



Ridge Route Communities  
**MUSEUM**  
& Historical Society

# The Ridge Route Rambler

We're nuts  about history.

Editors: Chandra Sargent Mead and Bonnie Ketterl Kane

## SMOKEY BEAR IS 75 YEARS OLD!!



As we are in that time of the year that we are ever alert for forest fires, we thought we would take this opportunity to say HAPPY BIRTHDAY to "Smokey Bear".

In the early 1900's, it is a wonder how those brave men – with little or no training – most of them volunteers – were able to

keep fires controlled as well as they did. Forest Service records indicate some of the largest area fires fought in the early years of the forest were:

2000 acres on Alamo Mountain in 1902,

2816 acres on the Ridge Route in 1928,

1940 acres at Lebec in 1912,

2370 acres above Chuchupate in 1947,

4130 acres in Lockwood Valley in 1942,

& the largest, 12,545 in the San Emigdio area in 1927.

Following the Alamo fire, Ranger Don Cuddy wrote *"Fire is out and I am glad of it for I am tired out myself"*. He had to recruit two hundred miners from the Lockwood Borax mines to fight that fire which was in an area where they obtained timber for fuel, mineshaft beams and buildings. Their women carried food and water on horseback to the men on the line.

Ranger J.D. Reyes from out Lockwood way once wrote: *"I know the horrors of forest fires only too well. I've fought so many fires it would take a long time to even mention them all"*. In 1921, Reyes spent 35 consecutive days on fires and had to go to Maricopa and raid the pool halls and saloons for more help.

Those were the days when even the head ranger did the recruiting and fighting. In one fire, Ranger Delapp, from the Ranger Station that was then in Tejon Pass, commandeered two busloads of high school boys from Los Angeles when they made a stop at Gorman. They were on their way to play a baseball game in Bakersfield dressed in their white flannel trousers, white shoes, brilliant blazers and straw

hats. Needless to say, *"they had to say good-bye to their finery"*.

Fire-fighting techniques and the delivering of men, tools and supplies improved greatly in the 1930's when mules were replaced with rugged trucks, tanker trucks and airplanes. The human-caused fires did decline in the 1930's through a national effort to educate people on fire dangers.

The Forest Service knew they need a symbol that the public could identify with the forests. The first animal to debut in fire prevention posters was the young deer *"Bambi"*, from the movie of that name that depicted the fawn caught in a fire. A bear replaced Bambi in 1944 in a campaign for fire awareness. Then in 1950, when a young bear, later named *"Smokey"*, was rescued from a New Mexico forest fire, he became the living symbol of the Forest Service, giving the public a better understanding of what the fires were doing to wildlife as well as the forest.

*"Smokey Bear"* became the most powerful force in the United States in stopping forest fires. When the program about Smokey was taken to the schools, children promised to help Smokey Bear, and as they grew to adults, they seemed to remember that promise. The Forest Service estimated that forest fires were cut in half as a result. The Smokey Bear symbol is now recognized as standing for fire prevention throughout the world. THANK YOU SMOKEY!!



View of Frazier Mountain during a 1941 fire  
(Ridge Route Antiques photo)

For those of you who are not local, we started this fire season with a sizeable fire in Grapevine Canyon that threatened the Digier Canyon residents; our amazing local firefighters were able to keep it to 208 acres. For more interesting stories of early fires in our mountains, read "View from the Ridge Route, Volume IV, The Resources", available in our bookstore or by mail (send a check for \$25, which includes shipping and handling).

## LEBEC CHURCH

The Lebec Community Church recently celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In 1919, it started as a home group of the American Sunday School Union. In 1926, it began meeting at the Pershing School No. 1 with Reverend W.A. Stephens leading the services. From 1928 and into the 30's it struggled, being reorganized by Mr. B.A. Boynton. For a time Sunday School was held in the old barracks of the fire department in Lebec, then at the new Tejon School, being led by Perry Woods and then Paw Borden in 1943.

From an interview done with John and Dorothy Schearer in 1996, we have gained some additional church history and on the actual building of the Lebec Church. In 1947, John, who had been a pilot at Mintner Field in Shafter during WWII, often accompanied Pastor Claude Downs of Bakersfield to Lebec to hold church services. John was then asked to take over the church because had taken a considerable amount of religious studies.

When he began pastoring, John was living in Manhattan Beach, where he was going to aviation mechanics school. He drove to Lebec on Friday evenings, stay with various members of the church, and leave after the youth group meeting on Sunday evening. The congregation was then meeting in the Tejon School auditorium with 30-40 attending. Members of the church had begun work on the church building, which was completed in 1948.

In 1949, John married Dorothy and they went back east so that he could complete his religious training and become ordained. He had hopes of becoming a missionary pilot but with five children, they revised those hopes and returned to Southern California. He worked at Lockheed in Burbank and again drove up to Lebec on weekends to help at the church, moving there permanently in the early 1950's. He worked in the oil fields at Mettler, but got fired when he refused to work on the weekends. He then became the custodian and bus driver at Tejon School.

In 1953, the Schearer family moved to Pomona to pastor a church, and Art & Shellie Dueck took over the Lebec Church ministry.

Many records are missing for the following years, but some of the later pastors were Fred Baltau in 1960, Richard Mangun in 1971, Charles Verden in 1978, Mark Johnson in 1980, Jim Curry in 1981, Wayne Lidbeck in 1988, Robert Carpenter and Gary Mounts in 1990, Don Hagner in 1991, Darrin Hulbert in 1994, and Scott Irwin who has been pastor since 2002.



Lebec Community Church shown in 1987

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Sat. **August 17** at 10:00 Rib **Basket Weaving Class**; offered by Bonnie Kane; \$15 cost includes materials; call to sign up

Sat. **August 31**, Sun. & Mon. **September 1 & 2** at 9-4; **Yard Sale** on Museum Grounds. No pickups. Your unwanted items will be appreciated; drop them off at the museum Mon.-Fri. 8/26-30 ONLY.



Sat. **Sept. 21** at 10:00: Corn Husk **Wreath Class** offered by Bonnie Kane; \$10 cost includes materials; call to sign up

Sat. **October 12** at 10:00; **Ridge Route Tour**; \$15 includes handout; call to sign up.



Fri. **October 18** at 7:00: **Night at the Museum**; Flashlight Scavenger Hunt

Wed. **December 4** at 2:00: Christmas **Tea** based on Alice in Wonderland



# **RIDGE ROUTE COMMUNITIES MUSEUM**

presents another

## **DESTINATION DINNER**

Saturday, **OCTOBER 5**, 2019 – 5 p.m. at the

### **RIDGE ROUTE RANCH**



Frank Lloyd & Starr (photo courtesy of Brigitte Trapp)

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*MANY THANKS TO*

*Tejon Mountain Village*

*FOR THE PRINTING OF OUR NEWSLETTER!!!*

# THIS OLD HOUSE

A new feature of our newsletter will be to highlight the history of some of our local buildings. Our featured building this issue is the "Fox Den", home of Al Fox for many years. Al bought his original Frazier Park cabin in 1928 for \$30 down and \$30 monthly payments. He soon established himself in the restaurant/bar businesses. He and a partner built the tavern on what is now Mt. Pinos Way, which has been variously called the Frazier Mountain Tavern and Sue's Tavern (currently). He also built the Pine Cone Café, which he and his wife operated for many years. He later added the dining hall and bar to it, the rocks for the wall coming from nearby Cuddy Creek. The Pine Cone Café later became the Mountain Inn, and is now La Sierra Restaurant.



In the 1930's the Foxes built the house shown at left, behind the Mountain Inn; it is not positively known who did the stonework, but it is alleged to have been done by Emmett ("Tom") Dalton, possibly of Dalton Gang fame, who did much of the stonework in that period of Frazier Park. Rumour has it that there was a tunnel between the house and business at one point.

Mr. Fox was the bartender at the Lebec Hotel when prohibition was lifted in the 30's. He also is reputed to have brought electricity to Frazier Park in the 1940's, circulating petitions to submit to So. California Edison, as his operation to that point had been coal oil lamps.

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## 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)	<b>\$25.00</b>
_____	_____	Senior Membership	\$15.00
_____	_____	Business Membership	\$50.00
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## PROGRAMS ON THE PATIO



A successful and interesting series of talks on the Mountain's Hidden History was held on our new patio throughout the month of July. Our historian, Bonnie Kane, presented information and photos on unique people, places and situations of our various mountain villages. She covered: Coming Up the Grapevine & Dead on the Vine; "Firsts" around Frazier Mountain; Frazier Park, Lake of the Woods & Lockwood Valley; and Cuddy Valley, Pine Mountain & beyond.

Our wonderful umbrella made from fabric of both the blue Japanese and yellow Gorman Christo's 1991-art exhibit of umbrellas was on display.

**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](http://www.ridgeroutemuseum.org)  
**Museum Email:** rrchs@frazmtn.com

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RENEWAL DATE!**