

Building a Bridge...

Bridges

2-03

For nearly two years, traffic in Soquel has been a mess while the Bargetto Bridge over Soquel Creek was rebuilt. Well... construction is finished! No more flooding, no more logjams, and no more traffic!

C.J. Cannino

For the better part of two years, motorists have been enduring delays along Soquel Drive while the Bargetto Bridge underwent construction. Now finally complete, the Bargetto Bridge in Soquel is a model of modern bridge work. "We really like the Bargetto. We love doing bridges," said John Presleigh, assistant director of public works. Presleigh admits his department received complaints from frustrated motorists, but the project did start and finish on time and can be viewed as a model for the rest of the county.

The next time you cross the span, know that a piece of local history lies beneath you. A time capsule was embedded in the concrete on the

southwest corner of bridge. "We put in a bottle of Lawrence J. Bargetto Cabernet Sauvignon and pictures of Soquel," said John Bargetto, from Bargetto Winery.

'For the motoring public, the Bargetto Bridge project was, to say the least, an inconvenience – and according to engineers it wasn't a picnic for them either.'

The bridge was named after John's father Lawrence in 1983. The elder Bargetto passed away suddenly in 1982 and as one of charter founders of the Soquel Water District and an active member of the community, the county granted permission for the bridge to be named after Lawrence Bargetto.

Construction on the Bargetto

Bridge and the approach wrapped up in the beginning of December and was a joint effort between the Redevelopment Agency and Public Works. The \$3.5 to \$4

million bridge upgrade included more than just the bridge, incorporating a "streetscape" improvement plan. Along with the new span came signal upgrades, landscaping, new bike lines, a new and improved sidewalk, lights and hanging baskets. "It's a beautiful bridge," said Presleigh.

"I think of two things when I drive

over that bridge," said John Bargetto, "I think the designers and builders did a beautiful job and I think of my Dad."

Bridge Over Troubled Water

The span that runs through historic Soquel had always been a source of worry because of the center pier, which would catch all the debris flowing down the creek during the winter. Public Works officials, along with residents, were concerned about the potential for flooding with a logjam in the middle of the bridge. "During the winter we parked a crane down there just so we could remove the debris," said Presleigh. Engineers redesigned the bridge without a center pier and constructed it with an arch. The Bargetto Bridge is now three feet higher in the middle and much more structurally sound with the addition of new abutments, among other things. Bargetto said he was impressed with how well the creek flowed during the storms in December. "The bridge was finished just in time before we had that deluge in December," he said.

For the motoring public, the Bargetto Bridge project was, to say the least, an inconvenience – and according to engineers it wasn't a picnic for them either. Because the Bargetto Bridge is a major thoroughfare, it was important to keep it open at all times. Construction was also limited to July through October because of the steelhead and salmon in the creek. The State Department of Fish and Game was concerned that falling construction debris could impede steelhead and salmon migration. A biologist was on duty to address possible concerns regarding the fish. Experts also developed a special piping system in the water that acted like the natural stream flow while they worked in the creek.

"It was a tremendously difficult project," said Presleigh. Workers closed down half the bridge while they made repairs and funneled traffic down from four lanes to two. Presleigh gives a lot of credit to the Soquel business owners who were extremely patient during the rebuilding process.

Construction is finally complete on the Bargetto Bridge over Soquel Creek in Soquel Village. The new span will prevent the winter logjams that plagued the old bridge.

