



American Mule Museum and Heritage Center Bishop, California

Spring/Summer 2017 Newsletter

Mission Statement

The American Mule Museum and Heritage Center is dedicated to telling the story of the contributions of that unsung hero, the American Mule, and of the people who worked with mules throughout the history of the United States, in the areas of transportation, agriculture, and recreation, with emphasis on the West, California, and the Sierra Nevada. The goal of the museum is to educate, inform, and entertain the public with information on the versatility and value of the American Mule.

Inside this Issue:

WELCOME	1
Architectural Rendering	2
Mules and Marines	2
Hollywood Mule	3
Tractor Fundraiser	3
In Memoriam	4
Membership Info	4

The American Mule Museum (AMM) Board of Directors would like to thank our over 400 members for their unwavering support and help. The American Mule Museum Kick-Off Party, held last year at the beautiful home of Past AMM President Robin Stater, was a great success. Its purpose was to garner public support as well as support from elected officials at the local, state and federal level. Over 125 invited guests attended this gala, including distinguished guests United States Congressman Paul Cook, his wife Jeanne and members of his congressional staff. California State Senator Tom Berryhill was also in attendance, along with Inyo County Supervisors Jeff Griffiths and Matt Kingsley, and Inyo County Administrator Kevin Carunchio. Bishop City Council Members Pat Gardner and her husband, Ted; Joe Pecsí and his wife, Marcia; Jim Ellis and his wife, Cami; City of Bishop Administrator Jim Tatum and his wife, Donna; and City of Bishop Chief of Police Ted Stec and his wife, Dawn, were also among the honored guests. The event was a testament to the level of interest and excitement that exists for building the American Mule Museum and Heritage Center.

The AMM Board of Directors continues to build public support for this valuable project and has taken significant steps to move closer to its reality. A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been developed for fundraising professionals and, as stated in the RFP, "the purpose of this RFP is to contract with a Capitol Campaign Fundraiser who will lead the AMM's efforts to identify and secure from private individuals, other non-profits, large and small businesses, and governmental agencies, donations, gifts, and grants to complete 100% of the Museum's total funding requirements". The RFP is posted on the American Mule Museum website at www.mulemuseum.org.

The American Mule Museum Board has also been in productive conversations with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and has identified a parcel of land adjacent to the Tri-County Fairgrounds that could be available for purchase when funding is secured and the requirements of the LADWP are met.

We are always looking for new members and additional board members, so please consider joining us in this worthy endeavor!! Let the hard working, resilient and always persevering mule be our inspiration to achieve the dream of building the American Mule Museum. Visit us on our website www.mulemuseum.org as well as on Facebook, and have a great 2017 Bishop Mule Days experience!



Larry Lewis of the Lewis Architectural Group in Visalia, California, is a dedicated member of the AMM Board of Directors and travels from Visalia to be an active member. He has generously donated his outstanding talents to the AMM and has created extensive architectural drawings that capture the vision for this unique museum. Larry is also a talented nature photographer and his beautiful work can be found at www.larrylewisphotography.com. A huge thank you to Larry for his extraordinary contributions to making the museum a reality!

Mules and Marines Celebrating Mules in the Military this Memorial Day Weekend

Mules and the U.S. Marine Corps have a rich and colorful history, and not even a recently tested robotic mule can replace the strength, stamina and human bond of the real thing. Mules have long been a critical part of the U.S. military, and were the backbone of moving armies during the Civil War. Today mules, and other pack animals such as donkeys and llamas, are used by Marines in various parts of the globe where Marines are asked to serve.



Training in the use of horses and pack animals by U.S. Marines is done right here in the Eastern Sierra, home of the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) on Highway 108 about 20 miles northwest of Bridgeport. MWTC opened in 1951 to train troops for Korea and has administrative buildings, barracks, corrals and an enormous tent for visiting troops. The Center is located on 47,000 acres of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, where serrated peaks above 10,000 feet are the perfect terrain to teach high-altitude combat skills.

In addition to the many combat-related courses taught at MWTC, the Animal Packers Course dates to the 1980s, when

the CIA sent operatives to MWTC before being dispatched to help the Afghans fight the Soviet occupation force. The CIA supplied several thousand mules to the Afghans for maintaining their supply lines.

Marines are taught to properly use, feed, and care for the mules, which can weigh 800 to 1,000 pounds and carry up to a third of their body weight in cargo and supplies.

Mules are ideal for covering long distances, often in steep and rugged terrain too difficult for vehicles, to get gear in and get the wounded out.

For now at least, the good 'ole live mule is here to stay. The innovative robotic mule, shown below, could run for 24-hours, covering 20 miles, but its downfall was the robot's very noisy gas-powered engine.



The American Mule Museum, to be located not far down Highway 395 from the Mountain Warfare Training Center, plans to honor the long tradition of mules in the U.S. military through displays, interactive exhibits, and archived photos. Please join us through your membership in the American Mule Museum, and help show your pride and support to -- Mules and Marines!

-Article by Craig Patten

Hollywood Mule

Probably the most famous mule on television was "Ruth" on Gunsmoke, owned and worshipped by Festus Haggen played by Ken Curtis.

Festus always had a mule named Ruth even if it was a jack. Festus served as a mule skinner in the Confederate Army and he was ordered by his Captain to take ol' Ruth and go behind Union lines to retrieve five dead Confederate soldiers. Ruth was his favorite mule, because she was faithful, stout and smart! Festus finds and retrieves the five soldiers and packs them out on Ruth's back, but they are met by Union fire from a sentry. But they plow along and arrive back behind Confederate lines. As Festus begins to light a pipe and settle down he notices Ruth is wounded and has blood running down her side! "Old Ruth just seemed to say, now don't cry for me, we had a job to do you see! And then old Ruth just seemed to slide right down." Festus puts a marker on Ruth's grave that reads: "Here lies a mule that gave her life and that's the truth. Now, every mule I'll ever own will bear your name. So, be it known while I'm alive, they'll always be a Ruth."



A side note about Ken Curtis, he had an excellent voice and was a member of the "Sons of the Pioneers". Married to the daughter of John Ford, you can often find him in a Ford movie, like "The Quiet Man" and also "Rio Grande". His last movie was "Conagher".

-Story by Mellouise Curry

Be sure and check out our website at www.mulemuseum.org and find us on Facebook by searching **American Mule Museum!**



Thank you to Lee Raine for donating her web design talents, and to Marye Roeser for keeping our website and Facebook page up to date with new and interesting articles and photos!

Antique Tractor Fundraiser

This beautiful tractor has been donated to the American Mule Museum and Heritage Center by beloved stunt-woman Sylvia Durando.



Sylvia got into the film industry training horses with her mother, and after joining the Screen Actors Guild had a 30-year career as a stunt-woman and double in countless classic western films. Sylvia now lives in Three Rivers, California, and is still an avid rider.

The tractor is a 1942 Farmall "War Tractor," - so called because this model was used in WWII - which has been lovingly restored by Mike Morgan. Sylvia has exhibited the tractor at the Tulare Antique Tractor show for 10 years, and has now donated it for a future fundraiser in support of the planned museum.

The American Mule Museum and Heritage Center would like to give a huge "thanks" to Sylvia for her generosity in donating this antique workhorse, and also a hearty congratulations to whomever becomes the lucky new owner of this beautiful and historic machine!

In Memoriam

"Self carries grief as a pack mule carries the side bags, being careful between the trees to leave extra room"

-Jane Hirshfield

The American Mule Museum organization has mourned the loss of many dedicated supporters since its formation and it would like to remember with deep sorrow and appreciation, three of the finest.

Bob Tanner: In 2004, Bob Tanner was named Mule Days Grand Marshall and was awarded a Mule Days trophy buckle engraved "Founder of Mule Days". Bob started in the packing business in 1949 when he was 19 years old. He purchased Red's Meadow in 1960 and spent the rest of his life promoting and advocating for the way of life he loved so dearly. He believed deeply that the packing industry provided the ideal way to take visitors deep into the beauty of the Sierra, and to provide the opportunity for everyone, from dignitaries to generations of families, grandparents, children and their children all on the same trip, to make life-long, irreplaceable memories. It was this love that led him to the idea of building a Mule Museum and Heritage Center in Bishop to honor the legacy of the magnificent American Mule. He worked diligently as an irreplaceable member of the American Mule Museum Board of Directors, up until his passing, to make this dream a reality. He was a successful businessman, an educator, a coach, a Rose Bowl Parade regular, and a packer and story teller to countless thousands. He passed away December 3, 2015 at the age of 86. His legacy continues to bring pride and joy to the packing industry that stole his heart so many years ago.

Dick Noles: The Eastern Sierra High Packers Association named Dick Noles its 2007 Best Friend of the Packers. Dick earned this honor for partnering with the packers on maintaining their historical portion of the back country and way of life. He was founder and President of AAPL - Advocates for Access to Public Lands - and was dedicated to providing opportunity for all to experience the American people's public lands. Dick was also a Founding Member of the American Mule Museum and served as an officer on its Board of Directors and was Vice President when he passed away in November 2015. He shared in the dream of building a Museum in Bishop to honor the great American Mule and was the leader in documenting the role of the mule in the building of the back country infrastructure for Southern California Edison in the Bishop Creek drainage. Dick retired from Southern California Edison in 1990 after a distinguished career, 25 years of which were spent working in his beloved Eastern Sierra. His community spirit and dedication to the great outdoors is deeply missed, He was a true Friend to All.

Sam Dean: Bishop Mule Days inducted Sam Dean into its Hall of Fame in 2003. Sam had been a Mule Days volunteer since 1976 and had served in a variety of capacities, including President. Sam was quoted upon being named to the Hall of Fame, "It's been an adventure... comical events, wrecks, animals getting away... you name it, it happens. I love it all!" Sam was dedicated to community service, including Advocates for Access to Public Lands and the Adventure Trails project. He received the Highest Recognition from the Lions Club for his outstanding effort on behalf of Eye Mobile, Inc. He was a member of the Tri-County Fair Board for 20 years and served as Inyo County 3rd District Supervisor, as well as in positions on the Bishop City Council and Planning Commission. He was a man of deep faith and was Deacon of the First Southern Baptist Church. It was this dedication to others that led him to his active involvement in the American Mule Museum organization, and he was serving as its President when he passed away on April 3, 2017 at the age of 84. Sam believed that the American Mule Museum would offer a unique experience to visitors of the Eastern Sierra which would capture and highlight the local history of the mule and the packing industry, as well as the mule's contributions to America and the world. Sam's zest for life and love of his community is deeply missed but he will be remembered fondly, especially this Mule Days.

We will "leave extra room between the trees" for our treasured memories of these three very special men.

Membership

American Mule Museum and Heritage Center



Ellie the Mule drawing courtesy of Leslie Engelhart

PO Box 395
Bishop, CA 93515

www.mulemuseum.org

Individual.....	\$25
Family (2 Adults, 2 children).....	\$50
Contributing.....	\$100
Business/Organization.....	\$150
Supporting.....	\$250
Sustaining.....	\$500
Benefactor.....	\$1000 +

When the Museum is completed, each level will include annual benefits. For more information on becoming a member, visit our website at www.mulemuseum.org