



# The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 35, Issue 2

March-April 2009

## Calendar

### Saturday, March 14

Seminar on antiques, 9:00 AM, Saugus station (see page 5)

### Sunday, March 15

Lecture and Tour on the St Francis Dam disaster, Saugus Station, 1:00 PM (see ad on this page and article on Page 4)

### Saturdays beginning March 21

Six classes on TV and cinema in the SCV, Saugus Station 1:00 PM Saugus Station (see page 6)

### Monday, March 23

Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Wednesday, April 1

Deadline for the May-June *Dispatch*

### Saturday, April 4

"Flickers at the Junction," Mystery Night Dusk, Saugus Station

### Monday, April 27

Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM Saugus Station

Check [www.scvhistory.org](http://www.scvhistory.org) for other upcoming events.

Also...

### First Thursday of Every Month

Genealogy Club Meeting 7:00 PM Saugus Station

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

## President's Message

by Alan Pollack



They called it the "Newhall Incident". It was the worst massacre of police officers in the 80 year history of the California Highway Patrol, and possibly the worst in American history. It changed police procedures forever thereafter:

Improved police training on how to approach a suspect, better weaponry, bullet-proof vests, saving the lives of many police officers in the line of duty. It was the story of the bravery and sacrifice of four young CHP officers, and the story of a true American hero, a civilian bystander who risked his life under fire from gun toting suspects to try to save the life of a downed patrolman. On the evening of April 5, 1970, four CHP officers, Roger Gore, Walt Frago, James "Skip" Pence, and George Alley

were brutally gunned down by two dangerous suspects in the lot of a Standard Service Station next to J's Coffee Shop on what is now the intersection of the Old Road and Magic Mountain Parkway in Valencia, California.

The two suspects were down and out career ex-convicts. They had met and became friends while in prison. One had been released from the Federal Penitentiary in Tallahassee, Florida eleven months previously. At age 34, he had been in and out of eight federal prisons for various offenses since the age of 16.

The other had been released from prison 8 months previous and was serving his parole time in Houston, Texas. Both had tried and failed to land legitimate jobs after leaving prison. They met again in Houston and rode out to California to turn back to the "dark side" and score a big hit. After staying for a while in Sacramento and failing to pull off an intended bank robbery, they rode down to Los Angeles in a red Pontiac. As they drove south on Highway 99 between Gorman and

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## LECTURE AND TOUR ON THE ST FRANCIS DAM DISASTER

### SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 1:00 PM

**FRANK ROCK WILL TALK ABOUT THE 1928 DAM COLLAPSE, FOLLOWED BY A TOUR OF THE DAM SITE, STARTING AT THE SAUGUS STATION**

**TICKETS \$35, INCLUDING WATER AND A SNACK**

## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

Newhall, they noticed lots of construction along the highway and figured they could come back to steal explosives from the construction sites when they were ready to pull a robbery. In the car with them was a veritable armory of guns.

After renting an apartment in Long Beach, the suspects encountered an armored truck delivering cash to the Santa Anita Racetrack. They tracked the truck on its usual route and decided on a plan to rob the truck on a freeway ramp. But to accomplish their diabolical plan, they needed explosives. Late in the evening of April 5, 1970, they returned to the construction site between Newhall and Gorman on the northbound Golden State Freeway with the intent of procuring the explosives. One suspect left the car to search for explosives. The other stayed in the car and parked on the side of the road behind a family stranded with an overheating radiator. With the family eying him suspiciously, the suspect in the car got nervous and made a quick U-turn onto the southbound side of the highway.

Ivory Jack Tidwell and his wife Pamela were traveling southbound on Highway 99 when they were almost sideswiped by the suspect in the Pontiac as he made his U-turn. They took down the license plate number of the car. Tidwell was quite angry and pulled up alongside the Pontiac to tell the driver off. But the suspect reacted by pointing a two-inch revolver at the Tidwells. Tidwell sped away and pulled off the highway further down the road to call the police and report the violent encounter.

The four young officers were relatively new to the CHP, having graduated from the police academy less than two years before the incident. Partners Roger Gore and Walt Frago spotted the Pontiac, now occupied by both suspects, as it headed south through the Newhall area. They followed the Pontiac as it pulled off onto Henry Mayo Drive (now Magic Mountain Parkway). James Spence and George Alleyn, driving in their patrol car northbound at Lyons Avenue, picked up the radio call from Gore and Frago and prepared to back them up. The suspects turned north on to what is now the Old Road and pulled into the driveway of a Standard Gas Station located next to J's Coffee Shop on the current site of Marie Callendar's Restaurant. J's had just opened its business in 1969 or 1970. Prior to J's, there had been a Tip's Restaurant on this location (James Dean possibly stopped and ate there as he headed to his fatal accident outside Cholame in 1955).

The CHP officers flashed the red lights of their patrol vehicle as Gore got out to apprehend the suspects. While Gore patted down the driver, Frago covered him with a shotgun. Suddenly the passenger got out of the car and fatally shot Frago.

The horror had begun. Distracted by the gunfire from the passenger, Gore could not react in time as the driver shot him.

"Newhall, 78-12! 11-99! Shots fired. J's Restaurant parking lot." Pence sent this desperate dispatch message as he and Alleyn pulled into the gas station driveway and saw their two comrades lying on the pavement. A gun battle ensued between the suspects crouched behind the Pontiac and the two officers. Despite their best efforts, both Pence and Alleyn were shot and killed during the battle with the suspects.

Throughout history many tragedies have been accompanied by great heroism, and the Newhall Incident was no exception. Gary Dean Kness was driving by J's Coffee shop on his way to work when he saw the gun battle taking place at the Standard station. As he saw one of the wounded officers fall to the ground, Kness raced out of his car to the officer's side, and tried to pull him out of the line of fire. While helping the officer, Kness saw one of the suspects approaching him with a sawed-off shotgun. He instinctively picked up the officer's shotgun and attempted to fire at the suspect, but the gun was empty. He then picked up a revolver and was able to fire off a shot at the suspect, who took off and ran wounded from the gunshot. Kness was honored by the CHP for his heroic efforts to save the officer, on June 5, 1970 at a Memorial Wall dedication at the Highway Patrol office on the Old Road, and again last year in April when a portion of Interstate 5 was named for the four downed officers.

Never before had so many officers been killed in one incident. In the aftermath of the shooting, the two suspects took off in opposite directions by foot. One headed up San Francisquito Canyon Road where he was apprehended by police officers. He was eventually convicted and sentenced to death. His sentence was changed to life in prison when the California Supreme Court outlawed the death penalty. He remains in prison to this day. The other suspect ended up barricaded in the home of Steven and Betty Jean Hoag on Pico Canyon Road near the Old Road, where he shot himself to death when the house was surrounded by the police. He had previously sworn that he would never return to prison.

The Newhall Incident left in its wake four young widows and nine fatherless children. Sympathy poured in from a stunned community as over 5000 letters were sent to CHP headquarters with nearly \$100,000 in donations for the families. But Gore, Frago, Pence, and Alleyn did not die in vain. As a result of their sacrifice, police procedures were re-examined and changed, making the jobs of police officers across the country much safer to this day. Many more lives of police officers may have been lost if not for the tragic loss of life on the worst day in the history of the CHP.

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## President's Message

*Continued from page 2*

To commemorate the 39th anniversary of the "Newhall Incident", the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society will be hosting a special event as part of its Lecture Series, featuring retired CHP Officer Harry Ingold, one of the first officers on the scene following the massacre, who will be telling the story of the events of that tragic day, including his personal recollections, and how, out of tragedy, the way police officers deal with dangerous suspects was changed forever. The talk will be given at 2:00 PM on Sunday, April 5, 2009 at the Saugus Train Station.

### HAPPENINGS AT THE JUNCTION

In preparation for our Newhall Incident talk, CHP Public Information officer John Lutz was kind enough to bring over to the Train Station a set of photos, news clippings, and other items related to the incident that have been kept for years in the local CHP headquarters on the Old Road. Jeff Boultinghouse spent the day with Officer Lutz and scanned many of the items for our archives. He will also be making digital copies to give to the CHP.

"Flickers at the Junction" host E.J. Stephens is planning 10 shows for this year, including a mixture of silent and sound classics. The shows will include a romantic comedy night, mystery night, western night, sci-fi night, American classics night, and fright night. We can't wait to see what movies E.J. comes up with!

Our Executive Director Pat Saletore has spent most of this month researching a set of 49 properties in Newhall recently designated as potentially historic by a Historic Preservation Measure passed by the Santa Clarita City Council. The Council hired Historic Resources Group from Hollywood to conduct a historic survey of the properties. Pat is helping this group to determine which of the 49 structures are of true historic significance and worthy of remaining on the list when a full Historic Preservation Ordinance is established in the City. Pat has been helped in her research by Maggi Perkins. Thanks to all for your time and efforts in helping to preserve the historic heritage of our valley.

At our last Board Meeting, Scott Franklin, a former Fire Captain with the LA County Fire department and currently the proprietor and manager of an independent consulting firm specializing in urban-wildland interfaces, gave a presentation outlining the extreme fire danger to Heritage Junction in the event of a southwest-wind-driven wildfire starting at Interstate 5 and heading east across the mountains between the interstate and Highway 14 towards our historic buildings.

Mr. Franklin has kindly volunteered to develop a fire plan to protect the buildings of the Junction in the event of such a catastrophic fire. We thank him for his interest and dedication in helping us to mitigate the risk to our buildings.

We have some exciting programs coming up in the next few months. Frank Rock, our local expert on the St. Francis Dam Disaster, will be giving his annual talk and tour to the St. Francis Dam on Sunday, March 15. Make your reservations now for our most popular event at 661 254-1275. We have also scheduled a talk on the history of the San Fernando Mission for Saturday, June 27. Speakers for this program will be Ken and Carol Pauley, co-authors of "San Fernando, Rey de España: An Illustrated History". In the forward to their book, Dr. Doyce B. Nunis stated "This is the first attempt at an all-inclusive illustrated history of Mission San Fernando in Alta California. In their endeavor to produce a definitive visual mission history, the Pauleys have left, figuratively speaking, no photo collection unfurrowed. The end result is a comprehensive and fascinating graphic record of the mission as caught by the camera in decades past as well as the present." We look forward to hosting the Pauleys in June. Stay tuned to our website [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org) for more details on these and other upcoming events.

The SCVHS Annual Tea hosted by Sue Yurosek will be held on April 18. Call Pat Saletore at 661 254-1275 for reservations. Also, Terry Sonntag will be holding the third in his series of seminars on antiques appreciation on Saturday, March 14 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Entitled "Do I Need An Appraisal?", this consumer session is eye-opening as to ethical and professional standards of antique and personal property appraising. Terry will explore myths of popular TV shows, when and why you may need an appraisal, written and verbal reports, authentication, how to approach valuation and research. This session will clear the air about insurance, estate, divorce and other legal appraisals that are required. Bring in a couple of items to share with the group. Handout materials are included. The fee will be \$45.00.

As always, we thank our dedicated volunteers, docents, and Board members for all they do for the Society. If you would like to help out at the Junction, we would welcome any time you have to give volunteering for the Historical Society. Call Pat Saletore at 661 254-1275 and she will have many interesting and rewarding opportunities waiting for you at Heritage Junction. Happy Spring to all! See you at the Train Station.

Alan Pollack

## The Dam Tour Returns! by Carol Rock

As we have done for the last several years, the Santa Clarita Valley Historical will host a tour of the site of the St. Francis Dam in San Francisquito Canyon on Sunday, March 15 as a fundraiser for the Society.

The dam break was the second-worst natural disaster in the state of California: the failure of the St. Francis Dam on March 12, 1928 killed more than 450 people, leveled farms and homesteads, destroyed property and livestock and changed the way dam safety was addressed forever.

“Dam Man” Frank Rock, considered an expert in the dam disaster who has appeared on the Discovery and History Channels as well as local documentaries of the event, will give a short lecture at the Saugus Train Station at 1:00 PM, providing an overview of the dam disaster, followed by a ticketed event, a three-hour motor coach tour of the dam site. Tickets are \$35.00 each.

The bus will leave Heritage Junction Historic park at 2:00 PM and return at approximately 5:00 PM. The tour includes snacks and motor coach transportation. Along with the historical narrative, Rock will also talk about some of the changes in the canyons brought about by recent fires and floods. Special thanks to the city of Santa Clarita for providing the busses for the tour.

Tickets may be reserved by calling 661 254-1275 with credit card and contact information, or by mailing your ticket order to SCVHS P.O. Box 221925, Newhall, CA 91322-1925. Mail orders must be received no later than March 10. Because this tour is a very popular fund-raiser, it is impossible to guarantee that seats will be available for purchase on the day of the tour. Order your tickets now!



## Volunteers Honored at February Party



*E.J. Stephens was honored as Docent of the Year, both as a regular docent, and for his and Kimi's work on Flickers at the Station*



*Scott and Cindy were honored for their work on the Haunt, as well as on the Pumpkin Festival, Christmas Open House, and blood drives.*

## Antiques Seminar: Do I Need an Appraisal?

**T**erry Sonntag, professional appraiser of antiques, will conclude his series of seminars with a special antique consumer presentation on Saturday, March 14, entitled, "Do I Need an Appraisal?" This nuts and bolts session will focus on a number of issues for those having collections, antiques, artwork or important decoratives in the home. The fee for the program is \$45.00.

Terry is an accredited member of the International Society of Appraisers and the Appraisers National Association. He is certified to The Appraisal Foundation's "Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices". His involvement in the field of antiques and collectibles goes back to the late 1960's as a collector, buyer and dealer, and he entered the field of appraising in 2003 because there was a need in this community for professional appraisal services.

This four-hour seminar (9:00 AM-1:00 PM) will guide you toward understanding the importance of selecting an appraiser that is accredited, tested and competent. An appraisal is really a legal document intended for a specific use. You will need an appraisal for estate purposes, to insure items against damage or loss, for a divorce settlement, IRS matters, damage claims and for equitable distribution. Don't leave it to fate, as you may contact a buyer in disguise that will mislead you with incorrect values or cannot write a competent report. Learn about Verbal Valuations and the ever popular appraisal television shows we enjoy watching.

Participants are encouraged to bring a couple of their personal items to discuss and share with the group. Learn about market trends, how to conduct your own research for comparatives, why there are different approaches to valuation, appraisal ethics, and more.

At the request of attendees that missed his January or February Seminars, there will be a repeat offering of Antiques for Anyone on May 9th and How to be an Antiques Detective on June 13th. Additional seminars may be added thereafter.

Join Terry and others at the Saugus Train Station for an informative ride into the past. Handout materials are always included with the seminar at no additional cost.

## Springtime at the Hart Museum by Ayesha Saletore



**E**vening events at the Hart Museum are quite enchanting. These events are the only opportunity for members of the public to see the Museum with the sun setting for the night and the warm lighting from the chandeliers taking over.

This spring the Hart Museum will host three evening events. Among these events is A Night of Jazz with Joe LoPiccolo and Vahagn Turgutyan. This concert will be held on March 21, 2009 at 7:00 PM. Tickets can be purchased for \$10.00 by contacting the Hart Museum Staff at 661 254-4584. For more information on special events in the Hart Museum, please visit our website at [www.hartmuseum.org](http://www.hartmuseum.org).

## Recent Docents

**T**hank you to the following members who served as docents during January and February:

Frank Adella	Barbara Milteer
Phyllis Berman	RuthAnn Murthy
Jeff Boultinghouse	Sandra Neill
Laurie Cartwright	Alan Pollack
Sarah Floyd	Pat Saletore
Francesca Gastil	E.J. Stephens
Harold Hicks	Konrad Summers
Karen and Bill Limbaugh	Gordon Uppman
Barbara Martinelli	Kristyn Van Wy

### 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>.

## Edison House Resoration Completed by the Questers by Roberta Harris

The Oak of the Golden Dream chapter of The Questers is pleased to report that restoration of the Edison House has been completed. The interior has been painted a sunny yellow with white trim, the wood floors are refinished, and the exterior sparkles with a fresh coat of bright yellow paint. The bathroom and kitchen floors sport a lively checkerboard of black and white tile, thanks to the Canyon Chapter. Heritage Reflections has tastefully selected the appropriate bathroom fixtures and accessories.

Furnishing is nearly complete, with some pieces original to the house, donations from Quester and community members, and purchases of vintage light fixtures and other pieces appropriate to the 1920's era. Hopefully this project will be completed by spring 2009.

Items on our wish list include a 1920's overstuffed davenport (sofa) and easy chair, braided or crocheted rugs and a small oak dresser with mirror. This house and the Kingsbury house are open to the public the first Sunday of every month from 1:00 to 4:00 PM.

The Questers is an international non-profit organization founded in 1944 and with about 900 chapters in 43 states and two Canadian Provinces. California boasts 35 chapters, with three in Santa Clarita. The purpose of The Questers is to promote the study and research of history and antiques, donate funds to preservation, restoration, and conservation of artifacts, existing memorials, historic buildings, landmarks, and provide educational opportunities.

For information about "The Questers" you may contact Roberta Harris, Oak of the Golden Dream Chapter 381, at [Roberta@MyQuesters.com](mailto:Roberta@MyQuesters.com) or <http://www.questers1944.org>



*The restored interior of the Edison House*

## Classes Planned on SCV Movie History by E.J. Stephens

The Santa Clarita Valley has been used as Hollywood's backlot since the earliest days of cinema. It was such a common production site that early producers called the area around Newhall "Newhallywood." Countless westerns, dramas, comedies, action, and science-fiction films, as well as many of television's most popular shows, were shot in our area. This tradition continues to this very day, with some of Hollywood's biggest films and television shows being lensed locally.

Beginning on March 21 and continuing for six Saturdays until May 2, the SCVHS will present a class entitled "Newhallywood on Location: The History of Film & Television in the SCV," hosted by board member and film historian E.J. Stephens. Classes will be held at the historic Saugus Train Station in Heritage Junction (which has often been used as a location for films), and at various locations around the Santa Clarita Valley. The class will include field trips, film watching, and lectures from special guests who will discuss all aspects of film and television production in Newhallywood.

Each class session will begin at 1:00 PM and last for approximately three hours. The cost is \$70.00. For more information, please contact Pat Saletore at 661 254-1275, or online at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org).

## Flickers at the Junction Schedule

The following shows are scheduled for Saturdays in 2009 at the Saugus Station. Shows will be outdoors, weather-permitting:

April 4	Dusk	Mystery Night
May 2	Dusk	Summer Silents I*
June 3	Dusk	Western Night
July 11	Dusk	Summer Silents II*
August 8	Dusk	Sci-Fi Night
September 19	Dusk	American Classics Night
October 3	7:30 PM	Fright Night
December 5	7:30 PM	Silent Night*

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

## If Shouldas were Nickels, I'd be Rich

### by John Boston

"Very few things happen at the right time, and the rest do not happen at all. The conscientious historian will correct these defects."

— Herodotus, 479 B.C.

Never in my wildest nightmares did I think I'd end up being something as cobwebian as a historian. Years ago, when I was both young and obnoxious, I shared working space with A.B. Perkins. It was when The Signal was shot-gunned out amongst all those buildings on 6th Street, San Fernando Road and Railroad Avenue. The Mighty Signal was like a motel up until the 1980s, except instead of beds, there were desks. I worked in a small bungalow with this elderly Icabod Cranish fellow Perkins, who was the undisputed town historian for a half-century.

We never spoke. I mean, never. I can't tell you how the irony of that makes me laugh, out loud, to this day.

At the time, I was busy with women, poker, practical jokes, road trips, gas station men's sports leagues and a half-hearted attempt not to just be a writer, but a rich one. We'd sit across from one another in a maroon bungalow. A.B. would pour over yellowed manuscripts and old photos. On the phone he'd not so much laugh but smirk and share stories with grizzled Santa Clarita veterans about how life was here when it was just dirt and jackrabbits.

I was too uninterested to even eavesdrop. I never asked him a question. Sadly, long after he was gone, I learned A.B. was an epic practical joker.

I can't tell you the pages, now numbering into the thousands, that I've typed about local Santa Clarita Valley history. I greedily pour over old diaries and archives. The more I seem to find out, the less I seem to know about life in the past tense here. I know words. I know stories. I lack suchness.

On a recent night I was at Vasquez Rocks in Agua Dulce, staring into a campfire and talking about man-eating

grizzly bears. I know lots of stories. But that's different than knowing bears, or seeing one in the wild, or running from one, or chasing one on horseback like a madman on a moonlit night. Tasting. Seeing. Smelling. Hearing. Feeling. Sensing. I'm practical enough to not want to be on the lunch bucket end of Nature's food chain. But experience, that's the thing. Experience makes you more alive.



I have so many questions.

I've said before, I'd like a time machine and the patented Colgate Invisible Protective Shield, so that I could witness history without becoming one of its victims. Wouldn't it be grand to sit at a Tataviam fire a thousand years ago? Who was God to them? Did they have jokes, and more importantly, would I get them? How long would it take me to get over my shyness that I'm sitting in a circle with a bunch of naked people?

I wouldn't necessarily like to live way back when, before air conditioning, video, contact lenses, my beloved Coca Cola and designer ice cream available in a near-instant. But I wouldn't mind visiting. I wouldn't mind riding around this valley on horseback, trying to figure where Hart High would be 10 centuries hence, or my home, or the Mall.

Given the chance, I'd jump all around in yesteryear. If I could just float in mid-air, I'd like to have safely seen the St. Francis Dam bursting in 1928 and watch that 200-foot tall wall of water come roaring down the canyon. I would have liked to have felt the mist and, maybe it's ghoulish, but I would have even liked to have wandered around the next day to inspect the tragic devastation.

I'd like to be up in Acton, and watch the pistol fighter Tiburcio Vasquez walk right by me. I'd like to hear what the townspeople whispered about him. I'd like to have walked around and seen infantrymen in their machine gun nests at Saxonia Park during World War II, or had a cold beer in the old 5-star Southern Hotel in the 1880's and chat with the old-timers.

I would like to be able to go back just 20 years and pester grumpy old A.B. Perkins with a few thousand questions.



Community Blood Drive  
In Remembrance of  
San Francisquito Dam Disaster

Tuesday, March 3, 2009  
2pm to 8pm

Location: SCV Historical Society  
Saugus Station – 24101 San Fernando Road  
Newhall, CA

Donor identification is required prior to  
donating blood.

Learn more about the blood donation process  
and donor eligibility at [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org),  
sponsor code: scvhistorical

*where would we be  
without them?*



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*The Heritage Junction Dispatch*  
P.O. Box 221925  
Newhall, CA 91322-1925  
[info@scvhistory.com](mailto:info@scvhistory.com)

Telephone (661)254-1275  
Headquarters: Saugus Train Station  
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

**Historical Society Board of Directors**

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Gordon Glattenberg ----- *Dispatch Layout*

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

**Society Info: [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)  
Photo, Text Archives: [www.scvhistory.com](http://www.scvhistory.com)**