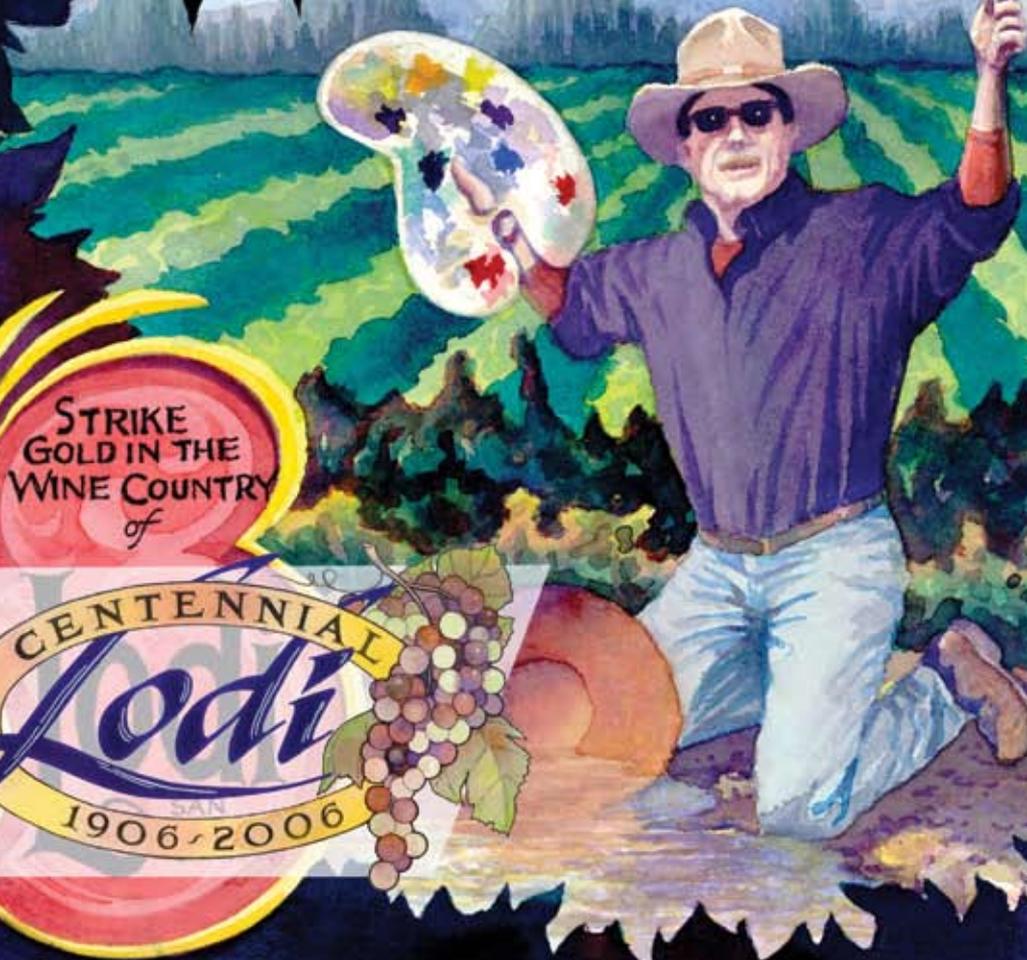


**DISCOVER**

*"The Romance of California"*

# HEAD WEST WALLDOGS



STRIKE  
GOLD IN THE  
WINE COUNTRY  
of

MEMORIAL  
WEEKEND

May  
26-29  
2006

CENTENNIAL  
*Lodi*  
1906-2006

*Rendering 100 Years of Prosperity*

# Romancing California



Tony Segale hosted the Head West Walldogs meet in Lodi, California during the Memorial Day weekend.



The 100 block of "West Walldog Street"...

Walldogs "Head West" to Lodi.

*"Just about a year ago I set out on the road  
Seeking my fame and fortune  
looking for a pot of gold  
Things got bad and things got worse  
I guess you know the tune  
Oh Lord, I'm stuck in Lodi again..."*

—John Fogerty

**May 26, 2006, a Friday**

Well, this was my first time to Lodi, but from the looks of it, it isn't too bad a place to get stuck, what with all the vineyards around, cool temperatures (at least for this Memorial Day event, compared to the hot summer to come) and a small town, with friendly small town people to boot.

Lodi, California is not to be confused with Lodi, in the Lombardy region of Italy; Lodi, Texas; Lodi, New Jersey; Lodi, Wisconsin; Lodi, Ohio; or several other Lodi Townships scattered around the U.S. One place claims "Lodi" means "peaceful valley". Sounds good to me. Then of course, Creedence Clearwater Revival's 1969 rock-n-roll song about the town could bring back a different set of memories for some.

A train passes by about every two minutes—or so it seems, especially if you happen to be slinging paint thirty feet up and trying to hear your iPod tunes over the racket the train makes. The site used to be the train station; now it's the fire station and a parking garage.

It's tempting to hand over all my change to Johnny McDonald, who slips over there every now and then to place a few pennies or dimes on the track. If he's diligent, he finds them after the train goes by and they make cool souvenirs. (I hear tell this is a highly illegal activity, but I



Photo by Denny Baronian

Noel Weber drew and embellished the design for the four letters of the "Lodi" copy, then added the sub copy in another hand-drawn style. The rest of the team finished the composition, adding historic images from Lodi's archives.



Noel Weber's crew, including daughter Anna, hard at it in the bright sunshine on Saturday morning.



Noel and Pete McKernon discuss what to throw at the guy with the camera: a brush or a rag?

now have two flattened quarters that I'll keep forever, along with the wooden Lodi nickels from Tony Segale, in my odds-n-ends tray on my desk.)

#### *May 27, 2006, a Saturday*

This is the California that Steinbeck's Tom Joad came west to be a part of. The history here is rich with all the others that came out for real. It's a history replete with grapes, watermelons, trains, singing... and sign painting.

At least over this past Memorial Day weekend, sign painting has taken its place in the history books of Lodi, California.

It all started a few years back when Tony Segale began making plans to host a

Walldog meet during the town's centennial celebration. Segale set about to do something that Lodi would remember. At its core was a display of public art, produced by some of the people who make public art. The end result was an understanding of the connection public art has to the sign business: this is where fine art and commercial art exchange vows.

Because, as it always seems to be at these gatherings, almost everyone on the walls is in the SIGN business.

This is the soul of outdoor advertising, albeit a soul that has been preempted by advanced technologies to the point that it has become something more of a community event and a gathering forum for

Walldog aficionados and practitioners than it is a mainstream industry. But this kind of thing is advertising's most public venue: the blank side of a building on Main Street, brought to you in living color by real people with hands and legs and eyes. Those who ply this craft have come through a change, and found, to the dismay of many that this form of sign work is still as viable as it ever was. It's just different today than it was in the old days. Today there are many sensible reasons for advertisers to contract with large print companies that produce billboards, to conduct nationwide campaigns with different images in every city and new images every week.

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Photo by Danny Baronian



Slowed by height and thwarted by Friday's gusty winds, the ambitious scope of this design by Mark Oatis emerged nevertheless, speaking volumes about the place called Lodi.

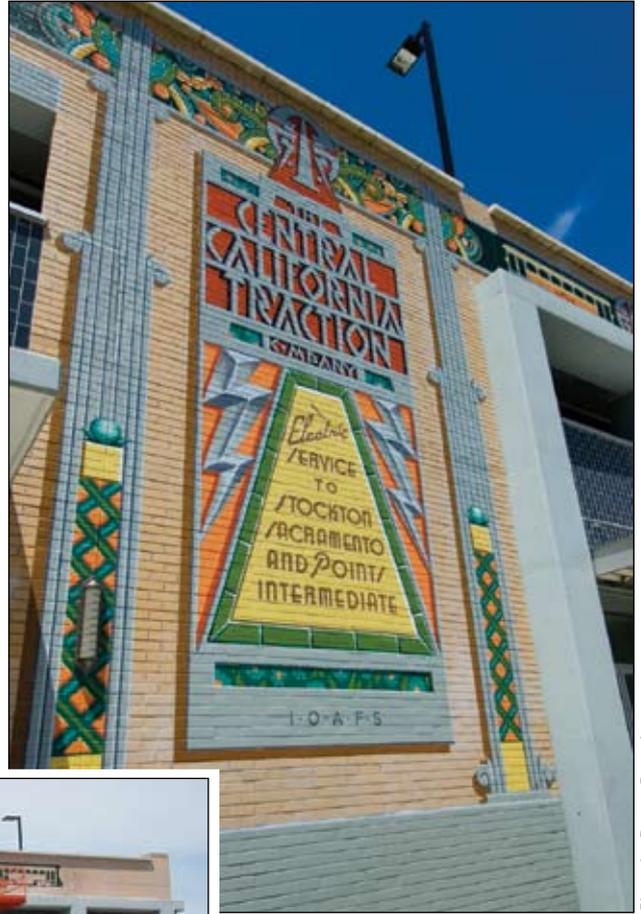


Photo by Danny Baronian



Mark and Rose Oatis step across the street to get a better view.



Erin Segale and Johnny McDonald got to hang with the pros for the weekend. They actually helped a lot too.



Tom Seibert: On top of the world...

CONTINUED

Photo by Danny Baronian



Robin Wallenfang's mural is a testament to the classic Roman era. Each vignette is bordered with 23-karat gold leaf.



Bill Riedel painted Tony Segale into history.



Robin explains to Bill and Randy some of the reference material used for the design.

Photo by Danny Baronian



David Butler's design is in memory of the Lodi Chautauqua, a gathering place for lectures, concerts and community events.



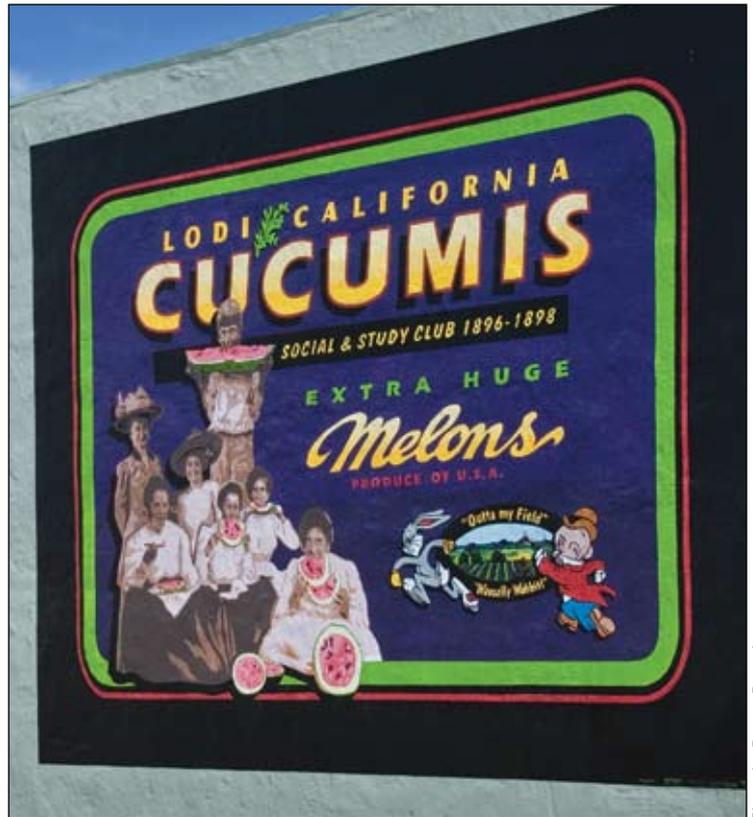
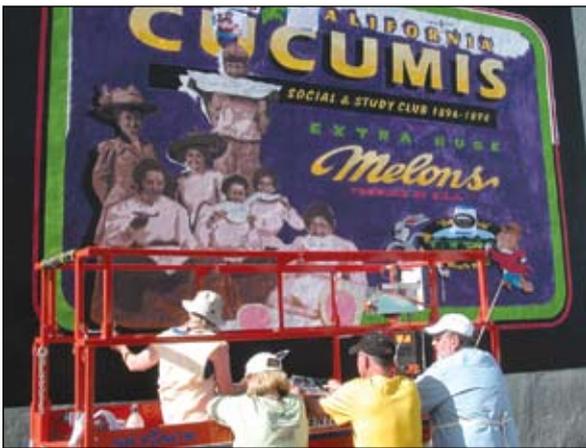


Photo by Danny Baronian

Nancy Bennett's mural remembers the watermelon industry and the many families in the region who relied upon it... and enjoyed eating them.



Dan Sawatzky looking on.



Dan's crew: happy to be working at ground level in the shade. This was the first mural completed, but the crew later went off to help get the other projects finished.

Dan Sawatzky's mural celebrates the working people and their commonplace toils and hardships.

CONTINUED



Gary Anderson's design remembers the grape festival, celebrating the industry that has long been one of the chief commercial enterprises, as well as an important part of the cultural fabric in today's Lodi.



Little by little, details emerge on the wall.

Yet the kind of Walldogs who found this type of work rewarding back in the old days still find it rewarding today. And every now and then, a group gets together to “paint the town” something like this group did in Lodi, California.

*May 28, 2006, a Sunday*

Some surely have to ask why. What's the sense in spending three or four days slinging paint in some town hundreds or thousands of miles away? But there are a lot of reasons, among them a chance to learn some basic skills from a few people who are extremely good at it. I asked Gary Anderson what he thought of this all. Anderson probably speaks for most people when he says it's because of the friends he's made, many of whom go back 10, 20 or 30 years now. This is the chance to spend a few days with people who have proven their dedication—both as friends and to preserving the craft.

Walldoggin' is an old school craft with old school techniques. As far as materials go, it's mostly paint, markers, pounce paper and the like. Equipment consists of scissor lifts, scaffolds, projectors, plotters, ladders, planks, some paintbrushes and sunscreen.

*May 29, 2006, a Monday*

The town of Lodi picks up on the energy level and participates in the activity overall. This, in a very real sense, is “performing art”. But it's also *Outdoor Advertising*—for the town; for the businesses in it. It's just a little different kind of *Outdoor*, compared to what Coca-Cola does.

So, all that said, who did what? Essentially when it was all over, there were nine pieces of *Public Art/Outdoor Advertising* produced over Memorial Day weekend in Lodi. All showcased different styles and different approaches to the craft. And all helped preserve a bit of history.

For the rest of the story, well as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words...

—Eddie Wieber