

# THE MOHAHVE MUSE

VOLUME 22, ISSUE 3



MARCH 2019

## CAMP CAJON PROJECT



The original Camp Cajon monument became a landmark at the entrance to the famous rest stop that straddled Route 66 in the Cajon Pass. William Bristol, founder of Camp Cajon, designed and built many of the camp's beautiful stone facilities.

(Photo from the collection of Mark Landis)

### *Story and photos provided by Mark Landis*

Join the Mohave Historical Society on Thursday, March 28 at 7 p.m. at Redeemer Church in Apple Valley for a lecture about the Camp Cajon Project.

Our guest speaker Mark Landis will present a program on the history of the roads and trails through the Cajon Pass, and the famous Camp Cajon, a landmark rest stop built in 1919 to welcome weary motorists traveling into Southern California on Route 66, known as "America's Mother Road."

The program will chronicle the evolution of travel in the Cajon Pass from footpaths, to wagon roads, to today's modern freeway. Landis will also discuss the construction and opening of Camp Cajon which became nationally known as "the gateway to Southern California."

The audience will be treated to historic photos and maps illustrating more than a century of travel through the pass.

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# 2019 OFFICERS

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Andrea M. Gutierrez

## Newsletter Editor

Mary DeSantis



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## The Mohahve Muse

is the official newsletter of the  
*Mohahve Historical Society*

P.O. Box 21

Victorville, CA 92393

*The Mohahve Historical  
Society is a non-profit  
501(c)(3) organization.*

*Our organization meets the 4th  
Thursday of each month  
at 7:00 p.m. at*

*Redeemer Church  
22434 Nisqually Road  
Apple Valley, CA 92308*

Visit our website

[www.mohahve.org](http://www.mohahve.org)

Our E-mail address is:

[mohahve@verizon.net](mailto:mohahve@verizon.net)

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## THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER!

I'm on the lookout for history stories & photos. You don't have to be a writer to contribute. Just write out the facts about the topic and I'll turn them into an article – and you'll get the byline.

**Deadline for submissions is the last day of each month.**

Send to Mary DeSantis at  
[MaryMinutemail@hotmail.com](mailto:MaryMinutemail@hotmail.com)  
or see me at our monthly meeting.

## MEMBERSHIP CORNER

### MEMBERS NOTE:

**December is our  
renewal month**

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

NORMAN & JUDIE BOSSOM, APLVLY

JUANITA RIEDELL, APPLE VALLEY

### RENEWALS

LESLIE & BEVERLY HUINER, PIÑON HILLS

JIM JACOBS, APPLE VALLEY

ELIZABETH ROSS, APPLE VALLEY

Thank you for  
your  
continued  
support!

For membership questions call

**Andrea M. Gutierrez**

➡ (760) 961-2731 ⬅

or contact her at the meeting.

## 2019 CALENDAR

### March 28

#### GENERAL MEETING

**Speaker:** Mark Landis

**Topic:** The Camp Cajon Project

### April 25

#### GENERAL MEETING

**Speaker:** Matthew Cabe

**Topic:** Movie Making in the High Desert

### May 23

#### GENERAL MEETING

**Speaker:** Bob Cambridge

**Topic:** History of the Cambridge family in the Victor Valley

### June 27

#### GENERAL MEETING

**Speaker:** Luis Fuerte

**Topic:** My Time With Huell Howser

### July and August

#### VACATION

**There will be no meetings during these two months due to family vacations and the excessive heat.**

### 2019 FIELD TRIPS

All events and field trips will be posted to our website as soon as they are planned:

**[www.mohahve.org](http://www.mohahve.org)**



## FEBRUARY RECAP

## FIRE ON THE MOJAVE

**Guest Speaker,  
Ruth Nolan**

by Mary DeSantis

During the summer of 1982, nineteen-year-old Cal State San Bernardino student Ruth Nolan signed up to be a wildland firefighter. For the next seven summer seasons, that job took her all over southern California and the western U.S. working on firelines.

“From the first day of training for the Mojave Greens wildland firefighting crew based in the Big Bear Ranger District of the San Bernardino National Forest, I knew this job was for me,” said Nolan. “Once I cut my first fireline, working close to the flames, I was hooked.”

More than three decades later, Nolan is writing a book that she hopes will educate, alert, and prepare both citizens and city governments about wild fires.



Ruth Nolan working the fireline as a Mojave Greens fire crew member (U.S. Forest Service) in 1984

[Photo supplied by Ruth Nolan]

This comprehensive book is a compilation of the latest firefighting techniques, fire proofing methods, advice from experts, lessons learned from previous wildland fires, traditional Native American methods of fire management, and fire stories.

- Continued on Page 10 [emailed newsletter only] -

(If you want to read the complete article, fill out and return the Application Request Form on Page 7 to be added to our email list.)



# CAMP CAJON PROJECT



Birdseye View of Camp Cajon. Photo from the collection of Mark Landis.

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Details of an exciting new project to build a replica of the stone monument that greeted guests at the entrance to Camp Cajon will also be provided. The new monument will be built near the former site of Camp Cajon, and the dedication ceremony is planned for July 4, 2019, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the camp's opening in 1919.

The objective of this volunteer project is to rebuild the stone monument that welcomed thousands of Route 66 travelers to Camp Cajon, which was located on present-day Wagon Train Road, just south of the McDonald's near the junction of the 15 Freeway and Highway 138.

In the early 1900s, automobiles became more affordable and reliable, and the newly motorized American public began pouring into Southern California through the Cajon Pass. National Old Trails Road became the nation's first "Ocean to Ocean" highway in 1912, and the road led travelers through the Cajon Pass, and into San Bernardino. National Old Trails Road became U.S. Route 66 in 1926.

The free public auto camp was the brainchild of William Bristol, a local orange grower, writer, and prolific promoter of the region. Camp Cajon was designed to be a shady oasis where weary motorists could rest and

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# CAMP CAJON PROJECT

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recuperate from their grueling trip across the expansive Mojave Desert.

Camp Cajon featured beautiful stone structures and facilities constructed from local river rock. The spire-shaped monument at the camp's entrance stood approximately 8 feet tall and featured large hand-laid stone text that spelled out "CAMP CAJON."

Camp Cajon was destroyed by the great flood of 1938, but thanks to a group of local historical societies, the memory of the camp and travel on Route 66 through the Cajon Pass will live on.

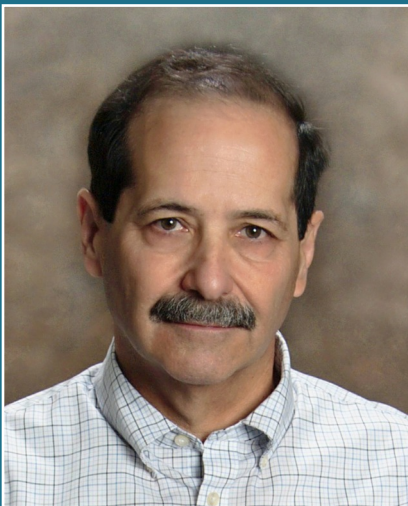
The rebuilt monument will be on U.S. Forest Service land.

The new monument closely follows the original design, with some updated structural requirements.

A great deal of preliminary work has been accomplished, but much more work and support are needed to meet the July 4 deadline.

Tax deductible donations can be made through the San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society's website. Checks can be made out to "Camp Cajon Monument" and mailed to: San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society, PO Box 875, San Bernardino, CA 92402.

For updates on the Camp Cajon Monument project, visit the Camp Cajon Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/campcajonmonument/>.



Mark Landis is a freelance correspondent and published author who specializes in the history of Southern California's inland region. He has been writing a local history column for the San Bernardino Sun newspaper and the Los Angeles News Group since 2001.

Mark owns Landis Publications, an internet-based company that specializes in local history publications and remastered vintage images. He is a member of several local historical societies, and is an avid collector of historic photos, books, and memorabilia. Mark is a native Californian, and has lived in San Bernardino County since 1984. He currently resides in Wrightwood with his family.

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION REQUEST



Website  
<http://www.mohahve.org>  
Email address:  
[mohahve@verizon.net](mailto:mohahve@verizon.net)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_



**NEW  
MEMBER**



**RENEWING  
MEMBER**



## MEMBERSHIP TYPE

**ANNUAL:**    **FAMILY/COUPLE \$30** ☐    **SINGLE \$20** ☐

**LIFETIME:**    **FAMILY \$200** ☐    **SINGLE \$150** ☐



Please make your check out to: Mohave Historical Society

Mail the completed form and your payment to:

Membership  
Mohave Historical Society  
P.O. Box 21, Victorville, CA 92393



**WELCOME TO THE  
MOHAVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**and THANK YOU for supporting  
this great organization.**






## PLEASE SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS!!

Mary Ruth Hughes

**Tishomingo**



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www.MaryRuthHughes.com

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**Apple Valley Legacy Museum**  
Apple Valley Inn #153  
Marcy Taylor  
(760) 985-1918



OPEN  
7 Days a Week  
Hours vary  
by season



20601 Highway 18, Apple Valley, CA 92307

**Victor Valley Legacy Museum**  
Old Town Victorville  
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(760) 985-1918




Open Monday  
through  
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Tribal Elders Council  
14671 Farmington Street  
Hesperia, California 92345  
David (760) 553-0743  
Dee Dee (760) 403-1756  
rumsenama@gmail.com

# Saving Apple Valley History

*Story and photos by Marcy Taylor*

Although some of our local historic properties and monuments have been lost to the elements, decay, abandonment, demolition, and "progress," we are thankful that concerned citizens are in the process of saving and restoring several notable icons. The volunteer docents at the Apple Valley Legacy Museum get a lot of questions about what's going on.

So here's the scoop:

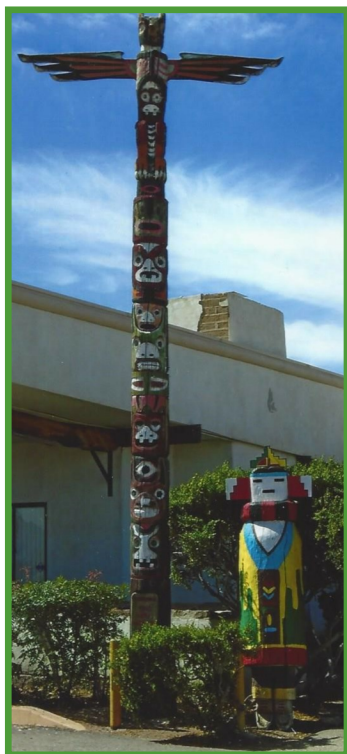
The Captain Joe McConnell Appreciation House, which has sat abandoned for years on the north side of Highway 18 across from Lions Park, is in the process of being completely restored. This house, built in a record-breaking 45 hours by the citizens of Apple Valley, with all volunteer labor and donated materials, was to honor a



local hero of the Korean War. The new owner, who was quite interested in the unusual history of the property, and with lots of info and photos in hand, is on the way to returning the home to its former glory. Many "old-timers" have stopped by to reminisce.

The historic Buffalo Trading Post, on the corner of Highway 18 and Rancherias, also recently changed hands. Lots of people have been wondering about the fate of the iconic buffalo and the two Indian totem poles out front. Well, your worries are over. The buffalo, as you've probably noticed, has been repaired and is getting a fresh new paint job. Again, original photos came in quite handy to bring new life to the treasured creature. And, no, the totem poles have not been stolen or taken to the trash dump. They too will be fully restored and will soon stand tall in a new location, not far from their old home of many years.

For more information on the history of the McConnell House or the Buffalo Trading Post, visit the Apple Valley Legacy Museum at the Historic Apple Valley Inn, Cottage 153 or call (760) 985-1918. ♦♦♦♦





## FEBRUARY RECAP

## FIRE ON THE MOHAHVE

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“One of my goals is to help people see our terrain through the lens of an experienced firefighter,” said Nolan during her lecture at the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Mohave Historical Society. “I want to teach people to keep a lookout for signs such as weather conditions, heat, wind, and moisture level to alert them to potential fire events.”

“Community preparation is fundamental,” warned Nolan. “We are not at a place where we can trust community government to protect us; we have to do a lot of preparation ourselves. The public needs to put pressure on our elected officials to provide the protection needed,” such as writing and enforcing effective building codes for fireproofing homes, making homeowners aware of simple and inexpensive retrofit guidelines for fireproofing existing homes, and initiating tax rebates or discounts



Ruth Nolan, guest speaker at the Mohave Historical Society meeting on February 28, 2019.

[Photo by Mary DeSantis]

for residents who fireproof their properties.

“We, the public, need to advocate for disclosing if houses are in a wildfire zone, and we can make better informed choices about where we choose to live,” urged Nolan.

A big concern for Nolan is the loss of riparian vegetation, especially Joshua trees, due to wildfires. Many native plants often fail to recover from a hot burn. However, admitted Nolan, “Some plants and birds do

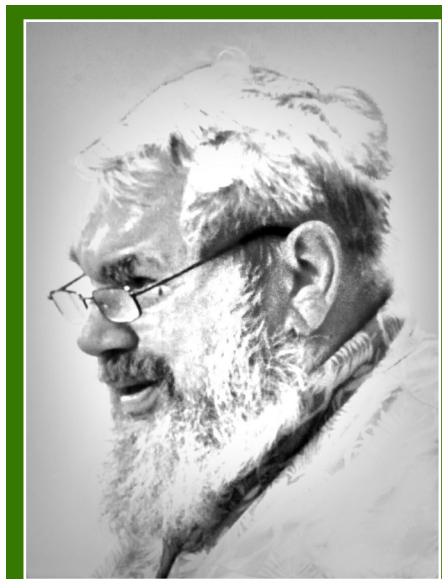
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# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to thank those that helped with the set up and clean up at the February meeting. It was very much appreciated.

Here we are in March already, which means a quarter of the year is gone and the November elections for 2020 MHS officers is approaching. I hope members have been thinking about who the



*Jim Mustra*

2020-2021 President will be. Also, please think about who you will nominate as the new Membership chair.

I have a list started for 2020 speakers which will help my replacement get off to a running start.



## Happy Saint Patrick's Day!

Artwork © 2019 by Mary DeSantis

## APPLE VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUM

### 4th Anniversary Celebration Saturday, March 30, 2019



Hi Desert Jammers Band

- ★ Vintage Apple Valley COLLECTIBLES Sale
- ★ Historical items raffled
- ★ Auction
- ★ Catered dinner
- ★ Live bands
- ★ Line Dancing

**TICKETS \$10**  
FOR MORE INFO CALL  
**(760) 985-1918**

#### LOCATION:

The Historic Apple Valley Inn  
20601 Hwy 18, Apple Valley, CA

# Alfredo Ramos Martinez

Story and photos by Fran Elgin

Alfredo Ramos Martinez (1871-1946) was a famous artist who vacationed and painted at Apple Valley's famous early-1900s holiday resort, Rancho Yucca Loma.

Born in Monterrey, Mexico, Martinez was a struggling young artist when he was discovered by the wealthy American philanthropist, feminist, and suffragist, Phoebe Hearst (the mother of William Randolph Hearst). Hearst offered him a monthly stipend to study in Paris, and supported him until he was capable of living off his work.



Martinez's Madonna, from above the fireplace in one of the ranch guest houses, can now be found in the Victor Valley Museum.

“In the early 1930s, Gwen Behr invited him to stay at the Rancho Yucca Loma for a year, where he painted frescoes in every cabin, as a kind of painted prayer for his daughter... Ramos stood small in stature and had arthritis in his wrists, but had a "sweet gentle personality."

Many of the paintings done at the ranch were on newsprint, as he had learned in Paris.”

— from *Rancho Yucca Loma*  
by Fran Elgin

Some of Martinez's murals are still in existence, but most of his artwork in the Yucca Loma buildings were lost when the houses were destroyed in a fire.

When I was researching Martinez in preparation for my book about Rancho Yucca Loma, I found a 2003 calendar that featured some of his works. I recently wrote to the people who had published that

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# Alfredo Ramos Martinez

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calendar to see if they had any left, and they graciously mailed me a calendar as well as a beautiful, hard-

I've received more stories and photos from relatives of people who spent time at the ranch. Then I ran into a local woman who had been

friends with a woman who had lived on the ranch when she was young, and she had in her possession the original painting of Catherine Boynton that is featured on the back cover of my book! This lady graciously donated the painting to the Local History Collection, where it is now prominently displayed.

Recently, I learned that the rancho's famous guest book has been found by Richard Thompson, a member and past president of the Mohave Historical Society (MHS)! That has also been added to the archives

in the Local History Room of the Victor Valley College Library in Victorville, California.

I want to let people know we have these treasures, and that all proceeds from the book go to the Mohave Historical Society.

I was inspired to write this book for two reasons. It was a work of love

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Flower Vendors by Alfredo Ramos Martinez.

bound, 252-page coffee-table book of his paintings, with information on where the art is located. It's published by the Alfredo Ramos Martinez Research Project, which was started by Louis Stern in 1991.

Stern told me that he had visited Yucca Loma when there were still some buildings remaining.

Since completing the book in 2014,



# Alfredo Ramos Martinez

## Rancho Yucca Loma

*Celebrity Guest Ranch and Hollywood Hideaway*



Fran Elgin

Copies of *Rancho Yucca Loma* by Fran Elgin are available through the Mohave Historical Society and at Amazon.com. All proceeds go to support the Mohave Historical Society.

Fran Elgin (photo below) is a librarian emeritus at Victor Valley College (VVC) in Victorville, California. She is responsible for the creation and maintenance of the Local History Collection at VVC, which houses a huge collection of documents, letters, oral histories, newspaper articles, maps, and photos relating to the Mojave Desert. Fran is a longtime MHS member who has served on the board over the years in many capacities.

- Continued from Page 13 -

that I felt I must do, because when I moved to the High Desert in 1963, some of the ranch buildings were still there and I was fascinated by them. One of our MHS members, Evelyn O'Brien, did a lot of research because she planned on writing a book, but she became ill and knew she couldn't make it, so she asked if I would do it. Evelyn passed away in 2000 and I took over the work she had begun. ♦♦♦



## FEBRUARY RECAP

## FIRE ON THE MOJAVE

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very well after fires. So, wildfire in our region isn't all bad," pointing out the vital role that fire plays in the regeneration of palm tree oases, for example. "We've learned that suppressing all fires can actually backfire in a big way." Nolan is looking to find a balance between current fire suppression practices, controlled burn approaches, and historic Native American wildfire management techniques.

"It's not a little astonishing that different ecologic zones in the same Mojave Desert can be so devastated, or regenerated, by wildfire. This is another one of the desert's great mysteries and intrigues, and another demonstration of the powerful presence and role of wildfire here," wrote Nolan in her forthcoming book titled *Fire On the Mojave: Stories from the Deserts and Mountains of Inland Southern California*.

"Probably the top three causes of wildland fires in the Mojave Desert are vehicles, target shooting, and



Ruth Nolan, front left, with some of the BLM CA Desert District Helicopter 554 flight crew at the Apple Valley Fire Station, 1987 Fire season.

[Photograph by crew member Barry White.]

lightning," said Brian Willbond, Fire Mitigation/Education Specialist and Wildland Fire Investigator at the Bureau of Land Management's Apple Valley Fire Center, "When vehicles break down, drivers instinctively pull over to the shoulder...and park their hot undercarriage right on top of the dry vegetation. Loose oil caps can come off while driving and hot oil can spill out. The ceramic lining of

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## FEBRUARY RECAP

## FIRE ON THE MOJAVE

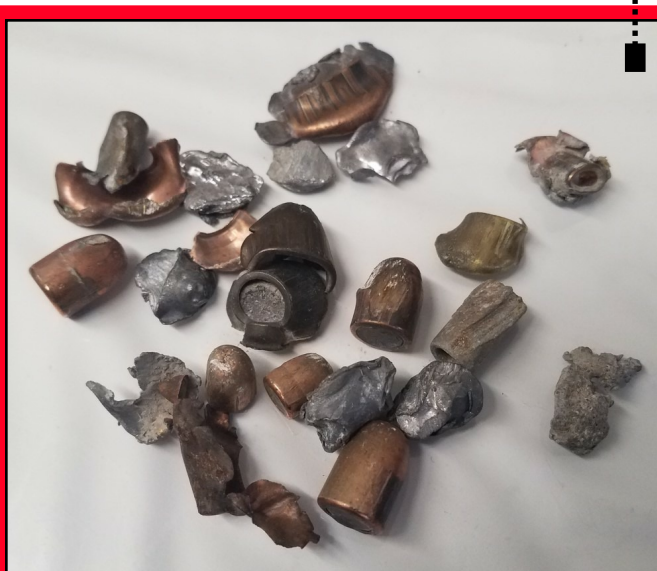
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catalytic converters often breaks apart, and even the tiniest little piece of hot debris can ignite grass.

Target shooters should choose their sites carefully. According to Willbond, when a bullet strikes a rock, the superheated (up to 1400 degrees) fragments can scatter into dry brush and start a fire. Fired bullet casings are also hot

enough to cause combustion. To avoid starting a wildfire that can claim lives and cause millions of dollars in damage, don't shoot at rocks, choose areas with no combustible vegetation, and clean up your brass.

Nationwide, the National Park Service (NPS) reports that humans cause more than 50% of all wildfires. NPS statistics show that of those human-caused fires, most are ignited by power-line failures, equipment operation, prescribed



Bullet fragments recovered by fire investigators at the flash points of several wildland fires in the Mojave Desert.

[Photo used with permission of the photographer, who asked to remain anonymous.]

fires (i.e., the forest service's controlled burns are counted as human-ignited wildfires), tossed cigarettes, and abandoned campfires.

*Fire On the Mojave* is a sabbatical project for Nolan, who has taken leave from her job as Professor of English, Creative Writing and American Indian Literature at College of the Desert in Palm Desert, in order to conduct research and interviews, and compile information for the book. ♦♦♦



# Volunteer focus

by Rita Wells

## BARBARA SMITH

Barbara Smith provided the refreshments for our February meeting. It was all so delicious! Her cookies were in beautiful baskets. The table looked very nice with a green tablecloth and glittery shamrock decorations. She had six different kinds of homemade cookies—peanut butter, lemon, chocolate chip, sugar, cranberry with white chocolate, and snickerdoodles!!!

How great is that?!!

Barbara also brought lemonade and juice, and Jim Mustra made the coffee, as usual. ♦♦♦



[Photo by Mary Ruth Hughes]



Artwork © 2019 by Mary DeSantis