

# PLUGGED IN

FUN FOR KIDS

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF THE SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS AND THE MUSEUM EDUCATORS' ROUNDTABLE TO PROMOTE LEARNING AMONG YOUNG READERS IN NATURAL SCIENCE, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY AND ART

## This Month's Theme: PIONEERS

# What Is A Pioneer?

A pioneer is someone who is the first in any enterprise, or someone who prepares the way for others. There have been, and continue to be, pioneers in our own Santa Barbara County.

## Pampas Grass In Goleta

In 1868 Joseph Sexton started a nursery in the Goleta Valley and developed many new species of plants. In 1872 he imported pampas grass seeds because pampas grass plumes were being used to decorate ladies' hats and to decorate horses in parades. Mr. Sexton's crops flourished, and he hired many people to work in his fields. They cut and bundled the plumes, which were shipped to many places from the Goleta Valley. It was a very big industry for over twenty years.

United States President Benjamin Harrison and his wife visited Santa Barbara in 1891. Santa Barbara held its first Battle of the Flowers Pageant to honor the president. Many arches were placed over

State Street and then covered with flowers. The arch at the intersection of Figueroa and State Street was covered with pampas grass plumes. Unfortunately, a fire began in the plumes and destroyed the arch. A city ordinance was established that forbade the use of the plumes for any future public decorating.

Today you can see pampas grass as an ornamental plant in gardens, parks, and road dividers. These days, people view pampas grass as an invasive weed that harms our environment (see below). You can drive by Joseph Sexton's home at the corner of Hollister Avenue and Ward Memorial Boulevard. The house has been restored and many of the plantings remain on the grounds. The Goleta Valley Historical Society Museums contain much historical information about the Sexton families.



Pioneer Joseph Sexton poses beside a large pampas grass plant at his home in Goleta.

Courtesy of Santa Barbara Historical Society

### Pampas Grass is an Invasive Weed

Although pampas grass is a beautiful plant, it is on the California Native Plant Society's list of invasive exotic plants. It is also on the *List of Most Invasive Wildland Pest Plants* that are of greatest ecological concern published by the Calif. Exotic Pest Plant Council. Please don't plant pampas grass near natural areas or watercourses as it is likely to escape and out-compete our native plants. This plant has invaded large areas of Northern Santa Barbara County and efforts are now being made to eradicate it.



State Street arches were decorated with pampas grass plumes at the Battle of the Flowers Pageant.

Courtesy of Goleta Valley Historical Society

## MATCH THE PAIRS

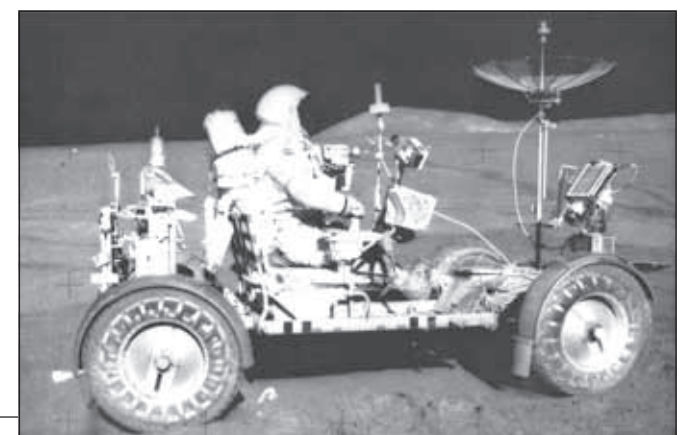
Draw lines from left to right to connect the matching pairs. Answers are below.

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Joseph Sexton         | Moon Rover        |
| NASA                  | Hydraulic brakes  |
| Malcolm Lockheed      | Pampas grass      |
| U.S. President        | Flying Boat, F-1  |
| Pampas grass plumes   | Pageant           |
| Battle of the Flowers | Benjamin Harrison |
| Loughead brothers     | Hats and horses   |

ANSWERS: Joseph Sexton - Pampas grass; NASA - Moon Rover; Malcolm Lockheed - Hydraulic brakes; U.S. President - Benjamin Harrison; Pampas grass plumes - Hats and horses; Battle of the Flowers - Pageant; Loughead brothers - Flying Boat, F-1

## PIONEERING THE MOON

Did you know that the vehicle made for traveling on the moon was built right here in Santa Barbara County? The Moon Rover was a project of the NASA space program (National Aeronautic Space Administration) in the



NASA photo

1960s. The Defense Research Lab, a division of General Motors Corporation, built the Moon Rover at the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport in the Goleta Valley. You can still see the very large metal hanger where the Rover was stored as it

was being built. A simulated moon terrain was created on the same property to test the Rover. This was a very important time in our history and people in Santa Barbara were pioneers working on this project. If you would like to find out more about the Rover, search under "lunar vehicle" on the Internet. We have had our share of pioneers right here in our own backyard.

## LOUGHEAD TO LOCKHEED

Flying a kite on the beach is great fun. In the early 1900's three brothers, Victor, Malcolm and Allen Loughead, began their aviation careers in Santa Barbara while on the beach flying kites. In 1915 two of the brothers, Malcolm and Allen, owned an airplane that they flew to the World's Fair in San Francisco. At the fair, they flew passengers over San Francisco, charging one dollar for one minute. These flights were so popular with fairgoers that the brothers made enough money to begin the Loughead Aircraft Manufacturing Company in Santa Barbara. Their first airplane, the F-1, a flying boat, was finished just before America entered World War I. The Loughead brothers went on to

build three other planes used by the military.

In 1919 the Loughead brothers, who were originally from Scotland, changed the spelling of their last name to the way it sounded, Lockheed. Thus, the Lockheed Aircraft Company was pioneered. Malcolm Lockheed eventually left the company and went on to pioneer other things. He invented the hydraulic brake system right here in Santa Barbara and later manufactured four-wheel brakes for Chrysler Corporation. Once a pioneer always a pioneer.

The Lockheed Flying Boat in the Santa Barbara Harbor

Courtesy of Santa Barbara Historical Society



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