



# California Police Historian

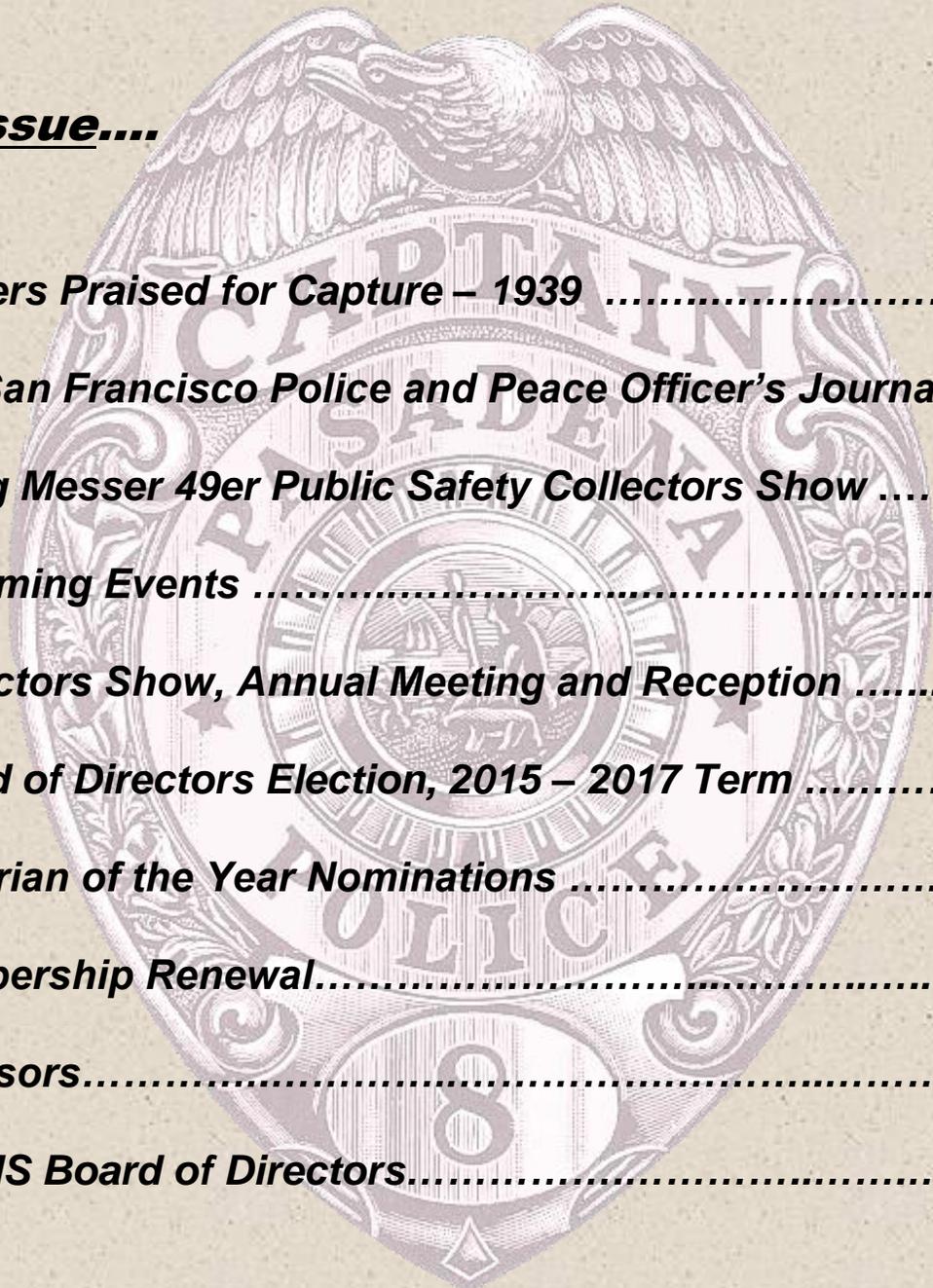


Official Publication of the California Law Enforcement Historical Society

## Spring Edition 2015

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## **Officers Praised for Capture - 1939**

**By Don Williams**

**Charles B. Gay, 44, a big-time bad man who eluded a small army of officers in Los Angeles and slipped through the fingers of other officers watching the highways out of Los Angeles, was not quite big-time enough to get through the net spread for him in Indio by the Riverside County Sheriff Deputies. His capture, after a gun battle on the highway, led to deputies being recognized for their courage.**

**Regarded as one of the most dangerous criminals in California and named by Sheriff Biscailuz of Los Angeles, as leader of a robbery and safe burglary ring, Gay had an extensive prison record and as a four-time loser his capture meant a probable life sentence for Gay.**

**Not knowing at which point he might enter Indio, city police and state highway patrolmen lay in wait along was then Highway 99 a short distance west of the city limits. Deputy Sheriffs staked out at two spots on Highway 99 south of the city limits.**

**Apparently doubtful of his ability to safely negotiate the long strip of desert highway from San Gorgonio Pass to Indio, Gay chose the more circuitous route over the Palms-to-Pines Highway, entering Indio on Avenue 46. At an unknown point he turned north in Indio to reach Highway 99. Careful not attract attention by speeding, Gay was traveling slowly when he passed the point near Jay's Auto Camp where Captain Roger Abbott of the Indio sub-station and Special Deputy James Downs were waiting in a Riverside County sheriff's car. The officers pulled in behind him, following for some distance. A quarter of a mile this side of the Highway 60 turnoff, where Special Deputies Ralph Stringfellow and Joe Clegg were stationed, Captain Abbott flashed on the red spotlight and started the siren. Gay slid to such a sudden stop that Abbott and Downs were abreast of him before they could stop their own car. Turning half around in his seat, Gay fired three shots point-blank into the sheriff's car, all shots perforating the car and one penetrating through the back of the seat between the two officers.**



*Pictured above is the Riverside County Sheriff's patrol unit, 1938 Mercury. Photos courtesy of the Riverside Sheriff Museum. This was the first patrol unit owned by the department. Prior to 1939, deputies used their own personal vehicles and were reimbursed by the county for mileage.*

**As quickly as he had stopped, Gay started away again a high speed as Abbott and Downs returned his fire, their bullets penetrating his car but failing to reach a vital spot.**



*Pictured above is the suspect's 1938 Ford V-8. Photos courtesy of the Riverside Sheriff Museum.*

**Traveling at a high rate of speed, Gay shot at Officers Stringfellow and Clegg at the Highway 60 turnoff and passed through their line of fire at more than 65 miles per hour. Although a difficult target at the speed he was traveling, a rear fender was peppered with buckshot as officers tried for his tires, and more than 20 bullet marks on his car indicated a surprisingly high percentage of hits.**

With Captain Abbott and Downs close behind him, and Stringfellow and Clegg swinging in behind them, Gay pressed his car to top speed. At Sandy Corners, a tire, apparently hit by the shower of lead he had been subjected to, blew out and the car careened to a stop in a cloud of dust. He was doing 94 miles an hour at the time, he later told officers.

Only a second behind, Abbott and Downs, with guns drawn, ran toward the bandit's car. As Stringfellow and Clegg pulled up, Gay was seen running across the desert toward a mesquite thicket. Realizing the end of the chase was near; he stopped and threw up his hands at the order of the officers. Glass from a bullet-perforated windshield had lacerated his right eye and blood was streaming down his cheek. Less serious cuts from bullet-shattered glass also were received by Abbott and Downs.

Gay's wounds were treated at Indio hospital and two hours after his capture he was taken to Riverside in the bullet-marked car Captain Abbott had driven in the chase.

Witnesses to much of the chase were Leonard Hayward and son Stanley, and in their words "not enough can be said for the courage of those officers!"

The Haywards, en-route to Coachella, pulled out on the highway from the Southern California Freight Lines Depot in Indio at the exact moment Gay, in his V-8 was driving by. Although unaware that he was the most wanted man in the state, the Haywards stated they thought his action unusual when instead of letting them pass immediately he crowded over toward the center line himself, although not traveling over 30 miles per hour. They dropped behind but picking up speed again they passed Gay a short time before he passed the spot where the sheriff's car pulled out to follow him. Through a rear view mirror Stanley Hayward witnessed the bandit open fire on Abbott and Downs.

Literally caught between two fires, the Coachella men said they hesitated to pull off the highway for fear the bandit might think them another car of officers and blast away at them, too. At high speed with Gay close behind, the Haywards passed Officers Stringfellow and Clegg as they were preparing to fire on Gay.

"Head for the alfalfa field Stanley," Leonard Hayward said he told his son. They did, and in a matter of seconds had hopped out of their car and were flat on the ground, they said. They later trailed the officer's cars in case they could be of service.



**Although bulletins warned that he would undoubtedly be heavily armed, officers initially only found a .45 automatic on the front seat of the Ford, which contained one fully loaded cartridge in the barrel and two in the magazine. When searched, officers found a .32 colt revolver fully loaded in the suspect's right pocket.<sup>1</sup>**

**Los Angeles County Sheriff Deputies Bogie and Claxton under direction of Capt. William Penprase, chief of the Sheriff's Bureau of Investigation had investigated the case for 10 days, which led to the arrest of six other persons and the seizure of an arsenal of guns and ammunition. The others in custody charged with suspicion of burglary and robbery were: Claude James Godfrey, 36, of 322 G. St., San Bernardino; Mrs. Evelyn Oliver, 44, of 2429 Manitou St., Los Angeles; Vern Shaffer, 43, of 948 16th St., Santa Monica; Dorothy Scott, 33, of 2429 Manitou St., Los Angeles; Spencer Redfield, 49, 22 1/2 W. 1st. St., Long Beach, and Harry Oliver, 53, of 2429 Manitou St., Los Angeles.**

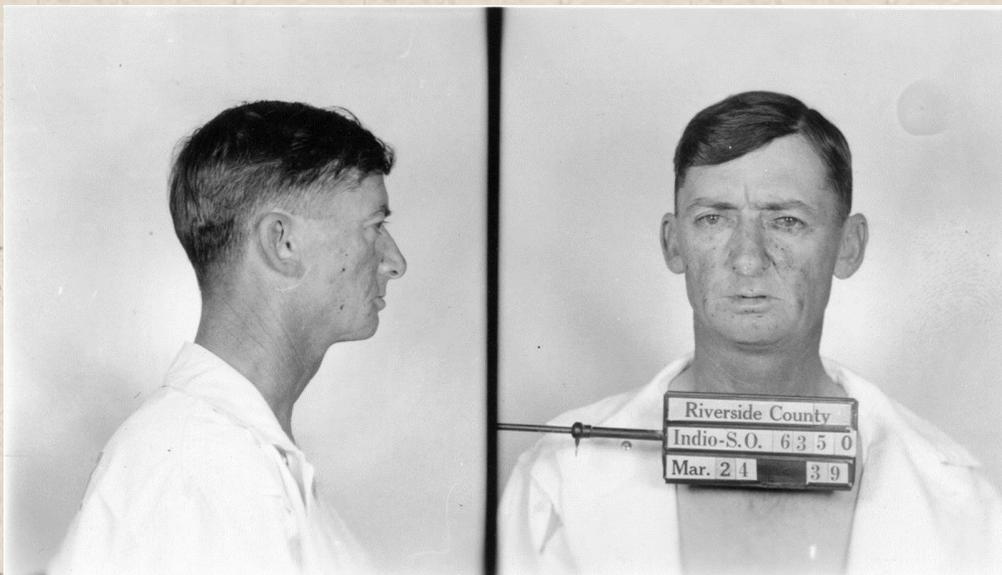
<sup>1</sup> *Riverside Enterprise, March 31, 1939*

**Gay's residence was in Inglewood. The suspects were believed to have committed between 30 and 40 burglaries and robberies in Los Angeles County.**

**Later, Gay said he would have "shot it out" with deputies rather than surrender, except that the blood from the wound on his forehead blinded him. Gay was turned over to three deputies from Los Angeles by Riverside Sheriff Carl Rayburn at the request of Los Angeles County Sheriff Eugene Biscailuz.**

**Gay is said to have been four times convicted of felonies and was known as a dangerous man. The prisoner told officers he had fled from Los Angeles, eluding men who were close on his trail, and had driven as far as Ontario where he spent the night in an auto camp. He was making his way to the Mexican border. When he got to Beaumont, he decided it would be impossible for him to get through the San Gorgonio pass without being caught, so he turned aside to Hemet and went to the desert by way of the Pines-to-Palms highway over the San Jacinto Mountains.**

**Several months later, Gay, considered to be the "pint sized bandit" because he only weighed 107 lbs., was convicted of two counts of assault to commit murder and a third of possession of a deadly weapon as an ex-convict, in the Riverside courtroom of Judge O. K. Morton. He was already serving sentences in Folsom on armed robbery charges for which he was convicted of in Los Angeles County.**



***Charles B. Gray booking photo, courtesy of the Riverside Sheriff Museum***

# Sheriff's Office, Riverside, California

CHARL F. RAYBURN, Sheriff

CRIMINAL _____	FILE NO. _____
VICTIM _____	DATE _____
DEPUTY _____	CRIME _____

## Supplementary Report

COPY OF ORIGINAL TELETYPE RECEIVED FROM RIVERSIDE OFFICE

L

1 RVS 3-24-39 10 AM CRIM  
R L ABBOTT INDIO

FOLLOWING EMERGENCY APB FROM SAN BERDOO---REFERRING TO LOS APB  
NO 9 OF 3-23-39 RELATIVE TO CHAS B GAY DRIVING NEW FORD V 8  
SEDAN BLACK COLOR, LICENSE NO 9 S7034 LEFT SAN BERDOO AT ABOUT  
0XX9-15 AM THIS DATE BELIEVED TO BE HEADED FOR MEXICO. COVER  
INDIO ROADS - THIS MAN HEAVILY ARMED AND IS REPORTED TO HAVE  
SHOT GUN CONCEALED ON IN TOP OF CAR. CHAS GAY DESCRIBED AS -  
43 YEARS, 107 LBS, 5 FT 6 3/4 INCHES, DARK BRN HAIR, HAZEL  
EYES, FPC 5/22 -/U SMALL R OVER UOO 11 WEARING BLUE SUIT,  
GREY HAT, BLUE SHIRT AND BLACK SHOES PLS HOLD CAR AND ALL  
OCCUPANTS SIGNED BY SHAY

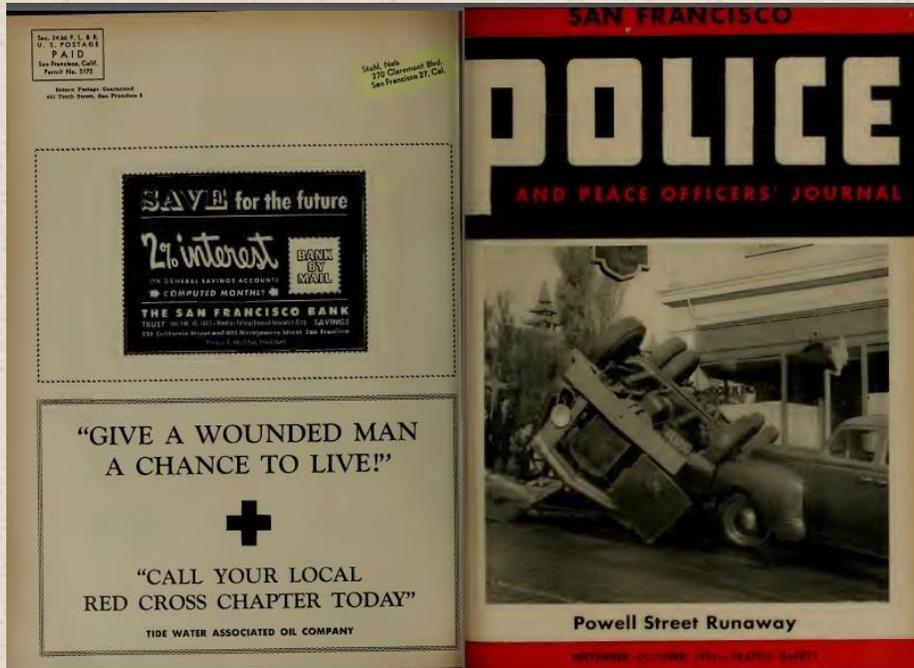
C F RAYBURN SHF RVS CMC NM ACK INDIO RLW WILL DO KAY

<sup>1</sup> Supplementary Report by R. L. Abbott, March 4, 1939



**The San Francisco Police and Peace Officer's Journal**

**By John Basalto**



**Back in the days before the internet (you remember those days, don't you?) law enforcement professionals kept abreast of the latest information, techniques and technologies in the business through what were known as police journals. There were a number of these monthly publications throughout the country. Here in California one of the most popular was the San Francisco Police and Peace Officers' Journal.**

**This particular journal focused on the San Francisco Police Department, but each month it also highlighted police officials and departments, big and small, from throughout California. It had a number of regular features, including listing standings in police pistol competitions, and articles on fingerprinting and scientific developments.**

**In publication from the 1920s, it is really interesting to view these journals to see what was going on in law enforcement at the time. You can now access some of these journals on line, and it provides for a fun walk back in time.**

**The following are some excerpts from the San Francisco Police and Peace Officers' Journal...**

**POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS' JOURNAL - 1933**

**CHICAGO POLICE HAVE NEW CARS**

**One hundred and thirty swift Nash Cars have enabled the Chicago Police Department to decrease the number of common crimes in Chicago by fifty per cent. The cars are the big eight sedans, which are equipped with radios, machine guns and all the other supplies necessary in the patrolling of a large city.**

**February 1933**

**PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1 NOW IS GONE**

**Murray Humphreys who succeeded to the crown left vacant by Al Capone, has at last run afoul of the law and as a result is today serving sentence for carrying concealed weapons. The so-called king of the lawless has been sentenced to serve a year term in municipal court in Chicago the other day. This is another conviction in the long fight to rid Chicago of its lawless element by the opening of the "Century of Progress Exposition" this summer.**

**NEW POLICE RADIO CHAIN**

**The radio system of the San Francisco Police Department has been extended to cover the cities of Burlingame, San Mateo and other towns on the Peninsula. This hook up will cut down the chance of the criminals to escape the forces of the law in the Bay District.**

**August, 1933**

**HOOVER IS NOW DIRECTOR**

**Mr. John F. Quinn, August 2, 1933.  
Business Manager, San Francisco Police Journal  
San Francisco, California**

**Dear Mr. Quinn:**

**Thank you very much for your telegram of July 31, congratulating me upon my appointment as Director of the new Division of Investigation in the Department of Justice. I deeply appreciate the cooperative sentiments expressed in your communication.**

**Sincerely yours,**

**J. Edgar Hoover**

**September, 1933**

**They say good things come in small packages. The smallest "package" in the San Francisco Police Department is Louis Holz, 63.**

**He measures 5 feet 5 1/2 inches in his stocking feet. He entered the force as patrol driver January 8, 1906, and besides being the oldest patrol driver in the business is the only one of 25 who can boast of meritorious service credits.**

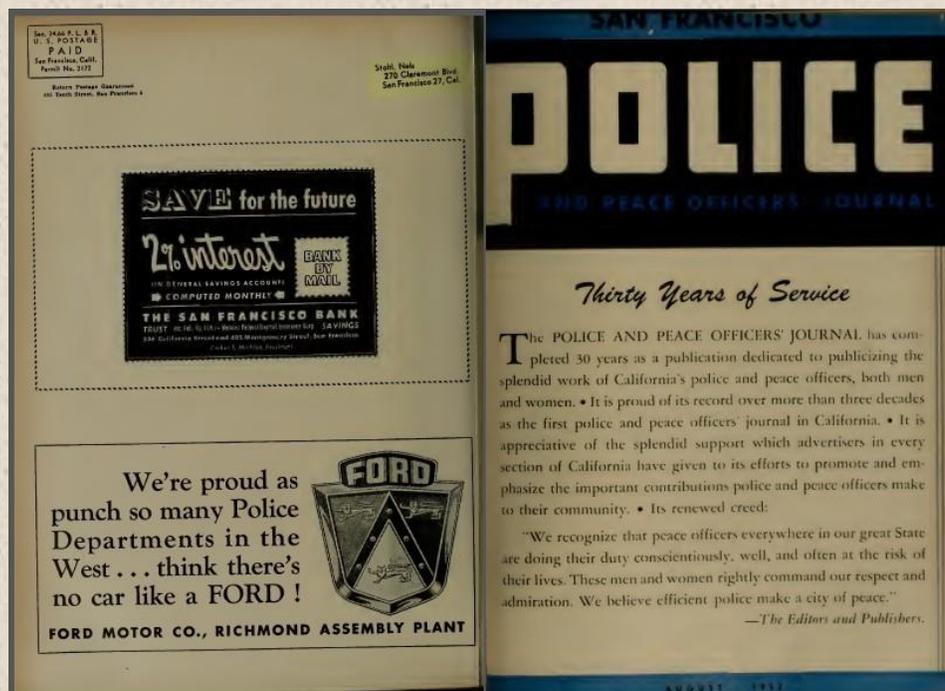
**Compared with some policemen, Holz is a pigmy but because of his athletic prowess, even at the age of 63, they call him the "little giant." Records prove that Holz has as much nerve as the most robust copper in the department.**

**On October 27, 1917, Holz, driving out of Southern Station, was called upon to bring in a prisoner arrested for assault to murder. The officer in charge was John Sonnenson, now of Western Addition Station and he is alive because the "little giant" did more than drive wagons in those days.**

En route to the station, the prisoner, one John Redmond, came up with a revolver he had secreted on his person and attempted to kill Sonnenson. There was a scuffle. Holz had his eyes on the street but his ears were "pinned back," so to speak, listening to what was going on. Suddenly the patrol came to a stop. Out piled Holz and around to Sonnenson (he went). He stepped into action as Redmond was about to pull the trigger and snuff out the policeman's life.

Swinging with all the power in his makeup, Holz crashed Redmond's jaw, the latter dropped; so did his revolver. Handcuffs flashed and it was all over.

Redmond did a term at Folsom.



**2015 Doug Messer 49er Public Safety and Military Collectors Show**

**The 20th annual Doug Messer 49er Public Safety and Military Collectors Show was held on Saturday, February 21, 2015, at the Roseville Veterans Memorial Hall, Roseville, CA.**

**The show is sponsored by the International Police Association (IPA) Region 29 [www.ipa-usa.org/group/region29](http://www.ipa-usa.org/group/region29) and the Roseville American Legion, Alyn W. Butler-Post 169 [www.rosevilleamericanlegion.com](http://www.rosevilleamericanlegion.com).**

**There were 47 display tables and 136 attendees. The shows raised a total of \$1,000, distributed to the California State Parks Anniversary Committee [www.parkanniversary.org](http://www.parkanniversary.org) the California Law Enforcement Historical Society (CLEHS) [www.calpolicehistory.com](http://www.calpolicehistory.com) and the local chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) [www.norcalcops.org](http://www.norcalcops.org).**

**In celebration of the show's 20 years, we recognized five Grand Champions for their many years of supporting the Doug Messer Show and presenting outstanding law enforcement displays.**

**The Grand Champions are: Phil Colonnelli, Mike DeVilbiss, Mike McCarthy, Tod Ruse, and Gary Teragawa.**

**Photos of the 2015 Doug Messer 49er Public Safety and Military Collectors Show are available on our web site: [www.Calbadgeshows.com](http://www.Calbadgeshows.com) On the Home page, click Photos, Jump to page 2, and then Roseville, CA 2015.**

**Show host Mike Lynch, Phil Jordan and Brian Smith would like to thank everyone for your continued support of the Doug Messer 49er Public Safety and Military Collectors Show!**



**Upcoming Events**

**30<sup>th</sup> Annual Northern California Law Enforcement Collectors Show and Menlo Park  
Police and Ripon Police Emergency Vehicle Show and Law Enforcement**

**Recruitment Fair**

**October 3, 2015**

**334 W 4th St**

**Ripon, CA**

**9:00 am to 2:00 pm**

**Tables \$25 each, \$10 each for display**

**Host [Mike Lynch](#)**

**Web: [www.Calbadgeshows.com](http://www.Calbadgeshows.com)**

**35th Annual The Porky Show, Police & Fire Memorabilia Show**

**January 16, 2016**

**1775 N. Indian Hill Blvd**

**Claremont, CA**

**9:00 am to 3:00 pm**

**Tables \$35 each**

**Host [Nick Cardaras](#)**

**Web: [www.theporkyshow.com](http://www.theporkyshow.com)**

## **Collectors Show, Annual Meeting and Reception**

**The California Law Enforcement Historical Society's 12th Annual Police Memorabilia Collector's Show will be held at the San Luis Obispo Veteran's Memorial Hall on Saturday, July 11, 2015, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. The Veteran's Hall is located at 801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.**

**There are 65, eight foot tables available at \$40.00 each; Society members pay \$35.00 each. Reserve your table early as the show sells out every year! Admission is \$5.00 per person, children under 12 are free.**

**Awards are presented for Best Patch Display, Best Badge Display, Best Historical Display, Best Educational Display and Best of Show.**

**To reserve a table and make payment on-line, go to [Collector's Show](#)**

**If you wish to reserve a table and pay by check, please contact:**

**Gary Hoving, President  
California Law Enforcement Historical Society  
P.O. Box 475  
Pismo Beach, CA 93448  
(805) 441-4936  
Email: [Gary Hoving](#)**

**On Friday, July 10, 2015, the California Law Enforcement Historical Society will hold its annual corporate meeting at the Central Coast Veterans Memorial Museum, downstairs in the San Luis Obispo Veterans Hall, from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The Museum is located at 801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA. All CLEHS members are invited to attend.**

**Immediately following the meeting, there will be a pre-show reception from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the Memorial Museum. All are welcome.**

**Board of Directors Election, 2015 – 2017 Term**

**The California Law Enforcement Historical Society is governed by a nine member, volunteer, Board of Directors, who meet annually, to set policy for the Society. Directors serve without compensation but travel expenses may be paid.**

**The Board of Directors consists of five elected at large Directors and four appointed Directors who represent specific areas of the state, Northern, Central, Central Coast, and Southern.**

**It is election time and nominations for the five elected at large Directors, 2015 – 2017 Term, are now being accepted.**

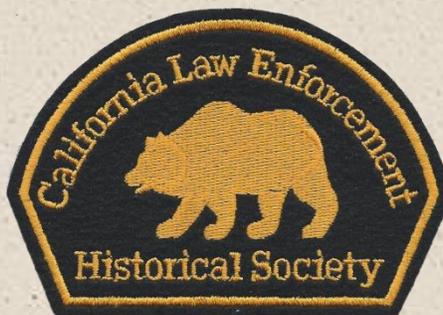
**Members that would like to serve on the Board, or nominate others to serve, are asked to submit their nomination in writing, by April 15, 2015, to:**

**Brian Smith, Secretary/Treasurer  
California Law Enforcement Historical Society  
P. O. Box 254875  
Sacramento, CA 95865-4875**

**You can also email your nomination to [Brian Smith](#).**

**After nominations are received and validated, a ballot and return envelope will be mailed to all eligible members by May 1, 2015. Please note: Article 12, Section 1, of the CLEHS By-laws do not allow Associate or Corporate members to vote, therefore, no ballot will be sent to those members.**

**In order for your vote to count, completed ballots must be returned no later than June 1, 2015. Election results will be announced in July 2015.**



**Police Historian of the Year Nominations**

**The California Law Enforcement Historical Society is accepting nominations for the 2014 *Police Historian of the Year*. The intent of the award is to honor and recognize the person that has made the greatest contribution to the preservation of California's law enforcement history. This may be achieved through a variety of ways including research projects, writings, publications, documentary film production, or contribution to the historical society as a whole.**

**Award recipients must be members in good standing in the CLEHS, have distinguished themselves during the year of recognition, and must have displayed excellence through service, research or preservation.**

**Recipients will be recognized in the next issue of California Police Historian and presented with a recognition plaque during the annual collectors show in San Luis Obispo.**

**Nominations may be made in writing to CLEHS at P. O. Box 475, Pismo Beach, CA 93444, or via internet at [calpolicehistory@aol.com](mailto:calpolicehistory@aol.com). Nominations shall be submitted by June 1, 2015.**

**Police Historian of the Year  
Recipients**

- 2013 Gary Teragawa**
- 2012 Jack Jones. PhD**
- 2011 Bradley Steele**
- 2010 John Basalto**
- 2009 Raymond Sherrard**
- 2008 Todd Houser**
- 2007 David DeSoucy**
- 2006 Keith Bushey**
- 2005 Mike Lynch**
- 2004 Gary Hoving**



**2015 Membership Renewal:**

**Have you renewed your 2015 membership in the California Law Enforcement Historical Society? If not, please take a moment to renew your membership with a payment of \$35.00 for one year or \$350.00 for a life membership!**

**You can make your payment on-line at the CLEHS web site [Cal Police History](#) On the home page, click on the MEMBERSHIP tab on the right margin to renew.**

**If you prefer, you can renew by sending a check to:**

**California Law Enforcement Historical Society  
P. O. Box 254875  
Sacramento, CA 95865-4875**

**Can't remember if you have renewed your membership? Contact [Brian Smith](#) for your membership status.**



***CLEHS Corporate Sponsors***

**Hoving & Associates, Private Investigations,  
Arroyo Grande**

**San Luis Ambulance Service, San Luis Obispo**

**The Ed Jones Co., Berkeley**



**California Law Enforcement Historical Society**

**Established in 2001, the California Law Enforcement Historical Society is a 501 (c) 3, non-profit, public benefit, educational corporation with the sole intent of preserving the rich history of the peace officers who have served within the State of California. The objective is to link those interested in preserving a forum for education, research, and the enjoyment of our past.**

***Board of Directors***

***Gary Hoving – President***

***Brian Smith – Secretary/Treasurer***

***Don Williams – Director***

***Doug Brimmer– Director***

***Keith Bushey – Director***

***Mike DeVilbiss – Director, Northern***

***Bradley Steele – Director, Central***

***Russ Snow – Director, Central Coast***

***Ray Sherrard – Director, Southern California***

***Police Historian***

**Bradley Steele, Editor, Email: [Bradley Steele](mailto:Bradley.Steele@calpolicehistory.org)**

***Contact***

**Gary Hoving, President**

**California Law Enforcement Historical Society**

**P. O. Box 475**

**Pismo Beach, CA 93448**

**Phone (805) 929-3106**

**Email: [Cal Police History](mailto:CalPoliceHistory@calpolicehistory.org)**

**Web: [Cal Police History](http://www.calpolicehistory.org)**