

Temecula Valley Historical Society

Newsletter

March 2005 Vol 5 Issue 3

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Membership
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www.temeculavalleyhistoricalsociety.org
Contact us at 951-501-9159

Naming Schools

By Bill Harker

Have you wondered how schools get their names, if there are a set of ground rules and who is responsible? It would appear that the rule of thumb is to choose the name from: 1) a list of national heroes, 2) persons of national importance like U.S. Presidents, 3) geographic location, and 4) local persons of importance.

Choosing the name is usually a responsibility of the governing body of the district within which the school is located.

On the 15th of February when the Temecula School Board gave names to four new elementary schools.

They used rule 4) in naming one of the schools after the late Tony Tobin, one after the late Susan La Vorgna, a former teacher who died of cancer, and a third school after the Luiseno band of Temecula Indians.

Tobin was a long time local resident, co-founder of the Temecula Valley Museum and a member of our Historical Society.

The fourth school was given the name of Crowne Hill because it relates to a nearby housing development of that name.

One thing is sure, given the ground rules, no school district should ever run out of names to choose from.

President's Corner

First, the bad news. Charolette Fox resigned as editor to undertake new projects that will mean commuting to Sacramento. Now for the good news. Former newsletter editor Bill Harker and frequent contributor Rebecca Farnbach have agreed to serve as co-editors. Newsletters will offer fewer stories, but will concentrate more on local history. If you have an item for the newsletter please contact Bill (951-676-3691 waharker@iinet) or Rebecca (951-699-5148, sunbrook@hotmail.com) or mail to Editor, TVHS, P.O. Box 157, Temecula, CA 92593.

Members of the Historical Society who served as judges for the Temecula Valley Unified School District History Contest last month were amazed at what our talented youth produced. If you would like to judge the Riverside County competition on March 19, 2005 at Riverside Poly High School, apply online www.rcoe.k12.ca.us/historyday

Keith Johnson has volunteered to become our Planned Giving chairperson and Barbara Tobin has agreed to head our Membership Committee. I am still looking for a volunteer to head our Youth Projects committee. You do not have to be a member of the board to serve as a committee chairman. If you are interested, please call me (951-302-9536.)

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ONE BIG BEAR

By Bill Harker

Filed away in the storage room of the division of Mammals at the Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. is a gigantic bear skull.

Attached to the skull is a tag reading: "Ursus Magister S.P. Nov. Type No. 150155 U.S. Natural Museum, Biological Survey Collection from Los Bieitos, Head of the San Onofre Canyon, Santa Ana Mts.-Southern California August 1900-now Camp Pendleton Marine Corp Base.

The Tag traces the huge skull to a folder, which is called the Stewart Bear. 'Ursus Horribles' is the official state animal of California, the only state in the Union that has a grizzly bear as its state emblem which was adopted in 1921.

The last strong hold of giant grizzly bears in Southern California was from Fallbrook north to Santa Ana Canyon and west from Elsinore to Capistrano.

Over one hundred years ago, the Santa Ana mountains were invaded by a hoard of settlers, deer slayers, miners, bee keepers and hog farmers. Many of these folks turned to hunting the mighty grizzly bear. The big bear was getting bad habits of attacking the farmers, their cattle, hogs and goats and demolishing bee apiaries.

In 1899 word drifted out of De Luz Hills to Santa Ana that a giant grizzly bear had been raising hell with the Rancho Santa Margarita and Rancho Santa Rosa cattle. In the De Luz valley the monster had destroyed bee apiaries by the dozens. This big bear really had an appetite for honey. Traps, rifle slugs and poison had failed to stop the Goliath.

A resident of the valley formed a hunting party and tracked the bear over Tenaja and into the San Mateo Canyon where they lost the trail. Word of the big bear reached Henry A. Stewart, who owned a 200 acre ranch near Capistrano and had earlier read about a Mr. Decker of Lake Elsinore. A giant grizzly had killed two of his milk cows and Decker had tracked the animal into the hills west of Elsinore, where he shot the beast 8 times with a 45-90 rifle before killing it.

The hide and claws weighed 50 pounds leading him to believe the bear must have weighed about 1,500 pounds.

Excited over the big bear stories, Stewart and his friend, Walter Manriquez, undertook a hunting trip in hopes of finding one of the big bears and on August 15th, 1899, they headed up the San Mateo Canyon hoping to spot one.

After tying their horses and making camp, they started up the Canyon and within minutes their dog picked up the scent of a bear. The scent led them on up the canyon and into the Devil Canyon and Cold Springs area, then over into the head of San Onofre, known as Biaritos or Casey Springs, which is just below the Santa Margarita look-out station.

The first to spot the huge bear was Manriquez who, carrying a 30-30 rifle, shot and wounded the animal which just kept coming toward him. Stewart, who was ready for the bear, saw the giant raise up on its hind legs and paw at the sky. A couple of well aimed shots finally did what Manriquez had failed to accomplish and the big animal dropped over dead. It took the use of a saddle horse to turn the big beast over.

Smithsonian Institute calculated that the bear must have weighed 1,600 pounds and, while standing on its rear legs, was more than 12 feet

all. Except for the huge skull, all that's left today is the ghost of the huge grizzly.

Ref: *California Grizzly Bear, San Diego Union, University of California at Berkeley*

Society Board Actions

The Temecula Valley Historical Society Board of Directors took the following actions at the February 4th meeting:

The budget committee presented a proposed budget for 2005 for review, ratification and adoption at the next meeting,

The society will consider placing donation boxes or bottles at strategic business locations to collect additional funds,

The membership committee was divided into two parts, Bill Harker to send renewal notices and Barbara Tobin to recruit new members,

Rebecca Farnbach and Bill Harker were appointed to produce the monthly newsletter.

Vail Ranch Centennial

The 1905 Vail Family purchase of four Mexican land grants is celebrated from July 4, 2004, through July 4, 2005. Upcoming events planned by the Centennial Committee, of which the Historical Society is a part, include an exhibit in the Temecula Valley Museum from March 3rd through April 30th.

On the opening evening of the exhibit, several former ranch people will treat an audience to an unscripted dialogue about life on the Vail Ranch during its heyday.

On Saturday, March 12th, the committee is presenting the museum Family Day program with a chuck wagon, real cowboys and demonstration of blacksmithing tools.

On Thursday, April 7th, another unscripted panel of experts will share their memories of the sale of the Historic Vail Ranch and the early days of the planned community called Rancho California.

Two Historic Park Dedications

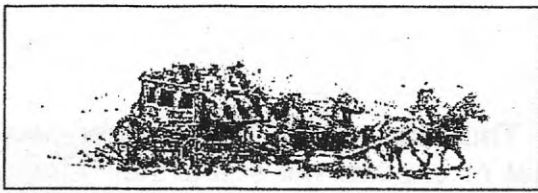
On Tuesday, March 2nd at 2 p.m., Pam Grender and other members of the Historical Society will be present when Temecula City officials dedicate the society plaque commemorating early Temecula resident Pablo Apis at the city park named in his honor. Dr. Anne Miller, our member who has extensively researched Apis, will introduce Apis family members coming from a distance to attend the event.

At 2 p.m. on Thursday, March 4, officials will hold a ceremony at the Temecula Sports Park to rename it Ronald Reagan Sports Park to honor his remarks to the US Olympic Committee in 1983 about volunteers in Temecula who exhibited a can-do spirit when they "got together and built themselves a sports park."

Early Temecula

As told by Gene Knott

Ferrell Freeman, who owned a blacksmith shop called Temecula Iron Works at Front and Fifth Streets, did a real favor for when he sold the business to my grandpa Al Knott in 1908. He let Grandpa pay him over time. Later, Grandpa bought ten lots across the street and had the shop moved. The building was lifted onto dollies and mules pulled it across the street. Freeman was a big man with long white hair and a beard. He wore overalls and seldom wore shoes. When he came to town, he drove a wagon pulled by a plow horse.

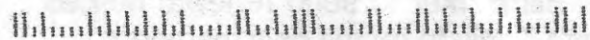


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 P. O. Box 157
 Temecula, CA 92593

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TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A tax exempt charitable & educational organization

Membership

Membership/Donation Categories:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$ 10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Historian | \$ 300.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single | \$ 25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$ 500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$ 35.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Founder | \$ 1,000.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor | \$ 50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$ 5,000.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$ 100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supreme | \$10,000.00 |

The Board of Directors formulate and vote on policies. The membership may vote for Directors at the annual meeting.

Membership is open to anyone regardless of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

Dues and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Donations may be designated or undesignated.

Checks payable to:

Temecula Valley Historical Society

Mail to:

P. O. Box 157

Temecula, CA 92593-0157