SANTA CLARITA HISTORY CENTER
DISPATCH
A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

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June 2026

Award-winning artist’s works donated

At top, “Ride to Spirit on the Back of Freedom,” ceramic, by Fred Wilson. Bottom left, Wilson with two of his creations; right, an unnamed ceramic piece

The Historical Society has recently acquired some unique sculptures from the collection of the late artist Fred Wilson (1932-2012), an award-winning artist whose works have been featured in

galleries in California, New York, and Europe.

Wilson, who once taught ceramics and textile painting to community members, as well as art at Hart High and sculpture classes at Golden Oak adult school, had a studio in Val Verde. He left the SCV for New Mexico in 1975 and received the New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 2007.

Items from this collection will be featured in gallery space currently being developed at the History Center. To read more about Fred Wilson, check out the article in the July edition of Santa Clarita Magazine.

SCVHS a good example for museums

SCVHS commended by evaluators for museum quality storage techniques.

Senior Archivist **Eva Gritz** was putting techniques she learned during a visit from the Northeast Document Conservation Center into practice when she set up our document storage area.

After sharing her setup with NEDCC, she was surprised to get an email from the organization asking permission to use the photograph in their training video. They were looking for imagery that showed flooding prevention and elevated shelving for collections and found Eva's storage area an excellent example.

"It's so neatly organized as well!" they added. Proud to be of service to the preservation community. Special thanks to **Guy Horanberg** and **Mike Jarel** for helping with setup.

Friend of Society donates specialized storage

Former board member and graphic artist **Greg Wilzbach** recently donated flat filing cabinets from his home art studio to the Historical Society. They were immediately put to use protecting the Society's documents and photographs in storage. Thanks Greg!

The support of our community is responsible for our success. Won't you help by making a donation to the SCVHS? You can help us provide interesting programs, protect our collection of artifacts, and be a part of preserving historic resources. It's as simple as clicking HERE. (Thanks! We can't do it without you!)

Another successful dam tour

Tour leaders at LADWP Powerhouse 2 (from left) Ann Stansell, Alan Pollack, and Frank Rock tell tour participants about the 1928 dam collapse.

The annual tour of St. Francis Dam disaster site was moved to May this year, a plan that worked out great; participants had sunny skies and beautiful weather for their exploration of San Francisquito Canyon. Nearly 100 people learned about that fateful night in 1928 when the dam

collapsed, sending a flood of water through the canyons that destroyed farms, homes, families, and livestock, as well as changing the landscape forever.

Participants attended a pre-tour lecture at the Newhall Family Theatre before boarding busses for the dam site. Thanks to **Raising the Curtain Foundation** for sponsoring the lecture location. At the site, groups took moderate hikes through the ruins and learned more about the devastation and its resolution.

There's a good chance that the 2027 tour will be held in May as well - watch this page starting in January for the latest news. Special kudos to tour leaders/speakers: **Ann Stansell**, **Frank Rock**, **Alan Pollack** and **Dianne Hellrigel**.

Speaking of anniversaries…

"The Last Spike" by Mian Situ, commemorating the joining of northern and southern railroad tracks near Lang Station in Acton. On display at the Saugus Train Station Museum in the Santa Clarita History Center.

Coming up September 5, we are working on an event to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the "wedding of the rails" when railroad magnate Charles Crocker pounded a gold spike into the rails near Lang Station, completing the railroad system between northern and southern California.

Details for this year's event will be available in the next Dispatch, but if you'd like to see some art and artifacts now, come to the Saugus Train Station Museum on Saturdays between 1-4 pm and check out the giclee prints by artist Mian Situ, as well as our display case of items from the 100th anniversary.

DONATE

Long-time docent Gordon Uppman dies

Docent Gordon Uppman gives a tour of the Saugus station.

Gordon Uppman, a familiar face around the Saugus Train Station back in the Heritage Junction days, died May 14. Leon Worden shared “Gordon was a wonderful guy who was a friendly and enthusiastic volunteer for the SCV Historical Society, Rancho Camulos Museum, and Placerita Canyon Nature Center. We will all miss him.”

Free California Historian Passports offered

Special passports offering free admission to historic parks in California are being offered by the state. The Antelope Valley Indian Museum State Park is one of more than 30 locations welcoming visitors eager to learn about history.

California State Parks is offering a special edition Historian Passport free to download through the Fourth of July weekend. The Historian Passport (normally $50) is FREE and valid for the rest of 2026 at more than 30 state historic parks throughout California, where visitors can immerse themselves in the state’s colorful history.

The passports provide admission for up to four people per pass. Download the pass HERE (you must create an acount with reservecalifornia.com to get the pass) and use it for unlimited visits to participating historic parks from Juneteenth (June 19) until the end of the year. The program is supported by donations from the California State Parks Foundation and the California State Railroad Museum Foundation.

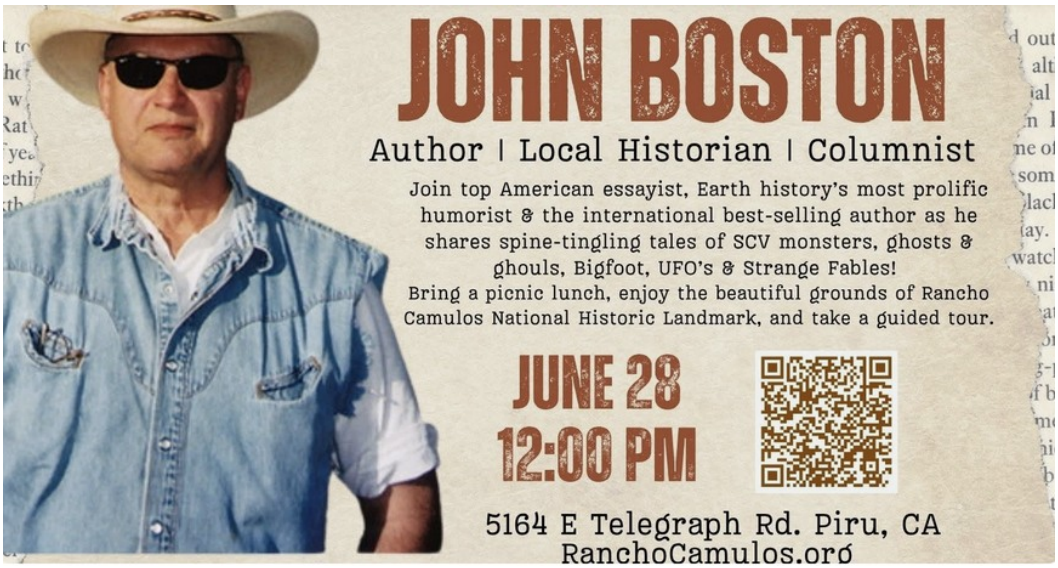
HISTORY IS ALL AROUND US!

We are surrounded by like-minded historical and cultural places to visit that offer interesting and entertaining programming! And by visiting, you're helping a nonprofit organization provide educational and recreational programs to your community. Go explore today!

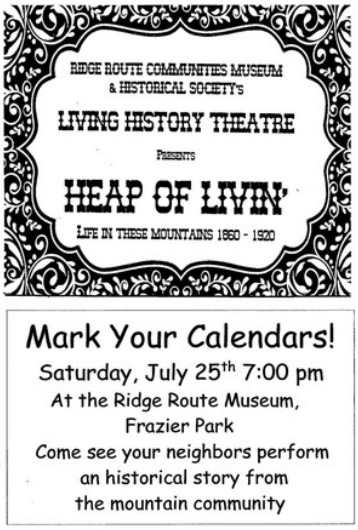
Celebrate Juneteenth at Val Verde Park

Pride Outside at Vasquez Rocks Natural Area

Boston’s at Camulos again!



Coming soon: a theatrical extravaganza



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 Western Stars

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

Museum of Neon Art (Glendale)

www.neonmona.org

Don't miss the annual parade! It starts at Hart Park, goes down Main Street, turns on to Lyons, then turns down Orchard Village Road. Lots of great viewing spots! Enjoy fireworks (please leave them to the professionals!) at the Valencia Town Center at sundown. For more info, click HERE

The Santa Clarita History Center Dispatch is supported, in part, by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture as part of the Creative Recovery LA, an initiative funded by the American Rescue Plan.

It's not too late! Donate to the SCVHS now by scanning the QR code. Thank you!

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

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