



# The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 38, Issue 2

March - April 2012

## Calendar

### Sunday, March 11

Free lecture on the St Francis Dam Disaster  
11:00 AM Saugus Station

Bus tour to St Francis Dam site  
12:00 PM Leaves from Heritage Junction. \$35. See below and page 3

### Monday, March 26

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Monday, April 2

Deadline for the May- June *Dispatch*

### Saturday, April 14

Spring Tea  
11:00 AM Saugus Station \$35  
Also see page 8

### Saturday, April 21

Patsy Cline tribute concert by Marie Wise-Hawkins and her band.  
\$35 including barbeque dinner.  
4:30 PM Heritage Junction

### Monday, April 23

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

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

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

## President's Message

by Alan Pollack



Many times, while walking in my neighborhood in Newhall, I can't help but notice jet airliners flying overhead.

Like it or not, the SCV lies beneath a major flight path into Burbank's Bob Hope Airport. This path

takes passenger-filled airplanes just west of the Newhall Pass before passing into the San Fernando Valley, where they bank leftward over Chatsworth to land to the east on the airport's Runway 8.

While you hope and pray it would never happen, once or twice I have sat in my backyard overlooking the Santa Susana Mountains beyond Interstate 5, wondering if I would ever have to witness the horror of one of these aircraft failing to clear the rugged

peaks that separate the two valleys. Turns out in the mid 1930's, that very scenario twice played out over our local mountains. In the last issue of the *Dispatch* we discussed the triumphant aviation career of Kelly Johnson (and his Lockheed Skunk Works facility) for whom a street is named in Santa Clarita. In this edition we will look at the dark side of aviation history in the SCV.

### UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 34

We begin on the evening of December 27, 1936. United Airlines Flight 34, a Boeing Model 247-D, was flying a scheduled run from Oakland to Union Air Terminal (now Bob Hope Airport). Pilot Edwin W. Blom and his co-pilot Robert J. McLean first made a stop in San Francisco before taking off at 5:30 PM to complete the journey to Burbank. On approach to Burbank at 7:36 PM, the control tower asked for the plane's location. The co-pilot made one last transmission stating "just

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## ANNUAL TOUR OF THE SITE OF THE ST FRANCIS DAM

MARCH 11, 2012

CALL 661 254-1275 FOR RESERVATIONS



## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

a minute” before contact was lost with Flight 34. Nothing was heard from the aircraft throughout the night.

At 10:00 AM the following day, wreckage of the aircraft was spotted at the head of Rice Canyon near the top of Oat Mountain. After conducting an investigation, the Accident Board of the Bureau of Air Commerce concluded that the plane struck the ground at an altitude of 2620 feet while banking to the right. The wings were sheared off by trees and the fuselage traveled another 300 feet before hitting the wall of a narrow canyon and sliding back down to the bottom. It was a cloudy, rainy night in Southern California. The Board stated its opinion that the accident “was an error on the part of the pilot for attempting to fly through the Newhall Pass at an altitude lower than the surrounding mountains without first determining by radio the existing weather”. All 12 persons on board the airplane died in the crash, including H. S. Teague, a 28 year old cartoonist at Walt Disney Studios, and Edward F. Ford, a Standard Oil employee and son of the president of the Grace Line Steamship Company. Ford had just gotten married 6 months prior to the crash. It was reported that a number of local citizens from the SCV braved the soaking rainfall to hike up the rugged terrain to find the wreckage and aid in the removal of the bodies of the unfortunate passengers.

### WESTERN AIR EXPRESS FLIGHT 7

Less than three weeks later, on January 12, 1937, adverse weather conditions brought down Western Air Express Flight 7 four miles southeast of Newhall, when the Boeing Model 247-B crashed into the San Gabriel Mountains near the summit of Los Pinetos Peak, about 1600 feet above the Walker Ranch in Placerita Canyon.

Manned by pilot William W. Lewis and co-pilot Clifford P. Owens, Flight 7 began its trek in Salt Lake City, on its way to San Diego, with intermediate stops to be made at Las Vegas, Burbank, and Long Beach. After being delayed for 23 minutes in Las Vegas due to the weather conditions in Southern California, the plane was cleared to proceed to the airport in Burbank. The pilots lost site of the ground as they flew over Acton, due to heavy overcast conditions. As the plane slowly descended toward Burbank, it became engulfed in the cloud cover and experienced extremely turbulent air conditions making navigation difficult with instrument flying. At 10:57 AM the pilot attempted unsuccessfully to get directional radio signals from the Union Air Terminal in Burbank. When he finally did obtain the signals he realized that the airplane had veered off course to the east and over the higher mountain

peaks east of the Newhall Pass. As he immediately started a turn to get back on course he noticed a dismaying sight out the cockpit window. To his left he saw two bushes through the window. Bad sign for an aircraft that was supposed to be high up in the air over the mountains. Realizing a crash was imminent, at 11:15 AM Pilot Lewis cut down the engines to lessen the impact and attempted to “pancake” the aircraft on to the hillside. According to the report of the Accident Board of the Bureau of Air Commerce: “The airplane first struck the ground with the left wing tip. It then skidded along the side of the mountain in a curved path for approximately 125 feet, finally coming to rest headed in the opposite direction from which it struck. The point of collision was at an elevation of 3550 feet near the summit of Los Pinetos, the highest mountain in the immediate vicinity.” The Accident Board further concluded “that the probable cause of this accident was error on the part of the pilot for descending to a dangerously low altitude without positive knowledge of his position.”

The Western Air Express crash took the lives of one crew member (co-pilot Owens) and four passengers, including noted international adventurer and filmmaker Martin Johnson. Johnson's wife Osa survived the crash with back and neck injuries. She later served as technical consultant on the 1939 movie classic “Stanley and Livingston”. One of the surviving passengers, 25 year old Arthur Robinson, actually hiked down the mountain into Sylmar where he ran into a search team from the Olive View Sanitarium. Robinson later recalled “Suddenly the plane began to drop—drop. Then there was a terrible crash. My seat belt kept me in my seat. I didn't lose consciousness, but my leg and side hurt. I guess I was about the only one that wasn't knocked out.” Another notable survivor was Robert Andersen, the man who later established the famous Pea Soup Andersen's restaurant in Buellton.

The Newhall Signal reported that rain throughout the day hampered rescue operations. It was not until after midnight that the passengers were brought down the south side of the mountain with the use of mule teams and buckboard, and a tractor. The wreck was said to be plainly visible from Newhall. Longtime Placerita Canyon resident George Starbuck recently discussed his personal recollections of the Western Air Express crash with Leon Worden: “Three of my uncles were the first ones to the scene, Ray, Charles and Edward Walker. They heard the plane go over and the sound of the crash. It was directly south of the upper house in Placerita. My grandfather drove down to Newhall to inform the sheriff and rescue crew. From what I remember, both of the Johnsons were on board; Osa Johnson survived.”

*Continued on Page 3*

## President's Message

*Continued from page 2*

Probably the most famous aviation accident in Santa Clarita history was not an airplane crash, but the helicopter accident that took the life of actor Vic Morrow during the filming of the John Landis-directed movie "The Twilight Zone" at Indian Dunes Park along the Santa Clara River on July 22, 1982 - but that's a whole other article, folks!

### HAPPENINGS AT THE JUNCTION

At its last meeting, the Board of Directors of the Historical Society welcomed three new members to its ranks. We are pleased to announce our new Board members: Vic Feany, the man who ran Newhall Hardware for many years; Scott Sivley, who helped bring us the Heritage Haunt and Pumpkin Festival, and Roberto Torres. Re-elected to their Board positions were Alan Pollack, E.J. Stephens, Sue Yurosek and Sioux Coghlan. We would also like to thank outgoing Board members Mike Jarel and Paul Duryea for their service to the Historical Society. And a special thanks to Jeff Boultinghouse, who will be leaving the Board after serving for many years. We will miss you, Jeff! But glad to know you will still be around to provide us with your expertise as a docent and technology genius!

The Dam Man Frank Rock will be back at the Junction on Sunday, March 11, to deliver his annual lecture and tour on the St. Francis Dam Disaster. Don't miss this one, our most popular event! Check our website for more details as they become available ([www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)).

Another exciting event will feature the lovely Marie Wise-Hawkins and her band, who will be performing a tribute to Patsy Cline as part of the Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival on Saturday, April 21. Marie received rave reviews for her performance as Patsy Cline at the Canyon Theatre Guild. Tickets are available on the Cowboy Festival website [www.cowboyfestival.org](http://www.cowboyfestival.org).

Good news for you lovers of ghosts and Halloween: Ed Marg and his crew will be bringing the Heritage Haunt back to Heritage Junction in October. An all-new scare experience awaits the brave among you!

This should be a great year for the Historical Society, as we continue to work on getting a new museum up and running in the Pardee House. We hope you can join us and volunteer your time to help us reach all of our lofty goals!

Hope to see you at the Train Station.

Alan Pollack

## From the Archives by Angela Chadbourne

The *Acton Rooster* was one of the local newspapers in our area. The SCV Historical Society has a collection of Roosters dating from November of 1900 through January of 1913. The *Acton Rooster* was published by R. E. Nickel; the local publisher was also R. K. Rayburn. A yearly subscription to the newspaper cost fifty cents, while individual issues were a nickel. The *Acton Rooster* was published monthly on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, unless, of course, the 15<sup>th</sup> was a Sunday.

Our copies of the *Acton Rooster* are in delicate condition. Since we are unaware of any other copies in existence, they need proper storage, care and should be handled as little as possible. In a hope to provide future accessibility for local historians, our copies of the *Acton Rooster* have been digitized by Executive Director Pat Salatore and volunteers Becky Bataille and Angela Chadbourne. Facsimiles of the papers can be created from these digital files for research purposes. Issues of the *Acton Rooster* are an especially good source of genealogical research for families from this region, as they regularly reported the comings and goings of the local people and their families.

The SCV Historical Society is hoping to collaborate with the California State Library or the Internet Archive in order to make the papers searchable on the internet. Hopefully researchers will be able to view the papers and search for keywords to find the information they are looking for. This ability to search specific words will make using the *Acton Rooster* for research quick and efficient.



ACTON ROOSTER

## The Hart Museum Honors *Hugo* and *The Artist* by Rachel Barnes



**B**est Picture. Best Actor. Best Director. Best Original Score. Best Art Direction. These are just a few of the Academy Award categories in which both *The Artist* and *Hugo* are contenders this year. And the Hart Museum honors this

resurgence in silent films (and movies that pay homage to silent films) with a special display of rarely-seen and never-before-seen artifacts related to both films starting in mid-February.

Be sure to come by and see a letter Georges Méliès (expertly portrayed in the film *Hugo* by Ben Kingsley) wrote to the History Curator at the Los Angeles County Museum in 1935. Come by and get an up-close look at one of only three existing Lumière Brothers Cinématographes - the early motion picture camera that inspired Méliès to create his fantastical and whimsical silent films, and ultimately inspired the development of the entire film industry. Come see the shirt Bill Hart wore in his final movie, *Tumbleweeds* (1925) and the jeweled dagger Douglas Fairbanks wielded in *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924) – clips from both films had cameo appearances in *Hugo*. If that's not enough, then you won't want to miss Buster Keaton's iconic pork pie hat, autographed by the comedian!

And that's not all. Not even close. The Hart Museum is also delighted to display actual props used in the silent film blockbuster hit, *The Artist*. For a short time only, you can see the coat rack Bérénice Bejo's Peppy Miller hugged tightly in George Valentin's (played by Jean Dujardin) dressing room, the vanity upon which Peppy Miller scrawled "Thank You" in bright lipstick, and the motion picture camera Valentin destroys in a fit of rage.

Be sure to check the Hart Museum Facebook Page (Search "William S. Hart Park and Museum" and hit the "Like" button), or contact the Museum at (661) 254-4584 and [information@hartmuseum.org](mailto:information@hartmuseum.org) for the schedule and updates on when all of the above items will be on display. The schedule and display artifacts are subject to change. And good luck to both *Hugo* and *The Artist* at the 84th Annual Academy Awards on Sunday, February 26, 2012!

## Hart Hall Spring Events- by Cheryl Hazama

**A**rtisan Row Home Arts & Craft Boutique  
March 31 & April 1, 2012, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
Free Admission

### CALL FOR ENTRIES:

Day One - Home arts and handmade crafts, folk art, quilts, novelty items, etc.

### Outdoor visual arts gallery:

All media visual art gallery, no size restrictions  
A miniatures gallery, (all media visual art)

Day Two - Home Arts and Crafts, dolls, teddy bears and accessories

### Outdoor visual arts gallery:

All media visual art gallery, no restrictions  
Print media & photography

**S**anta Clarita Valley Photographers Association  
Spring Print Competition  
May 18 & 19

Hart Hall  
24152 Newhall Avenue  
Newhall, CA 91321  
661 259-1750

### Join the SCV Historical Society Today!

Life Member	\$350.00
Life Member with spouse	\$500.00
Corporate	\$200.00
Non-profit	\$50.00
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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>.

## Saugus Depot's Archives Organized by Volunteer Shawn Beckert by Mike Jarel

Society member and volunteer Shawn Beckert has been busy lately organizing and cataloging several boxes of "paper" materials, much of which were left with the depot when the Southern Pacific transferred ownership of the structure to the Society. Part of Shawn's latest report reads: "In reviewing the Saugus Station's inventory, Box No. 11 was found to contain many Southern Pacific train orders from 1970 and 1971, as well as several of the station operator's log books, and a Santa Fe book of Rules and Regulations from 1909".

A little explanation is in order concerning Shawn's mention of "train orders", and their importance to the depot and the Society.

Since the late 1930's, the nation's railroads have progressively equipped rail routes with the heaviest traffic with direct electronic control, where dispatchers were able to monitor train movements, set signals, routes, and train meets using a diagramed control panel equipped with control switches at their fingertips. On lighter routes, mostly with single track equipped with sidings where trains met and passed, the railroads continued to dispatch trains by the use of timetables and "train orders". There were two types of train orders utilized by dispatchers: "track" orders which were used to inform crews of conditions over their route such as temporary speed restrictions ("slow orders"), tracks taken out of service, or other hazards. The second type of order was "movement" orders. Timetables set times and places where trains met or passed, and provided schedules that "inferior" trains could work against to clear at a siding (This was particularly critical on lines with no signals). Movement orders were used to allow the railroad to remain fluid when trains became delayed, extra trains or following sections of a scheduled train needed to be operated, or even to cancel ("annul") a train. Movement orders superseded the timetable where there was a conflict, such as to alter or create schedules, change a meeting place, or even hold a train. Such orders only remained in effect for the "life" of the order and only affected the trains addressed. On these routes, dispatchers monitored the progress of trains by their passage being reported by the operator at each train order station.

Train orders continued to be used on the SP until direct radio dispatching took over these routes, seemingly overnight in 1985, after dependable radio signal strength was assured over each route.

Train orders were dictated from the train dispatcher directly by telegraph or telephone to the station's operator, who typed them directly from dictation ONLY. Train orders were never ad-libbed, but were written in various prescribed forms or templates with the appropriate "blanks" filled in. Each order was given a number, the numbers starting over at the beginning of each calendar day.

The reason for the thin "flimsy" paper is that they were typed in multiple copies using carbon paper, the number of copies dependent on the number of helper engines in a train, if any. The head end crew on the locomotive, rear crew on the caboose, and any helper engine crew were required to have copies of every order that affected their train (addressed to "C & E", for conductor and engineer), and a copy was also kept and filed by the station operator. Each order copied had to be read (or telegraphed) back to the dispatcher, who would then give the operator an "ok" time and his initials which were then typed onto the order. An operator's "clearance" accompanied delivered orders, listing all orders by number that were to be delivered.

Orders could never be copied from any other source or "path". If an additional copy of a particular order had to be re-typed, it had to be again read back to a dispatcher and ok'd again. Both the dispatcher's office and all train order stations kept copies of all train orders issued, and a log was maintained by the operator of all orders delivered to each train by order number.

At some point it is our goal to be able to display particular timetables covering the Saugus route, along with examples of actual train orders that were issued from our station during the effective period of those timetables.

Thanks, Shawn for your hours of work sorting through and organizing all that material!

The train order shown on page 7 was for Southern Pacific steam locomotive 4460 crossing Donner Pass on a 1958 passenger excursion.

## The Murder Saga of Haystack Sloan

by John Boston

**T**he Sloan Canyon Boxer was a suspect in one of SoCal's strangest murders.

Back in 1947, a powerful and charismatic fellow named A.E. "Bud"/"Haystack" Sloan bought the old Stevens Ranch on Torre Canyon Road in Piru. He picked up the Stevens Ranch for a bargain (\$130,000 for 6,500 acres).

Sloan earned the name of "Haystack" during his brief boxing career during the 1930's, in which the giant heavyweight amassed a pro record of 7-4. Interestingly, five of his wins were by knockout, and in all three of his losses he was KO'ed. Sloan appeared on the cover of Ring Magazine and was infamous for his "ice tong punch," a one-two combo to both sides of the head.

Thirty years later, he would briefly be a suspect in one of the Southland's most sensational murder trials.

Born and raised in the sections homesteaded and named after his family, Sloan Canyon, (that's the Hasley portion of Castaic today) Haystack became a very successful businessman.

His B.S. Ranch (that's for Bud Sloan, not for his gift of Irish gab) came with two houses, some prime livestock pasture, lots of water, and 22 working oil wells in one of Southern California's prettiest valleys.

The ex-boxer had a sense of humor, posting signs at the entrance to his ranch: "Trespassers Will Be Shot. Survivors Will Be Shot Again."

Sloan also owned an 18,000 acre ranch in beautiful Mendocino County, worth about \$6 million in 1977. According to Ventura Star investigative reporter Colleen Cason, he loaned \$1 million to Coco Corral to keep his Fillmore Ford dealership operating. Corral paid Sloan back all the money - with interest, on time.

The ex-pugilist was questioned in a complicated murder mystery 45 years ago involving the fledgling Maverick International Airlines. Sloan was a major investor in the line, which specialized in shipping prize cattle to the Shah of Iran. The original airplanes were owned by Dr. Robert Beauchamp, the multi-millionaire father of SoCal credit dentistry. The planes were converted to hold thousands of pounds of cattle and horses.

The first year of operation, Maverick grossed \$17 million hauling livestock and returning with things like melons from Israel and auto parts from Italy. Small problem, though: While Maverick took in \$17 million, they spent \$20 million.

After the '70s, the Shah didn't need prize cattle, as he was deposed by the Iranians with the Ayatollah Khomeini. And, with poor management and deadheading (the practice of an aircraft returning with empty seats or cargo holds), Maverick's future wasn't looking good. Worse, Sloan's partners were reportedly hiding money offshore in the Cayman Islands.

Sloan's partners? You couldn't write a dime novel any better than the real life of the controversial Ojai couple, Lyman and Charlene Smith. The latter was noted for carrying out several very public sexual affairs.

Haystack got on a plane (non-Maverick) and flew to the world headquarters in New York to confront Lyman Smith. Sloan discovered that Lyman, who had a penchant for dressing in outlandishly expensive Western garb, owed the IRS \$250,000 in employee back taxes. Employee checks were bouncing like Superballs.

In 1980, a while after Sloan's New York visit, the couple was found brutally murdered in their Ojai mansion. Both

were bound by rope and bludgeoned to death with a log. Charlene had been raped.

The suspects were many, including Charlene's various lovers and Haystack, who wasn't too happy at losing seven figures on the couple's high lifestyle.

A controversial pastor of the Ventura Missionary Church, Rev. Mikel, entered the fray, accusing the Smiths' business partner, Joe Alsip, of the double homicide and rape. According to court records, Alsip was a lover of Charlene's and had visited with the couple the night before the murders.

Bonus: for some oddball reason, Alsip confessed. As one police investigator commented: "This is better than 'Law and Order.'"

*Continued on Page 7*



## Haystack

*Continued from page 6*

The Alsip trial was spectacular. A flashy and showboating attorney ended up getting Alsip acquitted. Today, Alsip runs a fishing boat in Hawaii.

For years, the case was dead. Haystack was absolved of any wrongdoing. And then, the Nightstalker entered the picture. Well. The *other* Nightstalker.

Richard Ramirez was the infamous serial killer given the nickname of The Nightstalker. But, prior to Ramirez there was a man of mystery that history and police call the Original Nightstalker. Both Ramirez and this other still-at-large monster broke into homes at night, committing invasion rapes and murders. This 'non-Ramirez' psycho was also known as The East Area Rapist.

It wasn't until 2001 when DNA evidence linked this Original Nightstalker to the Smith couple's murders from 1980. This Original Nightstalker/East Area Rapist is viewed as one of the top serial killers in American history, credited with at the very least 50 official murders. There are no clues to his identity.

Haystack? Castaic's jovial boxing millionaire? I've done a little snooping and cannot find what happened to Haystack. He was interviewed in 1995 by The Los Angeles Times for a boxing story on Ojai. Haystack was 79 then, which would make him 96 if he were still with us today.

As for Sloan Canyon, it's still there, with some of the relatives of patriarch Robert J. Sloan still living there. Bob and his wife Bertha homesteaded the area in 1927 and would have 11 children. The Sloans were famous for taking in orphans and lost souls, sometimes opening their meager home to dozens of strangers. Sloan Canyon is still named after him. Bob passed away in April of 1953.

*John Boston has earned 119 major writing awards. He is working on his new giant website, [thejohnbostonmagazine.com](http://thejohnbostonmagazine.com) and Scared o' Bears Ranch Publishing.*

## Typical SP Train Order (see page 5)

## Recent Docents

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

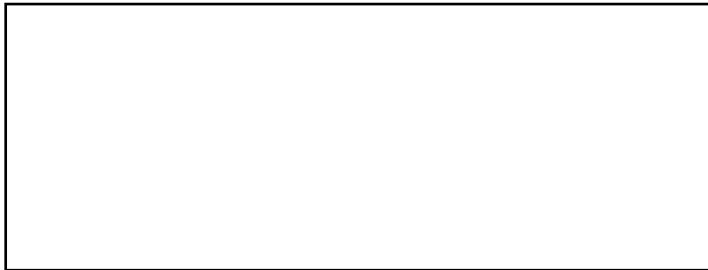
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Linda Casebolt	Alan Pollack
Sioux Coughlan	The Questers *
Evan Decker	Pat Saletore
Andrea Donner	Tony Tellez
Francesca Gastil	Ethan Tratner
Catherine Hartnek	Gordon & Marlene Uppman

Also, thank you's to the following, who opened the doors so that the docents could do their jobs:

Duane Harte	Barbara Martinelli
Cathy Martin	Ed Marg
Alan Pollack	

Don't know who the Questers are?  
See [www.questers1944.org](http://www.questers1944.org)

*The SCU Historical Society  
Presents  
Our Annual Spring Tea:  
11:00 AM, Saturday April 14  
\$35  
For information or reservations  
Call (661) 259-0810*



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Open to the public each Saturday and Sunday  
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Kingsbury House open the first Sunday  
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*“Preserving the best of the past for the good of the future”*

**Society Info: [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)  
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