2020 but was delayed due to the pandemic.



The artwork is from the collection of the late Lee Stone and was curated by his wife, Bonnie Stone. Stone had selected the artwork before his unexpected death in February 2020.

The American

artists portrayed in the exhibit represent a wide range of American experience for American audiences with themes such as work, progress, industrial steel mills, coal mines and factories. Recreational images depicted music concerts, carnivals, fair and puppet shows. Themes of hardship and survival depicted poverty, dustbowl landscapes, social protests and worker's unions.

According to Lee Stone, "The images from the American Scene have always held special interest for me and I am delighted to share a few of these images with our community."

About the Collector

Stone had three great loves in his life: his family, his life's work as a pediatrician and collecting and selling fine prints.

Stone was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1937. His childhood dream of becoming a pediatrician was fulfilled during his residency at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago. After spending two years at Irwin Army Hospital in Fort Riley, Kansas as a pediatrician he moved his family to Saratoga in 1967 where he opened his pediatric practice in San Jose. He remained on the staff of O'Connor Hospital until his retirement in 2005. He cared for hundreds of multi-generational families. As a member of the Physicians for Automotive Safety,

he was responsible for the implementation of a policy requiring newborns to be in approved car seats upon departure from the hospital.

He was able to create a parallel career as a print dealer specializing in 20th century works of art on paper. He was also a long-time member of the International Fine Print Dealers Association.

He and his wife of 58 1/2 years, Bonnie, had three children: Barrie, Rachel and Benjamin. Bonnie is a well-known artist in her own right and has had her artwork featured in books, curated exhibits and had an exhibit at the Saratoga History Museum on aprons!

Lee, according to Bonnie, was known for his zest for life, sense of humor, his curiosity as an ardent student of history, his sense of adventure and warm heart.

About the Exhibit

Some of the artists in the exhibit include Ben Shaun, Anton Refrigier, Wanda Gag, Peggy Bacon, Hugo Gellert, Leo John and Salvatore Pinto.

Ben Shahn (1898-1969) was a lead practitioner of "Social Realism" — art works that represented social consciousness. Such artworks were illustrative of the poor, oppressed or those who live at the margins of society.



Anton Refregier (1905-1979) was a muralist and became successful under the Federal Art Project in 1935. The project was part of the Works Progress Administration better known as the WPA. He received \$23.86 a week under the WPA. In 1940

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he won a commission for his most famous work, the "History of San Francisco," located in the Rincon Center in San Francisco.



Peggy Bacon (1895-1987) was a painter, print maker, illustrator, and author. She was known for her satirical illustrations of daily New York life.



In 1920, she wrote and illustrated various children's books and satirical book entitled "Off With Their Heads", a comical look at thirty-nine well known fellow artists. Her 1953 mystery, "The Inward Eye," earned the Edgar Allen Poe Mystery Award for best novel of the year.

Wanda Gag (1893-1946) is well known as an author and illustrator of children's books. She also was a talented artist and produced a large number of prints, drawings and water colors. She is best remembered for her book, "Millions of Cats."

Although she wanted to be remembered as an artist.



Salvatore Pinto (1905-1966) became an accomplished painter and printmaker. He studied under Artist Henri Matisse. His work was greatly influenced as well as his focus on leisure and beach scenes.

Variety of Printmaking Style

The images represent a variety of printmaking styles which is interesting in itself-- including offset lithography, serigraphs, etchings and wood engraving. Etching is a printmaking technique that uses chemical action to produce incised lines in a metal printing plate which then hold the applied ink and form the image. As a method of printmaking, it is, along with engraving, the most important technique for old master prints, and remains in wide use today

Serigraph is a labor-intensive screen print or silkscreen technique, dating back to the 20th century. This highly respected stencil printmaking process in the art world involves reproducing original masterpieces by hand. Although these prints are reproductions, each one has unique characteristics and nuances. This process is popular with many artists because it does not require much equipment or many materials.

Offset lithography (known also as commercial offset printing) is the kind of method in which images on metal plates are transferred to rollers and then to print media. This method was used all over the world since the 20th century.

Wood engraving is a printmaking technique in which an artist works an image into a block of wood. Painting ensues where the artist applies ink to the wood and prints using pressure.

The Hills Are Alive With the Sound of Music!

The hills are alive with the sound of music....at



least in Bob LoPresto's neighborhood of Sara Oaks. He has played monthly concerts off his balcony for all his neighbors during the pandemic. He notes his neighbors enjoy the concerts and bring friends, folding chairs and sit in the driveway-to hear the music.

Music has always been in Bob's life. His father was a violinist in a New Jersey Symphony and taught him

how to read music at an early age. He gave Bob private lessons on the saxophone to encourage his interest. He says, "I chose the saxophone so I could play both popular music and jazz.

Today this instrument is not only identified with jazz but is also considered a key instrument in nearly all genres of music. It is now almost impossible to listen to music without hearing a sound that is connected to the saxophone.

Bob started his own band in the seventh grade and continued with his band to play at weddings, concerts, and special events. As life went on he also continued to polish his musical ability and once had private lessons on a tenor sax with well-known musician Stan Getz, an artist in residence at Stanford. Getz is credited with pioneering the bossa nova style of music back in the 60s which is still very popular today.

When Bob moved to California 51 years ago he became involved in the Performing Arts program for Montalvo. He served as Board Chair of Performing Arts for 15 years. He and the staff selected the performing artists for three different venues at Montalvo including Fox Theater in Redwood City, Vasona Park in Los Gatos, and Montalvo in Saratoga.

While at Montalvo, he introduced such legendary stars as one of the greatest singers of his generation Tony Bennett, Singer Natalie Cole, Jazz Pianist, Composer and Post-Bop Jazz Musician Dave Brubeck, Singer, Song Writer and former Drummer for the Beatles Ringo Starr, legendary Percussionist Pete Escovedo and Sheila E., Musician, Singer, and Songwriter Kenny Loggins, Pioneer of Soul Music Ray Charles and many others.

One of his favorite stories is when he asked Tony Bennett how he stayed in shape. Tony replied, " I play tennis every day with my young drummer!"

Bob also was involved with the Stanford Jazz Program held on the campus of Stanford University. The program is known for having a



staff made up of the world's great jazz performers and educators. He was Chairperson of the program and notes that Stanford was selected as having the best college jazz programs for several years during that time.

One of his cherished possessions during this period was a

large painting of Bob playing the saxophone that noted artist Bruni had created. According to Bob, "Her Duke Ellington original painting is hanging at the Smithsonian. She is considered the top jazz artist in the world. I have copies of the paintings of Duke Ellington and Count Basie and originals of Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett that she painted."

Through the years Bob has served on 15 nonprofit boards on social justice including the Stanford Institute for Women and Gender. Of one of the highlights of his life, he says, "I am proud that I marched in Selma, Alabama with Martin Luther King as a college student." Many

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may remember that on March 25, 1965, Martin Luther King led thousands of nonviolent demonstrators to the steps of the capitol in Montgomery, Alabama, after a 5-day, 54-mile march from Selma, Alabama, where many organizations had been campaigning for voting rights. Selma, in spite of repeated registration attempts by local blacks, had only two percent on the voting rolls at that time.

While living in New York, Bob also worked on a committee with Actor Alan Alda and Feminist and Journalist Gloria Steinem for improving education for minorities.

Seemingly boundless with energy, he also has had time for sports.



According to Bob,"The 1994 baseball card shown was from SF Giants Fantasy Camp in Scottsdale, AZ. In the card, I am pitching to Willie Mays who was one of the Hall of Fame Giants who coached.

at the camp that year. We played two games every day. On the final day, we played a game against the coaches. Other coaches included Orlando Cepeda, Juan Marichal and Gaylord Perry. All of them are now in the Baseball Hall of Fame. I attended the camp for 15 years between the ages of 60 and 75. I was the oldest participant to attend!"

Bob has also had a rich and rewarding working career including being Vice President of Human Resources at Fairchild, Syntex and Levi Strauss. He's held executive positions at Korn Ferry International Consulting and Rusher, LoPresto,

Loscavio Executive Search and has owned his own company.

He's never lost his love of music. Now he plays the sax with recorded music of the greatest hits in both pop and jazz. Each year he expands his repertoire and in December includes holiday music. Most recently he's been seen in the Saratoga Village during the wine stroll and in the



Saratoga History Museum playing his sax during the Open House in November.

"I enjoy playing the saxophone for concerts, weddings and special events," says Bob.

Obviously a love that has continued since childhood! Bob lives in Saratoga with his wife, Marie. Bob notes his three daughters went to school in Saratoga. One daughter played in the Saratoga High orchestra when the orchestra went to

Versaille. Marie also has one grown son and a very very photogenic dog! All are music lovers.

The Legend of Levi Strauss

Legend has it that Levi Strauss sold the first blue jeans to miners during the Gold Rush. Factory workers were also among the first to purchase what was become to be known as Levi's.

Jacob Davis, a tailor in San Francisco was asked by a woodcutter in 1870 to make him a strong pair of pants. Davis designed the pants with copper rivets to the button fly and pocket corners to give the pants extra support.

The pants were so successful he asked Levi Strauss for financial support. Together Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis got a patent for the pants in 1872.

The pants were originally called "overalls".



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Recent Donation to the Saratoga History Museum!!

Locke Jorgensen recently donated a saw once owned by pioneer Sam Cloud. Jorgensen was a descendant of Cloud who came to Saratoga in 1893. Cloud built three buildings in Saratoga that still stand on Big Basin Way: His house which is now a fashionable restaurant called Bella Saratoga; the second building was once a popular mercantile store and is now the Saba Thai Massage and the third building that was once a Hay and Feed Barn now houses Intempus Property Management.

