

TATTERED TIDBITS

ALPINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 4, Issue 4

Carol Walker, Editor

October 2010

Upcoming events:

- October 17th— Italian Feast
- October 30th and 31st—Museum Open House
- November 27th and 28th—Museum Open House
- December 5th—Alpine Woman's Club Holiday Home Tour

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RICHARD CARRICO SPEAKER FOR ITALIAN FEAST

The annual Italian Feast will be held on Sunday, October 17th at 5:00 p.m. at the Alpine Woman's Club, 2156 Alpine Boulevard. You won't want to miss the fabulous homemade Italian dinner prepared by our Board—pasta dishes, salad, hot bread and yummy desserts for \$10.00.

Richard Carrico will be the featured speaker at this year's feast. An expert in the history of Indians in San Diego County—from the earliest times through the 1930s, Richard will enhance

our knowledge of our Indian neighbors. His book, *Strangers in a Stolen Land*, contains rare photos, maps and illustrations and is the story of native peoples, including Kumeyaay, Luiseno and Cahuilla.

Please R.S.V.P. to Carol Morrison at 619-445-2544 or send an e-mail to info@alpinehistory.org—we need to make sure we'll have enough food.

Make sure you don't miss this event—we hope to see you there!■



Richard Carrico

WHAT HAPPENED TO RORIE, THE GORILLA? By Carlette Anderson

The Alpine Historical Society Museum was turned into a temporary hospital. Rorie the gorilla had to have surgery... A swarm of bees made a home inside his body. The bees entered through a small hole in his

left foot. By the time Bill Waterworth, property manager, noticed the invasion he had to call in a specialist to take care of the problem. Bill Henselmeier, an exterminator from Harbor Pest Control, came up twice and was able

to take care of the situation. He donated his time and expertise to help make Rorie all better.

Don Parent from SDG&E made arrangements to have Rorie (continued on page 2)



Above Left: Bill Henselmeier exterminates the bees after it was found removing them alive was not possible.

Middle: Bill Waterworth inspecting Rorie's foot. Right: Over 5 pounds of honey and bees!

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What Happened to Rorie, the Gorilla? *(Continued from page 1)*

taken down from the tree so he could be repaired. A large hole was cut in each of Rorie's feet so he could be cleaned out. Bill and Baltazar Marquez took out over 5 pounds of honey and dead bees. They ran a water hose through Rorie's

body for about 20 times and were able to get all the honey and dead bees out. They used gorilla glue (that is what it is called) to replace the pieces they took out and were able to close up the holes in his feet. Baltazar's father-in-law

also helped with this procedure. He is a dental technician and has experience with fiberglass. They put three screws in his right foot to keep it closed. He is now lying peacefully in the barn and recovering very nicely. He will be back up

in his tree very soon. Keep a look out for him.

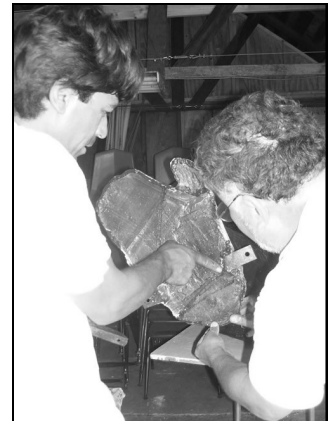
To learn more about Rorie you can read about him in the children's book I wrote about the history of Alpine, called *My Alpine*. ■



Joan Brady entertains attendees at our August meeting. The author of *The Ghost of Mt. Soledad* provided all with an enjoyable afternoon.

Vikki Coffey

The Alpine Historical Society has nominated Vikki Coffey for special recognition at the ALPS awards dinner. The honor will be presented on Thursday, October 7th, at the Dreamcatcher Lounge at Viejas Casino. Vikki is being recognized for her many years of service as a museum docent, program chairman, Holiday Home Tour Chairman and, especially, for her years as the Third Grade History Essay Chairman.



Our caretaker Baltazar and his father-in-law perform Rorie's surgery

Alpine's Wall of Honor

The Alpine Historical Society Board recently voted to be a part of making the Alpine Veterans Wall of Honor a reality by purchasing three tiles and a brick to commemorate A tile will be placed to recognize three of Alpine's pioneer veterans.

The first tile will be for Adam Beaty, who fought in the Mexican-American War in 1846. An injury received during service resulted in partial blindness in his right eye.

Another pioneer, Edward Foss, fought in the Civil War. He suffered pain throughout his life from a bullet which was lodged in

the marrow of his leg during the war.

The third tile will represent Captain Harry Jeremiah Parks who lived in Alpine following the time he served in the Civil War. Captain Parks received the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Abra-

ham Lincoln. His very interesting story is contained on our website, www.alpinehistory.org, under Historical Research, People of Alpine.

Reverend Joseph Thaxter, the first Chaplain of the American Revolutionary Army, never lived in Alpine;

however, we all know of his granddaughter, Dr. Sophronia Nichols. The brick will be purchased to honor Reverend Thaxter's service.

The Historical Society is collecting donations to cover the cost of the tiles and brick and George Barnett stepped forward to make the first such donation. Thank you, George! Donations can be mailed to the Alpine Historical Society, P. O. Box 382, Alpine, CA 91903.

You may also donate to the Wall of Honor by contacting Sue Roff, Alpine Community Center, at 619-445-7330. ■



Ox Carts of Volcan and Viejas Ranchos By Albert Simonson

The 1850 first county tax roll hit our local rancho pretty hard on his "carretas."

Both were valued at 50 pesos each, much more than ox carts at other ranchos. They must have been good, sturdy ox carts, with rancho-style solid wheels and extra features like quick-disconnect yoke hitches.

In those days, rancheros and their Indian vaqueros built their own ox carts, which were used for everything from hauling grain to wedding parties to bringing rancho lovelies down to Old Town dances, called fandangos.

The Gastelum family from Ensenada took a trip in one from home to Sonoma on the Camino Real and back. It took them two years and they stayed at nearly every rancho, mission, and presidio along the way. Rancheros were hospitable folk and they enjoyed hearing all the news from visitors. The Gastelums, too, enjoyed the friendly visits.

One thing Rancho Volcan had in abundance was good timber for the massive solid wheels. Usually two or three thick pieces made up each wheel. Also, our Cockney Bill was a good carpenter, in demand as a stage carpenter at the mission theater. Wooden pegs and rawhide held things together.

Spanish carts, in contrast, had world-class spoked wheels, too delicate for our California ox cart roads. There are many

variants around the world, derived from Egyptian and Mesopotamian designs. Turkish carts, oddly, have wheels and an axle which rotate as a unit. These are not good on turns, but great on the straightaway. This is a good feature, because oxen annoyingly lunge to the side to snatch roadside grass, but that rigid wheel assembly keeps them on the straight and narrow.



Drawing of an Ox Cart ("Carreta") by Bonnie Gendron

A peculiarity of early California and the rest of New Spain is that the rancho did not put a contoured yoke across the necks of the oxen. Instead, the straight yoke was tied with rawhide to the horns of the oxen. This is a California solution to the irksome snatching-at-grass problem.

The first ox cart I ever saw was at the Mayan ruins of Iximché in the Guatemala highlands. It was a rumbling, lumbering apparition with gigantic oxen, very high wobbling wheels, and a rawhide bucket swaying

to and fro, filled with boiled animal fat for the occasional lube job. Animal fat is not as tenacious as Pep Boys' grease, but it does permeate the wooden bearings like the sintered bushings in your car. To lube the bearings, you just pull the wooden pin out and wobble the wheel outward and slather the fat onto the axle shaft.

You can still see ox carts

San Diego in 1849, taking 3 months to do it with lots of visits along the way. Each wheel is a 5-inch slice of a big tree. Six-by-six timbers form the frame with fine mortise-and-tenon joints, now professionally restored. The wheels had wide treads to reduce wear. It was an ancient craft to build serviceable vehicles with only wood and rawhide, both renewable resources, and little or no iron.

With oxen, the 100% organic tailpipe emissions were minimal, except for greenhouse gas generated by the cud-chewing power source. Still, emissions were way better than an SUV like the Ford Extinction.

Cockney Bill Williams had ox carts at both his ranchos – Volcan de Santa Ysabel (Julian) and Valle de las Viejas (Alpine). We know more about his Viejas carts because Viejas was the major supplier of grain to the army and because a very trusted civic leader remembered Bill's grain transport.

Ox carts are still a popular feature of traditional Oaxaca parades. Their oxen wear garlands of bright flowers draped over their heads and yokes. Less festive for the oxen is the power steering feature – slender reins tied to their nose-rings.

(Editor's Note: The full text of Albert's story can be found on our website: www.alpinehistory.org under "Historical Research, Tales of Alpine.") ■

at San Miguel Mission and Santa Barbara Presidio. One of the best is in San Diego's Old Town at the Seeley Stable. It is reported to have been found under a haystack at Sutter's Fort, where the California Gold Rush began. This is a high-mileage, no-frills, 1806 vintage vehicle with severely worn-down lumpy wheels.

These wheels are among the oldest surviving in California, sturdily built by mission Indians at San Jose. Conchita Ramirez, fleeing wild-eyed forty-niners, rode this cart to

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Areas of Interest for Volunteers:

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

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