



# Antelope Horn

Newsletter of the  
Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc.  
PO Box 1255 Rosamond, CA 93560

February, 2018

## Meetings:

### Regular Meetings: 2nd

Thursday, monthly (except  
July & August).

Business Session: 5 pm, at the  
Wanda Kirk Library 3611  
Rosamond Blvd.,  
Rosamond, CA. All are  
welcome. Exceptions to  
this location will be  
announced in the newsletter  
and at our website.

Program: 5:30 pm, following  
the business session.

## Coming Up:

- March - Judge Richard Spann from the Civilian Air Patrol at Edwards AFB
- April - Walter Feller, photographer for the reprint of *Land of Little Rain*
- May - Nancy Pahr to talk about the China Lake petroglyphs.



**January Meeting: Thursday, February 8th, at 5 pm at the Wanda Kirk Library. Our special guest this month will be Bill Rawlings, long-time resident of the Antelope Valley. Old-timers will like to reminisce and newcomers can learn more about the history of the valley.**

## Me and the Antelope Valley Rural Museum

By Bill Rawlings

Though I came to live in the Antelope Valley in 1954 as a 7-year-old, 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, I am a 4<sup>th</sup> generation resident of this great desert I call home. My mother's fraternal (Thomsen) and maternal (Kugler) grand-parents emigrated from Germany, as children with their parents, through Ellis Island in the 1880's, became US citizens, eventually to settle in Wayne, Nebraska, where they each eventually met and married their respective spouses, and began their families. The Thomsens moved from Wayne to Lancaster in the early 1920's. Emma Kugler traveled to California to visit some family friends. She met my grandfather William Thomsen, my namesake, in Lancaster on her first visit. On a subsequent visit my grandfather proposed during an excursion to the poppy fields of Lancaster. They married, lived on ranch in the Roosevelt district in Eastside Lancaster where my mother was born in 1924. Sometime in the early 1930's they moved away from the desert. My mother met my dad, Scott Rawlings, in El Segundo and married in 1940, she at 16 and he at 21. In 1954 mom was told she needed to move to a dry climate, so dad closed his successful construction business, packed up everything, and so began my life in Lancaster.

My dad was very social, a builder and a doer. He was one of the Founders of the Antique Automobile Club in Lancaster with his friends who included Art Pickus and Carl Bergman. A few years later they and a few others were the Founders of the "Rusty Relics" Early Day Gas Engine Club of Antelope Valley. These people were collectors and restorers of everything old, and especially mechanical. But, the real story of the Antelope Valley Rural Museum begins in 1963 when my dad, who loved to race and play games with his 1919 Model T Ford, along with his Antique

American flag and fireworks from 2017 Rural Olympics



**Please notice: if you are receiving a hardcopy (black and white copy) of this newsletter and would like to enjoy it in color, it is available at our website: [www.kahs1959.org](http://www.kahs1959.org).**

Auto Club buddies, convinced the AV Fair Rural Olympics Committee to introduce the Antique Auto Race, complete with a pit stop tire change, and the Antique Auto Potato Race, which held its 53<sup>rd</sup> annual race in 2016. In 1967 I got to race as my Dad's mechanic in the Model T Ford Race. We competed together until 1973, managing six first places finishes and setting four new records. Our only blemish was the year that we had to borrow a car because I had blown the rear end in the Model T while practicing for the Antique Car Potato Race. We held the record time for 18 consecutive years, one of our proudest achievements together. From 1982 to 1993 I competed 12 times as a driver in Model T race, winning five and placing in top three all 12 years. In 1988, I regained the record with my new bride, Pam, as my mechanic.

Dad passed away a few months after the 1996 Rural Olympics and in 1997 I joined the Rural Olympics Committee in his place. Fast forward to 2005. Ok, I promise we're almost to the AVR. In May of 2005 there had been discussion and rumors that the Rural Olympics might be held at a different time of year or even eliminated altogether. On my drive to a Committee meeting in May of 2005 a little voice in my head said, "Create a Rural Olympics Hall of Fame." The idea being that if the Rural Olympics was going to be discontinued, the memory and historical significance of my dad and the dozens of AV pioneers who created and competed in the event were not going to be forgotten. When asked if there was any more business at the end of that meeting, I made my pitch for the Rural Olympics Hall of Fame to the Committee, with the idea that it could be the beginning of a complete AV historical museum in the future. Giovanni Simi, current Chairman of the AVR, was the first to approach me after the meeting with "I'm In, let's do this". Several other people came on board and during the 2005 Rural Olympics Donald "Jake" Jaqua posthumously awarded the *Golden Hay Hook*, as he became the first inductee into the ROHOF. That first year we began exhibiting during the AV Fair with a few photos and my dad's Model T Ford. As of 2016 there have been 59 men and women to be awarded the *Golden Hay Hook*.

Ok, I told you we'd get here; we're finally to the formation of the AVR. Shortly after the 2009 AV Fair that little voice came back and told me "now is the time to create a complete museum." I contacted eleven people I knew to be interested, and asked them to come to my home and discuss the possibility of expanding the ROHOF, which was growing rapidly, into a complete museum. On September 9, 2009 the *Antelope Valley Rural Museum of History* was formally created, and soon became recognized as a 501 (c)(3) public charity association by the IRS. The AV Fair has given us a home in the Farm and Garden Building which has allowed us to grow and thrive. Almost since day one, we have been fundraising to develop exhibits and to ultimately build a permanent home on the fairgrounds. Ground breaking may become a reality within the next year.

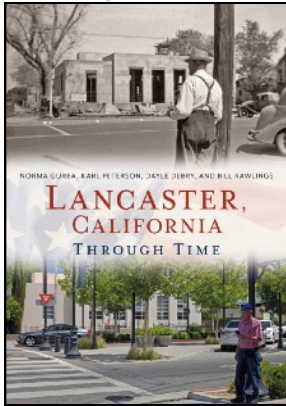
I've been given credit as the brainchild of the AV Rural Museum, but if I'm to be given credit for anything it would be my good fortune to know, find, and recruit the best possible group of ambitious people with very passionate and diverse interests in preserving and exhibiting the history of the Antelope Valley. I thank my dad for passing along his desire to be a doer, and an ability to associate with the perfect friends with a common cause. Dad also passed along his ability to envision and build things. Thanks to him I was a carpenter for fifty years, and a cabinetmaker for forty of those fifty. Those skills I inherited and learned allowed me to work with our volunteers to build the displays and furniture for the museum. Mostly I owe a huge thanks to the board members and volunteers of the AVR who have invested over 26,000 hours creating the museum, and thereby making me look way better than I deserve.





Lancaster, California Through Time - written by Bill Rawlins, Norma Gurba, Dayle DeBry, and Karl Peterson, will be available for sale.

The **Rural Olympics** is an agriculture-based series of race competitions that began in 1935 in Lancaster. In 2005 Bill spearheaded the **Rural Olympics Hall of Fame** which evolved into the **Antelope Valley Rural Museum of History**, for which Bill was the original president then chairman. He is currently the finance officer. Bill's motivation for the promotion of the Antelope Valley Rural Museum and the "**Lancaster, California Through Time**" book evolved from his love for his hometown, the AV Fair he grew up with and the six generations of his mother's family who lived and thrived in Lancaster. All royalties and profits the museum receives from this book go directly to the AVRVM Building & Development Fund for a new expanded museum to be located on the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds.



The following pictures are from the **1974 Rural Olympics** (taken by Janet Winters), including some of the events no longer a part of the Olympics.

At left is the men's sickle bar race.



At right are two pictures of the swather event, which was only a one-time event. Our own Charlie O'Loughlin was one of the two participants.

Below left is the always-popular antique auto potato race, anyone recognize the car???







*At right, is the antique auto race which included a pit stop to change the tire; the name on car says Carl (maybe Carl Bergman?).*

*Below, Charlie is receiving his trophy for the swather race (at center, blue shirt) and the tractor is bringing in the barriers*



*for the tractor trailer backing event coming up.*

*(Hard to see but fun to find the queens (in orange overall shorts) who attended & presented the trophies to the winners)*

*Bottom three pictures are from the horse relay race. The Rosamond team included Cecil Burton, Tom Leftwich and Pat Fisher.*

*Right: the Rosamond team getting their trophies.*

*Bottom: the handoff between Cecil and Pat.*

*Below right: Tom, Cecil and Pat leaving the arena, trophies in hand.*



*Fun to see all the old blue carts, the blue vests the workers wore, the empty fields beyond the fairgrounds & . . . ?*





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Website: www.kahs1959.org Email: info@kahs1959.org Please visit the website for more information about Antelope Valley history. Copies of recent newsletters are available, as well as other information. The first online KAHS book is now available. Glimpse of the Prehistory of Antelope Valley, by Stuart Glennan, is described as "Archaeological Investigations at the Sweetser site". We hope to be able to add other KAHS books in the future.



## For Sale by KAHS

### Books - \$10 Each:

Here Roamed the Antelope  
Bears - Borax and Gold  
Along the Rails from Lancaster to Mojave  
The Antelopes Left and the Settle-ers Came  
In Love with Life in Lancaster (Hard Times  
1927-1932)  
Antelope Valley Pioneers  
Castles in the Valley - Shea's Castle  
A Page in the History of Antelope Valley: the Arthur  
Pickus Story: His Home for Seventy Five Years  
Mojave, A Rich History of Rails, Mining and Flight  
Gold-Fever - 40 Years Digging Antelope Valley  
History  
Antelope Valley News and Views During Part of the  
Great Depression 1925-1935

Video DVD - \$15: Antelope Valley Yesteryears

Maps - \$4: Historic Settlers Circle Map  
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## 2017-2018 Executive Board

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### General Meetings:

5:00 pm- Business Session, 5:30 pm - Program  
Second Thursday of the Month, September through June  
At Wanda Kirk County Library

3611 Rosamond Blvd. Rosamond, CA 93560  
(Exceptions: June, September & December - to be announced)

### Memberships:

\$5 - Student & Military; \$15 - Individual; \$20 - Husband & Wife;  
\$30 - Family; \$35 - Businesses

The Kern Antelope Historical Society was established in 1959 for the purpose of learning and preserving the history of California, especially the Antelope Valley, which includes parts of Los Angeles and Kern counties. Speakers are invited to talk at our monthly meetings about aspects of our various cultures. Subjects range from Indians of the past to the Space Age. The Society offers field trips for members to significant locations in and around the valley throughout the year. Come join us to learn more about the wonders of this area we live in and also meet some new people.

**KERN ANTELOPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**P.O. BOX 1255**  
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