

THE ALPINE SUN SHOPPER – August 5, 2010
Tattered Tidbits: Alpine Historical Society

ALPINE CONCERTS IN THE PARK

Local residents, Katie and Brian Ford had been attending summer concerts in Coronado for many years. Katie thought, “*Why should we be driving to Coronado when we could have our own concerts right here in Alpine?*”

Katie called the band coordinator in Coronado and she helped her get started. The first thing she needed to do was find some bands that would donate their time to play for our community. The first concert was held on June 13, 1993, and the first band to play in that concert was “The Swing Set.” Since then a variety of different bands have played in the Alpine Community Center Park every Sunday evening, from June through August.

The Alpine Kiwanis Club provided the materials and built the stage. The Alpine Woman’s Club provided refreshments. The concerts were free and at the beginning the bands also played for free. The U.S. Marine Band and the U.S. Navy Band have played every year since the concerts began.

People brought lawn chairs, blankets and picnic dinners. Katie felt the concerts were like a Norman Rockwell setting. When the audience heard the military bands play, they felt very patriotic. People in the audience would yell, clap their hands, holler, and whistle while waving flags. These concerts bring the community together in a positive way. Friends greeting friends, neighbors greeting neighbors and families enjoying great music.

Eventually they were able to pay the bands by finding individuals and companies to underwrite the costs. They also contacted various restaurants in Alpine to prepare dinner for the members of the band.

In 1998, they were able to get Frankie Laine and his band to come to Alpine. His concert brought in a record crowd. To make Mr. Laine feel at home Katie baked him an apple pie and made him some Irish brown bread. No wonder he came back twice to sing!

From the first year, they drew huge crowds. Katie said, “*If you build it they will come.*” In 1995, Katie received “The Alpine Citizen of the Year Award.”

In 2004, after 11 years of hard work and fun times, the Fords turned over the concerts to the Alpine Community Center. Without their efforts, we would not have free concerts in Alpine.

This summer Alpine residents continue to enjoy the inspirational music of these outstanding bands. For a schedule please check the Alpine Sun or call the Community Center at 619-445-7330.

By Carlette Anderson