



# The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 36, Issue 3

May-June 2010

## Calendar

### Friday, May 7

Music at Hart Mansion, 8:00 PM  
See page 3

### Monday, May 24

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Tuesday, June 1

Deadline for the July-August  
*Dispatch*

### Saturday, June 12

Flickers at the Junction  
*Suddenly and Ramona*  
8:00 PM Saugus Station. \$5  
See page 8

### Saturday, June 19

Illustrated lecture on 20-Mule  
Teams and Borax Mining  
2:00 PM Saugus Station  
Free admission; See page 4

### Monday, June 28

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

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

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

## President's Message

by Alan Pollack



It was one of the greatest discoveries of Native American artifacts in California history.

On May 2, 1884, McCoy Pyle was going on a deer hunt. He left from his Mud Springs Ranch,

where he lived with his brother Everett and mother Mandy, and traipsed through the local mountains until ending up at the present day location of Chiquita Canyon Landfill along Highway 126 just past Castaic Junction. While exploring along a sandstone cliff in the canyon, Pyle noticed a cave some fifty feet below him. Being a curious young man, McCoy climbed down the face of the cliff to get a better look. As he peered into the opening of the cave, McCoy Pyle made a stunning discovery.

There before him was a veritable treasure trove of artifacts left behind some time in the past by the Tataviam people, the Native Americans of the Santa Clarita Valley.

### The Tataviam

The Tataviam were a group of Shoshone-speaking Native Americans who migrated into the Santa Clarita Valley from the Great Plains. According to Dr. John Johnson of the Santa Barbara Museum Of Natural History, we don't know exactly when the Tataviam came into our valley. Some historians place their arrival at around 450 AD, but this appears to be a rough estimate. It is also not known why the Tataviam happened to end up in our area. At the time of their arrival, they were apparently a fairly aggressive tribe that displaced the local Chumash people to the West beyond Piru Creek. As the centuries rolled by, the Tataviam evolved into a peaceful and industrious society

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## 20-MULE TEAMS!

## ILLUSTRATED LECTURE-

**SAUGUS STATION  
SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 2:00 PM**

**FREE; SEE PAGE 4**

## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

inhabiting around twenty villages in the Valley. The main village was centered around Castaic Junction and called *Chaguayabit*. The Tataviam lived in an area ranging from Piru to the West, Soledad Canyon to the East, and the Liebre Mountains to the North. They were hunters and gatherers and practiced shamanism. The way of life of the Tataviam remained relatively unchanged over the centuries until a fateful day in August, 1769, when their lives would forever be altered.

On August 8, 1769, the first Spanish land expedition led by Gaspar de Portolá crossed over the San Gabriel Mountains from the San Fernando Valley and entered the Santa Clarita Valley. These strange men were greeted warmly by the Tataviam. The Spanish had built the San Fernando Mission in 1797, and began a process of taking the Tataviam and other local Natives away from their homes to learn European ways and religion at the Mission. By 1804, the Estancia de San Francisco Xavier, a mission outpost, was built on a bluff overlooking Castaic Junction. Within a short time, most of the Valley was depopulated of the Native Americans as they were transferred to the Mission in San Fernando.

### **Pyle's Discovery**

Much of the Tataviam culture and way of life was lost to history until McCoy Pyle made his discovery in 1884. In that cave in Chiquita Canyon, Pyle found a plethora of woven baskets, axe heads, knife blades, crystals, imported pottery, headdresses, capes, and ceremonial scepters. The awestruck Pyle headed back to his ranch, grabbed his brother Everett and some mules, and returned to the cave to haul these Indian treasures back to their home.

The Reverend Stephen Bowers, an amateur archeologist with a thriving antiquities business and editor of the Ventura Free Press, got word of the Pyle discovery. He met with the Pyles and offered them \$1500 for the entire collection of artifacts. That was a lot of money in those days. Everett later stated "It was like finding a gold mine." The collection was sold to Bowers, who was in the business of profiting from antiquities. Bowers peddled the merchandise to museums worldwide, finally selling most of the collection to Professor F.W. Putnam of the Peabody Museum of American Ethnology at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. To this day, the majority of the Tataviam artifacts remain at the Peabody.

Although the discovery of the Tataviam artifacts is most certainly credited to McCoy Pyle, the cave in Chiquita Canyon has come to be known as Bowers Cave, the namesake of the man who sold away the collection to the Peabody Museum. Although he also profited handsomely from his find, poor McCoy Pyle did not live long to enjoy his new found wealth. Several years later, while working as a deputy constable under Ed Pardee, McCoy perished in a shootout at Castaic Junction.

The reason for the existence of the Tataviam artifacts in Bowers Cave remains a mystery. Historians speculate that the Shamans of the tribe may have been hiding their sacred artifacts from the Spanish after they established a presence in the Tataviam homeland with the construction of the Estancia in 1804. We may never know the real answer!

### **HAPPENINGS AT THE JUNCTION**

We are under construction! When visiting Heritage Junction these days, you may notice the Saugus Train Station undergoing a makeover. Thanks to a most generous grant from the Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation in San Francisco, the Train Station is getting a new paint job that will restore it to its glory days along the Southern Pacific Railroad. The Station will remain open during the construction. Stop by and see our progress!

Coming June 19: Don't miss the next installment of the SCVHS Lecture Series. Documentary producer Ted Faye will be speaking on the Twenty Mule Teams of Death Valley, a true American icon. The famous mules hauled borax from Death Valley to Mojave, California for a few years in the 1880's. They were later made famous on the boxes of Twenty Mule Team Borax. Mr. Faye will also discuss our local Sterling Borax Mine in Tick Canyon. He will be screening his movie "The Twenty Mule Team of Death Valley". This event will take place at 2:00 PM at the Saugus Train Station.

Many thanks to Leon Worden and SCVTV for their amazing production of the Newhall Incident, which was filmed at our event at Hart Hall last April. Leon's film debuted on SCVTV on April 5, 2010, the 40th anniversary of the tragic slaying of four CHP officers in Newhall. What a fitting tribute to the young men who lost their lives that day. Be sure to catch the Newhall Incident on scvttv.com.

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## President's Message

*Continued from page 2*

Congratulations to Maggi Perkins on the publication of the newest addition to Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series. The book titled "Newhall" brings together many historic photos from the collection of Maggi's grandfather and first historian of the SCV, Arthur Perkins, as well as from the archives of the Historical Society. Maggi did a book signing in April at the Cowboy Festival at Melody Ranch.

Congratulations also to the families of Ed Marg and Scott Sivley who were honored by the City of Santa Clarita on April 1. And thank you for all you have done for the Historical Society.

We also would like to thank the City of Santa Clarita for a grant which enabled us to purchase a high-end scanner and accessories which will help us to digitize our vast collection of historical photos and documents related to the history of Santa Clarita.

Frank Rock led another successful and well received tour to the site of the St. Francis Dam in March. A full busload of people was taken back in time to the second worst disaster in California history. Thanks to Frank for this ever popular event.

Thanks also go out to Paul Duryea for helping with weed clearance around Heritage Junction, Linda Rehberger for her gardening work in front of the Newhall Ranch House, Iywana Moody for assisting Pat Saletore at the Station during her spring break, and Becky Thomas who as a COC intern has helped us with our membership database.

Mike Jarel, Jimmy Escalante and Dale Wyant receive our warm thanks for their work on the block signal installation outside the Train Station. White Cap gave us a donation of hardware for the block signal.

Finally, thanks to the Questers group for their help with our school tours, and to Pete Benz for showing us the location of the Suracco Graveyard in Bouquet Canyon.

Spring has arrived and summer is not far behind. What a great time to visit us here at Heritage Junction. See you all at the Train Station!

Alan Pollack



Bowers Cave

### Music in the Mansion by Ayesha Saletore



Join us at the Hart Museum Friday, May 7, 2010 at 8:00 PM, for a spring evening of music! Experience the talents of soprano Erica Lazerow and pianist Joshua Pifer as they perform a survey of musical pieces in the warm elegance of the Hart Museum.

Ticket reservations are required. For more information and ticket reservations, please call the William S. Hart Museum at 661 254-4584. Members and Students \$10, Nonmembers \$15.

### Recent Docents

Thank you to the following members who served as docents during March and April:

Frank Adella	Barbara Milteer
Jeff Boultinghouse	RuthAnne Murthy
Laurie Cartwright	Sandy Neill
Sioux Coghlan	Alan Pollack
Sarah Floyd	Pat Saletore
Harold Hicks	EJ Stephens
Karen and Bill Limbaugh	Gordon Uppman
Barbara Martinelli	

## From Death Valley Across The Mojave: The Story Of The Twenty Mule Team Film Producer Ted Faye To Present The Story Of An American Icon To The Scv Historical Society

By Alan Pollack

For the 5 years years between 1883 and 1889 they hauled loads of borax from Death Valley to Mojave, California. But the story didn't end there. They were destined to become an American icon as the trademark of the Pacific Coast Borax Company (and later the United States Borax Company). They were made famous as the namesake of a borax laundry product that has been sold since 1891 and can still be purchased today.

Documentary film producer Ted Faye will be telling the story of Death Valley's Twenty Mule Team for the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society. Included in the presentation will be a screening of his movie "The Twenty Mule Team of Death Valley". He will also discuss the local history of the Sterling Borax Mine of Tick Canyon in the Santa Clarita Valley. The talk will take place at 2:00 PM on Saturday, June 19, 2010, at the Saugus Train Station in Heritage Junction at William S. Hart Park, a unit of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, 24101 Newhall Avenue (formerly San Fernando Road), in Newhall, California.

Ted Faye will present the story of The Twenty Mule Team using photographs, clips from his films and actual objects and artifacts from his collection. His interest in the desert began many years earlier as he ventured into the Mojave to cover the fight over the California Desert Protection Act. His wanderings took him to remote places where he pondered how people survived there, what drew people to the desert, and what it represented in the American character. While pioneers clearly saw it as a place to overcome, others saw it as a place to make their dreams come true, and others saw it only as a place for industrial exploitation. The Twenty Mule Team brings together all of those themes in one story, and what had once only been a hobby for Ted nearly two decades ago, has clearly become a significant part of his life's work.

Now he has produced 8 films on the Death Valley region, three of which are part of his new "Weird Tales" series. He produces all of his work through his company Gold Creek Films, which can be found at [www.goldcreekfilms.com](http://www.goldcreekfilms.com).

Ted Faye has produced documentary film projects for the past ten years. His work has aired on PBS television stations throughout the West, including Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Phoenix and Denver. He is recipient of the Western Channel Honorary Award, the National Educational Media's Golden Apple Award, Five Houston Worldfest Platinum, Gold and Silver awards, and the ITVA Golden Angel award for work in documentary films. He has worked on historical programs which feature the desert regions of the United States, including, "Death Valley Memories", "Death in the Desert" "Chasing the Rainbow, Adventures of the Desert Prospectors," "The Great Desert Railroad Race," and "The Twenty Mule Team of Death Valley." His company is partnering with the state of Nevada to produce entertainment-based, narrative tour-guides and tour-guide DVD's for the rural towns in that state. His current projects include the history of America's largest single mineral strike at Virginia City, Nevada, and the story of one of the most maligned, yet intriguing creatures in the animal kingdom, the mule. For several years he served as historical consultant to US Borax, and most recently is working with the Death Valley Conservancy to interpret the Borax Story and as a consultant to build a replica set of Borax Wagons.

The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society is pleased to host Ted Faye at the Saugus Train Station. The general public is welcome, and admission will be free. For more information on this and other upcoming programs from the SCVHS, please call Pat Saletore or Alan Pollack at 661 254-1275. Website: [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org).



## Toll Roads in the SCV? Don't Laugh, It Could Happen! by John Boston

*"We're on the road to nowhere..."*

— *Lyric from a Talking Heads song*

The Cross Valley Connector opened at the end of March and it made me smile. Politicians like to thump their chests and bark about how they're for roads to ease the ever-growing congestion. I remember years ago a New Jersey think tank put out an unusual study noting that every time someone built a new road, it only made over-population and congestion worse. The simple thing is, when you build a road, it makes it easier for even more people to fill the vacuum.

I also remember about five years ago Congressman Joe Knollenberg (R-Mich), who served on the powerful House Transportation Committee, came up with the idea of putting a turnstile on many of the nation's highways and by-ways. Joe thought it would be a most snappy way to pay for the largesse of government. Joe got booted in the 2008 election. As far as Santa Clarita goes, it wouldn't be the first time we had a toll road.

The controversial General Edward Fitzgerald Beale's nomination for United States Surveyor General was blocked by one Abraham Lincoln. Honest Abe quipped that he didn't want Eddie in the post because "...he (Beale) tends to become master of all he surveys." Which is another interesting story. As far as roads, Beale made a nice bit of change for really not doing anything except for being the head suit on the widening of what would become Beale's Cut in 1863.

You can still see this partially hidden state landmark at the southeastern end of Sierra Highway, about 50 yards or so past the summit on the San Fernando Valley side.

Besides getting a nice piece of change (a \$5,000 stipend for him, with a \$1,000 budget to build the road; Beale used Army troops so he didn't have to pay them). After that, Beale turned the main L.A.-side entrance to our valley into a toll road. For 21 years, Eddie got a piece of just about anything domesticated (or not) going through the gate. Here's a copy of the toll gate charges from nearly 150 years ago:

**horse and rider: a quarter**

**horse and wagon: 50 cents**

**stage coaches: \$1.50**

**larger wagons: \$2.**

**larger animals per head: a dime**

**sheep: 3 cents each.**

Wouldn't that be something if we brought toll roads back to the formerly riparian SCV? Cue the cheesy 1950's TV sitcom flashback music and add a puff of smoke as we dissolve into the 21st century road usage charts:

**USING INTERSTATE 5, SOUTHBOUND AT VALENCIA BLVD.** — 3 bucks.

**USING STATE ROUTE 126, EASTBOUND, FROM THE LITTLE FRUIT STAND ON THE RIGHT** — \$2.74 between 5:00 AM and 9:00 PM, less other times.

**MARKET STREET** — \$1, but only for those motorists using the road to go uphill, from either direction.

**TOWNE CENTER DRIVE** — Free. (They could use the business traffic and besides; that's where Newhall Land's Marlee Lauffer drives to pick up her dry cleaning.) (Thought we forgot about you, Marlee. We haven't.)

**BOUQUET/SOLEDAD/VALENCIA JUNCTION** — \$2 for motorists in the 3rd and 5th right-hand lanes going southbound on Bouquet and an additional \$6 a few hundred yards when Bouquet turns into San Fernando Road. \$4.29 for motorists driving east on Soledad with an additional \$3 if they are caught gawking at the porn shop in Honby. \$5 for motorists traveling east but free passage if said motorists stop off at McDonald's first to get tollkeeper a Quarter Pounder with Cheese, large fries and Coke.

**SOLEMINT JUNCTION, ALL DIRECTIONS** — There are no tolls planned for this section of Canyon Country, but vehicles will be inspected for illegal drugs and foster children smuggling in the trunks of all cars older than 1986.

**HIGHWAY 14 TO PALMDALE** — No fee imposed, but motorists must stop at toll booth and fill in a brief questionnaire, and the 2,700-page U.S. Census forms, complete with three essay questions, as to just why in the heck anyone in their right mind would want to drive up to Palmdale anyway.

**THE CROSSVALLEY CONNECTOR** — Free if you work for a government agency; \$79.95 if you're in the private sector.

**THE SCENIC OLD RIDGE ROUTE** — \$175.49 (It's always more expensive on the road less traveled.)

*Last year, John Boston was named Best Humor Columnist in America (again). Look for his new website, [thebostonreport.net](http://thebostonreport.net) or [thebostonreport.com](http://thebostonreport.com).*



The painting of the Saugus Train Station project has been going for more than a month. First there was about 3 weeks of lead abatement. This took longer than anticipated because the first chemical stripper, even after two applications, did not remove all of the “goop” that had been put on the Station’s siding before it was painted. After trying a second chemical, which was similarly unsuccessful, the abatement team decided to try to sand. That lasted about 10 minutes. It just ate the sandpaper. Finally they decided to fill the places that had come off to match the places that would not come off. As this is written, the priming is finished and the painting has begun. It is an amazing process.



At the Spring Tea, Nancy Cordova presented an interesting talk on Jadeware...and brought a bewildering collection of different examples of Jadeware old and new.





We now have a standing block signal in our train yard thanks to the efforts of some dedicated volunteers. Mike Jarel, Dale Wyant, Peter Ely and Jimmy Escalante have put in hours of work planning and executing this project. Manny Santana joined the group to help with the concrete foundation and brought his tractor to help set it up. This is a great new addition to our Train Yard “garden” of sprouting railroad signals.



For a couple of years, we have known that we needed a backflow device on the Station. This spring L.A. County Parks allowed their plumbers to install several backflow devices where necessary to bring us into conformance with codes. The last one to go in was the big one needed for the Station. This project has been a collaboration between Newhall County Water District and L.A. County Parks. The Society really thanks the NCWD under the supervision of Josh Gilliam and the Parks Department plumbers under Ron Cox for all they have done for us. Plumbing is generally not considered exciting by most people, but this project really has been. Not only because we are brought up to code, but because all those people involved recognized that what we do here has value and are contributing to it by helping. THANK YOU!

Our Spring Tea was a great success thanks to Sue Yurosek and her “crew,” which included her daughters Lynn and Johnsie and one of her great grandchildren. A good time was had by all including Mayor Laurene Weste, shown here with fellow SCVHS Boardmember Cathy Martin.



# Suddenly and Ramona Coming to “Flickers at the Junction” by E.J. Stephens

The popular “**Flickers at the Junction**” film series will return on Saturday, June 12, at 8:00 PM with an outdoor showing of two films that were both made in the Santa Clarita Valley. The feature presentation will be Frank Sinatra’s 1954 film “Suddenly,” which is a story about assassins trying to kill the president. This film was made in downtown Newhall, and a major star of the action was our very own train station, where the film will be shown!

We will also present a rare showing of the 1910 dramatic silent short film “Ramona,” which starred Mary Pickford and was directed by D.W. Griffith. “Ramona” was filmed at Rancho Camulos near Santa Clarita. The cost for the evening will be \$5 per person.

If you are interested in learning more about the history of the films and television shows that have been made in the Santa Clarita Valley, the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society will be hosting the “**Newhallywood On Location**” film class at Heritage Junction on the final four Saturdays in July. The class will take place in the historic Saugus Train Station, as well as at

the actual locations of several films made throughout the area. The class will meet from 1:00 to 4:00 PM on July 10, 17, 24 and 31, and the cost is \$50 per person. For more information, please check out the SCVHS web site at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org).

### 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> .



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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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*“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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