

SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 305
Diablo, CA 94528-0305

Presidents: Millie Frellas
Editors: Betty Vail

Meetings: 10:00 a.m.
3rd Tuesday of the month
(except August & December)
Danville Women's Club House
242 W. Linda Mesa Avenue
Danville, CA

Vol. XI No. 2

July/August 1995

NEXT MEETING: JULY 18, 1995

PROGRAM: THE GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

MARY WILLIAMS, Director of The Graduate Theological Union Library in Berkeley, has been associated with the library since 1981. She belongs to many professional organizations, has published in many magazines, and has given many presentations. She is working on eight family lines and spends a week each year in Salt Lake City.

The Graduate Theological Union Library contains some 369,000 volumes and more than 267,000 microfilms, phonorecordings, films and tapes. The combined collections place the GTU Library among the top four theological libraries in the nation.

We are fortunate to have Ms. Williams tell us what is available there and how to use this resource.

--Jeanette Moses, Program

LAST MONTH

by Christine Scott

In "Contra Costa County History," Betty Maffel, the director of the Contra Costa County History Center, gave a brief history of the Contra Costa Historical Society and an historical tour of the county, illustrated with slides.

The Contra Costa Historical society was founded in 1951 by A. F. Bray, an appellate court justice, and Louis Stein. A. F. Bray, Jr., A. F.'s son, is the current president of the society. In 1977 the society was established by the County Board of Supervisors as the official society to represent the history of Contra Costa County. The new Veale Annex, named after the man who was sheriff of the county for forty years, houses the Veale collection which includes all the papers produced in his office or brought into his office.

The land which was to become Contra Costa County was originally inhabited by the non-violent Miwok tribe. The Fages and Diaz Expeditions came through

in 1772 and 1776, herding the Indians into the St. Mary's Mission. Eventually the tribe was eliminated.

The Castro family received the first land grant in San Pablo while the area was still under the control of Mexico. Salvia Pacheco owned all of what is now Concord over 17,000 acres.

The first non-Indian, non-Mexican to receive a land grant was Dr. John Marsh. Arriving in 1837, he became the first doctor in California. He purchased a large land grant at Los Moganos near Brentwood. The house he built, which sits on top of an Indian village, still exists. It now belongs to the state of California. The second man to arrive in Contra Costa County was Elan Brown. In 1847 he settled on land which is now Lafayette. Pictures of the homes of Dr. Marsh and Elan Brown were shown.

Ms. Maffel also presented views of early Danville, Moraga, Walnut Creek, and Pleasant Hill. These included pictures of the Danville Hotel; Railroad Ranch, now the Diablo County Club; the
(Continued on page 11)



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JULY

- * 18 Tuesday 10:00 a.m. SRVGS Meeting: Mary Williams from the Graduate Theological Union Library in Berkeley will introduce us to the many sources in this facility.
- * 27 Thursday 10:30 a.m. Informal planning meeting at Jeanette Moses' home, 542 Silver Lake Dr. (Crow Canyon Country Club). Everyone is invited to come and share ideas for next year's programs. Call Jeanette Moses 837-4480.

AUGUST

- * 1-5 BYU Gen & Family Hist Conf BYU Conferences 136 Harmon Building, Provo, UT 84602-1516, Phone (801) 378-4853.
- * 11 NATIONAL ARCHIVES WORKSHOP 9:00-12:00 Military - Part I Pre-Revolution to War of 1812. Register in advance to guarantee a place in the class (there must be at least 10 in a class.) Cost \$12.00 in advance, \$15.00 at the door. Contact: Rose Mary Kennedy, 415/876-9009.

SEPTEMBER

- * 5 Tuesday 10:00 a.m. SRVGS board meeting at Frances Lloyd's. ALL MEMBERS WELCOME!
- * 12 Tuesday 10 a.m. Southern Interest Group will meet at Bea O'Rand's, 16 Ashford Ct., Alamo, 837-1760.
- * 19 Tuesday 10 a.m. SRVGS meeting. Peggy Frazier will report on resources she has used for her books and her research in Scotland; 12:30 p.m. ROOTS IV User Group see p. 3; German Interest Group see p. 3.
- * 25 Monday 1:30 p.m. United Kingdom Interest Group, at Francis Lloyd's, 210 Town & Country Dr. Danville, 837-9382.

OFFICERS to Contact

President: Millie Freitas 837-2483
 Vice-Pres.: Irma Dotson 820-8344
 Membership: Diana Hancock 820-1424
 512 Zephyr Circle.
 Danville, CA 94526
 Annual Dues: Individual \$15.00
 Family \$20.00
 Membership year: June 1 to May 31
 NEWSLETTER
 Editors: Betty Vail
 824 Moraga Road
 Lafayette, CA 94949
 283-3596
 Mailing: Barbara Dittig 735-9610
 Lucy Carvers 837-3146
 The newsletter is published each month except August & December

KIRKIN' O' THE TARTAN

"The Kirkin' o' the Tartan" is celebrated on Tartan Day in July. During the Kirkin' ceremony, members of the church congregation bring a piece of tartan forward, lay it on the altar, after which a blessing is asked on all the families of the church.

A traditional story tells how clansmen, forbidden by the English after 1745 to wear or even display the tartan, passed the word to bring concealed pieces of clan tartans to church on Sunday at the time of year that Scottish people had traditionally held ceremonies to welcome spring.



Services followed the usual order of worship, but at a time and signal known to the clansmen, they would touch their concealed pieces of tartan and receive a blessing. Then silent prayers were offered, a hymn sung, and the benediction delivered.

Today, in holding The Kirkin' o' the Tartan ceremony, Scotsmen keep alive the meaningfulness of their Scottish heritage.

(From Clan Blair Society Newsletter, May 1995)

SPECIAL INTEREST STUDY GROUPS

CALIFORNIA - Meets with the Irish Group (see below).

GERMAN - Meets at Barbara Johnson's, 616 Camino Amigo, Danville, 837-2153 every other month after the SRVGS meeting.

IRISH - Meets 10:00 a.m. each second or third (announced) WEDNESDAY at Patty Erickson's, 10 Ridge Pl, Pleasant Hill, 229-0889.

MAC COMPUTER GROUP To be announced. Contact Barb Dittig 735-9610.

PUBLISHING - Meets on the last Wednesday 10:00 a.m. when needed. If you would like help with a publishing project, contact Jane Steiner 283-0867.

ROOTS USERS - (Official Comsoft ROOTS III & IV Users' Group) - Meets 12:30 p.m. on Tuesdays following the general meeting at Ruth Pfeiffer's, 59 Mariposa Ct., Danville, 837 5160.

SOUTHERN - Meets 10 a.m. each second Tuesday. Next meeting September 12 at Bea O'Rand's, 16 Ashford Ct., Alamo, 837-1760.

UNITED KINGDOM - UK Group meets every other month, on the fourth Monday of the month, at 1:30 p.m. Next meeting September 25 at Francis Lloyd's, 210 Town & Country Dr., Danville, 837-9383.

PLEASE REPORT PROGRAM CHANGES TO WENDY HABERMEHL 829-8339

(continued from p. 9)

Dollar Ranch on which Rossmoor was built; the Oak Saloon; Heather Farm where John Muir Hospital is now located; the early library and post office in Lafayette; and the area in Moraga which is now the site of St. Mary's College.

She also showed scenes of the early Broadway tunnels—the upper or the original one, and the lower tunnel, the Caldecott, named after a county supervisor who worked on the construction.

Slides of the Blum Ranch and home in El Cerrito and San Pablo; houses in Richmond in 1900; the Standard Oil refineries in 1906; and the whaling industry in Pt. Richmond followed.

Pictures of Martinez featured the building of the Beale Courthouse, now the Finance Building; the Vincente Martinez adobe on the same property as the John Muir house; the beginning of the Shell Oil Refinery, Alhambra Water, and the Martinez Ferry. Additional scenes were of Concord with the Cal Portland Cement Company, the Concord Inn, and the Concord Baseball Team. Clayton was depicted by slides of the main part of town in 1903, the de Martini Winery and the Pioneer Inn. Concluding the program were slides of early Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley, Knightsen, Brentwood, and Byron.

Betty Maffei encouraged the audience to visit the Contra Costa County History Center, located adjacent to the Contra Costa County Library at 1700 Oak Park Blvd. in Pleasant Hill. The hours are Monday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



WELCOME TO THE INTERNET

The Contra Costa Library at 1750 Oak Park Blvd., Pleasant Hill, has an internet station which is available when the library is open: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 noon - 8:00 p.m. and Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Reserve up to an hour a week in advance (you may stay longer if no one else is waiting). Phone 645-6434.

Sign up when an internet docent is available if you are unfamiliar with the Internet. Docent hours are noted on the weekly sign-in form.

You are asked to sign in on the Internet clipboard near the Documents Desk before beginning to use the workstation.

You may bring your own formatted 3 1/2" IBM compatible, double-sided, high density, disk or purchase disks sold by the Friends of the Library. They are available at the Circulation Desk for \$3.00 each, or you may print up to 10 pages at no charge.

In addition to this library, seven other libraries in the Contra Costa County Library System have Internet workstations: Antioch, Concord, El Cerrito, Orinda, Pinole, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek.

SRVGS MEMBERSHIP NEWSWELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Since all of the following were official members by August first, their addresses will be in the 1995-1996 handbook.

Mary Darling is researching Martin Eder and William Vaughn McMullen, both from Wisconsin.

Maria Guzman is tracing Diaz and Guzman, both from Puerto Rico.

James Sherriff is looking for Bailey from Tennessee and Disney from Maryland and Ohio.

Vera Smith is searching for Mc Anally from Tennessee and Meeks from Oklahoma.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Communications seems to be our theme this month. We tried out one sound system last month, and we're hoping to try out another at our July meeting.

Some eight years ago, when there were no computers in the Family History Center and I had just completed a beginners genealogy class, it took me three SRVGS meetings before I raised my hand to ask what I.G.I. was! This was in the days when I.G.I. was the BIG Family History Center resource. To avoid this happening and to help all of us shy ones, we are establishing a "Dumb Question Box" (the questions don't have to be dumb!). When you pick up your name tag at the meeting, drop your questions into the box nearby. (You don't have to sign your name.) Just before break, I'll read the questions and ask for input from the members present. Let's give it a whirl and see what happens!

Your board is looking at the possibility of establishing a committee and pamphlets in their personal libraries that they would be willing to loan to other members or allow them to look at for a short time, or we could go the other way and list the counties, cities etc. that everyone is researching. I would like some input from the membership of this.

DON'T THROW OR GIVE AWAY ANY OF YOUR GENEALOGY BOOKS AND MATERIALS that you no longer need. We are hoping to have a genealogy shelf or two for research at the new Danville library.

Millie Frietas

A HELPING HAND

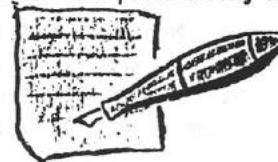
Diana Hancock needs volunteers to act as hosts or hostesses for new members, sitting with them at their first few meetings, introducing them to people with similar interests, seeing that they get refreshments, and helping them locate the freebie basket, etc. If you are interested in this project, please let Diana know.

A SUCCESS STORY

Jim and Pauline Shirley, who joined the society last September, are from San Leandro. When Jim announced that he is interested in the Shirleys from Virginia, Bea O'Rand was able to introduce him to a friend in Pleasanton whose last name is Shirley and who has been researching the same area of Virginia. Pauline's search centers in the United Kingdom where she is looking for Marsdens in Yorkshire and Paffs in Cheshire. Pauline uses both CompuServe and America on Line. She once entered a name on CompuServe and got 15 responses, 10 from the UK.

FEELING LUCKY?

Jerry Sturgen, our new Cassette Library Chairman, has announced an exciting plan to encourage the use of tapes. Every time you check out a tape and then when you return it, Jerry will give you a raffle ticket good for a variety of exciting prizes. Because there will be no August meeting, you can earn three tickets by taking out a tape in July. Jerry would like you to select your tapes early since the month's drawing will take place during the meeting.

OUR NEW PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN

If you see someone busy taking notes, it may be Ed O'Donnell who has agreed to be in charge of publicity. Welcome to the team, Ed.

NEED HELP?

Bette Kot will be starting a series of genealogy classes on Monday, September 18, at the Lafayette Senior Center, 500 St. Mary's Road. Classes will be held from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The cost for six sessions is under \$20.00. Bette will teach you where to find the information you need and how to organize it in a logical way. The course will also include a visit to the National Archives in San Bruno.

CONDOLENCES

SRVGS wishes to express its sincere sympathy to Patty Erickson on the death of her mother in May.

RESEARCHING IN OUR CORNER OF CALIFORNIA

SOME RESOURCES YOU WILL FIND ONLY AT THE OAKLAND MAIN LIBRARY

- * A Local History File
- * A Black Newspaper Index
- * Oakland Newspaper Index
- * City of Oakland only Birth & Death Indexes and actual certificates 1870-1904.

"City of Oakland only" means these records include only the area that was considered Oakland during those years. You will not find birth or death certificates there for areas later incorporated into the city of Oakland such as the townships and districts located east of Lake Merritt and known as East Oakland. These were: Allendale, Brooklyn (previously Lynn, Clinton, San Antonio), Elmhurst, Fitchburg, Fruitvale, Highland Park, Melrose, Seminary Park (now Mills College) and the Diamond District.

There are some birth records, but NO death records, for the Temescal district. They cover years 1878-1899.

If you visit the Oakland Library, Oakland History room, copies of these certificates can be had for 10 cents each. If ordered by mail, cost is \$1.00 each. (From The Live Oak, May/ June 1944)

SOLANO COUNTY HISTORY AVAILABLE

In cooperation with Dr. James Stevenson, Solano County Genealogical Society announces the reprint of Solano's first history, History of Solano County by J.P. Munro Fraser, 1879. Included in the 1995 reprint is a name index prepared by Solano County Genealogical Society members. This book is an important account of the early settlers, town, churches, schools, elections, and topography.

The 1995 reprint is available in numbered, hardcover copies of 566 pages in length. It is priced at \$34.95, plus postage and handling of \$3.50, and CA sales tax of \$2.53. Send check or money order to SCGS, P.O. Box 2494, Fairfield, CA 94533.

(CGS News April 1995)

The Solano County Genealogical Society is currently recording information from the United Methodist, Vallejo, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials. Copies of the early church registers are made available through their newsletter The Root Digger. (The Root Digger, May 1995, p. 52)



BACKYARD RESEARCH

Housed in the Atherton Town Hall, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton's Heritage Room is open on Tuesday afternoons from 1:00-3:00 p.m. An offspring of the Friends of the Atherton Community Library, the Curators of the Atherton Historical Collection receive space, utilities and some supplies from the city. The rest of their funding is from dues and donations.

Initially they were formed to identify structures of historical interest, but the scope of the collection far exceeds that goal.

Currently the collection includes:

- * Oral Histories from local residents
- * Over 500 old and rare photos
- * Local Maps
- * Family Collections
- * Historical magazines and newspaper collections
- * Hard to find books about Atherton & its residents.

The committee maintains indexes of the collection and is willing to help you research Atherton connections. Besides organizing and entering data in the computer, members of the committee will respond to inquiries and participate in appropriate workshops. Phone: 415-688-6540.

(San Mateo County Genealogical Society newsletter, Vol 13, Issue 6, June 1995)

CALIFORNIA STATE ARCHIVES UPDATE

The move of the State Archives from Roseville to its new building is completed. New research room hours have been changed to Monday to Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Records cannot be pulled between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. or after 3:30 p.m. The new address for the Archives is 1020 O Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. New Phone numbers are: General information (916) 653-7715, Reference (916) 653-2245. The Archives is located between 10th and 11th Streets, two blocks south of the State Capitol.

(Placer Trails, May 1995, p. 4.)

RESEARCH AIDS

MEN AT SEA

If your American ancestor went to sea in the 1800's, he may have applied for a Seaman's Protection Certificate to protect him from imprisonment by Great Britain and other powers. This program lasted from 1796 to 1897. The applicant presented proof of citizenship and paid a fee of 25 cents. Every three months a list of seamen was sent to the Secretary of State, Washington, D.C. stating each seaman's age and physical description. Write to the Archives Division, National Archives & Records, Washington, D.C. 20408.

(D.C.G.S. Newsletter, Sept. 1994, pg. 8 via The Live Oak, May/June 1995)

BORN AT SEA?

If you have an ancestor born at sea aboard a British vessel from 1656 to the present, a source of information is: St. Dunstan's Parish, London, England. If at least one parent was Irish, and the birth was between 1864 and 1920, records may be obtained from Registrar General, custom House, Dublin, Ireland.

(Central Florida Genealogical Newsletter)

CIVIL WAR DISCOVERY TRAIL

The Civil War Discovery Trail will bring the American Civil War to life for millions of travelers across the country. The Discovery Trail will soon promote the collective memories of the Civil War—linking together battlefields, historic homes and parks in hundreds of communities in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

The Trail, which currently includes sites touched by the war from Pennsylvania to Florida and as far west as Arkansas, is expected to dramatically bolster the nation's already intense fascination with the Civil War.

The Civil War Trust acquires, preserves and protects the most historically significant and threatened Civil War battlefield sites in the country. More purchases will be made possible through the sale of the 1995 Civil War Battlefield Commemorative Coins by the United State Mints. These

coins are designed to memorialize the soldiers and the sentiments of the conflict along with the underlying theme of "Enriching our Future By Preserving Our Past."

Anyone with questions about travel on the Civil War Discovery Trail, the activities of the Trust or the Civil War commemorative coins can call 202-326-8429.

(The Family Tree, Vol VI No. 3)

SAVING HISTORY

"Buying a battlefield can be the best history lesson," says Shelby Foote, a consultant for the TV series "The Civil War." He praised a preservation group's purchase of Brice's Cross Roads battlefield in northeastern Mississippi.

"It's small enough to be comprehended," Foote said Friday. "The whole thing only took about four hours, so you can really get hold of it."

The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites will pay about \$600,000 for more than 830 acres where the June 1864 battle took place.

"Brice's Cross Roads is the most important unsecured battle site in the country," Foote said. "Now it's going to be secured. I put it right up there with securing Manassas."

THE VIRGINIA HERITAGE CENTER

The manuscripts, public records and books document the rich history of Virginians from every walk of life can be found at The Library of Virginia. These collections represent the heritage of the Commonwealth and are meccas for thousands of visitors each year.

The new Library of Virginia facility, scheduled for opening next year, will give the public even more access to these invaluable collections through the action of the Virginia Heritage Research Center.

The Library of Virginia has the largest collection of Virginiana in existence, including the papers and records of state agencies. The Library's strongest collections are those relating to genealogy.

(From The Family Tree June/July 1995, p. 238)

NEW YORK - IRISH MARRIAGE & CEMETERY RECORDS *TOMBSTONES OF THE IRISH BORN: CEMETERY OF THE HOLY CROSS, FLATBUSH, BROOKLYN* is about to be reprinted. It was compiled by NY genealogist Joseph Silinonte who is working on another project. The Catholic Church authorities have given him permission to publish the genealogical information from the original marriage dispensation book (1859-1891) for the diocese of Brooklyn. It is the first time such material has been made available. During the period 1859-1865, a total of 4,722 Irish-born people are logged in the dispensation book. A county by county breakdown indicates that over ten per cent of them came from Longford. Mr. Silinonte's address is PO Box 7497, Elmhurst NY 11373.

[Irish Roots 1994 No.1]

CANADA - QUEBEC CENSUS RESEARCH

The Society ARCHIV-HISTO has started to publish the 1851 Census of the Province of Quebec. Each volume will contain either a parish or township or a city. This new tool comes with an index at the end of each volume. It helps to locate families and individuals and enumerates members and non-members of the family, their name, surname, age, trade, origin, and relationship. Also, it gives a complete reference to the Canadian microfilm so you can check other information recorded in the census.

CENSUS OF 1851 THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC from ARCHIV-Histo, Casier Postal 35, succ*D*, Montreal, Quebec, H3k 389
The Parish of Chambly \$15.00; The Parish of La Prairie \$15.00; The Parish of St-Constant \$12.00. The up-coming volumes in 1995 will be: The Parishes of Lachine, Pointe-Claire, L'Acadie, St-Luc.

TRAVEL FOR GENEALOGISTS

VIRGINIA - If you have traced your ancestors back to **GERMANY, NORTHERN IRELAND** or **ENGLAND**, a visit to the Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton VA could prove very educational and interesting. The museum is dedicated to those pioneers whose hard work and perseverance created America and the American culture. The German Farm replicates a farm of immigrants from the Rhine-land-Palatinate. The Ulster Farm is from County Tyrone of the 18th & 19th century. The English Farm is two reconstructed

farms: an 18th century one from West Sussex and a 17th century West Midlands farm from Worcestershire. The American Farm contains 12 buildings from a farm which once stood in Botetourt Co VA. [SBCGS Nov 93 via CSGA N/L Jan 94 and National Geographic]

MUSEUM OF APPALACHIA in Norris Tennessee is on 65 acres which contains a pioneer settlement much the way it was in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Everything is the genuine article, not reproductions. Local volunteers portray old-time life in daily living routines and demonstrate the skills it took to survive in those days.

ULSTER AMERICAN FOLK PARK at Castletown, County Tyrone is an outdoor museum designed to tell the story of the great waves of emigrants who left Ulster for the New World in the 18th and 19th centuries. A variety of Ulster ancestral homes has been reconstructed on the site to give the visitor a clear insight into the day to day domestic lives of the people two centuries ago. You can then imagine what it was like to sail to America, by walking onto the detailed and authentic quayside, and boarding a sailing ship kitted out in the spartan style of the time. A guide in period costume is on hand to answer any questions. You then disembark at the American section of the folk park. There you can see the type of house that the settlers first lived in. You can follow their upward social movement by visiting progressively more spacious and well furnished houses.. Further information may be obtained from: tel. 0662-243292; fax 0662-242241.

[From Irish Roots 1994 No. 2]

In an assignment given to Intermediate School students to write their own epitaph, this one came from an enthusiastic budding-genealogist:

EPITAPH OF

SHARON LYNNE WAGNER CORTEZ:
HERE LIES SHARON, OUR DEAR DEPARTED.
FINALLY, SHE FINISHED
SOMETHING SHE STARTED.

[from Karen Clifford, editor of California State Genealogical Alliance Newsletter, July 1994]

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

The Misadventures of a Neophyte Editor

Learning that the Society needed an editor, I volunteered. I had three advantages: I'm a retired English teacher, my computer has a speller, and Jane Steiner offered to proofread.

I had never played with fonts and had no idea how to create columns. When I changed to smaller print, half of the words disappeared from the screen; when I formed columns, they scattered around the page.

I didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but Jane pointed out that, as editor, it was my job to make revisions. Convinced, I ruthlessly cut her Founders Day report.

Jane got even by proofreading my efforts. Using a red pen, I marked the errors that my speller couldn't catch. For instance, instead of chairman of hospitality, I had written chairman of hostility. When we finished, there was so much red on the pages

that it looked as though I had bled on them. For several days I typed, cut and applied scotch tape. Convinced that my production was flawless, I arranged to meet Jane at the copy shop. But first I had to add one more item, Manny's account of the June library trip. Jane read it and laughed. Instead of Andy Gump, I had typed Andy Grump. Somehow grump seemed more appropriate.

I proudly pointed to the little flag beside "July" on the calendar. It was barely visible under layers of tape. The copy machine made the print look very impressive; it also made the tape lines very dark.

Home again, I corrected the mistakes, applied white-out liberally, and turned off the computer. Then I noticed that beside the logo on the front page, I had written NEWSPAPER instead of NEWSLETTER. After all of the hours I had spent on just one issue, I was tempted to leave this mistake, but sensed Jane looking over my shoulder. I corrected the error, recopied the pages, and delivered them--to the wrong address.

Betty Vail

SAN RAMON VALLEY
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
BOX 305
DIABLO, CA 94528-0305



FIRST CLASS MAIL