

QUARTERLY BULLETIN  
OF THE CALIFORNIA PIONEERS  
OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY  
INCORPORATED 1875

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O'Connor Hospital '89ers, Mary Simas and Henry "Hank" Calloway, invite their fellow California Pioneers of Santa Clara County to join in the 1984 Pioneer Day festivities. Annually, the '89ers present Pioneer Day to honor the pioneer legacy of the Valley and of O'Connor Hospital which, when founded in 1889 by the Daughters of Charity, became the Valley's first private hospital. This year's Pioneer Day, to be held at the Hyatt San Jose Mediterranean Room on October 14, will honor persons and descendants of families who've lived in Santa Clara Valley since 1915 or before. Luncheon tickets are \$20.00 per person and invitations are now available by calling the O'Connor Hospital Public Affairs Department at 947-2717.

# ▼ ▼ ▼ WHALE BLAZERS ▼ ▼ ▼

SAN JOSE, 1901: A sliding pole to speed up the fire department was ordered by the fire commissioners.

SAN JOSE, 1901: Ten cent shaves were to be abolished in all barber shops here said the newly organized barbers' union. Shaves were upped to fifteen cents.

SAN JOSE, 1902: The dozen automobiles brought here from the East for taking parties on observation tours about the valley were stored in the Dashaway Stables on South Second Street. After less than a year of operation, it was declared a bad investment.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, June 1904: The scholarship committee of the faculty gave out its semi-annual report. It showed 38 students had been dropped for deficiencies in scholarship and 31 others had been presented "hurry up" cards warning them they had to show an improvement in their college work. The comparative standing of the men and women, as shown by the report, was decidedly in favor of the women. Of the 38 who had just been dropped only 3 were women and of the 31 warned only 5 were women.

SAN JOSE, October 1907: An ordinance making it obligatory to remove hats in theaters of the city was introduced; also the local Pastors' Union protested against physicians working on Sunday.

SAN JOSE, October 1907: The Panama Pacific Exposition had decided to reduce the tax on hand cameras carried by visitors from 50 cents to 25 cents; also tripods would not be permitted.

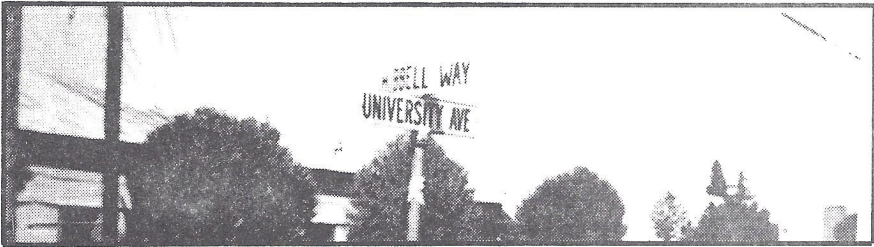
SAN JOSE, July 1930: Cigarette ads were appearing in which young women were pictured smoking or looking approvingly at young men who did. It was the intention of the City Council to bar such advertising and had notified advertising firms such advertising would not be tolerated here.

SAN JOSE, August 1930: New improved iceboxes were being advertised by Nathan-Dohrmann Company at \$17.85 to \$24.85. Included in the purchase was five hundred pounds of ice delivered as it was wanted.

SAN JOSE, 1931: A device developed by a local inventor, Cornelius O'Donnell, had aims to make a purchaser out of every motorist who drove into a service station for free air. If the motorist failed to buy something, he paid a nickel for air; if he did buy, the coin was returned to him. The nickel was inserted into a slot which released a lever that opened the air valve.

## HUBBELL SQUAB FARM

By Bill Chivers



Twenty-five thousand pigeons a few blocks from downtown Los Gatos! No, not a bird migration. It was the business of the "Hubbell Squab Farm" that operated from 1923 to 1951 on University Avenue in Los Gatos.

Doctor Hubbell was a native of Connecticut and graduated from Yale University in 1894. He came to Los Gatos in 1904 and practiced medicine until the war in 1917 when he joined the "Rainbow Division" in France as a doctor. He returned to Los Gatos in 1919, but the horrors of war had dampened his interest in medicine, and his hobby of raising pigeons and squabs was yielding him considerable profit not only in dollars and cents but also in hours of fascinating observation and rewarding study of bird life.

His original home and pigeon pens were at Royce Street and Santa Cruz Avenue. In 1923 he decided to quit his practice and go into the commercial business of squab raising. He bought five acres on University Avenue and there moved his home. He then built the most modern pigeon pens with concrete floors and drains for easy and sanitary cleaning. The pigeon lofts he built special so sunlight could get into them. He also developed a distinctive wood nest that would stay warm when the mother strayed. Hubbell invented a cafeteria type feeder that would dispatch separate grains so the birds could pick the feed best for them depending on their physical condition, thus eliminating mixing of the grain and the great waste from the birds throwing out the grain they didn't want. This feeder is still in use today by many squab farms and is called the Hubbell feeder.

Dr. Hubbell had developed a breed of pure white pigeons that were not exactly "White Kings" for he had these white pigeons long before that famous breed was known.

Pigeons make nests from straw and twigs; so Dr. Hubbell would furnish them tobacco stems to build their nests. He had found that the tobacco fumes would repel lice and other vermin likely to attack the adult and the young birds.

Pigeons mate for life, and both the male and female will take turns setting on the eggs. When the squabs hatch, they are featherless and helpless. Both the male and female feed the babies, usually two, a



milky liquid called "pigeon milk." They grow fast and in about four weeks are fully feathered and ready to leave the nest. They are juicy and fat at this time and usually weigh over a pound. At this time, they are killed, dry picked and sold. Not much went to waste at the Hubbell Squab Farm. The droppings were stored in one building and mixed with gypsum and phosphate to preserve the ammonia and dried for market. This fertilizer never burns and was in great demand by the berry farmers.

Ralph Doetsch, a retired orchardist, related to this author how he used to get the white pigeon feathers from Hubbell and spread them around his orchard, then disc them in for fertilizer. He said the orchards would look like it had just snowed.

Another associated industry that flourished before 1940 was the mounted white dove business for the wholesale floral trade. Dr. Hubbell had three ladies working full time mounting white doves with wings mounted as if alighting. One of these ladies was Mrs. Neta Snook Southern who lives on Shannon Road, Los Gatos. She told this author the details of how the birds were stuffed and mounted. These doves were popular at that time for funerals and weddings.

Dr. Hubbell had developed a system of skinning the pigeon. Then the skin side was painted with arsenic that would preserve the skin and hold the feathers. It was then stuffed with shredded paper, wires were inserted in the legs and wings, and then it was sewn up, packed into boxes and sent all over the United States and Canada.

The fresh squabs were very popular with the wealthy, and many were shipped to Palm Springs, Miami and Hawaii and many of the fine restaurants and hotels around the world.

Today the soft cooing of thousands of pigeons is no longer heard in Los Gatos, for in 1951 Dr. Hubbell sold his property on University Avenue and moved to Almaden Valley with his squabs and pigeons, and in November of that year he died.

Today a street sign at the location of his old squab farm reads "Hubbell Way," and his farm now has apartments on it.

Dr. George M. Hubbell is buried at the Los Gatos Cemetery. He is certainly another outstanding example of some of the creative, industrious and interesting people that make up the history of our beautiful Santa Clara Valley.

## Female Collegiate Institute of Santa Clara

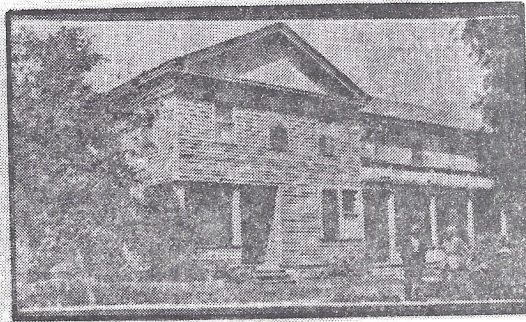
This time worn Santa Clara structure, once the site of early day scholarliness, was the remains of the once Female Institute or girls department of the University of Pacific. The institution was founded under the name of California Westleyan University under Methodist protectorship in 1851.

When the building was razed in 1931, several of its guide books were found dating back to 1862-63. The publications minutely revealed the cost of sending your young lady to the Institute. Tuition in the prep department for half a year amounted to \$23 while \$33 was the cost at the college level. However, there were extras listed. Music with the use of a piano came high, \$50 for the half year. The 'ornamental branches' consisted of raised and French embroidery, oriental painting, leather and wax flower creations amounting to \$15 for the half year.

The faculty or 'board of instruction' as the guide listed them were: Rev. George S. Phillips, principal and professor of mental and moral philosophy; Mrs. Elizabeth Phillips, governess and teacher of botany and domestic economy; Rev. James Rogers, professor of natural science and modern and ancient languages; Rev. O.S. Frambes, professor of mathematics; George M. Schock, professor of instrumental music on piano and teacher of guitar; Thomas Olinger, teacher of vocal music; and Miss Eliza E. Hadlock, teacher of ornamental branches.

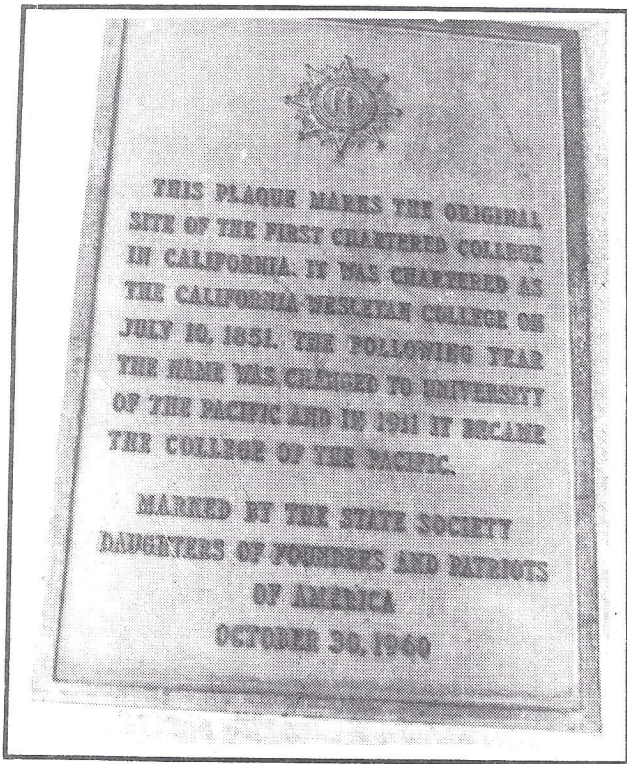
Behavior standards were upmost and were so emphasized: "Young ladies will not be allowed to walk or ride out unless in company with one of their parents or teachers. The institution is open for inspection at any time and friends are cordially invited to visit, but pupils cannot receive calls from any persons except those introduced by the parents or guardians to the principal or governess and no one else." It was further noted, the 99 collegians of 1862-63 were denied the thrill of a pleasure excursion on the Sabbath; furthermore, passing the vicinity of a gambling house or saloon was forbidden.

When the Collegiate Institute was built in 1853, redwood was used throughout. As there were no planing mills in the area, all lumber was hauled from the Santa Cruz Mountains. All window sash, frames,



doors and mouldings being made by hand.

The Institute was located on the northeast corner of Santa Clara's City Plaza but fell into disuse when the university moved to San Jose in 1871. Prior to its dismantling the building had been a rooming house. By 1924 the University had moved to Stockton. Of Santa Clara origin the University of Pacific is the oldest incorporated educational institution in California with its charter dated July 10, 1851.



This historical plaque in Santa Clara today at Bellomy and Winchester Blvd. marks the founding site of the University of Pacific when it was bounded by Lincoln, Durbam, Bellomy and University Streets.

H.C.

## The Midwife

By Joe Salameda

Listed on page 114 of the San Jose City Directory for 1910 is the following: "Bressani, Mrs. Mary Del Piero, Midwife, Graduate of the Royal University of Padova, 269 W. Santa Clara, Phone-Main 791, res.same."

I do not knowledgeable remember ever having met this lady, whose skilled hands brought me into this world on that early July morning in 1913; however, on many occasions during my childhood my parents recounted the episode of my father's pre-dawn bicycle ride to Mrs. Bressani's home to notify her of my imminent arrival and her post hast horse and buggy ride following my father to our residence on East Empire Street.

Why didn't my father telephone? Phones were then a rartiy in the humble "Little Italys." Besides, to relative newcomers to this country they were, even when available, as yet relatively unfamiliar instruments with which to entrust such important matters.

The number of my generation which Mrs. Bressani and other midwives of the period started on their life cycles in this world by home-oriented births is unknown; however, the count is definitely large. Hospital births, considerably more expensive, and unfamiliar to the tradition-bound old world Italian Mamas, were little used by them. One wonders how many times this lady set forth on similar trips to modest homes in the "Little Italys" of the San Jose area during the many years she served humanity during the early part of this century.

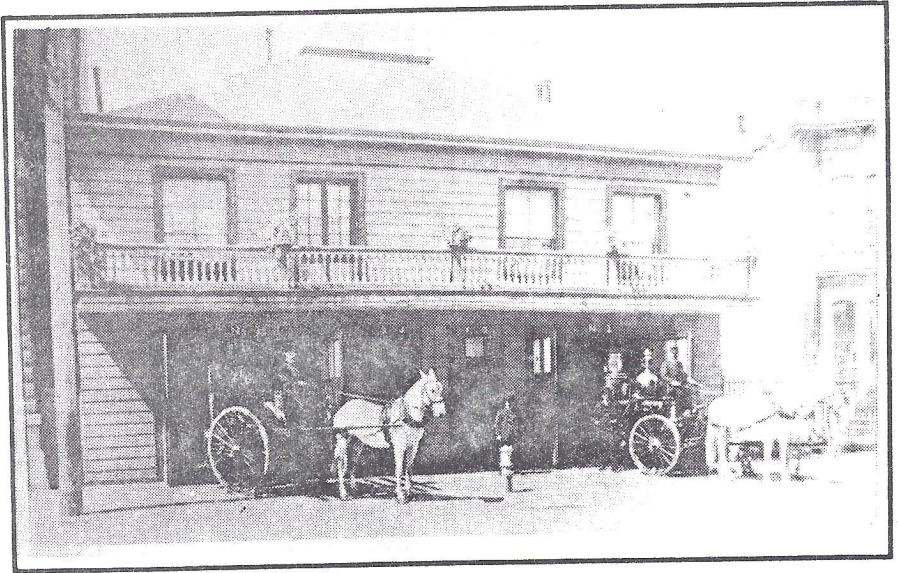
In retrospect, considering the broad spectrum of accomplishments of our generation, it may rightfully be set forth that she served her community well.

Home remedies were often used. When illness exceeded the corrective power of traditional home spun cures, the family physician was called and on his daily rounds would visit the home and be paid in cash at the time of the visit. Fees were sometimes two or three dollars during the twenties. The midwife's charges at the author's birth in 1913 was ten dollars.

Hospitals were few and hospitalization was infrequent. Prepaid medical insurance was yet far in the distant future. Families would mortgage their homes to meet major medical bills for their seriously ill loved ones.

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The preceding was taken from Mr. Joe Salameda's recent publication, "ITALIANA OF SILICON VALLEY." This arresting softbound is an overflowing account of the joys, tears and hardships endured by our valley's "Little Italys" during its 'garden of the world' days. Joe is a native born San Josean of Italian parentage with a degree from San Jose State (1936) and graduate study in history at Stanford University. Joe is presently managing director of the Los Altos Historical Association and a Pioneer member.—Crazie, Joe.



## The Year Our Fire Department Smouldered

By Helen E. Arbuckle

Speaking of the proposed \$175,000 city bond election on June 28, 1907, \$95,000 of which was for Fire Department needs, Mayor Henry Mathews stated that if the voters knew the exact state of the apparatus they would discard the old engines and purchase a whole new outfit. Of the several pieces of equipment owned by the city, only one could be relied on. Also on the list of proposed improvements was the purchase of 4,000 feet of new hose, the installation of 100 hydrants, and a monitor nozzle to secure the city against conflagrations in the business center where buildings were increasing in height each year.

The disastrous fire of 1892 that destroyed the Empire Fire House on South Second Street and almost wiped out the entire town left the remaining equipment in a dangerously weakened condition.

The firehouses were also in bad shape—not fit for man or beast. The appearance of the fire engine house, formerly a hotel, on North Third Street near Santa Clara, which replaced the Empire, was not so bad as it had been sheathed with boards which, though rotting, did not show how badly the old adobe building was sinking into the earth. The back wall and partition down the center of the building was crumbling; a few boards supporting the center of the structure were bent a foot out of their normal position.

The lower floor was of wood and housed the horses that had to be on the ready to pull the engine to put out a blaze. The odor of horse pervaded the upper story where the men slept, and clung to the at-

mosphere despite the frequent cleaning of the stable below. The more they opened the windows for ventilation the more the stable odors floated up to poison their air. As a house for men it was absolutely unfit, and unsanitary to boot. If the hotel charged more than fifteen cents a room in the days of its decadence, the proprietors should have been arrested for obtaining money under false pretenses. At least that was the sentiment of the firemen.

Front page news stories and editorials describing the wretched condition of the Fire Department's stations and equipment resulted in passage of the bond issue. San Jose reived four new stations, new hose, hydrants, a new ladder truck, and new steamers for Engines 1 and 2.

However, the recently dedicated Empire Firehouse replica at the Historical Museum was included in this largesse.

## Volunteer Firemen Still A Vital Function

By Don Tustin

In this day of paid fire departments in Santa Clara County there are still volunteer firemen in this area's fire departments.

**Santa Clara Fire Department:** Volunteers respond to all structure responses. Has the largest number of volunteers in the county. Has fully paid manpower along with the volunteers. Equipment: 10 engines, 3 trucks, 2 rescue units.

**Central Fire District:** Volunteers respond to all structure responses. Covers Los Gatos, Cupertino, Monte Sereno and non-city areas of western Santa Clara County. Equipment: 9 engines, 2 trucks, 1 tanker.

**Saratoga Fire District** has about ten paid firemen plus a large number of volunteers. Equipment: 6 engines, 1 rescue engine.

**Fremont Fire District** covers an area between Mt. View and Sunnysvale. Equipment: 2 engines.

**Milpitas Fire Department** has a small number of volunteers. Equipment: 3 engines, 1 truck, 1 tanker, 1 squad rescue unit.

**Redwood Volunteers** respond to structures and grass responses in Santa Cruz Mountains area of Santa Clara County. A unit of Central Fire District is called when the Redwood Estate stations responds.

Each volunteer has a 'fire' radio in his or her home or car over which they are notified. Response is required by the fire dispatcher for which they respond. For example Santa Clara Fire dispatcher will notify the Santa Clara volunteers where to respond and the type of fire—(house, factory, etc.) All volunteers are required to attend training sessions two or more times a month.

The volunteer system is a real service to the districts they serve.

**San Jose Fire Department**, one of the largest in the state, is fully paid with 29 engines, 10 trucks, 10 light units, 6 hose wagons, 6 patrol tankers, 3 tankers, 1 rescue unit, 1 HIT unit (for chemical spills), 4 district chiefs per shift.

## **“Living History Days” Gallops Back By Popular Demand**

A ‘Living History Day’ returns. This popular event gallops back for another enraptured day at the San Jose Historical Museum on October 13, 1984. Come step into this era high buttoned with displays and demonstrations in blacksmithing, quilting, spinning and weaving. Behold the likes of high wheeled bicycles, antique fire engines, side saddle equestriennes, suffragettes and Temperance groups. Catch a bungled bank robbery then a medicine show performance. Ogle beautiful Gibson girls in this setting reeling with ragtime piano and brass band harmonics. All this and more on Living History Day, Oct. 13—11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## **Conference of California Historical Societies**

All too soon Mary Lou Lyon’s term as President of the Conference of California Historical Societies ended when it held its 23rd annual meeting in Santa Cruz in June. Mary Lou was a Pioneer essay prize winner several years ago and is now a teacher at Homestead High.

The Conference, as its name implies, is composed of historical, preservation, and genealogical societies from all over the state with about 100,000 members. The head office is the University of Pacific at Stockton.

Helen Arbuckle, Victoria Malatesta, and Mary Simas represented the Pioneers at the business sessions and tours to Cowell State Park to see the old lime kilns, the Wilder dairy farm which is being developed as a park, and Davenport.

During the Awards luncheon our own June Oxford received a certificate for her book, “The Capital That Wouldn’t Stay Put.” Other awards were given for research and preservation.

The highlight was the Friday evening banquet at Coconut Grove and fashion show of vintage clothing from several collections that people might have worn in old Santa Cruz—Ike Graham, Josephine McCracken, Mary Halleck Foote, Cockeyed Charlie, and many other famous and infamous characters. Barbara Burkhart gave a delightful running commentary on the clothes and characters.

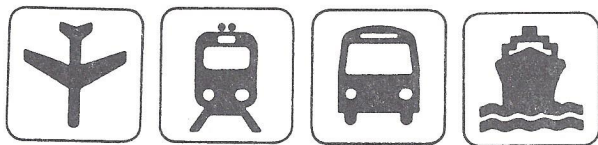
Next year’s Conference will be on the Queen Mary at Long Beach.  
—Helen Arbuckle

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SAN JOSE, 1902:—Painters were giving a new coat of paint to the Electric Tower, which straddled Market and Santa Clara Streets, declared they found all rivetings in first class condition and there was no danger of the big iron structure of ever falling.

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SAN JOSE, 1902:—The Superintendent of Schools discovered how \$15 worth of ink powder would fill the ink-wells of local schools for an entire term.



## Touring With The Californians

A New Package! SOUTH SHORE-LAKE TAHOE September 12-13, 1984. The Elm Inn just a short walk to Harrah's. Bonus \$12 cash, \$3 food credit. Total cost \$44.45 per person—add \$18 for single supplement. Space still available. Invite a friend to join you on this one. Departure 8:00 a.m. Wednesday; return 6:00 p.m. Thursday.

Oct. 23-Nov. 3 WASHINGTON, D.C. & CHESAPEAKE—WILLIAMSBURG CRUISE 'A star spangled area'. Relax on this informal style of cruising for seven days as you weave serenely through American history. About full but get on a very short waiting list.

ALASKA is for June 1985. More update at the Sept. 1st luncheon.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Ruth Gross who has contributed years of devoted time and patience to the Californians is withdrawing due to ill health. It now becomes urgent for the Tour Committee to seek a volunteer (small remuneration). Call Alice Vetterle if you are interested in this vital tour function. 294-7510.

You are now requested to call Alice Vetterle at 294-7510 for reservations from 9 to noon, Monday thru Friday. If there is no answer and it's urgent, you can call that evening.

## Welcome New Members

Edward P. Allegretti  
Rose Alves  
Mary Jane Andrews  
Beatrice Bernhart  
Wade Brummal  
Rev. Norman Culbertson  
Ida May Culbertson  
Elizabeth Dorr  
Milton R. Dorr  
Dorothy Enos

Joseph Enos  
Paul A. Heple  
Mildred M. Levratto  
Pearl E. Miley  
Thomas Muller  
Dorothy L. Ontjes  
Frank Re  
Susan L. Santo  
Maree Schlenker  
R. Kenneth Schlenker  
Ann Schreiber

Richard Schreiber  
Helen L. Sequeira  
Dwight F. Sheffer  
Charlotte B. Stelling  
Glenn W. Stephens  
Mary Stephens  
Leona E. Trefethen  
Leah Warren  
Tommy H. Warren  
Mary C. Williams



*Beyond the sunset*

Dessie M. Blue  
Willis S. Clayton, Jr.  
Robert L. Cochran

Vera D. Kynaston  
Viola C. Lawrence  
Eugenia McKay

Hazel McIntyre  
Bertha Ogden  
Melba Winn

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## NON-PAID MEMBERS REMOVED FROM MAILING

In keeping with policies of our organization, members who are not paid for the year 1984 have had their mailing plates set aside. This means that quite a few members will not be receiving copies of the TRAILBLAZER until dues are paid. Dues can still be paid in the usual way by sending your check of \$5 and self-addressed, stamped envelope to the California Pioneers financial secretary, P.O. Box 8208, San Jose, CA 95155. If you have any questions regarding the payment of dues or membership status, please call Mary Wahlberg, Financial Secretary, (408) 246-5503.

Also there has been duplications of TRAILBLAZER to some addresses. If you are receiving two copies and one would be sufficient, please call Mary Wahlberg at (408) 246-5503 or James O'Connor (408) 275-6409.

THE TRAILBLAZER issued February, May, August and November. Editor-Henry Calloway, 1899 McDaniel Ave., San Jose, CA 95126; Associate Editor-Laura Calloway; Assistant Editor-Bill Chivers; Staff Artist-Ralph Rambo. Subscription rate to non-members \$4 per year.

SUNSHINE Please notify of SICKNESS AND DEATHS: Mary Simas, 1722 Husted, San Jose, CA 95125 or phone (408) 448-6102.