

In this issue: The Blue Angels (seen here flying upside-down) are coming to China Lake!



East Kern

January 2017

Visions

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Inside this issue

Wildflowers aplenty this spring	3
Robber's Roost to get a jolt	4
30 years since Voyager	6
Petroglyph tours coming soon	7
Blue Angels to soar over IWV	10
Whiskey Flat Days in February	14



On the cover: The Blue Angels are coming to China Lake — Page 10



DAILY INDEPENDENT FILE PHOTO

Last year's wildflower bloom turned the upper Mojave Desert into a cornucopia of colors, as this view of Death Valley shows. This year should be even better with the large amount of rain the area has seen.

January showers make a great wildflower show

BY ELAINE WILEY
For the *Daily Independent*

Due to the amount of rain the Indian Wells Valley has received in January, we hope to have a spectacular wildflower showing in the valley and canyons this spring! Even though it is illegal to pick wildflowers, a special permit is given to collectors to pick wildflowers specifically for the Wildflower Exhibit held at the Maturango Museum. After collection, these wildflowers are identified and displayed by family. Most years, approximately 200 different species are displayed representing 45 different families. This exhibit allows the public to see the variety and uniqueness of wildflowers that grow in our valley and in the watershed areas surrounding the Indian Wells Valley.

The 2017 Wildflower Exhibit at the Maturango Museum will be Friday, March 31, through Sunday, April 2. Hours will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. We have a special speaker, Joy England, who will give a presentation at the Maturango Museum on her research at Rock Creek. Rock Creek is located between Bishop and Mammoth Lakes on Highway 395.

Day trips to spectacular wildflower areas will be scheduled during the weekend of the Wildflower Exhibit, and the Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert will be sponsoring a photo contest of wildflowers in conjunction with the exhibit. We also hope to have members of the Desert Art League painting some of the specimens during the exhibit. This will be a colorful and eventful weekend, and we are always hopeful that Mother Nature will provide a surprise flower or two that hasn't been seen for a while!



DAILY INDEPENDENT FILE PHOTO

An example of the abundant wildflower life one can expect to see this spring.

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Robber's Roost: Charging into the future

BY JACK BARNWELL
The Daily Independent

A Highway 14 roadside stop and ghost town just south of Inyokern will be bustling with activity as it gets a facelift and new additions.

Robber's Roost Ranch will become full of life again, according to owner Jon Knutson. That includes a small restaurant currently under construction, an expansion of its services, and in 2018, two universal electric vehicle charging stations courtesy of ChargePoint.

"We want to offer RV parking, eventually put in a gas station, expand the ghost town and improve on upon it," a decked-out, dressed-up Knutson said Wednesday. "We added two new bathrooms and the restaurant will offer pizzas, hamburgers, and sandwiches."

Electrical charging stations

The electrical stations are one of the big things, according to Knutson.

"It's real important because everyone needs to go green a little bit more, and it helps out when you're on electric and have to go a long way," Knutson said.

"It helps me out because of the advertising that pops up on a screen, and it helps the driver who might be going to Mammoth."

The electric stations are part a grant program by ChargePoint, a company that develops universal charging stations.

According to Munni Krishna, project manager for business development, the California Energy Commission award-



JACK BARNWELL/DAILY INDEPENDENT

Mike Crew, left, Robber's Roost Ranch owner John Knutson, ChargePoint's Munni Krishna, Robber's Roost Ranch store manager David Lewis, Erin Lewis and J.R. Coleman stand for a picture outside Robber's Roost Ranch Jan. 18. Thanks to a California Energy Commission grant, ChargePoint selected the ranch and ghost town as a location for two electric vehicle charging stations, to be built in 2018.

ed ChargePoint and partners a matching grant to build 70 stations in California, three of them on the Highway

14 corridor. The CEC originally funded 16 sites in 2016 for \$3.74 million, and provided an additional \$9.27 million for 54 sites in December.

"We're the world's largest and most open network of charging locations," Krishna said. "Our stations serve every car universally, even a Tesla."

Krishna was on hand to sign the final grant paperwork Wednesday to much fanfare from owner and employees alike.

"Jon's property was one of the locations that won the grant," Krishna said. "We try our best to always work with local business owners as these are a big point of economic development. The energy commission was looking to expand EV charging to outside just metro

areas."

That opens up the opportunity for road trips.

"Jon's property is in a great location, right off the highway, great amenities, clean bathrooms, good lighting," Krishna said. "We do something called the 'mom test.' Would you want your mom there at 2 o'clock in the morning? This is a place that felt safe and comfortable to walk around."

The units are 50-kilowatt direct-current (DC) fast charging units that create an open network. While Tesla pioneered the consumer-based electric vehicle, other car manufacturers have quickly jumped in. More than 542,000 EVs are on the road in North America, 235,000 registered in California.

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One fast-charging station will be installed in front of Robber's Roost Ranch, as well as a level-two station "for people who want to stay a little bit longer on the property and look around." The fast-charge station averages 30 minutes to "top off," while the level-two station typically takes two or three hours, depending on the electrical charge left in the vehicle's battery.

Bringing life to the small ghost town

Robber's Roost Ranch, which gets its name from the nearby Robbers Roost rock formation, will also be revitalized, according to manager David Lewis, starting with the restaurant. The small space, adjacent to the minimart, will offer a place to eat and drink.

Another plan includes putting in a fishing spot.

"We have a fishing lake we are putting in the back," Lewis said. "We're going to put proto-cabins around it, with RV pads in the back, so you can bring your RV up here and fish. You'll have a bar on site, a restaurant on site, a store on site, you can fish and you have a motorcycle repair shop for OHV equipment."

The idea is to offer fun for both children and adults. While the youngsters are out on the dirt, parents might be able to kick back and relax. Lewis said another goal includes providing an electronic tracking system in case of emergencies.

"If someone falls down and gets hurts or has a wreck, we can go after them or call in air support if it's severe," Lewis said. "It's a safety feature for the adults who bring their kids up."

The ranch currently offers amenities like an OHV area, motorcycle repair, a rock shop, and a jewelry shop with locally-made merchandise.

Lewis expressed optimism for the expansion plans.

"We want Robber's Roost Ranch to keep growing, and we are going to keep growing regardless," Lewis said.

Knutson, the owner, bought the ranch three years ago.

"I like the history here," he said. "I used to pass by here and a buddy told me the old owners were going to sell it, so I went ahead and purchased it."

He noted the importance the Robber's Roost Ranch and places like it.

"People get tired, need to use the bathroom and want to get their kids a soda or snack or something," Knutson said. "You'd have to go six miles and into Inyokern."

In those three years, changes were already made. The mini-mart was previously an antique store and given a face lift, while keeping a mom-and-pop general store feel to it. The ghost town portion was spruced up.

Lewis expanded on the ranch area's history, noting it went back to the days of the stagecoach wagons. The area was always a waystation in some form or another, though not always safe.

The Robbers Roost formation was used by a bandit gang led by Tiburcio Vasquez to scout for wagons to rob. Vasquez conducted a number of holdups in 1874 from Coyote Hole, a rock formation near the current intersection of Highways 178 and 14.

"Stagecoaches would stop here, and he would ride down and rob them," Lewis said. "He would then ride back up and see which way the posse was coming from so he could bug out the other way."

Vasquez was hanged in San Jose in 1875.

Sidney and Violet Armistead homesteaded the area in 1929, which included a roadside inn and a gas station.

"In the '20s you would come through here, and when the top speed of a car is 35 miles an hour, this drive was really long," Lewis said. "People would stop here, fill up their car, sleep here for the night and continue on their way."

He added the cabins were given a rustic feel up and the ghost town built up. One goal is to host Halloween parties in the future.

Expanding the ranch portion is also in the plan. Chickens and pigs are already part of the attraction, and cattle will be introduced. Lewis said the previous ones were slaughtered last year and eaten.

"We hope to have horses this spring," he said. "We're growing the ranch portion of the business as we are growing the business part of the ranch."

That might include serving food that is produced locally. "I would like as much of our food to be stuff we bring in from the farm — it's local, natural and organic," Lewis said. "If you sit down here, you'll have a fresh egg — and I mean an egg fresh that morning



JACK BARNWELL/DAILY INDEPENDENT

Robber's Roost Ranch owner Jon Knutson, center, and ChargePoint's Munni Krishna finalize paperwork to allow for construction of two electric vehicle charging stations, as store manager David Lewis, left, looks on.

— and that's something a lot of restaurants aren't able to offer right now."

In short, an authentic ranch feeling.

"When you come into the environment and step outside the city, you're stepping back into the Wild West," he said.

Those plans include possibly a ranch day, especially for kids with the Kern Regional Center and those with autism.

Knutson also owns Golden Valley Supportive Services in Bakersfield, which works with developmentally disabled people.

"What we want to do is bus them up and get them out of the hustle and bustle of the city, and be able to pan for gold, check out the animals and have a day on the ranch," Lewis said. "When they go home, they can take that experience with them. It's something we can do to touch the community."

The business expansion would be a way to help offset the costs for that outreach service.

For the OHV portion of its business, Robber's Roost Ranch would provide guide markers for the trail network.

"We get a lot of business from OHVers as far away as Powerline Road, near as far the brewery," he said. Maps would be on the ranch's fliers to "so that they can follow the trails that they are on without ever touching pavement."

"The whole idea is you're out there riding your bike and you don't want to be riding on the highway," Lewis said. "You want to be able to have fun on your way here."

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Celebrating 30 years since Voyager flight

BY KANE WICKHAM
Mojave Desert News

On the last day of 2016 on campus at Mojave Air and Space Port, the 30th Anniversary Banquet was held to honor the 1986 Voyager flight non-stop un-refueled around the world and the men (and woman) who did it.

Many know the story of how American design genius Burt Rutan and his steel-nerved brother Colonel Dick Rutan built a basically homemade plane out of the lightest material they could find with the express intent of capturing the last first — the only unachieved record left in aviation — to fly around the world without re-fueling at all. Many had tried and succeeded in circumnavigating the globe, such as Howard Hughes, or Charles Lindbergh, or even Wiley Post, and their exploits were long ago even when the Rutan Brothers and Jeana Yeager set to their challenge in the 1980s.

Seeking funding for their project and yet being very specific about what they would allow on their plane, the Rutan Brothers turned down some \$2 million in cigarette company money to put the brand on their plane when they flew it due to a vehement disliking for smoking by both brothers and their crew as well.

So many details and anecdotes of the flight have been recounted over the years since the successful flight and its aftermath, much of which is not good for the brothers, who quickly found themselves the darlings of Hollywood and the media, only to be treated badly



A packed house at the Stu Witt Center for the Voyager 30th Anniversary Banquet at Mojave Air and Space Port.

KANE WICKHAM/MOJAVE DESERT NEWS

by all leaving them with a bitter taste in their mouth. Even donating the plane to the Smithsonian came with disappointments, as once the plane was in its possession, the museum felt

it could do whatever it pleased with the generously donated piece of American aviation history, also causing undue heartache for the brothers.

In the end Dick Rutan on a visit to see the plane again said to himself the final chapter in the Voyager Legacy, that being, "We built that plane and flew it around the world non-stop and no son of a b— can take that away from us." True words from a man whose courage is inestimable.

The evening started out with a social at 5 p.m. when VIPs of all stripes packed into the Stu Witt Event Center. Stu Witt himself was on hand for the evening, as were Supervisor Zack Scrivner, much of the extended Rutan family from all over the country, as well as many a famous pilot and/or as-

tronaut. Of course American astronaut Mike Melville was on hand as part of the stage show that the three have perhaps unconsciously developed, but which sheds humor, light and truth onto the actual events as they played out back in 1986. The three entertained the crowd for some time with anecdote after anecdote, adding in some from guests in attendance as well who also helped with the historic record setting flight, which to this day has never been matched.

It was a truly memorable evening for any and all who took the time to capture some amazing American history as actually lived by the Rutan Brothers, Jeana Yeager (no relation) and the entire crew of the 1986 Voyager flight.

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Susan & Diane

Time to sign up for this year's petroglyph tours

BY AARON CRUTCHFIELD
For the *Daily Independent*

With a new year comes a new season of petroglyph tours, and the dates they'll be available will be posted very soon.

"We post the dates online at our website at www.maturango.org about the first of February for the spring tour season, and about the first of August for the fall tour season," said Linda Saholt, Maturango Museum Petroglyph Tour Coordinator. "The faster you get the paperwork completed and returned by email, FAX or U.S. mail, the faster I can get you signed up. Tours are limited to 20 people each and fill up quickly."

The tours take visitors onto Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, far past the main gate, to Little Petroglyph Canyon. That site contains many thousands of ancient Native American petroglyphs, drawings on the rocks that have a story to tell. Not only is this the largest single collection of petroglyphs left, it's also amazingly well preserved — a benefit of being located far into a secure military base, since some vandal can't sneak into the canyon in the middle of the night with a hammer or some spray paint.

"I personally feel a sense of spiritual energy every time I go to Little Petroglyph Canyon," Saholt said. "There are an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 glyphs in that canyon — so many are so old and weathered away, all you can see are the faintest traces; others have been carved into the rock over the top of older ones, so an accurate count is impossible. No matter which set of experts you listen to, those glyphs were made hundreds to thousands of years ago, and are priceless works of art in and of themselves. No one knows who created the designs or what they meant to the makers; the best we can

do is admire, marvel, wonder, and let the art speak directly to us on a visceral level. No one has ever been able to accurately put the feeling into words — and there is a certain delight in knowing that mysterious places still exist in this fast-paced, glass-and-concrete world."

The tours allow visitors to hike into the canyon and take in the sights.

"Sometimes it's really nice to just take a break and sit on a handy rock, breathe in and out, and listen to the quiet," Saholt said. "The glyphs will speak to you wordlessly. This is a great place to meditate for a few minutes every so often, in between the hiking and discovery stages. I recommend bringing a camera with lots of capacity, and extra batteries. The canyon itself is like a rip in Mother Earth's skin, in a volcanic area, so it looks toasted from the air. I'm told that 'Coso' means fire. In that narrow canyon, the light changes are dramatic — some designs can only be seen in certain light, and virtually not at all when the light changes. People who have been going to the canyon for 50 to 60 years say they see something they didn't remember seeing before, every time they go there. I've only been there about 30 times, and I know that's true. It's an amazing



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY JOURNALIST SENIOR CHIEF JON E. MCMILLAN
More than 250,000 pre-historic rock art petroglyph drawings can be found at the Coso Rock Art National Historic Landmark in the Mojave Desert, located on 36,000 acres at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, California.

place, and I love being able to help people go there and discover the wonders for themselves."

Because supply is low and demand is high, and because the tours are located on an active Navy base, one does not simply walk into the museum the day of the tour and get a seat.

Two forms must be filled out ahead of time to get access to the base; both forms are available for download at www.maturango.org.

"Obviously, the sooner you get your application in, the greater the likelihood you'll get the date you want," Saholt said. "If you have a group of folks

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coming, the earlier you get the paperwork in, the better chance of having your group go all together. Check out our website, under 'Petroglyph tours,' and read up — we also have an online store, where there are several excellent books and DVDs specific to the Coso petroglyphs. You might be interested in reading ahead. Also, try typing 'Coso petroglyphs' into your web browser and see what comes up."

Once the dates go online, the list is updated frequently, so potential visitors can see a fairly current list of how many spaces are left on each tour date.

For the latest information, email petro@maturango.org or call Saholt at 760-375-6900.

DAILY INDEPENDENT
FILE PHOTO

This is just some of what one sees during a petroglyph tour.





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Visitors participate in a past tour of Little Petroglyph Canyon. The tours for this year will soon be posted to the Maturango Museum's website.

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Blue Angels to visit for first time in 25 years

BY JACK BARNWELL
The Daily Independent

The Navy's Blue Angels are coming to China Lake, with their first show in the Indian Wells Valley since 1994 scheduled for March 18 and 19.

The preliminary schedule shows the gates opening at 9 a.m., with flying starting at noon and ending at 4:30 p.m., and the gates close at 5 p.m. In addition to the Blue Angels, other performances include Spencer Suderman Pitts in his S-2B, Jacquie B in her Extra 300 monoplane, Dan Buchanan in his hang glider, and Anna Serbinenko.

General admission and parking are free, but premium and VIP seats are also available on the flight line for \$25 per adults and children 4-12 (children 3 years old sitting on laps do not require a ticket). Tickets from the Flight Line Club are considered the best seats in the house but come at a premium cost of \$125 for adults and \$75 for children ages 4-12.

For more information and updates, visit chinalakeairshow.com.

In anticipation of the March show, an advance team came Jan. 9 for a site visit and to speak with community members and media.

Lt. Dave Steppe, events coordinator, and Lt. Brandon Hempler, the Blue Angels' narrator, took time to answer questions and give a synopsis of the upcoming show.

"We are extremely proud to come out to China Lake," Steppe said. "It's an amazing area down here in Southern and Central California."

Steppe noted the airfield at China Lake will be conducive to the March 18-19 show.

The Blue Angels are made up of Navy and Marine Corps pilots.

The squadron's mission "is to showcase



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS
DANIEL M. YOUNG

U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, Delta pilots perform the Maneuvering Delta at the Sea and Sky Spectacular 2016 in Jacksonville, Florida. The Blue Angels are scheduled to make a stop at China Lake for the first time since 1992 this March.



U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, conduct a training flight over El Centro, Calif., in January 2017. Blue Angels pilots will complete 120 practice flights before kicking off the 2017 air show season.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 1ST CLASS DANIEL M. YOUNG

the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps by inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach.”

Steppe noted it will be great to start its season. The first show of the season will be the Naval Air Field El Centro annual air show on March 11. China Lake will be its next stop.

“This will be our first show on the road,” Steppe said.

Hempler noted that the show will feature the Blue Angels signature style of flying tight formations in F/A-18 fighters. However, the air show remains only

one element of Blue Angels’ visit in March.

“Our mission is to come out here to not only show our pride, fresh look and professionalism of the U.S. Navy through out flight demonstration but also inspire the community, especially the youth toward a culture of excellence,” Hempler said.

The Blue Angels were first established in 1946 as a vision by then-Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Chester Nimitz to create a flight exhibition team. The Blue Angels team of that era flew maneuvers in F6 Hellcat, F8 Bearcat and F9 Panther. In the 1950s it was the F9 Cougar and F-11 Tiger; the 1960s saw performances in the F-4 Phantom, and by 1974 made

the move to the A-4 Skyhawk. In 1986, the Blue Angels unveiled the F/A-18 Hornet, which they use to this day.

The Blue Angels include a team of 17 officers in flight and support roles and 100 enlisted Sailors and Marines who act as the support crew. Crews of 45 members alternate between each show site.

Members of the Blue Angels are considered ambassadors of goodwill for the Navy.

Hempler and Steppe noted they were both blessed to fly with the Blue Angels.

“There are a lot of Sailors, Marines and pilots who would love to be part of the team, and we get the



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS DANIEL M. YOUNG

U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, Delta pilots perform the Delta Break Out at the Sea and Sky Spectacular 2016 in Jacksonville, Florida.

unique privilege of being part of that,” Hempler said. “It’s a lot like applying for a job: you have to have a lot of references, a good name in the fleet and all that comes with a great responsibility when you join the team.”

Hempler added, “it’s been a dream of

both ours to fly for the Navy since we were little.”

Steppe added it’s a “humbling experience” to fly with the Blue Angels.

Both are still in their first year serving on the Blue Angels team, but Hempler noted the flight team strives

for excellence, watching videos to continually get better.

Steppe described flying in an F/A-18 much like a roller coaster.

“The way the jets perform, it’s an awesome experience,” Steppe said.

Hempler agreed, adding, “I usually can’t wait to get up the ladder and strapped in. It’s like a sports car times a hundred. It’s a fun airplane to fly.”

Hempler said one of the signature performances, the Diamond Formation executed by Pilots 1-4, fly at a wing tip to canopy separation of 18 inches.

All maneuvers demonstrate what the Navy and Marine aircraft are capable of doing, Hempler added.

“The public loves the roar of fighter jets and knows what they are capable of doing and that they are out there doing our work for our country,” Hempler said.

Many shows draw about 50,000 to 100,000 people. Around 60,000 people are expected for the China Lake show.

Steppe said coordination of the event began in December.

“By the time March rolls around, we have all the logistics set,” Steppe said.

Capt. Paul Dale, commanding officer of Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, described the anticipation for the airshow as exciting.

“To have a demonstration team here of their caliber and the other acts alongside that [is exciting],” Dale said. “One of the points to emphasize is that the theme of this airshow is celebrating nearly three-quarters of a century of research, development, acquisition, test and evaluation. We get to demonstrate what the Blue Angels do, but also the excellence that is produced on

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U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, Diamond pilots perform the Echelon Parade maneuver at the Sioux Falls Airshow, Power on the Prairie, in July 2016.

this base in terms of providing for the national security of this nation.”

Those will come in the form of static displays and tours, as well as different

booths related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

“That you have 6,000 people working on this base with a common goal of

working for providing for national security is absolutely phenomenal,” Dale said.

Dale said that he’s seen the Blue Angels perform while at different duty stations, but recalled when he was a child attending a show in St. Cloud, Minn.

“We went an alternate route with some family members and came in through the woods outside the field ... there was a portion of the show where a jet flew over us at very low altitude

and we had no idea it was coming at us,” Dale said. “To this day I will remember the noise and vibration of the jet flying right over us.”

Dale also stressed his role as commanding officer is to ensure the base puts on a safe and secure air show. Procedures will be in place to make sure that occurs, including restrictions on what people can bring on the base, vehicles and locations that will be labeled off limits.

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Blue Angels team members Lt. Dave Steppe, left, and Lt. Brandon Hempler highlight the upcoming air show during a meet-and-greet session Jan. 9.

JACK BARNWELL/DAILY INDEPENDENT

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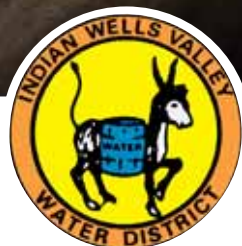
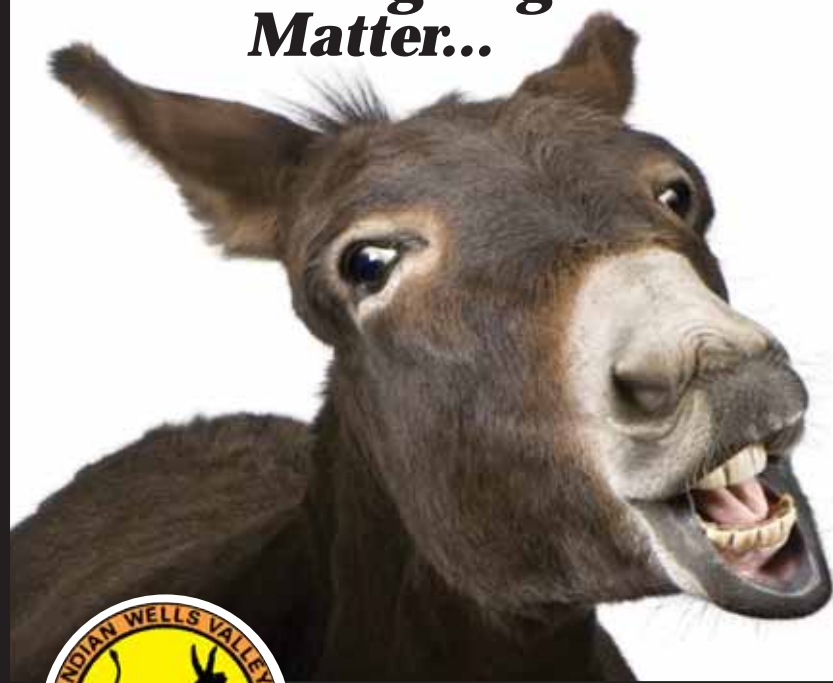
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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Whiskey Flat Days have been happening for 60 years, and the Whiskey Flat Encampment was started by Director Mike Woodward, above, 15 years ago so people could experience living history in first person.

It's No Laughing Matter...



Conserve Water!

Kernville goes back to Whiskey Flat for the 60th time

The Whiskey Flat Days event is back, and one facet of the event is the encampment taking visitors back through time starting on Feb. 17 and continuing on until Feb. 20 in the sleepy little town of Kernville.

"The encampment started 15 years ago," said Whiskey Flat Encampment Director Mike Woodward. "We wanted to bring the history back Kern River Valley. We create the environment when people arrive they stepped back 150 years experiencing living history in first person."

This year, the diamond jubilee celebration, marks 60 years of celebrating the rich history of the area, from the Native Americans, Civil War reenactments, cattle ranchers and trappers, to the miners who had high hopes of striking it rich in the Big Blue Gold Mine in the Southern Sierra Nevada on the Kern River.

Imagine being a part, or just observing how Kernville was once a booming mining town set in a 40-acre parcel of land on the Scodie across from the Rodeo Grounds down by the river. The participants will experience four days of sleeping in a tent, eating out of a chuck wagon, and gathering around the camp fire at night, all of which enhances the living history experience.

Over President's Day weekend, Kernville reverts to its old namesake "Whiskey Flat," which originated back in 1860 when alcohol was not allowed at the mine site. According to the Facebook page of the Kernville Chamber of Commerce Facebook, which is hosting the event, an industrious fellow threw a plank across a couple of whiskey barrels down on the flat south of the mine, hence the name



SUBMITTED PHOTO

As part of Whiskey Flat Days event there is a costume contest in town near the drugstore. Pictured from a past event are Erin, Zach, Mason and Cammie Woodward as they show off their period costumes.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A group of reenactors pose for a classic black and white photo at 2015's Whiskey Flat encampment.

of Whiskey Flat.

There will be all sorts of things to see and do aside from the encampment, including a parade, Wild West Daze Rodeo, carnival rides, frog jumping contests, Valentines Dance, Whiskey Flat Mayor Contest, gunfighting skits, melodrams, and all sorts of activities for children.

There will be numerous food and craft booths to meet the public's appetites along with a art show too. There is something for everyone.

Blue Grass and Country Western music sets the tone to days gone by.

As part of the encampment they have an Indian village, Civil War Confederate camp, mountain man village, and cowboy encampment. The miners' camp includes an old sawmill and a mine complete with tracks coming out of it.

"This event is all interactive with the public so they really get a feel of the history," said Woodward.

Reenactors come from all parts of California, and one group that participates every year is the Old West Mounted Lawmen's Association (OWMLA) members from Ridgecrest. Through out the event, these US Marshals will keep law and order in the encampment and take care of any bad guys in the area.

These gunslinging lawmen take their roles seriously and they fashion themselves in the Wyatt Earp style of dress: double-breasted vests and custom boots with classic hand-stitched cathedral patterns making each pair of boots one-of-a-kind.

Doug Lueck, who wears badge number 25, shared the history of how OWMLA was founded back in 2000 by James T. Murphy, a man who dedicated his life to law enforcement combined his interest in both the old west and law enforcement to make up this unique organization. Currently there are only 66 badges issued within the group and part of the criteria is members had to have been in law enforcement at one time of their life.

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