

Upcoming events:

- **September 24 & 25:** Museum Open House
- **October 16:** Celebrating Fire Prevention Month
- **October 29 & 30:** Museum Open House

Inside this issue:

- Remembering Joe Sisson, Life Member, page 2
- Membership Update, page 2
- Russian-born Woman, Now Alpine Resident, page 3
- Weather Report, page 3
- Rorie Appears on July 4th, page 4
- Anne Tarr, page 4
- Western Monarch Migration is Underway, page 4
- Timeline 1922: Alpine 100 Years Ago, page 5
- Alpine Historical & Conservation Society Directors & Mission Statement, page 5
- Membership Application, page 6



**JOHN DEWITT
MUSEUM**

2116 TAVERN ROAD
ALPINE, CA 91901

Open 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
last weekend of each month

Tom & Judy Myers, Editors
619-885-8063

FIRE PREVENTION PROGRAM ■ SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2022 ■ 1:00 P.M.

CELEBRATING FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

The Alpine Historical Society's October 16, 2022 program will center around Fire Prevention Month.

Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the first National Fire Prevention Week on October 4-10, 1925, when he noted that in the previous year some 15,000 lives were lost to fire in the United States.

Fire Prevention Week is now nationally observed each year during the week of October 9th in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871 and caused devastating damage: 300 deaths, 17,500 buildings

destroyed and 2,112 acres burnt.

We will be focusing not only on fire prevention, but also how fire-fighting has changed throughout the years. A number of very historic vehicles will be on display in the Women's Club parking lot along with fire prevention tips from our Alpine Fire Fighters.

The Alpine Historical Society has recently received a donation of a 1942 GMC original Harbison Canyon Volunteer Fire Truck



that will be on display along with some other magnificent and very historic fire fighting vehicles.

There will be something of interest for the entire family and special handouts for the kids. Mark your calendars for October 16th at 1:00 pm. . . until then, please stay safe.

Program is held at the Alpine Woman's Club, 2156 Alpine Blvd., Alpine

Admission is **FREE** (donations appreciated) but seating is limited, so **please make a reservation** by calling Corinne at (619) 417-1306 or send an email to info@alpinehistory.org

THE 1970 LAGUNA FIRE

September 22, 1970, Santa Ana winds roared in from the desert. The humidity dropped below 10%, and much of the local firefighting capacity was already engaged, fighting fires in Orange and Los Angeles counties. Vacations were cancelled for the remaining firefighters, and volunteers were put on alert. Then, at 6 a.m. on September 26, winds reaching 80 miles per hour felled a tree

against a power line, starting the Laguna fire, which grew into one of the largest brush fires in California's history at the time. Fire protection resources around the County were stretched thin and support from western states responded to assist. Sixteen homes in Alpine were lost as the raging fire, several miles wide, raced through Harbison Canyon and Jamul, heading for Crest.

The fire consumed 4,000 acres an hour and travelled 32 miles in 30 hours. When it was all over, nearly 176,000 acres burned, 380 homes and 1,000 other structures were destroyed.

In the last 50 years, wildfires have grown much larger with damages much greater. The Laguna Fire is no longer in the top 20 wildfires in California history, but at the time it was the most ferocious of them all.

REMEMBERING JOE SISSON, LIFE MEMBER OF AHS

Life member, Dr. Joseph Andrew Sisson passed away at his home in Casper, WY at age 88 on August 3, 2019. Joe graduated from San Diego High School then served in the US Army. Later he earned a B.A. from San Diego State College and his M.D. from Washington University School of Medicine.

Joe was not the first doctor in the family. He often talked about "Gramma Doctor." Dr. Sophronia Athearn Nichols, his mother's

grandmother, graduated in 1874 from the first-ever class of Boston University School of Medicine, practiced as California's 26th licensed medical doctor, and made her final residence in Alpine, California. Dr. Nichol's grandfather, Reverend Joseph Thaxter, studied medicine at Harvard College and graduated in 1768.

Joe is survived

by his two children with Virginia Joan Sisson (nee Ford), Edwin A. Sisson and Donna V. Sisson, two grandchildren, Matthew A. Sisson and David P. Sisson whose mother is Jennifer Ann Sisson (nee Phillips) as well as a handful of cousins from his mother's Anderson side of the family.

Travel issues during COVID-19 delayed the burial of Joe's ashes in the Alpine

Cemetery, where he wished to be interred with family members. Joe's family and relatives were able to come to Alpine in August this year for a service of remembrance, which included nearly a full day at the Alpine Historical Society's John DeWitt Museum, a place Joe visited often. As a special treat, Donna Sisson greeted the family gathering dressed as Dr. Sophronia Nichols, sharing memories of the family stretching back five generations.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members: Jane Cross, Barbara Gegan

A Grateful Thank You to Our Renewing Members: Cindy Day, Barbara & Gregory McCurtis, Vonnie & Mando Sanchez, Steve & Patty Tweed

Many thanks to the following for their generous financial donations: Barbara & Gregory McCurtis, Joe Sisson's Memorial, Steve & Patty Tweed

RECOGNITION OF OUR CURRENT LIFETIME MEMBERS

Carlette Anderson • Deborah Anderson • George Anderson • Mark L. Anderson • Willa Athey
 Franklin R. Ball • David Carey • Lisa & Dave Celeste • Ted Christensen • James H. Cleland
 James David • Rita David • Peggy & Jim Easterling • Beverly Falor • Katie & Brian Ford
 Vincent Fritts • Paul Gonya • Janet M. Harris • Lindy Harshberger • Ann Hill • Hilde Hinchcliff
 Leslie Holben • Ken & Denise Hujing • Ben Johnson • Bill & Diane Keltner • Jill & Shawn Killion
 John Krempp • Barbara Lea LaForce • J. Clayburn LaForce • Joanne & Martin Marugg
 Cheryl Minshew • Carol Morrison • Tom & Judy Myers • Bob & Carmen Ring
 Kurt Scherbaum • Kevin & Alejandra Schumacher • Albert Simonson • Donna Sisson
 Virginia Sisson • Rodney & Guille Tuttle • Paul & Carol Walker • Joan Waterworth

RECOGNITION OF OUR LIFETIME BUSINESS MEMBERS

Brabazon Alpine Paving and Trucking • Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians
 Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians • RGT Charitable Trust • Rock Canyon Animal Rescue Foundation
 Turvey Granite Pit • Chris Wiley—Primary Residential Mortgage

CURRENT MEMBERSHIPS: Life Members ~ 49, Current Members ~ 109, Members up for Renewal ~ 4

Impressions of Alpine — The following article was published in the *Alpine Echo Newspaper* in 1953. We are reprinting it here to provide a glimpse of Alpine as seen through the eyes of a Russian immigrant who came to America about 1940, a time when the world was at war in Europe. When published in 1953, the United States and Russia were entrenched in a Cold War that lasted until 1991.



View to the south, with Bell Bluff in the distance

RUSSIAN-BORN WOMAN, NOW ALPINE RESIDENT, GRATEFUL FOR PEACE JULY 7, 1953

The following tribute to Alpine was written by one of its residents, Helena Baroness, of Rt. 1, Box 307. Born in Russia, she emigrated from there as a child to Western Europe. She came to the United States 13 years ago and more recently moved to Alpine for reasons of health. With the perspective of a world traveler, she here presents her sentiments of her new-found home, dedicated to the "Alpine writers."

ALPINE . . . not a town . . . not a village . . . just a way of life, offering that which I was looking for: no movies, no drug stores, no sidewalks, no stop lights . . . but a welcome road to a rare, roughly scattered community of individualists as sturdy and spicy as the hills they inhabit. Each one standing apart, set firm in his creative achievements, evoking an impenetrable fortress, yet so easily reached by gentleness.

Folks well weathered, well-seasoned, blossoming forth with smiles of assurance, with eyes of sparkling freedom. None alike but all gathered under the great common denominator: **LOVE**.

A love for life the Alpine way, away from artificiality and superficiality; away from glamour, clamor, glitter, fuss, decay; close to Nature and its **CREATOR**.

Here, I came to readjust my sense of values, to rejuvenate in body and mind, to live a life of fullness from the ground up . . . up into the unfathomable depths of Infinity . . . past moons, stars, beyond either . . .

The setting is stimulating, pregnant with contrasts: a jealous land of subtle beauty and hidden bounty, ready to yield to the man of ingenuity and perseverance, giving enough. A well, a garden, an orchard are yours for the digging.

And dig you do: assiduously, lovingly, enraptured by the earth's contact, 'til you feel part of it, 'til you understand the **ONE**-ness of it **ALL** . . . then, you take time out to think . . . then, to write . . . only the angry, offensive roar of planes occasionally remind you of the confusion of our civilization, screaming a threatening warning to blast it out.

However, those strident intruders pass quickly on, chased by the ageless **PEACE** guarding her mountainous domain. Eternal, vigilant, so willing to enter any and every open door.

— Helena Baroness

WEATHER REPORT

In many parts of the country, people like to say "If you don't like the weather, just wait a minute, it will change." On the other hand, a lot of folks wish they could be a weather forecaster for Alpine. It sounds like easy money and if you always say "it's going to be warm and sunny with almost no chance of rain", you will be right most of the time. So, it was not too surprising to see the front page weather report in the March 20, 1959, *Alpine Echo* newspaper. No kidding, this is the official weather report for that issue:



RORIE APPEARS ON JULY 4

Everyone's favorite gorilla, Rorie, made a special appearance at Alpine's July 4th festival at the Alpine Community Center. Long-time Alpine residents know Rorie from his famous perch on the roof of the Log Cabin Café in Alpine. When the Log Cabin was closed and then demolished, Rorie was saved and protected by Brian McCall. In 1998, he found a permanent home with the Alpine Historical & Conservation Society, overseeing everything that happened at the John De Witt Museum from his perch in the tall eucalyptus tree beside the Nichols House. In 2018,

when the tree dropped limbs on the historic doctor's house during a severe storm, the tree had to be removed and Rorie went to the Carriage House for a long awaited bath and hair styling. Although he now spends most of his time out of the sun, he occasionally makes an appearance at the museum or at community events such as the July 4th festival. One of his favorite things to do is to dress for the occasion and pose for "selfies" with his fans.

Rorie is pictured here with Bronson & Archie in the back row, Theo and Rowen in the front.



ANNE TARR

Anne Albanese Tarr passed away at home in El Cajon on April 29, 2022 of natural causes.

Anne met her husband Don while attending San Diego State College and they were married in August 1952. Anne and Don moved to Alpine in 1998 where they became life members and hard-working volunteers at the Alpine Historical Society. Anne spent much of her time sewing beautiful quilts and for many years, she demonstrated the art of sewing on the antique Singer treadle sewing machine at the John DeWitt Museum. Anne served on the Board of Directors for the Alpine Historical Society and she enjoyed singing with the Retired Teachers Association Choir. She is survived by her children, Daniel, David, and Martha, and seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.



WESTERN MONARCH MIGRATION IS UNDERWAY!

The fall migration of Western Monarch butterflies has started! All Monarchs west of the Rocky Mountains migrate to wintering sites along the Pacific Coast from San Francisco to San Diego with some going as far as Baja California. During this migration, the butterflies need water, nectar and nutrients to fuel their long journey. When they reach the coast, they perch in eucalyptus trees, Monterey cypress and Monterey pines, picking the trees that provide the best cover and winter flowers for nectar. The monarch groves at Dana Point and the eucalyptus grove at the UCSD Ecological Park, (4301 Caminito Del Zafiro, San Diego) are good spots to view wintering Monarchs. When the weather gets warmer in February, the butterflies start their journey north and east to their summer homes.

You can help the butterflies along their way by planting some of their favorite native California nectar producing plants. Sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) blooms April to October, California Sunflower (*Encelia cali-*

fornica) blooms February to June, and California Goldenrod (*Solidago velutina*) blooms July to October, provide nectar during fall or spring migrations. Butterflies also need water, salt and nutrients, so con-

sider creating a butterfly "puddle" using a shallow pan or dish such as a plant saucer. Fill the dish with sand or soil, add flat rocks for a perch and just enough water to moisten the soil, then sprinkle lightly with salt. Keep the puddle moist by regularly checking

the moisture.

Planting flowering plants for nectar, milkweed for raising their young, and creating a butterfly puddle is all you need to make your outdoor space a wildlife habitat. When you certify your space for wildlife, you help Alpine retain its first-in-the-nation Certified Community Wildlife Habitat designation. For more information, visit the John DeWitt Museum, 2116 Tavern Road in Alpine or go to the website <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Certify>. It's easy to certify and show your support for Monarchs butterflies.



TIMELINE 1922: ALPINE, 100 YEARS AGO

In 1922, the population of Alpine was about 240 people, mostly living in private homes. Water for household use often came a bucket at a time from hand-dug wells. Some folks could afford windmills as part of a self-contained domestic water system that included the well and a redwood water tower supporting a redwood tank. These systems did not provide adequate water to irrigate crops and during drought, the crops generally failed. According to rainfall records for San Diego, 1922 was just such a year, receiving only 6.4 inches of rain – the following two years were less than 6 inches each.

Many homes still used outhouses, more politely called “privies”.

Electricity was still many years in the future, so settlers used candles or oil lamps to brighten the inside of their homes. Heating and cooking generally occurred over wood-burning stoves. There were some telephones in the town, but not everyone had them.

By 1922, the earliest pioneers had passed

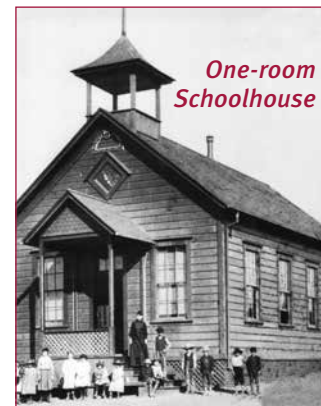
away, including Adam & Caroline Beaty, John Harbison, Dr. Sophronia Nichols, Benjamin & Harriet Arnold, and Edward & Caroline Foss. Of these families, the only second-generation family members still in Alpine were Charles, Percy, Joe, and Pearl Foss, and having no children, they were the end of the Foss family line.

The one-room schoolhouse built by Mr. Arnold was still sufficient for the small town, and shareholders still owned the Alpine Town Hall. The local church was still meeting in the Town Hall as was the Alpine Booster’s Club (later renamed the Alpine Woman’s Club). The Town Hall was the preferred place to

gather for parties, literary events, community meetings, school plays and Saturday night dances. As one local wit declared, “We met there for practically everything except séances and hog killings.” The first was considered sinful by the majority, the second too rough for the ladies.

A.L. McNett, who came to Alpine in 1888, was a butcher, raised goats on his homestead, and was the town sheriff. He was an auctioneer, served on the school board, called some of the square dances at the Town Hall, and kept order in the town with a firm hand.

The San Diego Mountain Resort Association listed six resorts in Alpine, the most promi-



One-room Schoolhouse

nent being The Willows, Viejas Vista, The Oaks, and Ye Alpine Tavern. Mary Ansell operated the very popular Rose Cottage Tea Room serving delicate cakes and pastries.

Dr. Hyman Lischner, who practiced in San Diego, acquired Los Robles, the former home of Benjamin & Harriet Arnold, where he established a sanatorium to treat returning soldiers exposed to toxic gas or tuberculosis. As often happened in the early days, the sanatorium burned down the next year.

Unfortunately, some things never change. A hundred years later, we still keep a close watch on the horizon – constantly looking for the plume of smoke that might foretell the next major fire.



Town Hall

ALPINE HISTORICAL & CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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Caretakers: Baltazar & Laura Marquez

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the *Alpine Historical & Conservation Society* is to encourage the community in an effort to retain structures and sites of historical significance, conserve natural resources and parkland, make available the visible evidence of the history of our community, and develop historical programs which emphasize the contributions of the various cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups that comprise the Alpine area.

Alpine Historical & Conservation Society
P. O. Box 382
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

Address Service Requested

**ALPINE
HISTORICAL &
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY**

P. O. Box 382
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

619-485-0625

E-mail: info@alpinehistory.org

We're on the Web!
www.alpinehistory.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Street Address/P.O. Box: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Send Newsletters via: E-mail U.S. Mail

Membership Category (Please check one):

- Student \$5 Individual \$25 Nonprofit \$30 Business \$50
 Senior (1) \$15 Family \$35 Nonprofit Life \$600 Business Life \$1,000
 Senior (2) \$20 Life \$500

Amount Enclosed:

Membership \$ _____

Donation \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Museum Open Houses History Day
 Programs & Events Oral Histories
 Exhibit Development Archival Data Entry
 Garden Maintenance Other _____

Please complete this form and include your check made payable to the Alpine Historical Society, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.