

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **November 4:** Motorcade Tour
- **November 25 & 26:** Museum Open House
- **December 9:** Annual Holiday Home Tour

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**JOHN DEWITT
MUSEUM**

2116 TAVERN ROAD
ALPINE, CA 91901

Open 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
last weekend of each month

Tom & Judy Myers, Editors
619-885-8063

THANKSGIVING DAY REMEMBERED

Have you ever wondered how the early Alpine residents celebrated Thanksgiving Day? We asked ourselves this question and began to search for the answer in our archives. What we found is a clear indication that in the past 60+ years our annual Thanksgiving Holiday has changed it's character remarkably. This article, based on excerpts from early Alpine newspapers, offers some insight into the ways we celebrated the holiday in the 1950's and 1960's. Has anything changed? We'll let you draw your own conclusions.

Alpine Sun, Thursday, November 20, 1952:

Mr. and Mrs. F.F. Fitzgerald are entertaining the John Presleys, and son John David, Thanksgiving Day. Mrs. Presley is her sister and they own two drug stores in S.D. A 30# turkey will adorn their table.

The Descanso community Children's Choir is presenting a special Thanksgiving musical program with church services the 23rd.

Alpine Sun, Friday, November 19, 1954:

Many families as usual will conduct home services and readings and the more serious descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers will go out into the open, bare their heads, and silently give thanks for the boundless beauty, peace, and comfort of this great nation, 'founded under God'. This is one day

of the year when you should properly display the national colors. Every family should own Old Glory – C.I. (Clark Irvine, publisher)

Florence's Market advertised Thanksgiving Day store hours 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fresh California Turkey Hens 11-13 lbs. for 49 cents per pound, Tom turkey 16-24 lbs. for 45 cents a pound. Cranberry Sauce cans for 49 cents, Simple Simon 8-inch Frozen Pumpkin or Mince Pies 29 cents each, baking yams 2 lbs. for 29 cents and fresh crisp celery 5 cents per pound.

Alpine Echo, Friday, November 20, 1959:

The Candy House placed an advertisement inviting all to: Order Your After Dinner Mints for Thanksgiving. Also, Candy and Nuts.

The Alpine Community Church is offering a Thanksgiving Communion Service on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26, at 11:00 am.

Town and Country News, November 11, 1965:

The Alpine Amigos 4-H Club has announced that they will

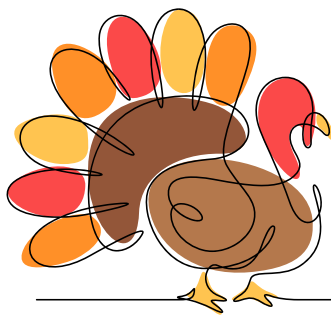
hold their annual Turkey Dinner at Fuller Hall. This special dinner is prepared for all those who might not be able to be with loved ones this year and possibly will have to spend the holiday alone, particularly senior citizens. The dinner is planned for noon at Fuller Hall and it is free to guests. The young ladies and young men will prepare all the food.

Town and Country News, November 25, 1965:

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Webb and family will be spending Thanksgiving holiday with Mrs. Webb's mother, Mrs. Stelia Aiken and her brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. C.L. Thompson and family of Lakeside.

In a column called *Thanksgiving Foods for Thought*, we learn that "Hoity-Toity tables of the 1880's were set with bone dishes – special semi-circular plates in which you placed the turkey bones after you had finished gnawing on them."

The Log Cabin Café advertised: *Thanksgiving Dinner served 12 noon to 10 p.m. Prime Rib, Turkey, Ham.*



Thanksgiving day

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER EVENTS

NOV 4, 2023: Special guests from the Old Spanish Trail (OST) Motorcade tour, sponsored by the Olaf Wieg-horst Museum and Western Heritage Center, are visiting the John DeWitt Museum for docent-led tours on this day. The Old Spanish Trail, aka Historic Highway 80, was completed a century ago, extending coast-to-coast across the USA from San Diego to St. Augustine, FL. This motorcade reenactment will travel a section of the OST between El Cajon and Alpine with a short diversion to visit Sycuan and the Alpine Historical Society.

NOV 25 AND 26, 2023: Our last museum Open House of the year comes right after Thanksgiving. Docents will be on hand to introduce you to the John DeWitt Museum, offer guided tours, and to answer any questions you may have. Exhibits include the Dr. Sophronia Nichols gallery, the Foss Family gallery, Alpine Women, exhibits on bees, popular birds of Alpine, and the historic 1942 GMC Firetruck.

DEC 9, 2023: The Alpine Woman's Club holds their 15th Annual Holiday Home Tour from 10 am to 3 pm. The John DeWitt Museum is one of the sites featured on the tour this year. The historic houses will be decorated with items recalling the pioneer period in Alpine, and refreshments will be served.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

A Big Welcome to Our New Life Members: Warner Recabaren Family

A Warm Welcome to Our New Members: Mr. & Mrs. Charles Sinclair

A Grateful Thank You to Our Renewing Members: Gary & Cathy Swain

Many thanks of appreciation for renewing their Business Membership for 2023: Alpine Chamber

of Commerce, Alpine Woman's Club, Alpine Library Friends Association, DMK Pharmacy

Many thanks to the following for their generous financial donations: Kevin & Alejandra Schumacher, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Sinclair

Many thanks to the following for their donations for our Firetruck Garage: Gay Beauregard, Warner Recabaren Family

RECOGNITION OF OUR CURRENT LIFETIME MEMBERS

Carlette Anderson • Deborah Anderson • George Anderson • Mark L. Anderson
 Franklin R. Ball • David Carey • Lisa & Dave Celeste • Ted Christensen • James H. Cleland
 James David • Rita David • Peggy & Jim Easterling • Beverly Falor • Katie & Brian Ford
 Vincent Fritts • Paul Gonya • Janet M. Harris • Lindy Harshberger • Hilde Hinchcliff
 Leslie Holben • Ken & Denise Hujing • Ben Johnson • Bill & Diane Keltner • Jill & Shawn Killion
 John Krempp • Barbara Lea LaForce • J. Clayburn LaForce • Carylyn Landt
 Joanne & Martin Marugg • Cheryl Minshew • Carol Morrison • Tom & Judy Myers
 Janet & Bill Peyton • Ann & John Pierce • Warner Recabaren & Family • Bob & Carmen Ring
 Kurt Scherbaum • Kevin & Alejandra Schumacher • Albert Simonson
 Donna Sisson • Virginia Sisson • Rodney & Guille Tuttle • Paul & Carol Walker • Joan Waterworth

RECOGNITION OF OUR LIFETIME BUSINESS MEMBERS

Brabazon Alpine Paving and Trucking • Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians
 Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians • RGT Charitable Trust • Rock Canyon Animal Rescue Foundation
 Turvey Granite Pit • Chris Wiley—Primary Residential Mortgage

CURRENT MEMBERSHIPS: Life ~ 51, Complimentary ~ 40, Current ~ 106, Members up for Renewal ~ 17

BEA LA FORCE DAY IS DECEMBER 20TH

In December 1992, The San Diego County Board of Supervisors proclaimed that “December 20 was, and always will be, remembered as *Bea La Force Day in Alpine*”. The proclamation was issued in recognition of her contribution to keeping the history of Alpine alive. Included with the proclamation were a medallion and a plaque honoring her extensive work as an historical playwright, author of Alpine history, and her many years of distinguished service to the Alpine community.

Bea La Force is known to many as the author of *Alpine, History of a Mountain Settlement*, available for purchase at the Alpine Historical Society’s John DeWitt Museum store. She is also a featured person in the Alpine’s Women Exhibit located in the east gallery of the Beaty House.

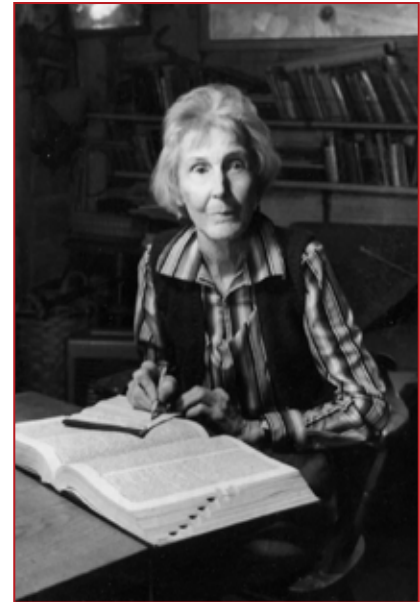
Following are a few highlights from her biography.

Beatrice Maureen La Force (nee Boyd) was born on June 9, 1908, in St Louis, Missouri, the second

of eight children. This large family moved to San Diego during or shortly after the First World War where her father, a master carpenter, found work in the growing city. Beatrice married James Clayburn La Force in 1923 and by 1928 had given birth to Carolyn, Alice, and James Clayburn, Jr .

In 1943, the family moved to Alpine’s *Rancho del Sequan*. While she continued to write and publish plays and short stories, also serving as Alpine’s Librarian, she was a founding member of the *Alpine Historical Society* and formed an organization of local writers, which came to be known as the “Script Teasers,” who met regularly to read and critique their plays.

In the late 1940’s, Beatrice and her husband bought a 40-acre property in Alpine, which they labeled *Sky Mesa*, and began to build a new home, constructed of adzed redwood railway ties from the defunct railroad that ran along the Mexican border from San Diego to Imperial County. They



moved into the unfinished structure after the home at *Rancho del Sequan* burned to the ground in 1950. In a small structure behind the house on *Sky Mesa* (called “The Shack”), she continued writing and publishing plays, children’s books, and *The Alpine History*, among other things, until she passed away in 2004.

Please consider a Memorial Gift to the Alpine Historical and Conservation Society when you are updating your Will or Trust.

A Thanksgiving Poem by Marie Kramer — From the Town and Country News, November 25, 1965:

The Ingredients of Thanksgiving

Sugar and spice and everything nice
That’s what Thanksgiving is made of
Stuffing with rice and smells that entice
That’s what Thanksgiving is made of.

The turkey is roasting and family is boasting
Of mother’s good cooking and baking
Outdoors, the wood-smoke swirls like a great cloak
And calls the leaves that need raking.

Pumpkin and mince pie, cool while small fry
Wait for the time to be tastin’
They’re hard to contain, while their appetites gain
All time spent not eating is wastin’.

A good meal well planned, all together so grand
That’s what Thanksgiving is made of,
A prayer for our land, God’s helping hand.
That’s what Thanksgiving is made of.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WINTER SOLSTICE

WHEN IS THE WINTER SOLSTICE?

The Winter Solstice occurs on December 21 or 22 each year. This year, the Winter solstice occurs at exactly 7:27 p.m. on December 21, 2023.

WHAT IS THE WINTER SOLSTICE?

The Winter Solstice marks the official start of winter. It is the shortest and darkest day of the year. Many cultures think it is the opportune time to shed the past and usher in a hopeful future.

In astronomical terms, it is the moment when the Sun reaches

the Tropic of Capricorn, giving us our shortest day and longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere in terms of daylight hours. Regardless of what the weather is doing outside your window, the solstice marks the official start of winter.

WHAT DOES "SOLSTICE" MEAN?

The term "solstice" comes from the Latin words sol (Sun) and sistere (to stand still) because, during the solstice, the angle between the Sun's rays and the plane of the Earth's equator (called *declination*) appears to stand still.

So, what does that mean, exactly? Upon the winter solstice, the Sun appears at its lowest in the sky, and its noontime elevation seems to stay the same for several days before and after this day. The Sun's gradual decrease in the sky reverses its journey to the winter solstice, marking

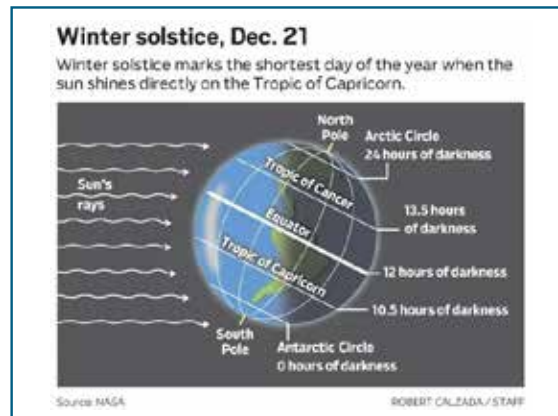
what many cultures believe to be a "rebirth" of the Sun as the hours of daylight become longer.

DID THE KUMEYAAY PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE WINTER SOLSTICE?

To answer this question, we offer the following short article from our local historian, Albert Simonson.

"Many cultures have observed with ceremony the winter solstice on December 21, and local Indians were no exception. As migratory food gatherers, they needed to know when it was time to migrate to distant places to harvest each resource. It was a matter of life or death.

Stone alignments and a dance circle on Viejas Mountain and Cowles Mountain show that the local Kumeyaay people observed the winter solstice. This is the turning of the sun which is probably the origin of diverse festivals of light which have accumulated into the winter holiday season as we know it."



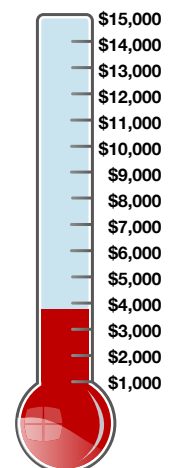
UPDATE: GARAGE NEEDED FOR THE HISTORIC FIRETRUCK

The **1942 GMC FIRETRUCK** shown here originally belonged to the Harbison Canyon Volunteer Fire Department. After it was retired and nearly rusted beyond recognition it was discovered and lovingly restored by Ed Bird and Ron Beidler. Now, in order to buy insurance for the Firetruck, we need to build a garage for it.

Please donate today! Your donation is tax deductible. Make your check payable to the Alpine Historical Society and designate the donation for the Firetruck Garage.



Contributions earn recognition in the *Tattered Tidbits* newsletter and donations of \$1,000 or more are rewarded with a ride in the firetruck (after we build our garage and get our vehicle insured). Please mail your donation to Alpine Historical Society, PO Box 382, Alpine, CA 91903, or bring it to the John DeWitt Museum, located at 2116 Tavern Road, Alpine, CA 91901 during any of our upcoming events. For more information, call Bob Ring at 619-246-7708.



A COVERED WAGON JOURNEY RECALLED

As newsletter editors we often get questions, insights, and interesting stories from across the continent. This story is an example of all three of these things in one simple email that came to us recently. In September, 2023, Brenda wrote:

In Volume 18 number 10, there was an article about my uncles Wayne and Johnny Tobitt along with Mercedes Gehrig who had traveled across country, my uncles in a covered wagon from Tennessee. I actually rode with them some in the summer in Texas on a horse directing traffic around them. In that article it said that Alpine had thrown a potluck supper for them welcoming them and that there would be pictures in the next issue which would be vol 18, No 11. I would so very much like to see and capture images of that newspaper for my Uncle's children and the family in general. Johnny is now on his death bed and it would be wonderful for me

to get this and send the images to the rest of the family.

Alpine must be a wonderful place to live for people in that town to welcome and feed them after such a journey, along with Mercedes Gehrig. I look forward to the possibility that there is a newspaper somewhere from so long ago, where I can glean some Pics and verbiage about them to share. I so appreciate any help you can give me and my family. My Mother was their sister. We all are a pioneering bunch!!!

Thank you so much for any help,

—Brenda

Not sure if we could find the article she mentioned, we searched our *Alpine Sun* archives and found both the original article and the follow-up article in successive issues of the newspaper printed in March 1969. We sent Brenda the pdf's of both issues of the *Alpine Sun*, and here are the articles she was searching for:

From the *Alpine Sun*, Vol. 18, #10:

From the *Alpine Sun*, Vol 18, #11:

PIONEER TRAVELERS WELCOMED

That covered wagon, drawn by a pair of mules and a yoke of oxen, en route from Tullahoma, Tenn., driven by John and Wayne Tobitt, and a pack-horse led by Mercedes Gehrig, with her son Jere and his bride Rosemary, from Denver, stopped overnight at the YC Tuesday, on their way to SD.

Editor Irvine went up Hwy 80 to get their picture, had a brainstorm, for Alpine to welcome them, so phoned Nikki Menconi, asked her to be chairman, which she did beautifully. Result, some 50 persons staged a potluck under the trees at the YC and all had a grand time.

Photos and story of the event will be run next week as it was too late for today's Sun. They left Wednesday morning.

JOLLY TRAVELERS ENJOYED ALPINE

There are the quintet that teamed up at Boulevard, came west together, as they prepared to leave here for SD. From left: Wayne Tobitt, Mercedes Gehrig, John Tobitt, Rosemary and Jere Gehrig.

Jere & Rosemary are newlyweds, drove the camper ahead each day to make camp for his mother.

"Up to Alpine's fine reception," says Mercedes "Pritchett, Colo, had given us the warmest welcome, but when over 50 showed up at your potluck, we voted you the best of all!"



Our story ends with Brenda's response:

I am so happy you found this. I will get that first page printed for the family. Was a quite amazing trip for sure. Again thanks so very

very much!!! Johnny's funeral is Sunday so I will bring these to share.

Thank you!

ALPINE HISTORICAL & CONSERVATION SOCIETY

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Bob Ring

1st Vice President, Programs: Corinne Lewis

2nd Vice President, Membership: Carmen Ring

3rd Vice President, Property: Marty Cochran

Secretary: Barbara McCurtis

Treasurer: Lisa Celeste

Director, Archivist: Carol Morrison

Director, Vintage Autos: Norm Kling

Director: Janet Harris

Newsletter Co-Editors: Tom & Judy Myers

Webmaster: Pene Manale

Caretakers: Baltazar & Laura Marquez

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the *Alpine Historical & Conservation Society* is to encourage the community in an effort to retain structures and sites of historical significance, conserve natural resources and parkland, make available the visible evidence of the history of our community, and develop historical programs which emphasize the contributions of the various cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups that comprise the Alpine area.

Alpine Historical & Conservation Society
PO Box 382
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

Address Service Requested

ALPINE
HISTORICAL &
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

P. O. Box 382
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

619-485-0625

E-mail: info@alpinehistory.org

We're on the Web!
www.alpinehistory.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Street Address/P.O. Box: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Send Newsletters via: E-mail U.S. Mail

Membership Category (Please check one):

- Student \$5 Individual \$25 Nonprofit \$30 Business \$50
 Senior (1) \$15 Family \$35 Nonprofit Life \$600 Business Life \$1,000
 Senior (2) \$20 Life \$500

Amount Enclosed:

Membership \$ _____

Donation \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Museum Open Houses History Day
 Programs & Events Oral Histories
 Exhibit Development Archival Data Entry
 Garden Maintenance Other _____

Please complete this form and include your check made payable to the Alpine Historical Society, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.