

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

Bay Becomes Bodega Bay

What is in a name? The towns of Bodega and Bodega Bay are often lumped together as “Bodega.” Until 1941 the town by the bay was simply known as “Bay.” Because there were already too many California towns named “Bay,” the US Postal Service asked our Postmistress, Glenice Carpenter, to come up with a new name. She chose “Bodega Bay.”



To add to naming confusion, the large outer bay beyond the jetties, where Bodega Rocks are located, bordered to the north by Bodega Head and to the south by Tomales Bay, and popularly called the Pacific Ocean, is “Bodega Bay” on the NOAA’s Nautical Charts.

Meanwhile, the inner harbor surrounded by Bodega Head, Old Town, the Tides and Lucas Wharfs on California Route One and Doran Beach, often referred to as “Bodega Bay,” is “Bodega Harbor” on the Charts.

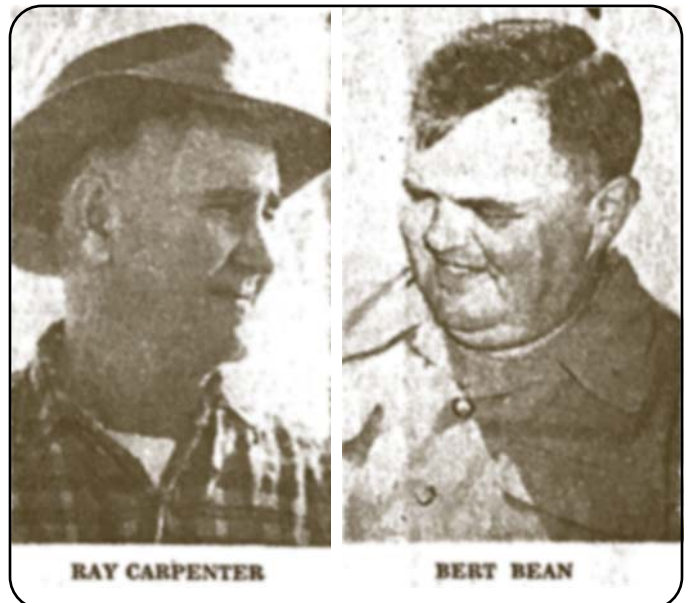
Controversy Swirls Around Bodega Harbor (Part 2)

After construction of the jetties and channel was completed in 1943, Bodega Harbor became known as a safe, welcoming harbor in bad weather – much safer than nearby San Francisco Bay. While Bodega Harbor was sheltered, boats could only be pulled ashore onto tidal flats for storage, maintenance and engine repair -- not a sustainable solution for the thriving fishing and shipping to San Francisco Bay.

Responding to a call to put control of the harbor into local hands, the State of California granted approximately 1,200 acres of tidal and submerged lands to Sonoma County on Sept 21, 1951 with the proviso that the County improve the harbor within 10 years. If Sonoma County failed, title would revert to the State. Bodega Bay’s townspeople were ready and submitted their plans to improve Bodega Harbor.

It took five years for Sonoma County to adopt a master plan for five Sonoma County harbors¹. The County, when implementing the Harbor Master Plan, put the owners of shoreline property on notice that development guidelines, including rent for use of tidelands, would be forthcoming.

Then, despite the best efforts of Bodega Bay commercial fishing interests to get the process started, there was inaction on the part of Sonoma County that led to confusion and disarray.



In 1958, only three years left before the State’s deadline to improve the harbor, Ray Carpenter, the father of our future Postmistress, (See *Did You Know?* column) was “just sitting tight ... and waiting,” unable to proceed with plans to build a commercial wharf. *continued on page 6*

FACES OF BODEGA BAY

Meet Bob Miller at the Surf Shack

by Laura Rogers-Bennett

Bob has an infectious enthusiasm or in his words he is “stoked” about surfing and has been working here for 25 years teaching novices, intermediate students and surfing with world class surfers.

Speaking of great surfers, Bob’s wife of 22 years, Lauri, is an excellent surfer, beautiful to watch glide over the waves and a teacher and mom of two great young guys. Bob and Lauri’s sons Miles and Dylan are now at UC Santa Cruz and in high school, and by the way, they are both great surfers too.

Bob grew up in Bennett Valley in Santa Rosa, went to the Santa Rosa Junior College and has been coming to the ocean his whole life to surf and enjoy the waves. He says that “looking at the ocean puts it all into perspective how small we are and things that might stress me out don’t seem to be worth worrying about”.

In addition to his business the Surf Shack, Bob is very involved in the community in Bodega Bay and has been a volunteer firefighter,



FACES OF BODEGA BAY

supporter of the local schools, the Surf Rider Foundation, migrant workers association and gives surf and kayaking lessons to at risk kids. His Surf Shack has grown into a family business and many local kids have worked there helping out when Bodega Bay hits the busy summer tourist season.

Bob enjoys music, learning to sail and is working on his house in Carmet by the Sea.

One thing you might not know is that when he was 5 years old Bob won a bicycle in an art contest put on by a local TV news station, but he did not yet know how to ride a bike.

One thing you surely know about Bob is his warm greeting for everyone. His big smile, his love of talking with people and most of all his love of the Pacific Ocean is easily shared for all. He says that we in Bodega Bay “all look at each other with a smile and know how lucky we are.” ■



A regular appearance in our quarterly newsletter, The Faces of Bodega Bay is a photojournalistic record of people in our town: school kids, surfers, shop owners, fishermen, restaurant workers; a whole gamut of people who live and work in Bodega Bay and help make it the wonderful community that it is. These “environmental portraits” portray the subjects in their natural environment, capturing their character and telling their story through their surroundings.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Rancho Bodega Settlers

by John Maestri

As a historian, I have always been fascinated with place names and the people who gave their names to these places. We are familiar with such names as Cheney Gulch, Doran Beach and the Coleman, Wright & Gleason Beaches.

In February 1875, James Smith, son of Captain Stephen Smith sued some 40 ranchers in Rancho Bodega to reclaim property sold by Tyler Curtis. In October 1875, the lawsuit was dismissed in the Sonoma County court, indicating that Tyler Curtis' sales to these ranchers was legal under the terms of the guardianship signed by Tyler and Manuela Torres Smith.

In June 1877, the case was appealed and went to the California Supreme Court, where the court upheld the earlier judgment made by the lower court. Judges of the California Supreme Court heard testimony from many parties, including James Smith, who attested that the sales were illegal and that the guardianship had been obtained without his permission.

The Supreme Court reviewed the original Mexican Land Grant of 1843 and the subsequent California affirmation of Captain Smith's land grant of 37,000 acres in Sonoma County, called Rancho Bodega. They reviewed the will of Captain Smith which gave his estate (and the land) to Manuela Torres and her children.

After Captain Smith died in 1855, Curtis obtained a guardianship of the three children of Captain Smith and Manuela Torres Smith (Stephen Smith, Manuelita Smith & James Smith). Tyler petitioned the Probate Court of California to allow him to sell their shares in the estate including the land of Rancho Bodega and it was granted based on his 1861 guardianship obtained after his marriage to Manuela Torres Smith.

The land owners and ranchers were the subject of the lawsuit. They had purchased their properties of between 150 and 500 acres beginning in 1861, and by the 1870s Tyler had sold all the lands of Rancho Bodega. Tyler Curtis and Manuela Torres Curtis moved to a mansion on Van Ness in San Francisco, where Manuela died in 1871. Needless to say, the Ranchers of Bodega Bay rejoiced in the Supreme Court ruling that allowed them to retain their ownership of the land. ■

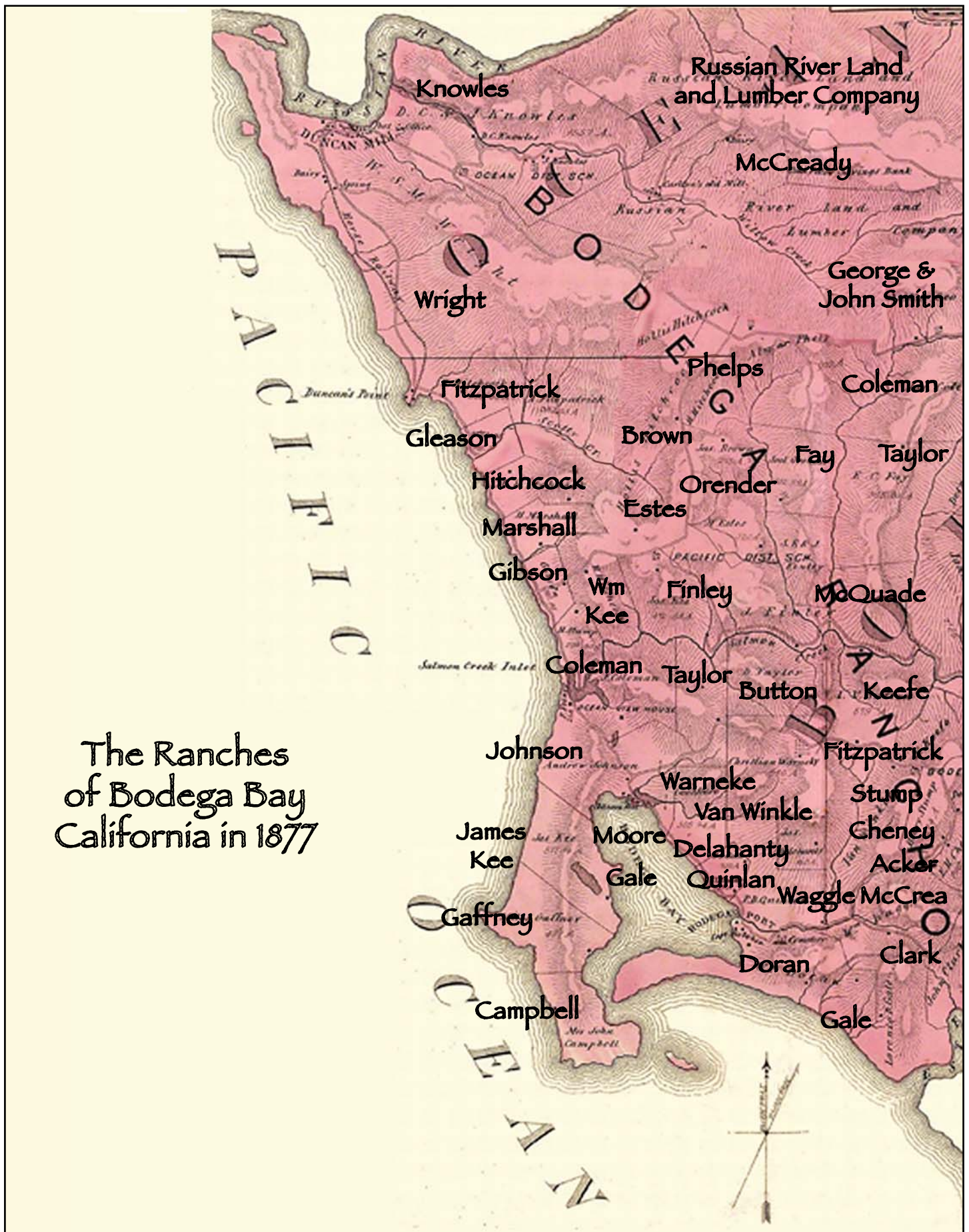
The map on page 5 and the biographies of the ranchers listed here can be found on our web site: <http://ranchobodega.org/rancho.html>

Ocean Township

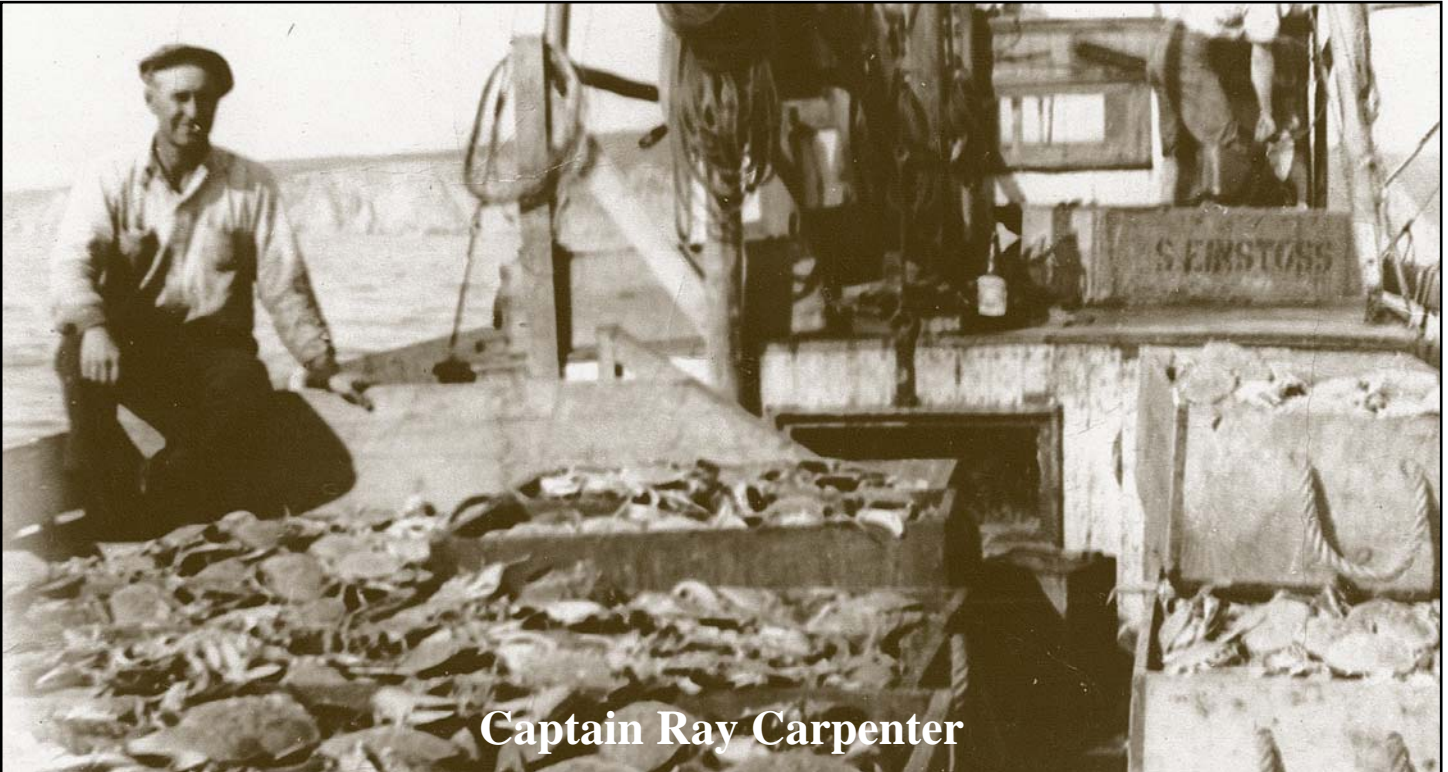
- Joseph Knowles
- David Knowles
- Samuel McCready
- Russian River Land and Lumber Company
- George Washington Smith
- John Kinder Smith Sr.
- Winfield Wright

Bodega Township

- Reuben Wood Acker
- James Henry Brown
- Isaac Vail Button
- James 'John' Campbell
- Edmund Cheney
- John Nathan Clark
- James Coleman
- James Delehanty
- William Marion Doran
- Hickman Estes
- Enos Fay
- John Finley
- Andrew Fitzpatrick
- Miles Gaffney
- Lorenzo Dow Gale
- Otis Seldon Gale
- John Henry Gibson
- William Gleason
- Hollis Hitchcock
- Andrew Johnson
- Benjamin Joy
- James Kee
- Nathaniel Keefe
- Hugh Ancrum Marshall
- John McCrea
- John McQuade
- George Moore
- Joel Orender
- Almar Phelps
- Patrick Quinlan
- Henry Stump
- Despard Taylor
- Thomas Van Winkle
- William Waggle
- Christian Warneke



CONTROVERSY SWIRLS AROUND BODEGA HARBOR (PART 2)



Captain Ray Carpenter

Captain Ray was “[a] weathered, soft-spoken but articulate resident of the town of Bodega Bay, one of the community’s most respected leaders, a commercial fisherman for 35 years (as of 1958) who owned harbor frontage.

Another frustrated fisherman was Capt. Ivan Davis, who owned a 50-foot tuna boat moored in San Rafael because Bodega Harbor was inadequate. Davis had 250 feet of frontage on Bodega Harbor’s east shore. He planned to dredge a mooring basin, protect the basin with a breakwater and provide all-weather protection for boats and rental berths for others - perhaps 30 or 40 boats in all. He planned emergency boat ramps with rails, called “ways” to haul leaking or sinking boats out of the water. After two years Davis said, “I’ve given up in disgust.” He could not understand why County Supervisors could not come up with a simple rental formula so that owners would know what they could do on tidelands and how much it would cost.

Resident and hotel owner Ray Shaw wanted assurances that the County would not lease the tideland off his beach to someone else. Ray and his wife owned about 1,200 feet on the northeast corner of Bodega Harbor with their Beach Motel and its well-known “Mystery Spot.”² Shaw wanted to dredge and construct a small boat basin on the lower part of his property.

“Would you buy a pig in the poke?” demanded Bert Bean, the big, burly former commercial fisherman who owned a Marine Engine and Boat Repair Shop on the East Shore. He planned to install marine ways (rails) to haul boats out for repair and maintenance. He was ready to proceed, hauled truckloads of fill material when County Supervisors indicated they were about to start charging tideland rent. Two years later he was still waiting to learn how much the rent was. ■ **Next issue:** Sonoma County’s Master Plan for Bodega Harbor.

¹The four harbors were Bodega Harbor, Petaluma River, Hudeman Slough southwest of Sonoma, Jenner and Fort Ross.

² Where Porto Bodega is located now - who remembers the Mystery Spot? Ask Robin Rudderow!)

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IN THIS ISSUE

Rancho Bodega Settlers

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Bob Miller from the Surf Shack



Bob's Surf Shack has grown into a family business. Many local kids work there helping out when Bodega Bay hits the busy summer tourist season.

FALL EVENTS

Bodega Bay's **POLLING LOCATION IS CHANGING** to across the street from the Post Office: VOTE at **BODEGA BAY YACHT CLUB** 565 Smith Brothers Road, Bodega Bay The Secretary of State recommended we use the largest facility available to meet social distancing requirements and increasing demands for technology and connectivity. Voting will take place for four days! Saturday October 31, Sunday November 1, Monday November 2 from 9:00 am - 5 pm, Tuesday November 3 from 7:00 am - 8:00 pm. A ballot drop box will be Bodega Bay Fire Station, for those that do not wish to go to the Yacht Club.

WEST COUNTY MUSEUM - SEBASTOPOL, CA Though our museum doors are temporarily closed, all is not lost! We invite you to virtually visit our newest exhibit celebrating the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote. Our museum is transformed into a "Suffrage Headquarters" where you will be informed about the highlights of the suffrage movement and the life and times of the major leaders. You will also see our local Suffragists, women who lived nearby and who were active in the fight for the vote. Also, you will discover the traveling speakers who made event stops here in Sebastopol, such as the women who spoke at Janssen's Hall with the Suffrage question as the topic. [<https://wschs.org/museum-videos/>](https://wschs.org/museum-videos/)

GAYE LEBARON INTERVIEWS GLENICE CARPENTER Hello, my name is Gaye LeBaron and this is one in a series of articles about people who have lived in Sonoma County for most of their life and have seen Sonoma County change. Today, I am pleased that Glenice Ames Carpenter has come into the studio to talk with us, we're gonna talk about Bodega Bay today because this has been her study for most of – yes all of her life. [<https://northbaydigital.sonoma.edu/digital/collection/Lebaron/id/3289/>](https://northbaydigital.sonoma.edu/digital/collection/Lebaron/id/3289/)

For more local events, visit our website. [<http://www.ranchobodega.org/events.html>](http://www.ranchobodega.org/events.html)