

New book explores history of tourism in Eastern Kern County

By Lucinda Sue Crosby
Staff Reporter
lcrosby@ridgecrestca.com

What's so great about tourism in East Kern County?

According to award winning author Bonnie D. Stone — “Everything.”

That's why she recently completed her sixth book, a humorous guide to unusual attractions in the region called “San Andreas Ain't No Fault of Mine:” currently on sale at the Maturango Museum.

Originally intended as an historical account of the Antelope Valley, Stone says the book's first incarnation was interrupted when her husband, Leighton, was transferred to Alabama in the early 1990s.

“I shelved the idea at the time,” Stone.

Several years later, after having returned to Lancaster and environs, she was speaking to a friend about fun places to take grandchildren in the area and voila! the idea for the book was reborn and revamped. The final version took her two years of research.

“I dragged my husband out of retirement to help me with field trips. Then after I got the manuscript finished, I wanted to make sure I had directions and mileage correct,” Stone said. “And you know how husbands are ... I didn't know what he'd say. As it turned out, he was enthusiastic and took over the mapmaking and mileage aspect.”

Some of the off-the-beaten-track — literally — destinations Stone highlights include the



Native American treasures such as these petroglyphs are part of the desert's tourism hot spots, according to the newbook by author Bonnie D. Stone.

world's only drive-through view of an earthquake fault; the world's oddest "tree" — the Joshua — because it isn't actually a tree at all; and, of course, the largest concentration of petroglyphs in the Western Hemisphere "guarded over by the Naval base at China Lake."

Naming the guide was the most difficult part of the creation, according to Stone.

"The title finally came to me in the middle of the night," Stone explained. "I remember that it was 2 a.m. I had gone through three complete rewrites already but the Ain't No Fault aspect seemed to give the book zing, if you know what I mean."

Looking at her experiences and field trips with humor caused Stone to see many of the attractions in an entirely different — "and more fun" — light.

Still and all however, Stone reminds that "San Andreas" is, first and foremost, a guide.

"I kept in mind what I would have liked to have had when I moved to the area in 1986," Stone said. "And frankly, one of the sites I have always enjoyed visiting and sending people to is the Maturango Museum."

Why?

"It is an important place to visit," Stone answered. "It gives the newcomer an excellent introduction to the history of the area. And let's not forget the petroglyphs. They have access to an important collection."

Museum Executive Director Jane Burbank-Larson was responsible for bringing Stone's book to the Maturango.

"Originally, Bonnie came to visit the museum to ask questions for this book," Burbank-Larson said. "She was very interested in accuracy and asked lots of questions."

"We had no other book that served as a guide for the Antelope Valley and I thought it would provide local folks with good information for places to take their kids — or to spend a day exploring."

Of course, the museum features a variety of books for anyone interested in learning more about the Indian Wells Valley, the Owens Valley, or Death Valley, to name just a few areas of wide interest.

But if you are interested in a slightly different kind of guidebook, "San Andreas Ain't No Fault Of Mine" might be worth investigating further.

For more information about this book or the Maturango Museum, contact their offices at (760) 375-6900. The guide is also available at Red Rock Books. To learn more about Stone's other writings, visit her web site at www.bonniedstone.com

Reprinted with permission from The Daily Independent, Tuesday February 28, 2006.
