



# Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert

230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd. • P. O. Box 2001, Ridgecrest, CA 93556 • 760-375-8456

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April 2019

To see our schedule of events, visit us at [hsumd.org](http://hsumd.org) or on Facebook at [hsumd](https://www.facebook.com/hsumd)

## New Searles Book Featured

This month's meeting of the Historical Society will feature James L. Fairchild presenting new information on John Searles, the pioneer and namesake of the Searles Valley.

Although Jim has spoken to us about Searles before (way back in 2009), you'll want to come out to hear the new information he has to present at our meeting on Tuesday, April 16, at 7 p.m. at the Historic USO Building, 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd.

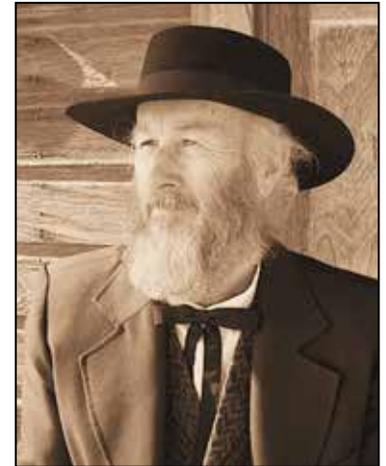
Jim has had a 12-year interest in John Searles, starting with a wish to present a living history docudrama of portions of Searles' life. In Jim's latest book, *John W. Searles, California Mining Pioneer*, he teamed up with David Robinson, the great-great-grandnephew of John Searles, to write the first complete biography of Searles. The fact that David is an avid genealogist and the holder of many original family documents and photographs greatly aided the research and writing of the book.

This book is unlike any earlier writings about John Searles in that the authors searched through hundreds of early records, such as mining claims, land deeds, early maps, contemporary newspaper

articles, and private collections of photographs and documents to provide documentation for everything included in the book.

The research included three trips to the Trinity River area to learn what John Searles and his brother Dennis were doing there in the first six years after arriving in California in 1852. Other travel included David's visit to the California Historical Society in San Francisco and a trip to San Diego by both authors to interview 93-year-old Clifford Burton, the nephew of John Searles' wife.

"This research makes this latest book a unique and thorough report of most of the major events in John Searles' life," said Jim. "We prove when John and Dennis came to California and how they travelled, where they were mining gold and silver in the Slate Range and why they left there, when they discovered and started mining borax, and the sad story of John's marriage and the tragedy that engulfed much of his wife's family, and of course the facts surrounding his famous hand-to-hand combat with a California grizzly bear. In all, the book has 15 chapters, each covering a different aspect of John Searles'



Jim Fairchild as John Searles, 2009

Courtesy of the speaker



Sarah Covington (?), Dennis Searles III, and John W. Searles, circa 1876-1877.

Searles Valley Historical Society

See p. 4

President's Message —

# HSUMD Books You'll Enjoy Reading

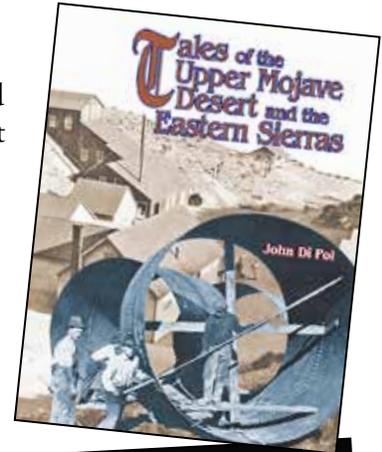


Tex Hoppus

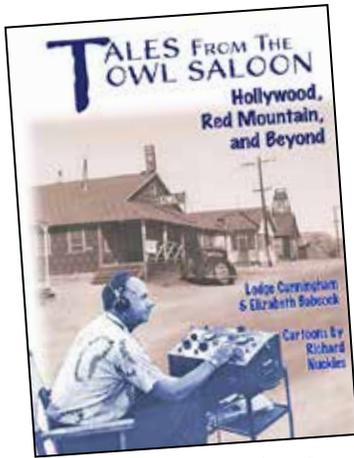
Because of the history of our Historic USO Building and what it brings to our community's activities and celebrations, these events and the marvelous work by our cadre of volunteers are most often the subjects of my monthly notes

But let's not forget that we are a Historical Society and, at our core, our mission is to preserve, protect, and present the history of where we live. So let me remind you all that we have had esteemed local authors who penned irreplaceable, entertaining, and informative books for us. And these books are in our Gift Shop ready to reward and inform your curiosity!

John DiPol's *Tales of the Upper Mojave Desert and the Eastern Sierras* (2013) features 59 short but intriguing tales following stories of local mines, canyons, mountains, and towns. Meet people and their stories as you take this popular ride through history.

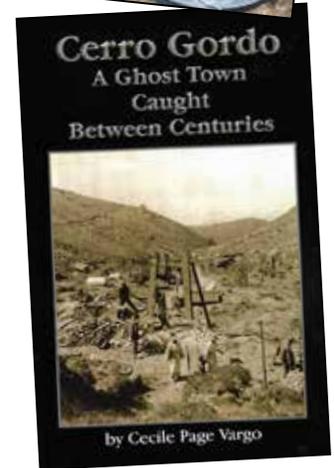


*Tales From the Owl Saloon* (2017), by Cabot Lodge Cunningham and Elizabeth Babcock, with cartoons by Richard Nuckles, is our most unusual book — boisterous, sometimes profane, but always fascinating telling of tales by storyteller Cunningham, a renowned Hollywood sound engineer in love with the Rand Mining District and owner of the famed Owl Saloon. More information about Lodge and the people he met at the

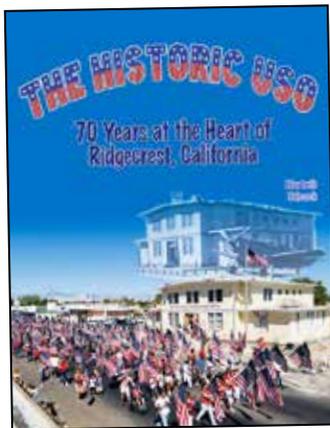


Owl is found in the second half of the book.

Cecile Page Vargo's *Cerro Gordo: A Ghost Town Caught Between Centuries* is a book filled with true stories, farces, and somewhere-in-between tales. If you haven't been to the mining ghost town, this book will inspire you to take the trip north and into the mountains to the east.



*The Historic USO* (2015) by Elizabeth Babcock has more historical photos than you could ask for, illustrating an exceptional history of early Ridgecrest. Why a USO Club was built, what went on here, how this building became the heart of the community, and how it continues to provide the community a warm, friendly, and active place to gather are some of the topics addressed. Liz wrote the book in conjunction with our building's 70th anniversary celebration hosted by HSUMD, owner and steward of this special facility.



The photos, memories, and mementos come from our collections, plus a wide variety of other local sources.

This is a small sample of the books authored by local writers and published by HSUMD. These books are an important part of the heart and soul of our region's foundations. More on this later!

HSUMD'S Open Mic Night is the place to be for great music and ambiance every non-flex Friday. Admission is a mere \$2 per adult. Children younger than 12 are free. Beers and wines are available along with the usual candies, sodas, popcorn, and Jumbo Crumville hot dogs. The entertainment starts a 7 sharp.

— Tex Hoppus

# Wildflowers and Collections



Lacy phacelia and goldfields in the Rademacher Hills.

Photo by Liz

I want to start this month's message with a reminder to stop by and have a look at our Wildflower and Landscape exhibit showcasing local photographers' efforts. You will also have a chance to see the video put together for our viewing during the Wilderness Celebration a few year ago.

The display will be up during the month of April during our regular hours Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Now for a different bit. I am asking for your help and appreciation with a few of our recent donations.

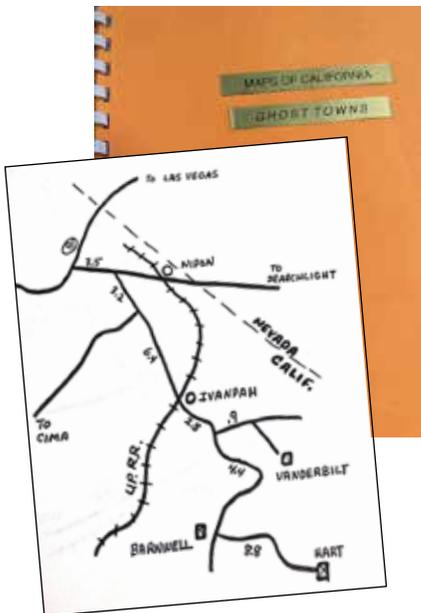
No help needed for the first one. Dee DiPol has donated her darling baby plate to be added to our display in the main lobby. The amazing story is that this is

the only dish that survived the Long Beach earthquake of March 10 1933. Dee says every other dish in the house was broken.

Next we have a Christmas card addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Sid Armisted, Mojave Desert Inn Hwy. 6. We all remember their logo at the gas station with the jack-rabbit wearing the canteen. Liz Babcock purchased this for our collections.



Next is a help request. I don't seem to have any notation about who the person was who donated the book entitled "Maps of California Ghost Towns." I have included one of the maps.



Anyone know how I came to have this? Anyone remember Had to have a license plate for Robert Henry via Andrew Sound.

Lastly, I didn't know that there were so many helpful little handouts for our veterans. Thanks to Susan Canfield, we will add several historic flyers (not pictured) to our VMB showcases.

Our HSUMD Gift Shop has several wildflower books and merchandise that will be on sale during April as part of our celebration of wildflowers. Books include *The Flower Watcher's Guide to Wildflowers of the Western Mojave Desert*, *The Jepson Desert Manual*, *Mojave Desert Wildflowers*, *Sierra Nevada Wildflowers*, and *Wildflowers of California* — with sale discounts of 10 to 35 percent. Other merchandise on sale includes wildflower magnets (for your refrigerator), wildflower screen saver (for your computer), and hats and shirts. Members get their 10% member discount on top of the sale price. Come in to get these great books and guides and save!

— Bob Dezellem



these items? your bicycle! Thank you,



— Carol Porter



# 'Reel Entertainment' Continues in April and May

The winds of April usher in a refreshing breeze of activities to the Historic USO Building. Our latest film series, "Reel People, Part 2" is a "reel" part of that: popular biopix, featuring super stars Tom Hanks, Meryl Streep, Amy Adams and Leonardo DiCaprio, among others.

On Wednesday, April 17, at 7 p.m., Classic Movie Night will screen the third of this series, a 2002 American biographical crime film directed and produced by Steven Spielberg and starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks.

The film, which opens with a real-life 1977 "To Tell the Truth" television episode, tells in flashback an unbelievable crime spree and resulting "cat-and-mouse" chase. Before his 19th birthday, Frank Abagnale, (DiCaprio) successfully performed cons worth millions of dollars by posing as a Pan American World Airways pilot, a Georgia doctor, and a Louisiana parish prosecutor. His primary crime was check fraud. He became so experienced that the FBI eventually turned to him for help in catching other check forgers. Tom Hanks plays the seasoned FBI agent who wearily pursues Abagnale through an amazing web of crimes and aliases ... all over the world. Abagnale's parents are brilliantly portrayed by Christopher Walken and Nathalie Baye. This fascinating film was highly regarded by critics and was a huge box office success.

On Wednesday, May 1, at 7 p.m., we present the *pièce de résistance* of this series with a much-beloved recent classic. This box office smash hit contrasts the life of chef and author Julia Child (portrayed with Oscar®-nominated expertise by Meryl Streep) in the early years of her culinary career with the life of young New Yorker, Julie Powell (Amy Adams). Powell sets out to re-create all 524 recipes in Child's cookbook in 365 days, a challenge she describes in a popular blog that makes her a published author. The two stories delightfully weave back and forth in time, jumping between various moments in Julie's and Julia's lives and making the viewer literally salivate over the fabulous Child creations ... from both of the chefs! Chris Messina plays Julie's gastronomically fortunate husband, and Stanley Tucci gives warm and loving support to his chef wife. Along with this presentation, one of our loyal film sponsors, Kim Metcalf, owner of the specialty retail store, Romancing the West, will be creating a lovely French atmosphere with special décor, tasty desserts, and champagne for our guests. Bon appétit, indeed!

As always our thrifty Snack Bar features a vast array of taste-tempting treats and opens at 6:30 p.m. to serve our hungry movie lovers who may sit at tables in our auditorium to comfortably enjoy their snacks. Admission is, as always, *free*, but we greatly appreciate donations to help maintain our building. Cartoons and previews begin at 7 p.m., and after an informative introduction and a few words from our loyal sponsors, the features will roll out on our big screen.

See you at the movies for "reel" entertainment!

— Nick Rogers

## New Searles Book

From p. 1

life. The presentation will touch on some of the highlights from a few of these chapters.

Jim Fairchild is a chemist and chemical engineer who has lived and worked in Trona for more than 56 years. His 56 years at Searles Valley Minerals, Inc., make him the longest tenured employee. He works as a principal process engineer, using his experience to improve existing mineral extraction processes and develop new technologies that will contribute to SVM's meeting its business needs for the next 15 years.

Jim is on the board of the Searles Valley Historical Society and the author of the SVHS book, *Early Mining at*

*Searles Lake, 1873-1929*. He is also a coauthor of the Images of America book, *Around Trona and Searles Valley*, published by Arcadia Press.

He is also the publicist for the Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society and has been a major contributor to making the mineral collecting field trips at the annual Trona Gem-O-Rama the largest event of its kind in the United States. He and his wife Bonnie continue to live in Trona in a house they purchased 48 years ago.

We meet on the third Tuesday of most months. Meetings are free and all are welcome to attend. For more info call us at 760-375-8456.

— Andrew Sound

# SAVE THE DATE — HSGUMD HOSTS CINCO DE MAYO ON MAY 4!

Hello, friends and family —

I hope you'll join us for our festive Cinco de Mayo event.

Below is a bio of Julio, the performer at our fiesta.

— Matt Zubia

## THE MAGIC OF MORONES

Julio Morones is a singer, composer, musician, writer, and keyboard artist from Los Angeles. Oh, and by the way, he is blind.

His love for music started at a very young age. Despite his disability, he fought against all odds and started composing songs, and learned how to play piano by heart. Even at the young age of ten he quickly learned that music was his passion and his way of expressing himself.

Morones has performed in numerous bands, playing in styles ranging from Reggae, Latin, Cumbia Tropical and

Rhythm and blues. He recently decided to perform as an independent keyboard player. He has just released his first solo album featuring the sounds of cumbia, Tejano, and bachata.

He is so grateful to God for his blessings and for giving him the talent to do what he does best...composing and performing music. Check out his warm, vibrant personality and his musical magic on YouTube...and enjoy!

— Nick Rogers



The poster features a yellow background with a red-to-orange gradient at the bottom. At the top, the text 'FIESTA DEL CINCO DE MAYO' is written in a large, arched font, with 'FIESTA DEL CINCO' in green and 'DE MAYO' in red. Below this is the Mexican flag. The main title 'DINNER & DANCE' is in a large, black, serif font. The date and time 'SATURDAY MAY 4th @ 6:30pm' are in a red, serif font. Below that, the text 'Prizes Awarded For Best Sombrero' is written in a green, cursive font. There are two images: a yellow acoustic guitar on the left and a white sombrero with a colorful band on the right. The text 'Live Music by: Julio y su Teclado Magico From Los Angeles' is in a large, black, sans-serif font. Below this is the address 'Historic USO Building 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd' in a smaller, black, serif font. A photograph of Julio Morones playing a keyboard is on the right side. At the bottom, the text 'Tickets Available At The Historic USO Building' is in a large, black, sans-serif font, followed by '\$15 per person - Includes Authentic Street Tacos & one Soda or Water Beer, Wine, and Soda will be Available for Purchase' in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

FIESTA DEL CINCO DE MAYO

DINNER & DANCE

SATURDAY MAY 4th @ 6:30pm

Prizes Awarded For Best Sombrero

Live Music by:  
Julio y su Teclado Magico  
From Los Angeles

Historic USO Building  
230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd

Tickets Available At The Historic USO Building

\$15 per person - Includes Authentic Street Tacos & one Soda or Water  
Beer, Wine, and Soda will be Available for Purchase

## *Sand Canyon Environmental Education Program (SEEP) - 2019*

# HSUMD History Station in Sand Canyon

Students sit at SEEP's History Station, one of six interpretive stations they visit while they complete journals of their trip. Craig Porter (standing in white shirt) shows them the tools a patrolman's family used to do their laundry.

*Photo courtesy of  
Craig Porter*



**T**wo of the 2019 SEEP field trips have already happened, and we still need your help. Please volunteer for one or all of the remaining field trips to educate fourth graders at the History Station in Sand Canyon. The remaining field trip dates are:

**Wed April 10**

**Fri April 12**

**Fri April 26**

**Thu May 2**

For the History Station, we will meet at the Black Pipe in Sand Canyon at 10:30 a.m. I will organize the equipment and take it to Sand Canyon (I will leave Ridgecrest by 10 a.m. — we can carpool to Sand Canyon and back).

We will set up the History Station at Sand Canyon and be ready when the first students to arrive at 11:25 a.m. For the History Station, the students are divided into two groups of students (approximately 30-40 students per group).

We have the first group from 11:25 until 11:55. The second group is from 11:55 to 12:25. Of course, the times include passing times from one station to another — so we only really get 20 minutes per group to do our

thing. We have to be on our game.

After the second group is finished at 12:25 p.m., we gather up our belongings and return to Ridgecrest by about 1:30 p.m.

What we do with our 20 minutes per group is give a short talk about the history of the aqueduct (Black Pipe) and the life of past inhabitants of the canyon. We also have some demonstrations showing how the aqueduct's inverted syphons work and demonstrations showing how people lived in the canyon before electricity. We point out the ruins of the past inhabitants that are still visible — swimming pool, house foundations, guardhouse, etc.

**Bottom Line:** For people who live in Ridgecrest, a field trip commitment is from 10 a.m. when we leave Ridgecrest until 1:30 p.m. when we arrive back in Ridgecrest. If you are willing to help, please get in touch with me at [cporter148@mchsi.com](mailto:cporter148@mchsi.com) or 760-446-3400 (home).

The best way to get trained is to listen to the Sand Canyon Station DVD (the abridged version is ~ 23 minutes) and attend a field trip to get the lay of the land.

— Craig Porter

# Nominating Committee Report

**Yes, it's time again to announce the nominees for next year's HSUMD board!**

An election for the HSUMD Board positions whose incumbents have completed their terms will be part of the May General Membership Meeting. The 2018 Nominating Committee is now accepting 2018 board nominations. Of course, as our bylaws state, nominations from the floor will also be accepted at the May meeting (if you get the nominee's permission before you make the nomination).

Each board member serves a two-year term, and our bylaws call for these terms to be staggered so that we don't have all members leaving or joining the board at one time.

The following current members of our Society's Board of Directors have agreed to run for another two-year term:

- John Abbott
- Richard Hendricks
- Tex Hoppus
- Jim Kenney
- Nick Rogers

Biographies of these candidates will be published in the May newsletter.

Continuing for the second year of their current terms are Chuck Cordell, Doug Leuck, Carol Porter, Andrew Sound, and Matthew Zubia.

*Nominating Committee:  
Craig Porter (chairperson), Don Snyder, Allan Woodman*

## Member Categories

HSUMD has three membership categories — all very important to us. Our regular memberships are \$35 per individual or family. Our business memberships are \$45 each. We also have a special category: life member, which is something the board bestows only on members who have supported HSUMD in sustained and special ways. Our life members' names are shown on our website.

## *New Members*

Carolyn Pande  
Dorothy Saitz  
Jessica Weston

## *Business & Nonprofit Members*

Ale's Steakhouse and Bar  
Allen County Public Library,  
Genealogy Department  
Anna Marie Bergens, Realtor  
Best Western China Lake Inn  
Bob & Ardyce's Bicycle Shop  
China Lake Photographic Society  
Clarion Inn  
Comfort Inn  
Comm. Light Opera & Theatre Assoc.  
Cordell Construction Co.  
Desert Empire Fair  
Diana Said, Vaughn Realty  
Earth Landscaping  
Eastern California Museum  
Econo-Lodge  
Edward Jones Investments –  
Brook H. Andreoli

The Flower Shoppe  
Heritage Inn  
High Desert Genealogical Society  
Phyllis M. Hix, Attorney  
Inyokern Chamber of Commerce  
IWV Premier Landscaping  
Jack & Dana Lyons, Realtors  
Kern Antelope Historical Society  
Kern County Historical Society  
Kern River Historical Society  
Maturango Museum  
MOAH  
Mohahave Historical Society  
Mojave River Valley Museum  
Motion Tire & Wheel  
Needles Regional Museum  
*The News Review*

Pleistocene Foundation  
Rand Desert Museum  
Red Rock Books  
Ridgecrest Area Convention &  
Visitors Bureau  
Ridgecrest Automotive, LLC  
Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce  
Ridgecrest Moving & Storage  
Ridgecrest Regional Hospital  
Roaming Dog Kitchen  
S&M Coins & Collectibles  
Searles Valley Historical Society  
Shoshone Museum Assoc.  
Starbucks  
Gary P. Staab & Assoc., Inc.  
Tehachapi Historical League  
Vaughn Realty  
Warren's Automotive  
Wrightwood Historical Society

## DIRECTORS

**Tex Hoppus, President**

760-382-1852, tex.hoppus@me.com

**Doug Lueck, Vice President**

760-375-8202, racvb@filmdeserts.com

**Richard Hendricks, Secretary-Treasurer**

shoreline83@me.com

**Andrew Sound, Programs**

760-608-7296, afsound@verizon.net



**John Abbott, Building Mgr., Bldg. Rental**

619-808-2223, jga2nja@yahoo.com

**Chuck Cordell, Building**

cordell.construction@yahoo.com

**Carol Porter, Accessions & Exhibits**

760-446-3400, carporter@gmail.com

**Nick Rogers, Movie Nite, Publicity**

Wnr428@hotmail.com or call

760-375-8456 for info

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## COMMITTEE LEADERS

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**Jim Kenney, Field Trips Coordinator**

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**Craig Porter, SEEP Coordinator**

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**Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, PR Coordinator**

760-375-4308, mccrohan@iwvisp.com

**Here's an easy  
way to see this  
newsletter in color!**

Just email Liz at [lizbab@fastmail.fm](mailto:lizbab@fastmail.fm) and ask to be put on the list to get a PDF copy emailed to you each month.

We don't plan to stop sending paper copies, but online is the way to go if you prefer living color. Unless you stipulate email only, we'll also continue to mail you a copy in black and white.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- ★ Annual dues are \$35 (family) and \$45 (business).
- ★ Please remember the Historical Society in your wills, trusts and other gift giving. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

**MEETING OF APRIL 2019**  
Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m., Historic USO Building



Historical Society of the  
Upper Mojave Desert  
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Ridgecrest, CA 93556

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