

THE MOHAVE MUSE



Mohave Historical Society

P.O. Box 21

Victorville, Ca 92393

Volume 23 Issue 8

September 2020

2020 Officers

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Mary Ruth Hughes

Vice-President

Marcy Taylor

Past President

Jim Mustra

Treasurer

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The 2020 Coronavirus medical pandemic has caused a historically suffocating pause to the operation of the Mohave Historical Society through the cessation of its Board and general meetings, road trips, and other special events. As of 8/17/2020, San Bernardino County is still on California's "watch" list with a positivity rate of 13% which is 5 points above the required maximum to reopen.

California's health department rules require that events such as our General Meetings, because of the size of the audience, could only be held outdoors accompanied with masks and appropriate social distancing.

The MHS Board held an open meeting on September 2, 2020 to discuss and develop solutions to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on our operations and to provide the general membership with a plan for the remainder of the year. The detailed results are presented on Page 2.

In support of our organization, first **District Supervisor Robert Lovingood** made a formal appeal to Governor Newsom to reopen SB County before we all go under!

Election of 2021 Officers.

With the resignation of our current **President Mary Ruth Hughes** effective September 1, 2020, the Vice President **Marcy Taylor** will move into the presidency immediately and a new Vice President will be elected for 2021 at the November General meeting. Shown on the left are the Board positions that are open for 2021.

You are being provided with this information to allow you, the general membership, to consider and nominate eligible members at the October General Meeting for the open positions. The Nominating Committee will be in full strength by then eagerly awaiting your nominations. Election will then be held at the November meeting to be followed by installation at the December meeting. If California's mandates for social distancing and masks etc. are still in place in October, the Board will then advise you of the alternative process to facilitate the nomination, election and installation of the Board officers.

Even though there is no specified qualifications for these positions, it is expected that the candidate has an enduring yearning to learn about the history of the desert area and to help develop that interest in others. Knowledge of computer usage such as Email, Facebook, etc., is highly recommended.

LOOKING

for a backup Webmaster

Contact:

Mohave@Verizon.Net

September Board Meeting.

The Board did not have a meeting since March and so the list of items on the agenda was exhaustive in an attempt to catch up with all the open items while accommodating the meeting in an open air environment with social distancing. Nevertheless much was accomplished.

The California requirements for public indoor gatherings continue to prevent the return to the Redeemer Church as a meeting location in the very near future. Therefore the September General Meeting has been replaced by a field trip to a local outdoor museum.

For those interested, the field trip will convene on Thursday Sep. 24 at 6:00PM at Waldo Stakes' newly opened "Dare Devils N Speed" outdoor museum in rural Apple Valley. The location is "El Ranchito Rakete", 26215 Desert View Road, Apple Valley, CA 92308.

This is the location where Mad Mike constructed his rockets. The tour involves Air Speed, Water Speed, and Land Speed displays and vehicles, as well as a tribute to Poncho Barnes. Waldo Stakes is a former



curator of the Vernon P. Saxon Aerospace Museum in Boron, beside the Twenty Mule Team Museum, the location known as "Where the Wild West

Meets the Cosmos." There is no charge for current MHS members; however, a donation to the host would be appreciated. For non-members, there is a \$2 charge for one-day insurance.

Directions: Highway 18 East to Milpas Drive, right turn (south) 1 3/4 miles to Desert View Rd, turn left (east) 1/4 mile to the location on the right. Go through the entry gates and you will be directed to parking. **Note:** Milpas Drive is east of Apple Valley, about halfway between Dead Man's Point and Lucerne Valley

Be aware that sunset on 9/24/2020 in AVC is at 6:41PM. It would be prudent for all participants to be on-site early to maximize the waning light.

Please **RSVP** at **(760) 985-1918** for this event immediately so we can have an idea of how many people to accommodate

The plan for the October meeting would again be a late evening field trip scheduled for Thursday, October 22, at Chimney Rock and the Lucerne Open Air Museum. The plans for this event are preliminary but as soon as the specifics are developed, you will be informed by email and the Victor Valley Press newspaper. The Board also recognizes that the trip date approaches the end of Daylight Savings Time, but will diligently work to make the trip a worthy event.

Some Good News!

The Board recognizing the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic effect on MHS operation and membership participation has made a good news decision. All 2020 paid memberships which are due to expire Dec. 31 will be extended through Dec. 31, 2021!

The "Buzz Book"

The invitation to join the Buzz Book was previously emailed to you. This is a reminder to send your information to the Correspondence Secretary, Therese Moore at 15115 Del Norte, Victorville, Ca. 92394, or email her at victorvilleteess@gmail.com.

Why a Buzz Book? Maybe you need a ride or just some information. This is purely optional, and would only be shared with members. All information need not be completed. . Only participating members will receive a copy of the Buzz Book. For those of you without email, a hard copy form is attached to your newsletter.



History of the Local History Room at Victor Valley College.

by Fran Elgin

As you are probably aware, MHS did not have a physical home before the 1990s - a place where writers and historians could research the history of the Victor Valley and the Mojave Desert. (Of course we still don't...ideally we should have a separate building where it could be staffed and financed. But that's a pipe dream.)

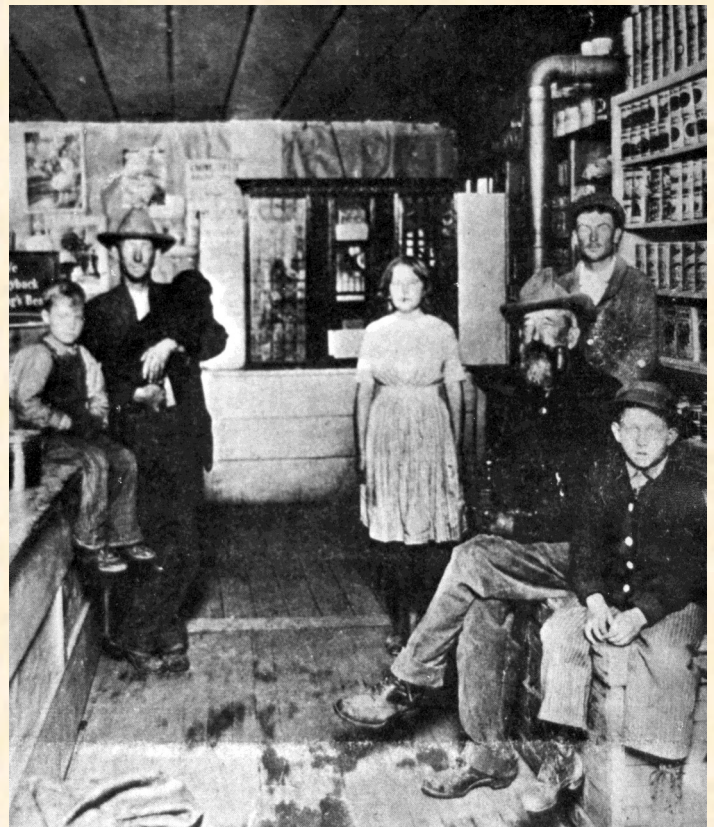
Since the beginnings of our organization in the early 1960s, active members had collected and housed hundreds of items in their homes - probably in a bedroom or perhaps in a garage. They included photos, documents, books, maps, oral histories, and other valuable materials. When they found out the college was building a new library on campus, they approached the librarians with the proposal that these materials be donated to the college library, where they could be preserved for future generations. The librarians met with the college administrators and requested that a Local History Room be included in the plan. It was approved, and the Local History Room was opened, along with fireproof legal size file cabinets, book shelves, map cases, and a budget for equipment and supplies. I was still a full-time librarian at that time. In addition to my regular teaching and reference desk obligations, I spent many weekends and extra hours during the week organizing hundreds of items and developing databases up until my retirement several years ago. Thanks to the many volunteers from MHS and other sources, the collection became known as a reliable source of information for local historians, desert buffs, and writers. I have devoted my retirement to keep the collection organized as well as possible so that we can continue to help the community and students with their research. Some of the many volunteers included Adrienne Sheridan, Marcy Taylor, Mary and Jemma deSantis, Julia Jackson, and Rick Schmidt, as well as students and faculty members.

Corona Virus Update. The library is closed down, and the librarians are working with the English teach-

ers to teach online. I continue to receive requests from various organizations, etc. Because of my emeritus status I am allowed into the library for a few hours a week, but I can't bring anyone else in to help. It's lonely, except for a couple maintenance guys who ask, "Why are you still here?" Anyway, I do have some ideas on how people with time on their hands can help teach our rich history to the community. I'll continue in the next newsletter.

Meanwhile, if you would like to help, look through those books you've purchased at our meetings, where you'll find some fascinating stories. If there's anything you'd like me to research from the collection, I'd be happy to help.

Fran Elgin
760-961-9343
Text: 760-780-7082



Shopping at Halleck (now Oro Grande)
Post Office & Groceries in 1913

Roy Rogers and Trigger visit children in Hospitals

by Marcella Taylor

For several months during the spring and summer of 2020, Joan Kahl of Sonora, Ca., lived and boarded her horse at the Roy Rogers Ranch in Oro Grande. As a huge Roy Rogers fan, she was excited to visit the Apple Valley Legacy Museum, where she picked up some information and a map to local Roy and Dale sites, including their two homes, the first Roy Rogers Museum, and Sunset Hills Memorial Park where they have both been laid to rest.

Roy Rogers, of course, was well-known for his movies, TV show, horsemanship, yodeling, square-dance calling, and Western music. But he also made a lasting impact of humanitarian acts such as entertaining the troops overseas, adopting and fostering children of various nationalities and races, and visiting sick and hurting children in hospitals and orphanages. On many of these visits he was accompanied by his co-star, the "Smartest Horse in the Movies," Trigger.

Photos of Roy and Trigger visiting kids in hospital rooms and children's wards appear in several of the many books written about Roy's multi-faceted life. He is seen cheering up the youngsters, some in heart-wrenching condition, by telling stories, playing the guitar and singing, while Trigger looks on.

Trigger often joined me in children's wards.



But until I met Joan, I had never had the opportunity to speak with any of these "children," now senior citizens.

Here's her story:

Born May 25, 1948, Joan contracted polio at 6 months of age. At that time there was no vaccine. The virus causing disease, known to be transmitted through water in local swimming holes, often paralyzed muscle groups in the chest, making it impossible for a patient to breathe unassisted. As a result, Joan spent 18 months, from Nov. 1948 -May 1951, in an iron lung at an LA area hospital, most likely Los Amigos, which cared for many polio patients.

Also known as a tank ventilator or Driver tank, an iron lung is a type of pressure ventilator, which encloses all of the body except the head. It is able to vary the air pressure in the enclosed space to stimulate breathing and keep the patient alive. This scary-looking device was commonly used for polio patients, the majority of them children, until 1955.

To put these dates in perspective, Joan was born 18 months after Roy lost his first wife, Arlene, mother of Cheryl, Linda, and Dusty, in Oct. of 1946, the year of Dusty's birth. So despite being a widower with three young children and a full schedule at the studio, Roy still found time to bring happiness to children in the Los Angeles area. Dale joined him in this endeavor after their marriage Dec. 31, 1947. He probably had a special place in his heart for polio patients, since his own mother wore a leg brace her entire life after a childhood bout with the disease.

Now back to Joan. Of course, most one and two-year-olds don't remember much of their toddler years. But one can just imagine little Joan, encased in a tank with only her head sticking out, as she thinks she hears Trigger, decked out in his rubber boots, specially made for slippery hospital hallways, clomping her way. Her mother recalled that as Roy and Trigger approached, Joan would get so excited she would start wiggling and bouncing up and down in anxious anticipation.

Thankfully Jonas Salk developed the polio vaccine in 1954, with the first children being vaccinated shortly thereafter. Even though the need for the iron lung was largely wiped out by the vaccine, as well as the develop-



ment of more modern respiratory devices, amazing some patients remained in the contraption as long as 50-60 years, with several lungs still in use as recent as 2013. You may remember a movie entitled "The Man in the Iron Lung."

Amazingly Joan almost fully recovered, but not without some reminders. When removed from the lung, she was pale as a ghost, and walking was painful. Due to paralysis on the right side of her body, her right lung was still not working properly. A slight case of scoliosis left her right leg 1/2 inch shorter than the left. Due to her difficulty walking, her dad often put her on horseback, thus fueling her life-long love of the western lifestyle. She attributes her claustrophobia in crowds or enclosed spaces such as malls, to her time locked in the lung. And of course, her love and appreciation for Roy and Trigger has lasted for seven decades.

Thank you Joan for stopping by the Apple Valley Legacy Museum and sharing your story.

The Negro Baseball League 100th Anniversary by Marcella Taylor

2020 marks baseball's 100th Anniversary of the Negro Leagues, founded by Rube Foster in 1920. Its history is chronicled in the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, which opened in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1991. During the Leagues heyday of the 1930's and 40's, many cities, most east of the Mississippi River, boasted teams, leading to minority communities' interest in "America's Great Pastime" in a still segregated country.

While Caucasian teams of the MLB were able to compete in real baseball stadiums, the Black players squared off in dirt lots. Nevertheless, outstanding players and exciting games were the result. Twenty-seven years after the inception of the Negro Leagues, Jackie Robinson "broke the color barrier," and signed with a Major League team, the Brooklyn Dodgers. But this was not the norm. It was not until 1962, when many minority players took the opportunity to sign with professional teams, that the Negro Leagues ceased to exist.

While there were no Negro League teams in the western United States, much less in small towns like Victorville, locals had their own version in fast-pitch softball. According to long-time Victorville resident Felix Diaz, three local playing fields were available to softball players: The Victor Valley High School field on Forrest, commonly known as "the Weed Patch," a field in neighboring Oro Grande, and a third at the Murray's Overall Wearing Dude Ranch, in what is now Apple Valley. While these teams themselves were segregated along racial lines they still played against each other.

During the 1930's and 40's, there were three or four local teams made up of all White players. Some were named for their sponsors like Victor Drugs or Tatum Construction; one was just known as Tired Old Men. The Southwest Cement, Riverside Cement, and Red Rooster Cafe teams were Hispanic, while the Bell Mountain Jacks were Black. George Air Force Base also boasted a team of military men.

Neighboring Barstow and San Bernardino had playing fields for both youth and adult teams. Victorville's youth, if they were good enough, had to join an adult team. That is until the late 1940's when Amador's Market, located on the corner of Cottonwood and E Street, sponsored a team for the local Hispanic youth. They had to travel either north or south on the old Rte. 66 to find another youth team with which to compete.

Diaz, who played for Amador's Market youth team, recalled a game at the Murray's Ranch against the adult Bell Mountain Jacks. The youth wore blue and gold, while the Jacks were decked out in maroon and silver. More so than the game or score, Diaz remembered the fine treatment both teams received from the Murrays, as they were all treated to a post-game "all you can eat" bar-b-que.



Hopefully soon, exciting sports events will return with real (not cardboard) cheering fans!

Photo: Courtesy of Marcy Taylor - Dr. Elizabeth Dowdy of Apple Valley, wearing a Negro League's 100th Anniversary cap, a gift from her son.



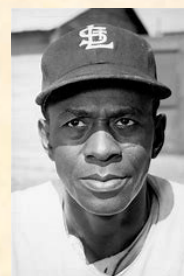
Joshua Gibson was an American Negro league baseball



catcher. Baseball historians consider Gibson to be among

the very best power hitters and catchers in the history of any league, including Major League Baseball. In 1972, he became the second Negro league player to be inducted in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Leroy Robert "Satchel" Paige was an American Negro league baseball and Major



League Baseball pitcher who is notable for his longevity in the

game and for attracting record crowds wherever he pitched.

BUZZ BOOK FORM – MHS member directory

If our would like be listed in the MHS “Buzz Book” (member directory) for member use only, please fi out the attached form and return it to”

Therese Moore – 15115 Del Norte, Victorville, CA 92394 or
VictorvilleTess@gmail.com
And it will assembled ASAP.

Why a Buzz Book? Maybe you need a ride or just some information. This is purely optional and with be shared only with members. All information need not be entered. Only participating members will receive a copy.

NAME:					
STREET:					
CITY:		STATE:		ZIP:	
HOME PHONE:		CELL PHONE:			
EMAIL:					