

## Upcoming Events

For the safety of our visitors and volunteers, the museum is temporarily closed, and sponsored events will be rescheduled when it is safe to do so.

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## 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

# 2020 The Year Everything Changed

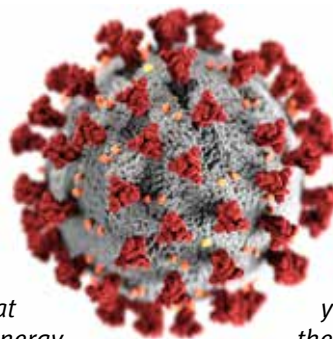
The year 2020 started with a booming economy and record low rates of unemployment. Yet fortunetellers were still seeing even better days ahead and the Novel Coronavirus reported in China on December 31, 2019 was not dampening our expectations. By January 21, the first case of the virus in the USA was confirmed in Washington. Renamed COVID-19, the virus rapidly spread with the first confirmed case in California appearing on January 26. By mid-March California banned large gatherings, schools began to close, and voluntary closure of bars and other gathering places was suggested. Stay-at-home orders and mandatory closings of businesses and public gatherings followed as the COVID-19

outbreak became a world-wide “pandemic”.

How has this affected Alpine? If you live here, you know the story—schools closed, churches offered worship services on-line, bars closed and most restaurants opened for “take-out” only. Gas stations, grocery stores, pharmacies and convenience stores remained open while providing disinfecting wipes and requiring shoppers to maintain physical distance, but many shelves remain only partially stocked. Residents are encouraged to stay home as much as possible and, when travelling is essential, to wear face masks while in

public to prevent spreading the virus.

You know this already, so why are we repeating it? Because we are all experiencing one of the most dramatic historical events of our times, and it is important that we record our experience and pass it on to future generations. Government and health care researchers will gather and analyze all the data about COVID-19, but that is only part of the story. What we want to know and archive for future Alpine historians is this: How has this epidemic affected you? What has changed in your life? What is it like to suddenly be confined to your home and how do you pass the time? How do you maintain social relationships while practicing physical distancing? What is your story?



Earlier this year Caitlyn Shaffer, a recent college graduate, volunteered to help at the museum, and with lots of energy and enthusiasm, she started the archiving project that had been on hold for a long time. But after just a few weeks, the California “stay at home” orders were issued and our archiving project was once again put on hold. We then asked Caitlyn to write her story about what it is like to experience this moment in history. [You can read her story on page 4.]

Caitlyn’s story is not the only one in Alpine. We want to hear your story too—

long or short, funny, happy or sad. What is this time like for you? What helps you get through the days? Please share your stories

with us. You can send them in an email to [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org), or if you would like someone to listen to your story and write it for you, please call Tom at 619-885-8063 and we will have a volunteer call you back.

For the time being, the John DeWitt Museum is closed and our quarterly programs are on hiatus until further notice. We look forward to welcoming you all back to the museum and our programs as soon as it is safe to do so.

## REPAIR WORK CONTINUES AT DEWITT MUSEUM

**A**lthough we are not able to welcome visitors to the John DeWitt Museum during the COVID-19 pandemic, contractors are performing essential maintenance and repairs for the safety of visitors in the future. These photos show some of the work in progress to improve your next visit to Alpine's history museum.



- Workers prepare a new driveway entrance to the DeWitt museum to improve traffic safety at the Tavern Road intersection with Huey Lane.



- Deteriorated wood stairs and railings at the Beaty House are being replaced and all veranda decks will be sanded and painted.



- The handicapped access ramp leading to the Nichols House will also be replaced with new materials for visitors safety.

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

**A Grateful Thank You to Our Renewing Members:** Pat Cannon, Brenda Clark, Anna Knuth, Pam Lawless, Michael Lembeck, Judy Matlock, Jo Moreland, Beverly Ring, Babs & Jim Rosenberg, Scarlette Spencer, Steve & Patty Tweed.

**Many thanks to the following for their generous financial donations:** Carlotte Anderson, Brenda Clark, Anna Knuth, Jo Moreland, Kevin & Alejandra Schumacher, Steve & Patty Tweed.

**Special Thanks of Appreciation to the following business**  
for renewing their annual membership in the Historical Society for 2020:

- ALFA – Alpine Library Friends Association •

## RECOGNITION OF OUR CURRENT LIFETIME MEMBERS

Carlette Anderson • Deborah Anderson • George & Joan Anderson • Mark L. Anderson  
Roy & Willa Athey • Franklin R. Ball • Pat & Joe Brunold • David Carey • Lisa & Dave Celeste  
Ted Christensen • James H. Cleland • Peggy & Jim Easterling • Beverly Falor • Katie & Brian Ford  
Vincent Fritts • Paul Gonya • Gail Wilson Guth • Janet M. Harris • Linda Harshberger • Ann Hill  
Leslie Holben • Ken & Denise Hujing • Ben & Kirby Johnson • Bill & Diane Keltner • Jill & Shawn Killion  
John Krempp • Barbara Lea LaForce • J. Clayburn LaForce • Joanne & Martin Marugg • Carol Morrison  
Tom & Judy Myers • Helen Porter • Kurt Scherbaum • Albert Simonson • Donna Sisson • Virginia Sisson  
Anne Tarr • Elma Terry • Rodney & Guille Tuttle • Paul & Carol Walker • William & Joan Waterworth

## RECOGNITION OF OUR LIFETIME BUSINESS MEMBERS

Brabazon Alpine Paving and Trucking • John Garbaczewski Family Foundation  
Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians • Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians  
RGT Charitable Trust • Turvey Granite Pit • Chris Wiley—Primary Residential Mortgage

**CURRENT MEMBERSHIPS:** Life Members ~ 48, Supporting Members ~ 101, Members up for renewal ~ 6



## MAY IS “GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE” MONTH

**W**hen Jon Green, Back Country Land Trust Land Manager at Wrights Field, was installing more native plants as part of the Chocolate Creek watershed clean-up and restoration project last fall, he seized the opportunity to scatter some California Poppy seeds along the creekside on the John DeWitt Museum property. Thanks to Jon’s efforts and another year of ample rainfall, the seeds sprouted and are in full golden bloom this month. It is amazing how even a small patch of native poppies can brighten your day and make you smile. The Back Country Land Trust along with the Alpine Garden Club and the Alpine Historical Society are partners in organizing and managing the NWF Community Wildlife Habitat Program in



Alpine. We encourage you to certify your garden, yard, patio, or other living space to do your part in support of wildlife in Alpine. You can learn more about certification by attending one of Carlette Anderson’s programs held several times a year at the Alpine Library or by sending an email message to WildlifeHabitats@aol.com.

In May 1998, Alpine was recognized as the first Certified Community Wildlife Habitat in the United States.

Certification is based on many factors, including the number of individual certified habitats within the community and the number of educational and outreach programs offered within the community to raise awareness of the critical needs of wildlife and how we can share our living space with wildlife within our community.

## KUDOS TO ALPINE GARDEN CLUB

**T**he Alpine Historical Society very much appreciates the great work and community support of the *Alpine Garden Club*. For several years members of the Garden Club have volunteered their time and talents to plant and maintain native plant gardens at the John DeWitt Museum. With all the

rain this year the plants are blooming in their full glory and the display is spectacular. Of course this much rain also encourages a bumper crop of weeds in the gardens, which the Garden Club regularly keeps in check as well. The Alpine Garden Club is a 501-c3 nonprofit organization that promotes gardening in

Alpine by offering monthly programs on a variety of garden topics at the Alpine Library. Additionally, they offer an annual *Waterwise and Butterflies Plant Sale* and *Monarch Butterfly Release* where you can purchase a variety of garden plants and learn about habitat preservation and gardening for wildlife. We encourage you to explore the offerings of the Alpine Garden Club when the current “stay at home” restrictions are relaxed.



*Kathy Bartonicek and Cathy Heany maintaining the beautiful native garden.*



## COVID-19 REFLECTION *by Caitlyn Shaffer*

I graduated from the University of Portland last May and have been home ever since. I spent my days getting my driver's license, running errands, picking up my younger sisters from school, and making dinner. Before COVID-19 really hit the US, I had started applying for jobs again and looking more deeply into graduate programs. I was really regretting not applying to grad school sooner, though I am still not sure where or even for what exactly. I regret it even more now that I have so little to do.

My sisters—Camryn, a 7th grader at Joan MacQueen, and Courtney, a junior at Steele Canyon—have been home from school for at least the last month and a half. The first day they were home, we watched movies, played video games, and created a fashion game to twiddle our time away. We made an activity list to keep us busy during the “Stay at Home” order. Since that first week, we've hardly touched that activity list. Weeks later, our days are filled with sleeping, snacking, homework, crafts, watching TV, and playing games outside. We do some yard work, but not enough to keep up with the ever-growing weeds. We are bored of this “new normal” and are craving something far more than what we are stuck with: friends, the possibility of going out to a store, sitting at a restaurant for unlimited refills on strawberry lemonade, and going to our grandparents' house

for a visit and a swim without possibly endangering them.

We have another sister, Cassidy. She graduated from the University of Oregon last year—a year early. She still lives in Eugene, working at the art museum on campus. Her job mainly consisted of leading tours of elementary school children throughout the museum, then teaching classes or reflection groups afterwards. She was disappointed when she called us a few weeks ago to explain how schools had cancelled all after school programs and field trips scheduled at the museum. Though the museum has not cancelled all of her hours and is having her produce art projects to be streamed online, Cassidy now sits in her apartment, alone, almost a thousand miles away with a pandemic in between.

My dad has been working from home for the last month or so. He sits upstairs at a desk in his room, on his computers with

his coworkers or on conference calls. He claims to love working from home and has settled into a routine of his own.

My mom, however, does not have this luxury. She is an urgent care/family practice nurse practitioner in Ramona, having changed jobs before the pandemic really hit hard. In her new and permanent position, she wears a face mask all day, seeing patients either in person or on the computer. Her clinic sends anyone with possible COVID-19 symptoms immediately to the hospital. They do not let anyone with a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing into the building, just to be safe. We are very grateful she has not been exposed to the virus, though there have been one or two close calls.

We have found creative solutions to our boredom through chalk, scraps of wood in the garage, and other things lying around the house. I still miss driving, Sunday masses at church, craft and hardware stores, baseball, and restaurants. We miss seeing all of people's faces—not just their eyes. We miss hugging our grandparents' whenever we see them and visiting our high risk ventilator-dependent cousin, Reilly. We're thankful our family is safe, and we are grateful for those putting their health and safety at risk for our continued wellbeing. We pray this “new normal” will quickly fade into a distant memory.



*Pictured are a few of the books and projects completed by Caitlyn and her sisters.*





## TIMELINE: ALPINE—THE FIRST 50 YEARS

**O**ur Tattered Tidbits *Alpine Timeline* series has been running since June 2016. In this series we started in 1850, the year California became the 31<sup>st</sup> state in the USA and the year that **COCKNEY BILL WILLIAMS** purchased 4000 acres in the Valle de las Viejas. In subsequent installments, we presented some historical insight into the early American settlers and European immigrants who purchased land or established homesteads here. We also described some of the pivotal events that played a part in changing this group of scattered settlers into a foothills hamlet called Alpine. The timeline for this period covered roughly a half century, from 1850 to 1900.

Our focus to date has been to discover the roots of Alpine through the people who shaped this community during the first 50 years. Major events and developments during this time started with the Cockney Bill Williams Viejas Rancho where from 1850 to 1862 he became a builder of ox carts, as well as a major grain supplier to the US Army. Williams also established a stage station along the San Antonio to San Diego Mail route, aka the “Jackass Mail”. Although the grain business was profitable, the stage line failed and left him deeply in debt. When he died in 1862, his wife abandoned the property.

In 1869, Adam and Caroline Beaty settled here, establishing bee keeping and ranching. Their nearest neighbor was 5 miles away.



George W. Webb

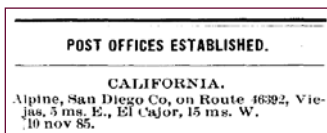
The 1870’s brought many new names and settlers to the area, among the most notable were **GEORGE W. WEBB** who built a toll road to Julian and established the first school district on his Alpine Ranch.

Beekeeper **JOHN HARBISON** established a homestead and became the world’s largest producer of honey. Soon after, the **EDWARD & CAROLINE FOSS FAMILY** arrived followed by many of their relatives. The stage stop formerly located in Viejas Valley was moved to the growing village a mile or so to the west and that village became known as Viejas Stage Stop.

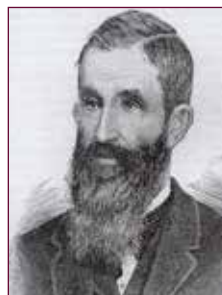


Foss Family

The 1880’s brought more new names, many of whom acquired land through the Homestead Act which allowed settlers to stake claim on 160 acres of public land. After living on the land for 5 years and improving the land by building a home and developing a source of income, the settlers could receive a Land Patent from the US General Land Office. It was during this decade that the village name Viejas Stage Stop was slowly replaced by the name Alpine. In 1885, the US Postal Service established the Alpine Post Office in the Whitney Store and named Henry J. Whitney as the first Postmaster. A few years later, **BENJAMIN ARNOLD**, a wealthy merchant from New York, moved to San Diego and in 1888 to Alpine, where he found the climate to be a cure for his asthma. Benjamin and Harriet Arnold were very generous and well respected



1885 Alpine Post Office established



John S. Harbison



Benjamin Arnold

by the town folk. The Arnolds employed local labor to build their home here and then proceeded to build civic improvements including a new school, a parsonage, a hotel with a restaurant, and restored the road and stage line from Lakeside. They donated land for the Alpine Cemetery and paid half the cost of the Town Hall.

By the end of the 1890’s a new industry of health and recreation was beginning to emerge, and the F.B. Walker family would soon establish the Willows Resort, arguably the best known of the many resorts that would follow. In 1894 the **COMMUNITY CHURCH** was formally established and in 1896, Alpine’s first Doctor, **SOPHRONIA NICHOLS**, established her medical practice on Tavern Road.



Sophronia Nichols

These projects along with the Post Office and General Store provided the basic structure required to change a scattered group of independent ranches into a cohesive community called Alpine.



Community Church Picnic

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

NEW Phone: 619-485-0625  
E-mail: [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org)

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.alpinehistory.org](http://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.