

# Ridge Writers on Books

## ‘San Andreas Ain’t No Fault of Mine’

By Bonnie D. Stone

221 pages, trade paperback

Fawltly Press, 2005, \$14.95

By DONNA McCROHAN ROSENTHAL

Consider it a guided tour of the Antelope Valley. “San Andreas Ain’t No Fault of Mine” takes readers through the Antelope Valley Basin from the San Gabriel Mountains to the Tehachapis together with several destinations for day trips beyond.

The book’s scope extends from the world’s largest wind energy producer to the biggest concentration of petroglyphs in the Western Hemisphere right in our own backyard to the world’s longest-running festival, the Wind Festival that begins Jan. 1 and ends Dec. 31 each year.

Award-winning journalist Bonnie D. Stone devotes each chapter to an aspect of historical interest — Native Americans, famous explorers, legendary outlaws, borax, gold, camels, stagecoaches, the railroad, Hollywood’s back lot, pioneers of flight from the earliest to SpaceshipOne and so on -- combining narrative discussions with driving directions and museum information for folks who want to know more so they can plan their own adventures.

She includes such obvious, not-to-be-missed entries as the Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve and Lancaster’s two-day California Poppy Festival in April as well as many spots that some of us never realized existed. Among them, the Swiss chalet-style Antelope Valley Indian Museum on Avenue M in Lancaster has appeared in “Bonanza,” “The Magnificent Seven,” “The Avengers” and “Remington Steele.”

Stone covers organized attractions such as the William S. Hart County Park and Museum that frequently screens silent movies for the public. Located in Newhall, this 22-room mansion formerly belonged to cinema’s first cowboy superstar. She also suggests less structured activities, such as investigating the San Andreas Fault or visiting Robber’s Roost. According to the author, this site was named for the bandit Tiburcio Vasquez after remnants of his campfire were found there.

Stone clearly enjoys local lore of every sort. She cites John C. Fremont’s description of the Joshua as “the most repulsive tree in the vegetable kingdom.” Elsewhere she tells us that old-timers talk about “cabbits” — the offspring of cats who bred with rabbits — but

this must go unsubstantiated because there are no cute cabbits running around today to verify this story.”

Stone concludes with an extensive A-Z listing of places to go, a month-by-month roster of festivals and special events, a chronology and maps.

All in all, this light-hearted yet well-researched volume serves up exactly what its subtitle promises, a “fun and fact-filled guide to the Antelope Valley.” “San Andreas Ain’t No Fault of Mine” is now on sale in the Maturango Museum Store.

*This weekly column is presented by the Ridge Writers, the East Sierra Branch of the California Writers Club. Meetings are held the first Wednesday evening of each month at the Ridgecrest Branch Library, and free programs are offered throughout the year. Visit [www.ridgenet.net/~curtdan/ridgewriters](http://www.ridgenet.net/~curtdan/ridgewriters) for information.*

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