



Ridge Route Communities
MUSEUM
& Historical Society

Summer 2013

The Ridge Route Rambler

We're nuts  about history.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from Susan Amon

As we work our way through summer, we find ourselves losing another Board member. Reluctantly, Dale Sheldon has had to leave us due to work conflicts. Thanks, Dale for your efforts on the Board. Dale continues to work with the Museum developing genealogical information on local families. Dale's resignation, of course, means there's room on the Board for new members. Please let us know if you are interested.

As you've heard me express before, fund raising is constantly on our minds and though we continue to find small ways to raise funds here and there, we find ourselves in need of someone who can help us develop an on-going strategy for fund raising. If this is something you have experience with and an interest in doing, please give the Museum a call. We'd love to talk with you.

I've been working with the Kern County Roads Department to authorize Museum road signage along Frazier Mountain Park Rd. and at the intersection of Monterey Trail and Park Drive. Hopefully this project will begin to show fruition before the end of summer. Also, look for our new signage along the fence by the Museum entrance, designed and installed by a local printing company. Hopefully increasing the Museum's visibility will increase the Museum's attendance.

ZEPHYR TRAIN "ROARS" THROUGH FRAZIER PARK (AND BEYOND)

by Bonnie Ketterl Kane



Photo by Suverkrop family 1940

In the late 1930's – some 75 years ago – two Frazier Park teens, with the help of numerous local residents, reconstructed a working model of the famous Burlington Zephyr passenger train.

Hugh Fife's parents were the owners of the Frazier Park Market back then while Walter Osborn's parents had a summer cabin in Frazier, as well as a home in Bakersfield. The two boys became close friends on the mountain and in town, as well as on the school bus to and from Bakersfield. As is still the case, the railroad tracks ran along the north side of Bakersfield High School.

In 1935, when Walter and Hugh ("Bud") were high school juniors, they were thrilled to see the Burlington Zephyr roar past the school on its first visit to Bakersfield. They followed it to the train depot where they studied it carefully and made a decision to build a replica. Within weeks the boys had worked up a design to scale.

The Fife home and lumber yard, near the site of the present Frazier Park Market, became a railroad yard. Most of the material used in construction of the "Silver Streak" was salvaged, with permission, from the old borax mines out in Lockwood Valley where they found wheels from old trucks and mining carts and the rails the carts once ran on. The old mine site had its risks: one time Walt got caught in a cave-in and it took "Bud" an hour to dig him out. Neighbor John Lashley provided the boys with a motor, truck chasses were located for the coach beds and many additional items were created through ingenious imaginations.

Heavy "U"-shaped two-inch wide bands of steel were curved for the framework on the tops and sides, thick pieces of boiler plate were hacked out and air brakes were fashioned. The exterior was fashioned with galvanized corrugated sheet metal and covered with aluminum. Lights were installed for nighttime rides. The passenger cars were outfitted with red and green leather restaurant seats.

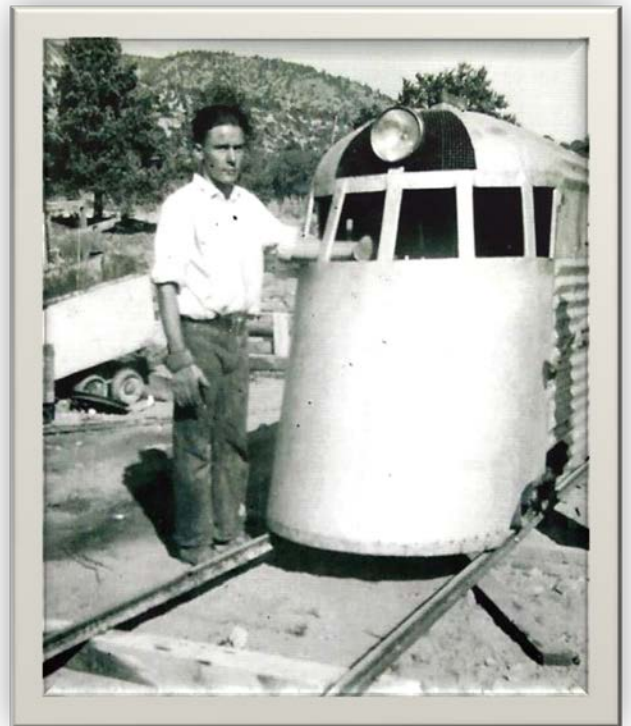
The result of Fife and Osborn's dedication to the project was a train 40 feet long and 4 1/2 feet high, weighing 7 tons. It was capable of carrying 18 passengers on a regulation narrow-gauge width track three quarters of a mile long. Plans were made to build a trestle 10 feet high over Cuddy Creek so as to give rides from the market to the playground at the park, but there is no proof that that was ever accomplished.

After moving the track to the local park to test their creation, articles appeared in the BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN, POPULAR SCIENCE and POPULAR MECHANICS. People began driving to the new little mountain community to see the miniature Zephyr. (The subdivision of Frazier Mountain Park had only been founded ten years earlier, so people were still interested in seeing it.) The enthused young men then decided to take their "Silver Streak" on the road. Fife and Osborn bought an old bus from Bakersfield High School, stripped it down and made it into a semi-trailer so they could haul the engine, two passenger cars and a half mile of track to nearby cities – pulled by their Chevrolet truck.

Walt & "Bud" started their tour in the summer of 1937 in Bakersfield, then over to San Luis Obispo. An article in the July 16, 1937 issue of the VENTURA FREE PRESS reported the train, set up from the end of California Street down to the beach, was a big hit. Their air horn called all to come and ride, and because it had lights, they would offer rides late

into the evening. After spending a week in Ventura, they moved on to Santa Barbara and other coastal cities. The highlight of the trip was being given a concession at the Monterey fair. They ended their tour in Taft, where a Pathe News cameraman took newsreel pictures of the boys and their train that were shown in theatres in Bakersfield and around the country.

The rides were 15 cents for adults and 10 cents for children. This was more than enough to cover the gas, which was 7 or 8 cents a gallon, as well as improvements to the train and lots of steak dinners. The boys slept in their truck or on the ground next to their train. However, having graduated from high school, it was time to get on with college, etc. and the young men went their separate ways. The train was sold to an oil company from the Taft/Fellows area where it was used at company picnics. Osborn went on to become a Kern County Superior Court judge in Bakersfield and Fife opened a lumber yard in Carmel.



Hugh Fife with his miniature train (Suverkrop family photo)

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125 YEARS AGO - CAMP SCHEIDECK

by Bonnie Ketterl Kane



This year marks the 125th Anniversary of the arrival of Martin Scheideck in an area that still bears his name – Camp Scheideck.

Back in 1888 Mr. Scheideck traveled to the United States with a friend, Gebhardt Wegis, another name important to the history of the area. The young men left their beloved German homeland to avoid mandatory enlistment in the army. When the two adventurers came to California, they walked from San Luis Obispo to Upper Cuyama where they felt they found an area that reminded them of southern Germany. Both claimed homesteads near the Reyes family who had been grazing cattle in the mountain valleys since the 1850's. Gebhardt married one of the Reyes daughters, Rosa, establishing the Wegis family name in that area.



Unknown persons in front of Scheideck's adobe home with post office in background (photo courtesy of Bill Smith)

Martin Scheideck constructed an adobe home and store with a wine cellar below. From the store he also ran a post office, and was known to serve his hard cider to postal customers and candy in a bucket for the children. He gained the long-held title of "Judge Scheideck", as an itinerate lawyer apparently left him a handsome set of law books which he read thoroughly and put to use in settling disputes.

The fun-loving "Judge" was known for putting on great egg hunts on both Easter Sunday and Halloween (which was his birthday) – a holiday still celebrated at Camp Scheideck.

Camp Scheideck is about 10 miles west of Lockwood Valley, a couple of miles east of Highway 33, in the Upper Cuyama Valley. Beautiful Reyes Creek rambles through the little settlement of cabins.

ACQUISITIONS

Six wonderful and rather rare books on the coastal and mountain Chumash Indian people have been donated to the Museum library by the Westlund family of Pine Mountain Club. They were a part of the collection of Pat Westlund, a local teacher, who enjoyed hiking and studying the first people of this area. The books were written by prominent anthropologists in the 1970s; several are autographed. A statement from one is how respected the Chumash People were - more than any other group of California Native Americans.

RAFFLE



photo by C. Mead

Enclosed with this issue of our newsletter should be 6 raffle tickets and a return envelope, so that our membership can participate in this year's fundraising raffle. Please return the "TICKET" portion with your name and phone number on the back along with \$5 (checks preferred). Prizes so far are:

1. a quilt stitched and donated by the Frazier Park Quilters,
2. a crocheted lavender afghan made by board member Hanni Mosig, and
3. a Family Tree offered by genealogist and former board member Dale Sheldon. The drawing will be held in December. Good Luck!

HUELL HOWSER DVD'S

You may or may not know of the passing of Huell Howser in January of this year, at the young age of 67. Huell was best known as the host of the travel show *California's Gold*, which highlighted the history and culture of small towns, landmarks and points of interest up and down the state of California. The Museum has two of his DVD's for sale in our book store: "*California's Golden Parks - Carrizo Plains*", and "*Road Trip - the Ridge Route*". Both are excellent and enjoyable!

INVITATIONAL DINNER

Board member Hanni Mosig will be hosting a fundraising dinner at her home in Pinion Pines on

Saturday September 28th. Entertainment will be provided by pianist Renee Vanasse. The Italian cuisine meal and wine will be catered by Keith from The Garden Spot in Bakersfield. Cost per plate will be \$50. Call the museum to reserve your spot.

ANNUAL PICNIC



photos by B. Kane

A great time was had by all (about 75 of us) at our annual picnic on July 20th. Ron Edsall brought his many friends and students for our musical entertainment. Burgers and "dogs" were bbq'd up by our lifetime member Don Cuddy, whose birthday was also celebrated. Bob Dorsey (originally from here but now living in Klamath Falls, OR), author of "*Growing Up in Wheeler Ridge*", visited us and even brought his banjo to join in with the musicians. Don't miss us next year in July!



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Thur. Aug. 15: "Night Talk" - A Walking Tour of Frazier Park led by our historian Bonnie Kane. Starts at 6:00 p.m. at the Museum. Cost: \$10.

Sat. Aug. 24: Rummage/**Barn Sale** at the Cuddy Barn, 10648 Cuddy Valley Road (between Darling Ave. & White Rock Rd.) from 8:00 - 3:00.

Fri. Sept. 13: 7:00 p.m. Town Hall Meeting at the Condor Room in PMC. Former board member Dale Sheldon will speak on genealogy.

Sat. & Sun. Sept. 14-15: Fort Tejon Historical Assoc. will host a "Timeline Event" and Foxtail Rangers picnic at the fort. Call the Park for details.

Sat. Oct. 5: The Ridge Route Car Tour returns! Guided by our historian Bonnie Kane & author Harrison Scott, president & founder of the Ridge Route Preservation Organization. Meet at the pkg. lot at the west end of Quail Lake on Hwy. 138 at 10:00 a.m. Number of cars and people will be limited - car pooling will be encouraged. Call the Museum to reserve a place. The tour will take three or more hours, so a picnic lunch is suggested. Cost: \$10.

Sat. Oct. 12: San Andreas Fault Tour led by Buena Vista Museum geologist Tim Elam. Meet at the Museum at 9:00 a.m. Limited to 35 people - call Museum to sign up. Cost : \$10.

DONATIONS NEEDED

We would be grateful for the donation of gently used or antique items for our Barn Sale on Aug. 24 (no clothing or electronics please). Call Daisy Cuddy at 245-2339 to make arrangements.

Also, if you don't recycle your own printer ink, please donate your used cartridges to the museum so that we can use them as a credit at Staples for our office supplies.

MANY THANKS TO

Tejon Mountain Village 

FOR THE PRINTING OF OUR NEWSLETTER!!!!

NEW ADDITIONS

A new shed has been completed at the museum by volunteer and lifetime member, Jim Kane. The shed will house miscellaneous farm and industrial equipment that has been donated over the years.



Photo by B. Kane

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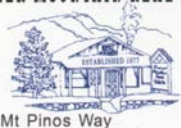
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The Museum and Historical Society
offices are located at 3515 Park Drive
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