

HISTORY CENTER

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Thyme



An aerial view of the fairgrounds in the 1950s. Note the race track at bottom center.

HOORAY!! The Mid-State Fair is back!

By Joe Carotenuti

After last year's cancellation, a grand county and state event is open for all to enjoy. Displays, entertainment, stock auctions or just taking time to enjoy the company of others, fairs bring a great deal of joy.

However, while our fair traces its history back to a very modest beginning in 1946, the tradition in this county is much older.

1875 is an appropriate year to mark the beginnings of the concept of a local fair. Initial efforts modeled the first noted event held in 1854 in San Francisco. Sponsored by the California State Agricultural Society, emphasis was placed on the exhibition of animals, agricultural production, and machinery.

Twenty years later, the San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Society was formed with an emphasis on "turf sports" with renditions of race tracks and ever-present discussions about horses. Eight years later the Society reorganized itself as the **16th District Agricultural Association** with a grant from the state to hold an "autumnal fair" offering premiums for agricultural and mechanical

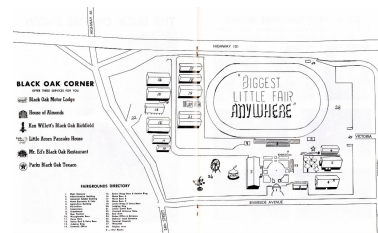
productions, fruits, stock and races.



A huge step was the erection of the impressive Pavilion in 1885 as a home for displays. Over the years, the building became a community center, an entertainment venue, rooming house and even the location of the first county library. While the county seat attempted various strategies to gain support, interest waned while other communities sponsored their own versions of a fair.

It was not until 1941 that the determination of a few locals to present a community venue began decades of a collective dedication. With approval by the State Department of Agriculture, an event was planned in Paso Robles. Now legally formed, the San Luis Obispo County Fair Association needed to postpone any activity until after the end of World War II.

September 13, 1946 saw the result of years of planning. For \$3.60, the public was invited to Paso Robles where two circus like tents on ten acres of barren ground along Riverside Drive announced the three-day event. Each day had a theme: day one was Youth Day, followed by Farmers Day, and closing with County Day.



Then – as now – a major attraction allowed 4-H Club and Future Farmers of America youngsters to auction their projects. The young entrepreneurs had little comforts at the time. Needing to stay overnight, an adjacent piece of property was “appropriated” and their dormitory consisted of sleeping bags on the dirt ground.

Billed as “**The Biggest Little Fair Anywhere**,” without any assistance from the state, the first year’s revenue paid for all expenses and premiums.

Changing its name in 1981 to the San Luis Obispo County Mid-State Fair and again four years later to just the Mid-State Fair, it’s now officially the California Mid-State Fair. By whatever name from a small community affair with primarily family involvement, it now ranks among the top state fairs that number about 75.

It was the faith in the future coupled with the hard work and stress in the present that has sustained 75 years of ingenuity and innovation...interrupted by the malicious virus. It was not a death knell as once again the greeting remains to “Meet me at the Fair” for its Diamond Jubilee.

ON GROUNDS FREE ENTERTAINMENT				PAID GRANDSTAND ENTERTAINMENT			
1990	SPRING Headliner Stage	Scagans Live	Bud Dry Entertainment Center	Pondosa Stage	Main Grandstand Area		
Sat, Aug. 7	Mad Pageant 7 pm	Charlie Daniels 7.5	Guest Who 8:30	Mugleston 1:45	Lisa Rowland/ Aaron Herdic 8 pm		
Wed, Aug. 8	Louise Mandrell 7.5	Legends in Concert 8:30 pm	Guest Who 8:30	Mugleston 1:45	Wayne Newton 8 pm		
Thurs, Aug. 9	Louise Mandrell 7.5	Legends in Concert 8:30 pm	Williams & Rees 8:30 pm	Mugleston 1:45	Conway Tatty/ Rodney Crowell 8 pm		
Fri, Aug. 10	Hot Date Taylor Dayne 8:30 pm	Legends in Concert 8:30 pm	Williams & Rees 8:30 pm	Mugleston 1:45	George Burns Terry Bennett w/ Les Brown & His Band of Renown 8 pm		
Sat, Aug. 11	Waylon Jennings 7.5	Legends in Concert 8:30 pm	Williams & Rees 8:30 pm	Mugleston 1:45	George Strait/ Patty Loveless 8 pm		
Sun, Aug. 12	Jerry Reed 7.5	Jets 8:30 pm	Williams & Rees 8:30 pm	LI Elmo & the Cosmos 7 pm	Kenny G/ Michael Bolton 8 pm		
Mon, Aug. 13	Righteous Bros. 7.5	Doug Kenshaw 8:30 pm	Williams & Rees 8:30 pm	LI Elmo & the Cosmos 7 pm	The Temptations/ The Four Tops 8 pm		
Tue, Aug. 14	J. B. Sayers & The Stamps 7.5	Hypnotic Tony DiStasio 8:30 pm	Williams & Rees 8:30 pm	LI Elmo & the Cosmos 7 pm	Curtis Black / Tony Tucker 8 pm		
Wed, Aug. 15	Tavis Tritt 7.5	Hypnotic Tony DiStasio 8:30 pm	Marty Bros. 8:30 pm	LI Elmo & the Cosmos 7 pm	Heart 8 pm		
Thurs, Aug. 16	Tavis Tritt 7.5	Hypnotic Tony DiStasio 8:30 pm	Marty Bros. 8:30 pm	Zippers 1:45	Kenny Rogers / Dolly Parton 8 pm		
Fri, Aug. 17	Charlie Rich 7.5	Annette Francioso 8:30 pm	Marty Bros. 8:30 pm	Zippers 1:45	Kenny Rogers / Dolly Parton 8 pm		
Sat, Aug. 18	Roy Clark 7.5	Charley Pride 8:30 pm	Marty Bros. 8:30 pm	Zippers 1:45	Budweiser 8 pm		
Sun, Aug. 19	Monte Mills & His All Star Showcase Band 4.5	Lee Greenwood 5.5	Marty Bros. 8:30 pm	Zippers 1:45	Budweiser 8 pm PRCA Rodeo 2 pm Monster Truck Madness Show 7 pm		

Corporate Sponsors of FREE On Grounds Entertainment

Coors Light Beer KWSP Whisper 106 FM KRPL 1230 AM K-OTTER 94 FM Scagans's Coolers
Pulp / RC Cola Langendorf Bread AMK Foodservice Company Producers Williams Bros. Markets
Glen Ivy Resort Cal Spas Twin Cities Community Hospital Spring Toyota/BMW Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream

Budweiser

We want to know, who went in 1990 and saw the Temptations?

Joe was the recipient of the History Center's 2020 Award for Historic Preservation Advocacy. You can read more about Joe's research on the Mid-State Fair in the July 2021 edition of the Central Coast Journal, found online at www.slojournal.com

Looking for peace in nature?

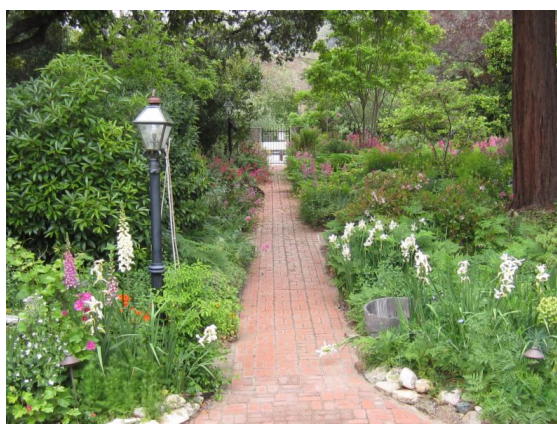
Our fantastic mindfulness instructor Kelli Schonher is offering three new opportunities to clear your mind and connect with the Dallidet Gardens.

On **Saturday, July 24th**, she will be leading a Mindfulness retreat in the gardens from 9:00 to 11:30.

On **Saturday, August 7th**, she will be offering a Connect to Nature workshop from 9:00 to 11:30.

On Saturday, August 28th, deepen your enjoyment of the many dimensions that Nature provides through the simple ability of playfulness.

[Click here for more information or to register.](#)



If you missed the news, we're open!

It's been a long time coming, but the History Center museum is once again open to the public.

We're open from 11 to 5 every day except Tuesday. We are also offering access to our Research Room, where you'll find answers to all your local history questions, on Wednesdays and Friday.

Looking to get involved? Want to learn and share our local history stories? We have docent shifts available. Contact info@historycenterslo.org to learn more.

We are also offering open hours at the Dallidet Adobe! Now through September, we'll be open from noon to 4:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. You can check the [calendar on our website](#) to make sure the gardens aren't closed for a private event.



If you want to book your own private event, email info@historycenterslo.org



September Carnegie Lecture

The Rios Caledonia Adobe

We are thrilled to be returning to in-person lectures with the phenomenal story of the Rios Caledonia Adobe, a jewel of the North County. In collaboration with the [Friends of the Rios Caledonia](#), you will be able to learn the story of this incredible landmark and the extraordinary work that the Friends are doing to conserve and maintain the site.

Coming up on September 10, 2021. Save the date, we'll fill you in on all the details soon.



Sun., July 25th, 2-3:30 p.m.
MORRO BAY HISTORIC WALK

Guided stroll past downtown buildings, murals and the Embarcadero to uncover the town's beginnings from fishing village to World War II Navy base to a seaside resort today. Why the incongruous smokestacks? Meet in front of the Bay Theatre, 464 Morro Bay Blvd. Leader: Joe Morris, 805-549-0355

We're also offering free weekly walking tours of Mission Plaza, tracing the 1858 events surrounding the Committee of

Vigilance, Pio Linares, and much more.

We're taking a break on July 10th, but every **Saturday** from July 17th through Labor Day meet at the base of the Carnegie Library at 10:00 am.



King David's Masonic Lodge in San Luis Obispo will be hosting festivities on Saturday, September 11, 2021, to unveil their newly restored painting of George Washington by the famed French itinerant painter Leon Trousset. Speakers will present discuss life in San Luis Obispo in 1870, the importance of this artwork, and also commemorate the 20th anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

[Click here](#) for more information and who to contact for reservations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TK'.

Thomas Kessler
Executive Director

