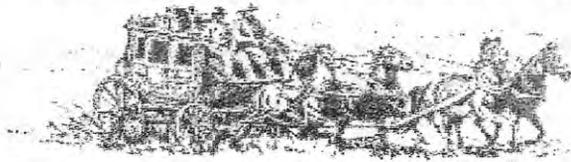


TEMECULA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2002

P. O. Box 157, Temecula, CA 92593-0517

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Charolette Fox

Recent member programs have included presentations about the Mormon Battalion, Historic Hwy 395, and a tour of the Santa Rosa Plateau to see the old adobes. Between 35 and 50 members have attended each of these events. In addition to member programs, the Board provided public information booths at the Bluegrass Festival, Western Days, the Jazz Festival and the Temecula Rodeo. June's booth dates will be Saturday, June 1 (at Sam Hicks Park), and June 22 & 23 at the Street Painting Festival in Old town.

Except for June 1, these booths have been on the most prominent corner of Old Town Temecula at Front and Main. And with each event, the booth draws more and more attention. Folks stop by to hear the vignettes of history related by Bill Harker, or Darell Farnbach, or Loretta and Malcolm Barnett. Of course, we point out the buildings and the stories we know about them. We also steer visitors to the museum where they can get additional information.

Through our new website, we are utilizing the technology to educate our residents and visitors. Jeffery Harmon has done a splendid job of developing a website with colorful and creative pictures, lessons in local history, and links to other websites. The site is easy to navigate and has information for our young (and young at heart) history buffs.

The web address is < www.tvhs.homestead.com/FrontPage.html >

The goals and objectives approved for 2002 are printed elsewhere in this newsletter. Each of the Directors has moved the organization forward by applying these goals to the work of their committees. These few guiding principles are working well.

They are augmented by additional resources such as our membership in the National Trust, the American Association for State and Local History, and most recently, memberships in the Murrieta and Temecula Valley Chambers of Commerce. A wider collaboration is underway with the genealogy societies, museums and historic preservation groups of nearby communities. With so many history-related groups emerging, we can learn from each other and lean on each other for strength.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the "Early Times Luncheon" on June 5th where you will hear what it used to be like in Temecula and surrounding areas.

EARLY TIMES LUNCHEON

By Eve Craig

The Society is holding an "Early Times Luncheon" on Wednesday June 5th honoring Norman J. Pico, James "Sandy" Wilkinson, Mildred Tobin and Malcolm Barnett telling of their memories and showing pictures of the very early times in Temecula.

This is a members- -only event to be held in the Champagne Rooms at Embassy Suites and includes a special buffet. Because seating is limited, only those making reservations will be able to attend. Call 699-9872 to make your reservation.

PROGRESS ON TOMB RESTORATION

By Eve Craig

First priority of the Society is to restore and preserve Wolf's Tomb. A few invitations have been sent to special individuals and organizations requesting gifts and having their names in raised letters on a large bronze plaque recognizing their contribution in support of preserving local history.

We are anxious to proceed with the project but will not do so until the amount of \$13,900 has been donated and designated by the donors for the specific purpose of restoring the tomb. Lifting or raising the 20,000 pound sarcophagus requires extraordinary equipment and know how. The tomb will be supported by five steel beams and concrete.

At this point we have raised a little over \$6,000. Anyone may contribute any amount by writing "designated for Wolf's Tomb" on their check which also entitles them to membership or membership renewal in the Society. We are grateful to those who have already donated to this project.

MAKING USE OF LOCAL HISTORIC RESOURCES

By Rebecca Marshall Farnbach

When I saw the topic for the museum program, I wasn't interested, until reading that the lecturer would evaluate and identify baskets. For years I have dusted an obviously old pine needle basket my husband acquired. I thought it would be good to learn a little about its history, then I could duck out the door.

Arriving, at the Temecula Valley Museum

basket in hand and about twenty minutes early, I saw our lecturer, Justin Farmer coming across the park with a cart filled with baskets and basket making supplies.

When Mr. Farmer saw my little basket, he stopped. Without a greeting, he asked to see the basket. "What you have here is a Pasadena basket. It is called that because George Wharton James, an English clergyman who moved to California for his health, taught basket-making classes in Pasadena around the year 1900. This is crudely made by one of his students.

"Do you know anything about George Wharton James?" he asked. I told him I was familiar with his visits to Indian settlements, especially in the Pacific Northwest, and his photographs that I had seen at the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles.

"He described Cupeno Indian baskets at Warner Ranch in his book *Traveling through Ramona's Country*," Mr. Farmer added.

As soon as we entered the museum, another docent intercepted, saying that a descendant of a historically prominent family had some baskets to show him at the museum loading area. Of course, setting up Mr. Farmer's display for the meeting would have to wait.

As the gentleman pulled a few baskets from a box in the truck bed, Mr. Farmer broke into a smile. Before long, he was handling and identifying baskets, looking as pleased as a child in a candy store with a hundred dollar bill. More boxes were pulled from the seat of the truck and Justin couldn't wait to see them. "May, I?" He couldn't contain his excitement, bringing each precious basket from boxes, revealing the past of each one that his hands caressed.

Within minutes, all five boxes were taken upstairs for further evaluation and admiration.

As the audience arrived, Mr. Farmer continued identifying baskets, from Arizona, Panama, Puget Sound and a prized local Luiseno Basket. He showed fresh juncas reeds, sumac, and deer grass, materials Indians wove into baskets. He narrated his life history along with a poignant tale of the near obliteration of Native American basket making. "I am a member of the Osuna family of the Santa Ysabel area. My relative Mary 'Grandma' Osuna was a renowned pine needle basket weaver. Because the craft was fading as the old people left us, I decided to learn this women's trade so it would not be lost forever.

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"I was a surveyor before retirement. I have collected baskets of known weavers since the late 1960s and own 220 mission baskets."

As he split juncas reeds into three sections lengthwise, he continued his story.

"The farther the settlements were from missions, the more likely they were to continue weaving. There are only about two dozen Juaneno baskets left from the San Juan Capistrano Mission Indians, and only about three dozen Gabrielino baskets."

He showed how different tribal baskets are identified by materials used, construction and dyed patterns. "The Luisenos started with sumac bottoms. They dyed reeds black with elderberry juice to create dark lines around the bottom and top of their baskets.

"The Cahuilla baskets have wild patterns, some that look like animal figures," he stated as he showed one.

He also lifted a prized Juaneno basket of his own, showing the dark pattern resembling crosses with double cross bars

"Store your baskets in containers. Don't let them get dusty, the dust attracts moisture and that will ruin them. Don't let them get too dry — a little moisture is good for them. Only handle them from the bottom, not the rims."

The basket weaver captivated his audience that evening. We handled reeds and saw a craft nearing extinction. Mr. Farmer wove stories that stretched from long ago to the recent past. It was a fascinating presentation that I was reluctant to leave.

The Temecula Valley Museum lecture series is one of many local resources available. At a fee of a voluntary donation, it is a bargain. To find out more about the lecture series, call the museum at (909)694-6452.

BOARD MEETINGS

Reminder

Historical Society Board meetings are held at noon on the first Friday of each month in the community meeting room of the Temecula Library. The meetings are usually followed by short informative programs of interest to our members. The meetings are open to all Society members and you are encouraged to attend.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Temecula Valley Historical Society is to identify, preserve and promote the historic legacy of the Temecula Valley and to educate the public about its historical significance.

THE SOCIETY'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Established in January of 2001, our first year was one of more or less finding our way, organizing for maximum effectiveness, building up a membership base, establishing an identity within the community and selecting some projects to sink our teeth in.

We set several goals and objectives to guide us, some of which were achieved and others that we are still pursuing. Our current membership now stands at 140 and we are financially sound.

With that first year under our belts and a clearer vision of where we are headed, the Board has set forth the following Goals and Objectives for 2002:

1. Restore Wolf's Tomb.
2. Develop a newspaper column.
3. Identify historic sites.
4. Submit articles to newspapers on local history and sites needing protection.
5. Develop a visual identity program, labeling each site with a sign or marker.
6. Set up annual heritage celebrations.
7. Set up a resource/reference library
8. Prepare ongoing local history programs for public and school presentations.
9. Host fundraiser for 2002 [establish annual fundraiser-event]
10. Form liaisons with Pechangas, Old Town Association, Temecula Public Library, Temecula Valley Museum, the County of Riverside, Cities of Murrieta and Lake Elsinore.
11. Establish a permanent facility with full-time staff.
12. Have a member/advisor on City Planning Commission.
13. Collaborate with State Historical tourism groups to make Temecula a destination point.

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