

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

JOHN CABRERA, NATIVE SON

John Cabrera is a native son of Camarillo, having been born here and having spent his entire 92 years living here or nearby. He is not rich or famous; he is not an early settler or the son of one; he is a hardworking, everyday guy, typical of the hundreds of service workers who have helped make the area what it is today. He is a frequent visitor to the museum; that is where we got to know him and heard his story.

John spent his first seven years on the ranches that made up early Camarillo. He was born on the Lewis Ranch; his family moved to the Daily/Flynn ranch soon after. For those of you new to the area, California State University Channel Islands now is where the Lewis Ranch was, and our museum is on grounds that belonged at one time to the Daily/Flynn ranch. His family lived in a small house on one corner of the ranch. School was on Ventura Blvd; it was a long walk through the fruit and walnut trees to get there.



When he was about eight years old, the family moved to a house on Glenn Drive. The streets of Arneill, Glenn, Fulton and Lomita became his neighborhood. Nearby were two grocery stores; one was on Barry street, the other on Lomita and Barry. Adolfo Camarillo's son, Frank, shopped there as did all of his neighbors.

The main business district of town was along Ventura Boulevard. He remembers the theater, a restaurant, Etchechoury Brothers service station, the Bank of America, Max Riave's clothing store, the Post Office, King's Market on the corner of Lewis Road and Ventura Blvd, another market and a pharmacy.

He attended Pleasant Valley School and he recalls that when he was eleven, the school principle, Onorinda Jones, "hired a few of us kids to hoe weeds for her lima bean patch." He also worked in the Santa Rosa Valley on a farm near where Baron Brothers is today. The next year, he spent the summer picking lemons and oranges and "Wow, was it HOT!" For this, he needed a work permit. He didn't have one or even know how to get one. Fortunately, the school provided it for him.

Mrs. Banner, his seventh and eighth grade teacher, was his favorite. Her son, Bobby, was a friend of John's brother. Her house at Fifth and Pleasant Valley Road is still there behind all the trees. She taught for 27 years in Camarillo and passed away in 1948.

When John was about 14, he left school. His parents had split up and moved away but he wanted to stay in town so he went to work to support himself. He survived on odd jobs and farm work until a friend taught him how to do upholstery. This led to a job in Oxnard at age 19, working for an upholsterer. He always liked learning new things and looking for ways to better himself. The commute was difficult so he moved to Oxnard. He stayed on that job for 12 years.

There was not a lot of money to be made in upholstering and he wanted to return to Camarillo so he accepted "Colonel" Lucas Cardello's offer to join him in starting a body shop. It was to be the first and only body shop in Camarillo at that time. The company was called Cardello Custom Coach Craft. It was located on Dawson Drive, a space that eventually became Cox and Swan-son. They repaired and repainted car and truck bodies only; they did not repair motors.

John and his family lived in a rented house for 18 years; he eventually purchased a mobile home here. After retiring from the body shop, he worked for Mazda for eleven years, readying cars that came off the ships in Port Hueneme. "It was not easy," he said, "but I like to keep busy". He believes that you make your own opportunities.

He lost his wife, Susan, recently but he remains the same friendly, smiling guy. He still drives himself, and is willing to do odd jobs when asked. His only son was wounded in the Vietnam War. He has two grandsons; one is a fireman and the other is a policeman. They live south of Los Angeles.

BARBARA WAGNER: IN REMEMBRANCE

It is with sadness that we relate the December 9th passing of Barbara Wagner, exemplary volunteer for many organizations in Camarillo. She will be missed dearly at the Pleasant Valley Historical Society as she was an active board member serving as Corresponding Secretary and media contact for many years as well as working at every event held at the museum.

Barbara held an executive position at Prudential Insurance where she worked for more than 30 years. She lived in Camarillo for close to 30 years where she volunteered with many children and adult literacy programs such as Laubach Literary Council, Pleasant Valley School District's "First Five" and "Pleasant Valley Neighborhood for Learning."

She was on the boards of the Friends of the Camarillo Library and Rancho Adolfo Mobil Home Estates and the advisory board for "First Five." The Camarillo Chamber of Commerce recognized her on two different occasions as "Volunteer of the Year" and "Senior of the Year."



Barbara always found time to do anything that was asked and she did it promptly with no-nonsense professionalism and a smile. We will truly miss her.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2019

It is that time of year for renewing your support of Camarillo's only museum that concentrates on the entire Pleasant Valley. Our museum features people and their artifacts that reflect what the early settlers would have had access to in their homes, as well as the history of Camarillo and Somis. The historic items in our collections are not found anywhere else in the area.

We need you to renew, or join for the first time, to allow us to continue to preserve items for present viewing and for future displays. Archival products are expensive, but necessary, to protect our unique history's artifacts.

We have no paid officers or employees for our non-profit organization. Our greatest expenses pay for the professional maintenance of the Charles Honn Botanical Garden and the water that helps it bloom. Some people join the museum just for the privilege of using the Gazebo for small events. All members are welcome to reserve the gazebo for their use.

Please use the enclosed envelope to return your tax-deductible membership renewal.

Thanks in advance.

DOCENTS NEEDED

Docents are the key to a successful experience at the museum. The first impression for a first time visitor will be the warm welcome they receive and the encouragement to learn about the Pleasant Valley.

Why don't you join the docent team? You will receive personal training and guidance to make you comfortable to share information with the public. You are needed. Contact Bill/Joy at pvhBill@gmail.com.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been an outstanding fall—attendance has been amazing. People are coming back to see what is new at the museum. The month of November saw over 300 people visit the museum and grounds. The Ventura County Garden Club held their meeting in the gazebo and toured the museum and garden. The speaker was from PVHS. CAPE School (Camarillo Academy of Progressive Education) used our gardens on four different days, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., to take family portraits. The days were Saturdays and Sundays and we had lots of visitors inside the museum by the families who came for their pictures.

We hosted a birthday party for Terry DeWolfe's 85th birthday and a reception to remember Dr. Phillip Snow, a long-time dentist in Camarillo. Dr. Snow's son-in-law is Rich Honn. Both were special events and showed PVHS's ability to accommodate and even entertain.

People come into the museum surprised at the quality of our offerings and apologizing for not coming sooner. They have lived in Camarillo for a long time and are just starting to come for a visit. They have seen the sign, looked at our website, and/or had us recommended by a friend. It is gratifying that so many are returning to see what is new. We try to change displays, where possible, every three months.

We have received and accessed some exceptional donations. The family of Ralph and Evelyn Cawelti has donated an amazing history of the Cawelti family in the Pleasant Valley. John Cawelti came to the Pleasant Valley in 1868 and purchased the X-Mission land from the lawyers for Mission San Buenaventura in 1884. The land runs along what is now Lewis Road from the corner of Ventura Blvd. to the area of CSUCI, on the west side of Lewis Road. Present Cawelti Road cuts the property in half. We have had a great time getting to know the history of the family and have numerous photographs on display. Many remember Ralph Cawelti's Mobil gas station on the corner of Carmen and the freeway, or his earlier station on Ventura Blvd.

The show piece of one of the displays of the Cawelti collection is the loan of a taxidermy adult bald eagle ready for flight. He was shot about 1905 by Minnie Bell Cawelti on their Lewis Rd. ranch. The bird was killing her chickens! Even though she was a tiny woman, she could keep up with the men and was a keen shot. (See Page 4)

Additional gifts were received from Liz Dilibert. Among the things she brought are Raggedy Ann & Andy children's books that sit in the cradle with the dolls of the same name. We have her great-grandmother's leather wallet from 1865 and her grandmother's large silver cruet set. All are on display. A selection of early school text books is being created, and Liz helped with these, too.

Mr. & Mrs. Jim Neumann brought some additional items including a 1930s Horsman doll that now sits in a 1905 buggy beside the rocking crib the Neumann's donated earlier.

Liz Daily continues to contribute books and documents that were part of Stan Daily's years with our museum and the City of Camarillo. Have you ever wondered about the real history of the Camarillo Airport? Stan had it, *The Battle for Camarillo Airport 1969-1976*, by Cherie Brant, and now we are able to use this source for documentation.

Thanks to all our donors for their gifts; each of these items contributes to the historic story of Pleasant Valley.

We are still waiting to do the seismic testing on the museum property. It is necessary before we can move forward on any expansion on the site. We will keep you posted as it progresses. The recent challenges in the museum plumbing have revealed the sewer line and its path across the parking lot. This will help us avoid drilling seismic holes through that line.

Joy Todd

MEMORIALS

Fred Phipps and Cathy Trainer contributed in memory of **Brian Abbott, Bernie Anderson, Alice Avadesian, Gordon Bergh, Carol Olsen Bryan, Lando Goertzen, Bobbie Jefferson, Larry Naysmith, Willis Naysmith, Bob Schumacher, Dr. Philip Snow, Milo Spracklen, Chuck Warda, Martha Weaver and Roni Dutroi-White.**

HONORARIUMS

Fred Phipps and Cathy Trainer gave in honor of **Geoff Dean's retirement as Sheriff.**

Donations in honor of **Terry DeWolfe's 85th Birthday** were made by Troy and Vickie DeWolfe, Carolyn DeWolfe Pelouze, Marlow Jacobson, Jake and Penny Jacobson, Pam O'Donovan, Misook Musselman, Judy Pelouze, Chris Perkins and Bill and Joy Todd.

A donation toward the upkeep of the Charles Honn Botanical Garden was made by **Rich Honn**

General donations were made by **Marlene Wait and Donna Clark**

BUILDING FUND CONTRIBUTORS

Bob and Barbara Burrows Margaret Keyes

Hillary and Stella Ling Patricia Wise

Gerry and Joan Olsen in honor of Carol Olsen-Bryan



Cawalti Eagle—see President's Message for details

Pleasant Valley Historical Society

FUNDRAISER AT PRESTO PASTA

Tuesday, January 8th, 2019

Eat at Presto Pasta anytime on this day and they will donate 20% of your total bill to PV Historical Society. Valid on dine in or take out. Simply present this flyer at the restaurant when ordering. Flyers may not be distributed at Presto Pasta.

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Standing Committees for 2017-2018

Finance: Bob Rust; Museum Operations: Bill Todd; Events: Joy Todd; Garden: Betty Jo MacDonald;

Facilities: Bob Burrow; Communication: Betty Sullivan.

Thank you for supporting our Dine Out events. Funds generated help us keep the lights on at the Museum, maintain the garden and print and mail this newsletter

THE PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND USEUM

Invites you to

DINE OUT on Tuesday, February 5 at



1620 Ventura Blvd., Camarillo from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

You must present this coupon to the server in order for the Society to be given credit.

THE PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

invites you to

DINE OUT on Tuesday, March 5 at



2216 Pickwick Dr., Camarillo from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

You must present this coupon to the server in order for the Society to be given credit.

NEWS FROM THE PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

720 Las Posas Road

PO Box 570

Camarillo, CA 93011-0570

(805) 482-3660

E-mail address: pvhs@pvhsonline.org

Web site address: pvhsonline.org

Newsletter Editor:

Betty Sullivan, 482-6340

The mission of the Pleasant Valley Historical Society and Garden is to acquire, identify, restore and preserve artifacts, documents and photographs related to the Pleasant Valley community; to make the museum and garden a focal point for the dissemination of local history and the education of the general public, and to recognize local residents who have provided outstanding service to the Pleasant Valley community.

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

Visit our new and improved website

Renew your membership or join now if you not a current member

Become a docent



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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U.S. Postage
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Pleasant Valley Historical Society
P. O. Box 570
Camarillo, CA 93011-0570
Museum Open: Saturday and Sunday
12 noon to 4 p.m.