

Temecula Valley Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

January 2006 Vol 6 Issue 1

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President's Corner

Here it is again. Hope you had Happy Holidays - a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Now that the crunch is over, we can guarantee you'll enjoy our plans for entertaining and informative speakers as well as the fun events planned by Audrey Cilurzo, Committee Chair for Events and Speakers.

Since our Annual (Dinner) Meeting, we've been able to amend and adjust our Bylaws to reflect a fiscal year of January 1st through December 31st and also provide a much smoother method of operation for elections through the Annual Meeting.

We are most grateful to Rebecca Farnbach for her services on our Newsletter this past year. Since she has passed the torch to Eve Craig, Leslie Karp and Bill Harker, we shall carry on with enthusiasm. We love to print stories about history in Temecula Valley and if you have some, please let us share them with our readers for all to enjoy. You may send them to Temecula Valley Historical Society at P O Box 157 Temecula, CA 92593 with your phone number included. We'll do our best for you and the readers.

Audrey Cilurzo and I spent a very enjoyable two hour lunch talking and planning events for your enjoyment and knowledge of the incredible history of the Valley. We came up with a full page of possibilities. We'd like you to let us know if you have any historic

places you'd like to learn about or visit on a tour and we'll try to accommodate your reasonable suggestions to the best of our ability.

Our meetings are on the first Friday of each month in the Community Room of Temecula Library at 12:00 noon. It is located just East of Winchester & Ynez off County Center Drive. You are very welcome to come and enjoy the well-informed speakers. See you there on January 6th, and again I wish you a wonderful New Year.

Eve Craig

SPEAKING OF SPEAKERS

By Audrey Cilurzo
Chair of Events and Speakers

For our **January 6th meeting**, we're very pleased to enjoy Betty Ryan, who, with her husband Dick designed, built and managed Temecula's first Bed and Breakfast when the Wine Country had only three or four wineries. It was so beautiful, well run and well appointed that TV Channel 7 and Wine and Food critiques talked about Loma Vista B & B time and time again on various shows. It inspired a long waiting list of guests who wished to come to Temecula.

Many people learned about Temecula Wine Country while visiting Loma Vista Bed and Breakfast. Betty and Dick are now retired and living in Glen Oaks Hills and are now very busy as members of the Temecula Valley Wine Society.

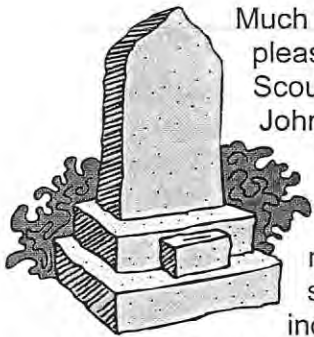
FEBRUARY 3RD MEETING:

We are delighted that Paul J. Price, is a new member of our Historical Society Board. He has studied and worked with the Luisenos of which the Pechanga Tribe is a part.

For the past 25 years, he has been involved in the worlds of Art, Anthropology, Preservation and Scholarship. His most significant mark is as an artist with very powerful paintings of landscapes and subjects. Many of his outstanding pieces of art can be seen in the Pechanga Resort and Casino. We'll be fascinated with his discussion of the Luisenos and their interesting predecessors.

WOLF'S TOMB IS A MONUMENT

By Eve Craig, Committee Chair



Much to our pleasure, our Boy Scout, Matthew Johnson, has obtained a donation from a nursery of 13 specific trees indigenous to this area and time that Louis Wolf resided in Temecula.

The trees are California Sycamore, Western Red Bud and Coast Live Oak.

Matt recruited several Scouts and friends who helped dig the 13 holes with a jackhammer because of the hard ground. They planted the 10' tall trees after they mixed the existing dirt with Miracle Grow.

The trees are placed to enhance the property and provide a lovely view of the extensive area below. Good work, men!

Still needed are many shrubs, which they will plant too. Then Matt's requirements will be met for his Scout status.

In addition, work is being done to water the trees and complete the sprinkler system. It's a joy to see the progress in the restoration of Wolf's Monument.

RESEARCH AND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

By Darell Farnbach

A dilapidated old stagecoach has sat out in the weather at Tony and Mildred Tobins' property for about 15 years. The Tobins donated it to VaARRA about four years ago and we are developing a plan to restore it. Actually, restoration is not accurate. It is more like building a stagecoach from some old parts.

The Historical Society has received funding from the Roripaugh Grant to purchase the materials needed to use the parts to build a replica of a mud wagon, which is the style of stagecoach the Overland Butterfield Stage Company drove through Temecula in the early 1860s.

A mud coach is more open than other stagecoaches like the ones the Wells Fargo Company made from solid wood. The mud coaches had canvas sides and doors, which would be rolled up in good weather.

This is only one of the Research and Preservation Committee's major projects for 2006. If you would like to help build the mud coach, please call me at (951) 699-5148.

PLAQUES AND BROCHURES COMMITTEE

By Pam Grender

Plans are being made to have the Butterfield Stage Plaque installed in the Redhawk Community Park, just South of the Redhawk Bridge. The Redhawk Homeowners'



Association is enthusiastically supporting this location and Herman Parker has given the go ahead. We feel it is a good location since the Magee Store, which held the first Temecula Post Office, was located on the South side of Temecula Creek, a mere stone's throw from the entrance to the park. It was to that former site that the Butterfield Stagecoaches actually made their stops. We searched for a site where people could get out of their cars and walk up to the plaque and actually read it. Another positive point about this location is that the homeowners above the park are very protective and vigilant about keeping vandals away. After months of observing the Pablo Apis plaque, which stands in another park, it has been reassuring to find there have been no acts of vandalism at that location. Perhaps parks are good choices for placing our plaques. We are very appreciative of two grants, one from the Will J. Reid Foundation (members of Lerverne Parker's family) for the gift of \$2000.00 to help finance our brochures and the other from the city for \$5000.00, \$2500.00 of which is to be used for plaques and brochures. We also received a gift of \$200.00 from David Elliot and Anne Miller to go toward plaques and brochures.

20,000 new brochures have just been printed and are already being distributed to many locations. Reactions upon delivery of the brochures are enthusiastic and positive. Most often I hear, "Oh good. We've been waiting for those. We can't keep enough of them on hand. Thanks so much!" (And that's with a twice a week delivery to Old Town!)

SWING ON IN

By Paul J. Price

The word 'honey' is stocked in my mind's pantry like some forgotten box of baking powder.

I was raised by my family on a long skinny strip of land running at the base of the Gavilan Hills. We were dry farmers. City folks called us ranchers. Dad called it a living. We were not alone.

Over a five square mile area were at least ten such ranches.

Let me see if I can recall the scene. Where the field was not plowed, it was full of granite boulders, buckwheat, and sagebrush. You could walk in a straight line from our ranch to Lake Elsinore if it were not for the barbwire marking the boundaries between the ranches.

Lake Elsinore, Perris, Hemet, and Temecula harbored city folk. A once a week trip to Temecula for live stock feed was a journey the whole family took.

During the 1950s Temecula was small and isolated—and not lost, you understand. Back then nothing existed to hide it. It was just a lonely little pocket of buildings on the vast rolling brown skin of the foothills.

Temecula was created to serve the railroad. The railroad was built first and the towns were established around the section houses built by the railroad for the construction gangs. They were more or less about ten miles apart.

These towns resembled a humped jumble of trees and low buildings on the horizon. They would contain a few hundred clustered souls served by one grocery, one drug store, one filling station, and at least one pool hall. They were ministered by different churches all painted lead white.

Many towns dried up when the trains stopped traveling through. But not Temecula. It may have slowed, but it continued to live. The towns' politics usually operated within a clannish system. Their mayors tended to be re-elected—and often. So having achieved job security—and developed in the process the ability for moral turpitude—these mayors would finally retire from their offices by dying. Most of Temecula politics took place at either one of its pool halls or its favorite—and probably only—restaurant, the Swing Inn.

Some of my favorite childhood experiences occurred at this restaurant. While Dad tanked up the car, Mom, my brothers, and I would walk to the Swing Inn for a bite to eat. Here cuisine began and ended with good old-fashion American cooking.

Anything that could be breaded and deep-fried just as you might do to chicken was available. They offered delicious, juicy burgers in baskets wrapped tight in paper. I never could

understand the wrapping as a child, because in order to put on the ketchup you had to take the wrapping off the hamburger first.

My experience with a well-done steak was limited to a thin slice seared to the texture and consistency of boot leather. I think the cook was teaching me about meat. The prevailing opinions about rare beefsteak were that we had seen cows hurt worse and still walk away.

I remember the waitress, a blond-haired lady wearing her apron. She was the first woman who ever addressed me as "honey."



I had never tasted pizza. So I asked the blond lady if they served it. Her reply, "No we do not serve Italian food, only spaghetti."

I recall asking the blond lady if they had Boston baked beans. Her reply, "No, only California baked beans." My mother gave me one of those disapproving looks, whereupon I dropped my eyes to count the red squares on the oiled tablecloth.

Once while eating our Sunday supper there, a Highway Patrol black and white pulled up outside the restaurant. All patrons' eyes looked out the window. A police officer walked in and the patrons' chatter dropped to low whispers. Then someone yells, "Hello, Bill!" The officer now has a name and is recognized as a regular and a friend. Bill now joins in on the chatter. Making gestures with his right hand while carefully balancing his coffee in his left (so as not to spill not even a drop on his freshly creased pants), he

tells of his encounter on the highway with an intoxicated driver.

It was a time of rebuilding America. She was at her finest. Every G.I. was a winner and every woman had proven her right to be equal—including my blond waitress.

LOCOED ANIMALS

By Bill Harker

The *loco* (Spanish for *crazy*) weed, well known in the Temecula Valley for causing unpredictable behavior in sheep, cattle and horses, grew plentiful throughout this area in the past.



Somewhat resembling alfalfa it can be recognize by its many fat, green pods.

Gentle horses, affected by the weed, often fail to perceive a person as he approaches then panics when spoken to. A seemingly reliable mount will suddenly stampede over a cut-bank with his rider or run headlong into the side of a barn. Cattle and sheep become obstreperous under the influence of locoweed and are difficult, if not impossible to handled. (Sounds like a teenager!)

Fortunately the early farmers and ranchers in our valley eliminated most of the weed through

better range management and grazing practices. The weed is almost never eaten by domestic livestock if there is any other feed available.

IT BEGAN WITH TEMECULA

One of California's oldest and most distinguished wholesale food distribution firms, Simon Levi Company, had it's roots in Temecula.

Simon Levi came to Temecula from San Diego in 1873 and became associated with Louis Wolf in operation of Wolf's Store on the Pauba Ranch and as appointed postmaster soon after arriving and succeeding his friend Wolf who had served in that position for three years.

The Southern Trail from the East was then an important highway for immigrants and adventurers, and Wolf's Store was widely known from San Francisco to the Rio Grande as an important stopping place on that trail. Weary travelers coming to California in covered wagons were doubtless encouraged by the prospects of stopping in Temecula for fresh supplies and a chance to receive mail from home.

In Temecula where Levi handed out the small weekly parcel of mail to news-hungry immigrants and sold flour, sugar and jerky to local ranchers and Indians, he found time to study the accelerating westward trend and visualize the gigantic market then being created on the West coast. While records show that Simon Levi only stayed three years in Temecula, it was here that the



seeds were sown for the giant present-day distribution firm which has remained in the family for almost 100 years..

Source: The High Country Issue 9

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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

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