

THE MOHAHVE MUSE

Mohahve Historical Society
P.O. Box 21
Victorville, Ca 92393



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December 2020

Merry
Christmas!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Happy
New
Year!

2020 Officers

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Corresponding Secretary

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Mary Dutro

Julia Jackson

Jack Magro

Mike Phillips

Rick Schmidt

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Greetings MHS members:

Well, the season is changing with Halloween and Thanksgiving in the rear-view mirror, and ready or not, Christmas is on its way. The current health concerns have caused indoor meetings to be replaced by outdoor fieldtrips the last three months, and by some miracle the weather cooperated for the most part all three days! Some have remarked that they like the change, but not, of course if it starts snowing or raining on our heads.

The Lone Wolf Colony is the location of our holiday dinner and installation of 2021 officers. The usual serve-yourself pot-luck will be replaced by a sit-down dinner served by LWC staff wearing masks and gloves, with 10 guests seated in the dining room area, and 20 in the great-room with the fireplace. So that's right - 10 plus 20 equals 30, and that's our limit. As of now we have 22 paid reserved seats. Doors open at 5:00, dinner is served at 6:00, the installation of 2021 officers will take place at 7:00. Please call (760) 985-1918 to make your reservation.

Guests will have an opportunity to enjoy the following 5 displays: Waldo Stakes's Museum of Speed, which was our Sept. trip; The Last Indian Battle at Chimney Rock, which was our Oct. trip; Joe Manners's photos of old Oro Grande, our recent Nov. trip; photos of Camp Cajon, our upcoming Jan. trip; and the LWC permanent display that some people have never taken the time to look at since they were too busy eating, talking, and singing Christmas carols. So wear your mask and your best Christmas duds, enjoy some holiday music, and even learn a little something. Raffle prizes and some last minute Christmas shopping are also on the agenda.

In other news, the Nov. 21 Oro Grande fieldtrip, and the Santa Fe Trading Company's Craft Fair the same day, were both fun and successful. Thanks to member volunteers **Roger, Bryan, and Patty** for your help in Victorville, and Director 4 **Julia** for your help in Oro Grande. We took care of business at the Cross-Eyed Cow and voted in the 2021 Board. It wasn't too difficult, since there were no challenges to the slate presented.

Coming up: Crafts Fairs Sat. Dec. 5 and 19 from 10-4:00 in Old Town Victorville, 54192 Seventh Street, when we hope to sell some MHS books to shoppers. Call Marcy if you can help at the booth. Minimal training required.

If you submitted your name and contact information for the 2021 Membership Directory, you can expect to receive your copy at the Christmas get-together. Unclaimed copies can be picked up at the Apple Valley Legacy Museum, or you can request to have yours mailed.

Thanks for your support during this unusual year, and looking forward to 2021.

Marcy

Christmas Dinner Reservation
Lone Wolf Colony
Thurs. Dec 17, 5:00pm

\$15.00 per person

Call 760-985-1918
for your reservation!

Future meetings / fieldtrips:

Jan. 23- Camp Cajon Monument led by Mark Landis

Feb. 27- Lone Wolf Colony- tour of grounds and telephone museum

Mar. 27- Hesperia Museum (Harrison Exhibit Center) hosted by Griz Drylie

Apr. 22- Lucerne Valley Desert Zen Center hosted by Ven. Thich Tam Mung

May 27- Apple Valley Curiosities- presented by Marcy Taylor

Acknowledgement of long-time MHS Members

By Marcy Taylor

Last December at the Mohahve Historical Society's holiday celebration at the Lone Wolf Colony, Marcy Taylor called up and acknowledged six long-time MHS members and true historians, who have over the years kept the organization alive and made it what it is. Most were stepping down from their board positions at the end of 2019. The article that was to have appeared in the January Muse was never printed due to a change of newsletter editors. So one year later their contributions are no less important.

First, **Fran Elgin**. She has been a member of MHS since about 1990, has served at various times as vice president, corresponding secretary, and recording secretary, not to mention stepping in as active president when needed. She has for years had the extremely time-consuming



John Marnell Mel Marks Andrea Gutierrez Fran Elgin Jim Mustra Mary Dutro

job of creating and running the MHS history research room, located at the Victor Valley College Library. Because of her dedication in collecting, organizing, and filing documents, research by students and local historians has been possible. In addition, she has written "Rancho Yucca Loma," contributed to other books such as "Mohahve 6" and "History of Victor Valley," and took on the tedious job of indexing Mohahve 1-5 series, to make the collections more conducive to research. Besides that, she has given talks to MHS and other groups on the Yucca Loma Ranch and important female pioneers of the Victor Valley, edited the newsletter, organized fieldtrips, represented the MHS on other community organizations such as the Victor Valley Museum and Apple Valley Historical Committee, and probably more that I haven't mentioned. She still works behind the scenes whenever needed. So a big thank you to Fran Elgin!

Next, **Andrea Gutierrez**. She has been a member since 1992, and shortly after joining was made a director. The following year she became membership chairperson, a job she held for 25 years. You've seen her at the back table at meetings, checking people in, giving out raffle tickets, and for many years providing most of the raffle prizes herself. So again, a big thank you to Andrea Gutierrez.

Mel Marks is another member that deserves to be acknowledged is who joined the organization in 1995. He kind of stayed in the background until becoming a director in 2016. He could be counted on to mail out the monthly newsletters, while contributing historical tidbits and giving sage advice. He rode shotgun with Jim Jacobs in his antique Model T two years in a row

in the Apple Valley Village Parade, and I might mention they placed and won a monetary prize for Mohahve Historical Society. When Mel completed his three year term, the board hated to lose him, but acknowledged when you're more than 90 years old, you've probably reached retirement age. You go, Mel!

This next guy also joined the MHS in the early 1990's. For some reason he keeps retiring, and then coming back. He has served more than one term as president, in several instances finishing out a term for someone else. He's given presentations, organized fieldtrips, scheduled speakers, and done other important jobs like making the coffee, vacuuming the carpet, setting up tables, and operating the projection equipment. Let's not

forget the wonderful all-expense-paid BBQ Jim hosted at the Victor Valley Museum to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the organization. All MHS members as well as members of neighboring historical societies such as

Barstow, Wrightwood, and Trona were in attendance.. So a big thank-you to **Jim Mustra**.

The next acknowledgement goes to **John Marnell**, a member since 2003 and past president, who has stayed quite active year after year. He has given numerous presentations to MHS and other organizations, led lots and lots of fieldtrips, gotten lost in the desert on some 4-wheel drive adventures, and authored several books, some with his co-author and traveling partner, none other than his wife Barbara. Some of you long-time members probably attended the annual August BBQ's, actual pig roasts, at his Hesperia home, or maybe his Thirsty Thursdays happy hours, or whatever he called them, when he invited members to get together, just because... So another big thank you to the Marnells.

Last but not least, I want to acknowledge a lady who continues to serve three-year term after three-year term as a board director, **Mary Dutro**, better known as the Tortoise Lady. Mary also joined MHS in the early 1990's, since earning the title Director #1 for Life. Besides saving sick, injured, and abandoned tortoises, caring for the tortoise terraces, attending pet fairs, and giving talks to school children, she also sells our books. Before COVID came along, she could be seen at the monthly meetings with her own mini-bookstore at the back table. So, Miss Director #1 for Life, thanks for all you have done and all you continue to do for MHS.

As MHS celebrates 56 years, let's all continue to strive to fulfill our mission of preserving, recording, and sharing the history of the Victor Valley and surrounding areas.

Santa Fe Trading Company 3rd Fall Crafts Fair by Marcy Taylor



On Saturday November 21, the Mohave Historical Society, Apple Valley Legacy Museum, and Victor Valley Legacy Museum again shared a booth at the very successful Santa Fe Trading Company's 3rd Fall Crafts Fair. Four MHS members and museum volunteers, Bryan Taylor, Roger Morgan, Patty Hedges, and Marcy Taylor worked the booth and welcomed visitors to step inside the museum to learn a little Victor Valley history. 70 vendors, three bands, and several food booths, created a festive atmosphere, as visitors enjoyed the beautiful weather and outdoor shopping experience. A special tribute to Veterans was included. Don't miss the two upcoming shows on Saturday December 5 and 19 for that last-minute Christmas shopping.

MHS members visit Oro Grande

On Saturday Sept. 21, the Honorable Honorary Mayor of Oro Grande, Joe Manners, proudly and enthusiastically shared the history of the town he has called home for more than 70 years.



After meeting at the Cross-Eyed Cow Pizza for a welcome and brief meeting, the group of about 25 Mohave Historical Society members and guests took off down the sidewalk for a living history lesson.

Stopping in front of each building, Joe shared a historic photo and told of its original use, a barber shop, a service station, a bank, a car repair, or a restaurant. His sense of humor and some



off-color stories kept the crowd's attention. This jaunt was followed by a tour of the Oro Grande Cemetery, the oldest in San Bernardino County. Mayor Joe, the self-appointed caretaker,

relies on both monetary donations and volunteer labor to help with the maintenance of the grounds, the gravestones, and the crosses. His love of both local history and his town are evident as he shares the stories of some of the hundreds of residents, from

babies, to war heroes, to whole families, who are buried there.



Contact Joe Manners if you would like a tour or are willing and able to support his effort to preserve the history of the old gold-mining town of Oro Grande. **Phone: (760) 912-2480**



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Sofia Chase
Mike Guiffredo
Delvin Harbour
Jeff Hardy
Christy Huiner
Michelle Lovato
Lorelei Kay Masuda
Roger Morgan
Veronica Sanchez
Trudy Shoemaker
Waldo Stakes
Carol Wiley

Thank You All!

2020 RENEWALS

Jack & Barbara Betterley
John Blanc
Linda Boruff
Norman & Judie Bossom
Gene & Mary Ann Christy
Doug Hillbert
Jerry Hutchinson
Lawrence Johnson
Marilyn Johnson
Anne Lynch
Thomas & Ingrid Mitchell
Jimmy Munoz
Janice Myers
Holly & Kent Purser
Stormie Reid
Paul & Beverly Sheriff
John & Carol Thompson

Thank You for renewing!

REMINDER:

Your membership has been extended to December 2021.

The Murray Ranch on the Road

By Marcy Taylor

Many minority travelers, who "hit the road" during the Jim Crow years, found their way to the welcoming Murray's Overall Wearing Dude Ranch "on the outskirts of Victorville," now known as Apple Valley. Yes, the Murrays welcomed everyone, and people of all races enjoyed their hospitality as well as the ranch's many amenities, including a reservoir for swimming, cabanas for relaxing in the evening, and a ballfield for local teams to compete. Entertainment included horseback riding, and dancing to tunes played on a real jukebox.

The Murrays has the distinction of being one of only two ranches listed in any edition of the Greenbook, the other being the short-lived Raglan Ranch only a few miles to the northwest. Little is known about Lilly Raglan's enterprise, but a whole lot is known about the Murrays, thanks to Joe Louis, Pearl Bailey, Herb Jeffries, and a slew of other famous folks who frequented the ranch. When Life Magazine published a story in 1937, and Ebony featured the ranch on its cover in 1947, the word was out.



Display of artifacts from Green Book locations in western U.S. including Murray's Dude Ranch, a 40-acre property on the edge of the Mojave Desert offering luxury and comfort to Black travelers.
Photo Courtesy of the National Civil Rights Museum

So now the Murray Ranch itself is "on the road," as a part of a Smithsonian Institute's three-year traveling exhibit. Despite the spring opening being postponed due to "you know what," the exhibit is currently on display at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. And the Ebony Magazine, on loan from the Mohave Historical Society's research room in the Victor Valley College Library, is prominently displayed, with its cover enlarged to poster size, welcoming visitors to the exhibit.

If you can't make it to Memphis before January 3, the next stop is The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, from May 8-August 1, 2021. If things go as planned, the exhibit will reach Sacramento in December of 2021, and Los Angeles two years later in December of 2023. I'm sure Mr. Murray, resting in peace at Victor Valley Cemetery, would never have dreamed the influence his little ranch would have, with his dream of racial integration and harmony a little closer to being realized.