

Let the holiday shopping begin!

—SEE THE KAWEAH KALENDAR ON PAGE 12 FOR LOCAL BAZAARS AND GIFT SHOWS

# THE Kaweah Commonwealth

A JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO LABOR AND WHO THINK

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WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THREE RIVERS AND SEQUOIA~KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

## Weather cool but dry

There is little chance of a shower but there are pristine mornings, hazy sunny afternoons, and clear, starry nights in the 10-day forecast. In fact, right now, with daytime highs around 70 degrees, Kaweah Country has some of the best weather to be found anywhere in the country.

Just consider the alternatives. Southern California is experiencing those dreaded Santa Ana winds with gusts in excess of 60 mph and a stubborn fire season that just won't quit. Areas located north of Sacramento will receive rain this weekend. For now, the storm track is deflecting the brunt of the moisture to the Pacific Northwest.

But local weather watchers are advised to be patient. It is not unusual for a mild El Nino to develop gradually with some significant energy for California in December and January.

The biggest local weather event of the last century occurred in the days leading up to Christ-

mas 1955. That 100-year event led to historic flooding, riverfront homes being washed away, and left Three Rivers totally cut off for a couple of days.

But folks in Three Rivers did what they always do in times of emergency. They rolled up their collective sleeves, dug out, pumped out, and then watched the flood waters recede and cleaned up the mess.

The debris that washed down the Kaweah canyon was of epic proportion. So much so that it collected behind the Dinely Bridge at an alarming rate.

The bridge soon gave way under the massive weight and sent water cascading down the channel that was so high and powerful that it washed out the North Fork Bridge next.

If you don't think that flooding could ever happen again, think again. In the meantime, give thanks for seasonable temperatures and a drying but beautiful Kaweah Country landscape.

## SIERRA SCENE



The Mineral King valley as it appeared Friday, Nov. 20. Snow coats Farewell Gap (elevation 10,587 feet) and the mountains that flank the pass, Tulare and Florence peaks (on the left) and Vandever Mountain. The current snowpack is mainly a remnant of the October 13 storm that dropped eight to nine inches at elevations above 10,000 feet. No precipitation is in the immediate forecast.

## Deadlines loom for comments on two Kings Canyon projects

In separate statements released this month, National Park Service officials requested that public comments be received on the Cedar Grove bridge replacement by Friday, Dec. 4, and on concessions operations in Kings Canyon National Park by Monday, Dec. 21.

"All comments received by the deadlines will be incorporated into the final environmental document," said Adrienne Freeman, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks public information officer. "The public input is a critical part of the process."

The Cedar Grove Bridge replacement is currently being ad-

ressed as an EA (environmental assessment). The bridge that is being proposed to be replaced was built in 1939 and is one of six bridges that span the South Fork of the Kings River in Kings Canyon.

The existing bridge was designed to have a maximum load of nine tons but due to its loss of structural integrity, its current capacity is seven tons.

Utilities, including fiberoptic, electrical, and telephone lines, and a sewer connection with the Cedar Grove Lodge are located under the bridge. A pedestrian sidewalk across the bridge also

—see **PROJECTS**, page 11

## New exhibits unveiled at 3R gallery

by JOHN ELLIOTT

With all the visitors expected in Three Rivers throughout the holiday season, Discoveries West Gallery and Archives is opening two new exhibits: one features a rare example of the folk art of a 19th-century Californio rancho while the other includes a new perspective of the paintings of Rick Gregory, contemporary Three Rivers artist.

The folk art, the centerpiece of a new exhibit devoted to the California Rancho period, is composed of several redwood panels with Basque graffiti that came from an old barn near Cook's Corner

in Orange County. The barn was among the last vestiges of the former Rancho Canada de Los Alisos, a Spanish-Mexican land grant that was granted in 1842 and 1846 to José Serrano.

Today, the ranch lands have become the modern cities of El Toro and Lake Forest. A reconstructed version of the original José Serrano Adobe has been preserved at Heritage Hill, a 4.1-acre county park located on El Toro Road.

The old rancho once included much more land than the 10,688 acres that were patented by the U.S. Land Commission in 1871. The principal industry in those days was the grazing of long-

CALIFORNIA RETROSPECTIVES TONIGHT!




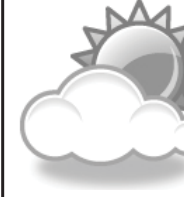
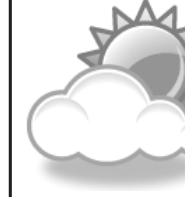
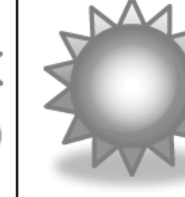
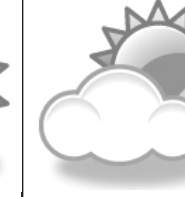
Friday, Nov. 27, 7:30 pm Discoveries West Gallery & Archives

horn cattle where the half-wild herds roamed free on the flanks of the Santa Ana Mountains. The droughts of the 1860s and the next two decades ruined the local cattle industry.

In the 1880s, much of the old cattle grazing acreage was leased

—see **GALLERY**, page 11

## • KAWEAH COUNTRY OUTLOOK: three rivers • lemon cove • woodlake •

Saturday, November 28	Sunday, November 29	Monday, November 30	Tuesday, December 1	Wednesday, December 2	Thursday, December 3	Friday, December 4
						
Sunny Hi 62 • Lo 35	Sunny Hi 62 • Lo 37	Sunny Hi 65 • Lo 38	Clouds and sun Hi 63 • Lo 38	Clouds and sun Hi 58 • Lo 37	Sunny Hi 59 • Lo 38	Clouds and sun Hi 60 • Lo 38

## WEATHER WATCH

Clear night skies will provide views where, for stargazers, there's no time like late fall/early winter to look up. There are many bright stars this time of year, but the planet Mars will soon be outshining them all. Want to experience some weather extremes? Head for Death Valley National Park where daytime highs are in the 80s, then go to Truckee for the night to experience some single-digit temperatures.