

Happy Holidays from the Rim of the World Historical Society

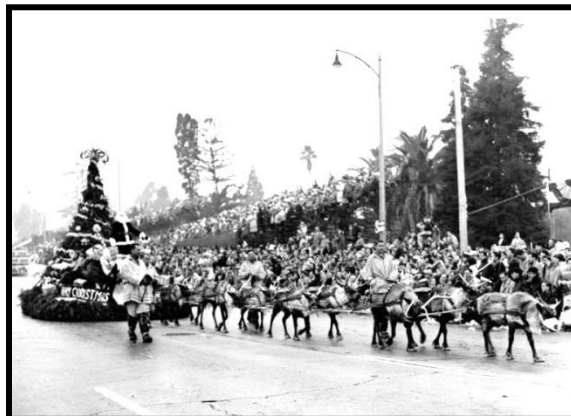
A Little History of Santa's Village

The year was 1953. The year of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Glenn Holland and Leonard Ray, two businessmen from Crestline, had been captivated by a recent article in the *Saturday Evening Post* magazine about a place in New York called North Pole. Glenn was involved with the promotion of the Club San Moritz and surrounding area, and Leonard was an accountant in the area. They knew Joe and Mary Henck had large land holdings in the Skyforest area on the Rim of the World Drive and came to them with the idea of opening a 'Santa' theme park.

J. Putnam Henck is quoted in his book, *From the Memories of Putnam Henck*, (no date): "When they ascertained that Joe and Mary would be interested in working with them, they proceeded to put a whole package together so that the construction could be started in the spring of 1954, heading for an opening date of the Memorial Day weekend in 1955. Glenn Holland was the creative idea man and Leonard Ray was the creative accountant guiding the business end."

Prior to the park opening, Santa and his reindeer appeared in the 1955 New Year's Day Rose Parade in Pasadena (see photo below). The entry was sponsored by and provided by the soon-to-be-opened Santa's Village in Skyforest. The January 2, 1955 *Los Angeles Times* carried the following headlines: "Nine Reindeer, Including Rudolph, Thrill Children." The article went on to read, "Santa's eight famous reindeer from the poem 'The Night Before Christmas', plus one more, Rudy the red-nosed Reindeer, all real live animals, were one of the major pre-parade attractions, especially with the children. The reindeer were pulling the float 'Merry Christmas' entered by the Skyforest home of Santa Claus."

All of them wore harnesses with name plates identifying them, and to each harness were attached sleigh bells, which rang merrily when the animals shook their heads. The reindeer were from a herd of over 30 imported from Alaska and provided for by Grady Corruthers. A picture of this float is shown below.

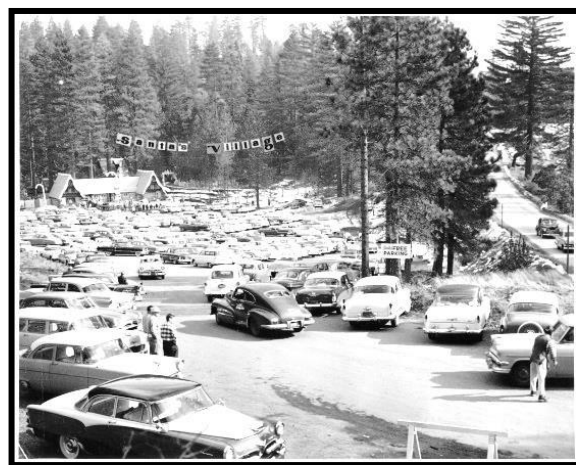
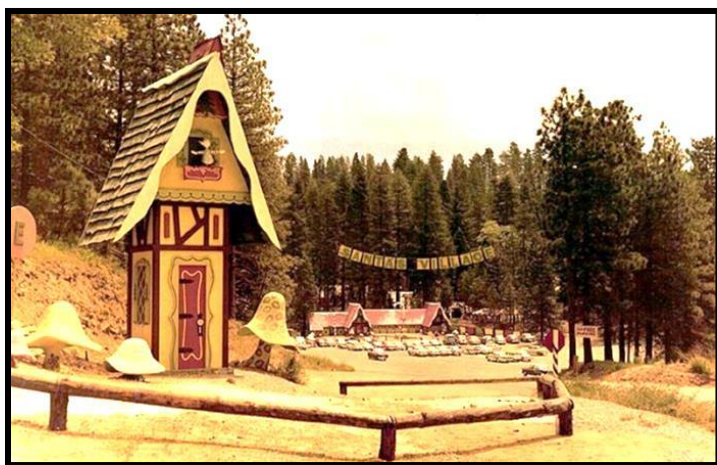


Santa's Village in the 1955 Rose Parade

A Little History of Santa's Village (continued)

On Wednesday before Santa's Village opened to the paying public, Glenn Holland, president of Santa's Village invited all residents of the San Bernardino Mountains to a pre-opening visit and "Get Acquainted Day." There was no admission charge and no merchandise was for sale. Santa's Village opened the following Saturday, May 28, 1955, on Memorial Day weekend, approximately six weeks before the opening of Disneyland! The admission on Saturday was 40 cents for juniors between the ages of 11 and 18, \$1.00 for everyone over 18, and youngsters under 11 were admitted FREE!

The park was open 364 days/year, only closing on Christmas Day to allow Santa to rest-up from his Christmas Eve gift-delivering travels around the world. Glenn Holland went on to become the president of the Santa's Village Corporation, Joe E. Henck was vice-president and Leonard Ray was the Corporation's secretary-treasurer. However, by 1967 Glenn left Santa's Village to become General Manager of Art Linkletter's Sierra Dawn. Below is a picture of the original entrance to Santa's Village and one supposedly showing the parking lot on opening day..



Santa's Village first Santa was Bill Strothers, originally of Virginia. J. Putnam ('Putty') Henck, son of Joe and Mary Henck, was the general contractor for Santa's Village. Logs for the construction were cut from the 100 acres of land, on the property owned by the Henck's. The park opened in 1955 with 11 buildings: the Welcome House, Santa's Home, Mill Wheel Toy Factory, Mechanical Toy Factory, Santa's Warehouse, Santa's Toy & Game House, The Candy Kitchen, Mrs. Claus' Food House, Santa's Souvenir Factory & Post Office, Reindeer Barn and Chapel of the Little Shepherd.

Eight rides were available on opening day, they included the Train Ride through the Enchanted Forest, the Whirling Christmas Tree ride, a pony ride, a burro ride, Cinderella's Pumpkin Coach and the Jingle Bells (Reindeer) Sleigh ride, the world's first and only sleigh ride drawn by reindeer. By 1962 the Bumble-Bee Monorail (picture on next page) had been added along with the Bobsled ride and Antique Car ride. By 1980 a carousel and a Ferris wheel had been added. Eventually 14 rides were available to kids of all ages.

It was here (Skyforest) in a picturesque setting on 15 forested acres where colorful buildings housed Santa Claus and his toy workshops. Here in a fairyland setting, his gnomes, elves and animal friends made up a children's and grownups' paradise. Two other Santa's Villages were opened, one in Santa Cruz, California, in 1957, and the other in East Dundee, Illinois, in 1959.

A Little History of Santa's Village (continued)

Sadly, the park in Skyforest failed to attract the visitors needed to remain profitable, and closed on Sunday March 1, 1998. That day saw a record attendance due to the closing being well publicized. During its existence it attracted over 5,000,000 visitors, and employed over 5,000 employees, 100 employees at Christmas time. An auction in August of 1998 attracted many visitors and buyers. The remaining artifacts of the park attracted many collectors with fond memories wishing to preserve those childhood remembrances. The carousel sold for over \$120,000.00. Our museum, located in Lake Arrowhead, has a permanent display dedicated to Santa's Village featuring items obtained at that August, 1998 auction

Below is a montage of pictures from Santa's Village in Skyforest.



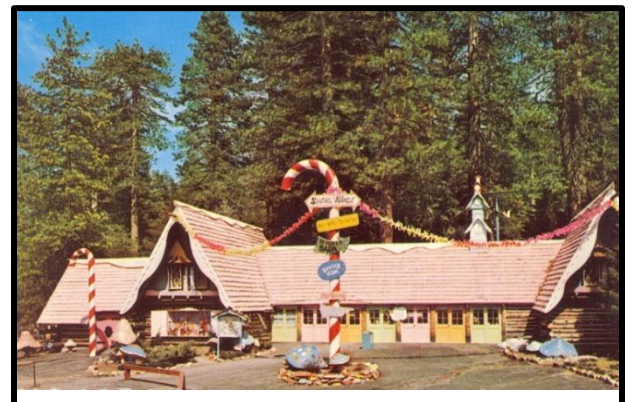
Santa's Candy Cane Sleigh ready to leave for the Land of the Snow Queen.



Santa's House with Santa, the Rainbow Man, the Lollipop Lady, Alice, the White Rabbit, and some elves.



Santa's Christmas Tree Ride.



The Main Entrance to Santa's Village



Inside of Santa's Village Exhibit at our museum



The Old Fire of 2003 came just this close.

Christmas at the Club San Moritz

The “Alps of Southern California” was an advertising slogan used to describe the San Bernardino Mountains during the 1940s, by the Club San Moritz. The Swiss Alps concept was brought to the San Bernardino Mountains by the Club San Moritz and their subdivision in the late 1930s, after the effects of the Great Depression were beginning to wane. Club San Moritz began in 1938 in the Valley of the Moon, in the former Arrowhead Valley Club building on the shore of Moon Lake. They remodeled it from its’ rustic log style into a European style chateau, setting the standard and style for the next 35 years.

Only club members were allowed to purchase property in the new development. The purchasers of Club San Moritz property were restricted to "Citizens of the white-Caucasian race, with good moral character." You couldn't do that today – fortunately. A background and ancestry check was done on every potential property owner, including asking if the family name had been changed, including spelling changes since 1900.

Club San Moritz signed a 25-year lease with an option for another 25 years, on a 7½ acre parcel of land on the east shore of Lake Gregory, just over the ridge from its Valley of the Moon clubhouse in 1947, to give club members access to the bigger lake, and built boat docks and a stable. It began constructing a larger lodge building currently known as the San Moritz Lodge on the shore of Lake Gregory since it now had 5,000 members. The V.O.M. clubhouse burned down as the new clubhouse was nearing completion just before Labor Day 1950.



The new San Moritz Lodge (above) was the central clubhouse where weekly events and activities for their club members were held, and where chateaus and chalets could be rented by the weekend by club members who didn't own a house. The Club San Moritz was a family oriented retreat, in a clean, positive, moral atmosphere. It was a fun way to enjoy the clean air and the mountains with club member similar to themselves. Some of the activities were seasonal, inspired by holidays such as Easter, Christmas and others.

The teen center, stables and ice skating rink, aka Ice Palace, were popular activities especially for the kids, and many of them made life-long friends with those they met-up each weekend at the club. Many of those years-long friendships resulted in marriage.

Every year the chefs at the private resort cooked up fantastic Thanksgiving and Christmas meals for its members. The Club San Moritz always hired the best chefs they could find, since many members ate every meal while they were on the mountain at the lodge. They were in mental competition with the exclusive resorts in the Lake Arrowhead area.

Christmas at the Club San Moritz (Continued)

To the right is shown a typical Christmas Party menu from those "Good Old Days". A full roast turkey dinner for only \$3.65 or, for the folks who wanted something special, a choice top sirloin steak for \$4.95 or, better yet, a broiled rock Australian Lobster for \$5.25. Don't you wish you could order from that menu today?

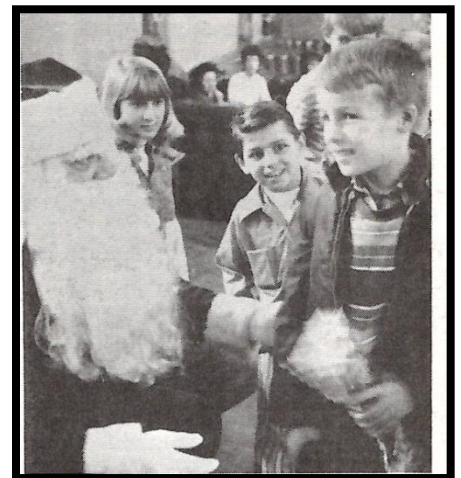


The stories of former teenagers, who came with their parents for those holiday meals in the 1960s, are enviable. It's said the spread of delicious food put out in buffets by the club on Holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter ranked with the top hotels in New York City, and the dinners were well attended, since in the early 1960s the price was only \$3.50 per person. Served dinners in the exclusive dining room were also available.

Because there were both rental cabins available and most of the members owned Club San Moritz chalets, friends would come up to see each other and spend the holidays at the club. Many members spent most of their weekends year-round at their chalets on the mountain.

The weekend prior to Christmas Santa usually came to visit the club and take personal requests from the children. The lodge would be decorated in fine style, with pine boughs, pinecones and with a huge tree in the central lobby and it was referred to as a winter wonderland, even in years without snow. For the children the events were memorable since a special party was held for them. There were of course refreshments, and the children all dressed up to see Santa. There were games, presents and usually a movie was shown. Since this was the days before VCR's, the showing of a movie was very special.

Some families would spend Christmas morning at their homes in the valley, so Santa would know where to drop off the presents, and then drive up to the resort to spend the rest of their holiday vacation, bringing all their new gifts, including snowsuits and sleds. Snowmen, tobogganing, snow angels and other winter fun were on everyone's minds. Christmas evening, after the wonderful holiday dinner, gifts from under the tree were distributed to the kids.



Christmas at the Club San Moritz (Continued)

After a holiday dinner, adult dinner dancing was offered from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Apparently, the kids didn't mind spending their school vacation in the mountains either. There were the Friday or Saturday night teen dances, a teen clubhouse, fishing, ice skating, and lots of other teens you already knew to hang out with in a fun location, and there was always the dream of a white Christmas. Many stayed at their cabins through New Year's Eve when a big party was always held.

Even without snow, there were many other reasons to come to the mountains. The crisp days were perfect for hiking, the cold evenings were a good reason to burn a fire in the fireplace. The chance to get away from the city, brought many families to the mountains, with daily activities for all ages at the Club San Moritz from the time school let out through the New Year, with many organized activities to attend. Some families saw the holiday season as the last chance to enjoy the mountains before the snow came, while in other years, it was the first chance to possibly enjoy the cold white stuff. The 1950's and 1960's were the "Golden Age" to come visit the mountains. The drive up the mountain became easier after the road to Crestline was widened to two-lanes in each direction in the mid-60s, up to the Crestline Bridge.

The 1972, Christmas was celebrated with a "delightful" holiday-themed dance show performed by the Pasadena Ballet Conservatory." There was a dance about "Rudolph and Santa's Reindeer" and other dance numbers, described as graceful modern Ballet. Afterwards Santa arrived hanging on the back of a big Crest Forest Fire District Fire engine and spent his afternoon with the kids. A couple pictures of that event are shown below.



A feature of one San Moritz Christmas Party was the Pasadena Conservatory of Ballet with a Christmas Theme.



A Favorite Selection That Day Featured Rudolph and Santa's Reindeer.

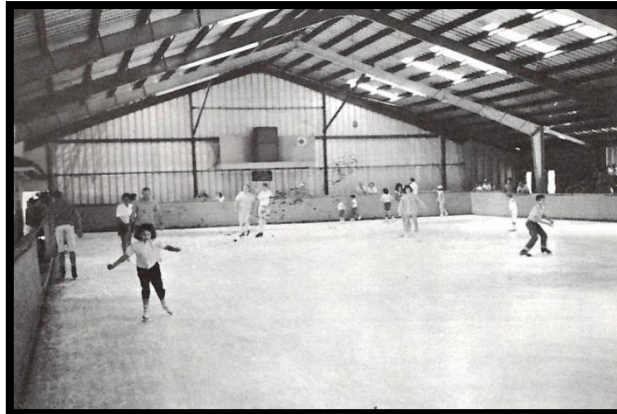
There however was one year that Christmas at the Club San Moritz was not as festive. It was Christmas morning 1970 when things changed greatly. That year, local resident and club member David Gustafson was a 19-year-old working at Club San Moritz as the Ice Palace's supervisor (like the life guard at the beach, a job he also did in the summer).

It was a picture perfect "White Christmas." There were a couple feet of heavy snow on the ground that year, and sitting heavily on top of everything else. There were very few kids skating at the rink compared to a normal Christmas morning, because of the difficulty of getting up the mountain with that much snow.

For several days, David had been hearing some creaking sounds from somewhere, as well as the noise of the heavy ice sliding across the skating rink roof, and then crashing down onto the ground beside the building covering the ice rink.

Christmas at the Club San Moritz (Continued)

As only about four to six kids were skating on the ice, suddenly, just before noon on that 1970 Christmas Day, David heard the loud cracking sound of wood. He looked up and saw the roof beams of the building beginning to splinter. The roof was collapsing under the snow load! David immediately yelled, "Get off the ice everyone!" The skaters quickly followed directions as they could also hear the unusually loud noises. David skated to the edge of the rink, moving all the kids safely out of the way. Only one little girl hurt her ankle in the rush to get out of the way of the roof as the Ice Palace's roof began crashing down onto the ice rink. All skaters and David got off the ice and out of the building safely due to his quick warnings.



The Skating Rink at the San Moritz Before the Roof Collapsed

As in any small town, news travels quickly, and David's father Bob Gustafson, rushed over to see the collapsed building and noticed it was the rim around the rink that held the roof and stopped it from falling all the way down to the ice. Had it not been for David's alertness and warning, serious injury or death might have resulted. Despite the destruction of the Ice Palace, it was considered a good Christmas after all, six scared kids but all safe and sound. "What a shocking way to spend Christmas Day," remembered Bob Gustafson, Sr. who had joined the Club San Moritz in 1948. The rebuilding of the ice skating rink building was expensive but with over 9,000 members, it was an amenity Club San Moritz members expected, they'd had the Ice Palace since the early 1960s. A new building over the ice skating rink was rebuilt.

The Club San Moritz had only a couple more years of activities after that. The 25-year lease negotiated in 1947 on the 7½ acres of land they leased from the Crest Forest Water District for \$150 a year ended in January 1972, and they had an option for an additional 25 years at \$200 a year, but another 25 years was not to be. Society was changing and private clubs were being highly criticized, sued and closed nationwide.

After the demise of the Club San Moritz the new ice skating building was sold and relocated to the top of Waterman Canyon. It was only a decade later that Bob Gustafson, Sr. helped found the Crest Forest Senior Citizen's Club, helping in 1980 to restore the flooded-out building that had formerly been the San Moritz Teen Center which they named "Leisure Shores."

Christmas at the Club San Moritz with its' glitz, events and friends in a wintery atmosphere, was always a high point in the year's activities for its members, invoking strong memories. It was magical for the children, and the experience was kept in their memories forever. Many of those Club San Moritz children later-on came back to live in these mountains, as generational family residents, some in the same chalets owned by parents and grandparents. Some returned to live here, partially inspired by their wonderful childhood memories of their days at the Club San Moritz.

Mountain Christmas Long Ago

The ROWHS Board of Directors, along with the staff producing this Fall Newsletter, has decided to have a general theme about Christmas in the mountains over the years. An excellent source of Christmas "back when" for the average people is Pauliena LaFuze's discussion of the meetings of "The Worthwhile Club" in Twin Peaks. Most of her document utilized the actual minutes of the club's meetings.

The Worthwhile Club had its charities they supported. These ranged from local families in need, to CARE, the Red Cross, the Cancer Fund, the Mountain Hospital, and the local Little League. They always supported the AFS (American Field Service) foreign exchange students at the high school, the high school itself, and the local library. You can also read about the start of Mary Putnam Henck school, the development of the golf course and country club, and the Masonic yearly BBQ. They made a lot of contributions to the Mountain Community Hospital and the Twin Peaks Church. They had a lot of interaction with the Lake Arrowhead Woman's Club. If there was a need in the mountain community, they tried to support it with their own money and labor.

When not busy with various natural disasters, the husbands of these women and the other men in the community quickly became involved in these growing philanthropic and social events. There were the usual snow storms and fires in the days before DC-10s and water drop helicopters when all the local men were out trying to hold back the flames. The electric company often had its hands full restoring power after damaging storms and fires. Pauliena's new husband, Cecil, was one of these electric company workers.

In the following article, every part in non-italicized type are exact words taken from existing Worthwhile Club minutes as documented by Pauliena. This article will present only those discussions of the club activities about Christmas for the first thirteen years of the club: the period from 1932 to 1945. Their Christmas activities give a good slice of the life of these early mountain residents at this time of year. In those first years, most of the events were held at the Alpine Lodge, later known as The Antlers, owned and operated by the Dexter Family.

1932:

The noble green fir that stood tall by the Lodge fireplace at the community Christmas parties bore country trim amid a new dollar's worth of ornaments. There was a ten-cent present from and for each person there. An exception was when the women finagled a hand-dressed doll into the arms of six year old Mildred Sharp (from a house opposite Switzers', sister of a boy who sang). That first year, Frenchy and Mr. Gould (*owners of the Alpine Store*) brought sacks of candy for each child. Fred Lang was Santa Claus in a new red suit just made by Mrs. Moran, the Edison boss' wife. On that night, NO resident of the village, male or female, was alone or left out.

1933:

After a bigger-than-ever Christmas Party and children's' play with Harley Wheeler (the Forestry lecturer from Agua Fria) in the Santa suit, they sailed on into their five-lyette year, with time for sundries. It is no wonder that they were invited to become a Federated Club in their own right on March 27, 1934. But, 'twas both modest and independent of them to wish to keep the fruits of their small labors in their own hands.

Mountain Christmas'Long Ago (continued)

1934:

Any social get-togethers they held, however, they made self-supporting. They fixed and filled ten toy bags for children at the County Hospital. They had a fine Christmas Tree social at which Verdi Anderson conducted a humorous country school Christmas program – and, the men made cakes. John was extra good at that since he had been a baker.

1935:

The next thing Pauliena knew, she was on the Christmas program committee. She obliged with “angel” carols by club daughters (Lois Dexter, Doris Kemp, Zua Kaylor, Betty Jo Johnston, June Nyquist, and Hazel Kaylor) from the mezzanine steps while club sons walked through the manger scene on a stage below. Shepherd crook-staffs and a head for a bag of straw that became a donkey were made by the more artistic members. Evasion of a dress rehearsal and a sudden drop in temperature contributed to one most startling sight – the striding of a shepherd across the stage encased in white long-handles and two coonskins off the wall! Every child received a sack of candy from the mysterious Santa and every person a gift from the tree (the name switched from one they had brought). Frenchy brought over ice-cream bars. Toy bags had been sent already to children at the County T. B. ward and four sweaters delivered to some local small fry. It was a satisfyingly warm and inclusive season, the epitome of friendship in a far-away high mountain winter. So as not to be a burden, the club voted reimbursement to the Greg Dexters’ for lights and for logs fed to the cavernous fireplace.

1936:

All the usual preparations were made for Christmas. Candied fruit was given to the Goulds, two cases of milk to the T. B. Ward, as well as thirty drill-cloth bags on hangers for the children’s Christmas and other possessions. A box of clothing was sent to the House of Neighborly Service; \$5 was spent on groceries for a needy family; \$5 was sent to the Children’s Home Society. Ranger Lang allowed a tree for the December 21st community Christmas Party. The weather turned cold so the number who got out was small.

On Christmas night it began to snow – and forgot when to stop. Cecil LaFuze, material clerk in the new Edison office, left Huntington Beach Christmas festivities for the mountain as soon as he saw the storm meant business. After dark, he pushed his little green Ford truck up the Pinecrest Hill, churned off a chain in the deep snow, and trudged on up past a snowed-in snowplow. No electricity was on anywhere, but Anderson, Johnston, Baer, Farmer, Kanoff, and Upp and Superintendent Barnett were searching out their snowshoes, preparing to do something about it. Some of the men started down Palmer Hill with sleds and wire and climbing belts.

At Lake Arrowhead, one barge took them through the slush to various pole-top substations around the water where they tried to throw in the circuits. If no light came or if something flashed, they knew that someone would have to patrol that line until they found its break or breaks. Tycoon Hamilton phoned that he expected holiday guests and was impatient as to how he would take care of them. I think the men enjoyed telling him that there was no way by which guests could get to his lakeside chalet. The blizzards continued. When the men traced the pole lines up across Strawberry Ridge by daylight, they found wires caked into six- and eight-inch cylinders, with most of them lying on the snow between poles.

Mountain Christmas Long Ago (continued)

Somehow the Edison District Superintendent and more linemen got up to Arrowhead Highlands and walked in to the Alpine office to help. Hours were from five or six in the morning until ten at night and sometimes later. Extra crews who took cabins in Dexters' resort could not cook meals in addition to those hours so the boss bespoke Edna Nyquist, Ethel Farmer, Edna Maachen and other Edison wives to have hot suppers ready for them. In their spare time, the office force shoveled corridors toward the buried gas pumps and the main road. Roads were not plowed for almost two weeks, by which time both grocery and private shelves were getting a little bare. But, the weary gangs climbed snowy poles, beat ice off the lines, and got juice to most of the houses by that time.

When Pauliena and baby were brought home to an igloo garage in the yard wall, snow covered the lower story of the Edison building; entrance was through a tunnel! "Papa" loaded them and baggage on a toboggan that he pulled right over the ten-foot hurricane fence at the back, and down past Nyquists to his warm and cozy cabin – of which only the gabled roof stuck out!

1938:

On Thanksgiving weekend in 1938, all hell broke loose on the West end of the mountains. We will present this in Pauliena's own words below:

Thanksgiving 1938 impended – bright and Indian summery – but with a smart North Wind. In the forenoon of the day ahead of it, our post office acquaintance, Mrs. "Ham'n Eggs" Miller (to distinguish her from another Mrs. Miller who was not concerned with the Townsend Plan) of east Strawberry Ridge, went to light fires at the home of her neighbor, Mrs. Cora Miller who was coming soon from Riverside. Soon after she completed her task and went home, the propane gas water heater blew up, sending leaping flames up the red gable and showers of embers over other homes. Embers blew down into the chaparral fronting Strawberry Peak – dry since April.

The fire truck went as well as the Edison crews. Cecil (my husband) came in briefly at eleven o'clock, eye whites gleaming in a smoke-blackened face. "Go call mother not to come," he said as he left. The fire spread went and south. Flames caught a stump under the Arrowhead Highlands Cafe, and Cecil and Jimmie Baer chopped it out. Edison men watched as the telephone and power lines down in Waterman Canyon burned.

As four o'clock, the Arrowhead Springs Hotel was in flames. Soon after it, the power lines at the foot of the underground cable in the mouth of City Creek caught fire. Civilian Conservation Corps boys from the camp there came with shovels to help watch the thousands of scrub-oak fires along Highway 18. Extra men and gear came to supplement our five ranger trucks and limited number of trained men.

In Alpine, an Edison truck stood by for evacuation of women and children, should any of the flames escape in our direction. We women were supposed to pack necessities, valuables, or treasures. I was rocking my baby in the dark when Cecil came in and turned on the lights; someone had gone down in the Gatehouse shaft to start the emergency generator left over from the dam-building days.

Bill Handley arrived, bringing home high school student, Marjorie Kemp, by way of Cajon Pass and Cedar Springs. All kinds of false reports about us were going out, so Handley and Ernie Houplin spent the night putting together a short wave transmitter.

Mountain Christmas Long Ago (continued)

That night I was taken to the Peak to look down into the "maw of Hell" that was the crescent between Red Rock Point and Rim Forest. An anemometer fastened near the base of the fire tower had broken at eighty miles an hour! Words were snatched from my mouth by the wind before they could reach my husband's ears. Burning trees looked like men with widespread arms; but the North Wind held.

There were flurries during the night that we missed. There was a crossover of flames from Highway 18 to the Horseshoe Bend Road and rumors came about the Squirrel Inn being on fire. We trusted the C. C. C. boys to contain those smoldering oak stumps.

During most of Thanksgiving Day, our men were gone (via City Creek Road) to set poles in the ashes of the Underground feed. At sundown they were allowed to come back up the High Gear Road, though I have heard tales of their batting embers off their canvas-topped truck and of their much wondering if the spurts of gasoline from their erratic carburetor might finish the fireworks. As fires do, it tapered off in a few more days. The C. C. C. boys and rangers and other mountain defenders could yield to sleep. Life could go on as if there never had been an enemy blustering at our idyllic life.

Maud Houplin's tall and fair actress mother, Cordelia Callahan, furnished another winter change. She stayed longer than she thought and was brought to the club by Gilberta. Naturally, these new talents were reflected in the 1938 Christmas program held in the high cedar-trimmed Dexter Lodge around a fragrant, beautifully ornamented tree.

The Christmas program turned out to be a Radio Hour put together by Mrs. Callahan. In artist's smock and tam, she put five of us with similar bobbed hair and newly made short dresses through a Dionne skit where we curtsied and danced and sang a little song in French. By whatever persuasion, the deer-hunting mackinaw'd husband of our president was dapper in a tuxedo. He made announcements and, with a twitch of the wrist, brought on new acts. Lefty Walton, tenor, who had sung with the Sons of the Pioneers, did "Gold Mine in the Skies" in Western costume with Pauliena. Later, with Mary McNee accompanying, they did "Little Old Lady Passing By" in dim lights and white wigs. In addition, the Christmas charities were given out. We gave \$5 to the Children's Home Society, \$5 to Nazareth House, and chickens were roasted and delivered for the Goulds and Martha.

1939:

Several Red Cross layettes were finished before Christmas. Featured along with the community Christmas tree and program was an accordion player. Cupcakes and sandwiches and presents went to all of the guests. In the old Santa suit, they said, was a new Santa. Baskets of fruit were sent as usual to Martha Dimlich Young and Mrs. Brigetta Nick, our kind of Germans. Underwear was given to Mr. Gould, \$5 to a needy family, a wedding gift to Eva's daughter, Leona (Deems), and a handsome plant to the Dormans.

1940:

A happy addition to the early winter was Louise Steele's suggestion that we have "Mystery Pals" to be remembered on birthdays and anniversaries and holidays. Quickly filling out the necessary statistics, we drew names and fell into the cloak and dagger endeavor.

Red Cross sewing materials, when they did come, were put aside until the club could decorate a tall fir tree and gather the community around it in fellowship at the Alpine Terrace Lodge. Mildred Stubbs brought movie films and I suspect we used the Arrowhead School's new projector. Mary McNee played carols on a portable organ for all to sing. Holiday baskets were sent to our sorrowing old-school Germans, Mesdames Young and Nick. A case of milk and cod liver oil was given to the T. B. ward at County Hospital.

Mountain Christmas Long Ago (continued)

1941:

The December 10th Worthwhile Club meeting after this debacle was very quiet. We heard a report on the Red Cross work to date. Should we stock the storeroom for emergencies, we wondered? We planned attendance at the Fire hall mass meeting on December 17th. Various men and women assumed Sky-Watch duties on Lake Arrowhead Dam, a vulnerable point in case of Japanese attack.

There was time for a Christmas pot luck and ham dinner in the Lodge for all the club families, our bachelors, and Harley and Mrs. Wheeler.

1943:

At the 1943-44 elections, Mary McNee was chosen for the presidency even though they had moved down to Edgewater Beach so Mac could be close to the majority of the phone line repairmen. Freda Gabbert, who took her Alpine house, and Mildred Stubbs were vice presidents. Nellie Kaylor was appointed treasurer. Ruth Phillips, wife of the sawyer, Wendell, out at John Dexter's Grandview Road Mill came and took over the job as treasurer even though she was much crippled with arthritis. She even brought her snuff-taking husband to be Santa Claus!

1944:

Early enough for Christmas, the group mailed boxes overseas and searched the thickets around Deer Lodge for manzanita canes for the Navy wounded at Arrowhead Springs Hospital. We gave the Children's Home and Nazareth House each \$5.

The Worthwhile Club held a family Christmas Party with tree at the Lodge, and Santa (Phillips) gave out gifts. They could hardly have pictured the terrible endeavors of our soldier boys under General Patton, holding desperately onto a bulge of Belgium. Nor could they have envisioned the massive and bloody return of General MacArthur to Leyte in the Philippines. Both of these efforts started Christmas week.

1945:

They held a Christmas potluck and had a tree in the Fire Hall, exchanging twenty-five cent presents. They had big plans for building a roof over the heritage lumber wagon in Strawberry Flats. Mostly, they occupied the winter months in making scrapbooks for sick children.

Well, we hope all of you have gained a little insight to Holiday Life in our mountains. At the time this is being written most of us are sheltering in place as much as possible due to the COVID-19 virus. Do we have the spirit and determination to survive this that these mountain residents 80 years ago had? We think you do.

This article written by Pauliena LaFuze and assembled by Jim Huff

Cedar Springs

The Nearly Forgotten Village

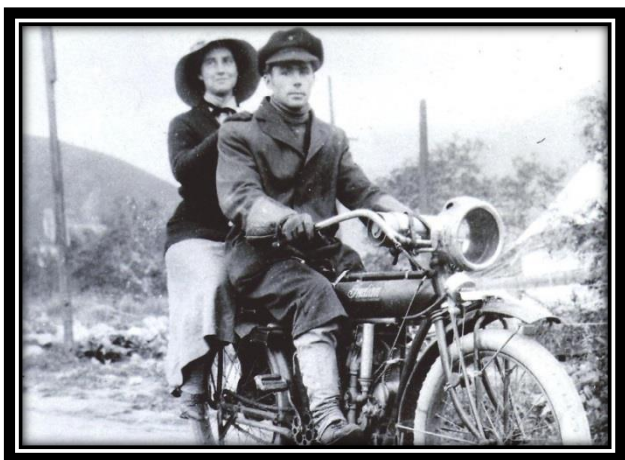
CEDAR SPRINGS

The Nearly Forgotten Village

The creation of Cedar Springs begins with Carl and Ella Hewitt. For those that may not be aware, Cedar Springs was a small community that is now under Silverwood Lake. In 1915 after completing 4 of 5 years of his medical education at the College of Medical Evangelists at Loma Linda (later becoming Loma Linda University Medical Center) Carl had to drop out because he had contracted tuberculosis. At this point the Hewitts decided to homestead at one of their favorite places – the area that eventually became Cedar Springs.

At this time there were no roads into that area so Carl and Ella would ride his red Indian motorcycle up Cajon Pass, park it at Cleghorn trail, and hike 9 or 10 miles to their 160 acres that they homesteaded. After years of hard work they established a farm where they raised fruit and vegetables. There was also a small health clinic for treating tuberculosis patients. Over time Carl & Ella increased their property to around 1000 acres. The farm increased in size to around 100 acres and used the creek in Sawpit Canyon to irrigate the fields. In the late 1920's Carl began selling strawberries to Walter Knott for Knotts Berry Farm.

Over time the community grew primarily with people of the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) faith establishing homes and a three room church which also was used as a school. Most of the people in Cedar Springs were SDA but there were a few families that were not but they blended in fairly easily by adhering to the SDA guidelines for personal behavior. Sometimes, like today, teenagers would show their independence by wearing makeup or dressing inappropriately. This year is the 100th anniversary of the Seventh Day Adventist church on the mountains. This is based upon the opening of a church in Cedar Springs in 1920. The actual celebration will take place in 2021 because of the COVID.



Carl & Ella on his Indian Motorcycle



George's Market in Cedar Springs

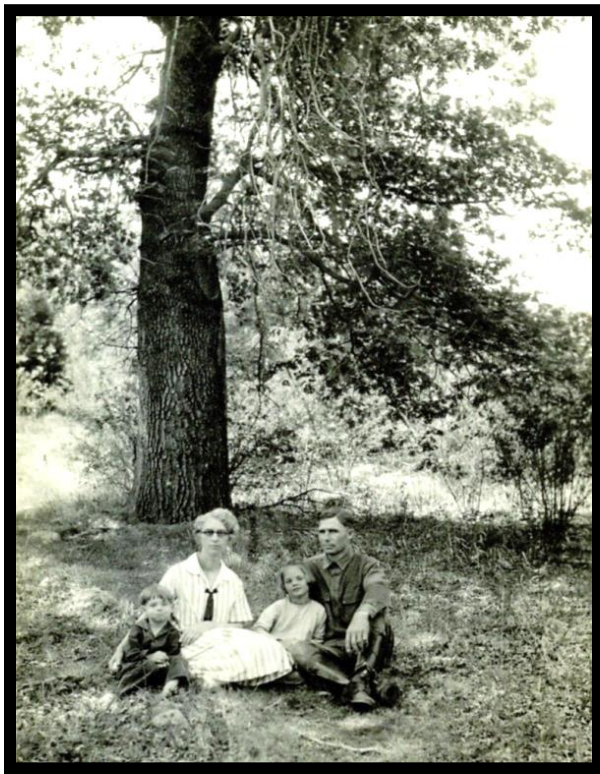
Cedar Springs (Continued)

A number of families lived in Cedar Springs including the Hewitts (Mr. Black, Ella's father also lived there), the Thompsons, the Breedens, the Barbers, the Elliots, the Jones', the Stillians, and the Bells. Glen Bell, known as Bill when he was a youngster, eventually started Taco Bell in the early 1960's.

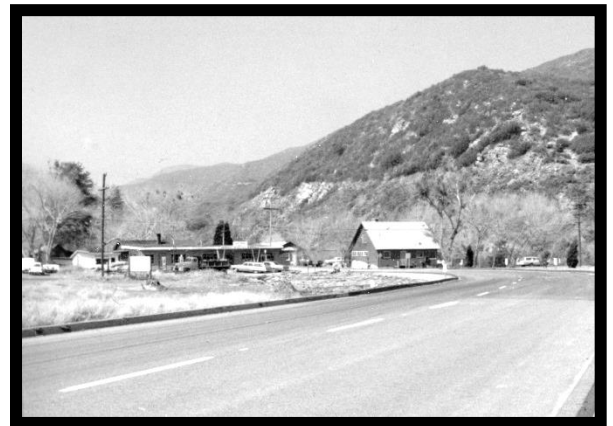
In the 1950's rumors began circulating about the Feather River project, which would create a reservoir where Cedar Springs existed. Most town folk did not believe this would happen because, after all, this was a government operation. By the early 1960's it was apparent that the project was moving forward. Designs had been completed and appraisers were purchasing all the property in Cedar Springs at fair market prices. Sadly, all the houses, the store, the fire station, and the church were torn down to make way for the lake.

Juanita Laing, known locally as the goat lady for all the goats she had, owned 40 acres in Cedar Springs and was offered a good amount of money for her property but she did not want to move. She finally had to be evicted and she expressed her opinion about this by kicking a US Marshall in the groin – or so the story goes.

The Cedar Springs dam was completed in the early 1970's and the lake began filling. Silverwood Lake filled up and is now enjoyed by a new group of boaters and fishermen.



Carl & Ella with Children, Burton & Ruby



"Down Town" Cedar Springs



Cedar Springs Church and School

America's First A-Frame

Perhaps the first real A-frame cabin was built at Lake Arrowhead in 1934 for Gisela Bennati by [architect] Rudolph Schindler. However, I have never found an address or location for the house. Does anyone at the Museum perhaps know where this house is located?" I must admit that I did not know the location of this cabin.



Photo Credit: Russ Keller Collection

Back in July, 2016 I received the following e-mail from Steve: "I understand that or the possible historical significance of such a house. But, this sent me a quest that ended with me finding the A-Frame on C Lane in Lake Arrowhead. Needless to say, Steve was thrilled with this information!

When I asked Steve to help me substantiate the claim about the "first real A-frame" he referred me to the book *Five California Architects* (1960) by Esther McCoy. I purchased the book, which dedicates two pages to the Bennati cabin giving the following description, "The 1934 Bennati cabin, the first of the A-frames in architecture, had a spontaneity that made later A-frames seem over-studied." The A-frame is located within the "Woods" and how architect Schindler was able to get his design approved is quite interesting.

America's First A-Frame (continued)



The following is taken from *Five California Architects* (1960) by Esther McCoy: "Its form grew out of the restrictions for the tract at Lake Arrowhead; all cabins were required to be in Norman style. Schindler, tongue-in-cheek, designed the roof to the ground.

When the businessmen on the art jury expressed doubt that the design was pure Norman, Schindler gathered up a shelf of old fox-marked prints of steep-roofed houses. He laid them on the laps of the jury and said, "Don't you recognize these, gentlemen? Pure Norman!" No one on the jury had been to Normandy, so the design was passed. The employment of local stone and the poetic use of the sloping site gave the house something of an indigenous character among the borrowed forms of the other houses.

Fir plywood was used between the framing members for walls and cabinets. Schindler was quite at home with this new industrial material. Six rooms were contained within the all-roof cabin, with bedrooms off a balcony."

I have a copy of the "Application for Building Permit" for this "weekend cabin" for Mrs. Bennati. I noticed a discrepancy between the 1934 date in the book and the permit dated November 25, 1936. It is also believed this was the first home built with plywood.

America's First A-Frame (continued)

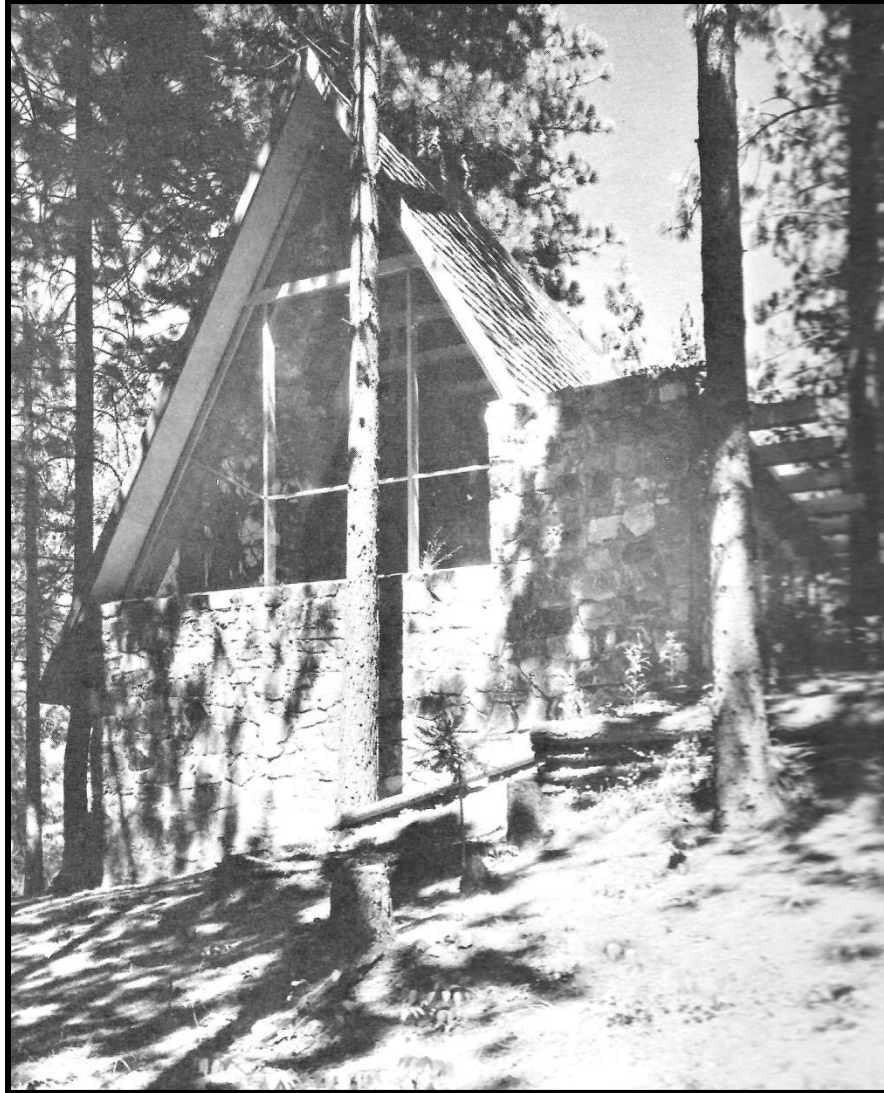


Photo Credit: Original A-frame from *Five California Architects* by Esther McCoy (2004)

I was later informed that the A-frame had been the victim of a fire. What a shock! I had photographed an A-frame at the location where the fire had taken place. So, off to the *Mountain News* archives I went to search the 1969 and 1970 newspapers. I soon found in the September 17, 1970 paper where the headline read: "Structural landmark lost in fast moving blaze."

The article went on to read: "Landmark Gone – A fast moving fire destroyed a large portion of the Donlin P. Murdy residence on C Lane in Lake Arrowhead. The fire was first reported at 7:49 p.m., Sept. 1. Five units and 16 firemen brought the blaze under control within 15 minutes. It was the first A-frame style dwelling to be constructed in the state." The reconstructed A-frame we see there today seems to resemble very closely the original dwelling, minus the garage. The *Mountain News* article may not have known this was America's first A-Frame.

Article written by Russ Keller

Way Back When: ROWHS Events August – September/October 2010

Ten years ago, our museum was starting to take shape. We still managed to have several events for our members. Below are some of these. How many of you remember these fun and interesting events?

Over the Labor Day weekend in 2010, we had special showings of a video about the Boles Murder Case for our guests and members in the Cozad Theater at the historical society museum. Over the years, we have shown this many times and it always draws a crowd.

On Saturday July 31, 2010, we invited the mountain community to share in the dedication of cultural landmark #9, the Whyte House. Thacker and Shirley Whyte hosted a wonderful afternoon with photographs, artifacts, and recollections of how the Twin Peaks community began with lumber milled from the Dexter Lumber Mill. The Whyte House is shown to the right.



Saturday August 7, board member David Knudson and a host of aspiring actors and actresses presented another spine tingling murder mystery dinner and theater. The evening at the Arrowhead Lake Association Burnt Mill Beach Club was filled with great food, friendship, and lots of laughter. The picture at the right shows a few of the motley crew of suspects in the murder of Lady Rockefeller at Lake Arrowhead that night.



Sunday, September 19, We had a repeat of our ever-popular Arrowhead Queen Tour. There was champagne and snacks on the dock after 5:00 pm and the boat left at 6:00 sharp. Cost was \$25 per person and we were limited to 60 attendees. This has always been a popular event and we have done it many times.

October 17, We had a presentation on our Sawmill Days educational program in the Cozad Theater at the museum. Shown to the right are some of the Historical Society "Pioneers" at Sawmill Days. They sure are a rugged-looking group, aren't they?



Way Back When: ROWHS Events August – November-December 2010

NOTE: THESE WERE EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2010 AND NOT 2020

Thursday, December 16, 2010: Our annual Christmas Dinner will be held at the UCLA Conference Center in Lake Arrowhead from 5:00 – 9:00 pm. Cocktails and a general socializing time will be in the Iris Room starting at 5:00. Dinner will commence at 6:30 in the main dining room with induction of the 2011 Board of Directors, awards, and dessert at 8:00. As members, you should have received your invitation by now in the mail. Please come and join us. If you have never attended our annual Christmas Dinner, you will find this to be a beautiful Christmas setting, great company, and wonderful food.

Saturday and Sunday, December 18 and 19, 2010: A Visit With Santa. Bring your children and grandchildren to visit with Old St. Nick himself in his home in the museum. Santa will be talking to children of all ages and making out his list (and checking it twice) of their Christmas wishes. Souvenir folders with pictures of the children with Santa will be available for \$5.00; or, bring your own camera – Santa says he is more interested in seeing the children than making money for the museum. Santa is also willing to visit with those special canine members of your family and says he will pass their wishes on to Santa Dog whom he knows quite well!



Holiday Book and Gift Sale

Even though the History Museum has been closed this year due to the Pandemic, on November 14th and 15th, from 10:00 to 3:00, the Museum's Gift Store will be moving outside to give folks a chance to purchase books and photos on our local Mountain History. Well known historian and author Russ Keller will be available to autograph his recent publications of the Lake Arrowhead and Crestline Milesposts, as will historian and author Rhea Tetley with her series of books on Lake Arrowhead and Crestline.

Other books available for purchase will be Ralph Wagner's "What Is It?", Pauliena LaFuze's "History of the San Bernardino Mountains, as well as Lee Cozad's two volumes on movies filmed in the area, to name just a few of the titles available. So drop by and browse, Holiday gift giving is fast approaching! Historical Society members receive a 10 percent discount on all purchases. Come and buy wonderful books and gifts for your family and friends.

President's Message

Holiday Greetings from the Rim of the World Historical Society. During this difficult time with so many seasonal activities on hold, the Historical Society has also had to cancel its Holiday events due to the Pandemic. Consequently, this has left little to report on in the Historical Society's Wagon Wheel.

As such, it was decided by the Board of Directors to move the Wagon Wheel in a new direction. Rather than report on recent events and the History Museum in Lake Arrowhead, which was unable to open this year, the Wagon Wheel will focus on articles of historic interest to our Membership and the Community. The plan is to allow the Wagon Wheel to evolve into more of a magazine format, which will come out on a quarterly basis. So this is our first issue of the Wagon Wheel's new direction. We hope you find it both informative and fun!

Our best wishes go out to all our members and the Community as we move into the New Year. We look forward to seeing everyone come Spring at our Annual Antique Wooden Boat Show in Lake Arrowhead Village, as well as at our Members Only Pre-Opening Party at the Museum in May.

Till then, may this message find you all in good spirits and good health

Cindy Burnett, Board President

Holiday Book and Gift Sale

November 14th and 15th, we are going to have a Museum Gift Store Sale in front of the museum. Come and buy wonderful books and gifts for your family and friends..

A Brief Look at ROWHS Christmas-Past Holiday Party

We are so sorry that the COVID-19 Virus prevents us from having our yearly Holiday Dinner this year. Hopefully we will be able to return to our usual schedule of fun and interesting events in 2021.

Our Annual Christmas Dinner was ever so much fun and gave all of us a chance to get in the Holiday Spirit and enjoy the company of our fellow members and friends. We always had the incoming Board of Directors sworn in at this Yuletide Dinner.

Below are a couple pictures of these dinners in the "Good Old Days." Note that our newsletter world became more colorful back around 2013.

We look forward to your historical society "rising like a Phoenix from the ashes of 2020".



2005 Board installed at Holiday Dinner



2013 Holiday Dinner with a Renaissance Theme. The 2014 Board was installed.

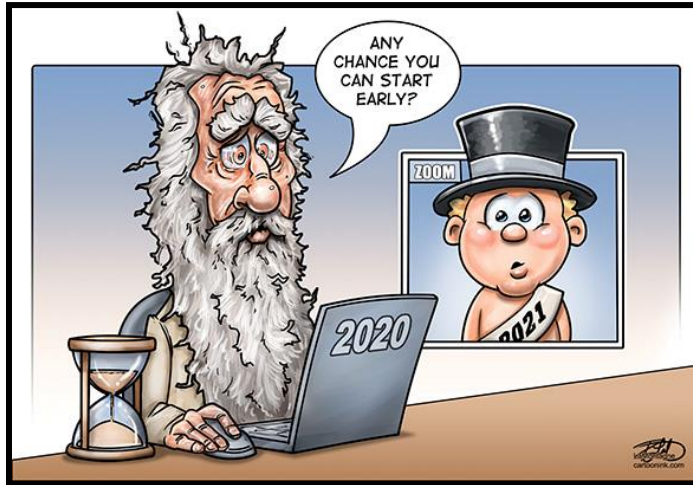
New Members

We welcome the following new members to the Historical Society. We hope to see you at many of our upcoming events so we can get to know you. Welcome aboard.

Emily Reynolds

Devina Horvath

Let us say goodbye to this year and get on to the next.



Rim of the World Historical Society

ROWHS, PO Box 1550, Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352

2020 Officers & Directors

Cindy Burnett, President 909-273-4291
Jinna McBee, First Vice President 909-336-2325
Bill Pumford, Second Vice President 909-338-3544
Greg Naylor, Treasurer 909-337-8210
John Stephens, Assistant Treasurer. 818-231-6528
Ken Brafman, Secretary 909-589-0605
Al Stearns, Director. 909-253-4527
Marilyn Mays, Director 909-485-1153
Duane Banner, Director 909-337-8298
Terry Ebert, Director. 909-337-5174
Sandra Koos, Director. 909-337-5174



RIM *of the* WORLD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY