



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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March 2018

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

Author of X-15 Book To Speak on Feb. 20

The Society's March meeting will feature Michelle Evans, author of the book *The X-15 Rocket Plane. Flying the First Wings Into Space* (University of Nebraska Press, 2013). This is a return engagement for Evans, who on her previous visit introduced the 1961 film "X-15."

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 20, and, as always, will be held at the Historic USO Building at 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd.

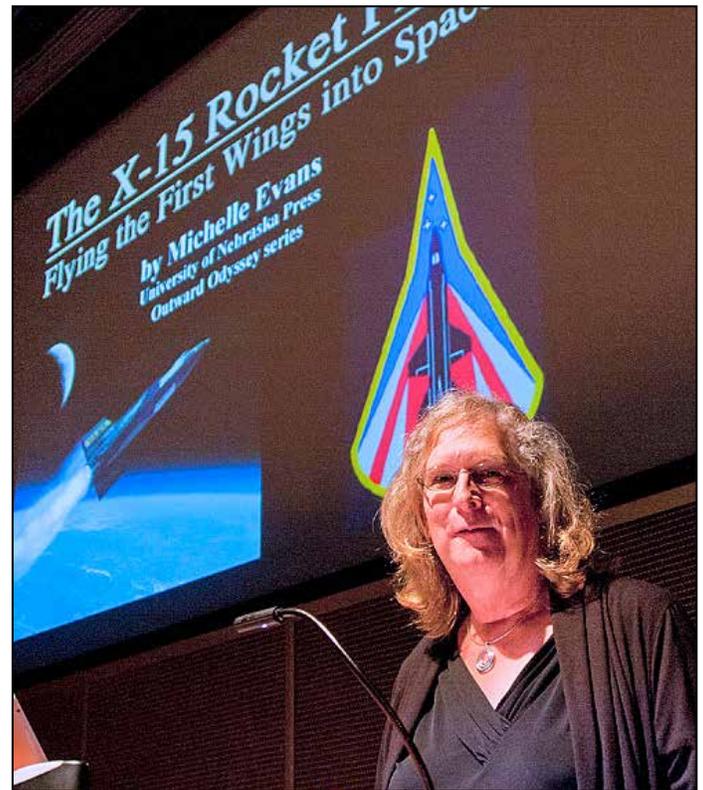
With the Soviet Union's launch of the first Sputnik satellite in 1957, the Cold War soared to new heights as Americans feared losing the race into space. "The X-15 Rocket Plane" tells the enthralling yet little-known story of the hypersonic X-15, the winged rocket ship that met this challenge and helped open the way into human-controlled spaceflight.

Evans' presentation will focus on this remarkable research aircraft that held the world's altitude record for 41 years. Its speed of Mach 6.7 or 4,520 mph still has not been matched or bettered.

Beyond the X-15 are the stories of the 12 men who guided it into space and all the people who kept the plane flying for nearly a decade, from the mechanics to the guys in the rocket engine shop.

Evans makes the case that the X-15 was the true precursor to the Space Shuttle by being the first piloted and winged vehicle to exit Earth's atmosphere and be guided through a controlled reentry to a safe landing on a hardpacked desert lakebed.

In her research, Evans interviewed nearly 70 people, including Neil Armstrong, Scott Crossfield, Robert White and six other of the 12 original pilots, speaking with family representatives for the remaining pilots. Others she spoke with include managers, flight planners, and the guys in the trenches who made the X-15



Michelle Evans at her 2013 presentation at the Leonard Nemoj Event Horizon Theater, Griffin Park.

Courtesy of the author

ready to fly its next research mission at high altitude and high Mach.

Evans is the founder and president of Mach 25 Media and is a writer, photographer, and communications specialist in aerospace.

Her background in aerospace engineering includes working on missile systems in the U.S. Air Force. Later, in private industry, she accomplished environmental testing for systems used in airliners and spacecraft.

See p. 5

President's Message —

HSUMD Activities in Support of Our Military – and Congrats to John Abbott!



Tex Hoppus

HSUMD

SUMD is, of course, a historical organization whose first mission is to collect, preserve, and display artifacts, memorabilia and information directed toward a greater understanding and appreciation of our region. Carol Porter and her team of volunteers are to be commended for their exemplary work toward this goal.

But HSUMD is also the owner and steward of the historic buildings – especially the Historic USO Building – that formed the origins of our city and this has allowed us to do something else: We have restored (or will restore) historic buildings, and we have returned the Historic USO Building to its original role as a center of community activity and service.

When the Federal Recreation Center (USO Club) opened its doors in 1945, it quickly became a place where both military and civilian folks gathered for entertainment, civic planning, educational events and other community activities. Now, in 2018, both military and civilian folks gather in HSUMD's Historic USO Building for the same reasons!

One segment of our Society's "family" are the military veterans (including those currently on active duty) in our community. With the help of the extraordinary Griffin family and many other volunteers, we host a monthly free breakfast for all veterans.

We have moved a one-room schoolhouse built in 1905 to our property, restored it to its original look, and created our region's only Veterans Memorial Building dedicated to the stories of service and sacrifice by local veterans.

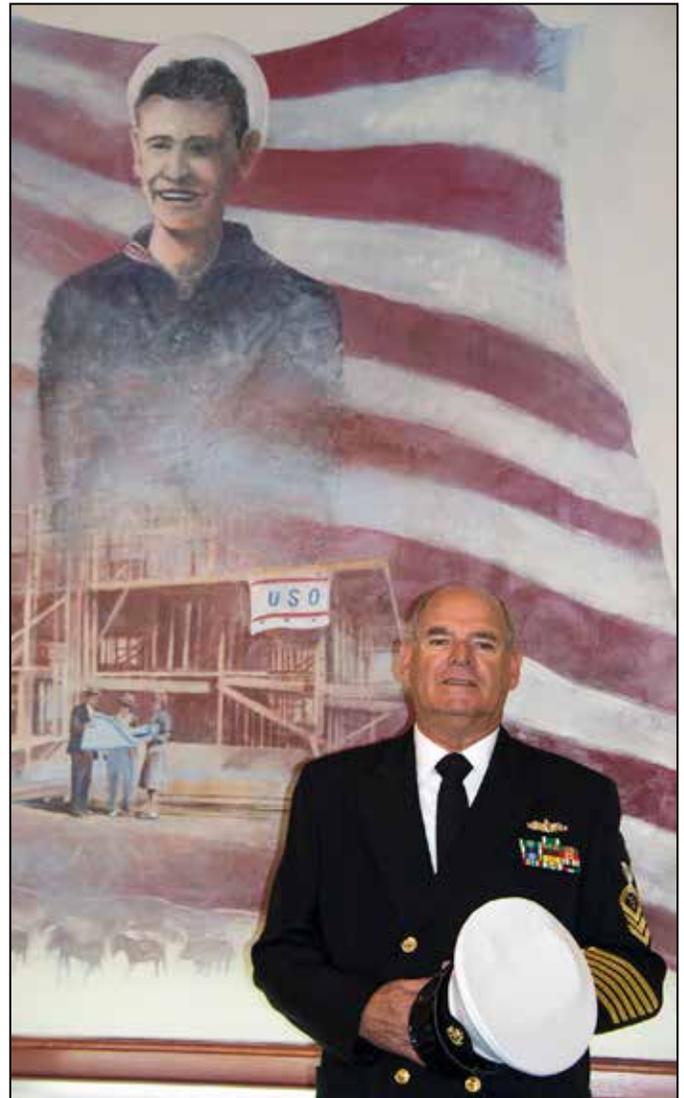
We host a regular Combat Stress Support Group meeting led by Dr. Jiselle Esparza. And we regularly work closely with our Navy neighbors to host a variety of events for Navy and other personnel and family members.

Our work in this area of supporting veterans will be recognized during a "special opening ceremony" at our community's new Starbucks, which is designated as one of the Military Family Stores. The date for this opening is March 7. While we are proud to be associated with and recognized for serving our veterans, we are deeply honored to be part of the lives of our veterans and their families!

On another but related note, our Historic USO Building was the venue for a special presentation on March 2. Our own John Abbott was presented with the medals that he earned during his career in the U.S. Navy. And the presentation was made by our Congressman Kevin McCarthy, with our Kern County Supervisor Mick Gleason, our Mayor Peggy Breedon, and other dignitaries and public in attendance.

With that great start, March promises to be another good month for HSUMD.

— Tex Hoppus



John Abbott (still fitting into his military uniform of nearly 20 years ago) with the iconic sailor in our lobby mural.

Photo by Liz

Report From Collections & Archives

HSUMD Progress Here 'n' There

Our collections volunteers are still working away on our history files and photos as well as cleaning up our data bases for posting on our website.

The HSUMD library is nearly up to date with our many new books and scrapbooks added to our database. This database as well as the one for periodicals will also be ready soon for our webmaster.

Mary Kus brought in two photos Stan Kus had saved in his personal items. They are pictures of the teaching staff at Vieweg School, 1965 and 1972. I could use a few identifications. Please stop by the former Fire Station on Station Street any Tuesday or Wednesday between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. if you think you might recognize a face or two.

As a representative of HSUMD, I shared a booth at the Home and Leisure show on March 3 and 4 with the Aguabonita Flyfishers. They showed the art of fly tying as a hobby and I shared the types of things families might share with historical societies to keep history for the area and for their families alive for future generations. I also had a bit of See's candy out there for sale.

Finally, it's the time of year to plan for our spring photo display and contest. We time this event to coordinate with the long-running Maturango Museum Wildflower Exhibit.

See p. 4 for our 2018 flyer. Please share it with friends, and bring in your photos too. Note that we have a new desert landscapes category this year, so be sure to look through your photos to share some of your favorite glimpses of our varied and wonderful scenery.

– Carol Porter



Well-beloved member Mary Zeiss has once again sent us a beautiful gift of flowers to brighten our lobby. Mary's card says, "Thank you for everything you do." And thank you, Mary!

Photo by Carol Porter



Arnold Burr (left), president of the Kern Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, presents HSUMD President Tex Hoppus with an award for "Proper Honoring and Displaying of the American Flag." Announcement of this honor for HSUMD came as part of the SAR and DAR workshop taking place last month. "We had about 45 men and women in attendance — a nice-size group," said Carol Porter. Note that both Arnold and Tex are in their period Color Guard Attire.

Photo by Carol Porter

Time To Enter HSUMD's Spring Photo Contest

Wildflower and Landscape Photographs Featured

Historic USO Building

April 6-7 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

April 8 from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

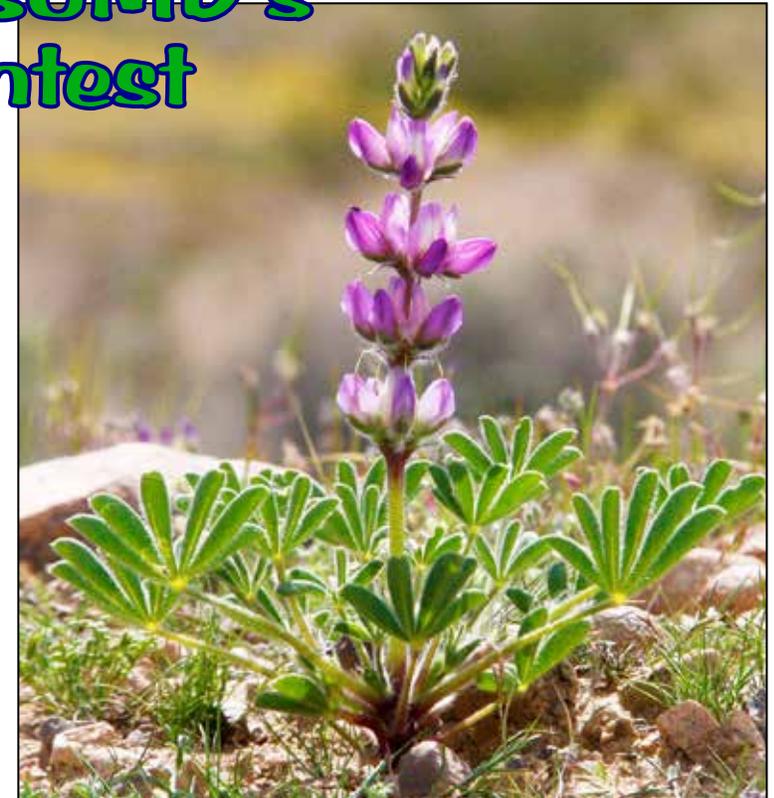
Winners announced April 8, 4 p.m.

Info – Carol Porter at 760-375-8456
or 760-793-2505

Our 2018 photographic celebration of desert beauty is coming up on April 6-8. Please share the glory of your wildflower and desert landscape shots!

The top three winners in each of the three divisions — Wildflower, Landscape, Youth — will be offered prizes of small shopping sprees in our Gift Shop. Winners will be selected by public vote. Visitors may vote during the above hours on Friday, Saturday, and up to 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

1. All wildflower photos must be of wild flora including shrubs or cacti that can be found in the local area. Remember, the photos do not have to be of this year's flowers. Garden flowers or hybrids that happen to "grow wild" will not be accepted.



Backlit lupine just off South Brown Road

Photo by Liz

2. The landscape photos should be representative of our local area. These photos do not have to include floral subject matter and may include critters, livestock, and birds, as well as vistas.

3. All photos should be matted or mounted on card stock, and each should be no larger than 11 by 14 inches. No frames or glass on the photos. We will be using adhesive Velcro on the back of your mounting board or photo to display on our mounted boards.

4. Each photographer will be allowed a maximum of five items.

5. Photos will be accepted on a first-come basis. The size of the display area will determine the number of items we can accept.

6. No names or business cards will be displayed. A list of contact information will be kept for inquiries.

7. Information on the winning photos will be posted at 4 p.m. Sunday afternoon. We expect you to pick up your photos after the show is finished.

Please bring your photos for display to the Historic USO Building on April 4 between 1 and 6 p.m. You will be asked to sign an agreement for displaying your items.

Questions? Call Carol Porter, 760-446-3400, or 760-793-2505.



Beautiful sky over Red Rock Canyon

Photo by Laura Austin

Missing Next Film Series Would Be a **CRIME!**

Just the facts, ma'am! Several heinous crimes have been committed, and it's time to round up the "usual suspects" — Humphrey Bogart, Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, Edward G. Robinson, Joan Crawford, James Cagney and Bette Davis. They are all part of the mystery "lineup" in our latest Classic Movie Night series, "Crime Scene," premiering on Wednesday, March 7, at 7 p.m. at the Historic USO Building and continuing through May 2.



Mary Astor and Humphrey Bogart
Screen shot, Wikimedia Commons

First on the wanted roster: we are looking not only for the killer of Mary Astor's estranged boyfriend, but also for the imposing onyx bird statue that many people are just "dying" to get ahold of. John Huston's 1941 crime classic starring Bogart as detective Sam Spade is "the stuff that dreams are made of..."

Barbara Stanwyck is trying to figure out a way to rid herself of her nagging, overbearing husband, and friendly insurance agent Fred MacMurray puts the idea into her head to buy a special casualty policy before hubby departs on a train trip. But, MacMurray's boss, Edward G. Robinson, is getting a little too suspicious.

Uh, oh! Billy Wilder's dark and brooding classic, which still chills and thrills after 74 years, will screen



Barbara Stanwyck and Fred MacMurray
Lobby Card, Wikimedia Commons

here on Wednesday, March 21 at 7 p.m.

Coming up in April ... Setting out on her own to pioneer a wildly successful California restaurant chain, Joan Crawford must deal with various male hangers-on (Zachary Scott and Jack Carson) and a spoiled-rotten daughter (Ann Blythe) along the way.

Eventually a body is found in Crawford's beach house, and friends and family alike are all on the whodunit list in Micheal Cutiz' noir thriller that nabbed Crawford the 1945 Best Actress Oscar® for her efforts.

Stay out of James Cagney's way, if you know what's good for you, as he has a terrific mother complex and a very itchy trigger finger! This 1949 classic, skillfully directed by Raoul Walsh, is one of his most intense film portrayals. It earned him a Best Actor Academy Award® nomination.

And finally, in May, Bette Davis stars as twins who are less than familial. In fact, they are downright hateful! Peter Lawford joins the mayhem, and he's as evil as the ladies. Karl Malden is trying to figure out who committed the foul play that ensues. Davis' former "Now, Voyager" leading man, Paul Henreid does an admirable directing job of this 1964 entry.

Take a look at the display case in the Ridgecrest Branch Library this month — Donna McCrohan Rosenthal has created a fascinating exhibit about the HSUMD publishing program, showcasing our books, some (such as our *Stage and Freight Stops*) with "before" and "after" versions.

Great to have one of HSUMD's most active programs displayed so appropriately!

By the time these crimes are solved, the Sixth Annual "Summer of Movie Magic" will be upon us, and we can all rest easier. Whew ... that was close!

See you at the movies!

— Nick Rogers

Author of X-15 Book

From p. 1

Her work with Mach 25 Media includes providing educational and display services for astronaut appearances and other space-related events at government facilities, science centers, schools, and other venues across the country and overseas.

Artifacts flown into space on the X-15 will be part of a special display in conjunction with her talk. A Q&A and book signing will follow the talk.

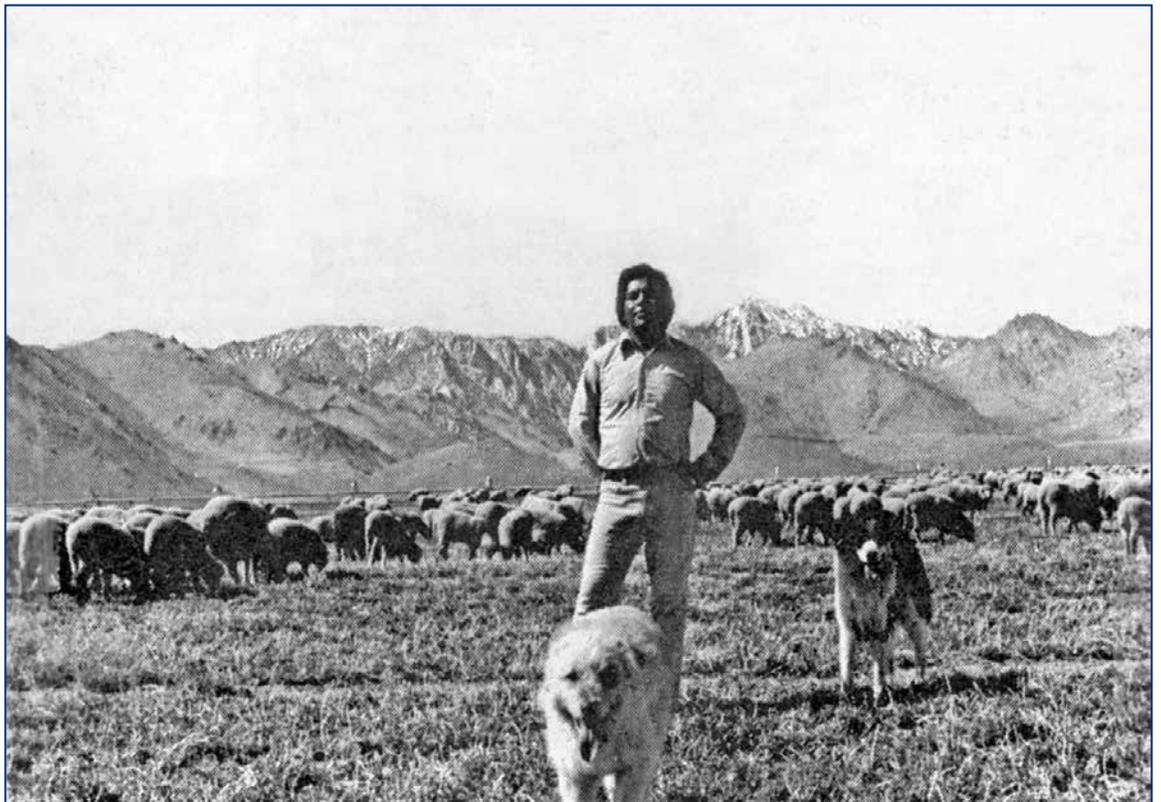
We meet on the third Tuesday of most months. Meetings are free and all are welcome to attend. For more information on this or future meetings, call us at 760-375-8456. — *Andrew Sound*



Evans talks with BJ Holden during a book signing at the Maturango Museum. Cherie Rabideaux is second from right. *photo by Robert Kline*

A Glimpse of Indian Wells Valley History

If you have a copy of Fred Weals' book, *Indian Wells Valley Pioneers Speak*, you may remember that the book features local shepherd and miner Pete Aguerberry, but that the accompanying photo of a shepherd and his flock is not from the local area. That's because I couldn't locate one! Serendipity triumphed recently when I found a great 1980 photo that shows a Peruvian shepherd, Victor, with two of his dogs and his flock on the Spike Leroy Ranch. Owens Peak may be seen in the background. The rancher told



John Coe that he rented the sheep from a Bakersfield concern to control aphids and to fertilize his alfalfa field.

Photo from Inyokern News-Review, March 6, 1980



These photos from the Martha Shoaf collection are both from 1943. At left Martha stands at the Manzanar gate, ready to teach 4th grade, and below she poses with two of her students, Kenje Oye (left) and Roy Tanaka.

Courtesy of Manzanar National Historic Site and the Martha Shoaf Collection



At Alisa Lynch’s wonderful, well-attended Manzanar talk last month, she told us about Densho, an organization that makes priceless photographs about Japanese-American history available online for anybody to enjoy. We were delighted to learn that among the pictures on the site is a rich collection donated to Manzanar by our own Martha Shoaf. You can see the collection by simply typing “Martha Shoaf collection” into Google. The item *ddr-manz-7* — *Martha Shoaf Collection* should come right up. — ed.

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 displayed on our website.

New Members

Alisa Lynch
John Van Guilder

Business and Supporting Members – please patronize them!

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
California Route 66 Museum
Cal-Sun Pools
Clarion Inn
Comfort Inn
Cordell Construction Co.
Cruise Planners–IWW
Desert Empire Fair
Desert Garage Door

Earth Landscaping
Econo-Lodge
Edward Jones Investments –
Brook H. Andreoli
The Flower Shoppe
Heritage Inn
Phyllis M. Hix, Attorney
IWW Premier Landscaping
Jack & Dana Lyons, Realtors
Maturango Museum
Motion Tire & Wheel
The News Review
Pleistocene Foundation
Professional Tax & Business Services

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
Gary P. Staab & Assoc., Inc.
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**Here's an easy
way to see this
newsletter in color!**

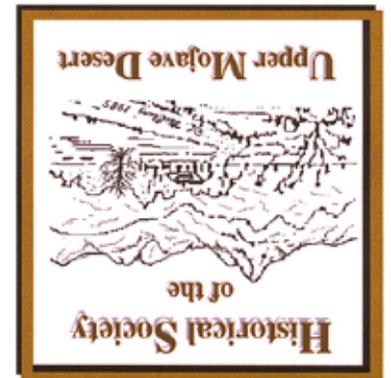
Just send an e-mail to our membership coordinator, Lloyd Smith at *lloyd.smith@hughes.net*, and ask him to put you on the list to get a PDF copy e-mailed to you each month.

We don't plan to stop sending paper copies, but online is the way to go if you prefer living color.

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 MARCH 2018
Tuesday, March 20, 7 p.m., Historic USO Building



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