

VaRRA News

Newsletter from the
Vail Ranch Restoration Association

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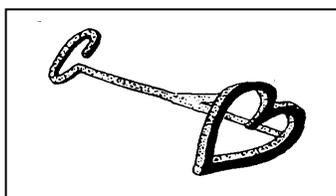
1st Quarter 2017 – Volume 8, Issue 1

“Dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the Historic Vail Ranch Headquarters.”

Little Temecula History Center is Open on Sunday – In Red Implement Barn next to Kohl’s At Margarita and Temecula Pkwy.

Sundays 12 – 5 pm
Or by Appointment

Come see the results of our efforts, and perhaps Volunteer to be a docent.



Vail Ranch Restoration Association

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On the web at
www.vailranch.org



Honoring the Butterfield Stage -- In 2005 funds were available for a large plaque to commemorate the Butterfield Overland Trail. It was decided that it should be placed along the trail where it transverses the historic Vail Headquarters. Awaiting the Headquarters restoration, the plaque was displayed in the Little Temecula History Center. In March 2017 the plaque was finally placed along the trail.

Neglected No More . . .

Ranch Headquarters Complex Now a Beehive of Activity

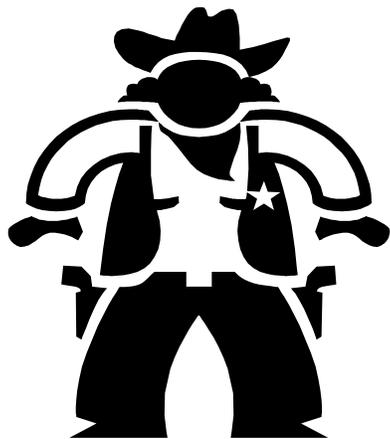
For years the remains of the Vail Ranch buildings appeared forgotten and forlorn, as they stood proudly against the sun, rain and vandals – trying to stave off a fateful ending. Once the center and life blood of a healthy ranching operation, disrepair was a kind description of the condition to which they had become.

Because good citizens of the area, and the founders of the VaRRA were not about to let them fade away, what was once the center of old Temecula (long before Old Town) – has come back to life, and is once more a thriving center of activity, with areas to reflect on the old days in area history, enjoy a Farmer’s Market on Tuesdays, watch

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Friends of VaARRA Associate Members

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Thorsten Behnken
Sandy Bourassa
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Russell & Patricia Cook
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Ranch Complex Activity . . .

a blacksmith bend a red-hot horseshoe, take a ride in a stagecoach, or watch children play on a grassy area.

The Wolf Store adobe is the first business to greet visitors to the property. Built on the old Southern Emigrant Trail which was later used by the Butterfield Stage, the Louis and Ramona Wolf's general store was home to the Temecula Post Office, the Justice of the Peace, as well as offered some of the first hotel rooms. The store was so famous that author Helen Hunt Jackson worked it into her novel *Ramona* calling it the Hartzel Store. It is one of the oldest buildings still standing in this part of Riverside County.

Carrying on the tradition of hospitality, *Augie's Coffee* and *a la Minute Creamery* now are in the Wolf Store, greeting visitors and delivering up superb roasted coffee and innovative flavors of ice cream made to order.

Walter Vail bought the property in 1905 and made it into the headquarters for what would become an 87,500 acre cattle ranch. By 1910 there were several buildings on the property, including the cookhouse, foreman's house, bunkhouse and a couple of barns. Later a water building was constructed to house equipment to measure area precipitation and water flow in the Temecula Creek.

The foreman's house has been transformed into a cook's delight which offers a variety of tasty, small batch, local food products. *Cheflavor* stocks flavorings to enhance each meal and offers lunch items to enjoy on the porch or out in the open park area. Chef Matt Green also offers cooking classes.

The old bunkhouse is now home to *Winchester Western Saddlery*. The saddle shop offers all things Western from bandanas to reins. The interior design utilizes the original wood floors and beams. Look for the historic bunkroom display to visualize how it looked during the ranch heyday.

Vail Pizzeria occupies the other half of the old bunkhouse, and offers the unique experience of creating your own pizza. Select your own ingredients, type of crust and sauce – then enjoy with a beverage, either indoors or outside while watching the many activities.

Across from the Wolf Store is a new retail building resembling an old mule barn that burned down in the 1920's. It is now home to *Nectar*, a women's clothing boutique, and *Juice it Up*. A hair salon will open soon upstairs, and other space is still available to lease.

Just past the Wolf Store is the old cookhouse which is presently still available for lease. The building is ready for a new occupant, which the owner Jerry Tessier of Artec Partners in Pomona thinks could become a charming restaurant.

Throughout the complex are benches to pause and relax, as well as plaques to explain the history of each building. The large old red Machinery Barn is available for a restaurant or brewery with spacious areas for both indoor and outdoor dining and entertainment.

If you haven't been by to see the restored Vail Headquarters, come by to see for yourself, wander, shop, and stay a while.

Volunteers Needed

Looking for something fun to do on Sundays? Come on down to the History Center / Vail Headquarters and volunteer . . . to help promote local history; get locals enthused about our Vail Ranch heritage; and also have a good time.

We have an ongoing need for volunteers to staff the History Center to sell tickets for train and stagecoach rides and to answer questions for visitors.

WHEN:

Every Sunday from Noon to 5:00 pm

WHERE:

Little Temecula History Center/Vail Headquarters

You are welcome to dress in period costume . . . visitors love that . . . however, costume dress is not required.

Let us know if you are interested . . . it should be lots of fun.

Check out this website for Vail Headquarters! <http://vailhq.com>
It is very colorful and talks about all the new vendors at the Ranch and activities that will be happening.

Contact us thru:
info@vailranch.org



A recent photo of Al Knott's 1927 Dodge Brothers Coupe as it undergoes some restoration work, which will include an old wagon tailgate on the added wood pickup box just as Al Knott had on it originally.

A Recent Acquisition

The Resurrection of Al Knott's 1927 Dodge Brothers Coupe

VaARRA recently was able to acquire from Mike Tobin the 1927 Dodge Brothers Coupe that was once part of Al Knott's Garage and Blacksmith Service in Temecula. It is being restored back to how it appeared when it was a cornerstone of Al Knott's business. When Mrs. Freda Knott was no longer using the car, her husband Al turned it into a pickup with a special tool box modification where the trunk space had been, and built a rear bumper so he could tow a trailer. The trailer was complete with a small forge that he used when doing farrier and other blacksmithing work at area ranches or farms.

According to the serial number, it is considered a commercial vehicle. It has an especially low first gear and that would be good for traveling around the back roads of Temecula or for pulling someone out of a ditch. Apparently, Al and Freda had a four-door Dodge as well as the converted coupe.

Sometime in the early 1960s both cars were sitting in a field in Aguanga. That is when Mike Tobin's father Art Tobin bought the coupe and started the long journey of bringing it back to life. Art Tobin was the brother of Tony Tobin of local history fame, and founding board member of VaARRA.

This acquisition means that this important part of Temecula's 20th Century history will remain in the area for years to come. In addition to the restoration work in progress, plans include having it on display at Vail Headquarters soon. Stay tuned for updates on the restoration of the 1927 Dodge Brothers Coupe.

Headquarters Bits & Pieces

■ This is the season for third-grade students to learn about local history and VaARRA is providing hands-on education for several classrooms. Each session will vary slightly, but each will include experience in the headquarters garden, with a horse in the corral, and riding the stagecoach on the old Butterfield Trail. VaARRA volunteers have been doing this for the past sixteen years and are always delighted when the former students come back as adults to visit the site again. The purpose for saving the historic Vail Headquarters is to keep a heritage site for the community.

■ On the 3rd Sunday each month the Temecula Gunfighters will be at the Vail Headquarters to provide valuable gun safety demonstrations.

■ On the fourth Friday of each month horse-drawn carriage rides are available for \$5 per rider. Imagine the romance of live music and an open carriage ride through the property.

■ Did you know that everywhere you see an old wagon wheel and a slab of granite there is an informative plaque. Take a walk around the property and you will learn a lot from the plaques. We are sometimes asked why we don't have informative brochures. The plaques are a way to eliminate paper waste.

■ Do you like books? Be sure to come to Vail Headquarters on Sunday, April 30 to see book vendors and to meet authors and illustrators. It will be a bookworm's paradise.

Vail HQ is now Officially chartered As Little Free Library

Among the many special features in the newly restored Vail Headquarters is an officially chartered Little Free Library box, where people may take books and leave books for others. The idea is to promote reading in the community. This movement of Little Free Libraries began in Minnesota and has spread throughout the U.S. Our charter is

#42756. As the designated stewards of the Little Library

at Vail Headquarters, we will mainly supply children's and youths' books to promote literacy. If anyone has some to donate, they can be delivered to the Little Temecula History Center on Sunday afternoons or to any VaARRA members on-site at the Vail Headquarters on Sunday afternoons or Tuesday mornings. The books may be gently used, but not battered, yellowed or fragile. Please watch for books at garage sales. Classics like "Black Beauty" and children's picture books go fast. Families enjoy searching for and finding local Little Library boxes. See if you can find the one at Vail Headquarters. Any books donated that are unsuitable for the Little Library will be sold to fund VaARRA projects.

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Have you seen . . .

Frank's Blacksmith Shop?

During the restoration of the Vail Headquarters, VaARRA constructed and equipped the blacksmith pavilion to provide a venue for live blacksmithing demonstrations, so that today's youngsters can get a glimpse of the important craft of bending metal to make needed tools and hinges and such. Not to mention taking care of a ranch's horses needs for hoof care & shoes.

Blacksmiths James, Rodney and Frank form our crew. Come by and see them at work on Sundays and Tuesdays.

Frank Santa Maria was the longtime blacksmith on the Vail Ranch and worked out of the Machinery Barn, which has been restored for commercial use except for the area behind the double doors near the blacksmith venue. Old time shop displays are evolving in that area to honor Frank's years of service to the Vail Ranch.

One of Frank's daughters stopped by recently and was surprised and delighted that her father would be remembered and honored in this way.

