

Temecula Valley Historical Society



Newsletter

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Newsletter
Eve Craig, Bill Harker, Leslie Karp

www.temeculavalleyhistoricalsociety.org

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Temecula, CA 92593-0157

President's Corner

We're moving ahead full blast in preparation of elections to the Board and making plans for our special Annual Dinner catered by Volker for our hungry members and guests. You and your family and friends are all very important to us as we endeavor to inform you of the unique history where you live. The meeting will be at the Assistance League Community Room on December 6th at 6:00 for complimentary refreshments, followed by a sit-down, served dinner, a Video by our incomparable Paul Jay Price and our exceptionally talented Christina Comer, lovely vocalist.

You will meet our current Officers, Board Members and Committee heads as well as the newly elected Board Members who will take their seats at the first meeting in January, 2007. At that time, new Officers will be elected and I will be happy to stay on the Board as Past President, hoping to make a smooth transition of the office. How grateful we are for those who have served their allotted six years well and deserve the required one year off of the Board, such as Bill Harker, Darell Farnbach, Audrey Cilurzo and Bonnie Reed. The remaining Board will stay on, and our gratitude extends to Barbara Tobin for her willingness and ability to adjust to our new fiscal year and make things go smoothly in spite of her many responsibilities.

We will discuss briefly our accomplishments for the year 2006 and some of the interesting plans for tours, DVDs and fun education for the schools in 2007. So, we look forward to seeing you soon.

Audrey will ask Rebecca Farnbach and Marvin Curran to entertain us with great stories about early Murrieta that are not known to most, for our next meeting in the Temecula Library's Community Room, November 3rd at noon. Marvin is a co-author with Rebecca and Loretta Barnett and provided many of his family's pictures for their new book, "*Images of America, Murrieta*". You'll really enjoy their storytelling.

Eve Craig

The Historic Vail Ranch: A Site Worth Saving Part II

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

My article in the last newsletter chronicled the early actions of the Vail Ranch Restoration Association (VaARRA). I should mention that there were earlier efforts to preserve the site by Temecula Valley Historical Society board members Bill Harker, Paul Price and the late Doris Whited. Bill and Paul can tell you about their experiences before VaARRA came on the scene.

For eight years we paddled against the current trying to achieve progress in renovating the ranch site, facing a series of unfortunate events that included economic downturn, three changes of ownership of the property and a change of county supervisors. During this time, VaARRA kept nudging the owners and authorities and continued to provide community education programs and publishing articles about the value of the site. We continued preparation for the interpretive center by conducting interviews and collection artifacts.

Until about three months ago, County Supervisor Bob Buster was still the lead supervisor on the Vail Ranch project, even though after redistricting about three years ago he didn't have to answer to local constituents about the site. A series of fortunate events began when the project was handed to our district supervisor Jeff Stone. Then, the county Economic Development Agency that had been in a longtime holding pattern was empowered by the supervisors to proceed. In the line of cause and effect, then Kimco, the developer, was reminded of their responsibility to renovate the site. Kimco, then, accepted Jerry Tessier's proposal for Arteco to take on the project.

As you heard from Jerry Tessier at the last meeting of the Temecula Valley Historical Society, it will take about a year to get plans approved by the city and county before construction can begin. Then, it will take a year to renovate the historical district and to prepare the buildings for business use. If all goes as planned, the site will be opened to the public in January 2009.

Because the site will not be run by VaARRA or by a governmental agency, it will rely on commercial enterprises to make it financially viable. VaARRA is working closely with Jerry Tessier and Arteco, his redevelopment company, to ensure the design of the ranch will not compromise the historic integrity of the buildings. We are specifically protective of the Wolf Store Adobe and will monitor any alterations done to the structure. VaARRA is pleased that Arteco has chosen to replicate a Vail Ranch mule barn for the additional commercial building needed on the property. Arteco strictly adheres to state and federal guidelines for historic renovation and has promised to supply VaARRA with any necessary information to complete the application for placing the historic district on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Besides the renovation of the buildings, the entire 4-acre site will be renovated for maximum historical use, including storytelling areas, a demarcation of where the old Butterfield Stage Trail went through the property, a historical garden, a working blacksmith shop and areas for live performances. VaARRA will have alcoves in each building for museum displays representing the historical use of each structure.

You may see Arteco's Web site (www.artecopartners.com) for examples of their work. And, you may ask questions to any of the following people who presently serve on the VaARRA board of directors: Rhine and Sandy Helzer, Dick and Charolette Fox, Bill Harker, Malcolm and Loretta Barnett, Dave Wilson, and Darell and Rebecca Farnbach.

We are pleased to report on the recent progress toward restoring this valuable local and regional historical treasure. We look forward to the day when the property is dedicated to community usage.

November Speaker

Our speaker for the November 3rd meeting is Marvin Curran, who was being born and raised in Murrieta. He lived in the Fountain House Hotel that was owned by his family until it burned down in the 1930s. The Fountain House Hotel, located across Clay Street from the Murrieta Train Depot, was built as a meal stop and overnight facility for rail passengers. His mother E. Hale Curran was born in Murrieta in 1900 and lived until 1999. She loved her hometown and collected over 1000 photographs of Murrieta. Marvin served on the first volunteer fire department, drove school buses, owned gas stations and was Chief of the Murrieta Fire Department for eighteen years. During the years of community growth prior to cityhood, the fire department ran the town's affairs. The new book "Images of America: Murrieta", compiled by Marvin Curran, Loretta Barnett and Rebecca Farnbach will be available for purchase at the meeting.

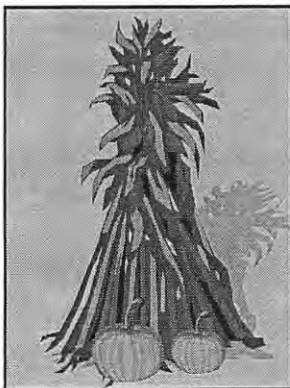
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

By Bill Harker

The Membership Committee is responsible for maintaining membership records indicating when the last annual dues were paid, the category of membership, the amount of dues paid and the check or money order number of the payment.

The records also indicate if the payment is a renewal or for a new member. In addition, a membership retention record is maintained that shows a history of each member's payment history.

The committee is also responsible for mailing notices to all members reminding them when their dues are payable and for obtaining new members. If each of our present members would bring in one new member we could double the number of names on our membership roster. If you know someone who might be interested in joining our society, please invite them to do so.



The Vail Ranch Restoration (VARRA) would like to thank the following members of the Historical Society for their volunteer service during the Big Horse Corn Maze Event: Bill Harker, Bill McBurney, Carol Marsden, Dick Fox, Sis Herron, Margaret Cushing, Rhine and Sandy Helzer, Malcolm and Loretta Barnett, and Darrell and Rebecca Farnbach. These volunteers directed parking and gave directions around the festival site. They made sure pumpkins were paid for before removal from the pumpkin patch. Bill Harker and Malcolm Barnett regaled visitors with stories of early Temecula. We taught youngsters how to make butter by shaking whipping cream in a jar. VARRA is receiving a donation from Big Horse that will be used for future museum displays at the Vail Ranch. Thank you!

Get To Know Your Board Members

Paul J. Price

Part Two

Paul J. Price has been involved in the worlds of art, anthropology, preservation and scholarship for the past quarter of a century.



He has worked on a massive array of artwork for Phase III of the Pechanga Resort and Casino in southern California. The project involves sculptures, mazes, rock art reproductions and forty-five paintings—some of which are produced as large a fifty feet wide and eighteen feet high. This impressive collection will represent the capstone of his multi-faceted career.

Price brings to the project many years of studying and working with the Luiseno people, of which the Pechanga tribe is a part.

He has played an integral role in the identification of Luiseno artifacts which were parts of private and museum collections. Price is also responsible for preserving many sites which were once significant Luiseno habitats and contained many significant features. His concern for the endangered sites resulted in him producing and directing two preservation videos (1988 and 1999). Finally, he is a researcher and educator, having helped many professors with their studies of southern Californian Native American culture and lectured himself on the heritage of the Luiseno people.

However, it is as an artist that Price has made his most significant mark. Price's painted landscapes and subjects are powerful, sweeping, and epic. He has the instinctive and sensitive ability to draw the emotions from the very heart of his subjects. His creative designs for both commercial and public attractions can be seen around the world. He worked on the historic restoration and theming of the Santa Cruz Beach and Boardwalk (1981-3), helped develop the original Chuck E. Cheese (and associated characters) for Pizza Time Theatre in Irving TX (1981-4), and directed and produced fabric lines and wall décor for national sales for Studio Four (Chicago, IL) and Environmental Graphics (Minnetonka, MN 1989-92).

His work on scenario interpretations, natural habitats and museum displays is equally impressive. He produced the conceptual drawings for the Polynesian Cultural Park, Viti Levu, Fiji (1986), designed the original Pechanga Cultural Museum (1995), helped develop the present-day Pechanga Repository/Training Center (1997-2001), created and established the farm museum attraction at the Winchester Mystery House in San Jose, CA (1998), and consulted on preservation and the displays for the Lake Perris State Park Museum in Perris, CA (2000-4).

Other projects, also global in scope, include art work on the Seattle World's Fair (1978), the Louisiana World Exposition (1982), Parque de Diversiones in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1984), and Diversiones Moy Arcade in Guadalajara Mexico (1994).

Price has been awarded a U.S. Patent for electrical lighting a merchandise display concept (1990) for work done for one of his clients, Dunn-Edwards Paint, Los Angeles, CA. He received a California State Parks Superior Achievement Award for excellent service and contribution in preserving state archaeological sites in the Inland Empire District in 2002, and a Wall of Honor Plaque for outstanding



Reflections
Sandy Wilkinson 1923-2006
By Carol Marsden

Who was Sandy Wilkinson? A rancher, a friend, and always a "gentle...man". Yes, he came from the large, very wealthy and prominent Los Angeles family of the Vails. He was born to privilege, but was forever humble. Join me as we look back and reflect.

The Early Years

Born in Los Angeles, James Vail Wilkinson, in 1923 in an age long ago when the words "please" and "thank you" were essential and taught; when one stood when an older adult entered; when one usually behaved... although at times with an argument. Sandy was born to the "mannered" world. A basis for his long life as a gentleman.

Early Christmases were spent on the Santa Rosa in the two story Victorian "Dear" House, usually with his mother, two sisters and of course, a housekeeper. There was no electricity in the house so after arriving, with the tree on top of the car, and decorating with candles they kept water stored nearby to put out the flames in case of fire and according to Sandy pack rats in the attic. Where were those Vail men to assist?

It was on the Santa Rosa that Sandy learned to hunt (birds and deer), and ride; a good basis for his future life on the Vail Ranch. To the end, he always claimed the "the Santa Rosa with its Oaks and its meadows was the most beautiful part of the ranch".

Sandy attended local Los Angeles schools and graduated from Stanford University with the class of 1945. "A smart party man" a classmate said. He was excellently read and socially inclined.

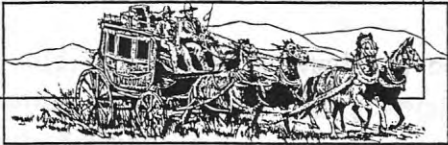
Sandy was struck with tuberculosis and was advised by the doctor to mend in Arizona. Sandy refused. The doctor also advised him to limit his smoking to one cigarette a day "one half in the morning and one half in the afternoon". Did Sandy do this? Probably not. But with a degree in engineering, higher education, fun and games behind him; it was time for the "smart party man" to head for the Vail, where he was to spend a lifetime.

To be continued in the next issue

Temecula Valley Historical Society
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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.*

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