

# TATTERED TIDBITS

ALPINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Volume 1, Issue 3

May 2007

## Special points of interest:

- Alpine History Day Celebration—don't miss it!
- Just a reminder—send your membership renewal (if it slipped your mind) or join today!
- Beekeeping exhibit in the Beaty House starting June 2—"bee" sure to see it!

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Alpine  
Historical  
Society  
P. O. Box 382  
Alpine, CA 91903

## ALPINE HISTORY DAY CELEBRATION —JUNE 2!

The annual Alpine History Day Celebration will be held on Saturday, June 2, 2007, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Alpine Historical Society's museum, 2116 Tavern Road, Alpine, California. All are invited to attend this event—our only major annual fundraiser!

- Tap your feet to live "good old" music
- Take the opportunity to bid on wonderful silent auction items
- Tour the two old pioneer houses and see the new renovations
- See the historical displays and memorabilia

- Talk about the restoration of the Model T Ford with its owner
- Jump and jump and jump some more on the fun jump
- Hear the talented third graders read their award winning essays on Alpine history
- Lunch on homemade chili, salad, bread, drink and an ice cream sundae for only \$7.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children
- See old friends and meet new ones!

This year's special exhibit is "The History of Beekeeping

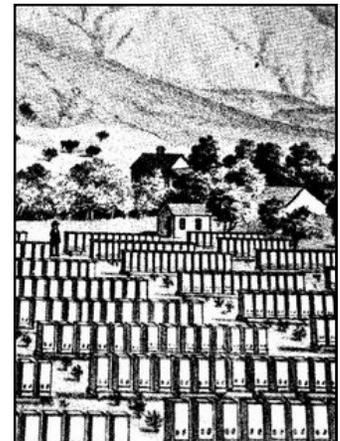
in Alpine." There will be a wealth of information about early Alpine's lucrative beekeeping industry along with a display of many beekeeping artifacts. The observation hive will allow us to watch the bees in action! We'll also be able to learn about the pioneer beekeeper in the area, John Harbison, and see a replica of Harbison's California Hive which was patented in 1859.

Mark your calendar today for this special event—there will be something for everyone to enjoy!■

***Alpine is a special place—come celebrate with us!***



**The photograph on the left is of John Stewart Harbison, pioneer Alpine beekeeper. The copy of a lithograph on the right depicts Harbison's Alpine hives, circa 1860.**





Bill Waterworth and Paul Walker working on the replica of the Harbison Hive

**“The first honey ever to grace the table of Queen Victoria came from a Harbison apiary.”**  
Reported in the *Troy (New York) Times* on December 14, 1884.



John S. Harbison and his section honey boxes, circa 1905

## John S. Harbison—“King of the Beekeepers”

John S. Harbison was born on September 29, 1826. His grandfather, John Harbison, and his grandmother, Massey Harbison, were among the first settlers of Western Pennsylvania.

Most of his early life was spent farming; however, in 1854, having an attack of gold fever, he left home and headed for California. He soon realized that mining was lots of work for very little reward and decided to pursue something with which he was familiar. He sent home for an assortment of seeds and fruit trees. When the shipment arrived, he started the first nursery of fruit and shade trees in the Sacramento Valley. From these trees started the great orchards which line the banks of the Sacramento River. In May, 1857, he returned to his Eastern home and began

preparations for shipping a quantity of bees to California and, after a journey of about four weeks, landed sixty-seven colonies of bees safely in California. Thus began the history of beekeeping in California.

Following is an article, from the Ticolor Collection, which was reprinted in *The Reader* on February 24, 1994: “While many San Diegans equate the man with the Sweetwater River valley named Harbison Canyon, members of the bee industry know the Beaver County, Pennsylvania native by another moniker—“King of the Beekeepers.” During the 1870’s, when anyone operating more than one hundred hives of bees was considered a large beekeeper, Harbison owned and operated 3,750 hives, scattered from Fallbrook to the Mexican border. By 1874, bee-

keeping had become a major industry in San Diego County, with over one-half million pounds of the sweet, viscid liquid produced by bees feeding on the nectar of local mountain sage.

Harbison arrived in San Diego in 1869 and revolutionized the honey industry. In 1873, when California produced so much honey that the Pacific coast markets couldn’t absorb it all, he loaded 21,000 pounds of comb honey and sent it to Chicago by steamship and train. His innovative “section honey boxes” became the industry standard. And after the great “bee fever boom” of the 1860’s had quieted down, when most “stocked” beehives sold for four dollars, “Harbison Hives” still commanded \$100 apiece.”

John Harbison—a true Alpine pioneer!■

## Welcome New Members and Volunteers!

Welcome to the following new members: Frank Ball, Lisa Herman and John Popp.

Thanks also to renewing members George Barnett, Vikki Coffey and Sharon Coop and Scarlett Spencer.

We are most grateful to our generous donors for their recent cash donations: George Barnett, Vikki Coffey,

Sharon Coop, Judy Matlock and Scarlett Spencer.

If you haven’t mailed your membership envelope to renew your membership, now would be a great time to do so! Your support will be much appreciated.

Volunteers are always welcome. If you have special talents you are willing to

share, please contact Carol Morrison at 445-2544. We have a myriad of “wants”—volunteers are always needed and your work will be greatly appreciated. Let us know your specialty!

Helping with the June 2 AHD Celebration would be a great place to start—please call today!■

## Our Dedicated Volunteers: Don Tarr

Don Tarr has served as Chair of the Alpine Historical Society's Third Grade Essay Contest for the past three years and also serves as Secretary of the Board. He is a volunteer who truly makes a difference in our community.

Don is a native San Diegan and grew up in National City. Early on he became interested in local history, doing research on the early history of National City as his Eagle Scout project. He also wrote a family history of his three sets of great grandparents who arrived in the San Diego area in the 1880's and 1890's, settling in El Cajon and San Diego.

This interest in history led him to his vocation—teaching. He worked for the Grossmont High School District for 35 years as a teacher, counselor, vice principal and special education administrator, retiring in 1988. Don still works one day a week chairing the Special Education team at Chaparral High School.

Don and his wife Anne met through joint fraternity/sorority activities at San Diego State University. They have three grown children, four grandchildren and a great granddaughter.

Don and Anne are active members of the East County Retired Teachers

Chorus and participate in about 20 performances each year.

When the Tarrs moved to Alpine ten years ago they decided they needed to learn more about Alpine's history. While volunteering in his grandson's classrooms at Boulder Oaks Elementary School, Don became aware of the local history unit in the third grade classes. Obtaining a copy of Beatrice La Force's book, Anne and Don both became hooked and they soon joined the Alpine Historical Society—a step which has truly benefited the Society and its membership! Thanks, Don, you are appreciated.■



Don Tarr

**Our pioneer houses are open the last Saturday and Sunday of each month from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.**

**Stop by and visit soon!**

## April Quarterly Meeting

The quarterly meeting of the Alpine Historical Society was held on Sunday, April 22, 2007, at the Alpine Woman's Club. Those in attendance were treated to an excellent luncheon followed by a most interesting speaker.

Dr. G. Gage Skinner spoke about his beekeeping experiences. Dr. Skinner

began his beekeeping hobby while he was still in high school and his interest has spanned a period of over 50 years.

The presentation provided valuable information to the volunteers who are at work preparing the exhibit for the Alpine History Day Celebration. With the ongoing news media coverage re-

garding colony collapse disorder and the loss of bees throughout the world, the subject was of particular interest.

Revised bylaws, approved by the Board in December, 2006, and presented to the membership at the January, 2007 meeting, were also voted upon and approved.■

## Museum Update

The Dr. Sophronia Nichols House has recently undergone a major renovation. New flooring has been installed in the kitchen and

the entire restroom has been remodeled to provide handicapped access. These changes were funded by a Community

Enhancement Grant from San Diego County. Jill Sing has decorated the restroom—it looks wonderful! Drop in for a peek.■



AHS President Carol Morrison and speaker G. Gage Skinner

**Alpine Historical  
Society**

2116 Tavern Road  
P. O. Box 382  
Alpine, CA 91903

Phone: 619-659-8740  
E-mail:  
info@alpinehistory.org

**We're on the Web!**

[www.alpinehistory.org](http://www.alpinehistory.org)

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Send notices via: E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Category (please check one):**

Student \$5

Family \$35

Business \$50

Senior \$15

Nonprofit Org. \$30

Business Life \$1,000

Individual \$25

Life \$500

**Amount Enclosed:**

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Interest for Volunteers:**

Building Preservation

Technical/Clerical

Where Needed

Please complete this form and include your check payable to the Alpine Historical Society, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

*Thank you for helping to preserve Alpine's history!*

Stop by our Museum Store to browse through the numerous brochures pertaining to Alpine history and look at the books and other items available for sale! It's well worth the trip and you'll enjoy seeing the recently completed renovations in the Nichols house! The museums are open the last Saturday and Sunday of each month from 2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.

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