

## Upcoming Events

For the safety of our visitors and volunteers, the museum is temporarily closed, and sponsored events will be rescheduled when it is safe to do so.

## Inside this issue:

- Our New Life Members, Rita & Jim David, page 2
- Membership Update, page 2
- Remembering Bill Waterworth, page 3
- We Remember Vikki Coffey, page 3
- A Mountain Man's Sage Advice, page 3
- Timeline: The Alpine Store, 1885–2012, page 5
- Membership Application, page 6

## NEW COMMUNITY PARK

In February 2019, many residents cheered the announcement that San Diego County would purchase 98 acres of land adjacent to Wright's Field for a community park and additional open space for the Wright's Field Nature Preserve. The northern panhandle of the new parkland was originally purchased by Barth Casty in 1892, the larger southern portion was part of the Homestead granted to Henry J. Steil in 1890. A local developer purchased the 98 acres decades ago but was unable to get permits for development. The County is in the planning phase for the new park and has solicited community input to the initial plans. Alpiners who have reviewed the plans have var-

ious reactions from cheering the proposal for family picnic grounds along with a sports complex and outdoor activity areas to booing the plans based anticipated traffic congestion, wildfire risk and the excessive water use projections. The Board of Directors of the Alpine Historical and Conservation Society joined with other community leaders and organizations to ask the County to provide additional information or undertake studies in three critical areas summarized here.

### 1. Water Resources

The use of potable water for irrigation is highly questionable in San Diego County where such water is precious. If possible, the County should use reclaimed water for irrigation needs and/



*Alpine County Park, full map at [sdparks.org/publicmeetings](http://sdparks.org/publicmeetings)*

or significantly downsize the area where irrigation is needed. If a well is planned, we request that a full environmental impact study be

*(continued on page 3)*

*An historical perspective on Wrights Field, by Albert Simonson*

## OUR NATURE PARK

If you want to know what is absolutely unique in Alpine, you need to take a tour of our Mesa del Arroz, (i.e. Wrights Field) right behind Joan MacQueen Middle School.

The old Spanish name was first shown on an 1846 map of the Alpine/ Viejas area, and appears in various old documents. It means "Grassy Mesa," and to early rancheros like the Osuna brothers, sons of San Diego's first

mayor, grass and water were what you needed to raise cattle. In that hide-and-tallow economy, the surrounding brushy hills were worthless.

Some people just like the solitude of this big open space. Some appreciate that it is a rare so-called "California Native Grassland," with rare plants such as were common when pronghorn antelope and bears wandered here, before Spaniards introduced European plant

species. Flower enthusiasts like to search for the rare and beautiful chocolate lily, or mission bell.

I like it because it is a great place to bicycle, and because the historic beginnings of East County are still visible there upon the earth. The most notable of these is a long stone wall, enclosing about twenty acres of rock-free soil. The land just outside the wall is rocky.

*(continued on page 4)*



**JOHN DEWITT  
MUSEUM**

2116 TAVERN ROAD  
ALPINE, CA 91901

Open 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.  
last weekend of each month

Tom & Judy Myers, Editors  
619-885-8063

## OUR NEW LIFE MEMBERS: RITA & JAMES DAVID

We are delighted to welcome our newest life members **Rita and James David**.

Rita is originally from New York and James from New Jersey. They moved to San Diego in 1978, where they established three businesses: an Insurance Agency, a Pension Administration, and a Medical Brokerage. Jim and Rita moved to Alpine about 20 years ago, living

in Palo Verde Ranch for 15 years before moving to their current home 5 years ago. They have four grandchildren, all living in San Diego.

Rita has remarked at the many changes in Alpine during their time here, but they still see it as a wonderful, friendly community. Many in Alpine know Jim and Rita as they have developed many friends here. Rita is a past president of the

Alpine Woman's club and fondly remembers the outstanding board and officers who assisted her there. She was instrumental in establishing the Woman's Club Scholarship program that has assisted many Alpine high school seniors to attend college. Both Jim and Rita joined as life members and we are grateful for their support and encouragement.

---

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

---

*A Warm Welcome to Our New Members:* James & Rita David, Laurie Hallihan

*A Grateful Thank You to Our Renewing Members:* Carlyne Allbee, Brenda Clark, Richard & Jane Kelso, Anna Knuth, Pam Lawless, Michael Lembeck, Jo Moreland, Louise Phipps, Jim & Babs Rosenberg, Jill Sing, Elizabeth Love Smith, Scarlett & Gary Spencer, Janis Vanderford, Susan Walter

*Many thanks to the following for their generous financial donations:*  
Brenda Clark, Laurie Hallihan, Richard & Jane Kelso, Pam Lawless, Jo Moreland, Louise Phipps, Kevin & Alejandra Schumacher, Jill Sing, Elizabeth Love Smith, Janis Vanderford

---

*Special Thanks of Appreciation for renewing their Business Memberships for 2021:*

Barons Market • Laurie Hallihan, State Farm Insurance

## RECOGNITION OF OUR CURRENT LIFETIME MEMBERS

Carlette Anderson • Deborah Anderson • George & Joan Anderson • Mark L. Anderson  
Roy & Willa Athey • Franklin R. Ball • Pat & Joe Brunold • David Carey • Lisa & Dave Celeste  
Ted Christensen • James H. Cleland • James David • Rita David • Peggy & Jim Easterling • Beverly Falor  
Katie & Brian Ford • Vincent Fritts • Paul Gonya • Gail Wilson Guth • Janet M. Harris • Linda Harshberger  
Ann Hill • Leslie Holben • Ken & Denise Hujing • Ben Johnson • Bill & Diane Keltner • Jill & Shawn Killion  
John Krempp • Barbara Lea LaForce • J. Clayburn LaForce • Joanne & Martin Marugg • Carol Morrison  
Tom & Judy Myers • Helen Porter • Kurt Scherbaum • Albert Simonson • Donna Sisson • Virginia Sisson  
Anne Tarr • Elma Terry • Rodney & Guille Tuttle • Paul & Carol Walker • Joan Waterworth

## RECOGNITION OF OUR LIFETIME BUSINESS MEMBERS

Brabazon Alpine Paving and Trucking • Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians  
Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians • RGT Charitable Trust • Rock Canyon Animal Rescue Foundation  
Turvey Granite Pit • Chris Wiley—Primary Residential Mortgage

**CURRENT MEMBERSHIPS:** Life Members ~ 50, Current Members ~ 88, Members up for Renewal ~ 16

## REMEMBERING BILL WATERWORTH

**B**ill Waterworth, a long-time resident of Alpine and Life Member of AHS passed away on April 29, 2021.

Bill volunteered with many organizations, having served as Treasurer and Property Manager for many years with the AHS and he volunteered with the Alpine Library Friends Association, where they remember that his knowledge of history was legendary and many patrons enjoyed long conversations with him. Bill also enjoyed reading books with Alpine's elementary children, stimulating their interest in



reading. He spent nearly every Wednesday morning for over a year restoring the Walker Buggy, and at home he was an avid gardener. Bill was a museum docent, always on hand to describe the farm exhibit when Alpine's third graders toured the museum. Bill, along with Ed Morrison, built one of the most popular exhibits among young visitors to the John DeWitt Museum, the "outhouse", and he collaborated with Paul Walker to build the replica Harbison Hive exhibit. We will miss him.

### *New Community Park, continued from page 1*

conducted to examine the potential effects on the surrounding groundwater table, and that a hydrologic assessment be done to analyze the impacts to private homeowners and existing wellheads nearby.

#### **2. Wildfire Risk**

When more people gather in the park, the probability that they ignite a fire increases. To mitigate this risk, fire hydrants must be provided at key locations. Activities involving fire, such as barbecue pits, must not be included in the design. We request that the County adopt a "no open flames" policy for the Alpine County Park, and that it be vigorously enforced.

#### **3. Traffic Safety**

If public roads are to be the primary means of getting to and from this park, then traffic studies need to be conducted, a risk assessment done, and roadway conditions improved with a focus on traffic calming and pedestrian safety. We urge the County agencies to work collaboratively on roadway improvements addressing pedestrian safety along South Grade Road. Crosswalks at both park entrances should be considered, along with bike lanes, additional signage, and DG sidewalks where possible.

*Information is currently available on the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation website (DPR), [sdparks.org/publicmeetings](http://sdparks.org/publicmeetings). Comments and questions may be sent to Park Project Manager, Marcus Lubich at [Marcus.Lubich@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Marcus.Lubich@sdcounty.ca.gov).*

## WE REMEMBER VIKKI COFFEY

**V**ikki Coffey, one of our longest serving volunteers with the Alpine Historical & Conservation Society, passed away this year on Good Friday, April 2, 2021.

A retired schoolteacher, Vikki became a member of the AHS in 2000. She has volunteered as a museum docent for many years, guiding visitors through the museum during Open House events. Many of you may remember being served ice cream sundaes by Vikki and her husband, Paul, for many years at our Annual



History Day event.

Vikki also served as liaison with the Alpine schools for the third grade school tours of the museum, and she coordinated the annual history essay contest for third graders.

She served as the Secretary of the Board of Directors for many years, and arranged for guest speakers at our bi-monthly membership meetings. Vikki was a woman of many talents and with a sweet disposition. She is missed by all who knew her.

## A MOUNTAIN MAN'S SAGE ADVICE:

*"Be a curious person."*

**W**e received this excellent advice at our April Program from G. Gage Skinner—instead of sitting around being bored, or watching TV, he encouraged us all to go out and explore the world around us—find something interesting in nature or in one of the many libraries or museums in San Diego County to spark our curiosity. The San Diego region has a rich history, beginning with the Kumeyaay and continuing through eras of exploration and settlement by the Spanish, Portuguese, Russians, British and Americans. We live at a meeting point for many cultures. This region is also a multi-faceted environment, with ocean beaches and rocky cliffs on the west, giving way to chaparral and foothills, then to mountains, and finally to desert regions eastward. There is always something to explore in San Diego's great outdoors.



Gage, well-known throughout East County as the "Mountain Man", often appears in parades, mountain man reenactment events, and speaking engagements wearing authentic, traditional attire. He is also an expert beekeeper, naturalist, anthropologist and professor.

Thank you Gage for a most interesting presentation and for your sage advice.



### *Our Nature Park, continued from page 1*

Much of the stone for Alpine's barbecue pits was stolen from this wall, now greatly diminished from the four-and-a-half-foot height evident in a 1928 photograph.

On the 1846 map, this place is crosshatched, which by mission and rancho custom indicated a grain planting. And, indeed, the documentary record confirms that trains of Indian-led ox carts passed from here on a tedious trail to San Diego's army depot in 1853. Even without this knowledge, it is clear that only cultivation of grain would have been feasible on this heavy clay soil.

North of the grain field is a different kind of agrarian wall, built up of earth with stone facing, and very broad. Its top forms a nearly level line as the wall passes over sloping terrain, suggesting that it may have once supported an irrigation conduit, now vanished, probably of wood. Several other segments of stone wall exist on this land, but their purposes are less amenable to interpretation.

The Back Country Land Trust, owners and protectors of the land, have an excellent 1928 aerial photo, which shows that little has changed in three-quarters of a century. The trees have grown somewhat, and the stone walls have been reduced in height.

We can probably blame much of the plundering on Ludwig Schmidt, who was reported by old-timer Neil Galloway to have built many of the early fireplaces around here. Ludwig, who also was known as Louis Smith, settled on this land March 13, 1888 and built his house. The foundation is still there, under a group of tall eucalyptus, in the northern part of the land, which has been saved for public use. Next to it is a foundation to an adobe building which may date from earlier occupation.

At first glance, the grain field wall may appear to have been randomly piled up. Closer study shows it to have diagnostic characteristics of unusual width and a cobble core.

Kumeyaay natives left a number of stone wall remnants around Alpine, but this wall exhibits straight lines and arcs when seen from above. It may have been built by natives, but probably under mission or rancho guidance. Prehispanic Indians had no need to protect grain crops from range cattle, but the introduction of European cattle put at risk most crops.

In the early 1840's, the mission administrator was San Diego's first mayor. His family came from Loreto, now in Baja California. His sons ended up owning the entire Alpine area in 1846. It will now perhaps not surprise you to find out that walls of this type are found around Loreto. Good specimens are found around Misión San Xavier, the best preserved stone mission church in the Californias.

These so-called "dry" (or unmortared) rounded-stone field walls are not known to exist anywhere else around here, but they are found in different parts of Latin America. Some even predate Spanish influence, such as a very similar wall around a funerary precinct at Ihuatzio in central Mexico. An old-timer there explained to me that extremely heavy stones were manhandled into position with stone boats and levers.

England, and even New England, have dry walls of different configuration. They are protected by law and they contribute much to the charm of the countryside.

The discovery of Alpine's field walls aroused great interest among academics in California. Not only is it apparently a rare relic of our Indian and Hispanic past, but the enormity of effort required for its construction amazes all who see it.

There must have been strong motivation to move so many tons of rock. One clue to motivation is that, before the early 1870's, the law of the open range prevailed. Rancheros had no liability if their range cattle trampled or ate your crop, so you needed a fence around it. Another clue is that when the Osuna brothers petitioned the government for this land, the mission padre cited a need to "prevent incursions and rustling by gentiles [heathen Indians]."

Being strategically located at a narrow chokepoint in the open grassland corridor between brushy hills, the walls would have served both purposes perfectly. Traffic of men and cattle could have been controlled by vaqueros between the flanking heights.

With the passage of new fence laws and the invention of barbed wire, vaqueros were no longer needed to follow the herds. Most hung up their "chaparreras" (chaps) for a last time, said "adios" to a proud Spanish-Indian tradition and passed into history transmogrified into a John Wayne image. Now, no western museum is complete without a display board of the early barbed wire. That brought an end to an era.

So what is special about Alpine is that it shows how things were in the west before barbed wire, in the days of open rangeland.

Recently, members of the Alpine Historical Society were taken on one of the Back Country Land Trust's regular tours of the land. The society's president, Carol Morrison, probably summed up everyone's feelings when she said that Alpine now has truly unique resources with which to promote tourism and education.

"We are all just astonished at how much the Back Country Land Trust has been able to accomplish for the benefit of the community," she said. "I can see this land becoming a living classroom just behind the new school."

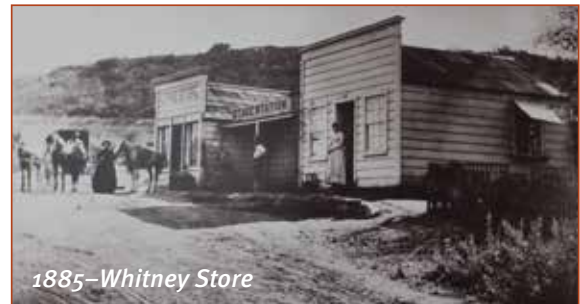


## TIMELINE: THE ALPINE STORE, 1885–2012

Some unverified accounts say the first store and post office in Alpine was established around 1865 by Henry J. Whitney. But certainly a successful store would need a sufficient customer base to be viable, and there were hardly any settlers here then. However, we have found that a U.S. Postal Bulletin establishes the first Post Office in Alpine on November 10, 1885, and the next day, November 11, Henry J. Whitney was designated as the Alpine Postmaster. Although it's

possible that the store and perhaps a mail drop were established earlier, we can only say for certain that the first Store and Post Office existed in Alpine in 1885.

This Whitney Store and its many successors served the community for nearly 80 years, under various owners and at several locations. Information from notable Alpine historians, such as Beatrice



1885–Whitney Store

La Force, Albert Simonson, and Jim Hinds, helps us piece together the following timeline.

- 1885**—The **WHITNEY STORE** and **POST OFFICE** is located on the south side of Alpine Blvd., south of the Alpine Creek and east of Marshall Road.
- 1890**—Whitney sold the store to Charles F. Emery who named it the **ALPINE CENTRE STORE**. Emery owned it until it burned down in 1904.
- 1905**—T. M. Albee built a larger new building on the north side of the road facing the site of the original store. The new store, located at the corner of W. Victoria and Alpine Blvd., was named **ALPINE STORE**.
- 1909**—Edwin B. Snow acquired the **ALPINE STORE**, and he became the Postmaster.
- 1913**—John B. Wilkinson ran the store for a year.
- 1914**—Mr. and Mrs. Harold Flegal bought the **ALPINE STORE** after purchasing the Brabazon Vineyard a year earlier.
- 1916**—The Flegals, concerned that they would not be able to sell wine after prohibition laws were passed, sold the store to C. V. and Maude Hilton so they could focus on making pure grape juice from the Brabazon vineyard.
- 1933**—The **ALPINE STORE** burned down and C. V. Hilton built a new store with an Adobe style façade, at the same location. Hilton leased the store to Art and Alice Simmons.
- 1936**—Gordon and Mava Wilson with their four children took over the **ALPINE STORE**. Mava and Gordon Wilson ran the store until they retired in 1951, turning the business over to their son, Jack.
- 1963**—Headlines in the *Alpine Echo* newspaper proclaimed: HISTORIC ALPINE STORE PROPERTY SOLD - PURCHASE MADE BY SAN DIEGO DOCTOR FOR INVESTMENT. The **ALPINE STORE** closed its doors forever as a grocery store and was renovated to house multiple businesses, among which were *Clark's Home Furnishings*, the *Frontier Gallery* and the *Barbershop*.
- 2012**—The **ADOBE STORE** as it came to be known was, without notice to the community, demolished hastily to make room for a new multipurpose commercial building that includes several apartments on the second floor.

1890–Alpine Centre Store



1933–Alpine Store



Alpine Historical & Conservation Society  
P. O. Box 382  
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

*Address Service Requested*

**ALPINE  
HISTORICAL &  
CONSERVATION  
SOCIETY**

P. O. Box 382  
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

**619-485-0625**

E-mail: [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org)

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.alpinehistory.org](http://www.alpinehistory.org)

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

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

Street Address/P.O. Box: \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Send Newsletters via:  E-mail  U.S. Mail

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

- Student \$5     Individual \$25     Nonprofit \$30     Business \$50  
 Senior (1) \$15     Family \$35     Nonprofit Life \$600     Business Life \$1,000  
 Senior (2) \$20     Life \$500

**Amount Enclosed:**

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

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

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

**Volunteer Opportunities:**

- Museum Open Houses     History Day  
 Programs & Events     Oral Histories  
 Exhibit Development     Archival Data Entry  
 Garden Maintenance     Other \_\_\_\_\_

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