

Gone, but not forgotten

Scotts Valley Historical Society saves material for new museum project



DAN COYRO — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

The historic Polo Barn in Scotts Valley is demolished June 27 to make way for 40 custom homes. The Scotts Valley Historical Society is saving much of the wood for reconstruction of the old Scotts Valley Octagon to house the Scotts Valley Historical Society museum.

By Amanda Edwards

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SCOTTS VALLEY » Scotts Valley Historical Society member Jay Topping took a philosophical approach on the demolition of the Scotts Valley Polo Barn.

“Although we have lost the barn, we need to remember that we managed to save a valuable piece of the barn,” Topping said. “We should be happy to reclaim what we could for future generations to enjoy.”

Large boards of rare wood and other parts were removed from the now demolished Polo Barn. The recycled material will be part of the reconstruction of the Scotts Valley Octagon and house the Scotts Valley Historical Society Museum.

The barn was demolished June 27.

The original Octagon was built as an aviary and later turned into a hardware store and the first post office in Scotts Valley.

The Scotts Valley City Council will discuss the museum project in August. If approved, the project will take several years to complete, according to Dene Bustichi, vice mayor of Scotts Valley.

Bustichi has been very involved in this project and he helped remove the barn wood and provided the equipment to

do so. Bustichi said he believes that the community of Scotts Valley is feeling let down by the structure’s demolition.

“Whenever something from your past is destroyed, you feel a loss and I think our community feels a loss right now,” Bustichi said.

The Polo Barn included a hay barn, a tack shed, and a large arch that connected the quarters to stalls, housing seven horses.

Millionaire Marion Hollins, who purchased the barn in 1930 from William Wurster, used the barn for her polo stables. The site was also used for a Christmas-themed amusement park known as Santa’s Village.

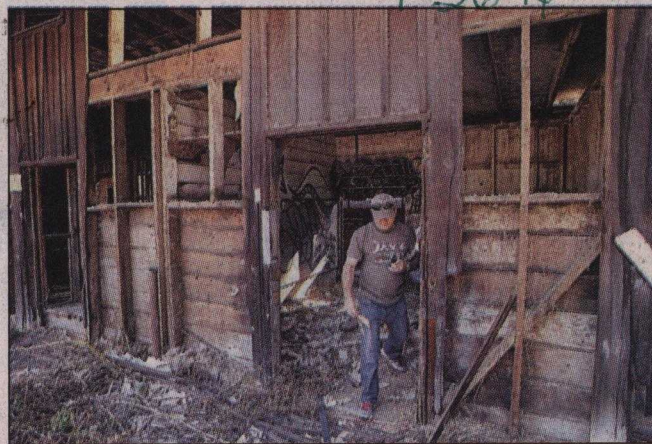
The barn remained unused since the late 1970s and had fallen into disrepair.

In the late 1990s, Florida-based Lennar Homes purchased the property and won approval to build 40 upscale homes.

Lennar said it would restore the barn and move it to a nearby location after receiving approval from Scotts Valley planners.

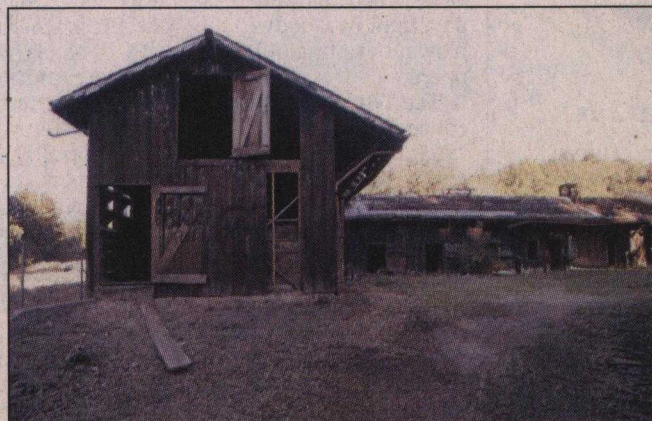
That plan fell through when the developer failed to start construction and with the start of the recession in 2008, the plan was stalled even longer.

In February, Lennar revived



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Jay Topping of the Scotts Valley Historical Society retrieves some Santa’s Village memorabilia from the historic polo barn before its demolition.



NHAT V. MEYER — BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

The Polo Barn at the site of the former Santa’s Village in Scotts Valley on Dec. 11, 2013.



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The historic polo barn in Scotts Valley is painstakingly dismantled last month so much of the wood can be used to reconstruct the old Scotts Valley octagon for use as the Scotts Valley Museum.

Polo

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the project. But by that time, the barn had fallen into such disrepair it was unsalvageable due to the decay and vandalism.

"The barn was let go partly to the embarrassment of Scotts Valley and partly to the embarrassment of Lennar Homes," Bustichi said.

Officials at Lennar Homes realized that it was no longer an option to re-

locate the barn.

As part of the deal, Scott Valley will receive \$1 million and the developer will build a public park on the property along with the new homes.

After a decade, Bustichi said he began to realize that rebuilding the Polo Barn was not the best option.

"A decade passed, the realities of what the barn could or couldn't be sunk in, and I became one of the council members that approved the removal of it," Bustichi said.