



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UPPER MOJAVE DESERT

230 W RIDGECREST BL ✦ P.O. BOX 2001, RIDGECREST, CA 93556 ✦ 760-375-8456

VOL. 36, No. 9.....SEPTEMBER 2021

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

HSUMD PRESERVES MORE HISTORY!

As you surely remember, our **HSUMD Newsletter** of October 2020 outlined the history of Ridgecrest’s first “Free County Library.” To remind you:

In 1947, Kern County had taken over the property upon which the USO Club had been built in 1945. By 1955 the county had built a jail, a firehouse, and two fire engine houses on its property—the city’s first collection of civic buildings. And on September 16, 1956, the county finished building our first county public library and it was dedicated!

The community’s library was located west of the old USO Club and a small building that had housed the USO Club’s director and his family (you can read the history of that small building in the August 2020 **HSUMD Newsletter**). The small building was later torn down and that area became a small parking area for the new library.

The new library was called the Ridgecrest Branch of the Kern County Free Library. Its address was 250 W. Ridgecrest Boulevard. It contained 1,616 square feet and served a population of 5,000 in Ridgecrest, and was available to China Lake’s 12,000 residents.

In 1961 local residents helped change the front of the library—facing Ridgecrest Boulevard—by putting in desert-style landscaping, with rocks, trees and shrubs. (Much of that landscaping can still be seen today.)



1961

In 1978, a new library was opened by Kern County on North China Lake Boulevard, in the new Ridgecrest Civic Center, and all of the library functions were moved there. It had about 7,500 square feet of floor space, and was able to accommodate many more thousands of books. At that time, the new library was predicted to be the second largest in the county.

And what of the building that had been our first Ridgecrest Branch of the Kern County Free Library? The county would change it to a clinic under the Kern County Department of Public Health. It would remain a health clinic until 2018, when the clinic operations were moved up to the county buildings on North China Lake Boulevard. The building has remained unused since then.

Now, here’s the latest news regarding this important part of our town’s history: **HSUMD** has become the steward of this historic building!

Working with the General Services Department of Kern County, with the support of



2021

our 1st District Kern County Supervisor, Phillip Peters, and his District Director, Joe

Brennan, along with our own Ridgecrest Mayor Eric Bruen, **HSUMD** and Kern County established a long-term lease for the “Old Library” building. We are now able to “rehabilitate” the building (that word has specific meaning in the world of historical preservation) and maintain / preserve that artifact of community history. This is a huge deal!

Our plans for the building’s use include our moving our own extensive library from upstairs in the **Historic USO Building** into the Old Library. We are also hoping to integrate the Literacy

...MORE HISTORY (GO TO: PAGE 4)

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I will use this space to bring your attention to two exemplary members of our Society: Patti



Tex Hoppus

Jeglum and Jack Lyons. We—our Society members and the general public—have enjoyed the products of the talents and attention of great newsletter editors. Patti, our most recent volunteer for this task, agreed to serve us as our Newsletter Editor several months ago, and I know we would all agree that she has done a magnificent job! Our newsletters become a legacy of our Society and a lasting record of our activities and accomplishments, and the work that Patti has put into our newsletters gives us all not only a wonderful readable product, but also an enduring history of our Society. Thanks, Patti!

We were all profoundly saddened to learn that our long-time friend, Jack Lyons, passed away in June. Born in San Francisco in 1932, John Harold “Jack” Lyons became a Navy fighter pilot in 1954, later left the Navy to earn a degree in Aeronautical Engineering in 1962, and then came to work at China Lake. He married Dana Boon in 1966, and the couple welcomed the births of son Michael in 1968 and daughter Michele in 1969. After retiring from China Lake, Jack was a realtor specializing in commercial real estate until his retirement in 2017. Special note: Jack loved coming to HSUMD’s Classic Movie Nights!



Jack Lyons

Jack and Dana were deeply loved by so many in our community and in our Society, and we grieve along with Dana. Our **Historic USO Building** will be the venue for a Celebration of Life for Jack Lyons to be held on Saturday, October 16, 2021, starting at 11:00 am.

Jack’s family welcomes his friends to join in this celebration of his active and honorable life.

—Tex Hoppus



SPECIAL DATES IN SEPTEMBER!

Here are special dates in September to remember:

1. Our **Historic USO Building** and its Store are open on **Thursday through Saturday, from 11:00 am till 3:00 pm**. Masks are not required of vaccinated guests. When we are able to find and train additional volunteers, we will reopen our Store on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.
2. **Tuesday, September 21:** Our monthly **HSUMD** Meeting for members and the public will resume.
3. **Friday, September 10:** Our every-other Friday night **Open Mic** event will restart. Tom Rindt and his team are getting ready to resume this wildly popular night of musical entertainment for all.
4. **Saturday, September 11:** This will be the 20th anniversary of September 11, 2001, and there will be the Ridgecrest Parade of 1,000 Flags starting at 9:00 am. **HSUMD** will have 10 volunteers marching in the parade, each proudly holding an American flag. Join our volunteers in the March, or bring your family to Ridgecrest Blvd. and watch!
5. **Wednesday, September 15:** Our every-other Wednesday night **Classic Movie Night** will restart. Nick Rogers, movie aficionado, is working toward reassembling a team to provide you the evening of family entertainment that so many have missed.
6. **Thursday, September 16:** Our third-Thursday-of-every-month Veterans Breakfast will restart. Our former cook continues to support veterans and our efforts, but he can no longer get food and prepare it for us. So, we’re looking at asking local food businesses to donate breakfasts each month for us to serve our veterans.

✦ Please note and understand: All of these events and dates are subject to changes due to changes in the health and safety conditions in our community at the time. —Tex Hoppus



ADDITIONS TO ARCHIVES

This month has been a good month for additions to our archives. Pat Farris of the News Review has generously donated the many years of back papers to the **Historical Society**. When these are all sorted and shelved we will have an amazing collection of local newspapers dating from the mid-forties to current years. We have the Times Herald beginning in 50's, Rocketeers, mid 40's to 70's, Independent, by its many names, 1950's to current, and now the News Review. I am always amazed at the generous community we live in.



Pat Farris with Archives Volunteer Greg Boske

Another great addition to our history and library is the Auld family's latest history creation. This one deals with the beginning of the competition Swim Teams in the Valley.



Donna Siler Weeks has shared old photos of her father's work place and several early badges and pins.

Thank you to all who think of our efforts to preserve the history of our community.

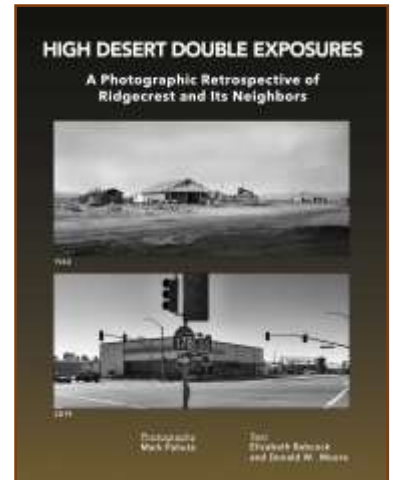
—Carol Porter



Donation from Donna Siler Weeks

SEPTEMBER 21 MEETING: PAHUTA & BABCOCK

At long last, we can meet again. The **Society** will hold a general meeting on Tuesday, September 21, at 7:00 PM at the **Historic USO Building**. The featured program will be Mark Pahuta and Liz Babcock telling us about their recent book, *High Desert Double Exposures*.



One of the few redeeming features of 2020 was the publication of the long-awaited follow-on to *Ridgecrest: A Photographic Retrospective*. The original was a late '80's collaboration between photographer Mark Pahuta and writer Don Moore. Mark was originally inspired by a couple of then-recent books that had taken 19th century photographs of the Western United States and reproduced them by taking another photograph from the exact spot. Mark took on the challenge of doing the same thing with old photos of Ridgecrest, and the result was an exhibit at the Maturango Museum in celebration of the Silver Anniversary of the incorporation of Ridgecrest, with paired old and new pictures of the same sights around the Indian Wells Valley. The exhibit grew into a book, with the addition of captions and historical research by the late Don Moore, a long time Ridgecrest resident.

The *Ridgecrest Retrospective* was a local best seller, and both it and a second printing quickly sold out and have been out of print ever since. Many people (not just me!) have been agitating for a follow-on, and last year it came out. For the new book, like the old one a Maturango Museum Publication, Liz Babcock joined Mark and hunted down new "old" photos, provided historical research, and added much new text (although many of Don Moore's captions remain as well). Mark and Liz made the decision to expand the coverage to include neighboring areas, so the title

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has expanded to *High Desert Double Exposures: A Photographic Retrospective of Ridgecrest and Its Neighbors*. The result is a fascinating collection of photos showing how various locations in Ridgecrest and nearby spots in the Upper Mojave Desert region have changed over the years. Almost all are in a series of three or more shots, one showing an early view, then one taken for the original volume showing the identical site in 1988, and then more pictures showing the view today as well as usually a shot or two from the intermediate years. The photos are all accompanied by commentaries by Don or Liz giving the historical background and the contemporary reality of each scene.



Inyo-Kern Company Building, c. 1925



West Ridgecrest Boulevard,
(Maturango Museum, 1946)



Inyo-Kern Company Building, c. 2013



West Ridgecrest Boulevard, 2019

...MORE HISTORY (FROM: PAGE 1)

Council of IWW into the building (the Literacy Council provides English language learning and U.S. Citizenship test preparation), as well as certain functions of the nonprofit organization Friends of the Ridgecrest Branch Library.

HSUMD is very appreciative of the help and support from Kern County and City of Ridgecrest

At the meeting, Liz and Mark will show some of the pictures from the book. Mark will discuss his original inspiration by the art of re-photography and the process of choosing and recreating the historical views for the book. Liz will focus on some of the ins and outs of getting the more recent book together, including historical information about some of the photographic treasures added to the book. The book will be on sale that evening for \$29.99, and our two presenters have agreed to autograph your copy after the program if you so wish.

We hope to see you all return to this, the **Historical Society's** first General Meeting in over a year! **HSUMD** meetings are free and open the general public. Call 760-375-8456 for more information.—*Andrew Sound*

leaders in making this stewardship by **HSUMD** possible. And now we start planning our efforts for the rehabilitation of the building's inside so that we can meet our goals and also to preserve the building's history. If you want to help with this effort, please let us know! This "Old Library" is part of our history—and a specific part of the newly established Ridgecrest Historic District! —

Tex Hoppus

THE SHOW GOES ON!

WELCOME BACK TO THE HSUMD SIGNATURE EVENTS!

Hello good neighbors! It sure has been awhile since we have communed in the Joe Fox Auditorium of the **Historic USO Building** to enjoy rock music, food and fellowship, and the thrill of movies on a big screen. Well, barring any unforeseen upcoming health restrictions (knock on wood), the two signature events of the **Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert** will resume in September. YAY!

Here is the proposed event calendar: On Friday, September 10 at 7 p.m., rock out with the best local bands in our town on non-flex Friday **Open Mic Nights**.

And, I am very pleased to announce the long-awaited return of **Classic Movie Night** every flex Wednesday at the Historic USO Building. As always, our famous **Super Star Snack Bar** will be serving the ¼ lb. all beef Jumbo “Crumville” hot dog, our 4-cheese “Coso Queso” pizza, a wide variety of frosty soft drinks, candy, ice cream cups, chips, and hot, fresh-popped corn! All our returning guests (and our new visitors as well) will be served a free bag of popcorn on our re-opening night!

And, what better way to celebrate a return to “normal” than to enjoy four fantastic films that take us to wonderful distant lands! **“Ticket to Travel”** is the theme of our inaugural Classic Movie Night event for 2021. Comedy, romance, thrills and adventure will be coming your way in four films starring the likes of Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Gregory Peck, Audrey Hepburn, among other exciting stars experiencing the glamor and excitement of exotic locals: London, Rome and various other European locations...(and one very dangerous amusement park!).

On Wednesday, September 15 at 7:00 p.m., Audrey Hepburn stars as a restless princess who escapes her royal duties to explore the wonders of Rome. Gregory Peck is a reporter anxious to land a hot story for his newspaper. And, what better story than that of an escaped princess “on the lam” in romantic Rome? Attempting to exploit this situation, Peck becomes thoroughly enchanted with Audrey, and his plans take a decidedly different and romantic turn. Hepburn's beguiling performance, in her American movie debut, won

her a Best Actress Oscar® and made her an instant film legend!

Two more films follow on flex Wednesdays September 29 and October 13. And, a very special Alfred Hitchcock Halloween treat is scheduled for Wednesday, October 27. Our year-end presentation of Holiday films begins on November 10. Look for future film tributes in 2022, beginning with **“Black Films Matter”** in January and February, followed by a loving six film tribute to the great Audrey Hepburn...**“Awesome Audrey.”** A reminder: all films screen at 7 p.m. on flex Wednesdays, with doors opening at 6:30. Fliers featuring film titles and other information will be soon available in the lobby on the Historic USO Building.

*Welcome Back to all the events that make the
Historic USO Building
the community jewel that it is!
—Nick Rogers*



Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn star in our Grand Re-opening **Classic Movie Night** presentation on Wednesday, September 15 at 7:00 p.m.
Photo: thefilmspectrum.com

HSUMD'S NEWEST MEMBERS

Ray and Carol Wilson
Patti Jeglum, PJHJ Originals

Welcome

BUSINESS AND NON-PROFIT MEMBERS

Baxendale's 🍷
 Best Western China Lake Inn
 Cathy Kline's Floral Accents 🍷
 Center Pharmacy 🍷
 China Lake Museum Foundation
 China Lake Photographic Society
 Clarion Inn
 Comfort Inn
 Cordell Construction Co 🍷
 Cosner-Neipp Computing 🍷
 Dana Lyons, Best Realty 🍷
 Desert Empire Fair
 Diana Said, Vaughn Realty
 Earth Landscaping
 Eastern California Museum
 Eastern Sierra Custom Picture Framing 🍷
 Econo-Lodge
 Gary P. Staab
 Heritage Montessori School
 Inyokern Chamber of Commerce
 Kathy Walker's Window Tinting 🍷
 KC Martin Construction & Painting
 Kern Antelope Historical Society
 L & N Properties
 Maturango Museum 🍷
 MOAH
 Mohahve Historical Society
 Mojave River Valley Museum
 Motion Tire & Wheel
 Museum of Western Film History 🍷

Needles Regional Museum
 Phyllis M. Hix, Attorney
 PJHJ Originals 🍷
 Pleistocene Foundation
 Rand Desert Museum
 Red Rock Books 🍷
 Ridge Writers 🍷
 Ridgecrest Area Convention & Visitors
 Bureau 🍷
 Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce
 Ridgecrest Cinemas 🍷
 Ridgecrest Lions Club 🍷
 Ridgecrest Regional Hospital
 Roaming Dog Kitchen 🍷
 Rodeway Inn
 Romancing the West 🍷
 S&M Coins & Collectibles 🍷
 Searles Valley Historical Society
 Shoshone Museum Association
 Starbucks
 Tehachapi Historical League
 The Desert Tortoise Preserve
 The Flower Shoppe
The News Review
 TJ Frisbee Bicycles 🍷
 Vaughn Realty
 Warren's Automotive 🍷
 Wrightwood Historical Society

🍷 Classic Movie Night Sponsor 🍷

HSUMD'S 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!

MEETINGS RESUME IN SEPTEMBER

Regular monthly meetings will resume September 21 with Mark Pahuta and Liz Babcock discussing their just-published book, *High Desert Double Exposure*.

Join us as they share pictures from the book and discuss aspects of creation of the book.

Tuesday, September 21, 7:00 PM at the **Historic USO Building**.

GRAND RE-OPENING OF THE CLASSIC MOVIE NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2021

“TICKET to TRAVEL” premieres on flex Wednesday, September 15. Join the stars: Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Maggie Smith, Audrey Hepburn, Gregory Peck, Farley Ganger, Orson Welles, Louis Jordan, Rod Taylor, Eddie Albert, Diane Baker, Ruth Roman, and Suzanne Pleshette on four hilarious, romantic, action-packed journeys to exotic locales.

Our **Super Star Snack Bar** will be open featuring: our famous ¼ pound all-beef “Crumville” hot dog,” four-cheese pizza, cold soft drinks, tasty ice cream cups, a wide variety of candies and fresh, hot popcorn.

And, speaking of popcorn, all guests will be served a FREE bag on this evening of our Grand Re-opening of **Classic Movie Night**. Fliers featuring film titles and information will soon be available in the lobby of the **Historic USO Building**. Doors open at 6:30, and the show starts

at 7:00. Admission of course is, as always, donation, only.—*Nick Rogers*

“SEE YOU AT THE MOVIES!”
FREE BAG OF POPCORN ON OUR
GRAND RE-OPENING OF
CLASSIC MOVIE NIGHT..
SEPTEMBER 15 @ 7:00



**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE
UPPER MOJAVE DESERT**

**Membership Application
or Renewal Form**

230 W Ridgecrest Bl
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760) 375-8456

Renewal New Membership Family (\$35) Business (\$45)

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Mailing Address:

Street/P.O. Box: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Contact Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Newsletter Preference: Email & Print Email ONLY Print ONLY

Mail complete 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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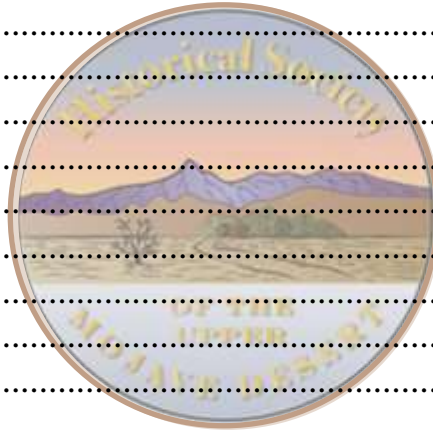
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HSUMD.org
For More Information, click

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THE
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