

The Ridge Route Rambler

We're nuts  about history.

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LOSS OF ALMA NEWMAN

On August 23, 2014 Alma Newman, wife of Curtis Newman, lost her battle with Parkinson's Disease at the age of 81. Her family moved to the Frazier Park area in 1939. Curtis's family built a small house without water or electricity in Lake of the Woods in the 20's, moving permanently from Bakersfield in 1937. Alma and Curtis met while attending the little Lebec School and married in 1950. They left "the hill" for 25 years, returning in 1989. She was a vocational nurse and later a postal worker. Alma and Curtis were early board members of the Ridge Route Communities Museum & Historical Society (before we even had a building site). Alma was the Museum's Treasurer for many years. We are grateful for the many gifts received in memory of Alma Newman.



In addition, a significant sum has been received in memory of Kathryn Treghea, who was a Snedden, a local founding family in the Lockwood Valley area.

THINGS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED (or maybe not):

Invitational Dinner: scheduled for mid August regrettably had to be cancelled. HOWEVER, many of the reservations graciously donated their refund to the museum.

The Drum and Song Circle on August 8, hosted by Sara Jane "Sunjay" Owens and Alan "Spirit Hawk" Salazar, was an interesting and successful presentation of the storytelling, music and song of the Chumash and their neighboring tribes.



"Bloomer" Tea: originally scheduled for mid September, has been rescheduled for next spring. In the meantime, a number of new underwear items have been added to the collection. Enough interest has been expressed in a "bloomer tea", that there may be several dates in 2015. Watch your newsletter for details.

San Andreas Fault Tour: September 27, led by Tim Elam, geologist from the Buena Vista Museum of



Natural History. We had a great response to our annual Tour. Attendees came from Santa Clarita, Lancaster, Pasadena, Porterville, Bakersfield, Tehachapi, Northridge, Sunland and, of course, the local communities. Fault activity was pointed out from Cuddy Valley, to Lake of the Woods, Mesa Valley Road (near Interstate 5) to Tejon Pass and Gorman. Some trivia on the well-known S.A. Fault:
 --Scientists have determined that California's largest earthquake (7.9 on the Richter scale) was centered in the west end of the Antelope Valley in 1857.
 --Apache Saddle, west of Pine Mtn. Club, is the highest point on the San Andreas Fault at 6125 ft.
 --The last major quake on the Garlock Fault, that meets the S.A. Fault just east of Frazier Park, was in 1640.



OLDEST (EUROPEAN) ACQUISITION YET. . .

We have recently received some amazing acquisitions that could date back to the early and mid-1800's. Al Fleming, actor and stunt man, settled in Lake of the Woods back in the late 1960's, when he got to know Marvin Armstrong, who worked for the county Road Department. When Marvin began bulldozing for the new Frazier Mountain Park Road, (to by-pass the Frazier Park business district) he asked Mr. Fleming to bring his metal detector to check the soil in the area of the old Sherrick/Tait Ranch at the east end of town. A location was chosen and several inches of soil were removed at a time, until they were down some six feet. Here they found a burned area and a number of rusty old items - Spanish colonial period bridle bits, spurs and keys, Civil War period bullet mold, cannon fuse covers, uniform epaulet & cape frog, as well as miscellaneous square-headed nails, scissors, saddle fittings, and a musket trigger guard, barrel, lock & hammer.

The Museum is very grateful to Al for sharing this collection with the museum. Below are just a few of the relics found:



ANNUAL RAFFLE

The awesome, amazing items that will be raffled on December 6th continue to mount. They currently are:

1. A lovely purple, ivory & teal crocheted afghan crafted by our own Hanni Mosig,
2. A red, tan & multi-colored quilt prepared by Dawn Burns (photos were in our Spring edition),
3. A certificate for 5 to a Tejon Conservancy tour,
4. A \$50 gift card to the Roadhouse Grill,
5. A \$100 certificate toward a one night stay at the Old Bear Bed & Breakfast in PMC, and
6. A certificate for two to a Wind Wolves Preserve tour "in" Maricopa.

If you don't already have raffle tickets, drop \$5 (or more) in the mail to us, and we will send you 6 tickets for every \$5.

LOCAL TRAVEL THROUGH TIME

The response to Bonnie Kane's newest book in her series, A VIEW FROM THE RIDGE ROUTE, Volume V, The Roadways, has been very gratifying. Here are a few accounts from that book, written by those who actually traveled through our mountains way back when.

J. J. Lopez, the foreman of Tejon Ranchos in the late 1800's, wrote of his family's travel on the first wagon trail 100 years before. The road was developed along an Indian trail by the Spanish Jesuit explorer/priests as early as the 1600's and became

known as El Camino Viejo or the Old Way. Mr. Lopez wrote:

"The old carreta roads had all been well-defined Indian trails when the Spanish and Mexicans started using them. Originally they had been the trails of wild animals worn deeper into the hills and plains by the Indians, animals and others in their passage from water hole to water hole. The freighters carried a pick and shovel with them to occasionally improve the trails. Otherwise they were the same as the elk, deer and antelope had left them. In the later 1700's and early 1800's, El Camino Viejo was often used as a refugee and thief's trail by those who wished to bypass the coast missions and ranchos unobserved."

Another account by trailblazer Elisha Stephens, later first resident of what became Bakersfield, tells of *"the great number of grizzly bears eating acorns"* in what became the Fort Tejon area *"so many that they looked like bands of cattle"*.

With the Gold Rush in the mid-1800's, the shorter route via Grapevine Canyon became more commonly used. In 1850 the Los Angeles Merchants Association hired men to improve the rough, rugged trails and the new road became known as the *"Los Angeles-Stockton Road"*, tying together these two major population areas. When the location for Fort Tejon was chosen at the top of Grapevine Canyon in 1854, the roadway that ran through the fort was often called *"The Tejon Road"*.

In 1858 the Butterfield Overland stage began running between St Louis and San Francisco – through Los Angeles and our mountains. Mr. Tallack, an Englishman, wrote of the stop at Fort Tejon, possibly in the summer of 1860:

"The Tejon station (across the road from the fort) was a store kept by a dry sort of Yankee, who...scarcely deigning to answer any questions put to him, set before us a supper of goat's flesh and coffee...After making a hearty meal we had again to shift into another vehicle...It being one o'clock in the morning, and...dark... we had to be...careful that none of our...packages or blankets were left behind...So we tumbled hastily into our new wagon, wrapping ourselves up in coats or blankets... as they come to hand, waiting 'til morning for more light and leisure to see which was our own."

With the advent of the automobile and the appeals for improved roadways, electric power poles and gas and oil pipelines were run through the mountains in the early 1900's as well as improvement to the dirt trails. An old-time Frazier Mountain

resident, Art Novak, recalled a ride to the north from Los Angeles in 1914 through the peaceful and beautiful Grapevine Canyon:

"We camped on the creek that runs down the mountain on the Grapevine and caught all kinds of trout...It was all grapevines and trees along the creek,...mostly along the west side of the road. We decided we needed a part for the Ford before the long drive back to Los Angeles. My traveling companion, Jack Robinson, hitched a ride to Bakersfield in a horse and wagon. [which] took him three days... while I waited with the automobile."

As travel increased, the dirt road was run along the ridge tops to avoid the flooding creeks in the long used canyons below. The Ridge Route became the first paved highway between Los Angeles and points north by 1919.



A well-known early 1900's resident of the Frazier Mountain area, Robert Cuddy, with his touring automobile all packed for travel along the Ridge Route.

Author Bonnie Ketterl Kane, began collecting all the items she could locate on the history of our mountain area when she moved here in 1970. She worked in Pine Mountain Club, and later for Tejon Ranch. She and her family lived, worked, hiked and explored in and around most all of the greater Frazier Mountain area. She serves as historian and curator of the Ridge Route Museum which houses her collection of artifacts, articles, photos and books. She has been active in many community organizations as well as on the founding board of directors of the Fort Tejon Historical Society, the Museum and the Ridge Route Preservation Organization (which supports restoration of the historic Ridge Route Highway).

"A VIEW FROM THE RIDGE ROUTE - The Roadways" is available in the Ridge Route Communities Museum bookstore as well as on the museum website. The sixth book in the series *"A View from the Ridge Route - The Communities"* is anticipated to be published in 2016.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR DUES!

Ridge Route Communities Museum & Historical Society

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LOOKING BACK . . .

This year's rummage sale was one of our best. Originally scheduled only on Labor Day, Monday Sept. 1, it was expanded to the entire 3 day weekend. It was also the first time (in awhile) that it was not held at the Cuddy barn, but at the museum itself.

The purpose of the rummage sale has long been to help with our greatest expense of the year, our insurance, and we came close to meeting that this year. We thank all of you who donated items to sell and the many workers, Barbara Moritz, Louise Hagler, Teresa Dyer, Christopher & Mark Billesbach, in addition to our regular staff volunteers, but especially Jim & Bonnie Kane, who put in many prodigious hours of preparation.

Life Member Carol Lagasse donated numerous items to the sale, among them five very old school desks. Surprisingly only two of them sold, so we donated the other three to the West Antelope Valley Historical Society, as they are establishing their museum in the old Leona Valley Schoolhouse. They were very grateful.



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