



# Annual Report

GOLETA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
2017



"I can't say enough wonderful things about this place! We are sooo fortunate to have such a nice, shady, homey venue right here in the Goodland. So many great community events are hosted right here, let alone the beautiful setting it has provided for holiday celebrations, weddings, anniversaries, and our favorite: concerts in the park each summer. I'm so glad it's not just set aside as an historical site, and that's it. Thank you for sharing this place and therefore, exposing its beauty to so many. I, as a neighbor, love it!!"

- Lisa Maraszek, neighbor and Facebook fan



# Thank You

Dear Friends,

Reflecting on our accomplishments in 2017 brings me great pleasure! Once again, we have been privileged to be an integral part of the Goleta community, and have loved providing programs, events and lectures, centered in local history for all to enjoy.

As the historic heart of Goleta, Rancho La Patera & Stow House is more than a property purchased in 1871 by William Whitney Stow for his son, Sherman. It has become a refuge for many. It is an oasis, a place to refresh, revive, and restore. It is a harbor from the shelter of the storm that is today's world. While celebrating our accomplishments, we express our gratitude to those in our community who makes it all possible. Our commitment to Goleta history and its preservation is what drives our mission year after year. Your commitment to Goleta history makes our work possible.

As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the dedication of Stow House to the community, we will always be grateful to the visionaries of the 1960s who saw the importance of establishing the Goleta Valley Historical Society. Today, you, our donors and volunteers, make this possible through your generosity of time, talents, spirit, and financial support. We continue to emphasize the importance of what our founders recognized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Goleta is a Good Land!

As we celebrate all that we offer – our important work of historical preservation, our desire to educate and inspire, and serving as a community gathering place – we are reminded that we must not take anything for granted. The Thomas Fire – the largest, most destructive in California history and the ripple effect it has had on our local communities – reminds us to stay vigilant and do everything we can to ensure our precious Goleta history and landmarks are preserved for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Amanda De Lucia  
*Executive Director*

Twitter: @stowlapatera  
Instagram: @stowhouse

# By The Numbers

900

Third Graders  
Participated in  
Pioneer Days



79

Musicians  
competed  
at Fiddlers'



1

huge book  
project  
complete!

400

Guests  
shared dinner  
on the DAM

2,000

copies  
of Goleta: The  
Good Land!

2,000

Views of  
Santa's  
Video  
Message

51  
GREAT  
YEARS

996

Facebook  
Friends

1,500

School  
Children  
Visitors

25,000  
Visitors

9,000

Attendees  
to Music  
at the Ranch

1

Very Happy  
Executive  
Director





# *Education – Preservation - Community*

## **OUR MISSION**

To collect, preserve, interpret and foster research of Goleta Valley's history through exhibits, programs, and stewardship of the historic Rancho La Patera, home to the Stow family.



## **Highlights of 2017**

# Lifetime Achievement



William Shakespeare said, "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away."

At the Annual Meeting in January 2017, the Society was pleased to honor **Joan Rakowski** with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Joan has many gifts and she has spent her life sharing those gifts as an educator and as a community volunteer.

Joan was born in Indianapolis, Indiana where her father served in the military at Fort Harrison. Growing up, she attended Catholic schools and graduated from Marian University where she majored in Education Psychology and received a teaching credential in Special Education. She received a Master's Degree from Butler University. In 1960 Joan married "the boy next door," Arnold "Arnie" Rakowski. They have three children, six grandchildren, and have been married for nearly 57 years.

As the newlyweds were leaving on their honeymoon Arnie said "Oh, by the way, I've been laid off work." Fortunately, General Motors (GM) reinstated him. In 1962, after a year's assignment in Warren, Michigan, Arnie was reassigned to the Goleta Delco plant where space research was being conducted. He remained with GM until his retirement. As the Rakowski family settled into their life in Goleta, Joan began her 25-year teaching career with the Goleta Union School District. After teaching five years in a general education classroom Joan was assigned to teach Special Education classes and did so for the remaining 20 years of her career.

In the early days of Special Education, classes for special needs students were segregated from the rest of the student body. Joan, along with a strong parent group, supported integrating special needs students into regular classrooms. Their efforts were instrumental in the integration of the District's special needs students into regular classrooms and the student body.

Joan's first introduction to Rancho La Patera was taking her family to the 4th of July Ice Cream Social which became a family tradition. Joan admired the docents dressed in beautiful long skirts but she never went inside the Stow House.



For Joan volunteering is a family affair with all of her children and grandchildren giving their time to our activities!

# Lifetime Achievement

In 1993, following Joan's retirement, fellow teacher and GVHS volunteer Anne Rughe encouraged Joan to serve on the Society's Board of Directors. After serving on the Board, Joan became president of the Ladies League and continued her board service. The Ladies League became the stewards of Stow House preparing seasonal exhibits, telling its story through docent-led tours, and helping maintain the House for future generations.

While most people associate Joan with Stow House, she is a font of knowledge about Rancho La Patera: its history, where things are stored, or the back-story on any topic. She plays an instrumental role along with staff in exhibit design and installation, assisting with Pioneer Days, serving on the Collections Committee, and leading weekend House tours for visitors as well as for special groups.

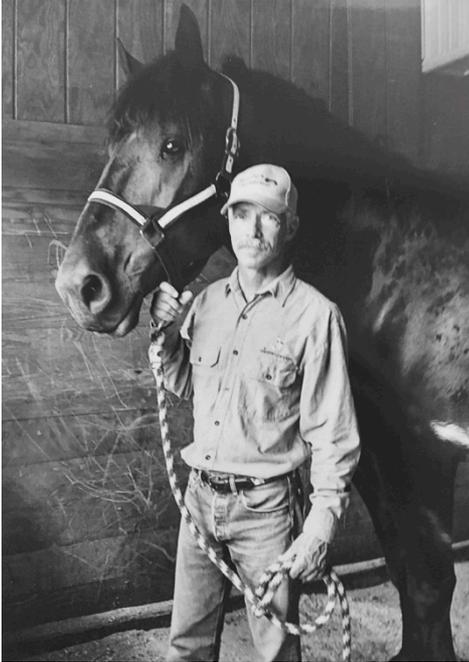
One of Joan's passions is historic preservation. Her interest in preservation peaked when she decided to give the Society her mom's 1920s prom dress. She discovered that the clothing and textiles in the GVHS collection were not being properly maintained and preserved. Again, with her can-do attitude, Joan and Mary Lou Williamson travelled to Ventura over a number of months to learn how to curate and protect historic clothing and textiles. As a result of their training the proper storage boxes and lots of acid-free tissue paper were purchased and they learned to make proper dress storage bags. The clothing and textile collection was inventoried, items' histories were researched, and photo documentation was started.

Joan immersed herself as a volunteer and never looked back. Twenty-four years later, Joan is still a very familiar face at most GVHS events volunteering along with her husband Arnie. She also serves as the Society's volunteer collections manager. Joan is most proud of the preservation work she has done to protect the historic clothing and textiles that are displayed in the House for visitors to enjoy. There is no doubt that Joan has dedicated her life to the Stow House. She knows every room, every piece of furniture, every artifact, and every story!

Joan is not only a tireless and loyal GVHS volunteer, she is also a long-time volunteer at her church, St. Mark's University Parish, where she is in charge of Church Atmosphere or the decoration and aesthetics of the interior of the church. In 2009 GVHS recognized Joan as Volunteer of the Year and in 2013 the Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce recognized her at the Goleta's Finest event as Volunteer of the Year for her work at Stow House and her work at St. Mark's Church on behalf of the homeless.

She has many gifts and she has spent her life sharing those gifts as an educator and as a community volunteer. Thank you Joan for the many contributions you have made to the Goleta Valley Historical Society.

# Volunteer of the Year



In January at the Annual Meeting, Larry Miller, Jr. was honored as “Volunteer of the Year.”

**Larry Miller, Jr.** came to GVHS to help out over 10 years ago after moving from Ohio, where he worked as a director on living history farms.

We’ve benefited greatly from his expertise over the years. During the Restoration Project he worked closely with Ron Nye and he currently serves on the Society’s Advisory Board.

Larry has served on our Board of Directors and is, like his father and mother, Larry Sr. and Joan Miller, a stellar example of what it means to be a volunteer. He is one of those volunteers who falls under the radar. He quietly helps out in a big way every year with our 4th of July and during the year. When we need things like hay bales, minor fixes or major projects, he’s always quick to help.

He was the first to offer his forklift when the delivery of the hayride wagon required extra equipment we weren’t aware of. Then there was attaching the stairs to the wagon, which required tools and a bit of knowledge of wagons. He was there to take it for a test drive around the property to see how the turns and twists accommodated a new wagon.

Over the years, Larry has donated his time to be the driver of the Holiday Hayride wagon, bringing joy to many girls and boys...and their parents. The 4th of July is another example of his willingness to donate his time to GVHS.

In December, we asked if he could help facilitate the entry of GVHS in the Goleta Old Town Holiday Parade, and within an hour he had the transportation for our tractor and new hayride on a flatbed truck into Old Town Goleta all arranged.

We are so grateful to him for his service and to his family for their continued dedication to our cause.

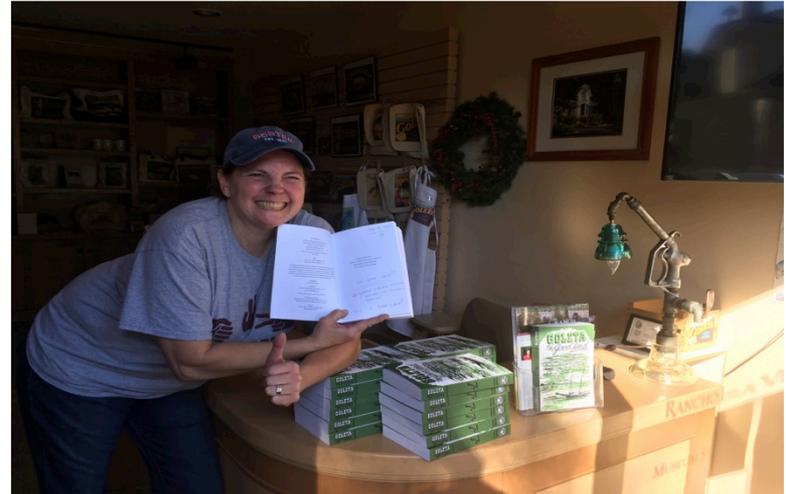


# Goleta: The Good Land

## Goleta Valley Historical Society Reprints the Epic Book

The Society's mission, and in fact the founding of the organization, was inspired by Walker Tompkins' book, *Goleta: The Good Land*, which has been out of print since 1976. It was this passion that inspired the ambitious project to reprint the book for future generations.

A team of volunteers and staff painstakingly re-typed chapter by chapter and re-scanned over 100 historical photos. Months of editing followed and with the help of incredibly generous sponsors and historian Erin Graffy of Kieran Publishing we debuted the book in December 2017.



In addition to selling the book, we are committed to ensuring that every local school and library has a copy of this enthralling adventure of Goleta history.



Among the images found during research for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary exhibit were photos from what appears to be a launch of the book, *Goleta: The Good Land*, in 1966.

# Anniversary Exhibition

## Goleta Valley Historical Society Celebrates 50 Years

The Society celebrated our anniversary with two exciting projects.

The first was a reprint of "Goleta: The Good Land," a book by Walker Tompkins. The second was an exhibition that highlights the organization's founding and first few years entitled, *Good Land Gold: GVHS Celebrates 50 Years*, installed in 2016. The popularity of the display and enthusiasm of the book have been a welcome addition to the History Education Center experience for our guests to Rancho La Patera.



Memorabilia on display includes early guest registers, photos of the dedication of Stow House, scrapbooks and much more. Photos and records preserved in our archives for this project were also digitized for future generations.

# Pioneer Days

Our flagship education program, Pioneer Days, was developed in collaboration with Goleta Union School District. Now in its ninth year, Pioneer Days is an integral part of Goleta Union School District's 3rd grade curriculum, and is also offered to all public and private elementary schools on the South Coast on a first-come, first-served basis as funding permits. Pioneer Days gives 3rd grade students, who study local history as part of the state-mandated curriculum, an opportunity to explore firsthand early California ranch life. The multi-disciplinary program spans several weeks and addresses the California CORE curriculum in history, while weaving in lessons in the sciences, math, language arts, and physical activities.

Participation in 2017:

**900 Students**

**(4 additional Goleta classes in 2017!)**



In addition to new school participation we had an exciting addition to the Pioneer Days program: Summer School. Our own Lisa Potter treated children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade with old-fashioned ranch activities, which even included tending a family of goats!



# Lectures & Screenings



## Goleta & The Railroad

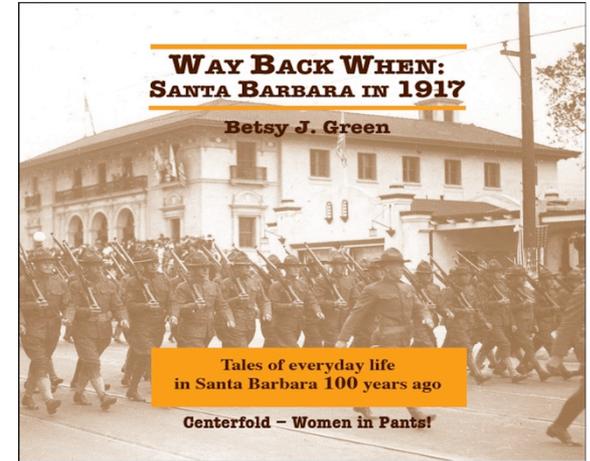
Historian and South Coast Railroad Museum Board Chair Bruce Morden gave a lively collaborative talk about our railroad history. As he explained, "Goleta grew up with the railroad." Guests learned of the people and places that made Goleta what it is and how they are associated with the railroad – Goleta, La Patera, Coromar, Ellwood, Hollister, Sexton, Kellogg, Cooper ...Plus, interesting connections to lemons, walnuts, tomatoes, Marines, earthquakes and moving railroad depots. [Did you know three of Goleta's were moved?]



## My Favorite Historian, Walker Tompkins

Historian Neal Graffy gave a talk about his favorite historian, Walker Tompkins, author of *Goleta: The Good Land*. Graffy illustrated the profound influence Tompkins had on his own life and on the community of history enthusiasts he inspired in Santa Barbara – with his insatiable curiosity and talented storytelling.

Walker Tompkins was a prolific writer, radio host, *Santa Barbara News-Press* columnist, and founding member of Goleta Valley Historical Society.



## Way Back When: Santa Barbara 100 Years Ago

Author Betsy Green spoke about life in Santa Barbara just one hundred years ago with fun and wacky facts about our area. *The Lockheeds set up their seaplane business on the beach... young ladies' swimsuits caused a scandal... a Flying A Studio stuntman drove a car over an abyss ...and a new speed record was set on San Marcos Pass. There was a major crime cover-up at the Potter Hotel ...a 'human fly' climbed a clock tower on State Street ...So much fun discovering some of the quirky and interesting tidbits about the area we love.*

# Community Festivals



Our 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual **Old Fashioned 4<sup>th</sup> of July** was a day of fun at the Ranch for all ages. Local musicians entertained the crowd of 1,200 people with Bluegrass and Country music while the hayrides, pony rides and display of old engines kept them moving through a wonderful Independence celebration.

**Old Time Fiddlers' Competition & Festival** This year we were pleased to add a FREE CONCERT to kick off the weekend. The event began with a performance by many leaders in the Old-Time music industry and over the two days eight groups generously played for the crowds. Over 1,000 people participated during the lively events which included a competition, performances, workshops, jam sessions and an "Instrument Petting Zoo" to inspire all ages. Thanks to all who attended, volunteered, and participated, especially David Bragger, our Artistic Director.

**Holiday at the Ranch** Sadly this year our holiday open house had to be canceled due to poor air quality from the Thomas Fire. We missed seeing the faces of the happy families and guests but we still had fun getting ready for the holidays. Our sincere thanks to Joan Rakowski for leading the décor efforts and to Santa Claus for his unwavering support! 😊





**"Our house is now the community's home."**

*- Garrett Van Horne, Stow descendant, in 1967 at the dedication of Stow House to the County of Santa Barbara (later it would become part of the City of Goleta, who in partnership with GVHS preserve it today.)*

# Music at the Ranch

**Building community.** Our ninth summer of free concerts drew crowds of nearly 2,000 guests per week thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and the time and talent of our local bands. The small town feel, beautiful ambience and our friendly volunteers kept the crowds returning week after week.

Gold Sponsor: City of Goleta



"Looking for an inexpensive family-friendly activity? Music buffs and fans alike are in for a treat at the annual Music at the Ranch featuring favorite local bands." - Seasons Magazine

# Fiesta Ranchera



*Left: Spirit of Fiesta Norma Escarcega and Junior Spirit Eve Flores with Rhonda Henderson, La Presidente and Robin Cederlof, who portrays Saint Barbara.*

*Right: Friends from Anna's Bakery show off their donated treats.*

The 10th annual **Fiesta Ranchera** opened Fiesta's summer season with a sold-out crowd. This popular event, co-hosted by our friends at Old Spanish Days, offered a festive evening of fun, food, music, dancing and a rare opportunity to experience the magic of the Ranch after dark.

That evening Debby & Roger Aceves congratulated the Society on 50 great years preserving Stow House with a check for \$20,000 from a new "Circle of Friends."





## *It takes a village*

Our sincere gratitude to our dedicated volunteers, community partners, sponsors, donors, Board of Directors and staff. Most of all, thank you to our visitors who inspire us with their wonder and keep us on a path to the future.



**Thank You**

Above: We continue to host events and festivals that welcome our community to enjoy the beauty and ambience of the Ranch.

# Strategic Partnerships

**This year GVHS was proud to partner with, or offer support to, the following organizations:**

Cathedral Oaks Nursery School  
Dos Pueblos Jazz Choir  
Environmental Defense Center  
Flamenco Santa Barbara  
Goleta Union School District  
Goleta Valley Art Association  
Old Spanish Days  
Goleta Chamber of Commerce  
Goleta Noontime Rotary  
Goleta Valley Community Center  
Lucidity Festivals  
Partners In Education  
Old-Time Fiddlers' Association  
Primetime Band  
Santa Barbara Maritime Museum  
Folkworks  
Santa Barbara Downtown Organization  
Santa Barbara Educators Roundtable  
Santa Barbara Fermentation Festival  
Santa Barbara Newcomers  
Santa Barbara Historical Museum  
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau  
Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society  
Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation  
Santa Barbara Sunrise Rotary  
South Coast Railroad Museum  
TV Santa Barbara  
Your Children's Trees



Goleta Valley Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our supporters during the past year.

## **\$100,000+**

City of Goleta

## **\$25,000+**

Wood-Claeyssens Foundation

## **\$5,000 – \$9,999**

Goleta Chamber of Commerce

Towbes Foundation

Williams-Corbett Foundation

Marborg Industries

Bella Vista Designs\*

## **\$2,000 – \$4,999**

Debby & Roger Aceves

Pat & Ron Caird

Hollister Village

Montecito Bank & Trust

Spark Creative\*

\* Indicates in-kind contribution

Note that we are not able to list all donations; however we are grateful for gifts of all sizes.

## **\$1,000 – \$1,999**

American Riviera Bank

Louise & David Borgatello

Celene & Brian Borgatello

Judy & Mario Borgatello

Bottiani Family

Robin & Reid Cederlof

Community West Bank

Glynne Couvillon

Goleta Noontime Rotary

Fidelity Investments

FLIR Systems

Barbara Giorgi

Heritage Oaks Bank

Impulse Advanced Communications

Gerd & Peter Jordano

Kris & Bob Muller

Rose Ann Hill

Karen Ramsdell

Jean Sedar

Catherine Cavaletto

Mary Lou & Michael Cavaletto

Arlene Doty

Office of Arts & Culture, SB County

County of Santa Barbara

Santa Cruz Market

Marshall Tibbetts

Towbes Foundation

Ventura Party Rental Center

## **\$250 – \$999**

Kristen & Tom Blabey

Kathleen & Ken Boomer

Ilse & Frank Bourbeau

Charla & Barry DuFour

Lisa Cushman

Santa Barbara Elks Club

Sally Foushe

Balance Financial

Jaime Kuczkowski

Brenda & Michael Gartzke

Susan & Scott Heinz

Kathy & Chris Koeper

Matlick-Freeland

Sharon Rumberger

Whitman Family

Cecilia Villines

## **\$100 – \$249**

Margaret & Joseph Connell

Martha Correa & Gil Garcia

Josiah C. Jenkins

Albert Borgaro

Anne Petersen

James Marchiando

McGowan Gunterman

C. Leora Willford

Peter & Laura Goodell

Jane & Terrence Honikman

Elenore Johnson

Patricia K. Krout

Nancy & Ken Knight

Arlene & Bill Radasky

Janis Shinn

Joel Studebaker

# Looking Ahead

## As we look ahead our goals include:

- Sell many copies of *Goleta: The Good Land* by Walker Tompkins!
- Publish a history of the 1942 Ellwood shelling
- Recruit and train new volunteers to conduct docent-led tours of Stow House and the History Education Center; work in the Visitor Center and Museum Store; assist with *Pioneer Days*; and help with our community celebrations and fundraising events
- Increase GVHS membership to garner and ensure continued support for Society programs and activities
- Continue producing signs identified in our Master Interpretive Signage Plan to enhance the visitor experience
- Remain fiscally solvent while continuing to offer the same level of programs, events and activities that we have in the past
- Expand the *Pioneer Days* program with additional schools from the region
- Engage the community in a discussion about the role of GVHS in capturing and preserving local history
- Begin digitization of the collection with the goal of making available online for research and public learning
- To work with the City of Goleta to create a Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- Celebrate our history!
- Have fun!



Above: Award winning singer and musician Meredith Axelrod expresses her amazement (“and love”) for the Ranch and the Old-Time feel of the Fiddlers’ Festival.

# Our Team

## Board of Directors

Robert Muller, Ph.D.  
*President*

Sally Foughse  
*Vice President*

Peter Goodell  
*Treasurer*

Jacque Hilliard  
*Secretary*

Catherine Cavaletto  
*Historian*

Tom Blabey  
Sally Foughse  
Cheryl Jiménez-Frei  
Jaime Kuczkowski  
Karen Ramsdell  
Marshall Tibbets

## Advisory Board

Mike Edwards  
Gil Garcia, A.I.A.  
Kim Kimbell, Esq.  
Larry Miller, Jr.  
Fermina Murray  
Ron Nye, Ph.D.  
Ida Rickborn  
Jennifer Tice, Esq.  
David Van Horne, Esq.  
Katie Van Horne



## Staff

Amanda De Lucia  
*Executive Director*

Lisa Potter  
*Education*

Dacia Harwood  
*Events & Marketing*

Wes Hensley  
*Resident Caretaker*

## Visitor Service & Event Staff

Tiffany Kishiyama  
Elise Goodell  
Angel Davison

Jennifer Gray  
Karen Poulter  
Susan Shiferl



GOLETA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
*STEWARDS OF*



RANCHO LA PATERA & STOW HOUSE  
304 NORTH LOS CARNEROS, GOLETA  
goletahistory.org 805.681.7216