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SPRING VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Bancroft Bulletin

February/March 2016 • Vol. 17, No. 4

From the President's Desk . . .

I hope you had a fabulous holiday season, I know I did. It seems that 2016 has finally brought us some winter weather including much needed rain and chilly temperatures. Time for a fire in the fireplace and an extra blanket on the bed. No complaints here.

Each new year means a fresh start and that holds true for the Spring Valley Historical Society. February will kick off our new exhibit featuring the changes that took place in the 1950s. Our curator, **Pat Case**, along with **Carol Myers**, **Sharon Barrington**, and yours truly have assembled a cross section of how the decade affected our community, our nation, and the world. Pat is still seeking stories from **you**, our members, about your experiences during the '50s - whether it happened in Spring Valley or elsewhere. Please contact her (see page 2) if you have a tale to tell.

During the month of January, Pat and I visited two other historical societies. The first was the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum in Campo. I was very impressed with all they have accomplished since my last visit - new restrooms, new exhibits, and additional rolling stock (train cars) that were all amazing. Naturally we had to ride the train and on the return trip Pat saw a mountain lion (not a bobcat) bounding through the brush with what appeared to be a rabbit in its mouth. Talk about exciting!

The second place we visited was the grand opening of the South Bay Historical Society exhibit celebrating the centennial anniversary of the Lower Otay Dam failure and subsequent massive flood. The exhibit is in the Chula Vista main library on F Street and 4th Avenue - and is a must-see with many unique artifacts and dozens of photos taken at the time of the catastrophe.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the meeting Saturday. Perhaps I can even persuade you to share one (or more) of your memories of the 1950s.

– **Rob Case**

Apologies for this briefer issue; the Editor is swamped with too much work at this time so had to make things brief.

FEBRUARY 6th PROGRAM

The History of Gunpowder Point, Chula Vista

Have you ever looked at a map of San Diego Bay, where the Sweetwater Marsh separates Chula Vista from National City and noticed the place name "Gunpowder Point"? When and why it got that name is the subject of the talk to be given by our President **Robert Case** at our February membership meeting. Come hear about the key role this Chula Vista landmark played during World War I. See historic photographs of the multitude of buildings (*photo of Hercules Powder Co. below*) that once stood on this site and current photographs of what remains.

See you there!



SVHS DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb. 6	Program – 7 pm Preceded by Potluck – 6 pm
Feb. 15	Board meeting – 7 pm
Mar. 1	Co. Enhancement Grant - deadline
Mar. 21	Board meeting – 7 pm
Mar. 23	Newsletter deadline

SVHS Officers/Committees

President	<i>Rob Case</i>	462-7928
Programs	<i>Kathy Viessman</i>	465-1830
Ways/Means	<i>OPEN</i>	
Treasurer	<i>Carol Serr</i>	
Secretary	<i>Carol Myers</i>	
Membership	<i>Carol Serr</i>	698-1242
Bldgs&Grnds	<i>OPEN</i> (buildings)	
	<i>Maureen Quinn</i> (grounds)	
Curatorial	<i>Pat Case</i>	
Historian	<i>OPEN</i>	
Publicity	<i>OPEN</i>	
Hospitality	NEEDED	
Newsletter	<i>Carol Serr</i>	698-1242
	FAX (858) 505-9658 Attn: Carol	
	<i>e-mail: SpringVlyHistSoc@aol.com</i>	
Caretaker	<i>Jim Van Meter</i>	469-1480
Security	<i>Petey, the wonder dog</i>	

General meetings are held on the 1st Sat. of even-numbered months; & Board meetings are at 7 pm on the 3rd Monday of every month - both held at the Museum annex - at 9050 Memory Lane, Spring Valley, (619) 469-1480.

Visiting hours at the Bancroft Ranch House Museum and grounds are 1-4 pm, Fri. thru Sun. Group tours by appointment.

Caretaker Jim Van Meter is always looking for people willing to be docents to help with giving tours; please contact him.

The *Bancroft Bulletin* is a bimonthly publication of the Spring Valley Historical Society. Contributions are welcome and should be sent to the Editor, either by e-mail (preferably) or to: SVHS, P.O. Box 142, Spring Valley, CA 91976.



DISCLAIMER: Articles printed in this newsletter are informational in nature and do not necessarily represent the views or beliefs of the Board of Directors or the Society in general.



If you help sponsor this publication you can use your contribution as a tax deduction to a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Our Tax ID number is **237317982**. Please help us pay printing or postage costs.

Caretaker's Corner

It seems like the New Year 2016 took off like a sprint race. New Years Eve celebration in this neighborhood was not without a few explosions, gun fire, fireworks, and some bell ringing (the latter by yours truly). Car alarms went off and added to the symphony. No sirens though, that was good. Thankfully the first of heavy rain and wind did no real damage; no leaks in buildings. But palm fronds flew and some pepper trees gave up their loose branches. With the help of member **John Klein**, we cleaned up quick.

Nice day here for the Victorian Ladies first meeting/lunch of the year. They return on Sat. March 19, 11:30 am to 1 pm for a meeting and will be having a "closet sale." of Victorian-era apparel. The Bancroft Book Club will not meet here this Feb.; they will return the third Mon., March 15. Presenters Book Club will meet Mon. Feb. 9 at 9:30 am.

Barnyard News Flash: ground squirrels are being difficult about relocating. A family of skunks has been checking things out around the area keeping Guard Dog Petey on alert status. Resident hens and others in the barnyard agree - skunks do not make good neighbors. So a campaign for keeping out uninvited critters such as skunks and grey ground squirrels is underway. Guard Dog Petey located two nests of resident hens sitting on eggs. Many work parties in planning. Looking forward to a great year - here on Memory Lane.

A new flag was donated by member **Gary Cowart**, in honor of his father 20-year Navy veteran John Leonard Robbins who served in WWII and Korea.

Happy New Year to all who read this fine newsletter. Thank you, Editor Carol Serr.

Hope to see you at the next pot-luck meeting.

Yours faithfully,
Jim Van Meter - Caretaker/Director/Raconteur



Plants for Sale

Come by and check out our Garden Shop near the entrance to the grounds (at gate). We have a variety of plants - at great prices! And we're always happy to take more potted plant donations. Your plant purchase is greatly appreciated too.

Also check out our native plant garden, created by member Joel Hastings, on the east side of the property. Just ask Jim, if you can't find it.



February is Black History Month

Your Help Still Needed for Our Spring Valley in the 1950s Display

While much of the display was recently installed, we are still hoping more SVHS members who lived in our community during the 1950s will share your memories of how things were back then, including what stores and businesses were in existence in your neighborhood, games you played as a child, whatever comes to mind.

Please e-mail photographs, stories, or a list of items to loan for displaying to Curator, **Pat Case**, e-mail case619@cox.net or phone her to make arrangements to pick up items (619) 462-7928.

March is Women's History Month

Save the Date for the Annual History Conference March 4 & 5 • 10 am - 5 pm

The theme for the Congress of History's 51st Annual Conference is **Scandals & Scoundrels – Stories of Controversy and Such in the San Diego Region** – on the history from the early days to mid-1960s. The conference location will be at the OASIS Hall on the 3rd floor of the Mission Valley Macy's (1702 Camino del Rio North). The exhibit & book sellers area will be open to the public during the conference.

Pre-registration began this month – \$35 for the 2 days; \$25 seniors; \$15 students.

Visit their website: www.congressofhistory.org or call 619-469-7283 for more info. Lunch available at mall eateries (or bring your own).

Speakers at press-time, including our President Rob, are shown at right. →

SVHS NOTICES

DONATIONS:

Thanks for the very generous donation from the **Victorian Ladies Society** and also **Richard Carrico**, the **S. V. Woman's Club**, and all the other smaller donations members have given. Any amount is greatly appreciated! Donations help preserve our local history by keeping the museum running.

CONDOLENCES to the family of long time SVHS member and benefactor **Charlie LaVoie** who passed away in December. He was the 1994 *Mr. Spring Valley* and served on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

SAVE THESE SVHS EVENT DATES:

April 16 – 1-3 pm – FOUNDERS DAY OPEN HOUSE
May 14-15 – our Annual RUMMAGE SALE
August 6 – Summer BBQ & COUNTRY FAIR AUCTION

Hope to see you at these events!





Helen Ofield - *Where Are the Great Cat Burglars?;* **Alexander D. Bevil** - *Old Town's "Escape-proof" Jail: Graft, Corruption, and Nepotism in Pioneer San Diego;* **Jack Innis** - *Professor Robert Sterns and the Great Subterranean Cavern Hoax of 1888;* **Rick Crawford** - *The Rise and Fall of the Notorious Clifton E. Mayne (1890s);* **Charles Spratley** - *"Dare" to be a Scoundrel: D.D. Dare, the Villa Montezuma, and the Short Life of the San Diego Cable Railway Company;* **Bruce Semelsberger** - *The Selling of Ocean Beach: Billy Carlson and Frank J. Higgins;* **Rob Case** - *Isham's Springs;* **Welton Jones** - *Naked Truth: Zoro Gardens at the 1935-36 Exposition in Balboa Park;* **Richard Carrico** - *The Country Boy, Madame X & the Japanese Spy;* **Mary Ellen Stratthaus** - *La Jolla's "Gentlemen's Agreement," Housing Discrimination in San Diego 1930s-1960s;* and **Louise Matthews** - *Jail House Cuisine from the Right Side of the Bars.*

[since speakers are volunteers, no guarantee they will be there]

SPRING VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 P O BOX 142
 SPRING VALLEY CA 91976
 Visit our website at: svhistoricalsociety.org



Come hear an interesting talk at our **Feb. 6th** meeting on the varied history of Gunpowder Point, located in Chula Vista (now the location of the Living Coast Discovery Center and San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge). The Hercules Powder Co. processed kelp to make gunpowder at the factory shown below, from 1913-1919. The Hercules Powder Co. logo shown at left.

 Please **save** SVHS the cost of printing & postage by having your *Bancroft Bulletin* e-mailed.* Thank you. 

Membership Application / Renewal Form

Fiscal Year: July 1 - June 30

Annual Dues:

Individual	\$10.00
Family (2 adults + kids)	\$15.00
Organization	\$20.00
Sustaining	\$35.00
Student (under 22 yrs)	\$5.00
Life Member (1 individual)	\$150.00

Please make check payable to:

Spring Valley Historical Society

bring this form to a meeting and introduce yourself!

or mail to address shown in upper left corner of this page

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ ZIP: _____ - _____

e-mail: _____ PHONE: (____) _____

*I prefer a hard copy of the newsletter be mailed (if box **not** checked, a PDF newsletter will be e-mailed)

AMOUNT: DUES \$ _____ and/or CONTRIBUTION \$ _____

PLEASE CONTACT ME FOR HELP WITH: _____ Work Parties _____ Giving Museum Tours

_____ Serving on Board _____ Rummage Sale _____ Other: _____