If this old truck could talk...
We’re on track to make big changes in 2024

No slowing down for the SCVHS as we plan and develop two new museums for the History Center, one may open in summer

Our staff and volunteers are busy repairing buildings, raising funds to finance programs and museum displays, cataloging artifacts, creating experiences that will dig deep into our local stories. We’ve got the Cowboy Festival coming up and we’re hoping that the first of two museums - the Saugus Train Station, which will be focused on the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads, will be open in late summer. In the meantime, here’s the latest on historic happenings.

Walker Truck roars to life, thanks to SCV Corvette Club mechanics
The pickup truck with the rusted patina, parked next to the Saugus Station for more than a year, recently rolled away from its spot under its own power, heading toward the Center’s hillside village for a quick turnaround. Six mechanics, five of them members of the SCV Corvette Club and all with their own special skills, have been working hard to restore the historic vehicle. After installing a new engine, new transmission, clutch and muffler, gauges, wires, plugs, pumps and a new gas tank – as well as a newly-upholstered seat, a fabricated floor (these guys created what they couldn’t find in the auto parts stores), newly-hinged hood, new rear tires and a rebuilt stake bed (the original burned in the 2017 Thomas Fire),
it’s hoped this showpiece with the strong local pedigree will actually be driven in the 2024 Fourth of July Parade.

The Society is grateful to these dedicated car buffs, including Ron Nolan, Dave Jewett, Bob Haas, Al Aird, Dennis Monden, Brad Inch, (and Bailey, their canine project supervisor). Special thanks go to Bob Walker, who has provided financial backing and watched his grandfather’s truck come slowly back to life. Watch for a grand unveiling of the finished project some time in Spring 2024!
Rebranding starts at the front gate
Thanks to our graphic designer (and Board Member), Greg Wilzbach, we have a bright, beautiful new sign at the gate to the Santa Clarita History Center. Greg proudly installed it himself a few weeks ago and it’s already attracting new visitors!
City's Historical Archives to receive Perkins Collection
Marguerite Perkins, granddaughter of the area’s first historian, A.B. Perkins (pictured above), is donating the Perkins Family Collection to the City of Santa Clarita Historical Archives. The collection includes 630 books, correspondence, photos, documents, manuscripts, ledgers, maps, digital files and artifacts that document the family’s history, their professional and civic activities and the history of the Santa Clarita Valley.

“This is an amazing contribution to the history of our valley,” said SCVHS VP Leon Worden. “As an old school classmate of Maggi’s, I know how deeply she cares about her grandfather’s legacy and she has found the perfect home for it. The city library’s experienced archiving staff can give it the professional care it deserves and ensure that it is preserved and available for generations to come.”
Art Perkins was a true Renaissance man: a judge, a housing developer, a water purveyor, and most importantly, our town’s first real historian. Fifty years before anybody dreamed of a historical society, Art Perkins was collecting the family photographs and information that became the backbone of our valley’s history. He was a competent researcher and published author who shared his “Story of Our Valley” in The Signal.

‘Tis the Giving Season
Did you know that the holiday season is the perfect time to donate to your favorite local history group? Skip the crowded shopping center and make an investment in someone’s legacy, a donation in memory of a loved one, or a gift to our community that will benefit our History Center! Click [here](#) to donate or mail your check to SCVHS, P.O. Box 221925, Santa Clarita, CA 91322-1925. All donations are tax-deductible.
Classroom Presentations Open to Newhall Students

Classes in the Newhall School District are invited to submit requests for exterior tours of the History Center. Students and teachers alike can learn a lot from looking at the outside of a historic building and talking about life a century ago. Tours can also include a climb up into the cab of the mogul steam engine and a chance to blow the whistle! Because of liability restrictions, only districts with a contract with Los Angeles County can currently visit the grounds. These restrictions do not apply to home-school groups or private schools. To set up a tour for your class, call Education Outreach Chair Barbara Martinelli (pictured above) at (661) 254-1275.
Cowboy Festival returning to Hart Park in 2024
Plans are underway to bring the popular Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival back to Hart Park April 20-21, 2024 and the History Center will be part of the festivities, sharing updates on our museum(s) progress or possibly hosting an event (we’re still figuring out logistics). Stay tuned for details. In the meantime, mark your calendars for an entertaining, delicious, fun weekend for the whole family, complete with music, poetry, Wild West fun and that legendary peach cobbler! (pictured: volunteers Frank Rock and Greg Wilzbach)

Leave the Porch Lights On!
You may have noticed a little more light at the History Center at night; volunteers Mike Jarel and Guy Horanberg helped our project manager Leon Worden install timed lights on the porches of all the houses and around the Newhall Ranch House and Saugus Train Station as well as the parking lot. This adds another layer of security to protect the Center and gives us a “village” look when the sun goes down.
Tanks for the Memories

Union Pacific Railroad contractors recently demolished the 5,000 barrel Southern Pacific oil tank on the hill at the end of Drayton Street (behind the original location of the Saugus Train Station). The tank held oil that was used to help refuel helper engines that were needed to make the grade north to Saugus during the steam era.

Thanks to Josh Landon from the demo crew, the Society was able to acquire a giant outlet valve from the century-old tank. Pictured below are the valve in its original place and the valve in the railroad yard of the History Center. Special thanks to Society volunteer Mike Jarel for the context and Chris Mowry from Hart Park who used a tractor to help offload the valve once it arrived at its new home.
Docent Training at Placerita Canyon Natural Area

A new docent class will begin January 9, 2024 at the Placerita Canyon Natural Area! Learn about the natural environment, teach children about nature and make a difference in your community. No special background needed, just a willingness to attend training and to volunteer twice a month.

Training starts Tuesday, January 9, 2024. Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 am to noon. The 9-week training program includes topics such as native plants, ecology, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, geology, history and interpretive techniques. Cost: $45, which includes all training materials (instruction manual, field guide, T-shirt and related items). Minimum age for docents is 18. Visit www.placerita.org for more information. To learn about other volunteer opportunities, call (661) 259-7721 and speak to the Volunteer Coordinator.
Historic pothole project looking for sponsors, volunteers
The Ridge Route Preservation Organization was given clearance from the Angeles National Forest to repair potholes along the north section of the Old Ridge Route from Hwy 138 to the Tumble Inn. The repairs, which will begin in spring 2024, will preserve the road and make it more accessible to the public and emergency services. The area targeted is in a large stretch of open land used by hikers, cyclists and hunters, which is also in a high fire danger area. The RRPO is seeking donations to help fund the project; a $15 donation buys a 50-pound bag of asphalt cold patch. For volunteer and donation information, visit https://ridgeroute.org/pothole-project.
Mark your calendars!

The Newhallywood Silent Film Festival will be held Feb. 16-18, 2024, with showings at the Newhall Family Theatre during the day and at The Main during the evening. More details in January, visit their website www.newhallywoodfilmfest.org for updates.
HISTORY HUB
We will be featuring short items from the organizations that surround our Center in every issue; in the meantime, please visit their websites to get information on their upcoming events.

Friends of Hart Park
www.friendsofhartpark.org

Walk of WesternStars
https://oldtownnewhall.com/walk_of_the_western_stars/

Old Town Newhall Walking Tour
https://oldtownnewhall.com/walking-tour/

Placerita Nature Center
www.placerita.org

Vasquez Rocks
https://parks.lacounty.gov/vasquez-rocks-natural-area-and-nature-center

Rancho Camulos Museum
www.ranchocamulos.org

Ft. Tejon Historic Park
https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page-id+585

Ridge Route Communities
www.ridgeroutemuseum.org

Fillmore Historical Museum
fillmore.museum@gmail.com

It’s not too late! Donate to the SCVHS now by clicking HERE! Thank you!

The Dispatch is edited by Carol Rock. Questions and comments can be sent to crock@scvhs.org.