Apple pie and milk. It was possibly the last meal for legendary actor James Dean at Tip’s Restaurant in Castaic Junction on September 30, 1955, just hours before his young life came to an end in a tragic auto accident near Paso Robles, California. Dean began his movie career in 1954, and had just completed his third movie “Giant” when he met his untimely end. In spite of his short career, he remains one of the most popular actors in Hollywood history.

James Dean was born February 8, 1931 in Marion, Indiana. He attended high school in Fairmount, Indiana. After graduating in 1949 he moved out to California where he majored in pre-law at Santa Monica College, and then drama at UCLA (much to the chagrin of his father). He began pursuing his acting career full time in 1951. Between 1951 and 1954 he appeared in various television programs with limited success, but it was his role as a North African house boy in the theater production of “Bachir” in 1954 that got him attention from Hollywood movie makers.

In 1954 Dean was cast in the first of the three films that brought him into the realm of Hollywood immortality. Elia Kazan, director of “East of Eden” (based on John Steinbeck’s 1952 novel) was looking for a Brando-like actor to play the role of the rebel son of a disapproving father (played by Raymond Massey). Dean, still a relative unknown, was recommended for the role and, with the enthusiastic endorsement of Steinbeck himself, quickly established himself as Hollywood’s rebel loner, much to the delight of a vast teenage audience. For his role in “East of Eden”, he would later be the recipient of the first posthumous Best Actor nomination in Hollywood history.

Continued on Page 2
President's Message

Continued from page 1

“East of Eden” was quickly followed by his ultimate legendary role as a rebellious and misunderstood high school student in “Rebel Without a Cause”. The film also featured young talents Natalie Wood and Sal Mineo and included a now-famous scene shot outside the Griffith Observatory. “Rebel Without a Cause” would prove to be enormously popular with the teenage audience and cemented Dean’s place in Hollywood history.

Dean’s last film, “Giant”, saw him playing a supporting role to Elizabeth Taylor and Rock Hudson. The film was released in 1956 after his death and resulted in a second posthumous Best Actor nomination at the 1956 Academy Awards.

As historians, we see time and time again the effect that untimely death at a young age can have on long-term fame. Marilyn Monroe, John F. Kennedy, James Dean. Dean became interested in auto racing while filming “East of Eden”. During the filming of “Rebel Without a Cause”, he purchased a Porsche 550 Spyder. He was barred from racing while filming “Giant”, but upon completion of the movie he decided to drive the Porsche up to Salinas, California to compete in auto races at the Salinas Airport. As with many events in history, there are grey areas that historians can neither prove nor agree upon. The day of James Dean’s death is no exception. On September 30, 1955, Dean started out from Los Angeles with his 29 year old mechanic Rolf Wütherich in the Porsche. They drove into the Santa Clarita Valley along Highway 99 and by some accounts may have stopped for lunch at Tip’s Restaurant at Castaic Junction (the location of which was most likely the present day intersection of the Old Road and Henry Mayo Drive at the junction with Highway 126, although there are some who believe it was the current Marie Callender’s site at the corner of the Old Road and Magic Mountain Parkway). The last person to serve him food was possibly Tip’s waitress Althea McGuinness, who died in the 1970’s. An article in the “Signal” newspaper in September, 2005 recalls a 1985 interview by Tony Newhall of former Tip’s manager Carmen Cummings who stated “Yes, he did stop there on his last day. He sat at the counter. We all recognized him.” It is not known for sure whether Dean stopped anywhere else for food that day on his way to Salinas, although at a roadside stop called Blackwells’ Corner a historic marker states that James Dean made his last stop there. What exactly he purchased there remains a mystery.

After his purported meal at Tip’s, Dean proceeded north up Highway 99, and down the Grapevine Grade into the San Joaquin Valley. There he was ticketed by a CHP officer for speeding 65 mph in a 55 mph zone. Just north of Bakersfield, he turned west on U.S. Highway 466 (now California Highway 46) and climbed over Polonio Pass headed towards Paso Robles. Dean’s auto was estimated to be traveling at 55 mph as he approached the town of Cholame on the downgrade from the pass. Just outside of Cholame, Highway 466 met Highway 41 in a “Y” intersection. Coming in the opposite direction was a 1950 black and white Ford Custom Tudor coupe driven by 23 year old Cal Poly San Luis Obispo student, Donald Turnupseed, who was traveling to Tulare, California to visit his parents. As he approached the “Y” intersection Turnupseed began to make a left turn on to Highway 41. Due to the twilight conditions and the color of Dean’s car, Turnupseed never saw the approaching Porsche. The two cars collided in a horrific near head-on crash, with Dean’s car ending up crumpled in a ditch by the side of the road. Dean was pronounced dead on arrival at Paso Robles’ War Memorial Hospital. His last words were reported to be “That guy’s gotta stop. He’ll see us.” Dean’s body was brought back to Fairmount, Indiana where he was buried in Park Cemetery at a funeral attended by 3000 people. A young life was ended prematurely at the age of 24, but a Hollywood legend was born.

The town of Cholame has preserved the memory of James Dean with a stainless steel monument dedicated to Dean wrapped around an Oleantheum tree in the parking lot of the Jack Ranch Cafe. Meanwhile, in Santa Clarita, we are busy trying to preserve the remaining historic buildings in the city. On July 15, 2008 members of the Historical Society appeared before the City Planning Commission to testify in favor of a proposed Historic Preservation measure that would help protect buildings identified as historic and potentially historic on the city’s General Plan and Downtown Newhall Specific Plan. Speakers included past Presidents Carol Rock and Leon Worden, current Board member Duane Harte, and myself. Our efforts paid off as the Commission decided by a 4-1 vote to recommend passage of the measure to the City Council. A City Council hearing and decision on the Preservation measure took place on August 26. We will have more details and outcome of the meeting in the next Dispatch.

Ed Marg and crew are working day and night to put the finishing touches on our second annual Heritage Haunt “Curse of the Ghoul Mines” spectacular to be held on October 10-11, 17-18, 24-25, and Oct 30 to Nov 1. Many thanks for their Herculean efforts to create a Haunted House sure to outdo the enormously popular event that drew thousands of people last year and received rave reviews. We can’t wait to see what they have in store for us this October. Be afraid. Be very afraid!!!

Thanks go out to David Terry of Terry Transport for his help with moving our trailers. David did this on his own time, using his own gas and big rig. Also thanks to “Feathers Photography and Printing” for their tremendous support of the Haunt and for once again doing this year’s Haunt artwork, banners, and posters at cost and waiting for payment until after the event.
President’s Message

Continued from page 2

A special thank you goes to Victor Feany and family, and Newhall Hardware for donating tens of thousands of dollars of inventory from their store to the Society. We were so sorry to see this icon of Santa Clarita close down. We wish Victor well and hope to see him at the Society in the future.

The steel container near the train is now a fully functional metal shop with permanent lighting, outlets, cooling and steel racks thanks mostly to the efforts of Ed Marg Sr., Mike Smith, and a few other volunteers. In addition, they repaired the heavy-duty vise, made a steel work table, and added needed tools and equipment. With the donation from Newhall Hardware, we now have ample supply of steel stock that allows us to build or make repairs of all kinds to metal parts.

The upstairs workshop in the Newhall Ranch House has been re-organized, insulated, and interior walls installed. In addition, with generous donations from Newhall Hardware, lots of new shelving, racks and benches have been installed to organize all the hardware they gave to the Society. To make room for this, there was much effort expended to organize everything and create work space for doing restoration. Gerry Sokolowicz created a shelving system underneath the Ranch House that now stores many of the historic pieces of the several houses in a more stable temperature and humidity environment. Thanks mainly to the efforts of John Lesperance, Gerry Sokolowicz, Ed Marg Sr., Tony Monton, Tom Van Tassel and a few other volunteers, the Ranch House work shop is well on its way to becoming a very usable and functional area that can be used by volunteers in helping with the restoration of Heritage Junction.

In conjunction with the Haunt, Scott Sivley is organizing a Pumpkin Festival to be held at the Junction and Hart Park on October 18 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Scott is a master organizer and promoter. His event will include pumpkin carving at Hart Park, tours of the Hart Mansion, old movie clips at Hart Hall, back stage tours of the Heritage Haunt, “create your own maze and Haunt” in the Haunt Saloon, ghost town stories of the Old West to be performed by the Canyon Theatre Guild and Repertory East Playhouse, gold panning, and tours of the historic buildings of Heritage Junction. Businesses in Old Town Newhall will host Trick-or-Treating for the kids. Thanks to the County of LA for their help in promoting and producing this event. Great work, Scott, for organizing what should be a fun day for all ages!!

E.J. Stephens continues to produce his very popular “Friday Night Flickers” classic movie series. The show on August 1 took place under the stars outside the Train Station and featured silent movies by Laurel & Hardy and Buster Keaton, along with the early Hollywood 1902 sci-fi classic “A Trip to the Moon”. The movies were once again accompanied by the magical music of 95 year old silent-era organist Bob Mitchell. “Friday Night Flickers” will be ending with this show, but don’t despair...we will be introducing “Flickers at the Junction” in October; when the movie night will be changed to Saturdays based on popular demand. Coming Saturday, October 4 will be the Lon Chaney horror classic “Phantom of the Opera”, along with Buster Keaton’s “The Haunted House” (appropriate movies to complement the Heritage Haunt). The event will feature a guest appearance by Carla Laemmle who appeared in “Phantom”. Once again, Bob Mitchell will provide musical accompaniment. E.J. recently accompanied Mr. Mitchell to Dodger Stadium, where Bob was honored as part of the 50th anniversary of the LA Dodgers for his role as the first organist at Dodger Stadium.

Coming to the Lecture Series on Saturday, September 6, will be Harrison Scott, Executive Director of the Ridge Route Preservation Society, who will deliver an encore of his popular talk on the history of the Ridge Route. Mr. Scott has recently published a new book, “Lost Hotels on California’s Historic Ridge Route”, which will be available for sale at the show and can be autographed on request. Much of the Ridge Route has been closed for repairs of damage from heavy rains 3 years ago, but Scott’s organization is hoping to get it reopened later this year for travel and tours. On July 26, we had our first lecture event at College of the Canyons in collaboration with COC, when Dr. John Johnson delivered a fabulous and well received talk on the Native Americans of the SCV. Thanks to Dr. Johnson for his talk, and to Patty Robinson of COC for helping us organize the event and providing us with a nice air-conditioned venue on the COC Valencia campus. We hope to do many more events with COC in the future.

On June 21, I had the pleasure of doing an interview at local radio station KHTS on the program “Along the Trail”, with hosts Marde Anderson-Holt and Mike Dowler. On the program we discussed various topics of Santa Clarita history and the goings on at the Historical Society. Thanks to KHTS for giving us the opportunity to reach their wide audience to promote the history of the Valley. The interview can be found at http://www.hometownstation.com/along-the-trail/along-the-trail-june-21-2.html.

We are proud and happy to announce that the Historical Society will be sponsoring Mr. SCV John Boston and his famous “History of the Santa Clarita Valley” class starting in the Fall of this year. John is not only a great local historian, but a highly entertaining story teller. He will be taking class participants to various locales in the SCV over several

Continued on Page 4
Flickers Move to Saturday
by E. J. Stephens

Nearly 200 people attended the very first outdoor “Friday Night Flickers” program on Friday, August 1, and heard 95-year-old organist Bob Mitchell accompany four classic silent short films made by Buster Keaton, Laurel & Hardy, Harold Lloyd and Georges Melies. The films were shown from the loading dock of the historic Saugus Train Station at Heritage Junction, and most of the guests watched from lawn chairs from the parking area. Bob, who was recently honored on the field by the Dodgers for being the first organist ever at Dodger Stadium, regaled everyone with a version of “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” during intermission. The weather was accommodating, and everyone had a great evening.

This very successful night concluded the “Friday Night Flickers” program. The series is here to stay, but the name and night of the presentations will change for future shows.

Our very first “Flickers at the Junction” presentation will take place at 7:30 PM on Saturday, October 4, when Bob will once again be on-hand to accompany the classic Lon Chaney silent horror film “The Phantom of the Opera,” from 1925. This film is famous for Lon Chaney’s brilliant performance, as well as for featuring some of the very first uses of color in a major motion picture. Carla Laemmle, who was 16-years-old when she performed as a ballerina in the film, is scheduled to make an appearance. There will also be a showing of Buster Keaton’s hilarious short film “The Haunted House” preceding the main feature. This presentation will again take place outdoors, and guests are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs and blankets. As always, admission is only $5, which includes free popcorn!

On Saturday, November 15, the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society in cooperation with the William S. Hart Museum will present a very special evening entitled “Fencing With Fairbanks.” This evening will feature dinner and a special presentation of silent swashbuckler Douglas Fairbanks’ film “The Mark of Zorro” in Hart Hall. There will also be tours of the William S. Hart home, and a book signing and fencing demonstrations in the Saugus Train Station. Please call 661 254-4584 or contact www.hartmuseum.org for details.

President’s Message

Continued from page 3

sessions which cover the entire history of the Valley. I have taken this class twice myself and can highly recommend it to anyone interested in learning about our rich history. I can honestly say I learned from the best!! Stay tuned to our website for more details.

We would like to thank Oak of the Golden Dream Questers Chapter 38 for their generous donation of $1500 to help us eradicate termites that had taken up residence in the Newhall Ranch House and Saugus Train Station. Tony Monton, a member of our Haunt crew, was kind enough to arrange for his pest control company “Our Town Pest Control” to provide the service at a low cost to the Historical Society. We greatly appreciate this kind of help from the community. Upkeep of our historic buildings is very expensive. We couldn’t do it without you!

Finally, thanks as always to everyone who have contributed their time and expertise to the Society recently. We appreciate all that you do for us and your community. See you all at the Train Station.

Alan Pollack.
Hart Museum News
by Kristyn Van Wy

The William S. Hart Museum has been quite busy lately with recent programs as well as upcoming events. In August, the Museum hosted over 50 guests for our first lecture from our Hollywood at Hart Speaker Series. Be sure to look for our next lecture in this series, which will focus on Hart’s Pinto Pony, Fritz, and the history of horses in the film industry.

The Museum will also hold “A Day at the Ranch” on Saturday, September 13th from 9:30 to 11:00 AM on the Ranch House lawn. Families with children of all ages are welcome to attend. Guests can participate in different crafts and activities while learning about cowboy life. There is a suggested donation of $2 per child.

An additional upcoming event is the 15th annual American Indian Powwow and Native American Craft Fair which will be held on September 27th and 28th. Experience Native American culture through music, dance, art, and cuisine. For more information, visit www.friendsofhartpark.org.

As always, you are welcome to come to the Museum atop the hill for a free tour. We hope to see you soon!

Fall/Winter Hours, starting September 1st:

   Wednesday - Friday; 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
   Saturday & Sunday; 11:00 AM - 3:30 PM

The History of Entertainment

Recent Docents

Thank you to the following members who served as docents during July and August:

   Frank Adella    Barbara Milteer
   Jeff Boultinghouse   RuthAnne Murthy
   Sioux Coghlan   Sandra Neill
   Sarah Floyd   Alan Pollack
   Francesca Gastil   Konrad Summers
   Harold Hicks   Gordon Uppman
   Marla Khayat   Kristyn VanWy
   Barbara Martinelli

In the Santa Clarita Valley
by John Boston

The magical Santa Clarita Valley: From dance and music to almost the birth of the motion picture industry, our valley has been the navel of the entertainment universe. Here are a few snippets of what happened in SCV show business in the Septembers and Octobers of yesteryear...

October 9th, 1925 -

Before it burned down, Newhall Elementary School’s original auditorium was contracted to show silent movies. (There weren’t any talkies yet.) On this date, Franklyn Farnum starred in the Western, “Billy the Kid.” Farnum was noted for being similar in style to our own Wm. S. Hart. He was NOT related to the acting brothers Dustin and William Farnum. Franklyn would later be president of the Screen Extras Guild and would be an extra and actor in many Westerns shot locally, including a bevy of Hopalong Cassidy oaters.

October 30th, 1925 -

Famed Saugus actor Harry Carey employed an entire Navajo Indian village to work his 1,000-acre-plus spread in San Francisquito Canyon. What raised a few eyebrows around town was a cultural tidbit that in some Navajo enclaves, it wasn’t unusual for a man to marry several sisters from the same family. Boy howdy.

September 6th, 1928 -

We talk so frequently of the Western superstars who lived or visited here in the SCV over the decades - Tom Mix, Bill Hart, John Wayne, Will Rogers, to name a few. One of the biggest stars of his day was also one of the smallest. His pals at Newhall Elementary where he attended school called him Billy Lamoreaux, but on the silver screen, he was Buzz Barton. Buzz was working on a film in Hollywood when he fell 20 feet from some scaffolding and broke his arm. Filming was delayed six weeks and sadly, school was just beginning.

September 12th, 1939 -

Big Bill Bonelli bought the old 355-acre Roy Baker Ranch on this date, 60 years back. Roy bought out his partner, movie star Cowboy Bob Anderson. The ranch had previously been owned by another screen legend, Hoot Gibson. Hoot lived on the place for a year with his new bride, Sally Eiler. Hoot held onto the place for five years before it fell to bankruptcy. The grounds were ravaged a year earlier in the 1938 big flood and a fire destroyed the rodeo stands in 1935. You might know the place as the Saugus Speedway.

Continued on Page 7
Newhall Hardware is officially gone, but not forgotten. The empty shell of a building sits forlornly on Main Street, San Fernando Road…Spruce Street, or whichever it is now. For those of you who loved to go hang out or pick up odd pieces of hardware that the young people at other “home centers” haven’t ever seen, I have a comforting thought: In all the years that the SCV Historical Society existed, Newhall Hardware helped out just as much as they possibly could. We could always go there for things that no one else had…or occasionally pick up small things at no charge because Vic and Diane loved us.

As they were closing out, many of those hard to find items were not sold in the liquidation, and were just donated to the Society. From lowly wood screws to display cabinets, they offered them and the Haunt guys (what would we do without the “Haunters?”) gladly went and picked them up. Anyone visiting the Newhall Ranch House can’t help but be reminded of Newhall Hardware. The bins of nuts and bolts are proudly continuing their lives in the Ranch House, being slowly put to work.

So here I would like to make sure that Vic, Diane and the rest of the crew from Newhall Hardware know:

Thank you! We love you back!!

Really Haunted? Over the summer we were approached by The American Paranormal Research Association who wanted to “investigate” rumors of paranormal happenings at Heritage Junction. We tried this once before with a group and were underwhelmed with the results. But we gave it another go and were surprised at their findings. I know; If you go looking for something, you will probably find it. But some of the things they have found are prettycompelling.

In fact it is hard to argue with recorded female voices talking when the building contained only men, or the sounds of footsteps when no one was moving. Was that really Martha shushing Timothy? Did Timothy really say “I want my mommy” in the middle of the night?

Eerie, huh?

Some of the videos were a little strange, too. Could it really be? Was that really a spectral flagman at the railroad crossing in the middle of the night on that footage? Are the false alarms we routinely get from the freight room really the fault of that moving black shadow in the infrared footage? Yeah, it responded to the comment that it didn’t have to be here…by saying it was “going to stay with them” on a faint recording! I don’t really know. But I am REALLY interested in finding out especially since my office is in the next room!

First rodents, now black shadows that talk! I don’t know if I mind so much…at least the black shadow won’t attack my snack stash or shred any paper!

Make a Difference Day is coming. If you would like to come and help supervise the volunteers coming to help us clean up, de-weed, etc., on October 25, that would be really great. Please come help!

Join the SCV Historical Society Today!

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Memberships make great gifts for your historically-minded friends and family! To join or renew online, visit http://www.scvhs.org.
In the Santa Clarita Valley

Continued from page 5

October 31st, 1944 -

One of the greatest Western novels was Owen Wister’s “The Virginian.” On this date, Paramount took over a good chunk of Placerita Canyon, installing a small railroad for the movie. The classic was filmed at Monogram Studios and starred Joel McCrea. Interesting tidbit: When he was a lad, McCrea was William S. Hart’s paperboy when the silent screen star lived in Hollywood.

September 9th, 1951 -

Newhall’s Hall of Fame cowboy Andy Jauregui was badly mauled by a Brahma bull and was in St. Joseph’s hospital, listed under “grave condition.” He was wrangling for the movie, “Broncho Buster” at the Universal Studios lot in North Hollywood when the beast turned and caught Andy against a fence and gored him.

September 29th, 1952 -

A few old timers might recall some of the oddest sounds ever heard in the Little Santa Clara River Valley since the Pleistocene Epoch. Clyde Beatty used to use present-day Stevenson Ranch for his winter camp for his famed circus. Before there were so many buildings littering the landscape, sound would carry and folks as far away as Saugus could hear the moans, roars, trumpeting and addendum noises of lions, tigers, elephants, leopards, etc., etc. Clyde used to house his circus in El Monte, but the odor was too repugnant for the folks there. It was an amazing sight for locals when the circus came to town, because they unloaded 20 railroad cars at Market Street by the abandoned Newhall Train Depot and walked many of the critters down San Fernando Road to Pico (today, Lyons Avenue) all the way to the old Newhall Dairy Ranch on Highway 99 (today, I-5). It was quite a sight, seeing a parade of elephants, camels, llamas and zebras walking down the road. The predators, of course, had to make the trek in their wagon cages.

October 26th, 1973 -

Lots of folks were really steamed about the change of venue at the Mustang Drive-In. It seems if you were headed West down Soledad — and you slowed way down — you could get an eyeful of giant, naked people really, really liking themselves. The bill was a German-made XXX-rated porn double-header of “The School Girls” and “The School Girls Growing Up.”

September 13th, 1978 -

Geez. I sure hope they didn’t burn Deep Purple’s “Live at the London Philharmonic.” On this date, the high school club to Grace Baptist Church, in a Pan-like frenzy, ripped up and bent their record collections. Pat Boone need not worry. The 40 students sacrificed tapes and records (those big round black things before CDs) that glorified “satanic worship, drugs, homosexuality and the occult.” Artists getting rended were: Kiss, Ted Nugent, Elton John and Led Zeppelin. I could see Elton John ... but Led Zeppelin?

October 24th, 1954 -

Hart High seriously beat up on Valencia in football, 26-6. For the record, the gridders were the Tigers from Valencia High in Placentia. One of the stars for the local Indians was a handsome halfback named Gary Yurosek. He would change his name, move to Hollywood and become the famous actor, Gary Lockwood, star of the classic Stanley Kubrick film, “2001, A Space Odyssey,” among several other movies. By the way, there was a second famous person on that Hart team of ’54: quarterback Joe Kapp, who not only starred in several movies and TV shows, but also took the Minnesota Vikings to the Super Bowl.
Features:

- Heritage Haunt Pumpkin Festival
- Live Bands
- Theatrical Dance Production of Sleepy Hollow
- Scare Zones
- Musical Light Show
- Photo Opportunities with Haunted Scenes
- Heritage Haunt Souvenirs
- Hamburgers • Hot Dogs • Popcorn • Snacks • Drinks
- And EVEN MORE thrills and chills!

For more information call (661) 254-1275

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Kingsberry House open the first Sunday
of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 PM

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“Preserving the best of the past for the good of the future”

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