



# 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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November 2017

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

## Program To Focus on VAdm. Ashworth, A-Bomb Drops, and Old China Lake

This month our regular monthly meeting will move up by almost a week to avoid the Thanksgiving holiday week and to allow two special speakers to reprise their presentations on Thursday morning for the Veterans Breakfast.

Please join us for an evening of China Lake nostalgia and information on the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bomb drops on Wednesday, Nov. 15, at the regular time and place of 7 p.m. at the Historic USO Building, 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd. Our speakers will be Capt. Dave Ashworth, USN (Ret.), and his colleague and friend, Col. Steve Hall, USAF (Ret.).

Dave will talk about his father, VAdm. Frederick L. "Dick" Ashworth, who was the NOTS Commander from April 1955 through September 1957, often termed the "Golden Years," a highly productive era that saw the fleet introduction of Sidewinder, as well as the creation of an array of conventional bombs, missiles, and "smart" weapons.

VAdm. Ashworth retired in September 1968 after a distinguished 36-year career in the Navy, during which he commanded aircraft squadrons, ships, carrier divisions, and the 6th Fleet.

An early notable role was that of weaponeer (bomb commander) aboard the B-29 Bockscar that dropped the Fat Man atomic bomb on Nagasaki on Aug.

*See p. 6*



Then-Capt. Frederick L. Ashworth, NOTS Commander

*U.S. Navy photo*

Steve Hall and Dave Ashworth in Madrid, NM, about 40 miles southwest of Santa Fe, on their way to Los Alamos to visit the Bradbury Museum, October 2015. They also visited the Trinity site.

*Photo by Dave Ashworth*



President's Message —

# We Are Thankful!

*I*t's November and the fall season is here. To quote William Cullen Bryant, "Autumn, the year's last, loveliest smile." Of course, "fall" is also used in the timeless advice, "The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up."



November is also a time for remembering all we should be thankful for in our lives. On Saturday, Nov. 11, we as a nation will show our thankfulness for all veterans who served our country with their honorable service and sacrifice. On Thursday, Nov. 23, we as a nation will show our thankfulness for all of our blessings – including our family and friends. And in our daily lives throughout November (and other times), we can always show our thankfulness for the good things that may be around us.

I am thankful for all of the work from our many dedicated and supportive volunteers; they are generous in their support and their time, and they are the reason HSUMD operates in all of its activities. I am thankful for the community of citizens, veterans, and friends who support HSUMD generously; without community support, we could not be. I am thankful that HSUMD has become such an active and enjoyable center of activity in our community's life.

I am very thankful for my whole family and for my dear friends, but I will not embarrass any of them by naming names here. They know who they are! (Well, one friend doesn't know, but I'm keeping that person in the dark...)

By the way, I am thankful to see that some of you who use Amazon to order things that you need are using its AmazonSmile to donate to HSUMD. For those who are now confused, here's how it works: AmazonSmile donates a portion of your purchase price to an organization that you choose – and that organization may be HSUMD. Each time you buy, log in through [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), select a charity (hopefully it's HSUMD), then purchase as normal. It does not add to your cost at all, and it helps us.

Don't forget that this month we are moving our General Meeting and its special guest speakers ahead in time. Check out our front page for the details. Mark your calendars, because this is not our standard "third-Tuesday-of-the-month" schedule and you will want to hear two very special speakers.

Don't forget our Gift Shop sales during November, either. The featured sales item this month will be shirts and hats, with discounts from 20% to 50% off every day. And every Tuesday in particular, EVERYTHING will be on sale for at least 20% (except our See's Candies – and you'll just have to stop by to get some See's!).

I hope to see you at our buildings on Veterans Day on Saturday, Nov. 11; at our General Meeting on Wednesday evening, November 15; and at our Veterans Breakfast on Thursday morning, Nov. 16. And I hope you all have a very happy Thanksgiving!

— *Tex Hoppus*



**VOLUNTEERS TO BE THANKFUL FOR —** Special HSUMD volunteers all dressed up in their Hawaiian garb to serve at our Ladies Tea in October are (from left) Tex himself, Carol Porter (our Hawaiian chef extraordinaire), John Abbott, and Nick Rogers. What a goodlooking group! *Photo by Liz*

# November brings M.G.M. holiday classics to Movie Night

**H**aving just wrapped up our very popular “Bogie and Bacall” film series, we’re gearing up for the holidays with four film classics from the legendary Metro Goldwyn Mayer studios.

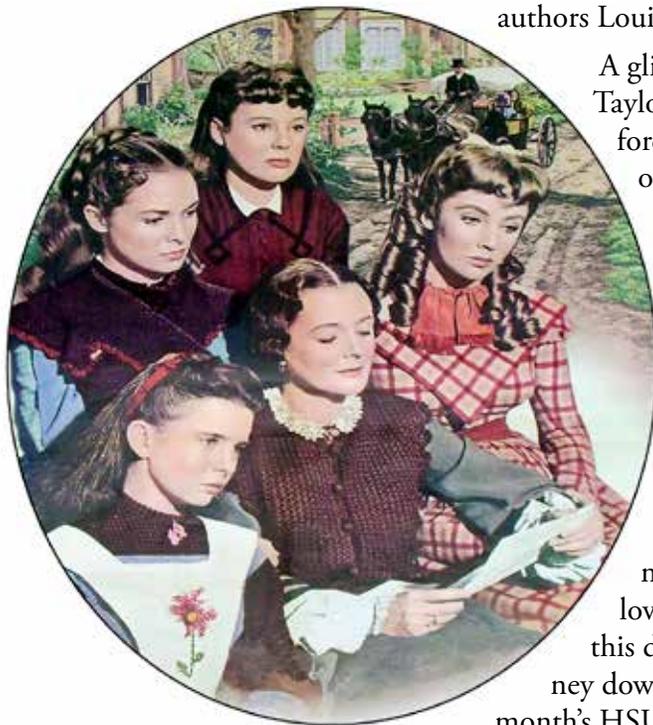
We kick off the series on **Wednesday, Nov. 8, 7 p.m.**, at the Historic USO Building. This date, by the way, is a non-flex Wednesday. The normal play date for this film was originally Nov. 15, but due to a special HSUMD program scheduled for that evening (see the front page!) the series premier will be moved up to the Nov. 8 non-flex date.

This means that the normal schedule will resume on Nov. 29, which is a flex week movie date.

Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon head an all-star cast that includes Agnes Moorehead, Edward Arnold, Gladys Cooper and Peter Lawford in this 1944 drama. Garson portrays an 84-year-old family matriarch, who flashes back to decades of passion, breakups, reconciliations, losses, laughs, schemes, and sacrifices during an eventful family Christmas Eve gathering. Be sure to join us to share her remarkable life.



Jump way up to **Wednesday, Nov. 29**, and then on to Dec. 13, both at **7 p.m.**, for two classic stories by famous authors Louisa May Alcott and Charles Dickens.



A glittering M.G.M. cast, including June Allyson, Janet Leigh, Elizabeth Taylor, Margaret O’Brien, Mary Astor, Rossano Brazzi, and Peter Lawford make up the beloved 1949 Technicolor® repertory presentation of a hallowed Civil War-era tale of bravery and loyalty on the home front. Included in this film is a delightful Christmas scene that really brings home the true meaning of the holiday.

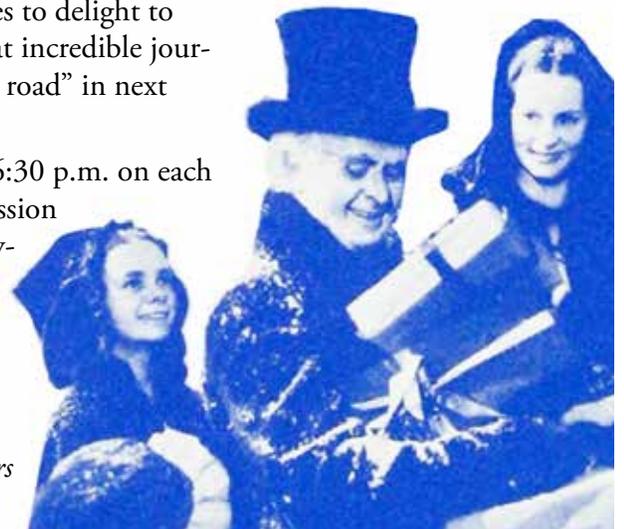
Travel to Dickens’ London on **Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.**, as Reginald Owen brings the larger-than-life character of Ebenezer Scrooge to the big screen, along with all of the scary ghosts of Christmas, in one of the most popular cinematic versions (1938) of this holiday classic tale.

Round out the holiday season, on **Wednesday, Dec. 27**, with an encore visit to the “Emerald City” in M.G.M.’s 1939 mega-classic extravaganza, that has enchanted generations of movie lovers ... and continues to delight to this day. More about that incredible journey down the “yellow brick road” in next month’s HSUMD newsletter.

Our fabulous Snack Bar opens up at 6:30 p.m. on each Movie Night to offer taste-tempting treats at Scrooge-like prices! Admission to the movies is, as always, FREE, but we sure won’t mind those holiday-inspired donations!

For film titles, call 760-375-8456 or pick up a new schedule in the lobby.

See you at the movies...for a joyous M.G.M. Merry Christmas.



# Collections Manager's Report *Special Events = Busy Month*

I want to start my message with a big thank you to John Abbott, Tex Hoppus, Craig Porter and Nick Rogers for acting as our servers for the Ladies Tea this year.

My neighbors Chris and Kyson Willis, daughter Bonny Porter, granddaughter Brisa, along with Nick Rogers were in the kitchen by 7 a.m. helping with the preparation and keeping the food coming.

Our tea began with colorful, delicious hors d'oeuvres and continued with more yummy treats, all created by Carol!



President Tex presents our costume winner Lola Frankneier with a box filled with an arrangement of succulents. The judges (our servers) were smitten by her beautiful home-made lei, perfectly displayed against its white background.

About two days before these annual luncheons, I wonder what possesses me to do this, and then the day arrives and it is such fun that I fall right into the trap of saying NEXT year this, NEXT year that.

The Folk Band Caliches of County Kern outdid themselves this year, starting several months ahead learning Hawaiian music and adapting the lyrics to fit our tea.

The article in the *Daily Independent* by Jessica Weston was just great — she captured the atmosphere and fun perfectly.

Liz Babcock and I had an amazing time at the Eastern Sierra History Conference. This was the second conference the Eastern Sierra Interpretative Association (ESIA) has hosted.

I did not attend last year; if it was anything like this year's,

*See next page*



The entire group at this year's Hawaiian-themed Ladies Tea. If you're not in this picture, you missed out on a fun, delicious time! Missing from the photo: Jessica Weston, who arrived shortly thereafter. Note the Caliches onstage behind the participants and servers.

# Collections Manager's Report

From page 4



You might call Father Crowley the patron saint of the weekend. The good padre (bearing a distinct resemblance to ESIA Exec. Director Jeff Gabriel) was emcee at the conference, then beamed down at us from a Bishop mural.

I certainly missed out on a well-planned and informative event. The subjects covered were interesting and unique.

Liz and I came back with some promising ideas for future programs, and as soon as the dust settles, we'll be passing them along to Andrew Sound.

Who knew Bishop had a Mural Committee that is responsible for the many murals found on the walls in the town's downtown area? Having heard about these at the conference made us take a look as we were passing through town.

Who knew there were so many and so large? We were stopping for coffee, and I missed the turn, so went down a block to double back. That was serendipity! We passed four of these wonderful murals for sure and maybe five. It was a nice reward for missing a turn.

## Whitey Winchester CD release party — HSUMD fundraiser

In mid-December HSUMD will welcome Andy Stanford to the Historic USO for the release of his second album. This CD features 20 artists, many local, recruited by Andy to take part in the making of this album.

Some of these artists will perform at the event, which will take place on Saturday, Dec. 16. Doors open at 6 p.m. with a cover charge of \$5. Proceeds from the show will go to HSUMD and the ongoing building restoration efforts.

The standard fare of hot dogs, beer, wine, and soft drinks will be served.  
— Matt Zubia

Liz of course gave a great talk, and we sold a gratifying number of *Tales From the Owl Saloon*. Many in the audience were very surprised to hear about Red Mountain as a town and fully entertained by Lodge Cunningham's tales. Thanks, Liz.

By the way, we ate well, slept well, and have caught up on our visiting. I would recommend this conference for anyone interested in the Eastern Sierra, not just those working on historical preservation.

My volunteers and I have been moving items and shelves to make room for our new digitizing equipment. This is very exciting, and I can't thank the Ridgecrest Elks enough for their generous donation allowing for these purchases.

I am relying on photographer Liz to provide a photo or several for your enjoyment on our latest activities.

I also need to show my appreciation to fellow board members John Abbott and Tex Hoppus who rescued me from near disaster when I left a case of books in Ridgecrest and didn't realize it until we got to Mammoth. Those two work cheap. They made the drive to meet us in Lone Pine for a piece of apple pie and a root beer float. Thank you so very much for a Thursday-night rescue. — Carol Porter

Our Historic USO Gift Shop stocks engrossing books and videos focused on local history, eye-catching T-shirts and caps, See's delicious candy, and many other gift-worthy items. See Tex Hoppus' message, page 2, for info on some special sales. Please do stop by and shop! It all benefits HSUMD!

# Ashworth, A-Bomb, China Lake

From p. 1

9, 1945. This feat provides the tie-in to Steve Hall's presentation about the missions to deliver the atomic bombs to Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. Both men will repeat their presentations the following morning at the Veterans Breakfast, also at the Historic USO, 8:30 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 16.

Dave will focus on his dad's role in the development of nuclear weapons and China Lake's contributions to the Manhattan Project, with an emphasis not so much on the historical data but on his personal connection to the famous admiral. He'll also throw in a little about his experience growing up in China Lake as a "Navy brat" and the Commander's kid, a time that he says shaped his life forever.

Steve Hall's talk, entitled "Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Missions," will focus on the two atomic detonations over Japan on Aug. 6 and 9, 1945. He will discuss the science that created the weapons; the decisions on if, when, and how to use the weapons; and the actual deliveries.

Most of us are somewhat familiar with the first two parts of the talk; we are likely to know very little about the third. This lecture presents the story of those two deliveries, from takeoff to touchdown, and discusses the decisions made on each mission, decisions that brought World War II to an end.

Dave Ashworth graduated from Stanford University in 1966 and became a naval aviator, like his dad. He spent 24 years in the Navy, seven active and the rest in the reserves. During his service, he flew the A-7 light-attack jet from the carriers *Ranger* and *America* during the Vietnam conflict.

While Dave was in the Naval Reserve at NAS Alameda, he commanded Attack Squadron 304. After a year at Northrop, and a fun job ferrying A-7Hs to the Hellenic Air Force on Crete, he was hired by Western Airlines, which merged with Delta in 1987. He retired in 2003 after 28 years with the airlines as a captain on the Boeing 767.

Dave lives in Park City, Utah, where he skis, rides BMW and Ducati motorcycles, bikes, manages property, reads, and writes. He lives part time in Solana Beach, where he escapes the cold of Utah. He has volunteered at



NOTS workers install Fat Man shape on the range, 1945.

*U.S. Navy photo*

the La Jolla Medical Center, transporting veterans to and from their medical appointments.

Steve Hall is a former senior fellow at L-3 Communications Systems-West (CS-W), Salt Lake City, Utah. Today he's an instructor at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Utah, where he lectures on World War I and II history.

He is a 1967 graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology and served 26 years as an aircraft maintenance/logistics officer in assignments ranging from Iceland to Germany to Japan, maintaining six types of combat aircraft, including his favorite, the beautiful B-52.

Steve received his master's in management from Troy State University in 1976. He is a graduate of three Air Force professional schools and has published twice in Air Force periodicals.

He is also a long-time guest lecturer at Georgia Tech, Morehouse College, the University of Utah, and venues throughout the Salt Lake Valley.

He and his wife Pam live in Ogden.

HSUMD normally meets on the third Tuesday of the month. Meetings are free and open to the public. For more information on this or future meetings, call us at 760-375-8456.

— Andrew Sound



VAdm. F. L. Ashworth congratulates his son, Dave, just after pinning on his naval aviator's wings, Friday, Oct. 13, 1967. Steve shared this photo with us on Friday the 13th this October — exactly 50 years later — a lucky day, I'd say! See the article starting on page 1 for more about Dave, his illustrious father, and this month's program. *Photo courtesy of Dave Ashworth*

## Membership Reminder

A 2018 membership letter will go out near the end of November. Letters will go to all members regardless of whether you own 2018 dues. Please respond to the mailing if there is any changes in your membership so that we can update the database.

— Lloyd Smith

## 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

Joe Depina  
Brian Hoyt

Robert M. Johnson  
Mike & Bessie Reeves  
Ron & Nancy Rossi

## Business 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—IWV  
DeathValley.com  
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  
IWV Premier Landscaping  
Jack & Dana Lyons, Realtors  
Maturango Museum  
Motion Tire & Wheel  
Nevins Tech. Consultants  
*The News Review*

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Professional Tax & Business Services  
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**Here's an easy way to see this newsletter in color!**

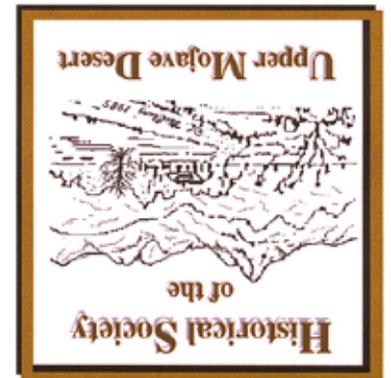
Just send an e-mail to our membership coordinator, Lloyd Smith at *lloyd.smith@hughes.net*, and ask him to put you on the list to get a PDF copy e-mailed to you each month.

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 NOVEMBER 2017**  
**NOTE CHANGED DATE: Wednesday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m., Historic USO Building**



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