



Ridge Route Communities
MUSEUM
& Historical Society

The Ridge Route Rambler

We're nuts  about history.

Editors: Chandra Sargent Mead & Bonnie Ketterl Kane

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PATIO COMES ALIVE!!

With funds saved and received at years-end, we decided to move forward with our long-held plans to pave our little patio. In March, a crew from System Pavers in Camarillo removed the wood chips and dirt, and did a fantastic job of laying the pavers, even including a "path" to the bridge and our Native American Center.



Just one month later, Jim & Mary Lowery and staff presented a class for a local home school group on the new patio, teaching the importance and beauty of our oak trees and how the Indians of the area would have ground and cooked acorns – delicious! It was a beautiful setting on a beautiful day.



WILDFLOWER REPORT . . .

For those of you not living in our immediate area, we share with you a report on this year's flowers. The lupine at the bottom of Grapevine Canyon made one of their best appearances in many years. The hills of Grapevine Canyon and Gorman are still green (usually turning brown by now) and the flowers have been slowly making their appearance. Wind and a cool spring seem to be delaying their full display. On the other hand, all the winter rain may give us a spectacular year.

It's a different story out in the warmer Antelope Valley, where the flowers have been in bloom since mid-March. Neenach, Fairmont and the A. V. Poppy Reserve have seen more visitors than they have in a while.



This is also a fantastic year for blooming Joshua trees, which the local native people considered a delicacy (roasting the blossoms and grinding the seeds).



1919-2019 - FROM WAR TO RANCHING IN LOCKWOOD VALLEY

Just more than one hundred years ago, with war pending, a future Lockwood Valley resident, Lewis Plush, became one of the first to enlist in the student aviation training program at the University of California and quickly advanced to the newly formed Air Service of American Expeditionary Force.

Plush was one of a few flyers in actual combat in World War I. While flying with several other planes over France, eleven German planes engaged his group in combat, and Plush was forced to crash land, with no parachute yet! He landed in an old quarry and dragged himself to a nearby chateau, belonging to a wealthy American woman who lived not far from his family in California. At her French home, Mr. Plush was cared for until he could return to Pomona where he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and, as a friend wrote, "his name was on the tip of everyone's tongue".

Lewis Plush then decided to pursue his desire for a life on land of his own. He drove north to explore the mountains and found some remote acreage on the north fork of Lockwood Creek. In 1919 Plush began the work required to stake a homestead claim. As required to make such a claim, he built a small cabin (just 14 feet x 14 feet) and began clearing the brush so he could plant an orchard of apples and cherries.

In order to finance his venture, he continued to work a job in Pomona and made the 125-mile trip on the new Ridge Route Road to spend weekends on his land. Friends often came with him to help, and several ended up claiming homesteads as well. Quite a circle of young fellows joined to help each other develop their homes and fields.

Back in Pomona, Lewis became a driver for the woman who had saved his life in France and in return, she helped him purchase a much-needed tractor and other equipment for his ranch. He drove a cut-down "flivver" Model T Ford with two bucket seats and a truck bed behind.



Lewis Plush & friend, William de Lancey, haul cedar fence posts in the "flivver"

Lewis' parents, Sadie and William Plush, would often join their son in the mountains on weekends, driving a touring vehicle called a "Hupmobile" which "Will" kept spotless and shiny – a challenge on the dusty dirt roads. Before an acceptable house was constructed, Lew built a tennis court for his mother, a Southern California women's tennis champion (even in her 50's).

Summer weather was usually cool with temperatures in the 70's, although it would occasionally reach 80 degrees. Friends and family often came for the weekend – especially for the 4th of July, when beds and sleeping bags would be spread under the pinon pine trees. Mr. Plush once recorded getting 25 pounds of pine nuts from under one tree, valued at 40 cents a pound.



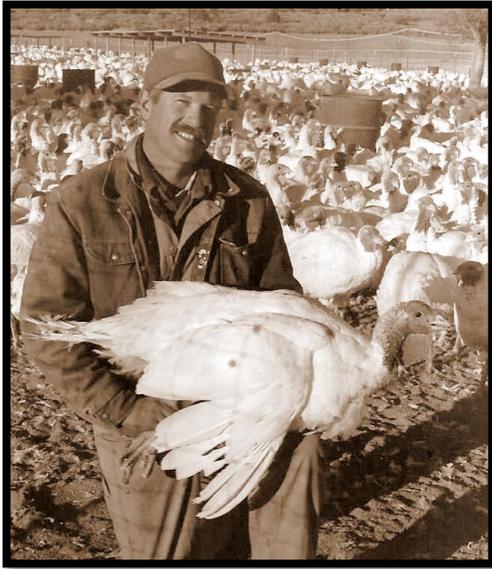
Young Plush cooking outdoors for visiting friends

Lewis Plush filed his homestead claim in 1920 and commuted to his property for three years. During that time, the handsome, husky fellow with a huge smile attracted the attention of the beautiful Ella Kleiner. Before they married, he bought four small houses from the nearby old borax mine, dismantled them and from them created a wonderful home for her. They married in 1923 and became the parents of two daughters, Louella and Lola.



Sadie, baby Louella, Ella and Lew Plush gleaning pine nuts

Many stories could be told of the joys and struggles they experienced throughout the years. Beginning in 1925, the family became life-long turkey ranchers and donated a portion of the land across from their home to the Boy Scouts of Ventura County. Pretty Louella Plush attracted the attention of one of the camp counselors, Bert Lee, Jr. Bert and Louella, and later their son Gary with his wife Lois, carried on the tradition of turkey ranching until 1999.



Gary Lee in the turkey shed

Like his father-in-law, Bert Lee, Jr. was in the Air Force. Some twenty-five years after Lewis Plush's crash in WWI, Bert's plane was the first plane shot down in World War II, at Pearl Harbor, for which he received a Purple Heart.

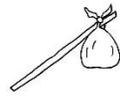
And now, 100 years after Lewis Plush first tilled the soil, Gary and Lois are preparing for retirement and readying the ranch to be sold, ending the family's dedicated years of loving care to that corner of Lockwood Valley.

Additional information on the Plush/Lee families can be found in William de Lancey's book "Homesteader's Heyday" and Bonnie Ketterl Kane's forthcoming book "A View from the Ridge Route: The Communities".

AMAZON SMILE

For those of you who might shop on Amazon, just a reminder that if you do your shopping on www.smile.amazon.com, you can designate the Ridge Route Communities Museum & Historical Society, and a portion of your purchase will be donated to us. Thank you in advance©.

UPCOMING EVENTS



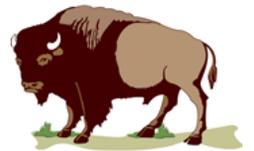
Wed. **June 5** Hobo Theme **Tea**; cost \$15; call early for reservations

Thur. **June 27** Chamber of Commerce **Mixer/Open House**

Sat. **Aug.17** Rib **Basket Weaving** Class; cost of \$15 includes materials

Sat.**Aug.31**, Sun. Mon. **Sept.1,2** it looks like we will once again have our Labor Day **Yard Sale**; stay tuned for further information and please save your items for us

Sat. **Sept. 28**: don't miss out on our **Destination Dinner** at the Ridge Route Ranch near Sandberg, with Hollywood stuntman Frank Lloyd and his bison, Star, as hosts; cost \$50/plate



Sat. **Oct.12** Ridge Route **Tour** open to the public; cost \$15 includes handout; reservations required



OUR CONTINUING VISION

A couple of issues back we told you about our dreams for the museum's future. One of them was the patio (front page), which came to fruition thanks to a large donation at the end of the year. We still look forward to adding an exhibit and meeting hall to our existing building. Your ongoing support from memberships, bookstore sales, donations and events is greatly appreciated. We have included an envelope with this issue to make it easier.



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FOR THE PRINTING OF OUR NEWSLETTER!!!

WHAT YOU MISSED



In March, our local ornithologist, Lynn Stafford, packed the house for another excellent talk, this time on Birds of Prey.

An unexpected bonus was a visit from professional falconer, Gordon Grant, with his peregrines, "Bob" and "Lucy".

In April, one of the Tejon Conservancy docents, Chris Gardner, made his "Tejon Ranch in Pictures" presentation to the Museum. If you ever have a chance to see this, it is not to be missed. The close-up quality of his photos of plants, flowers, birds and mammals that inhabit the Ranch rival National Geographic!



SPRING CLEANING . . .



Our bobcat looks on as Jim Kane and Don Billesbach make some changes to an exhibit.



Don Billesbach cuts back the grapevine planted by Curtis Newman many years ago from a cutting from Grapevine Canyon. If not cut back every year, it would have covered the entire grounds and building by now.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR DUES!

Ridge Route Communities Museum & Historical Society

PO Box 684, Frazier Park, CA 93225

New Member	Renewal		
_____	_____	General Membership (includes spouse & family)	\$25.00
_____	_____	Senior Membership	\$15.00
_____	_____	Business Membership	\$50.00
_____	_____	Lifetime Membership	\$300.00

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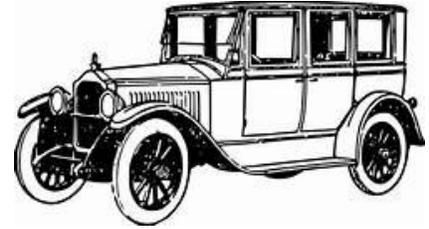
Address where acknowledgment can be sent _____

Donation: \$ _____ (to help with our monthly expenses)

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RIDGE ROUTE TOURS EXPANDED

Our tours of the old Ridge Route Road are becoming more and more popular, as we have already had one for the public and two for private groups this spring. Mike Lawler of the La Crescenta Historical Society brought his group and very kindly reported back to us that the tour was "*incredible, very entertaining*". Let us know if you have a group that would like a tour, or watch our newsletter, web site or Facebook for tour dates. We only offer the public tours in the spring and fall; the next one scheduled for October 12th. Reservations are required and the \$15 cost includes a handout to follow as you go. If you can not make it to one of the tours, you can purchase our "Self-Guided Tour of the Old Ridge Route Road" in our bookstore for \$7.



Museum Location: 3515 Park Drive, Frazier Park, CA
Museum Hours: Fri. Sat. & Sun. Noon-4:00; Summer Noon-5
Museum Phone: 661-245-7747
Museum Website: www.ridgeroutemuseum.org
Museum Email: rrchs@frazmtn.com

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RENEWAL DATE!**