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Alta Dutch Flat Gold Run

# COMMUNITY

Volume 36 – No. 1 PUBLISHED BY THE DUTCH FLAT COMMUNITY CENTER WITH MEMBER SUPPORT Spring 2025

## Dutch Flat’s Community Garden to get makeover in 2025

By Laura Glassco



Photo by Laura Glassco

### Community Garden at the corner of Sacramento and Main Streets

Several years ago, the Community Garden and the Hearse House were deeded over to the Golden Drift Historical Society from the Dutch Flat Community Center. The Hearse House was restored in 2024. We are now focusing our efforts on the Community Garden.

Jeanne Wilson, Board Member of the Golden Drift Historical Society and Member of the Redbud Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and Lora Piscitelli, docent at the Golden Drift Museum, Redbud Society Member and Garden Designer, are co-chairing this effort. They have secured a grant from the Placer County Resource Conservation District to 1. Create a native plant garden; 2. Emphasizing those plants there are excellent pollinators and 3. Have low water consumption requirements.



Silver Bush Lupine

Native pollinator plants that will be added to the Garden include: Lemmon’s ceanothus, hoary coffeeberry, silver bush lupine, hollyleaf redberry, Western azalea, dwarf wild rose, California goldenrod and sulphur buckwheat. In addition to these pollinator plants, the Garden already has yarrow, California fuchsia, woodland strawberry,

### Western Azalea



**To ensure that memorial plants are undisturbed, we are asking those that know of existing memorial plants within the Community Garden to please contact Lora Piscitelli at email: [adreamer57@att.net](mailto:adreamer57@att.net) or cell: 530-368-6836 by April 15.**

common rush and wild blue flax.

Over the years, this beloved space has been given a wide variety of plants. We are asking those that know of existing memorial plants to please contact Lora Piscitelli (see contact information above) by April 15. She will ensure that memorial plants remain in the garden.



California Goldenrod

Additionally, many non-native plants will be removed from the garden to make room for the native pollinator plants. We expect the following plants to be removed and will be available to anyone willing to pick them up: Day lilies, Shasta Daises, Red Hot Pokers, Rosemary, Laurel, Mint and Euphorbia. Lora will notify the community when these plants are available on social media.

Lastly, if you have any of the following items and would like to donate to the Community Garden Project, please contact Lora. We need: River Rock and Garden Benches. Monetary donations are also welcome and are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to Golden Drift Historical Society and mail to PO Box 253, Dutch Flat, CA 95714. Or donate online at [www.goldendrift.org](http://www.goldendrift.org).

Thank you for helping us to revitalize this Community open space as a native plant habitat hosting a wide variety of pollinators!



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## What Community Support Looks Like

By Shana Brown, Superintendent/  
Principal, Alta-Dutch Flat School District

For the Alta-Dutch Flat-Gold Run communities, the Alta-Dutch Flat School is the heart of the community. While other, larger school districts may rely on local organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club to fulfill needs, we truly rely on the support of individuals in the community to reach out with offers of help. Let me share what community support looks like for our school.

Community support means that the owner of the local store buys cupcakes for the entire school for Halloween and Christmas. Thanks, Abe!

Community support means that the generator that was originally purchased by the Dutch Flat Fire Department Ladies’ Auxiliary for the Dutch Flat Water Agency is relocated and donated to the school.

Community support means that the Alta-Dutch Flat School’s Parents’ Club is able to donate over 60 meals to our local community food bank after our Thanksgiving feast.

Community support means that the Dutch Flat Community Center earmarks December donations for families at our school.

***“Thank you for all you do on behalf of the children at Alta-Dutch Flat School”***

Community support means that the local CalFire staff is invited to all of our activities.

Community support means that the Dutch Flat Pool staffs more lifeguards on the days when our students will be there.

Community support means that Alta Dutch Flat School’s Parents’ Club sells out of tickets for the Surf and Turf dinner which supports our annual Ski Day. This year, all of our students were able to ski for free because of our community support.

Community support means that members of our community come to our Veterans’ Day assembly and to our Winter concert.

Community support means that our local restaurant may pass along food to families in need.

Community support means that local service organizations, such as the Oddfellows, Rebekahs, Dutch Flat Community Center and Dutch Flat Pool, present awards at our 8th grade graduation.

Community support means that, literally, members of the community volunteer to work with our students. Thank you Kitty, Amber, and Gunda!

When Alta-Dutch Flat School says that we thank you for your support, we mean that we feel your support behind us. We know what we mean to our community. You are generous in your giving and we do not take that lightly. Thank you for all you do on behalf of the children at Alta-Dutch Flat School.

Shana Brown  
Superintendent/Principal

[alta.k12.ca.us](http://alta.k12.ca.us)  
[sbrown@alta.k12.ca.us](mailto:sbrown@alta.k12.ca.us)



34050 Alta Bonnybrook Rd.  
+530-389-8283



COMMUNITY STAFF

Publisher:

Dutch Flat Community Center  
P. O. Box 14, Dutch Flat CA 95714  
530-389-8310

Editorial Staff:

Sarah Fugate, Editor

Reporters & Contributors:

Shana Brown  
Nancy Bullard  
Diane Ewing  
Sarah Fugate  
Bill Gallaher  
Laura Glassco  
Geri Lennon  
Debby McClatchy  
Mia Monroe  
Shelley Willsmore

Special Contributor:

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Diane Ewing  
Doug Hughs, At Large  
Bob Pfister, At Large  
Shelley Willsmore, At Large

Email: dfcc.newspaper@gmail.com

Address: 933 Stockton Street, Dutch Flat

Website: www.dutchflatcc.org

Facebook: Dutch Flat Community Center

X: @dutchflatcc

Views expressed in letters, guest opinion pieces and other contributions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, the Dutch Flat Community Center, or its Board.

This newspaper is published quarterly and distributed to Dutch Flat Community Center members and to residents of the Center’s service area from Gold Run to Emigrant Gap in Placer County, California.

We welcome contributions from readers. Submission deadline for the next issue:

June 10, 2025.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Attic: Thursdays, 10 am - 1 pm.

Dutch Flat Community Center Board of Directors Meeting: 2nd Mondays, 6:00 pm. Location varies. Contact Laura Glassco, 916-778-8308.

Dutch Flat Community Center Potluck: 3rd Thursdays. 6:00 pm. Bring a place setting, your own drink, and a dish to share. July and August at the Dutch Flat Pool.

Dutch Flat Seventh Day Adventist: Community Worship Service, Wednesday, 6:30 pm and Saturday, 3:30 pm. 936 Stockton Street. Contact 706-633-8789.

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church Pancake Breakfast: 2nd Saturdays, 8:00 am -10:00 am.

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church Arts & Crafts: Thursdays, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. All are welcome. Learn something new!

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church: Worship Service, Sundays, 11:00 am. Fellowship lunch following service. Contact: 916-847-8477.

Golden Drift Historical Society Board Meeting: 1st Monday of February, April, June, August, October and December, 7 pm. Golden Drift Museum, Main Street. Contact Sarah Fugate, 530-210-5085.

Pioneer Union Church, Gold Run: Worship Service, Sundays, 10 am.

Placer County Library Mobile Service: See Page 5.

Sierra First Baptist Church, Alta: Worship Service, Sundays, 11 am. 33990 Alta Bonny Nook Rd., Alta. Contact 530-389-2168.

Sierra First Baptist Church Bible Study: Mondays, 8:30 am,

Sierra First Baptist Church Community Lunch: Mondays, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. Free.

Sierra First Baptist Church Food Pantry: Thursdays, 10 am - 12 pm.

A message from the DFCC President

By Laura Glassco

Spring tried to arrive in February but took a step back in our early March snow! During the winter, many helped to organize our backstage room full of decorations and WES items. We now know what’s there and can access it easily.

See the Spring events below. The 9th Annual Artisan Faire is on Saturday, May 3rd. It will have many artists selling their handmade jewelry, watercolors, clothing, lawn art and more! A delicious lunch will be available from Maria’s Mexican Food Truck. The Golden Drift Museum will also be open. So come get those unique gift items, enjoy a tasty lunch and drop by the museum for a visit!

The 3rd Annual Spring Fling will be held on Saturday, May 17. The party theme this year is “Hippy Happy”. So come wearing your beads or whatever you like. Tickets will be on sale at the Trading Post April 1. Seating is



limited, so get your tickets early for a great beef tri-tip dinner, fantastic silent auction items and music by Malarkey. All proceeds help the Center continue to provide fun and enjoyment for all.



Sierra Nevada foothills band, Malarkey, will provide musical entertainment at the Spring Fling on Saturday, May 17. Tickets will be on sale at the Trading Post beginning April 1.

Here’s what’s coming up this Spring:

|          |           |                                 |
|----------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| April 20 | 6 pm      | Potluck at the Community Center |
| May 3    | 9 am-3 pm | Spring Artisan Faire            |
| May 15   | 6 pm      | Potluck at the Community Center |
| May 17   | 5 pm      | Spring Fling Dinner and Dance   |
| June 19  | 6 pm      | Potluck at the Community Center |

**CORRECTION:** It was previously reported that the Golden Drift Historical Society paid one-half the cost to restore the historical school banners now on display in the Community Center. In fact, the GDHS paid one-eighth of the cost.

Become a Member of the Dutch Flat Community Center!

Dutch Flat Community Center Membership Form  
A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization (Tax ID# 68-0484699)

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Mail to: Dutch Flat Community Center, P.O. Box 14, Dutch Flat, CA 95714

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# Welcome Home

## Angels in Fatigues

By Bill Gallaher

“INCOMING!” “Again, this week? Rockets this time! Shrapnel! We’ve got patients to protect. I’ve got to either move them under the beds or cover them with mattresses.”

1st Lt Sharon Lane, pictured right, never finished her shift. A Viet Cong rocket hit the 312th Evacuation Hospital in Chu Lai, South Vietnam, killing Lt Lane while she was protecting others. Ironically, her patients that day were Vietnamese. Mostly friendlies, but maybe not all. When the Viet Cong, who were rice-hatted farmers by day and black pajamas clad soldiers at night, needed medical care, they put on their rice hats and became farmers and used the evac hospitals.

Lt Lane knew she might be treating Viet Cong soldiers, and could have protected herself, but her patients were her first thought. She was a hero!! Lt Lane was the only American nurse killed by enemy fire in the Vietnam War. 7 others died by non-combat means. All the approximately 6500 nurses volunteered for Vietnam. Nurses were assigned to Army or Navy, with men making up about 20%. They are ANGELS IN FATIGUES.

Women combat vets? In Viet Nam? Many people, including Vietnam vets, are unaware of women’s important role in the war effort. I even heard one vet claim “there were no women in Vietnam”. (He apparently was one of the lucky ones who didn’t get a free ride on a Dust Off, or Medivac, helicopter.) My brother stepped on a land mine in Vietnam and spent 18 months in a VA hospital. He fell in love with most every nurse that attended him! These Angels in Fatigues, many just out of nursing school, often worked round the clock in massive casualty situations, directing triage, assisting with emergency tracheotomies and amputations, inserting tubes to assist surgeons, and removing damaged tissue and shrapnel from wounds. They were called “Pluckers” because they plucked out shrapnel from wounded soldiers. They also returned home to the same unfriendly reception and psychological trauma their male patients suffered.

What would we have done without you Angels in Fatigues? What was it like for nurses in combat zones? Most were stationed in evacuation hospitals, temporary medical facilities set up near active combat zones. Tents and cots. Hot, humid and buggy. The mission was to stabilize wounded soldiers before transferring them for further treatment.

In their own words, these are their stories. The following quotes are from nurses that were stationed in various Evac Hospitals in Vietnam:

“On January 30, 1968, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong launched the Tet Offensive. It is a period of my life I will never forget. I had volunteered for the 12th Evacuation Hospital at Cu Chi where some



of the bloodiest fighting of the War took place. We were inundated with casualties that went on for weeks. The triage area filled up as fast as we could move them out. When a helicopter landed, patients were rushed by stretcher to the pre-op hut where clothes were cut off. As the patients were examined, the severity and location of their wounds was assessed, transfusions and respiratory resuscitation started and superficial hemorrhage was controlled. Some wounds were horrendous, beyond description. Those patients who were unstable were immediately taken to the ORs. Others were sent to x-ray first.”

“At times, there were two choppers on the ground unloading patients and several others circling. In mass casualty situations, we might have 50, 60 arriving at once. The base itself was frequently attacked by mortars and rocket fire. When that happened, we rushed to the shelters and as soon as the noise stopped, we ran to pre-op. In mass casualty situations, extra tents were hastily erected around the helipad and these served as extra ER’s and resuscitation centers. I had to do the triage and I felt the enormity of that task. Walking down the rows of desperately wounded men, with a glance and cursory exam deciding who would go to surgery first and who could wait for the next available operating room. It was the hardest job I ever had.”

“We heard a radio call that Hill 950, west of Quang Tri Province, was getting run over with mortars. Our hospital sent two “Dust Offs”. The fighting was intense and they could only get in with one helicopter that only evacuated one of three Americans. One soldier was later deemed missing in action and the other a POW. Back at the hospital, we waited for the chopper to return, which was tenuous because the chopper was being shot at and had to make an emergency landing at Khe Sahn. Both of our crews made it home safe.”

“Coming home from Vietnam on the “freedom bird”, I came into Travis Air Force Base.... They kept us on the plane at Travis for two hours before they let us deplane. They said it was for our safety and told us not to wear our uniforms. They waited until there were very few people in the airport to let us off. American uniformed service members were being harassed and attacked by anti-war protesters so we were cautioned not to

be in uniform for our own well-being. You mean I volunteered and spent a hellish year in the midst of a war, caring for my brother soldier’s wounds, and now I am home safe but I am at risk here because of my service?”

Capt. Diane Evans, an Army nurse in Vietnam: “The men sandbagged the hooches and hospitals as they were rocketed and mortared. Soldiers were in the guard towers, some standing guard, getting killed, protecting nurses. We were in the hospitals saving lives. We had to measure up. When a soldier came in and his life depended on us, we learned quickly. We were the youngest nurses ever sent into battle. Most of us were under 25 years old. I was 21. We had energy and stamina. We wanted to do our job. We were given a mission. We wanted to get each other home alive. Many times, we were in the hospital saving lives as we heard incoming and outgoing artillery. We got used to knowing what the sounds meant, and the air raid sirens. We pulled together as a team — men and women. Our job was to take care of each other and get our jobs done and get home safely. We were there to protect our patients.”

Another nurse said “No one really talked about the women who served in the military. We were just invisible veterans. Even while we were serving, there wasn’t a lot written about what we were doing.”

“As air raid sirens and mortar blasts and sapper attacks were happening, Dust-off helicopter crews dropped wounded off at field hospitals. We worked around-the-clock to treat the injured despite attacks from the Viet Cong.”

“We were so tired. We were working on pure adrenaline. And giggling at nothing. I had worked in emergency rooms with automobile accidents, but nothing prepared me for this”

“We learned techniques such as starting intravenous lines in the dark, performing amputations and working with burn patients.”

“We heard artillery rounds 24 hours a day.”

“Our shifts were 12 hours; 6 days a week and our incoming came by helicopter. It would be called a ‘PUSH’ and the wounded were triaged in the ER. Often when working day shifts, we might have to crawl to safety if under a rocket attack.”

Thank you to all the women who have served our country, and especially the Angels in Fatigues.

There is too much to tell in one column about these heroes. My next column will share more personal experiences and letters from nurses as they talk about their former patients.

Also, one of the evac hospitals was directly over VC tunnels.

More on tunnels and “Tunnel Rats” later.

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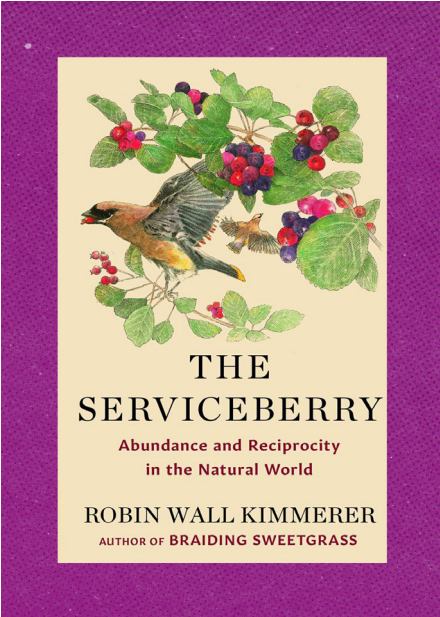


# How to Love and be Loved by a Forest

By Mia Monroe

For half a century I was in public service in our nation’s national parks and continue to this day as a VIP (volunteer in parks!). I not only offered this service to you as citizens and visitors to our public lands but also was called to be a steward of the natural systems, species, and seasonal rhythms often as a restoration ecologist, but also to help all engage deeply meaningfully as well as enjoy nature!

It was a reciprocal relationship we all had and indispensable to continue. I realized the deeper meanings of this when recently reading Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *The Serviceberry* this winter and she expanded the way we - the natural world and us, nature and each of us - can give and take intentionally, carefully and abundantly. *I hope you all approach this coming “fuse of green” aka as spring in that spirit of reciprocity.*



All of us have a profound feeling, maybe expressed as love, for the nature around us at Dutch Flat. The many and necessary connections with our landscape, our biophilia. This could be something material and deep in our bodies, such as the exchange between creatures, plants and earth. Or even more basic like photosynthesis that gives us oxygen from green leaves. Maybe it is the catch of the breath at the bursting open of a bud or the greening up of the trees. Position your deck chair to the sun (or sunset or night sky!).

Maybe you have an early spring walk in mind! That’s a great time to think about the language of the woods through the framework of the Five Love languages:

*Words of Affirmation:* Speak to the trees and maybe even speak up for them (think SYRCL or NFARA)

*Quality Time:* Whether you’re on a five-minute stroll or errand or a five mile hike, leave a few moments to forget the tick of the clock, breathe in and out to fall in to tree time. A new study shows positive effects to our well-being just looking at a colorful flower bud for 3 minutes!

*Physical touch:* Hug a tree! Touch your toes into the moss or hummus. Plant a

garden and imagine the harvest ahead!  
*Acts of Service:* Pick up litter, do trail work, share your favorite area with someone else. Pay attention to other living things there.

*Giving and Receiving Gifts:* Offer a healthy yard. Water wisely. Maybe leave a little mess of sticks, cuttings as a hiding spot for little critters. Consider shade. Offer a bird feeder. Pause to enjoy the beauty of a butterfly, the song of a bird, crickets and frogs at day’s end.

Spring is time to revisit nature, become reacquainted, watch the bare branches become clothed again with leaves and more! Who will migrate back in? Say thank you for the fresh air and brightness returning to our lives! Here’s how to listen to *The Serviceberry*: <https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/the-serviceberry/>



# DUTCH FLAT

## Spring Artisan Faire



### Saturday, May 3, 2025

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

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By Debby McClatchy

Gold Run’s Main Street

In the Golden Drift Museum, on the left side of the picture gallery, is a large picture of Gold Run’s Main Street in 1870. The businesses on the left include their Odd Fellows Hall, Brown’s Bank, Leach’s Saloon, Oliver’s Store, Runckel’s Bakery and Saloon, Weber’s Saloon, a notions store, Warner’s Drug Store, and Hawkin’s Tin Shop. On the right are Anderson’s Blacksmith, Heintz Mercantile, and the Hackett House Hotel. After The Good Templars, a fraternal organization that allowed women, but no alcohol, flourished in Gold Run, the saloons saw business greatly diminish. The Gold Run Ditch and Mining Company had as its president, Allen Towle. This, plus Mr. Runckel owning bakeries in both Gold Run and Dutch Flat, shows a close relationship between the two towns.

Jay Street in Dutch Flat

Jay Street in Dutch Flat is a small alley that cuts straight through town behind the Community Center to end quickly on School Street. Originally, the lane was named Joseph Street, after one of the Dornbach founding fathers, but then shortened to “Jay”, probably by the County. When I was a child it was informally called “Pig Alley”. It was only as an adult that I learned this was a more socially acceptable way of saying “Pigalle”, as the area had been Dutch Flat’s red light district in its heyday. Little mention of this area is found in the town’s histories. Isaac Coffin refers to it briefly, as his second wife, Cynthia, was supposedly friends with some of the ladies who worked there.

Town Fires in Gold Rush Towns

Dutch Flat is known as the only Gold Rush Town to have never completely burned down. In most towns, during the first twelve years of the Era, many “buildings” were built of pine and cloth with stove pipes thrust through, a certain recipe for disaster. If a fire started, it generally spread. Mining took place in warmer months, and everything was bone dry.

Ophir was thus destroyed on July 18, 1853. The fire started in the kitchen of the Union Hotel and all Main Street was consumed, except the Brewery.

The first large fire in Auburn was June 4, 1855. It started in Chinatown near the Methodist Church and quickly spread to Dr. Rinze’s Drugstore, the Diana Bowling Saloon, and the Keehner’s Bakery. Within one hour and twenty minutes, eighty buildings were destroyed.

More Gold Rush Trivia



Main Street, Gold Run, 1870

Colfax had two serious fires during the nineteenth century, one in 1874 and another in 1887. The 1874 fire started in a barber shop located on a plot now housing the City Market. All wooden buildings on Main Street burned, leaving only those made of brick, including the Masonic and Odd Fellows Halls. The 1887 fire started in the May Hotel and was disastrous in that the whole town lay in ruins.

Some towns that burned down were moved to better locations. In the early 1850s Michigan Bluff, known then as Michigan City, was home to Leland Stanford’s home and mercantile. Twenty-one miles east of Colfax, it was one of Placer County’s oldest towns. Mining started there early in the summer of 1848 by a party of sailors and a company from Sutter’s Fort. The mining method was hard-rock, where extensive tunnels were dug into local ridges. The amount of gold found was massive.

In 1857 the whole town burned down, and was not rebuilt, as the ground was laced with tunnels and unstable. A new town was built slightly to the north and renamed. In 1882 there were still 468 inhabitants, but, by the turn of the century, Michigan Bluff was basically a ghost town.

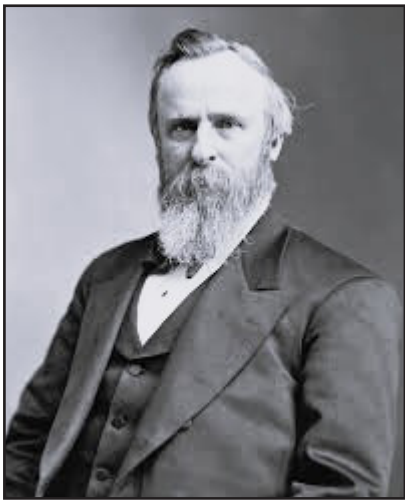


Rules for Stagecoach Passengers

(Posted at most stations and some coach interior roofs; some Victorian language edited for better understanding)

- 1. No liquor preferred. If you must drink, share the bottle, particularly with the driver.
- 2. If ladies are present, no smoking is preferred. Chewing tobacco is permitted, but spit with the wind, not into it.

- 3. If ladies are present, no profanity is preferred. Except the driver, or else the teams will not understand him.
- 4. Robes are provided for comfort. Anyone hogging them will be asked to sit outside.
- 5. Do not snore.
- 6. Do not lean on your neighbor.
- 7. Do not shoot off your firearms; it spooks the teams.
- 8. In the event of a runaway coach, do not jump off, as you will be at the mercy of the elements, highwaymen, and coyotes.
- 9. Never discuss politics, religion, or past stagecoach accidents or robberies with your fellow passengers.
- 10. Unchivalrous behavior of gentlemen to ladies is not tolerated. Those guilty will be put off the stage, where it may be a long walk to their destination.



Rutherford B. Hayes, 19th U.S. President

An Honored Visit to Dutch Flat

In April of 1880, President Rutherford B. Hayes traveled west on the transcontinental railroad, then stopped off in Dutch Flat for a campaign fundraiser. After that fancy, alcohol-fueled event, the President fell down the stairs in the Opera House and was laid up for ten days in the Dutch Flat Hotel. A constant stream of supplicants kept the party going until the recovered, but satiated, man was able to join his entourage, who had been holed up in the Colfax Hotel with ex-Vice President Schuyler Colfax, coincidentally also on a trip west.

April fools! Which one?



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# Even the Rich and Famous

By G. A. Lennon

As most are aware, Hollywood recently lost a fabulous actor, Gene Hackman. In a strange set of events, he was found dead in his mansion near Sante Fe. To further add to the shock, his wife and a pet dog were found, also dead, in another room in the house. If you haven't watched the news for a while, the weird set of events played out for days, criss crossing the Oscars which led to further upending of *what if* details. It was, of course, a media storm. Tonight, after laboring hours over tax prep, I simply had to grab the remote and a tiny glass of wine and check in on the continuing investigation. I wasn't ready for the updated news.

An august gathering of New Mexican law enforcement, medical and environmental gurus and the ever-present media were gathered outside of the Hackman residence. An autopsy indicated that Gene Hackman's wife had died of a strange infectious disease known as Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome, while Gene had died in another room of cardiac complications exacerbated by Alzheimer's. By the way, he did not test positive for Hantavirus. It doesn't pass human-to-human and dogs don't get it either. The dog in a cage well, likely died of being in a cage for many days. Re-reading that last sentence is rather horrifying. You can't make this kind of drama up. The front door was ajar, nothing had been stolen, but at some point a hidden passage had been found under the main floor. We all know what the media did with that tidbit. In addition, most of us suffer from voyeurism. It's easy to go into sleuthing 1A and ponder publicly over the unanswered questions. Could we give them a rest? Imagine being their family and having to hear over and over the details on news and social media. But as I sit here and try to remember details of life cycles, of rodents and viruses, I am also aware of the twisted hand of fate.

Here are some cool people and wealthy ones for sure.... living in a mansion in the Southwest. Gene was 95, his wife, Betsy Arakawa Hackman, a classic pianist was 65, the dog was one of 3. The other two dogs were alive and in the house. Now I'm not trying to be ghoulish and string out all the details, but frankly, it is rare, this viral thief in the night.

The virus in question that took Mrs. Hackman, was Hantavirus, also known as the Sin Nombre Virus. It was originally discovered back in the seventies in New Mexico. It is a level 4 virus. OK, I can't stand it, you need to know what level 4 means. When one is doing research at one of the bio institutions, researchers have to wear hazmat suits with controlled oxygen. All the movies you've seen like Dustin Hoffman in *Outbreak*, as well as the recent thriller *Contagion*, paint an eerie picture of a virus that must be respected and considered lethal. Ebola is one of them. With a mortality rate exceeding 50%, Hantavirus ranks in

that classification as well and is often fatal. Since I've worked in world health, I have also harbored a fascination for the truly creepy viruses and Hantavirus, especially since it is carried by the deer mouse is on my list.

People who know me are amused by my inordinate ability to research the living life out of something I am interested in. So, the mouse that carries Hantavirus became my own personal project about 10 years ago. I googled the "mouse that carries Hantavirus" for starters. I came up with a photo of a darling little mouse with white chest and paws and a bit larger than normal ears and brown fur. When I was working in tropical medicine at UCLA, a gazillion years back, my prof's kids had one as a pet. They are deceptively sweet looking. Then their genus name was *Peromyscus*. Now that's a cool name for any mouse. Hantavirus hadn't been discovered then. The ordinary field mouse is just the plain Jane of the mouse kingdom but entirely looked over for its own capacity to carry bad diseases but let's stay focused on our cool mouse.

Diving deeper into my research, I already knew about the outbreak in the seventies but wanted to dive deeper. I found that



Deer Mouse

not only did the *Peromyscus* live here in the foothills and Tahoe but Hantavirus had been diagnosed more than once here in California.... nearby. Its habitat? Overcrowded spaces, like my shed. So, I went outside and sure enough, I found mouse droppings. My imagination took off at warp speed. I called one of my virology friends at Berkeley and got a box of disposable hazmat suits and gloves and a few boxes of N95s. Then I got industrial Clorox. I drove my handyman nuts with details and he agreed to help me disinfect the notorious shed. The morning he arrived, I was already in uniform. I need to tell you that Hollywood is NOT accurate. You NEVER see an actress larger than a 4 in a hazmat, so I looked alarmingly unattractive in my bio garb. Undaunted, I handed him one of the suits, an n95 and gloves. He responded ...I'm not wearing that "crap". I countered, "you MUST!" We stood and argued, and I even threw out the legal side of things....." You are my employee and it is my responsibility,...you MUST!" I won't bore you with any more arguing gambits but it got ugly. Finally, he agreed to wear the mask and gloves but stood firm on no hazmat suit.

So here we go, into the shed. He quickly

looked at the evidence and said, "Hold on, I need to get my glasses out of my truck." When he returned, he laughed and said, "S@#T! We dodged a bullet! Those are dead ants not mouse poop." (Trust me I've cleaned up the expletives). He was right.

I had prepped the place before we entered by spraying all down with Clorox and letting it dry to disinfect the area. I would have swept or vacuumed, but the *how to get rid of section* warned not to do so. Since it is in the urine of these darling mice, it would aerosolize on dust.

I'll always remember that day and how Dan made it so laughable. My Madam Curie stance did NOT phase the mountain dude.

Now here's the kicker. A couple of years later, some mice did move in during the winter. One in particular had the guts of thunder. You know mice.... They get careless and leave their droppings everywhere. I tried "mouse whispering" but they are either hard of hearing or just plain ignore me. Finally, I got serious with the peanut butter traps. I heard the snap in the middle of the night. Yep, he was dead as a door nail. HOWEVER, he/she? had a white chest and white paws and larger than normal ears.... Needless to say, I did Infection Control procedures big-time. I also immersed his little fur carcass in the industrial Clorox. I'm a pacifist regarding animals. I love em all, though black spiders and snakes have received a bad rap in this century. But mouse dropping were a "Call to Arms".

Why am I boring you with these details? Why don't we discuss Gene Hackman's film history.... perhaps another day. But Hantavirus was discovered initially on a reservation in New Mexico. A young man was living in a trailer that was chocked full of clutter, dried food and trash and had become mouse infested. He developed a strange kind of pneumonia or flu, you know the typical symptoms of respiratory infection and died. The media were all over that one but he unfortunate native American wasn't famous. It nevertheless got a bit of momentary fame many years ago. The health department isolated an unknown virus. Sin nombre means without a name.... So it was initially called *Sin Nombre virus*.

Now I'll wrap this up with a warning: Ya'll need to clean up your sheds and garages and crawl spaces. You also need to plug up any entrances to lower spaces. We've already read that mother bears are now birthing under houses. I'm not sure which is worse, a deadly virus encounter or an overprotective mama bear. Your choice. But every time I go into that shed I look around and promise myself in springtime I'll clear it out. Sure, I will. But remember, other mice, the street gray ones now also carry diseases and some carry Hantavirus. So DO NOT EVER vacuum or sweep a place that has been closed up and nested in.

And now I'm supposed to go to bed and sleep like a baby? Yep, don't ask me to handle a snake or mountain lion, but the unseen, hmm, zzz. If I can't sleep, you guessed it, Netflix will surely have a flick or two of Gene's work playing, hopefully "The French Connection" and his role as Jimmy "Popeye" Doyle. With the dawn of social media, everyone now is "exposed" and often think they qualify as experts.... including my holy self. But tell you what? Were we better not knowing? I don't think so. It pays to be informed and to act on that wisdom. Good Luck with that bit of advice.

I guess I have to do a U-turn on Gene's wife. Good Lord, she was a gorgeous woman and for the life of me, how on earth did she get infected with Hantavirus? The doctor on the news was very careful to note that the house was clean but that an outside area had been identified as a potential site for mice. In addition, stored kibble dog food is also an excellent source for mouse nesting. Killer viruses don't pay attention to human resumes and bank accounts. They ride side-saddle on the backs of rodents who don't die of the illness, just pass it on--oddly called Spillover in the biz. This could happen anywhere where the opportunities for mice, food, and storage occur.

I send a silent prayer for the Hackman family who have to sustain the social media frenzy, let alone the loss of fine folks like Gene and Betsy Hackman. Even the rich and famous .....sigh, even the rich and famous.



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