Calendar

Saturday, October 21
Heritage Haunt
3:00 PM Pardee House
Ghostathon
8:00 PM Newhall Ranch House

Monday, October 23
Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM Saugus Station

Saturday, October 28
Make a Difference Day
All day Heritage Square

Sunday, October 29
Lecture on Artillery Used in the Mexican-American War,
3:00 PM Saugus Station

Monday, November 27
Board of Directors Meeting
6:30 PM
General Meeting
7:30 PM Saugus Station

Friday, December 1
Deadline for the January-February Dispatch

Saturday, December 9
Christmas Open House
Noon to 4:00 PM Heritage Square

First Thursday of Every Month
(Except Summer)
Genealogy Club Meeting; for
Location, check with Ed Blancher
at eblancher@socal.rr.com

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

President’s Message

by Carol Rock

Things are changing fast around the junction – the Pardee House is re-greened, thanks to Sue Yurosek and her crew of workers – and of course thanks to our Exec Director Pat Saleitore, who obtained paint donations from Dunn Edwards; visitors to the station have learned everything there is to know about the history of movie making in the SCV, and the cannons are scheduled to roar at the end of October thanks to program planner and board member Alan Pollack.

In this issue, you’ll find pictures of recent successes – like the return of Christmas In July, chaired by Mary Ann Colf and featuring Nancy Cordova as the auctioneer and Sue as the chief cook and bottle washer – and information on upcoming events – Halloween is back big time, thanks to Greta Dunlap, our tireless volunteer who is rallying workers (like the magically talented Konrad Summers); scaring up new spirits to turn the Pardee House into a haunted house and bringing back the Ghostathon sleepover, this time in the Newhall Ranch House. Don’t miss this spooky spectacular – we’re already hearing the community is excited to come back to the junction for a good scare!

Your board of directors has been working on a couple of other projects, including the Christmas Open House, our annual celebration of the holiday and our incorporation 36 years ago – which moves to Saturday this year, Dec. 9, in concert with the City of Santa Clarita’s annual

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Heritage Haunt and Ghostathon
October 21!!

Christmas Open House
Saturday, December 9
Starting at Noon
Santa Will Appear!
Save the Date

For Details, See Page 4
President’s Report

Continued from page 3
downtown holiday event. Chair Cathy Martin has some new surprises up her sleeve (maybe a special book-signing?) to add to the event, along with our traditional Santa visit and entertainment.

Most importantly, the board has held two joint meetings with the Friends of Hart Park to explore the establishment of a foundation that would benefit both parks - bringing in some big donors interested in making long-term or larger-dollar investments and giving us a little more credibility when we apply for state and federal grants. A steering committee made up of three Society board members and three Friends board members is working on bylaws with the help of some other community leaders who offer sound advice and guidance. Funding from foundations has allowed many local charities to succeed in completing new headquarters and projects. Along with being a positive move for the Society, this will also make desperately needed funds available to restore our houses, do more outreach and take better care of our workers.

When you're doing your holiday shopping, make sure to stop by the station and check out the gift shop - Cathy and Pat went to the gift show recently and have come back with some amazing things - Halloween items are up now and they've already warned me to be prepared to spend some money when the Christmas shipment comes in! Gift memberships also make excellent stocking stuffers! Remember, everything you buy benefits the Society's mission of preserving our past for the future.

See you around the Junction!

Living History: The Mexican War in California: Antique Cannons to be Fired in Heritage Square!
by Alan Pollack

Between the years 1846 and 1848, the United States and Mexico fought a war that began as a territorial dispute over Texas but ultimately resulted in the cession to the United States of the southwestern portion of the continent, including the future states of California, Nevada, Utah, and portions of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. Southern California had a small but important part in the War. On Sunday, October 29, at 2:00 PM at the Saugus Train Station in Heritage Junction, historian Cap Cresap will present a living history event about the Mexican War in California for the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society. The demonstration will include military uniforms and the firing of cannons from the period 1870-1850.

The war in Southern California included men such as Edward F. Beale and Andrés Pico, who started as adversaries in December, 1846 at the Battle of San Pasqual in present day San Diego county, but later became partners in the fledgling oil industry in Pico Canyon in the 1860’s. In January, 1847, famed explorer John C. Fremont camped out with his troops in the Santa Clarita Valley (most likely in the area near the intersection of San Fernando Road and Sierra Highway) on his way to Campo De Cahuenga (near present day Universal Studios) to accept the surrender of the Mexican forces under General Andrés Pico. Both men signed the Treaty of Cahuenga on January 13, 1847, which in effect ended the Mexican War in California.

Mr. Cresap will also be discussing the Mormon Battalion, a group of 543 men who agreed to enlist to help General Stephen Watts Kearney in the war in California. In one of the longest military marches in history, they traveled 2000 miles from Council Bluffs, Iowa to San Diego, where they joined Kearney in January, 1847. Some of the soldiers did garrison duty in San Diego, San Luis Rey, and Los Angeles. After their discharge from the army, most of the Battalion headed for the Salt Lake Valley. Some who chose to winter at Sutter’s Fort were present when gold was discovered nearby in January, 1848.

Please mark your calendars for an interesting day of California military history. Don’t miss the firing of the cannons!!!

Recent Docents

Thank you to the following members who served as docents during July:

Frank Adella Karen & Bill Limbaugh
Jeff Boultinghouse Barbara Martinelli
Sioux Coghlan Barbara Mitteer
Greta Dunlap Pat Santeore
Sarah Floyd Konrad Summers
Francesca Gastil Michelle Veasman
Harold Hicks
Nevada Courthouses
by Gordon Glattenberg

On vacation this August, I made a circle tour of Nevada with my friend Elyse, first driving though Las Vegas to Great Basin National Park (on the Utah border 300 miles to the north), then following US 50 to Lake Tahoe and eventually Sacramento. US 50 crosses 15 mountain summits in that stretch, and goes through two 19th century mining towns, Eureka and Austin.

We stayed one night in Eureka, in the Jackson House, a nicely refurbished two-story brick hotel from the 1870’s. It was located in the center of town, next to the Keyhole Bar and a restored Opera House. Directly across the main street was the Eureka County Courthouse, another two-story brick building from the same decade. It was restored six years ago and is in beautiful condition.

Our first stop in the courthouse after it opened the next day was the County Recorder’s office on the second floor, which had an embossed metal ceiling and a safe at the rear that looked like a bank vault. The office was occupied by a friendly woman who offered to show us the safe. It contained books of county records beginning about 1870, written in beautiful penmanship on paper that still looked brand new.

We next spent some time in a small courtroom on the first floor, where a local woman was being arraigned on animal cruelty charges. Afterward, a discussion of the case with a deputy sheriff involved in it led to his acting as our tour guide through the building. This included the main courtroom (pictured), judge’s chambers, jury room, and the jail. The courtroom included two potbellied stoves along the sides, no longer used for heating but nice additions to the 19th century décor, and a small balcony for spectators. The jail had been replaced by a facility in a newer building down the road and was being used as a storeroom; the court’s employees’ Christmas decorations were stored there, a bizarre sight!

After leaving Eureka, the next town on the route was Austin, 70 miles to the West and the seat of Lander County. It also had a brick courthouse dating from the 19th century, but the interior was rather dreary, with none of the elegant touches of its counterpart in Eureka. This courthouse also lacked employees who were proud to show their workplace to visitors.

The two courthouses demonstrated the importance of people who care about old buildings and put in the effort needed to bring them back to life.

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Adopt a Door at the Pardee House
by Sue Yurosek

Those of you who have been by Heritage Junction couldn’t help but notice the fact that the Pardee House has had an upgrade! It has had the woodwork replaced where needed and it was then repainted, replacing all that peeling paint with new. As with any home fix-up project, now everything around it looks worse! You can’t help asking, “What’s up with the industrial metal doors?”

Since we’re just a little tapped out from the painting project, we thought we’d offer an “Adopt-a-Door” program. We need both interior and exterior doors, ranging from $400 to $1500, including the front door/Main Entrance. Let’s keep the work going forward! Attached is a picture of the front door...behind Ed (the one in the sun bonnet) and Lib (in the bowler) Pardee.

Contact Pat at 254-1275 to participate.
Executive Director’s Report
by Pat Salatore

Current Events:

Make a Difference Day is coming. This year it looks like we have them interested in raising our semaphore signal, along with the usual cleaning and weed abatement. Wouldn’t that be cool?

I have applied for a $20,000 grant from the Union Pacific Foundation for the painting of the Saugus Train Station. The project is estimated to cost $36,000.

Vermin Control: Curiously, there has been little activity in this area in the last month. The bees finally subsided, and the only thing I’ve caught in the rat traps is a lizard. Very odd! I can attribute this to:

◊ Rats and mice have become discouraged due to trapping activities.
◊ It’s been too hot for rodents (and taggers) to venture out.
◊ The tenants have all moved to Hart Park.
◊ The bait the park placed in our sheds is working.
◊ There is too much activity here for vermin to thrive.
◊ Or maybe they’re tired of peanut butter and crackers, and are waiting for wine and cheese?

However, there are more rabbits than ever, and we have not one but two new deer in our population. They’re now almost grown and come down to feast on the roses in the morning.

Howser of KCET has contacted us regarding our proposed participation in a program he is preparing that would compare and connect the Golden Spike driven at Promontory, UT in 1869 with the one driven at Lang Station in 1876. In anticipation of this, Alan Pollack and I went out to locate some places along the track that might be of interest:

◊ We got shots of Lang, where a marker remains but the station is gone.
◊ We also found the location of the Ravenna station.
◊ We located the site of the 1929 Saugus train robbery.

Heritage Haunt and Ghostathon

Families and friends can join the fun at Heritage Haunt and Ghostathon on Saturday, October 21, 2006, at Heritage Junction.

Heritage Haunt will be from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM and will include a spooktacular haunted house in the historic Pardee House for ages 6+. Kids can enjoy trick ’o’ treating on Main Street, hear local ghost stories and, for a nominal fee, enjoy pony rides, a petting zoo, ride a horse drawn wagon, visit the fortune teller and savor delicious food.

Admission to Heritage Haunt is $10, which includes the Haunted House and trick ’o’ treating, or $5 for bystanders, which is entry only and trick ’o’ treating.

The Ghostathon is an overnight, for those that last, in the Newhall Ranch House. Admission is $100 and limited to 20 adults. The overnight includes a ghost hunt, seance, dinner and continental breakfast. Participants must bring a sleeping bag, pillow, flash light and toiletries. Cots will be provided.

A portion of the proceeds will go towards restoration of the Pardee House. For further information, go to www.scvhs.org or call 661 254-1275.

Christmas in July
Interview With Wayne Spence
by Jeff Boultinghouse

Wayne Spence started a long career with the Southern California Edison Company in 1947. In the 50's, he became the Northwest Division Superintendent, in charge of maintaining all of the facilities owned by Edison from Santa Monica all the way into the Sierras. This assignment included the Saugus Substation, the original home of the Edison House. He paid us a visit on August 20 and shared some of his memories of life in the Edison Company's camps.

The Edison Company built housing for its employees working at power plants and substations located far from the cities. In 1919, Saugus was considered to be a long way from Los Angeles and merited its own collection of Swiss-Germanic style cottages. For many years, Mr. Spence maintained our Edison House along with the rest of the camps, all the way up to Big Creek in the Sierra.

He told us that the rent was $25 a month. Employees in company housing stayed there until their next promotion or a new assignment took them elsewhere. Some employees might get a new job every year or so. When they moved to another camp, they went to the end of the waiting list for camp housing. The small cottages varied in size, but always had the same basic floor plan. Most of the families had children, which sometimes made for tight quarters.

After asking one housewife what exterior color she wanted when it was time to repaint, she answered that she didn't know; she never really looked at her own house. But her neighbor's house ought to be green, she said, since she looked out her kitchen window at it all the time. After that, Mr. Spence took to asking all the homemakers what color the other houses should be.

The low $25 monthly rent made it possible for Edison employees to save enough money for homes of their own. As the areas around the camps became more developed and more housing became available, many of the cottages went vacant, often for years at a time. The cottages at Big Creek might be the only original ones still in use.

Join the SCV Historical Society Today!

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Memberships make great gifts for your historically-minded friends and family! To join or renew online, visit http://www.scvhs.org.
August 26 Program on Movie Making History in the SCV
by Alan Pollack

On Saturday, August 26, a capacity crowd of over 100 people packed the Saugus Train Station to enjoy delicious ice cream served up by Cathy Martin and her volunteer helpers, and then listened to anecdotes and information on the history of movie making in the Santa Clarita Valley presented by film historian Marc Wanamaker. Mr. Wanamaker is the founder of Bison Archives, an institution which researches and archives the history of the Hollywood movie industry, and is a member of the Board of Directors of Hollywood Heritage. He showed a number of very rare photos taken during the production of the many movies filmed in the SCV.

Highlights included a band of aliens walking across Vasquez Rocks and baby photos of Harry Carey, Jr. taken at the Harry Carey Ranch in San Francisquito Canyon, which Wanamaker found in a pile of photos for sale on the East Coast. There were also photos of Melody Ranch after it tragically burned down in the fires of 1962. In perfect Hollywood tradition, the remains of the Ranch were used for war scenes in the TV series “Combat.” Mr. Wanamaker’s stories and photos included Harry Carey, Tom Mix, William S. Hart, John Wayne, the Monogram Ranch, Melody Ranch, Golden Oak Ranch and many more.

Many people reported having a great time at this show, and audience members got into the act, shouting out the names of movies, people and even horses as they appeared on the screen. Mr. Wanamaker himself stated that he had a great time. Sales were strong in the gift shop that day, and a number of people left us their e-mail addresses for notification about future events. The event was featured the next day on the front page of the Signal newspaper. We hope you will all continue to come and enjoy these quality presentations that we plan to present throughout the year.