

# FAVIM Bulletin

Friends  
of the  
Antelope Valley  
Indian Museum



P.O. Box 1171  
Lancaster, California 93584

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## 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE INDIAN MUSEUM AS A STATE PARK

BY ANNE KITTLITZ, FAVIM HISTORIAN

March 2012 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Indian Museum to the public, on a regular basis, as a State Park. This article highlights the events leading up to this opening. The first opening was on Sunday, March 21, 1982. It was by reservation and the Desert Chapter of the Sierra Club was the first group to tour the museum. Docents were ready to greet the visitors. The weekday tours, usually schools, also began in March.

The museum opening was a long time coming for many reasons. It had been three years since the State had purchased the museum, so why the delay in opening it? After the passage of Legislative Bill AB 2117, the museum was unfunded. At that time, Jim Geary was the High Desert Manager for State Parks, and there were limited staff and funds to spread among the parks in his jurisdiction. Also State Parks have regulations for public facilities. There were many concerns that had to be dealt with before it could open, such as, safety of the building, preservation of artifacts, additional restrooms and access for handicapped were a few. And these all cost money that had not been allocated yet.

Although the State owned the facility, it was not included in any budget. Some local citizens took on the task of organizing an Advisory Committee to do what they could to promote the museum. This group received permission for a limited opening for April 19,

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All of the State Parks could remain open and in good repair if the State of California would spend one penny a year for each person in the state.



Contact CA State Parks to keep AVIM open:  
Email: [calshpo@parks.ca.gov](mailto:calshpo@parks.ca.gov)  
or call 916-445-7000

[http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=24545](http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24545)

20 and 26, 27, and May 3, 4, 1980. The opening received a lot of publicity, and the museum was staffed by the Indian Museum Advisory Committee members. The first day this opening included a reception for Grace Oliver and others who worked so hard to save the Museum. The six days of museum open house tours received overwhelming community support with 6,186 guests and \$11,000 raised by the Advisory Committee.



Antelope Valley Indian Museum view from south

But after this special opening, there were still no operating funds available or funds to hire interpreters. So it was decided to staff the

museum with volunteers. On Oct. 17th 1981, a volunteer class was started. They met in Kachina Hall, the table was moved and seats set up for a large class of over 30 people, made up of many AAUW members and other interested citizens. They met over a five month period, Oct. 1981 to Feb. 1982. The instructors were Beryl Amspoker who taught the history of the museum, Roger Robinson, anthropologist at AV College, instructed on the history of the local Indians, and Dick Edwards from State Parks helped in interpretation of the artifacts. Edwards was very encouraging when he said, "You frankly have a tremendous facility here for interpretation. ... It's overwhelming".



Grace Oliver at AVIM Docent Training in 1981

As you can imagine many things had to be worked out such as logistics for conducting school and adult groups through the museum, how many children could safely be taken on a tour, etc. But after much study, work and practice, the 27 docents were ready and tours of the museum began in March 1982. By June, when the museum closed for the summer, docents had led 80 museum tours and over 1,200 guests had visited the museum. The

open house tours had a more modest beginning, but eventually the museum was open to the public every weekend. And the people of the Antelope Valley have been a huge support over these last 30 years.



#### HOLIDAYS ON THE HOMESTEAD

BY PEGGY RONNING, AVIM CURATOR

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, the first annual Holidays on the Homestead event was held at the museum. This event focused on the museum's history as a homestead and dude ranch and the holiday traditions practiced by the museum founders. According to Elaine Fetterman, H. A. Edwards' granddaughter, her grandmother Rose Edwards was famous for her holiday chili and cornbread. Rose decorated with natural greenery. According to Debbie Devorac, grandniece of Bernard and Harriet Feurer who operated the Golden Mesa Dude Ranch, Harriet Feurer loved decorating for the holidays.

State Parks interpreter Jean Rhyne was the mastermind behind the event. She shepherded the event from idea, through research, to implementation in only 1½ months. She did an outstanding job.

The Holidays on the Homestead event recognized H. A. Edwards' artistic background with a holiday-themed craft boutique. Nine crafters participated, including: Meredith Hergenracher, Janice Yelland, Michael Chas Williams, Pascal Casey, Tina Jenkins, Cecelia Begay, Sandy Huszar, Paula DeGrace, and Tracy Alden.

The event included a chili cook-off in recognition of Rose Edwards. Contestants included: the Lake Los Angeles Fire Station, Tina Jenkins, John Adolph, Rick Reisenhofer, and Jerry Weatherman. Tehachapi District superintendent Kathy Weatherman judged the competition. John Adolph was thrilled to take home first place and a gift certificate for the museum Gift Shop. Fire House Chili was second



Volunteers Decorating AVIM for Holidays at Homestead



Homestead Craft Boutique - Joshua Cottage



Jean Rhyne, State Park Interpreter, welcomes Visitors



Secretary Darrell Walters with Visitors in Museum



Michael Tcherkassky, "The Saddle Serenader"



Cool, Windy, Fun Day chatting with Park Interpreters



KTPI 97.7 FM Big D & Bubba Covering the Events



Evening serenade at the campfire.



Lemon Leaf Restaurant Provided Cornbread for Event

place, and Tina Jenkins' Hawaiian Chili was third. The Lemon Leaf restaurant and FAVIM board members Don Borchers and Betsy Matheny donated cornbread for visitors to enjoy with their chili.

Jean and museum volunteers paid homage to Harriet Feurer's holiday spirit by decorating Joshua Cottage and the museum grounds. Cowboy singer Michael Tcherkassky, known as "The Saddle Serenader", provided additional dude ranch ambience.

Despite cool weather and occasional light rain, he performed outside all evening by a blazing bonfire. Jean provided a walking tour of the historic grounds focusing on the museum's construction history. Local country music station KUPI sent their van to support the event.

Fifty-three people attended the event, which raised \$288.66 for FAVIM. Everyone had a great time, so mark your calendars and join us at Holidays on the Homestead next year.



Just one more trip to the Boutique. Join us next year for Holidays on the Homestead!



**VISITING ARTIST PROGRAM RETURNS**  
**BY PEGGY RONNING, AVIM CURATOR**

The museum has restarted the visiting artist program. We hope to have a different artist demonstrate their work at the museum each month. Our first artists were Raven and John Rivera. They demonstrated their beadwork in Kachina Hall on February 11<sup>th</sup>. Their

friends Edward Fresquez and Lorelei "Snow Feather" Wolf joined them. John also performed on his flute while Edward Fresquez accompanied him with song and drum.



Artist, Musician, Dancer John Rivera with Flute

Raven Magpie Rivera is from the Cheyenne and Sioux Nations. Her father George Magpie is a member of the Southern Cheyenne of Oklahoma. Her mother, Rachel Strange Owl Magpie, is a member of the Northern Cheyenne of Lane Deer, Montana, and is a fluent speaker of the Cheyenne language. Among their many honors, Raven's family is "Keeper of the Cheyenne Buffalo Medicine Hat". Raven is a creative jewelry maker and is particularly noted for her beadwork.

John Rivera is a descendant of the Chiricahua Apache, Jicarilla Apache, Pueblo, and Navajo. In addition to his jewelry, he makes his own regalia. He is a Vietnam Veteran and works for the United States Forest Service in Angeles National Forest.

Thanks to an AV Press article and word of mouth, the museum was busy all day. A total of 74 people turned out to see John and Raven.



John & Raven Rivera, FAVIM Members, Treasurer Betsy Matheny & President Don Borchers



**NEW FAVIM BOARD MEMBER – LYNN DUPRATT**



Lynn DuPratt, New FAVIM Board Member

I was born in Bakersfield and moved to Lancaster in 1950, a few months before my second birthday.

I attended local schools: Park View, Antelope Valley High School and Antelope Valley College. I graduated from California State University, Northridge, with a bachelor's degree in English.

My employment history includes working for many years in my father's business, Desert News Company, a wholesale magazine agency and working as a receptionist in the office of a psychiatrist and psychologist. My true career was nearly 28 years with the Antelope Valley

Press, where I started as a reporter-photographer and was associate managing editor when I retired in Jan. 2007.

I was married for 21 years to James V. DuPratt Jr., from 1976 until his death in 1997. James was an English and journalism teacher at Quartz Hill High School and served for 12 years on the Antelope Valley College Board of Trustees. We did not have children.

My hobbies and interests include photography, gardening, travel, reading and volunteer work. I began volunteering at the Antelope Valley Indian Museum in 2011. I have volunteered at the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve since 2008, and I am secretary of the Poppy Reserve/Mojave Desert Interpretative Association board. I also serve on the Save Saddleback Committee. I serve on the board of directors of the Antelope Valley College Foundation and was on the Lancaster Community Shelter Board of Supporters until it was disbanded in 2011.



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**FAVIM**

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

<http://www.avim.parks.ca.gov>

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**Your membership is important!**

FAVIM raises funds to support projects and activities at the Antelope Valley Indian Museum. Membership needs to be renewed each September, except in the case of a Life Membership.

Please make membership checks payable to "Friends of the Antelope Valley Indian Museum" (or "FAVIM"), and mail to the return address at the left of this page.

If you are not yet a member, and would like to support the Museum, and receive a quarterly FAVIM Bulletin, and a 10% Discount of AVIM Gift Shop purchases, please send your name, address, and check payable to "Friends of the Antelope Valley Indian Museum" (or "FAVIM"). Mail to the return address at the left of this page.

**Dues:**

Individual	\$ 15	Organization	\$ 35
Family	\$ 20	Patron	\$ 50
Life	\$ 200		

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Friends of the Antelope Valley

**Indian Museum**

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