



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 35, Issue 4

July - August 2009

Calendar

Saturday, July 11

"Flickers at the Junction", *The General*, starring Buster Keaton
Dusk, Saugus Station

Monday, July 27

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Saturday, August 1

Deadline for the September-
October *Dispatch*

"Flickers at the Junction", *The Wizard of Oz*, starring Judy Garland
Dusk, Saugus Station

Monday, August 24

Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Check www.scvhistory.org for other upcoming events.

Note: Long-time member David Sokolowicz is in Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital in critical condition. Contact Pat Saletore at 254-1275 for details.

Articles and inquiries regarding *The Dispatch* may be made to 254-1275

President's Message

by Alan Pollack



He is known as the "Father of Acton", a small town in the far reaches of Soledad Canyon, on the road to the Antelope Valley. At age 31 Rudolph Eugene Nickel arrived in Acton, then

a town with one resident, John F. Duehren, on Oct. 11, 1887. Duehren was the owner of the '49er Saloon, established in 1870. Nickel quickly set to work, establishing many of the first services in the town. As his first act, Nickel established a general store in 1887 and moved the post office from the nearby town of Ravenna to his Acton store. Nickel established his home on the floor above the store.

In the 1860's, a transient mining camp called Soledad City had been established in Soledad

Canyon during a boom in copper, silver, and gold mining in the area. Soledad City literally moved up and down the canyon as new mining opportunities were discovered. Finally the town settled down four miles from the future site of Acton. In 1868, Soledad City applied to the United States Postal Service for a post office. Seemed like a simple proposition...but it wasn't. Dibs on the name Soledad was already taken by a town in Northern California. So the mining town had to come up with a new name to satisfy the Postal Service and get their Post Office. People in the Wild West times of Southern California had their priorities. One of the most "important" men in the town of Soledad City was the saloon keeper and merchant Manuel Ravenna. To honor this distinguished figure, John O'Reilly, the Irish owner of a portable grocery in town, suggested that Soledad City be renamed Ravenna, and so it came to pass. After the Southern Pacific Railroad was completed

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SUMMERTIME MOVIES! FLICKERS AT THE JUNCTION-

**"THE GENERAL" WITH BUSTER KEATON,
SATURDAY, JULY 11**

**"THE WIZARD OF OZ", WITH JUDY GARLAND,
SATURDAY, AUGUST 1**

**MOVIES START AT DUSK,
OUTDOORS AT SAUGUS STATION**

President's Message

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through Soledad Canyon in September, 1876, Ravenna built a train station and became a stop along the railroad. There is really nothing left of Ravenna today, but the town site can be visited by taking Soledad Canyon Road up to Bootlegger Canyon Road a few miles southwest of Acton.

Nickel wasn't finished with his real estate endeavors after establishing the post office. In 1890, he constructed the Acton Hotel, a two-story structure built in Victorian style. In 1903, Henry Gage, then completing his term as Governor of California, hosted his pal President Theodore Roosevelt at the Acton Hotel. Roosevelt had arrived on the railroad after making a stop at the Saugus Train Station. Gage was well known as the owner of a number of gold mines in the Acton area, including the New York, Puritan, Emma, and Red Rover mines. Roosevelt wasn't the only President to visit the hotel. The superintendent of Gage's Puritan mine had a daughter, Lou Henry. Miss Henry was to become the first female student at Stanford University. There she met and married a geology student from Iowa by the name of Herbert Hoover. The President and Mrs. Hoover would stay at the Acton Hotel during visits to the area. Related to our current economic situation, Hoover was to suffer the misfortune of taking some of the blame for the stock market crash of 1929, which occurred during his watch as President. Many a "Hooverville" was named after him. The Acton Hotel, was unfortunately burned down on Oct. 19, 1945. Although never proven, the fire was strongly suspected to be the arson work of town postmaster Clarence Rush. Rush, who had been hired to run the hotel when the hotel's owner Samuel H. Schorr went off to serve the military in World War 2, had been accused by Schorr of stealing many furnishings and supplies from the hotel upon Schorr's return from the War. Rush was arrested and arraigned the night before the fire. Rush's case was eventually dismissed for lack of evidence when Schorr failed to show up to testify.

In July, 1891, Nickel started one of the earliest newspapers in the Santa Clarita Valley. Called the "Acton Rooster", the newspaper was initially thought to be the very first newspaper in the Valley. More recently, however, it was discovered that a single-sheet newspaper produced in Newhall actually preceded the Acton newspaper. There are no known surviving copies of the Newhall newspaper. The Historical Society is very grateful to Maggi Perkins, granddaughter of SCV's first historian A.B. Perkins, for providing us with several original Acton Rooster newspapers

from the early 1900's passed down to her by her famous grandfather. Later in November, 1891, Nickel established the Acton Water Works, the first of its kind in the Valley.

One final note on the town established by Rudolph Nickel: Acton was the site of a classic Wild West showdown-style gunfight in 1905, one for the dogs!! The gunfight pitted a New York immigrant of German descent, and honorary Mayor, William Broome, against fun loving Kentuckian William H. "Rosy" Melrose. The dispute centered around the fatal shooting of Broome's beloved pit bull by Melrose, after the dog had attacked Melrose's canine. Melrose and Broome faced off on the dusty main street of Acton on February 28, 1905. Melrose, known as a quick draw and accurate shooter, got the better of Broome, sending five bullets into his torso and killing him on the spot. A sensational series of trials followed, each ending in a hung jury. Ultimately the charges against Melrose were dropped, but feuding over the gunfight persisted in the area for many years.

HAPPENINGS AT THE JUNCTION

On April 5, the Historical Society and Hart Park were honored to present an historic program dedicated to the memories of the four officers slain in the Newhall Incident of April 5-6, 1970. The program started and ended with a California Highway Patrol Honor Guard raising and lowering the flag in memory of the officers. Close to 150 people packed Hart Hall to hear the stories of Roger Gore, Walter Frago, James Pence, and George Alleyn as told by retired CHP officers Harry Ingold and Roger Palmer. Ingold and Palmer were partners in the second patrol car to show up at the scene following the fatal shootings. The audience was riveted as the officers told first hand of their experiences that tragic day.

Next on the program, we were most fortunate to bring up a true American hero, Gary Dean Kness. Mr. Kness was passing by the scene on his way to work when he saw the shootings take place. Kness, at great personal risk, ran into the action, and tried to save the life of Officer Alleyn while sustaining gunfire from the perpetrators. He even managed to fire off a shot at one of the gunmen. For his actions during the Newhall Incident, Mr. Kness was given a tribute and presented with a plaque by the Historical Society during our program. The plaque was handed to him by Marine Sgt. Major Lawrence Archinbolt in recognition of his previous service as a United States Marine. Mr. Kness deservedly

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President's Message

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received an enthusiastic standing ovation by our audience. City Councilwoman Laurene Weste was next up to present honorary certificates from the City Of Santa Clarita to the three men as thanks for the roles they played in the Newhall Incident.

Following the tributes, a question and answer session was held during which additional officers and participants in the Incident stood up and told their personal reminiscences to the audience. Included in the audience were the son of one of the jurors in the trial of shooter Bobby Augusta Davis, and Marilyn McDaniels, the owner at the time of the Standard Service station located next to J's Coffee Shop where the shootout took place. There are many people to thank for the great success of this incredible program. Thanks to Carol Rock, Wendy Hahn, and Leon Worden for suggesting and finding Harry Ingold for the talk. Thanks to Gail Ortiz of the City of Santa Clarita for directing me to the appropriate contact at the CHP. Thanks to Officer John Lutz, public affairs officer for the CHP, for his help in organizing the CHP's participation in the event, and for bringing wonderful framed photographs of the officers from the local CHP office to Hart Hall for the presentation. Thanks to retired CHP Officer Don Uelmen for providing photographs (now posted on scvhistory.com) of a ceremony honoring the officers and Gary Kness just shortly after the shooting at the old Highway Patrol office south of Lyons Ave. on the Old Road. Thanks to Board Member Jeff Boultinghouse for creating flyers for the event, and setting up a challenging sound system at Hart Hall. Thanks to SCVHS Board Member, Friends Of Hart President and Santa Clarita City Councilwoman Laurene Weste for representing the City of Santa Clarita in honoring the speakers. Thanks to Leon Worden for providing an amazing backdrop of photographs on the stage and for filming the event, along with his assistants Megan Mann and Susan Shapiro. Special thanks to Norm Phillips and William S. Hart Park for co-sponsoring the event and allowing us use of Hart Hall. Thanks to our Board members who helped out during the program including E.J. Stephens, Cathy Martin, and Duane Harte. Thanks to our Executive Director Pat Saletore, for all her help in setting up Hart Hall for the event. And finally, we can't thank enough our speakers Harry Ingold, Roger Palmer, and Gary Kness for sharing their experiences with our audience and making this a day no one will ever forget!!

John Boston just completed another great "History of the SCV" class in May ending with his famous campfire session at Hart Park. For those of you who missed this class, he says

that was his last one!! Maybe we can talk him into doing another one in the future??

On May 30, the Oak of the Golden Dream Questers celebrated their 40th anniversary with a grand opening and dedication of their restoration project of the Edison House in Heritage Junction. We owe the Questers a huge debt of gratitude for the wonderful work they have done on the Kingsbury and Edison buildings.

E.J. Stephens hosted another exciting Flickers at the Junction outdoors at Heritage Junction in June featuring the John Wayne movie classic "Stagecoach". The film featured one scene of the stagecoach coming through Beale's Cut being attacked by Indians. Thanks to E.J., wife Kim and his family for putting on these movie events.

Thanks to Patty Robinson and College of the Canyons for co-sponsoring our June lecture series event held at COC with authors Ken and Carol Pauley discussing their book "San Fernando Rey de Espana, An Illustrated History". The Pauley's showed a portion of their extensive photographic collection related to the history of the San Fernando Mission.

We also give a warm thanks to Tony Newhall and the Newhall Foundation for their generous grant to help us repaint the Saugus Train Station. We could not possibly do this project without the help of this great organization. We greatly appreciate your dedication to the preservation of the history of Newhall and Saugus.

At our last Board meeting, Scott Franklin presented a fire protection plan for Heritage Junction. We take very seriously the safety and preservation of the historic buildings under our care. Thanks to Mr. Franklin for helping us with this important endeavor.

Mark your calendars for upcoming lecture events to include railroad expert Chuck Wilkie who will discuss the local history of the Southern Pacific Railroad on September 26. We are also excited to present Carl Goldman, co-owner with his wife Jeri of local radio station KHTS, who will present a history of radio on January 30, 2010. Both programs will be held at the Saugus Train Station.

Finally our sincere condolences go out to Norm Phillips of Hart Park for the loss of his father, and to Board member Sue Yurosek for the loss of her grandson.

Thanks to everyone who helped us put on these wonderful programs over the last few months. See you all at the Train Station.

Alan Pollack

April 19, 2009

Dr. Allan Pollack, President
Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society
Post Office Box 221925
Newhall, CA 91322-1925

Dear Dr. Pollack:

Thank you for helping the Newhall Highway Patrol officers remember, with others from the community, that tragic event of 39 years earlier. Before your interest, the officers remembered and grieved in private. That is because law enforcement is a terribly isolating profession. We work odd hours, weekends and holidays, and regulate public conduct. We look inward and to others in the same world for understanding.

On that April Sunday in 2009, we found interest and understanding and an atmosphere of acceptance by a group of people from the larger community. That atmosphere made it possible for Officer Ingold and others to tell the story in a way that non-law enforcement people could understand--and describe what it meant to the officers and that heroic private citizen who came to the aid of the four we remembered that day.

The event and size of audience says a great deal about the years of work of the Society to preserve the history of the region—both ancient, and of centuries past and present. That identity and standing in the community in large part contributed to the willingness of the Highway Patrol to share the story—and even more important its documentation of the event. In all my years with that great Department, I have never seen information of that significance shared with an outside organization.

May your work in preserving and sharing the events that shape the heritage of the Santa Clarita Valley achieve similar and continued success.

Very truly yours



Richard N. Noonan
Society Life Member

Assistant Chief, Retired
California Highway Patrol

A Message From the Hart by Kristyn Van Wy



The William S. Hart Park and Museum is always a great place to bring family and friends for a nice relaxing and fun-filled summer Saturday. The Museum will offer even more in the way of

amusement this summer in the form of *Summer Days at the Ranch*, a series of family events designed to not only educate but also entertain young minds.

These events are FREE to the public and will include hands-on activities, crafts, and much more. All ages are welcome to attend, but the activities are geared for 3-10 year olds. For more information, please contact the William S. Hart Museum at 661 254-4584.

All events will be held on the Ranch House Lawn and will run from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon.

June 20th: Saddles and Spurs- Cowboy Life

Yee-ha! Come on down to the Ranch to learn all about cowboys and life on the open range. Be sure to don your western gear, because the best dressed Cowboy and Cowgirl will be awarded.

July 25th: Squirrels to Snakes- Discovering Southern California's Wildlife

Learn all about local plants and animals through various crafts and activities, then take a guided hike up the Nature Trail to see if you can spot some of those plants and animals in their native habitat. There will also be a live animal presentation provided by the Placerita Canyon Nature Center.

August 22nd: Acorns, Sea and Sage- The Chumash

Discover how the Chumash used the resources around them to survive hundreds of years ago. You will also have the chance to make a musical instrument and grind your own acorns.

School Tours by Barbara Martinelli

The 2008/2009 school tour season came to a close with a two-bus tour of historic sites in the Santa Clarita Valley (for five third grade classes from Valencia Valley Elementary School). Stops included: Mentryville, Beale's Cut, the Walker Cabin, and the Oak of the Golden Dream.

Laurie Cartwright recently retired from the Saugus District and knows most of the teachers coming to us from that district. She helped out in May and June, and has volunteered to work with me for the next school year. Definitely a great addition!

This year, over a period of fourteen days, we were visited by 720 third graders, 20 first graders, and 87 girl scouts. The Questers assisted on five of those days, and Harold Hicks on seven. Many thanks - we couldn't do it without you!

Recent Docents

Thank you to the following members who served as docents during May and June:

Phyllis Berman	Barbara Milteer
Laurie Cartwright	RuthAnn Murthy
Sioux Coghlan	Pat Saletore
Sarah Floyd	E.J. Stephens
Francesca Gastil	Konrad Summers
Harold Hicks	Gordon Uppman
Karen and Bill Limbaugh	Kristyn Van Wy
Barbara Martinelli	Michelle Veasman

Join the SCV Historical Society Today!

Life Member	\$350.00
Life Member with spouse	\$500.00
Corporate	\$200.00
Non-profit	\$50.00
Family Member	\$50.00
Regular member	\$25.00
Senior Member (60+)	\$15.00
Junior (18 & under)	\$9.00

Memberships make great gifts for your historically-minded friends and family! To join or renew online, visit <http://www.scvhs.org>.

Freight Room Door Repairs



Heritage hunters Tom Van Tassel and Scott Sivley (top) remove rollers from a bay door in the freight room. The rollers were damaged and one was even broken entirely. We found Gary Standkey (above), whose father is fixing the needle bearings to make our doors open easily. Anyone who has opened these doors know they weren't so easy before. Thanks to all involved, we will be able to open and close these doors for a long time to come.

Spring Tea



Nancy Cordova showing off her family's quilts in a program on quilts for the Spring Tea



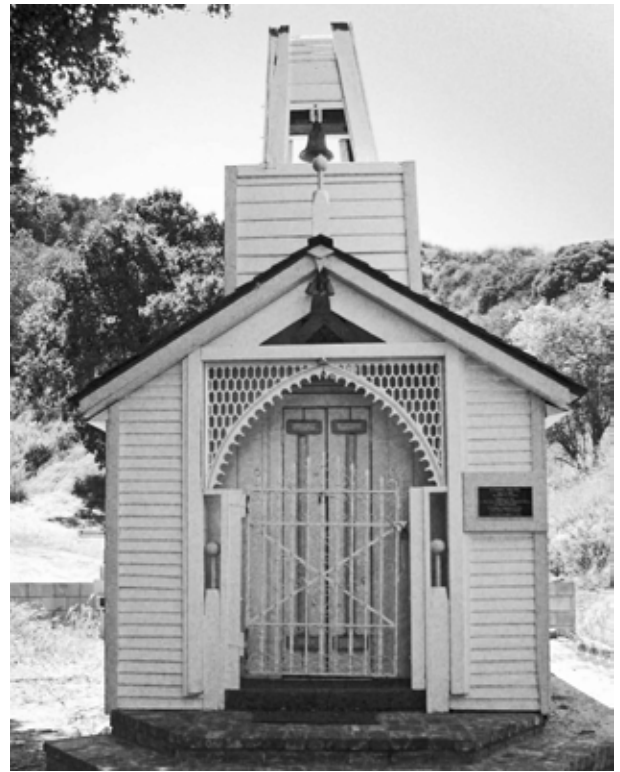
John Boston and Michelle Buttelman at the Spring tea

Tequila Tasting by Cathy Martin

On April 23, the Thursday night before the Chuck Wagon dinner and show, we held our first-ever Patron Tequila Tasting. The Pardee house was converted into a nice little Mexican cafe/bar. The evening started out with a brief movie of the history of making tequila, then the guests were served authentic Mexican street tacos and a cactus salad. While the food was being consumed, the tequila started pouring. Grant, our Patron representative, told us about the different styles of Patron tequila we were tasting and how they differed from each other. Grant also brought some very nice door prizes for us to raffle off.

Everyone who attended received a small gift from Patron. Our guests were so pleased with the event that they want to be notified *first* when we will be holding another tasting. All in all, the event was a great success, and you can look forward to there being another one. The proceeds from the event are going to the Pardee House renovation.

Thanks to all of you who took a chance on this new event. Special thanks go to the volunteers who helped make this the success that it was: Eva Hicks & her sister Terri, as chefs; Diane, Vic, Matt & Steve, set-up and break-down; Tara Martin, server; and Tim Martin, tickets and bouncer.



Tom Buxton has been fixing the sadly deteriorated steeple of the Chapel. It is now stable enough to ring the bell!

Flickers at the Junction Schedule

The following shows are scheduled for Saturdays in 2009 at the Saugus Station and will be outdoors, weather-permitting: Note that some dates have changed.

July 11	Dusk	"The General"*
August 1	Dusk	"The Wizard of Oz"
September 12	Dusk	"North by Northwest"
October 3	7:30 PM	"Dracula/Plan 9 from Outer Space"
December 5	7:30 PM	"Wings"*

* Live organ accompaniment by 96-year old Bob Mitchell, "Last of the Silent Era Organists"

SCV History Book Available! by John Boston

The John Boston/SCV Historical Society tome on the pageantry that is Santa Clarita is now available, as Arcadia Publishing released its latest Images of America series, "The Santa Clarita Valley."

The book describes the eclectic story of the SCV with hundreds of rich photos and Boston's unique penmanship, covering everything from mining and range wars to Bigfoot sightings and the valley's century-plus heritage of the movie industry.

The book is \$21.99 and is available at Heritage Junction, the Wm. S. Hart Park gift shop and other local retail outlets. Boston also has personalized autographed copies for sale which can be ordered by calling 661 373-1293.



Sue Droz (sister in law of Jim Droz, who along with Dr. Alan Fine, donated the Kingsbury House) is cataloguing photos into Museum Software called PastPerfect.



Volunteer Bob Bennett is scanning photos on the computer in Pat's office dedicated to scanning.



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24101 San Fernando Road, Newhall
Open to the public each Saturday and Sunday
1:00 to 4:00 PM
Kingsberry House open the first Sunday
of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 PM

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“Preserving the best of the past for the good of the future”

**Society Info: www.scvhs.org
Photo, Text Archives: www.scvhistory.com**