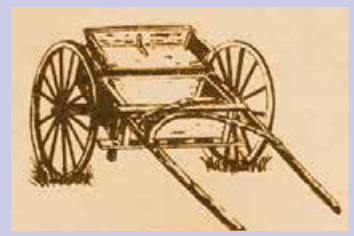


The Mail Cart



Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum

President's Message

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Creepy Doll Twilight Tours
October 1, 2022
- Heritage Halloween
October 22, 2022
- Dia de los Muertos
October 30, 2022
- November 4, 2022 Annual membership dinner
- Barn Sale
November 18-20, 2022
- Holiday Open House
December 4, 2022

Greetings to all,

The Volunteer Picnic was held last weekend on July 23rd. Co-chairs Sylvia Moya and Nancy Kidd did an outstanding job hosting approximately 30 volunteers in the Wood Ranch Barn. Fried chicken with all the fixings and pie was on the menu. Arriving guests were seated at well appointed tables with centerpieces. After lunch, volunteers channeled their inner summer child, playing with water pistols, water balloons, bubbles and card games. Laughter and good old fashioned fun was enjoyed by all.



Our annual membership dinner will take place on Friday, November 4, 2022. I would like to encourage members to consider becoming a board member for the Historical Society. We currently have a first-rate board of directors working diligently to not only preserve the history of Simi Valley, but also work with the Park District to maintain the historic buildings on the property. Any member of the Historical Society can become a board member by attending 2 or more meetings, completing an application and sitting down with the board president to discuss duties and how the board functions. The Historical Society board meets once a month on the second Thursday at 6pm in the Visitor Center. Please email us or call the office to express your interest in continuing the legacy of our organization.

At the July 2022 Board of Directors meeting, a proposal was presented to revive the four murals on the Currier Apricot Pitting Shed. The original murals were painted in 2009 and have provided the public and volunteers an insight into the agricultural heritage of Simi Valley. Unfortunately, three of the murals have deteriorated to the point that the paint is cracking and peeling off. The plan is to bring the murals back to their visual glory with proper materials and sealant.

Finally, I was deeply honored to be recognized by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District as their Volunteer of the Year for 2021 at an awards breakfast (see photos on page 4). I have my father to thank for the spirit of volunteerism that he modeled in his own life and passed down to me. Many of us volunteer at Strathearn Park because we love the history and people we get to work with. For me, I do not expect to be rewarded for my efforts, but an occasional "atta girl" is a nice perk.

Warmest regards,
Linda Bosley

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PRESIDENT'S AWARD

This quarter we recognize two of our volunteers that have made a difference throughout the park.

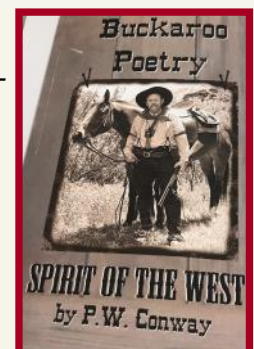
Karen Schemm has been a docent and volunteer at Strathearn Historical Park and Museum since 2015. Her contributions include co-chairing the school tours program, sewing various projects for the park and for fellow volunteers and docents, conducting tours, and volunteering for special events. With the reduction of available docents to give tours, Karen has graciously volunteered over 80 hours over the last few months to ensure coverage on the weekends so those visitors to the park walk away with a full understanding of Simi Valley history.



Barry Stone has been volunteering with the Mechanical Restoration team for many, many years. His experience and knowledge of working on tractors has led to the restoration and operation of several of them here at the park. The Mechanical Restoration team is currently working on a Ferguson tractor once owned by the Strathearn family. From procuring hard to come by parts to cleaning and rebuilding others, Barry's dedication to ensuring the safe operation of all our vehicles allows future visitors an opportunity to look at the past and see just how far we've come.

New Cowboy Poetry Book Release!

Long time Historical Society member, Peter Conway has written a new book entitled, "Buckaroo Poetry - Spirit of the West". Autographed copies of the book are currently available in the Park Visitor Center for \$10. We also carry Peter's previously released Buckaroo Poetry books.





A Pioneer Speaks
Enterprise-Sun & News
Wednesday, May 21, 1969
By R.E. Harrington



Indian caves here may be preserved

The former Flanagan ranch has been sold for subdivision. It lays at the north end of Stearns St. and extends north from this point about a half mile, east nearly a mile, and west to the Las Lajas creek or about ½ mile. I farmed it for several years in the 1930's so am familiar with every foot of it.

The new owners plan to put houses all over it, even houses anchored to the old rock ledge where the Indian Caves are located at the extreme eastern end of the property.

There are several of these Indian caves in this rock ledge.

The roofs of these caves are blackened by fires and on the floor of one of these caves are potholes where the Indians used to grind their acorns.

Oak trees used to abound especially in the east end of the Simi Valley. The Indians ground these acorns into flour and had a method of taking the bitterness out of the flour quite similar to one of our methods of taking the bitterness out of olives.

To me it would seem like sacrilege to anchor houses to these rocks where the Indians made their homes. There is one hope that this will not be done and that these old Indian caves will be preserved in a park. The Simi Valley Recreation District is considering making a park to include and preserve these Indian Caves.

The first time that I was in one of these caves I found the remnants of an old Indian basket that had been used for cooking. There is a beautiful canyon in front of these caves and several springs in it right near the caves. In fact I imagine that the Indians could shoot much wild life as they came to drink at these springs.

I developed one of these springs with a cement water trough and scratched my initials in the fresh cement and the date which was 1934. It is still there.

The rest of the letter will be about the Chumash Indians. Their territory extended along the coast from Point Mugu to Pismo Beach. In other words they were a coastal tribe. Ventura, the Rincon, Carpenteria and Santa Barbara were perhaps the most heavily populated portions of their territory.

They never traveled much out of their territory because they were surrounded by hostile tribes. Unfortunately few of their caves have been preserved.

There are some fine caves up at Rocketdyne, but since that is private property, the public will perhaps never see them.

There was once an Indian village on the south bank of the Arroyo Simi named Simiji or perhaps Simiee, it was debated, at a point just above where the Arroyo Simi crosses L.A. Avenue. There was always water there, in fact some of our early settlers used to bath and learned to swim there.

The word Simiji in Indian meant the little white wind clouds so often seen when the wind blows up here and Indians living on the coast, as most of them did, would never venture up here when those wind clouds were in the sky.

The word Simiji was contracted by whites to the word Simi.

There are other explanations about the name Simi, but this one was given to me by my brother who worked over 40 years for the Smithsonian Institute and it seems most plausible to me.

Early explorers said that the Chumash tribe was far superior to other tribes of Indians.

At Carpenteria, as the name indicates, they made boats out of cedar planks that they brought on their backs from the second range of mountains. They corked the seams of these boats with asphalt from the cliffs near Carpenteria and rowed them to the islands where there were other Indians, so many that the early Mission Fathers even thought of locating a mission there at one time.

Later a group of Russian sea otter hunters came to the islands and ruthlessly murdered all the Indians because they protested having all of their otter killed off.

They used them for food and their hides to cover their wigwams. Quite a number of Chumash lived at Pismo Beach on the clams.

Besides the painted caves here, there was one at Santa Barbara and some painted rocks on the Carrizo Plains back of Pismo. These are especially fine paintings.

These paintings are on private land and souvenir seekers have chipped away the painted rocks. San Luis Obispo County has done nothing to protect them. There is little left.

BITS AND PIECES

Community Council Award Breakfast

On June 4, 2022, Dewey Runkle was recognized by the Simi Valley Historical Society as the 2021 Volunteer of the Year at the Community Council Awards Breakfast. The award was presented to him by Board President, Linda Bosley. Dewey was presented with certificates by representatives from the Simi Valley City Council, U.S. Congress, County Supervisor's office and the California State Legislature.

Simi Valley Historical Society Board President, Linda Bosley received Volunteer of the Year award from the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.



2022 Victorian Tea Party

Professional costumer, Maegen Hensley clothing demonstration entitled, How to Dress in a Bustle ,was a big hit.



2022 Board of Directors

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President Linda Bosley
Vice President
Secretary Shelley Howard
Treasurer Karen Olson
Past President Vicki Spilka

Board Members

John Billinger Kris Grayson
Richard Johnson Nancy Kidd
Sylvia Moya Don Novell
Nellann Wilson

Directors at Large

Pat Havens
Alan Shack
Judy Pepiot
Ryan Valencia
Carolyn Valdez

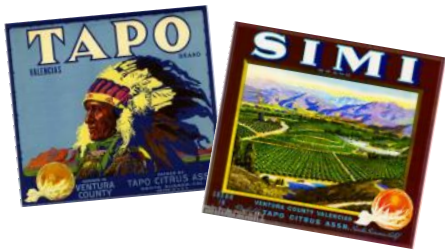
Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

Historian Pat Havens
Park Staff Jeannie Liss
SVHS Admin. Karen Olson
Assistant

Weekend Park Hours: Saturday and Sunday: 1:00 to 4:00 pm
Week day Park Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am to 3:00pm

For information, please call (805) 526-6453
Email: strathearnpark@gmail.com
Website: www.simihistory.com
Facebook: [facebook.com/Strathearnpark](https://www.facebook.com/Strathearnpark)

Simi Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 940461
Simi Valley, CA 93094-0461



Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum
Located at Strathearn Historical Park & Museum
137 Strathearn Place
Simi Valley, CA 93065



The Mail Cart is sent quarterly to all current members. The Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum's membership year runs from January 1 through December 31.

The Mail Cart is electronically sent to all members with an email address on file. If you are receiving a "paper copy" of the Mail Cart and would like to receive it via email (there are extra articles in the electronic version!), please send us your email address. Any changes to your email address should be included to continue receiving the electronic Mail Cart. If you do not have an email address, or have requested a printed copy of the Mail Cart, the postal service will continue to deliver your copy. Questions regarding your membership? Call our business office at (805) 526-6453 or email strathearnpark@gmail.com.

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