



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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May 2019

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

Annual Dinner Features SEEP

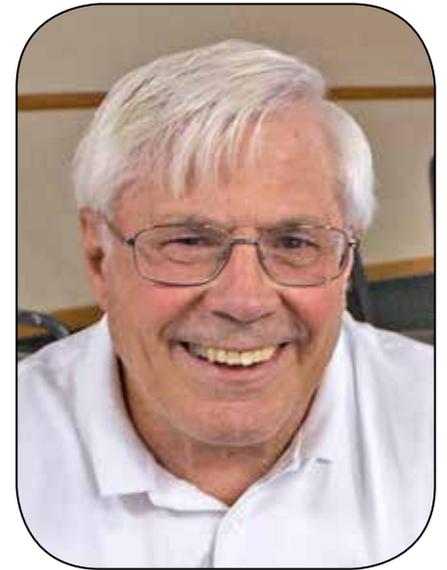
Our annual dinner meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 21, at the Historic USO Building, 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd. We hope you'll attend! Doors will open at 6 p.m., with dinner served at 6:30. A brief business meeting following the dinner will include elections to the board of directors (see info on our candidates, page 3).

The dinner will feature pulled pork prepared by Board Member Chuck Cordell and his Habitat for Humanity crew, plus dessert provided by HSUMD. The cost is \$10, and tickets are on sale at the Historic USO Gift Shop. You can also call in reservations, then pay for them when you come to the meeting. In other case, please make arrangements by Friday, May 17, so we can get an accurate count for the meal.

After dinner and the business meeting, Craig Porter will offer brief remarks on SEEP (the Sand Canyon Environmental Education Project). Craig has been the coordinator for HSUMD's portion of the program since 2012. We will also have the opportunity to see an abridged version of the Society's video, "Sand Canyon Station." (Mark Pahuta's original version is on sale in our gift shop.)

SEEP is a springtime classroom and field trip event that shows local fourth and fifth graders the story of natural and human impacts on Sand Canyon. One of HSUMD's longtime contributions to the community has been to present the history of Sand Canyon on the sites where that history happened. In the early years of the program, several HSUMD members with connections to the canyon, including Robert Ramsey, Lois Ramsey Carr, Litha Crowell Mattis, and Henry Schuette, would join the trips to provide living links with history.

The video starts with the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct that passes through Sand Canyon on its route along the Eastern Sierra just to the west of our valley. The canyon was one of the challenges on the aqueduct's route.



Our speaker, Craig Porter

Photo by Liz

See p. 5



Litha Crowell Mattis, who lived in Sand Canyon and went to Tiny Standard's Mount Owen School when she was a young girl, shares her memories with youngsters on a SEEP field trip held in the early days of the program.

Photo by Bill Nevins

President's Message —

Yes, We 'Do History'!



Tex Hoppus

Don't forget that we have our Annual Meeting this month on Tuesday, May 21. It will include, among other fun and important things, a program about SEEP, good food prepared by Chuck Cordell and his team, and a vote regarding our board of directors for next term. Be there!

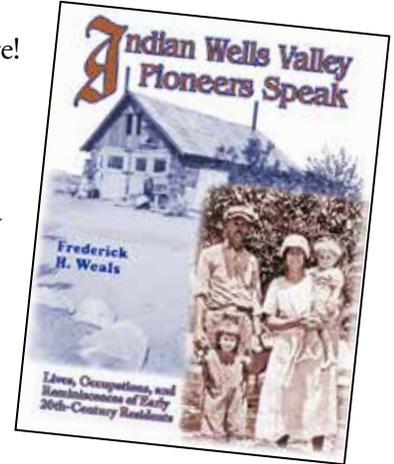
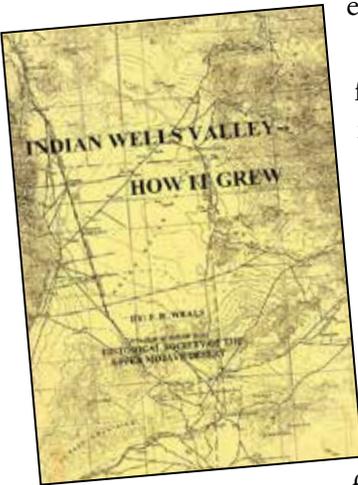
Tickets are a mere \$10 per person, with dessert provided by HSUMD. Please arrange for them by Friday, May 17.

Remember last month's message about some of the fascinating history books that we have in our Gift Shop – penned by local authors and historians on subjects directly related to our region's past? Here are more, for your consideration and reading enjoyment.

How It Was, prepared for print by Lou Pracchia (1994), features entertaining and informative personal memoirs by five of our earliest settlers.

Along those same lines is *Indian Wells Valley Pioneers Speak* (2017), by Fred Weals, author at age 100. Learn about local farmers, miners, shepherds, teachers, well diggers, merchants, railroad men, lawmen, civic leaders and firefighters. Where did they come from? Did they remain? Find out in the book.

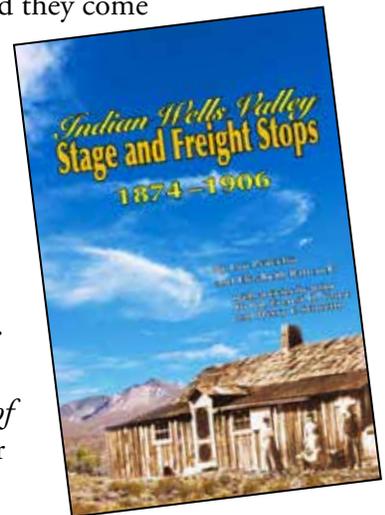
Ever wonder where or why housing developments are where they are? How our town street names came about? How we got spread out all over the valley? Read *Indian Wells Valley — How It Grew* (2001), another information-filled Fred Weals book.



Travel through our valley on our *Indian Wells Valley Stage and Freight Stops 1874-1906*, a 1994 publication by Lou Pracchia that was revised and expanded in 2012 by Liz Babcock. Meet the people who made it happen and learn where the thirsty mules got their fill.

Yet another book by the prolific Fred Weals is *A History of the Churches of Indian Wells Valley* (2003). This review of our valley's major religions discusses individual church histories, their founding years, and expansions. A must-have for every church office, the book encompasses churches in the Rand District, China Lake, Inyokern and Ridgecrest.

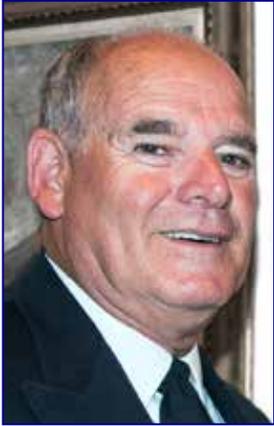
Who knew a post office would be required to move from the west side of the highway to the east side and back across, then once again return east only to settle back to the West and to finally close down? Now you will understand the title, *The Zig Zag Post Office* (2007), by Jane Thomann. Here is a story of the Little Lake Post Office, Hotel, Cafe, her family, and many friends in the nearby area, including some famous Indian Wells Valley personalities.



Our Gift Shop also features many other books in addition to those we have produced ourselves. Yes, our Historic USO Building, our Veterans Memorial Building, our historic Jail and our historic Firehouse and Engine Houses offer lots of fun and informative events and activities. But don't forget that we also "do history"!

— Tex Hoppus

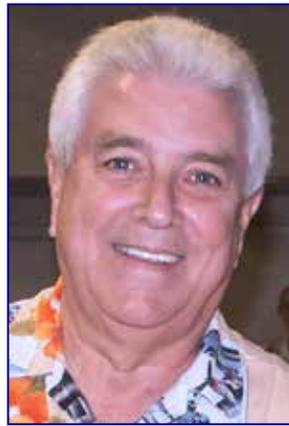
Candidates for Election to HSUMD Board



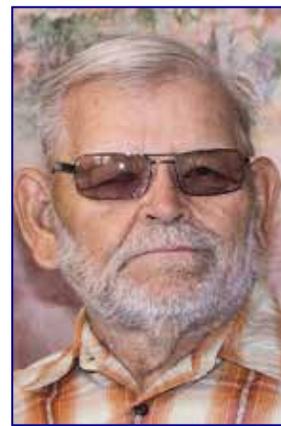
John Abbott



Richard Hendricks



Tex Hoppus



Jim Kenney



Nick Rogers

Here are glimpses of the five accomplished gentlemen our Nominating Committee has induced to run for seats (continuing and in one case returning) on our board. Continuing for the second year of their current terms are Chuck Cordell, Doug Lueck, Carol Porter, Andrew Sound, and Matthew Zubia.

John Abbott is the indispensable person who handles the arrangements for Historic USO building rentals. He has held that key position ever since he joined our board in 2011.

He is also well-known in our town as a key volunteer for Police and Community Together (PACT). He also represents HSUMD in coordinating the support group for veterans that meets in our Veterans Memorial Building.

John grew up in Maine and married his sweetheart, Norma, in April 1967. After high school graduation, he immediately joined the military. By the time he was 20, he was serving in the Vietnam war, and after he returned home he was stationed domestically in riot control. By the time he retired from the Navy, he had achieved the rank of Senior Chief.

His experiences helped convince him of the importance of reaching out to other veterans. His desire to help the community and his commitment to the veterans' group are his two biggest motivations for wishing to continue on the HSUMD board.

A modest but useful boardmember, **Richard Hendricks** says, "I moved to Ridgecrest in 2009 and joined the HSUMD Board as recording secretary in 2015. I serve the board as Secretary-Treasurer for the Society. I hope to continue to serve in this capacity."

Tex Hoppus, a longtime member

of HSUMD and president of our society for the past five years, has lived in the IWV since moving here in 1970 when the Naval Ordnance Lab in Corona closed.

He has a B.S. in aerospace engineering and an M.S. in electronics engineering and has served the Navy both as a civil servant and as a contractor. Tex has earned numerous honors from Eagle Scout to the Naval Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

Tex's interest in history extends to include membership in the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. He's also a student of genealogy and has published a thick book, *Stones Upon Stones*, detailing the history of the Hoppus family. His wife Marti also provides a lot of help to HSUMD as our bookkeeper.

Jim Kenney has been a resident of our valley since 1971. He previously served four terms on our board, making major contributions both as program manager and as field trip coordinator, and he serves as a member of our Publications Committee. A former teacher at Cerro Coso Community College, he has also been involved with the BLM Advisory Committee and is a member of the Gear Grinders. Jim's HSUMD field trips have been legendary for the knowledge and appreciation he brought to each of them. Health considerations have limited his ability to continue those trips, but he has agreed to become the much-needed publications and history advisor on our board.

And here's what **Nick Rogers** has to say. "My interest in HSUMD began when I met the late Alan Alpers at a Classic Movie Night presentation some eight years ago. I loved what he was doing: showing classic films in a theater setting to a community of movie lovers. He was also serving as host to valley residents and visitors to our Historic USO Building. He was always so gracious, saying "Hello" to everyone entering and "Thanks for coming!" when they left. Well, being a classic film lover, and really appreciating what Alan was doing, I asked to helm this signature event myself. Many years later, I still love this community outreach and I want it to continue on and on..."

"As a boardmember for the last six years, I have also assumed the task of publicity for the Society. And, I'm sure you have seen me on the ladder out front changing the marquee weekly!"

Nominations are also welcome from the floor as long as you have first gotten your nominee's permission to place his/her name in nomination.

Nominating Committee:
Craig Porter (chairperson)
Don Snyder
Alan Woodman

Movies in May – and Beyond



Octavia Spencer, Taraji P. Henson, and Janelle Monáe at a global celebration of their film, Dec. 10, 2016.
NASA photo

The month of May brings the Historic USO Building the two final Classic Movie Night “Reel People, Part 2” presentations, both of which have to do with flight!

On Wednesday, May 15, at 7 p.m., we bring you the much-acclaimed, unbelievably true life story of three African American female mathematicians, known as “human computers,” employed at NASA during the space race. They toiled alongside many of history’s greatest scientific minds working to calculate the launch of John Glenn into space and to guarantee his safe return.

The three women, brilliantly, and humorously played by Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, and Janelle Monáe, worked tirelessly amid subtle and not-so-subtle discrimination from co-workers to accomplish major breakthroughs in space travel and cement their places in history as true American heroes. Kevin Costner and Kirsten Dunst co-star. This 2016 film will have you cheering at the conclusion, we guarantee!

Fast forward many years to the year 2009 when a true American hero skillfully piloted a full US Airways Flight 1549 into an emergency landing on the Hudson River, assuring the safety of 155 passengers and crew and captivating the hearts of the American public. Tom Hanks stars in Clint Eastwood’s story of the harrowing flight and subsequent publicity and investigation that threatened to destroy our hero with accusations of “pilot error.” Aaron

Eckhart portrays the brave co-pilot and Laura Linney appears as our hero’s wife.

Since the name of this film (to be screened on Wednesday, May 29 at 7 p.m.) happens to be the name of the main character, our film license prohibits the mention of his name, but, you probably know it. If not, you may call 760-375-8456 for the title of this and our previously described feature or stop by for a film schedule.

Arrive early...at 6:30 p.m. to “fuel” up on tasty cuisine and savory snacks from our thrifty Snack Bar. Admission is, as always, **free**, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Looking ahead... Our seventh annual “Summer of Movie Magic” begins the very next Wednesday. Premiering on Wednesday, June 5, this year’s series will showcase five Walt Disney films and five family favorites in showings every Wednesday at 7 p.m., through Aug. 7. Spiffy new programs will be available very soon in our lobby.



Aaron Eckhart and Tom Hanks at a premiere of their film, Tokyo, Sept. 15, 2016.
Wikimedia Commons

Annual Dinner and SEEP

From p. 1



John Di Pol and Hank Schuette speak to youngsters on site in Sand Canyon. John coordinated HSUMD's SEEP participation for many years, and Hank was there to share memories of his father, who worked on construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct. *Photo by Bill Nevins*

The video will explain about a disaster that delayed construction for about six months, as well as some of the other challenges encountered.

The aqueduct was controversial for many of the inhabitants of the Owens Valley, and after aqueduct completion in 1913, its owner, the City of Los Angeles, hired patrolmen to inspect and protect it.

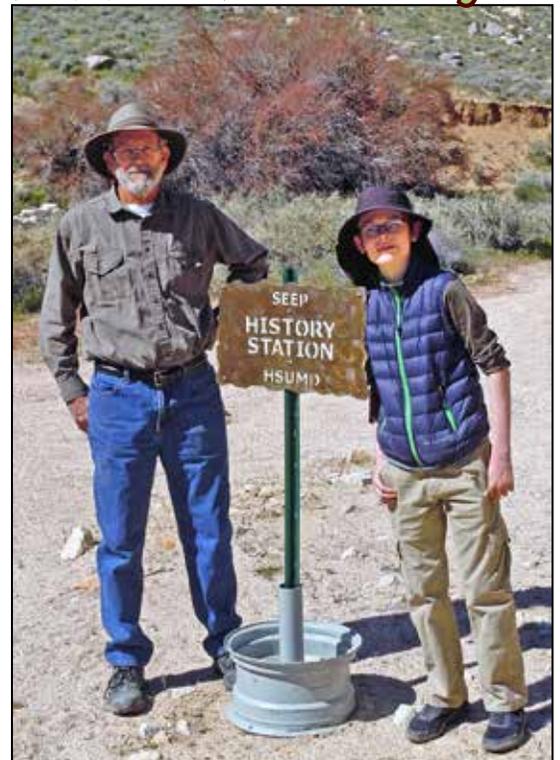
Some of these patrolmen lived in Sand Canyon, and their children are featured on the video telling about life in Sand Canyon in the 1930s and 1940s.

HSUMD's programs are on the third Tuesday of most months. Meetings are free and all are welcome to attend. For more info, call 760-375-8456. — *Andrew Sound*



Craig Porter shows a group of fourth graders pictures of life in Sand Canyon during the 1930s-'40s. Bill Ferguson, another HSUMD volunteer presenter, is at left background. Photo taken during this year's March 29 trip up the canyon.

2019 glimpses of SEEP in Sand Canyon



Bill Ferguson and his grandson Flow volunteer at HSUMD's SEEP History Station in Sand Canyon, also on March 29.

Both photos courtesy of Craig Porter

News About Our Collections

Many Hat-Sorting Helpers Needed

We have a very nice Fashion Through the Decades exhibit created by Liz Babcock a few years back. I thought it would be a fitting display to have up during the month of May and into June. I would like to add to this exhibit some of the many hats we have come into in the past year.

The photo at right shows just part of why I do need help from many with this project. We need to go through our many hat boxes to choose which ones we would like to use and how many.

This would also be a great time to pick the hats we want to display in a permanent exhibit in the ladies' dressing area.

You can see that I'm not joking about the need for help with this project. Please give me a call or let the gift shop know if you are willing to help out. I haven't set a day or time yet and will wait for inputs from you all.

One of the hats donated recently is the Crazy Hat Tea 2019 winner for Most Creative — a lovely hat decorated with flowers as well as teabags and a miniature tea set — how fitting!

Please give me a call if you have a bit of spare time. My numbers are 760-793-2505 or 446-3400.

— Carol Porter



Photo by Carol Porter

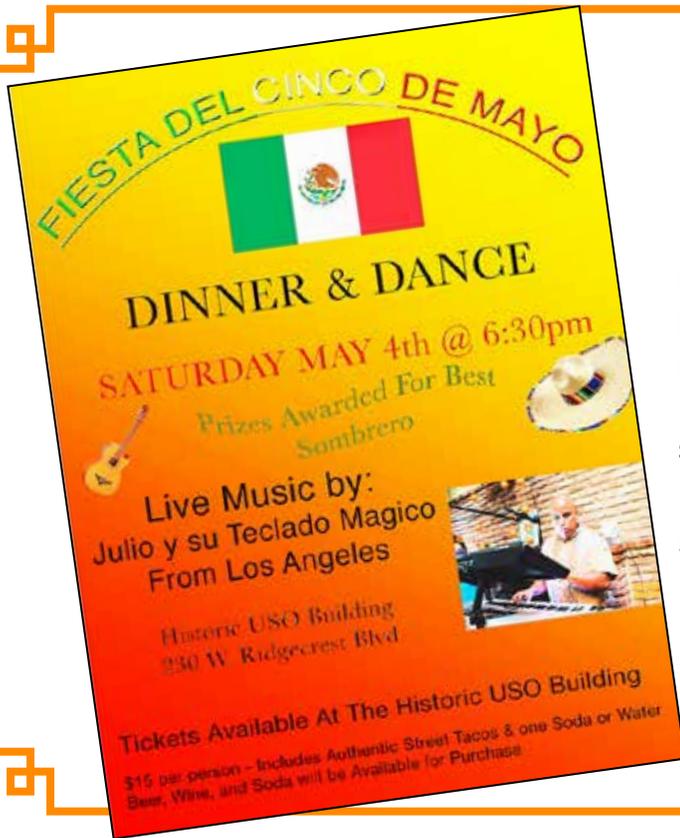
Gift Shop Offers Discounts

This May you'll want to stop by the HSUMD Gift Shop, located in the Historic USO Building. Books, T-shirts, hoodies, sweatshirts, hats, DVDs, and more are on sale at 15 to 30 percent off regular price to make way for summer merchandise. There are several great summer hats available with wide sun-blocking rims. HSUMD members get their 10-percent member discount in addition to the sale discount. There's also a great selection of Sees candies just arrived and in stock (alas, no sale prices or discounts on Sees).

— Bob Dezellem

HSUMD'S Open Mic Night is the place to be for great music and ambiance every non-flex Friday.

Admission is \$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. Entertainment starts at 7 sharp.



Fun Event on May 4!

We ran a full-size version of the poster at left in our April issue. Hope you receive your May newsletter in time to use this smaller rerun as a reminder that you won't want to miss our gala Fiesta Del Cinco De Mayo on Saturday, May 4, starting at 6:30 p.m.

Get your tickets now at the Historic USO Gift Shop — a mere \$15 per person!

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

Lisa Carr Rains
Jim Fairchild

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

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

Just email Liz at 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.

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 MAY 2019
Tuesday, May 21, Dinner at 6:30 p.m., Historic USO Building



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