

Temecula Valley Historical Society Newsletter

October 2005 Vol 5 Issue 10

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

President's Corner

The big news is that our website www.temeculavalleyhistoricalsociety.org is back up and running, thanks to the efforts of Wendy Lesovsky, our Community Relations Chair, and Rebecca Farnbach, co-editor of the Newsletter. New member, Elaine Esham, who holds a degree in multi-media information processing, has volunteered to become the Society's webmaster. She is well qualified to assist the Society in spreading the word electronically about our history.

I am still looking for a volunteer to join us as chairman of the Youth Projects Committee. If you would like to help us with that position please call me at 951 302-9536.

Bill Harker, head of the Nominating Committee, and Eve Craig, Secretary, will soon have the ballots in the mail for the new Board members. Please vote as soon as you receive your ballot and return it in the mail. The new members will join the Board for the November 4th meeting to help elect officers who will preside for the next year. You may meet the Board at the Annual Meeting for members to be held at the Assistance League building on November 16th.

The date was changed so that we can enjoy the beautiful Holiday decorations displayed by the Assistance League.

You still have time to enter the Erle Stanley Gardner mystery

writing contest with entries due by October 12th. See the rules at the Temecula City website.

Our thanks to Board member John Moramarco for the use of his property for the upcoming Historical Society Barbecue. See the enclosed flyer. Hope to see you there.

Jimmy Moore

Everyone is invited to attend our meetings at noon on the first Friday of each month in the community room of the Temecula Valley Library.

2005 Annual Meeting

Please plan to enjoy a special evening with the society during the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, November 16 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Assistance League Chapter House at 28720 Via Montezuma in Temecula. A sit-down dinner will be served and a speaker will give a historic presentation. The cost is \$35 per person and reservations are required.

Members in good standing will receive an invitation along with a ballot for electing board members to serve the next three years. For further information, please call Audrey Cilurzo (951) 304-3666, or Eve Craig (951) 699-9872.

Save these dates:

October 23 – Barbecue at
Moramarco Ranch
November 16 – Annual
Meeting & Dinner

Liliane Blanc: Erle Stanley Gardner's Cook

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

Long after everyone in Temecula forgot her, the former cook for Erle Stanley Gardner reconnected with her past.

Several of us have become acquainted with former secretaries of Gardner who are still living near Temecula: Hedy Roripaugh in Fallbrook, Lillie Golden in Hemet, Betty Burke in Lake Elsinore and Mildred Gagnon in Sun City. Finding Liliane Blanc was a delightful surprise.

Liliane, a Swiss native, came to Temecula in 1954 with her husband and two-year-old daughter Denise to take a position working for author Erle Stanley Gardner at his Rancho Paisano south of town. No matter that she had no experience as a cook, she responded to a help wanted ad and they made their way here from where they were living in New York City. He worked as a handyman and they lived on the ranch for two years, looking after the place when Sam Hicks was traveling with Gardner.

Initially, Jean, who was the inspiration for character Della Street and later became Mrs. Gardner, was concerned about having the two-year-old at the ranch. Jean's worries were relieved when "Uncle Erle" insisted on sharing a daily breakfast with Denise. According to Liliane, the author ate his breakfasts late in the morning because "his ideas came at night." The child became his mascot and was introduced to each visitor to the ranch.

Liliane savors memories of living in the biggest cottage at Rancho Paisano. She says Jean organized everything and everybody, from the work of the secretaries to recipes and serving company. There were animals everywhere, including five dogs belonging to Gardner and two owned by secretaries. Liliane loved gardening and feeding the birds at the ranch.

Although Liliane loved living at the author's ranch, she didn't enjoy his books. Speaking with her German accent she admits it may have been because she didn't read English well, but she didn't like the Perry Mason series. She found his travel books more interesting.

She has fond memories of Jean and the other secretaries. Jean would sometimes disagree when someone would challenge her about a manuscript and would say, "Well, the dictionary is WRONG!"

She also has warm recollections of Jean's two sisters, and Agnes Baines and Hedy who married Louie Roripaugh. Liliane says Native Americans from Pala helped with housekeeping and gardening.

The Blancs left in 1956 because Liliane's now ex-husband didn't like to travel and he missed living in Europe. They divorced over forty years ago. She raised Arabian horses for pleasure and spent the rest of her working years at a chemical manufacturing plant that produces medications.

Little Denise grew up in Switzerland and can't remember her association with the famous author. She graduated from college with a business degree and is an administrative secretary.

I first heard of Liliane in 2002 from Temecula resident Jan Rich, whose late husband Ray Rich published *Horse & Rider* magazine. Liliane subscribed to the magazine and when she first contacted the Riches in 1984 with questions about her horses, she had no idea she was communicating with someone in Temecula. As friendship warmed between Liliane and the Riches, she returned to visit a very different Temecula than she had known before.

Now at seventy-six years of age, she is eager to share her memories of Uncle Erle and Rancho Paisano.

I wrote an introductory letter to her and was overjoyed when she responded with a very lengthy phone call from Switzerland. She is delighted to know that there is an annual celebration of Gardner's life and work. If anyone wants to write to her, her address is: Renn Weg 93, CH4052, Basel, Switzerland.

Celebrate our famous local author's life during the Erle Stanley Gardner Weekend sponsored by the Temecula Valley Museum November 4 – 6

Notes from Lilie Golden

lie, one of Gardner's former secretaries, is one of the most charming and fun people I have ever met. We struck up a friendship during the 2003 Erle Stanley Gardner weekend. She sent the following to share, all perfectly typed, of course. – RMF

Temecula, the Vail Ranch, Rancho del Paisano in 1949 - what an experience for someone who had been born and raised in England, endured food and clothing rationing, blackouts, and lived in a cellar during the bombing raids of WWII.

Erle Stanley Gardner hired me as one of his secretaries – a long story as to how that came about – and here I was at Rancho del Paisano, several miles from Temecula on the Pala Road.

From the rubble of bombed buildings to the glorious scenery and fresh air of Southern California, I was many, many miles from my native land.

Rancho del Paisano – also known as The Fiction Factory – was formed from a large circle of buildings: the main house and kitchen, the office, separate cabins for Uncle Erle, Jean Bethel, employees, guests and myself. Everyone had privacy. Well congregated in the main house for meals, to entertain guests, and when work was done for the day.

Dick Grobaty was the foreman. Our cook was Maria Gomez, who came in daily, and was a whiz at flipping a pancake on the wood-burning stove in the main cabin. (It was some time later when the kitchen area was added.)

Ruth Moore, a sister of Jean's who was always known as "Honey," lived in Rainbow with her husband Walter and came daily to do bookkeeping along with many other tasks. Another sister, Peggy Downs came to visit and to oversee operations when Uncle Erle, Jean and I traveled to many parts of the globe.

The dogs – Lobo, Bonnie, Chiquita, Coon and Blackie – were strays who had found a home with good food, comfortable chairs and beds. Jean and I would walk them every day down to the big oak tree and back. At one time, the little pet fox, Petey,

would accompany us, nipping at the heels of the dogs and at our heels.

The first people I met at the ranch were Louis and Hedy Roripaugh. Louis was foreman at the Vail Ranch, and Hedy had been a secretary to Uncle Erle prior to her marriage to Louis. My first Christmas Day in America was spent with Louis, Hedy and their children – a delightful time when I was missing my family.

Old-Style Math

By Bill Harker

The old Luiseno Indian language went no further than five in numerals. After that, it was a matter of addition and multiplication, with fingers and toes featured largely in the act. Here is a literal translation made about 100 years ago:

- 10 My-hand finished both.
- 11 Besides other my-hand one finger.
- 15 All my-hand finished and one my foot.
- 21 Besides other my-foot one finger.
- 25 All my-hand my foot finished and another five.
- 40 All my-hand my-foot finished again all my-hand my-foot finished
- 71 Five-times five another five-times five, and four times five, one upon.

News from County Historical Commission

Temecula is well represented on the Riverside County Historical Commission. Congratulations to Darell Farnbach for his recent appointment as commissioner and to Charolette Fox for her new position as presiding officer.

More Events to remember:

- September 10 thru October 23 –
20th Anniversary Exhibit at Temecula Museum
- September 27 – Dedication of Tony Tobin Elementary School, Temecula
- September 29 – Ribbon-Cutting at Gilman Ranch House Museum, Banning
- October 6 – Gallery Talk at Temecula Museum
- October 23 – Anza Mule Days
- October 29 – Riverside County History Symposium



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**Temecula Valley Historical Society
P. O. Box 157
Temecula, CA 92593**

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