

# THE MOHAHVE MUSE



*Mohave Historical Society*  
P.O. Box 21, Victorville, Ca 92393

*Volume 26 Issue 3*  
*March 2023*

**President:** Marcy Taylor, **VP:** Delvin Harbour, **Treasurer:** Carol Wiley, **Rec Secy:** Meera Maheswaran, **Corres Secy:** Stormie Reid  
**Directors:** Mary Dutro, Dennis Hom, Eric Mandeson, Mike Phillips, Rick Schmidt

## *President's Corner*

Hello MHS members,

We're moving into March when "the March winds shall blow." Let's hope they don't, as February took care of that this year. Instead we can celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the time change, and the first day of spring. Here's wishing all of you "the luck o' the Irish!"

Back in Oct. we started encouraging members to renew for 2023. Most did and that we appreciate. However, I still have several unclaimed membership directories and a few non-renewing members, who will unfortunately not receive this edition of the Muse. But I would like to take time out to acknowledge some of our 33 life members who never have to be on the reminder list ever again. Two board members, Dennis Hom and Meera Maheswaran, have recently taken the plunge, and joined the group. Now they are eligible to serve on the board for the rest of their lives!. While some life members have moved away or can no longer attend meetings, some that continue to show up when they can include the Cambridges, the Betterleys, Kelly Osborne, Lorraine Moffat, and long-time members Fran Elgin and Mary Dutro.

I won't take up too much space, as we have a lot of things to report on this month. So get out your calendar and record the dates of the many fun and exciting things listed on page 2.

All of you are invited to Apple Valley Legacy Museum's 8th Anniversary weekend events March 31, April 1 and 2. The silent auction, raffle, porch sale and museum visits will run all weekend. Get your ticket now for the Sat. evening Ho-Down for some boot-stompin' fun! Come enjoy two bands, the Thunderbirds square dancers, a funny (we hope) skit, and a chicken dinner, all for a mere \$15. So don your best Western duds and plan to join the fun. See flyer page 7.

Thanks for your continuing interest in local history.

*Marcy*

## **Member Presentations**

One of the objectives of the MHS states that members shall present subjects of local historical interest to our membership as well as to other organizations. Lately we have been doing just that. In addition to the "Green Book / Murray's Ranch" talk given by President Marcy Taylor at the Needles Route 66 Info Fair, she and MHS member Bruce Hollenbeck teamed up for a Valentine's Day presentation on "The History of the Apple Valley Library" at the Friends of the Library (FAVL) monthly meeting.

Bruce's mom, Edna Hollenbeck, opened the library back in 1949 in a small room in the Post Office building on Highway 18 and Navajo with 200 books. The slide show took attendees on a 74 year journey of the library's development and growth through 3 additional locations: the second on Highway 18 in the Village area; the third in the old Terri Lee Doll Factory building near the Civic Center Park swimming pool, which is now being demolished; and the fourth at its current location today. A highlight was a video of the Children's Summer Reading Program, attended by hundreds of local kids and teenagers, which made clear to the members in attendance that their hard work is always worth it! Bruce loaded tables with scrapbooks dating back many decades, and also displayed the typewriter his mom used to type out the first bookmarks for opening day. He also told some funny tidbits about his family coming to California from Detroit, and fielded many questions.



**Bruce Hollenbeck - 1950**  
**Library 1st year anniversary**

My sincere thanks to the many MHS members in attendance, some of whom are also FAVL members: Patty, Carol J., Sofia, Jan Myers, Tricia Douglas, Dennis and Stephanie Hom, and FAVL's newest member Barbara Betterley. Thanks also to Tech Man Dennis Hom for his assistance. Let's keep up the good work and continue to preserve and share local history. Stay tuned for a presentation by the Homs at the June 13 FAVL meeting. Meetings are free, open to the public, and have great snacks!

By Marcy Taylor

## MHS Upcoming Events

- Mar. 23 **MHS Mtg.** Dan Mitrovich "Preservation Ranch: Protecting the Desert Tortoise"
- Mar. 24 **Fieldtrip. 10am,** Rancho Verde Estates/ Verde Ranch - Brent Gaddis
- Apr. 27 **MHS Mtg.** Eric Mandeson "Historical Landmarks of Lucerne Valley"
- Apr. 28 **Fieldtrip. 10am,** Lucerne Valley sites.
- May 24 **Fieldtrip. 10am,** Kemper Campbell Ranch. Peggy Shaughnessy.
- May 25 **MHS Mtg.** Gary Whiteside "The Whiteside Family and Flying Tigers"
- Jun. 22 **MHS Mtg.** Anne Roark "Doble, the forgotten Ghost Town and Mine near Big Bear"
- Jun. 24 **Fieldtrip. 10am,** Big Bear Museum
- Jul. 22 **Fieldtrip. 10am,** Cajon Pass Tour, Parts 1 and 2
- Aug 26 **Fieldtrip. 10am,** Wrightwood Driving Tour
- Sep 28 **MHS Mtg.** John Beyer "Beyer's Byways: Amboy, Ca"
- Sep 30 **Fieldtrip. 10am,** McDonald Museum, SB
- Oct. 26 **MHS Mtg.** Joe Manners & Marcy Taylor "Ghosts that Haunt the Desert"
- Oct. 27 **Fieldtrip. 10am,** Tour Oro Grande Town and Cemetery.
- Nov.16 **MHS Mtg.** Speaker Dennis Hom "Growing Up in Old Town Victorville", Election of 2024 Board officers.
- Dec. 14 **Christmas Celebration**

## Community Events

- Mar. 11 11am, Camp Cajon Tour, compliments of Wrightwood Historical Society
- Mar. 31 Apr. 1-2, Apple Valley Legacy Museum 8th Anniversary Event. See flyer on page 7
- Apr. 30 10am, Clamper's Monument Dedication at Dead Man's Point, Apple Valley, CA
- Jun 23 Route 66 Festival, Tulsa OK, featuring -25 "Overground Railroad" by Candacy Taylor and Apple Valley Murray's Ranch.

On January 27th we lost long time historical society member **Bertha Churchill**. Bertha and Ken, her husband of 65+ years, enjoyed attending the monthly meetings for the program and mingling with friends. They enjoyed going on field trips and camping. Bertha was an accomplished cook and seamstress.



She will be missed by many.

By Jim Mustra

## March Speaker - Dan Mitrovich

Some of you may remember **Dan Mitrovich**, who spoke at the Rededication of the Desert Tortoise sculpture ceremony last spring at the Victor Valley Museum. We met by chance as I was painting away, and he stopped by to see what I was up to. He shared his involvement with Preservation Ranch, whose purpose is to protect the desert tortoise and its habitat. He expressed his appreciation for my revamping of the damaged sculpture, and without hesitation agreed to attend the ribbon cutting.



Dan is definitely a go-getter, whose footprint extends across the country. A long-time marathoner, who just completed the November race in New York, is the author of "Forever at the Finish Line," a book about the quest to honor New York City Marathon Founder Fred Lebow with a statue in Central Park. And thanks to Dan and his team, Fred is standing "forever at the finish line" of the NY Marathon, checking his watch as each runner finishes the grueling race, just as the late Fred Lebow did for years. BTW, President Bill Clinton, also a runner, wrote the forward to Dan's book.

Dan and **Heidi Brannon** will speak on the topic "The Effect of Illegal Marijuana Grows" on the environment and the desert tortoise. Their presentation will include a video. Table displays of the posters and scrapbooks from the tortoise dedication at the VV Museum, will be available for viewing. In addition, we will display a large banner on the subject donated by the County Museum. I'm sure we will all learn a lot, and appreciate the work that is being done to protect our signature species of the Mojave Desert.

## March Field Trip - Rancho Verde Estates

You won't want to miss our fieldtrip, **Friday March 24**, to the beautiful Rancho Verde Estates. We will meet at 14848 Riverside Drive in Apple Valley, the home of MHS member, Brent Gaddis, at 10:00 AM. It is the location along the Mojave River of the historic overland route used by Native Americans, Mormon pioneers, and explorers, where the four trails (the Mojave, the Mormon, the Santa Fe, and the Old Spanish Trail) merge before heading down what we now know as the Cajon Pass. We will learn about the history of this desert oasis while sitting near the riverbank in the custom built amphitheater, evoking the feeling of being in Athens or Rome. Brent will introduce us to his self-taught building techniques, an interest he developed while living overseas. We will get a chance to see and enjoy his amazing stone structures, as well as his prize-winning stone sculpture pieces, that won many a ribbon at the San Bernardino County Fair.



You can sign up for this trip at the March 23 meeting at the Lone Wolf Colony, at the Apple Valley Legacy Museum during open hours, or by calling (760) 985-1918. Directions from Highway 18 / Apple Valley Road: Take Apple Valley Road south, turn right on Symeron, left on Tacony, left on Riverside Drive, pass Dr. Reddy's mansion, and go 450 feet, make a right turn into the next driveway and park.



**January General Meeting** by Marcy Taylor

On January 26 the Lone Wolf Colony was packed with MHS members and a few visitors anxious to hear local historian Nick Cataldo bring to life the history of San Bernardino. His three books: Images of America, San Bernardino; The Earp Clan, the Southern California Years; and Creating the Gate City, San Bernardino; flew off the sales table manned by his wife Linda. Attendees also purchased MHS books, renewed memberships, and signed up for upcoming fieldtrips.

Prior to the main event a few other matters needed to be taken care of. Recording Secretary Meera Maheswaren, who missed the December event due to a conflict with a MOAA (Military Officers of America) dinner the same night, was officially sworn in. Now she's ready to go back to work!

Next came the introduction of royalty. Mary Dutro, AKA Queen Mary, wearing her official crown and "MHS 30 Years" sign, was



recognized as being an ACTIVE MHS member since the early 1990's. And then our speaker, Nick Cataldo, AKA King Nicholas, was recognized for his more than 40 years of active membership with the San Bernardino Historic and Pioneer Society. We thank them both and applaud their tireless dedication in the preservation of our local history.

In sharing the history of San Bernardino, "The Gateway City," Nick took us on a trip back in time to the founding fathers (and mothers), the settlers of various races and religions, including the Mormon pioneers, former slaves, Mexicans, Indians, and Asian settlers, all of whom played an important part. We learned about the trails, the railroad, the roads, the layout and naming of the streets, and the construction of the buildings in this important transportation hub. Thank you, Nick, for another interesting and educational presentation.

**Old West Days at Victor Valley Museum** by Marcy Taylor



The cowboys and cowgirls, as well as the outlaws and card sharks, filled the Victor Valley Museum Sat. Jan. 21 for "Old West Days." The well-attended event included western music, kids' crafts, card games, skits, rope braiding, doll making, line



dancing, and a number of table displays from various non-



profits and local museums. San Bernardino Historic and Pioneer Society, Mohave Historical Society, the Apple Valley Legacy Museum, and the Hesperia Museum, among others, displayed vintage photos and artifacts representative of by-gone days. Their volunteers were happy to share stories and answer questions, while offering books and other items for sale to the many attendees "moseying on through."

Our thanks goes out to the San Bernardino County Museum and the Victor Valley Museum staffs for hosting and including us in this fun-filled family-friendly event. In the words of Roy Rogers, "Happy Trails and may the Good Lord take a likin' to you!"





### Needles Route 66 Info Fair by Marcy Taylor

Board members Delvin Harbour, Mary Dutro, and Marcy Taylor made the trek to Needles for the second Route 66 Info Fair held at the El Garces Harvey House train station on Feb. 11. At the



first fair held last year, Delvin represented the Route 66 Association, and Marcy represented the Victor Valley Legacy Museum. This year the MHS was invited to participate, so Mary joined us, with all three of us taking turns manning two adjoining tables.



In addition to the 16 organizations set up inside, and the BLM set up outside in the park, the day included 3 tours of the



Harvey house, and a number of presentations on various topics, starting appropriately with "The Harvey Girls," with presenter Lynne Miller in full costume. Marcy did a quick version of the

"Bell Mountain / Murray Ranch" presentation, that was shared in its entirety at the February MHS meeting. As expected, in spite of being a Route 66 Green Book site, many attendees knew little or nothing about the importance of the Murrays, Herb Jeffries, Pearl Bailey, or Joe Louis as connected with Apple Valley, at that time referred to the "outskirts of Victorville."



All in all, it was a successful day spent selling books, posters, maps, and other vintage items, and meeting many new people interested in the history of the Victor Valley area. We don't often get to share our knowledge with folks from Kingman, Fort Mojave, Long Beach, Tulsa, and Canada among other places. It was most interesting meeting a representative from the Tulsa Historical Society, that will be hosting the June event at which Candacy Taylor, author of "The Overground Railroad," will speak. She will be featuring the Murray's Overall Wearing Dude Ranch in her presentation.

On the way coming and going many people were stopping off in Amboy to pay their respects to Albert Okura, owner of the whole town, who suddenly passed away the end of January. We will learn more about him in an upcoming talk by John Byer on Amboy, as well as on our fieldtrip to the McDonald's and Military Museums in San Bernardino, for which he is also responsible. So the next time you stop at Juan Pollo for a bite of chicken, think about Albert Okura, "The Chicken Man."



Wade Bray from Tulsa, Oklahoma, promoting the AAA Route 66 Road Fest to take place June 23-25.



## Meet your 2023 Board Members



I was born and raised in Clayton, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis, and grew up during the Viet Nam War and hippie years. Despite being a high school dropout, I have a BSE from Drake university, with a double major in English and Fine Arts, and a MA from Cal State University, LA. My credentials allow me to teach K-12 and Jr. college. After teaching in two small Iowa towns, both outside of Des Moines, where it sometimes snowed 2-4 feet, I moved to inter-city LA and taught for LA Unified during the time of integration (ie bussing) and when M. L. King's birthday became an official holiday. Those were turbulent times.

My husband and I moved to the desert in 1983, first to Hesperia, and then to Apple Valley in 1990. I taught at Hesperia Jr., George AFB, and VV College, and am thankful to have retired before COVID struck. I operate two small museums / visitor centers, participate in many community events, and sit on several boards: MHS, NAACP Branch 1082, and the Apple Valley Historic Advisory Committee, and am a member of Friends of the Apple Valley Library and Happy Trails Children's Foundation. If any of you have any free time, let me know, and I will put you to work!

Thank you **Marcy Taylor** for your support to MHS as President and your support to the community at large.



Born in Galveston, Texas, Mary moved with her family to Ca. in 1943 during WWII. After graduating from high school in Monterrey Park, she attended E. LA Jr. College, and then LA County General Hospital School of Nursing, earning her AA degree. While working full-time and attending Cal State LA part-time, Mary earned her BS in 1955. After working at various hospitals, she relocated to Apple Valley in 1958, and continued in her nursing career until her retirement in Sept. of 2022. After 30 years at St. Mary's Hospital, she took a one-day substitute assignment at Dr. Amar's office, which turned into 32 years!

Mary's interest in the desert tortoise began in 1960 when Sherman and Charlene wandered into her yard. After producing two offspring, they were released back into the wild in 1973. As the adoption chairperson of the California Turtle and Tortoise Club, HD Chapter, Mary cares for the tortoise terraces at the Lewis Center and for her own five tortoises, as well as running a nursery and hospital from her home and yard. At the present time she has five additional tortoises "brumating" (hibernating in tortoise talk) in her den for the winter. Mary joined the MHS in 1990. About ten years later she joined the board and took over book sales, a job she has held for the past 20 years.

Thank you **Mary Dutro** for your support to MHS as a Director and your support to the community.

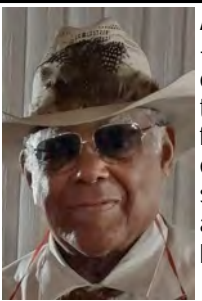


Originally from Wyoming, my family moved to the High Desert in the mid 60's. I've lived in Hesperia, Apple Valley, and Victorville and attended schools in each area. After several different jobs I started working at a local Cement Plant early on and worked my way up to a machinist and retired after 39 years. I volunteer at the Victor Valley College once a week in the Local History Room which I find fascinating.

I have many passions. Exploring in the Mojave Desert in my Jeep is my number one and I have a love for finding new historical locations. I've always admired early settlers in their quest for a new and better life and their heartiness and fortitude to achieve that. Being a Director in the Mohave Historical Society lets me learn of new and exciting areas to explore. It's kind of like being an early prospector although the GOLD nowadays is only in "The Golden Years".

I have a machine shop and restore old motorcycles and have a small motorcycle museum behind it. I still ride and am fortunate to have friends that share that exhilarating experience with me. I like shooting and collecting Blackpowder and primitive weapons along with Rifle, pistol and shotgun (Trap) and have been a member at Apple Valley Gun Club for many years. I also like to do Genealogy and have my family traced back into the early 1700's. The Mohave Historical Society is a great organization for anyone interested in The Mojave Desert History, of which there is a lot.

Thank you **Rick Schmidt** for your support to MHS as a Director and your support to the community.



A native New Yorker, US Air Force Korea Veteran, 66 years a California resident including 14 years in Apple Valley, and a 28-year retired Space Shuttle Program Manager, Mike Phillips was introduced to MHS in 2018 by his neighbor Mel Marks and eventually accepted a directorship in 2020. He is also the MUSE editor and maintains the MHS membership data. Even though not a total "history buff", he is very supportive of the goals of MHS and thoroughly enjoys and appreciates the MHS field trips. After 37 years in Montebello, Mike and wife Yvonne moved to Apple Valley in 2008 to provide a "summer camp" environment for at that time their 4 young grandchildren. Here they all learned to swim, play golf, tennis, bicycling, and skateboarding, all through the Apple Valley Parks and Rec Summer Programs. Grandson #1 particularly loved swimming and became the youngest AV Junior Life guard. Now, the youngest grandchildren will be graduating HS this summer.

Mike and Yvonne just celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary. Tempus fugit!

Thank you **Mike Phillips** for your support to MHS as a Director and your support to the community



**February Field trip—San Bernardino Pioneer and Historical Museum** by Marcy Taylor

Sat. Jan. 28 was a beautiful warm and clear day to zoom down the pass for a follow-up trip to Old Town San Bernardino. Twelve of us met at the San Bernardino and Pioneer Society Museum and Harris Hall, both on the same property, on "D" Street in the center of the older section of town. Harris Hall, where the monthly meetings are held, is chock full of historic photographs, display cases of all kinds of interesting objects, and comfortable old theatre seats. Our guide, Nick, a true walking encyclopedia of knowledge, walked us through, rattling off names and dates with ease.



The 1891 house in the front, located on the only remaining rounded "carriage corner" in the city, was originally owned by Judge Otis. We had a trip back in time to the age of wringer washing machines, butter churns, lace curtains, antique furniture, and parlors with high ceilings and flowered wall paper. It was difficult to get the group out of there when it was time to go to lunch at Molly's 50's restaurant a few blocks down the street.



After our fill of down-home cooking and a dose of nostalgia, it was off to the last stop, the San Bernardino History and Railroad Museum, just on the other side of the freeway. The huge 1918 depot building, with amazing architecture, tile floors, and countless displays documenting the history of the railroad, the fire department, and other aspects of early life in San Bernardino, was filled with more than can be described here. The friendly volunteers and knowledgeable and enthusiastic docents overloaded us with information on the hundreds of items on display. If you missed this adventure, I recommend you take a drive down the mountain on a Saturday morning in the near future and see these places for yourself.



# Apple Valley Legacy Museum 8-Year Celebration!



**Fri, March 31 - Sat, April,1 - Sun, April 2**  
**Apple Valley Inn, Bob Hope Cottage #153**  
**20601 Hwy 18, Apple Valley, 92307**

## DAILY EVENTS (10 - 4pm)

Collectibles Sale, Silent Auction, Museum Visits  
 Vintage Treasures Raffle. RESULTS - Sunday 3pm



## SATURDAY NIGHT HO-DOWN (4 - 7 PM)

Dinner and Entertainment for **\$15.**

Live Music: "Boni on the Keys" and "Sweet Gospel Jam"  
 Square Dancing led by "the Thunderbirds"

Delicious Vittles: "Old Town Dogs" Roy Rogers nephew David!  
 Museum visits, Western comedy skit, Sing-along



**Tickets on sale NOW! \$15**

Apple Valley Legacy Museum - Open: Mon - Sat 10-4, Sun 12-6  
 Or call 760-985-1918 Cash or check only

### One for the History Books by Marcy Taylor

Some folks are blessed with longevity. That's great if a person is in good health. Occasionally the paper reports on someone celebrating a 100th birthday. That person is known as a Centenarian. Sometimes you even read about a person turning 115 or 116 years old. That's usually on the other side of the world where people eat fish and vegetables and exercise daily! But do you know we have a Supercentenarian right here in the Victor Valley? That's 100 plus 10 or 110!

You hear people refer to their "old friends." That usually means people they have known a long time or grew up with. But I have a truly "old friend," Beatrice Pruitt, who is really one for the history books. Now this Supercentenarian I'm referring to is no "normal" Supercentenarian, if there is such a thing. Being 110 years old is in itself not exactly "normal." I've been privileged to know her and celebrate her birthdays since she attended Herb Jeffries' 100th birthday party at age 101. Of course, she had to celebrate 108 at home due to Covid, when she sat in a chair in the driveway accepting the gifts and flowers being delivered. Then she was right back at the restaurant greeting her guests for 109 and 110.



Despite some health problems and a recent hospitalization, Beatrice seems to have a lot of life left in her. She navigates on her own, with just the use of a cane for balance, and even works out on an exercise bike. Yes, you heard that right. Please check out this photo of Beatrice peddling away at age 110! She certainly should motivate any of us who are feeling old and lazy to stop complaining and get moving. Thanks, Beatrice, for allowing me to have the pleasure of knowing you. And hats off to son-in-law Jimmie Smith and family for allowing Beatrice to lead a full and active life as a Supercentenarian.



Can you guess where the Prez and Vice-Prez reside?

Golden Land of AV T-shirts and Sweats are now available at the Town of Apple Valley!



Day Light Savings Time Starts March 12!

**MOHAHVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
 Founded 1964 Website: www.mohahve.org

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP TYPE**

**ANNUAL:** FAMILY/COUPLE \$30  SINGLE \$20   
**LIFETIME:** FAMILY/COUPLE \$200  SINGLE \$150

MEMBERSHIP DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Newsletter (MUSE) delivery option:  
 Email  USPS

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RENEWAL  NEW MEMBER

Questions? Call (760) 985-1918  
 Please make your check out to:  
 Mohahve Historical Society

Mail the completed form and your payment to:  
 Membership  
 Mohahve Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 21, Victorville, CA 92393

**PLEASE USE THIS FORM TO RENEW OR CHANGE YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS**  
 (Name, Address, Phone, Email) and submit by USPS, Email or in person at a general meeting)

**MHS GENERAL MEETING**

**Lone Wolf Colony**  
 23200 Bear Valley Road, Apple Valley, CA 92308  
 7:00pm - doors open at 6:30pm



Mohahve Historical Society  
 Post Office Box 21  
 Victorville, CA 92393

The **MUSE** is the  
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