



# HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UPPER MOJAVE DESERT

230 W RIDGECREST BL • P.O. BOX 2001, RIDGECREST, CA 93556 • 760-375-8456  
VOL. 36, NO. 6 .....JUNE 2021

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

## CELEBRATE & LEARN

Two Quonset-style Engine Houses were built in 1948 and 1950. There were our town's first fire protection buildings. **HSUMD** is the owner and steward of these historic buildings, and we've recently finished a major effort to repair and rehabilitate both of these treasures of Ridgecrest's heritage.



First Quonset hut-style Engine House, with "living quarters" in its back, is in the center. Second Engine House is on the right, and the original county Firehouse is on the left. This photo is from the perspective of the old Emergency Fire Horn, which sat atop the Historic USO Building.

To celebrate our accomplishment, and to let you see these important pieces of our town's history, we invite you to come down on **Saturday, June 12**, and enjoy our **"Open House"** that day between **11:00 am and 3:00 pm!**

And, as an extraordinary bonus, at **1:00 pm** in the auditorium of the Historic USO Building, Ridgecrest Mayor Eric Bruen will present a **City Proclamation** of a new **Ridgecrest History District**.

Our Book Store will be open, and we will have our Veterans Memorial Building, our Historic USO Building, and our historic Jail open for you to see. AND we will have interested people gather (safely) on our new "plaza" behind the Historic USO Building to start their tour of the two Quonset huts under the guidance of our volunteers.

Bottles of water and lemonade will be available, history books will be available, and some chairs for waiting guests will be available on the plaza.

Come see what we've been able to accomplish this year— all because of the generosity and help from citizens, businesses, and the indispensable volunteers of **HSUMD!**



HSUMD has endeavored to repair and "restore" the two Original Kern County Engine Houses, and has proudly erected a sign reminding the public of the history behind these pieces of Ridgecrest history.

**OPEN SATURDAY**  
**11:00~3:00**  
**HOUSE JUNE 12**  
**A SPECIAL PROCLAMATION 1:00**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's June 2021, and summer's about to begin. Here's a short list of what will happen, including celebrations that are coming up:



Tex Hoppus

June 5 will be World Environment Day (a day meant to raise environmental awareness across the globe). June 14 will be Flag Day (where we preserve the traditions, history, pride, and respect that are due the nation's symbol, Old Glory, and we will have raised a brand new flag!). June 19 is Juneteenth (when we celebrate Union General Gordon Granger's reading of the Emancipation Proclamation aloud in Galveston, Texas, effectively liberating slaves in the state). June 20 is the summer solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, this year's longest day and the formal beginning of our summer season. June 17 is the first birthday of my dear and beautiful granddaughter Zoe! And June 21 is Father's Day, a day that means everything to a proud father like myself.

On June 12, we at **HSUMD** will celebrate the hard work that we accomplished this past year in repairing and rehabilitating the two Quonset-style buildings that we have behind the Historic USO Building – the historic Engine Houses that were our town's very first fire protection structures. We invite all of you to come down and see what we've accomplished in preserving our town's heritage. (See the Front Page for the notice of this event in this edition.)

And, if the State and County have reached certain goals in controlling the spread and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we may be allowed to restart more of our abilities to entertain and educate you! Watch our sign out front on Ridgcrest Boulevard. for notices of what we can do after wards!

The world seems to be getting brighter. And our team of volunteers is eagerly waiting to see you and to serve you.

We hope to see more of you in the near future. We miss you! –*Tex Hoppus*

## JIM KENNEY, CHERISHED HSUMD CONTRIBUTOR

Historical Society members are among the many, many friends and admirers mourning the loss of Jim Kenney, who died on April 27 at the age of 74.

Jim was a wonderful, warm, generous, and modest HSUMD supporter. In my 2015 book, *The Historic USO*, I described him as “a devotee of local history with a vast mental storehouse of information about practically every corner of our desert” and “someone we can depend on for accurate information, great ideas, and personal links with the denizens of the Upper Mojave Desert.” No wonder he earned a 2016 honorary life membership!

Jim joined **HSUMD** in 1995, and as was his custom with whatever he did in life, he became one of our leaders early on, serving on our board numerous times, first as program manager, later adding the task of running and coordinating our field trips, and in recent years becoming our history consultant. This past May he had again agreed to run for our board.

As our field trip leader, Jim took us to the far reaches of local mountain trails, the most history-filled mining areas, and the most obscure traces of former stagecoach routes. Places we visited under his leadership included Darwin, Cerro Gordo and numerous historical sites in the Rand Mining District; plus numerous canyons, valleys, and ranges in the history-rich area that surrounds us.

I was one of many who depended heavily on him as a historical resource. As a final reviewer of *High Desert Double Exposures*, the 2020 Maturango Museum publication I did with Mark Pahuta, Jim made valuable corrections to our information on Saltdale.

I am also indebted to him for correcting errors in my 2012 edition of **HSUMD's** *Indian Wells Valley Stage and Freight Stops*. So helpful was Jim that he took me to the site of Freeman Stage Station and showed me how to correct my text and map.

Jim Kenney...(Continued: Page 3)

Jim Kenney...(From: Page 2)

If you never rode with Jim in his beloved jeep, you missed a special treat: a running commentary on the geology and history rolling by the window. When I did a talk about Garden City, Jim again took me to the site to point out many features I



surely would have missed without his guidance.

I don't have the space to enumerate Jim's many other services to our community, but I do want to mention his valuable participation in the Gear Grinders 4WD Club, the Searles Valley Historical Society, the BLM Desert District Advisory Council, and Cerro Coso Community College, for which he ran an Automotive Technical School in the 1980s.

He leaves behind Donna, his wife for nearly 54 years, and loving children and grandchildren. The family is planning a celebration of his life on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, with details to become available as the event nears. If you would like to make a contribution toward his memorial urn, you can send a check to Donna Kenney at P.O. Box 2224, Ridgecrest 93556. — *Liz Babcock*



## ELECTION TO THE 2021 HSUMD BOARD

Due to COVID restrictions there will be no in-person business meeting this year where **HSUMD** Board members are elected. This year the election is being conducted online or mail-in from now until **June 14, 2021**. The ballot mail-in or hand delivered to the Historic USO Building is given in this newsletter. A pdf ballot will also be emailed to those who get their newsletter via email.

There are five Board Members who were appointed last year (2020) by the Board, for the first year of a two-year term. They were appointed due to the COVID restrictions of no in-person

## MORE ABOUT JIM KENNEY

A love of history and a passion for four-wheeling made Jim Kenney the ideal leader for the **HSUMD's** field trips, and I feel lucky for having known him and gone along on many of the trips. The adventures always involved a number of stops along the way with Jim telling us about the points of interest we were seeing.

I have a lot of fond memories of those trips, but three in particular stand out. One followed an **HSUMD** program by Nicholas Clapp about the Lost City of Ophir, after which Jim followed Clapp's clues and found the Lost City and later led a field trip out to the site. That provided a real sense of adventure, treading over ground that had been lost to history. Another memorable trip was to the Cantil area. There we met up with Trisan Deu Pree, one of Jim's circle of acquaintances and a long-time local resident who was able to give us an insight into a way of life that was even then sinking beneath the sands. The society truly benefited from Jim's wide collection of knowledgeable friends, whether he was arranging tours or setting up our monthly programs.

Finally, there was the time Jim and I "pre-ran" a field trip based on Liz Babcock's *Indian Wells Valley Stage and Freight Stops*. Since it was just the two of us in RubiBlue, Jim's bright blue Jeep Rubicon, I got the full benefit of his wisdom and good humor. He gently mocked me for bringing along my GPS, which I saw the point of when we reached an area where all roads and landmarks disappeared from the screen!

The HSUMD has lost a great contributor in Jim Kenney. The Society, and I, will miss him. — *Andrew Sound*

meetings. These Board Members need to be affirmed by a vote of the membership for the second year of their remaining term. The By-Laws state that Board Members can only be appointed for a single year by a vote of the Board.

- These continuing Board Members are:
- Chuck Cordell
  - Kitty Ferguson
  - Doug Lueck
  - Carol Porter
  - Andrew Sound

Election... (Continued: Page 4)

Election... (From: Page 3)

The ballot has a section where you will be able to affirm these five Board Members for the remaining one year of their two-year term.

The Nominating Committee has accepted nominations for the following six candidates for the **HSUMD** Board of Directors. Five of the nominees are current members of the Board who have agreed to continue:

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

In the April newsletter the Nominating Committee called for nominations from the membership. The Committee received one nominee in this way, Joe De Pina. Pictures and bios of these six candidates are given below.

— *Nominating Committee:*  
*Craig Porter, Greg Boske, Don Snyder*

## 2021 HSUMD BOARD CANDIDATES

**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 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 as a **HSUMD** board member.

**Joe De Pina:** "I am retired. I've been volunteering at the Historical Society building for the last four years. I was the bookstore manager for the last three years. I'm looking forward to many more years to serve the HSUMD."



Thank you for considering me for a Board position."



**Richard Hendricks:** "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** is a longtime member of **HSUMD** and president of our society for the past seven years. Tex 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. Tex 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 is also a student of genealogy and has published a 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 five 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



Candidates (Continued: Page 5)



### Candidates (From Page 4)

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 continue as the much-needed publications and history advisor on our board.

*We are saddened by Jim's inability to continue serving on our Board.*

**Nick Rogers:** "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 board member for the last eight 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!" .

### READ THIS NEWSLETTER IN COLOR!

Just email [hsumdnwletter@gmail.com](mailto:hsumdnwletter@gmail.com) and ask to be put on the list to get a PDF copy emailed to you each month! We will continue to mail paper copies, but online is how to receive this in living color. Unless you request MAIL ONLY, a paper copy will also be mailed to the address on file.

### WAITING...TO DO IT RIGHT!

Hello, good neighbors and movie lovers:

We have received many inquiries as to when **Open Mic** and **Classic Movie Night** will resume their bi-monthly presentations. Open Mic Night, with its close seating and performing proximity will probably not resume until the pandemic situation is completely resolved. Not much sense for scattered artists performing before a size-restricted audience.

At our last Board of Directors meeting, (with the eight of us nearly shouting at one another from six feet apart!) we toyed with the idea of re-starting the Classic Movie Night in a limited, socially-distanced manner that would insure the safety of our loyal patrons. Well, this would mean that we could not seat large groups of friends and neighbors together at our round tables, which so many of our guests prefer to enjoy their hot dogs and treats with their families and friends. Also, we would have to limit the number of people entering the building to attend the movies and maintain a 6-ft distance for customers at the Snack Bar. Staffing safety in the kitchen and auditorium would also be a concern. We simply do not have the vast space that regular cinemas enjoy.

Movies began in a humble manner in the late 1800's, with presentations of crude, but fascinating images being beamed on large white sheets nailed to walls of store backrooms. They were silent, so they appealed to the masses, foreign or otherwise, yearning for cheap entertainment. The communal appeal of the movies has always been what makes the art form so popular and important. That shared feeling of laughter and drama make the films memorable to movie lovers. That's what we really love about the movies.

We have been showing motion pictures on our large screen for about twelve years and have taken pride in creating a safe and friendly environment for our many loyal guests. The Board unanimously agreed that to operate in a severely altered format would be a great disservice to our many guests who come to our little movie "palace" to enjoy the films, the food and the family of like-minded folks. We intend to bring back Classis Movie Night in its popular tried-and-true format just as soon as the current pandemic restrictions have been lifted.

*Thanks for your  
patience, good  
neighbors.  
Remember this:*



## **BUSINESS AND NON-PROFIT MEMBERS**

Ale's Steakhouse and Bar  
 Anna Marie Bergens, Realtor  
 \*Baxendale's  
 Best Western China Lake Inn  
 China Lake Museum Foundation  
 \*Cathy Kline's Floral Accents  
 China Lake Photographic Society  
 \*Center Pharmacy  
 Clarion Inn  
 Comfort Inn  
 \*Cordell Construction Co  
 \*Cosner-Neipp Computing  
 Desert Empire Fair  
 Diana Said, Vaughn Realty  
 Earth Landscaping  
 Eastern California Museum  
 Econo-Lodge  
 The Flower Shoppe  
 KC Martin Construction & Painting  
 \*Eastern Sierra Custom Picture Framing  
 High Desert Genealogical Society  
 Phyllis M. Hix, Attorney  
 Inyokern Chamber of Commerce  
 IWV Premier Landscaping  
 \*Dana Lyons, Best Realty  
 Kern Antelope Historical Society  
 The Desert Tortoise Preserve  
 Pleistocene Foundation  
 \*Maturango Museum  
 MOAH  
 Mohave Historical Scient  
 Mojave River Valley Museum  
 Motion Tire & Wheel  
 \*Museum of Western Film History  
 Needles Regional Museum  
*The News Review*

Rand Desert Museum  
 \*Red Rock Books  
 \*TJ Frisbee Bicycles  
 \*Ridgecrest Area Convention & Visitors  
     Bureau  
 L & N Properties  
 Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce  
 \*Ridgecrest Lions Club  
 Ridgecrest Regional Hospital  
 \*Ridge Writers  
 \*Ridgecrest Cinemas  
 \*Roaming Dog Kitchen  
 Rodeway Inn  
 \*Romancing the West  
 \*S&M Coins & Collectibles  
 Searles Valley Historical Society  
 Shoshone Museum Association  
 Starbucks  
 Gary P. Staab & Associates, Inc.  
 Tehachapi Historical League  
 Heritage Montessori School  
 Vaughn Realty  
 \*Warren's Automotive  
 \*Kathy Walker's Window Tinting  
 Wrightwood Historical Society

\*Classic Movie Night Sponsor

## **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 an honor the **HSUMD** Board bestows only on members who have supported the **HSUMD** in sustained and special ways. Our Life Members' names are on our website: [hsumd.org](http://hsumd.org)!

### 2021 Ballot for Election and Affirmation of HSUMD Board Members

Please submit your vote by **June 14, 2021** so the newly elected and the affirmed candidates can be accepted to their positions by the June 21, 2021 Board Meeting per the HSUMD bylaws.

You are able to vote for each nominee or to accept the nominations as unit.

The following members are in good standing and eligible for a position on the HSUMD Board of Directors.

John Abbott

Joe De Pina

Richard Hendricks

Tex Hoppus

Jim Kenney

Nick Rogers

A Vote for all of the above as a unit

The following board members, appointed in 2020 to their positions by the HSUMD Board of Directors, need a vote of affirmation from the membership to continue for the second year of their term of office. These members can be affirmed by a single vote below.

**Chuck Cordell , Kitty Ferguson, Doug Lueck, Carol Porter, Andrew Sound**

Yes- For affirmation of the above 2020 appointees

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of HSUMD Member Voting*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of HSUMD Member Voting*

You may bring your ballot to 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd, Ridgecrest CA 93555 on Thursday, Friday or Saturday between 11 am to 3 pm, or mailed to the above address. If you prefer to scan the ballot into your computer to vote by email, please send to: hsumdnewsletter@gmail.com

#### **HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UPPER MOJAVE DESERT**

230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd  
Ridgecrest, CA 93556  
(760) 375-8456

#### **Membership Application and Renewal Form**

Renewal

New Membership

Family (\$35)

Business (\$45)

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address

Street / PO Box: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Preference:

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**Mail completed form and payment to:**

Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert (Membership)  
P.O. Box 2001 Ridgecrest, CA 93556

*Make checks payable to: HSUMD*

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Check on HSUMD.org  
For further information



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