

# Temecula Valley Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

March 2006 Vol 6 Issue 3

### 2006 Officers

President	<i>Eve Craig</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-President	<i>Audrey Cilurzo</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-President	<i>Barbara Tobin</i>
Secretary	<i>Charlotte Leathers</i>
Treasurer	<i>Bill Harker</i>

### Directors

<i>Laura "Sis" Herron</i>	<i>Bonnie Reed</i>
<i>Darell Farnbach</i>	<i>Barbara Tobin</i>
<i>Csaba Ko</i>	<i>Don Vierstra</i>
<i>John Moramarco</i>	<i>Duane Wheeler</i>
<i>Bob Newson</i>	<i>Paul J. Price</i>

### Committee Chairs

#### **Research & Development**

*Darell Farnbach*

#### **Historic Markers & Plaques**

*Pam Grender*

#### **Wolf Tomb Restoration**

*Eve Craig*

#### **Public Relations**

*Bill Harker*

#### **Planned Giving**

*Keith Johnson*

#### **Speakers & Events**

*Audrey Cilurzo*

#### **Website**

*Elaine Eshom*

#### **Youth Projects**

*Paul Price & Open*

#### **Old Family Cookbook**

*Myra Gonsalves & Pat Metro*

#### **Historian**

*Myra Gonsalves*

#### **Newsletter**

*Bill Harker, Eve Craig, Leslie Karp*

#### **Membership**

*Barbara Tobin*

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

Contact us at 951-501-9159

Or P.O. Box 157

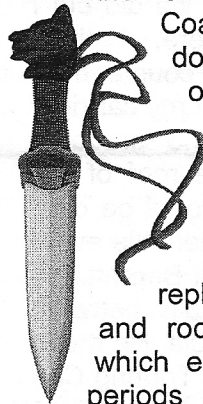
Temecula, CA 92593-0157

### *Mission Statement*

The mission statement 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.

### **President's Corner**

Our audience was spellbound at the last Historical Society Meeting. Paul Price of our Board took us back 20,000 years in his discussion of findings all along the United State's West Coast from Alaska down to the tip end of South America that prove mankind was here. He brought spears and darts, some of which he replicated himself, and rocks used as tools which established specific periods of the time of human existence. We cannot thank Paul enough for his fascinating teachings. His quarter of a century knowledge of and work in archaeology, a great deal of it with the Pechanga Indians, is incomparable. He has promised us more treasures of his multi-faceted expertise in the future. This month we are starting a series of biographies of our Board members. The first one is of Laura "Sis" Herron, our eldest statesperson, so-to-speak. She is willing to share some of her incredible community service experience with us. What a "Wonder Woman"! In April you



will hear about Bill Harker who is our Treasurer and has also served amazingly in this community as well as others. Our active Committee Chairs will inform us what's happening each month in their busy lives. There's a new project started by Darell Farnbach for the Research and Preservation Committee in this edition. Elaine Eshom will have a computer class at Menifee Campus of Mt. San Jacinto and can be reached by calling 694-6969. It starts March 28th. Please share your favorite recipes with us on the form that Myra Gonsalves has enclosed. It's going into a fabulous cook book for us all. Our next meeting is May 3rd at noon in The Temecula Library. See you then. If it's not too late to go to the March 3rd and 4th San Diego History Conference, call Helen Halmy at 619/469-7283. We expect Wendell Ott to discuss the Santa Fe Railroad that went through Temecula back in olden times.

*Eve Craig*

*Happy St. Patrick's Day!*

School children have started a tradition of their own. They pinch classmates who don't wear green on this holiday. Wearing green is strictly a U.S. custom, as the color green is not popular in Ireland. Green is connected to the old green flag and a time when Ireland was not free. Green is also a color connected with hope and nature.



## THE ROCK HOUSE IN TEMECULA CANYON

By Walt Cooper

After returning from Lodi in fall of 1932 I tried to make a living by cutting wood. But so little demand made it a poor proposition. A maiden lady named Miss Izon owned two small ranches, one was in French Valley and the other in Temecula Canyon. I think there were 160 acres in each. This lady hired Alfred "Toad" Freeman as Foreman on both ranches. Toad had a son, David, who went to grammar school in Temecula. So Toad hired Jessie and I to take care of a few cattle and a team of horses and cook for David and send him to school. A bus picked up kids on Temecula grade and it was one mile from house to Temecula Grade. We were working for our board but we had to trade at Tarwater's store who had nothing but potatoes and some canned goods; bread but no meat. But the board was poor and it was cold in that canyon. We could not cut any oak trees for wood and willow wood put out little heat. The well was in the creek in front of rock house. We had to take hot water and throw on the pump in the morning. After breakfast thaw it out again. Pat Quinn an Irishman built the house of rock to serve as a bunkhouse for his crew. These men could cut up boulders and make fence posts, steps, curbs etc. They did it like splitting wood. The curb at Temecula Bank was made by them also the Courthouse in Riverside were rock steps. The house had no ceiling which made it hard to heat. The rock quarries were operating for a good many years. After cement plants

became more popular the rock business quit. I understand that lots of rock went to San Francisco. It rained a lot that winter and one trip to the grade my old car bogged down and it was a month before we got it out. We planted a garden & potatoes that made for better food. About the first of May I went to cutting oat hay for Maurice Stoner in Murrieta. I quit Toad's job & never went back again. In later years Gib Miller, Harry Kerdraon & I would drive to the rock house and hike up that high mountain west of house. There were 3 or 4 little meadows up there where the deer would feed. We would kill some and dress them there and put the meat in white cloth bags and carry it out in lighter loads. I don't know if anyone ever lived in the rock house after we did but I think it is still there. I think Rancho has a golf course near there. I have stopped my car right by the railing on the grade & looked down on the roof of the old rock house. It would be over 125 years old. Another little event in history was old Eli Barnett. He farmed a lot of grain between Murrieta and Temecula. He drove a long 1924 Cadillac Touring Car. He also was a tobacco chewer and would spit out the left side & it was coated with tobacco juice. Eli would be Malcolm's Great Grandfather. Written by Walter Cooper May 18, 2002 He passed away April 26, 2005.

## OLD TEMECULA'S MAYORS

When young Clyde Matthews came to the unincorporated village of Temecula in the late 1940's to engage in the mercantile business, long-time resident Ed Saurin had already assumed the unofficial title of *mayor*.

Among the interesting items Matthews offered for sale to the village residents was a line of the most beautiful western boots ever seen in the High Country. Reportedly, "Mayor Saurin" was fascinated by one expensive pair fastened at the top by small golden chains.

After considerable negotiations Matthews and the "mayor" finally made a deal. For one pair of the new boots Saurin relinquished his title and boot salesman Clyde Matthews became unofficial mayor of California's oldest town.



## Your Prized Old Recipes

The Temecula Valley Historical Society is compiling a historical cookbook to benefit the Society and preserve a taste of history. Erin Diamond began this project in pursuit of her Gold Award for Girl Scouts, but moved away. The Society is continuing in her spirit. Headed by Myra Gonsalves and her sister Pat Metro, the committee is putting together a keepsake cookbook that will preserve your prized recipes with their history and traditions. Look for the recipe sheet in the month's newsletter. We hope you will contribute! Will you share with us?

Send the family recipe sheet to:

Cookbook  
Temecula Valley Historical Society  
PO Box 157  
Temecula, CA 92593-0157

## Restoration Begins on Pujol School

by Loretta Barnett

Old Town Temecula's first school, built in 1889, now located at 29825 Santiago Road is now in the process of being restored to its original condition.

Mercedes Pujol, (a wealthy widow from Spain) donated the land where the school was built. The original site of the school was where the Temecula Valley Museum sits today. In 1889, Temecula already had a school located near what is now Loma Linda Road, so the new \$3,000. school located in Old Town became known as the Pujol School.

In 1914 a new district was formed to construct a new two room school at a cost of \$10,000 on the same site. The old Pujol School was moved to 4th Street and began holding church services and Sunday school. Mules and horses pulling the building on logs accomplished the move. In 1922 Mrs. Freda Knott took charge of the old building and taught Sunday school until 1982. For 60 years it was known as "Mrs. Knott's Church". Mrs. Knott was the wife of Al Knott, who operated one of the early blacksmith shops in town and later a successful garage and gas station on Front Street.

In 1986 the old Pujol Schoolhouse was moved again to 29825 Santiago Road. Today, the Pujol Schoolhouse is in the first phase of renovation. With grant money received from the Roripaugh Family foundation and individual donation, the termite damaged wood has been replaced in the bell tower, and new lighting in the bell tower has

been installed. The original bell is still working.

The second phase of renovation will be to tent the building. The entire building will be repainted, windows repaired. period doors installed with hardware appropriate for the period, all fixtures, trim molding, furniture and accessories will be from the 1890's era. The goal of the Temecula Community Church, as stewards of this building, is to enhance, preserve and maintain the integrity of one of the oldest buildings still standing in Temecula. When renovation is complete, this old schoolhouse will be one of the few buildings in Temecula that has maintained its original character. The Schoolhouse will be a glimpse of the past for future generations. The Old Schoolhouse is open to the public for tours and weddings by calling (951) 676-5021.

A Fund Raiser will be held on March 24, 2006 to help raise funds for continued restoration for the Old Schoolhouse. To participate in the Temecula Christian School Golf and Walk Challenge to be held at Temecula Creek Inn and to be a part of the restoration and preservation of one of Temecula's historic buildings, call Haley Radford @ (951) 553-2548 or (951) 695-0025 or Dom Occhipinti @ (951) 757-4525.

## Meet Your Board Members

### Laura "Sis" Herron

I was born in Los Angeles on September 19, 1913. One of my early memories is of the vegetable man. He had a cart filled with vegetables that was pulled by a mule. He came twice a week. I also remember the iceman. He came every other

day. On hot days we children would sit on the curb waiting for him, because he would chip pieces of ice for us. Boy was it good!

I moved to Pasadena with my grandparents in the early 1920s. I attended school there until the seventh grade and then moved to Long Beach. In the late 1920s I had to quit high school to go to work as a waitress at a South Gate BBQ. The owner made it into a drive-up in 1929 and I became one of the first carhops in Southern California. We had cute uniforms, but no skates back then!

I was married in 1930 and had two sons. Dick Birdsall who lives in Temecula and Don Birdsall who lives in Sun City.

I married Rex Herron in 1948 and lived in Long Beach and Paramount.

In 1981 I moved to Temecula and my neighbors were Mildred and Tony Tobin. We lived way out in the country on Pala Road. There were 200 people in Temecula and 2000 in the Rancho California development.

Since coming to Temecula I have been very active as a volunteer and belong to many clubs and organizations. In May 2005 I was honored to receive the Melvin Jones Fellowship from the Lions Club, the highest honor the club awards.



## Speakers and Events

By Audrey Cilurzo

Paul Price at our February meeting related the early population changes from hunters to seed eaters by the natives of Southwest Riverside County. We were all spellbound by his descriptions and demonstrations of the many artifacts he brought and shared with us. Paul is an anthropologist, artist, historian and public speaker. He excels in all areas. We are so fortunate to have him on the board of directors and a part of the Temecula Valley Historical Society.

**Friday March 3** Our meeting will investigate the beginnings of the youth sports program in Temecula. How did the original sports park start? Why does the Temecula Elementary school have a swimming pool? How did the soccer and basketball programs begin?

**Friday April 7** Pat Ommert will be our speaker. She has seen all the changes in our valley since she and her husband Will started their veterinarian clinic out at the Track and Training center near Vail Lake. She worked to preserve riding trails for the many people with horses in the valley. She fought other battles to preserve the rural atmosphere of the eastern portion of the old Vail Ranch. Pat knows the history of this valley because she has LIVED it.

Put these dates on your calendar!

## Research & Preservation Committee

The Research & Preservation Committee of the Historical Society is beginning a new project we are calling The Heritage Family Collection. What

is that? We are going to begin interviewing descendants of pioneer families, settlers or early residents of the Temecula Valley. We will assemble photos, newspaper accounts and documents telling each family's story and will put the information into a three-ring binder. We will attempt to acquire a genealogy of the family and will write a brief narrative about them. I have put together a couple of prototypes already. The benefit of a collection like this is evident. For researchers, it is a concise and well-organized resource giving information about a family in one place. Descendants can peruse their family's notebook and quickly discover whether we have information they are looking for and they can see what we are missing. As one family shares materials, it may help tell another family's story. For example, one heritage family may present a 1920 photo of students attending the Temecula School. The photo may feature forty more people. The photo will be copied and inserted into a book for each of the other families represented. This will be an ongoing project because we will update each notebook as new information comes in. We will schedule a workshop and brainstorming session for all that want to participate in compiling this valuable information about our heritage. (Please call me at 951-552-3516 to volunteer. Darell Farnbach, Committee Chair)

News about Two Local History Books The Vail Ranch Restoration Association (VaRRRA) is pleased to announce the Images of America photo journal of Temecula will be available on March 9th. This easy-to-read book tells the story of Temecula in pictures from the Native

American era through the 1940s. VaRRRA used seed money from the Roripaugh Grant to collect and copy the photographs, many of them never before seen outside family collections. Loretta Barnett directed the project with Rebecca Farnbach's assistance. Also lending support were VaRRRA proofreaders Malcolm Barnett, Dick Fox and Darell Farnbach, all members of the Temecula Valley Historical Society. Steven Allen scanned photos from the Roripaugh, Vails, Knotts, Barnetts, Parkers and many other early Temecula families for publication. All proceeds from the sale of the book will go to VaRRRA for renovation of the Vail Ranch headquarters site. The books, \$19.99 each, will be available during book signings announced in local newspapers, or to order books, please contact Loretta (951-676-7031) or Rebecca (951-699-5148.) Now that Loretta and Rebecca have one book under their belts, they are working with Marvin Curran to produce a book for Murrieta, which they hope to release next fall. The proceeds from the Murrieta book will go to the development of a Heritage Room at the new Murrieta Public Library. Please let Loretta or Rebecca know if you have any photos to include in the Murrieta book.

**Darell Farnbach**

## New Members

Luke Laney  
David Alan Thompson

## Renewals

Agnes Gaertner  
Don & Diana Larkin  
Jimmy & Peg Moore  
Rita Pappenfus  
Hedy Roripaugh  
Harold & Ruth Rouse