

the 1970's

The decade of the 70's ushered in many new and not so new things. Major trends included:

- Increasing disillusionment with government and its policies, especially the war in Vietnam
- Advances in civil rights with enforced bussing for school integration
- Increasing influence of the women's rights movement
- Increasing concern for the environment
- Increasing space exploration
- Anti-war demonstrations continued with the violent clash at Kent State in 1970 that resulted in the Ohio National Guard shooting four students who were protesting the war by throwing rocks and bottles at the men trying to control the chaos
- The influence of the hippie movement became more mainstream, bringing in punk rock and disco, bellbottom pants, hot pants, platform shoes, clogs, mood rings, lava lamps, pet rocks, long hair for men and, of course, the drug culture and the sexual revolution
- Changes in religious expression spawned cults and in 1978 the most extreme case with the Jonestown massacre where 900 died following the instructions of their leader Jim Jones
- The floppy disc came into being and Intel developed the microprocessor, Atari was born, and the VCR was launched

At this time, the city of San Luis Obispo and law enforcement had new and complicated challenges to attend to.



Dedication Ceremony 1970

On Sunday, July 26, 1970, the current police facility was dedicated. It was touted as "an ultramodern facility." The dedication ceremony began with the invocation given by Father Joseph Stieger of the Old Mission. Proud Police Chief Ervin Rodgers, a career officer with over twenty years' service, introduced the guests.

In addition to dedicating the police facility that day, there was also a special dedication to Sergeant Frank Garzoli. He was a career officer with the department, serving from 1954 until his untimely death in 1968. He was admired and respected both as an individual and as a police officer. Funds were collected to assist his widow and to erect a memorial fountain adjacent to the front entrance of the new police facility. To this day the plaque is still affixed to the Santa Rosa side of the department, though the fountain was removed some time ago.



Unit Inspection 1970



Patrol Inspection 1970

The department was manned by one chief, a captain, three lieutenants, five sergeants, twenty patrolmen, five detectives (including one sergeant), three records clerks, three communication personnel, and two parking enforcement personnel. Officers had to pass a one year probationary period and attain eight college units in social science or police procedure before achieving permanent status. Each new patrolman was required to attend a Basic Officers Training Program held at the Riverside Sheriff's Academy for a period of 12 weeks. The department was a member of the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission and 50% of all expenses, including salary for all officers who were attending basic and advanced courses, were reimbursed by the State.

At the time, the average time in service for department personnel was four and a half years. In terms of education, the department boasted an average of one and a half years of college per man, with one holding a BA degree and two others having the equivalent in unit hours. Six other personnel held AA degrees.



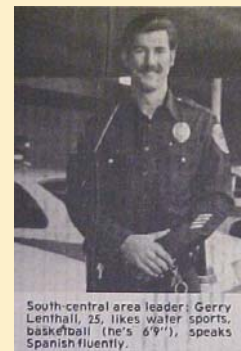
Al Webster



Ed Martin

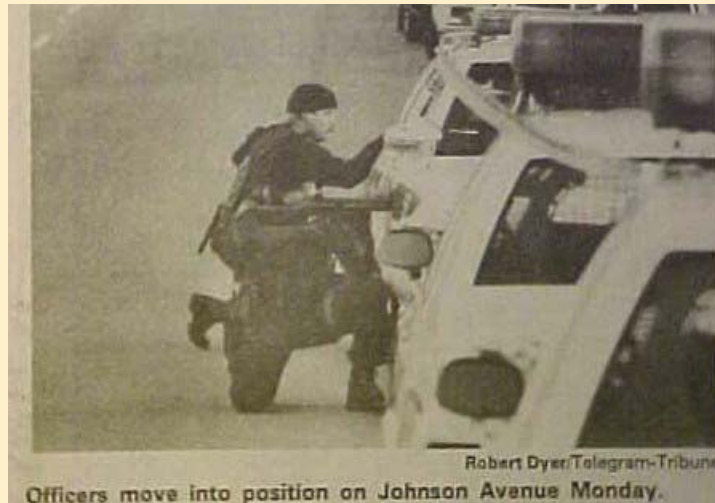


Ron Brown



Jerry Lenthall

Enforcing the law was the primary purpose of the department and would enable the citizens to be free from criminal attack, to enjoy freedom of movement, and conduct themselves within the framework of existing laws. It was stated that day, "law enforcement necessarily restricts the liberty and freedom of movement of those persons who, by engaging in criminal activity, interfere with the rights of others. To arrest such a person is not a denial of his civil rights, for no one has the right to violate the law." The theory or motto of the day was "Prevention Through The Noticeable Presence Of Police Vehicles And Personnel."

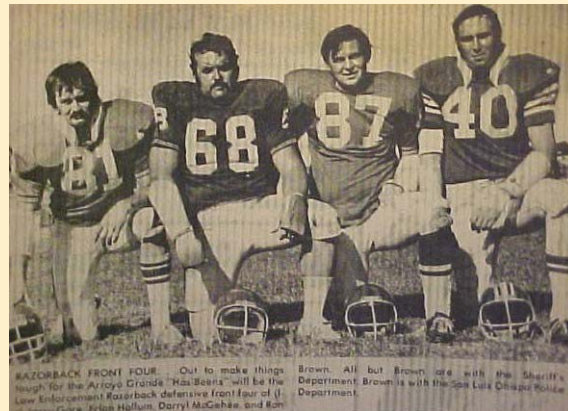


In 1972 the SWAT team was formed. The following is related by retired Lieutenant Ron Brown:

"The SWAT team was formed in 1972 by Lt. Larry Lunsford (AKA: "Double L"), Terry Young, Dean Treanor, Barry Gregory, and a few others. I think Mike Blackburn might have been on it also. The first SWAT call out was for a reported sighting of Patty Hearst. It was reported that she was being held by the SLA (Symbianese Liberation Army) in a house in the Ramona Drive area, near Tassajara. I was getting off graveyard shift that morning and was asked to accompany the SWAT team on that call out. We surrounded the house and after about two hours, we stood down. She was not there."

LAPD eventually killed most of the SLA in the infamous shoot out in May 1974, per Retired Officer Dale Strobridge.

On December 1, 1973, the first "Fuzz Bowl" was held. Ron Brown also submitted the following information and pictures.

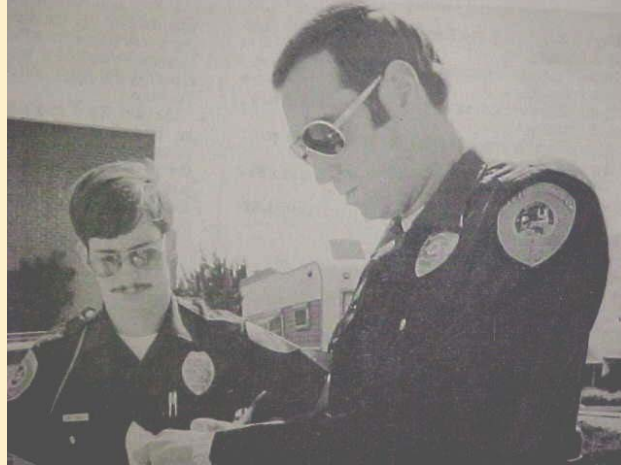


RAZORBACK FRONT FOUR — Out to make things tough for the Arroyo Grande "Has-Beens" will be the Law Enforcement Razorback defensive front four of (l. to r.) Gary Erick Hallum, Darryl McGehee, and Ron Brown. All but Brown are with the Sheriff's Department. Brown is with the San Luis Obispo Police Department.

"Various law enforcement agencies in SLO County were represented on the 'Razorback' football team. We played against the Five Cities Youth Football coaches, called the 'Has-Beens.' The game was held at Arroyo Grande High School at 8 o'clock in the evening. Cuesta College supplied the Razorback team with uniforms and equipment. It was a close game, with the Has-Beens making a second touchdown in the last minutes of the game to win. All proceeds went to the Youth Football League. They held four or five more Fuzz Bowls over the next few years. The Razorbacks lost all of the games."



THE RAZORBACKS — The line will be set to force tomorrow night when the Razorbacks take on the Has-Beens. (Back row, left to right) Kevin Matthews, J. Johnson, Ron Brown, Charles McClure, Darryl McGehee, Mike Foskink and Steve Barnett. (Middle row, left to right) Jim Hassen, Jerry Quirk, Keith Huggins, Ron Hahn, Dan Grogan, Harold Cohen and Mike Madigan. (Front row, left to right) Raymond Johnson, Larry McMillan, John Collins, Don Burnett, Larry Hubert, John Barkley and Kelly Jones. Not pictured are: Charles Rowden, Bob Cameron, Bill Erwin, Wayne Hunter, Joe Little, Tom Mansfield, Bill Nichols, Jack Rio, Martin Parke, and Tom Starnes.



Matt Stoner and Ron Brown

In 1975 two innovations were implemented by the department. In April a new patrol was started. The Tribune stated, "Foot Patrols For Downtown."

"Police foot patrols will be a permanent part of downtown San Luis Obispo's Thursday night shopping. At the request of businessmen who have complained that teenagers block sidewalks and store entrances, intimidate shoppers, and drag race, a two-man patrol has walked the downtown for the past three Thursday nights. That much is not unusual, Police Chief Ervin Rodgers said. He has ordered such patrols for two or three weeks at a time upon past merchant complaints. The City Council discussed the problem Monday night and since the Council did not object, Rodgers today said the patrol will be permanent. The officers patrol together. 'You don't want to put an officer downtown alone, not in that kind of situation,' said Chief Rodgers."

In the same article, there was also a picture of Sergeant Tom Stewart displaying a new device. It was a tuning fork to set one of San Luis Obispo's two new radar units, which was used to catch speeding cars. The article went on to say that the police were testing the devices now.



Sergeant Tom Stewart

In 1976 a new Traffic Safety Unit was established in the department. The following is from retired Sergeant Bruce LaHargoue, who was serving at that time.



Lt. Larry Lunsford

"The current unit was originally formed in 1976 after John Huelsman secured a traffic safety grant from the California State Officer of Traffic Safety (OTS). The first three members were John Huelsman, Harold White, and Gary Orback. I joined the team in late 1977 after one of them rotated back to Patrol duties. I researched and wrote the OTS grant that allowed us to obtain our first modern era motorcycle. We received that motorcycle as a 'hand-me-down' Harley from the Riverside Police Department in 1979. Pete Hubbard became our first motor officer after I declined the offer to ride (more about this later).

"The following year I modified the grant to allow us to get two more motorcycles. I believe Gary Nemeth and Frank Goodwin got these slots, though one of those may have been Dale Strobridge instead.

"I continued with the Traffic Unit until 1981 and administered the OTS grant. The unit didn't have a full time sergeant until a few years later. I served as the Traffic Administrative Officer and was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the unit. I promoted to Sergeant in 1982 and returned to the unit three times during my career, hence my nickname, 'Mr. Traffic' (coined by Retired Police Chief Don Englert). I'm proud that I wrote, received approval for, and drove the original Motor Grant application to Sacramento in only three days."

From 1976 to 1999 a two-man pistol team was active. Per Ron Brown:



Dale Strobridge, Darrel Andrews, Lee Cunningham, & Joe Hazouri

"Detective Lou Schweibert and I were the team. The department supplied the practice ammunition and gave us a vehicle to travel to each shooting event. We were pretty lucky and took first place in the Two-Man Master Class in eight events. We won at the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department shoot as well as at the Alameda County, Ventura County, and Orange County shoots, to mention a few. In 1999 Dale Strobridge and Don Lazzarini went with us to the LA County Shoot and won first place in the Four-Man Open Class. The team stopped competing in 1995.



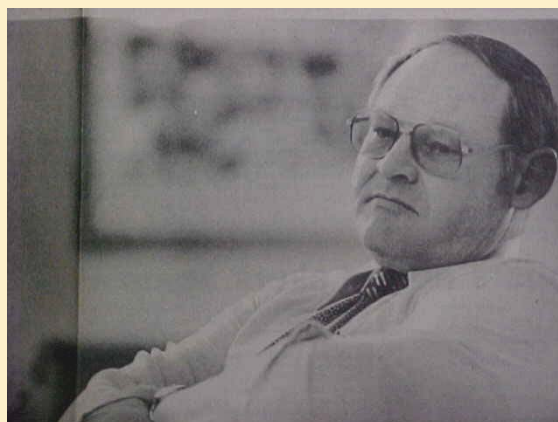
This March 1977 article showed a rough sketch of the new logo for the police cars:



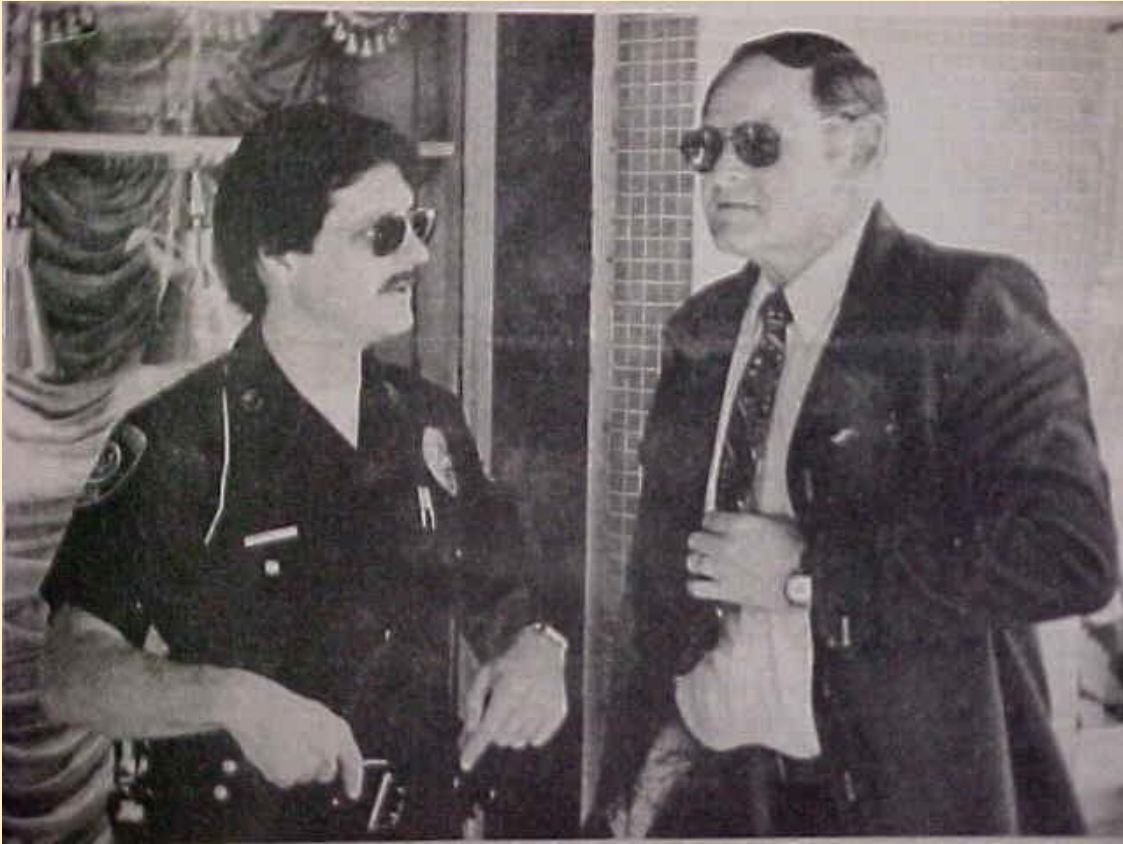
"San Luis Obispo police cars will have a new look beginning in April, if a proposal being presented to the City Council Tuesday by Police Chief Roger Neuman wins approval. Neuman said seven new Plymouth Fury I's have been ordered and he is asking the Council to approve new markings to replace the traditional black-and-white.

"Neuman's plan calls for the car bodies to be painted a high gloss white. A 4" high visible, blue, reflective safety tape would extend from the rear to the front on each side of the vehicle, instead of the painted black door. Additionally, Neuman proposes placing a city seal decal on each side of the cars, in blue and earth brown, to replace the old circular black and brown logo with a picture of the Old Mission. Neuman will recommend the new decal be reflective to give more visibility to the cars at night.

Chief Neuman's proposal was accepted by the council and the cars were replaced.



Chief Roger Neuman



Sergeant Bart Topham & Chief Roger Neuman



SLOPD's first female Sergeant, Janet Rude, 1978.

In May 1978 a police lieutenant was awarded a certificate of commendation for developing a theft case against a parking meter coin collector.



Gary Grant & Bill Anderson

Lieutenant Gary Grant was the first recipient of the award in a new commendation program by District Attorney Christopher G. Money. Money said Grant, who uncovered the thefts himself, built such a good case that the meter collector pleaded guilty to grand theft without going through a preliminary hearing.

The meter collector had been a coin collector for the city for eight years. Until Grant uncovered the thefts, Money said, there had been no suspicion of illegal activity. A coin collector himself, Grant was in the habit of going to United California Bank to pick up rolls of coins to sort out for his collection, according to Money. He was given rolls with the name of a car stereo business on them and found that the meter collector owned the business. Suspecting that the man might be diverting coins from the parking meters, Grant placed marked coins in the parking meters. He found later that some of them were missing, confirming his suspicions.

'The efforts of this officer have saved the citizens of the city of San Luis Obispo many thousands of dollars and have helped bring a quick end to an important case where the defendant was convicted of grand theft,' said Money.



Officers Gary Nemeth and Rick Crocker

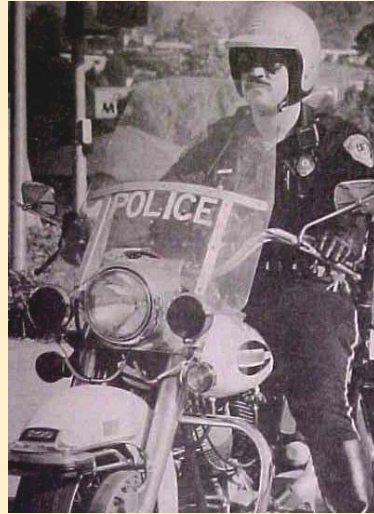
An article on August 15th 1979, entitled the "Putt-Putt Patrol" featured a picture of San Luis Obispo police officers Rick Crocker and Gary Nemeth cruising on Peach Street, testing the department's new Vespa Grande 50cc mopeds. The subtitle reads "Mopeds Join SLO Police Arsenal."

"The putt-putt of two mopeds soon will be part of the law enforcement armament of the San Luis Obispo Police Department. Two Vespa mopeds, authorized by the City Council in July, were received by the police Tuesday. As soon as a training program for officers using them is completed, the two wheelers are expected to hit the streets, according to Chief Roger Neuman.

Neuman said he requested the vehicles because of their maneuverability in some traffic situations where squad cars can be practically useless. The two \$600 machines will be helpful during patrols of the downtown area on Thursday nights, Neuman said, when 'cruising' traffic is sometimes so thick that squad cars are immobilized. On Thursday nights the mopeds will be available to foot patrol officers who roam downtown, Neuman said, pointing out the motorized bikes will get the officers on scene quickly without tiring them out by running, as they've had to do in the past. He said the mopeds also will be used for patrolling secluded areas where four wheeled vehicles cannot drive. Evasive bicycle riders also will be targets of the mopeds. Some bicyclists have avoided apprehension by ducking through tight alleys or turning around so the cars cannot pursue, he said.

The mopeds will be available for plain-clothes assignments and surveillance, said Neuman. The mopeds won't be marked as police vehicles."

In the November 15, 1979, Tribune there was an article entitled, "City Rider, SLO Gets Police Motorcycle'. It reads:



Officer Pete Hubbard

"San Luis Obispo got its first motorcycle cop in more than 20 years Wednesday when Patrolman Pete Hubbard took to the streets on a Harley-Davidson 1200. Hubbard's main job will be traffic enforcement, said Sgt. Charles Baldwin, of the San Luis Obispo Police Department.

"Baldwin said studies of the city's accident rates have shown a need for the motorcycle to patrol congested parts of town. Squad cars are too bulky to handle such problems as bicyclists riding on the wrong side of the street, he explained.

"The city got the 1977 model bike from the city of Riverside through a state traffic safety program. The bike didn't cost anything, but the department has spent several hundred dollars in repairs, Baldwin said.

"Hubbard was sent to a two-week defensive driving school in San Diego to learn how to steer the bulky bike. The two-year patrolman said he saw many shocked looks and flashing brake lights on his first day on the bike.

"Baldwin said the department is following the advice of researchers who have found that accidents decrease when the number of traffic citations increase. Hubbard wrote 10 citations Wednesday, he said. There have been 996 accidents in the city so far this year. The accident rate for 1979 was down 11 percent from last year's rate as of September 30th. Baldwin said the motorcycle should help lower the rate even more."

