

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

LEO CARRILLO IN CAMARILLO

By Beth Miller

Commonly known by a namesake state beach and an old television program, Leo Carrillo's family heritage reads like a Hollywood script about California history.

Jose Raimundo Carrillo, his great-great grandfather, explored with the 1769 Portola Expedition to Alta California. His relatives include a governor of Alta California, a mayor of Los Angeles and he had family in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Leo's 1880 adobe birthplace was near Olvera Street.

Leo had many talents and he worked as a cartoonist, comedian, actor, writer, rancher, environmentalist and preservationist. He realized his talent for languages, dialects and comedy while working railroad construction in San Luis Obispo to earn tuition to attend St. Vincent's College. Encouraged by his colleagues at the San Francisco Examiner, he went to New York's vaudeville stage. With success on Broadway, returning to California was his dream. When Hollywood called him to test for sound films, Leo began another career. A top-paid actor in the 1930s-1950s, he was a Hollywood star.

Related to the Camarillos through family ties from the Portola Expedition, he brought Hollywood to town on his frequent family visits. Leo introduced his "Cisco Kid" co-star Duncan Renaldo to the area. Renaldo purchased a ranch on Bony Mountain and later retired in Las Posas Estates.

One day at the Camarillo Ranch, Leo encountered his cousin Adele Hernandez Flynn leaving the house. "The famous Hollywood star!," teased the future librarian and City Treasurer. "If only I had my autograph book," Adele joked. Leo spirited Adele's small black purse from her hand and signed the inside flap! Today that purse, donated by her daughter, Adele Flynn Stuebing Walsh, is displayed at the Camarillo Ranch.

Leo consulted Adolfo about horse care and breeding. When Leo bought 2500 acres near Carlsbad, Adolfo sent Meliton Ortiz with the gift of a horse, cow and mule. It became a profitable cattle, horse and dry farming ranch, now preserved as the 27-acre Leo Carrillo Ranch Historic Park.

Leo enjoyed riding with the Los Rancheros Visitadores and for several years he organized the Santa Barbara Fiesta Parade. Riding with his Camarillo relatives, Leo announced his family to the crowd by twirling his sombrero high above his head and shouting "primos" (cousins). He and his horse gave a special bow to Carmen Camarillo. When Adolfo's brother, Juan, returned after years of travel, Leo hosted a celebration at his Santa Monica "ranchita." [Los Angeles Times, March 13, 1936]

A state booster, Leo was called "Mr. California." He considered elected office, but instead became Earl Warren's campaign manager. Governor Warren appointed Leo as a California State Parks Commissioner. Serving from 1943-1961, Leo oversaw major acquisitions including Hearst Castle, Anza Borrego and Will Rogers State Park.

(Continued on Page 2)

LEO CARRILLO IN CAMARILLO (Continued from Page 1)



One of Leo's last visits to Camarillo was in 1954 when he was the master of ceremony for Adolfo's 90th birthday celebration. In 1958, Leo was an honorary pall bearer at Adolfo's funeral. Busy to the end, Leo wrote his memoir, The California I Love, which was published posthumously in 1961.

On the left, Leo as artist; on the right, Leo signed his photo "For Carmenita, with love and regards, always, Leo Carrillo, 1936."



Museum Expansion Update

In case you are curious about the Museum Expansion planning and have not heard the most recent details, we want to provide some current information. We are currently responding to the comments received from the City as a result of the pre-application review that was submitted last year. One of the more important comments was that the property is within a possible fault zone. Welcome to California. As a result, we elected to have an investigation conducted to determine whether it would be deal breaker or whether the plans could proceed and under what constraints.

Bob Fierro worked with the City and the consultant hired by PVHS to have drilling and surveying done. This effort was to see if the area is subject to unsurmountable obstacles such as an identified fault line or other limiting factors. Kudos for Bob Fierro and the consultant for their work. As a result of the investigation, it appears on a preliminary basis that the addition can be accomplished under certain circumstances. Soil conditions and physical improvements were a constraint on the CPT (cone penetration test) investigation, thus limiting the study area beyond the minimum limits of review. While we are still awaiting the final report and the City response, the site planning committee is back at their work and is addressing other comments received on the pre-application review. This will allow the planning process and refinements to the plan to move forward while still being mindful of not getting the cart before the horse. So, keep your fingers crossed and stay tuned.

We hope you are as excited as we are with this endeavor. It will allow the architect and the committee to prepare formal renderings and a model of the expansion program. Once that it is accomplished and we obtain City approval, construction documents could be prepared for the building permit. We will then be working with contractors for the project to take place.

With that in mind, the fundraising committee has been meeting in order to come up with a strategy as to how this can happen. The two efforts are now being coordinated so that everyone's vision to expand the museum can occur and we may better serve the Pleasant Valley region.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The past three months have seen the beginning and the end of the geo-seismic testing at the museum property. The results are still pending with the city, but preliminary reports bode well for our expansion plan. Interestingly, the donations to the building fund that came in last year have covered the unexpected \$35,000 that went for testing and we still have our initial funds untouched. That said, the next nine months will be used for actively seeking additional moneys for the expansion. Our goal is \$1 million. That will include the cost of the building plus additional displays and storage within the whole museum area. We need everyone's help. More information will be forthcoming in the weeks and months ahead. Please let us know if you would like to help on any of the fundraising committees including writing and designing information about the building.

The Hospice/Livingston Memorial Garden Tour is coming to our garden on May 5, 2019. We are excited that they have selected us for their event. We look at the garden right now, after lots of rain and no sun, and see trees that have not budded out and plants low to the ground with no color. However, by May, the garden will explode with color, bees and butterflies. We are an urban bee garden laboratory and want to show what a natural garden can do. With the loss of bee and especially butterfly habitats everywhere, we keep year-around plants that sustain their populations.

Saturday, May 19 will be our annual Living History Day. We need volunteers to work stations and help the children. It is a fun day for families. (See below)

Sunday, June 2, at 2 p.m. is the Annual Meeting. Bob Burrow will report on the progress of the expansion program and I will tell about what is going on in the museum and garden. The meeting is open to all and I hope to see many of you there. We will try to answer your questions about all the exciting things that are going on here.

I see so many people helping around the museum and the grounds. Just for fun, I added up the registered volunteer hours for last year and it was over 3,100 hours. That is a lot of dedication and help. Thank you all.

Joy Todd

LIVING HISTORY DAY

Living History Day is Sunday, May 19, from 1 to 4 p.m. We will have a variety of activities scheduled for the children of the community. It is a great opportunity for children to learn about the life experiences of our forefathers. Among the hands on activities planned are:

Making Butter	Wood Working Skills	Braided Rug Coaster
Making Tortillas	Fabric Potato Printing	Bullrush/Button String Toy
Grinding Grain	Panning for Gold	Handkerchief Doll Toy
First Aid	Night Cap Making	Wash Tub and Scrub Board

Demonstrations: Weaving and Spinning and Quilting

Admission is free and children will have one or more items to carry away with them. If you have a suggestion and/or would like to volunteer your help in any of our activities, please call Joy Todd (805-482-0179), Liz Daily (805-482-1036) or Pat Roth (805) 482-3382). There will be a good time for all, adults as well as the children.

Don and Doña Nomination and Selection

Since the Pleasant Valley Historical Society's inception, Don and Doña honors have been awarded to nearly 500 individuals over the years. The PVHS Museum displays five binders filled with information about previous honorees beginning with 1965. The museum, located at 720 Las Posas Road, is open on Saturdays and Sundays from noon to four p.m.

We invite you to submit nominations for the 2019 Dons and Doñas. Nominations will be accepted until May 20th. Following that date the Don and Doña Selection Committee will meet to consider all nominations. As stated in the Nomination Form, included in this ECHO, all nominations are confidential and only known by this committee. The Committee determines who will be selected and those selected are notified. The PVHS Board hosts a "get acquainted" reception for the honorees and the Board in July.

The Annual Don and Doña BBQ to honor the recipients will be held on August 24, 2019 at the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Parks District Community Center. We look forward to receiving your nominations. For information please send an email to bburrow1@msn.com or pvhs@pvhsonline.org.

UNDER THE DAISIES

"Where have all the flowers gone? Long time passing...." Read about some of the burial grounds in the Ventura County/Pleasant Valley area.

I. There was a burial plot "on a hill on the south side of Highway 101 on property now owned by Barbara Hughes" according to a recently found un-dated (but prior to 1946), newspaper clipping. It was referred to as the "Old Pleasant Valley Cemetery." It was abandoned in the late 1890s, but the first burial was a child belonging to the Fickus family in the 1860s. There were approximately 30 burials on the property that was not owned by anyone in particular, nor taken care of. When it was abandoned, the bodies were moved to Springville or Pleasant Valley Cemetery.

II. The *Little Flock of Regular Baptists of Jesus Christ* church in Springville owned the *Springville Cemetery*, founded by Rev. William. O. Wood (1826-1905), with the church building being dedicated November 28, 1880. The 4.88 acres of land were donated "by Thomas R. Bard (as land agent for Thomas Scott) to Wood and the trustees of the church for \$1 in March, 1880. There were a few burials in the land before the church bought it. It was common in earlier times for people to be buried on their own ranches. Rev. Wood was originally buried in *Springville Cemetery*, but was moved to *Ivy Lawn Cemetery* along with other family members. The church building and cemetery have been accurately located to have been adjacent to the south side of the present Springville Off-ramp on Highway 101. The cemetery itself occupied less than an acre.

There are ninety recorded names of those who were buried in *Springville Cemetery*, mostly from the 1880-1890s. Sixty bodies were reinterred from *Springville Cemetery* to Ivy Lawn in October 1942. *Springville Cemetery* was closed in 1925—some say 1905 when Rev. Wood died. Are the others still haunting...?. It is currently vacant land, but was recently rezoned to become a business park. An aerial photograph showing the building and cemetery site is on display at PVHS Museum.

III. Four acres of land now recognized as Dizdar Park on Ventura Blvd. were purchased from E. Etting by Pleasant Valley Baptist Church for use as *Pleasant Valley Cemetery* in September 1891 for \$125. In the previous twenty years, there were at least 23 burials on the same acreage, aka *Camarillo Cemetery*. Money to purchase the land was donated by Frank Davenport. The PV Baptist Church building was on the north side of Old Conejo Road (Ventura Blvd) on the site of present day Chapel City Church.

A total of 218 burials were made during the years 1871-1941 at *Pleasant Valley Cemetery*. When the large family 20' x 20' burial lots were sold, there was no money set aside for the upkeep of the cemetery, and eventually it fell into an unkempt condition that was not favorable to the growing community of Camarillo. Hazan "Mike" Dizdar (1885-1943), who had become a prominent Camarillo business man, took it upon himself with his own money, to arrange for the bodies to be moved to Ivy Lawn Cemetery in 1941-1943. Local lads were paid \$5/grave to dig them up. It is deducted that at least five bodies were not located or moved at the relatives' request—hence the rumored "ghost" stories near the Chamber of Commerce building! Dizdar died before the task was completed and was buried at Ivy Lawn, but he left money in his will to complete the undertaking. Dizdar Park was dedicated May 30, 1945.

Pleasant Valley Historical Society & Museum

Serving Camarillo, Somis and Santa Rosa Valley since 1964

720 N. Las Posas Road, P. O. Box 570, Camarillo CA 93011

Phone 805 482-3660 website: www.pvhsonline.org

NOMINATION FORM

Selection of 2019 DONS & DOÑAS

Persons being nominated for a Don or Doña shall be:

An individual who has lived in the Camarillo, Somis or Santa Rosa Valley area for at least twenty years, and has provided outstanding community service for a minimum of ten years within these areas, and/or to the Pleasant Valley Historical Society during that time.

Nominee's Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Address: _____ Cell Phone: _____

_____ Email: _____

The names submitted consideration shall be kept CONFIDENTIAL and shall only be made known to the Dons and Doña Selection Committee.

History of Nominee's Service:

Please attach additional page(s) if more space is required.

Submitted by: _____ Home Phone: _____

Address: _____ Cell Phone: _____

_____ Email: _____

Completed Nomination Form must be mailed with a post mark date no later than May 20, 2019.

Send to: PVHS Dons and Doñas Selection Committee, P. O. Box 570, Camarillo, CA 93011

MEMORIALS

Fred Phipps and Cathy Trainer contributed in memory of **Deena Ruth Gerry, Al Nunes, Priscilla Partridge de Garcia, Joan Rochford, Bob Taylor.**

Donations in memory of **Jim Thomas** were made by Julie Cameron, Stephen McAllister, Janet Mounce, Mary Ann Novak, Pat Wise, Megan Sharma, Adele Stuebing Walsh

BUILDING FUND CONTRIBUTORS

Gary Goff

Beverly and John Pearson

Under the Daisies continued from Page 4

In 1929, Juan Camarillo (1867-1936) purchased 2.74 acres on the eastern side of the *Pleasant Valley Cemetery*. Later, Adolfo Camarillo donated most of that land to Ventura County for use as a fire station and community center in 1941. Some bodies had to be moved to another location in the grounds. It was Mike's vision to have the cemetery acreage converted to a community park when it was completed. The remainder of the cemetery was deeded to the County of Ventura from the PV Baptist Church when the bodies were removed for use as a park. Max Riave publicly suggested that the park be named after Dizdar.

IV. After two years of planning for a new cemetery park in Ventura, Martha J. Hardwick became the first person buried at *Ivy Lawn Cemetery* On October 17, 1917. (The name was changed to *Ivy Lawn Memorial Park* in 1996.) From the beginning, the 60-acre park was planned with endowments that would ensure the perpetual funding care for grounds upkeep. In early 1920s, Adolfo Camarillo was vice-president of the ILC Board, and was president in 1947. Many prominent Camarillo and Pleasant Valley pioneers and residents were buried at Ivy Lawn over the years. It received "Historic Cemetery District" status in 2012. It is the only non-profit cemetery in the county.

V. Southeast of Camarillo, *Conejo Mountain Memorial Park* was founded in 1965 by Mary Howard Smith. Mary, a pioneer farmer, owned a large portion of the land grant, Rancho Guadaluasca and wanted to be buried there on "Smith Ranch." The County denied it, but later reached an agreement that if she donated a portion of the land for a cemetery, she could be buried there. Mary and her husband had farmed her grandmother's land, the Hill Ranch, in Santa Rosa Valley, and later a large acreage in Las Posas Estates area until they were able to buy the Smith Ranch acreage. She died "with her boots on" in 1992 and her wish was fulfilled to be buried in the 119-acre cemetery. She was a feisty spirit and fought the county when they wanted to build a jail in her area, as well as housing developers. She said, "developers couldn't get her off her own land when she was dead!" "The Chapel of the Islands" is Pt. Hueneme's historic *Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church* that was moved here when the port was expanded. Currently, a corporation that owns other cemeteries owns Conejo Mountain Cemetery.

Some contributing data is from: *They Lived and Died in Pleasant Valley*, Rains & Milleman; *A Place for all Time*, Cynthia Thompson; and information provided by Gary Liss.

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Thank you! We look forward to seeing you.

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Dr. Renee Whitlock

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

Pizza Night! Family Fundraiser

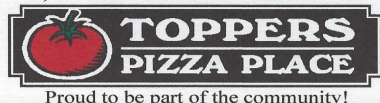
Benefitting
PVHS

Where: Toppers Pizza Place
425 Arneill Rd.
Camarillo
(805)385•4444 or 495•4444

When: Tuesday, May 7, 2019
3:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

What: Toppers Pizza will donate back 20% of pre-tax sales generated by our group!

How to Help: Just follow these steps to help raise funds!
1) Bring the whole family to Toppers during the above period for a great pizza!
2) Show this flyer to the cashier **when you place your order** (or tell operator for phone orders).
3) No coupons or other discounts will be honored in conjunction with this fundraiser.
4) No flyers may be handed out in or around the restaurant during the event.
5) Online Orders are not included.



Proud to be part of the community!



THE PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

invites you to

DINE OUT on Tuesday, June 4 at



185 E. Daily 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

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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 IN THE COMING MONTHS

Living History Day, May 17

Annual Meeting, June 2

Dine Outs on April 2, May 7, June 4

Submit Don and Doña nominations by May 20



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Pleasant Valley Historical Society
P. O. Box 570
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12 noon to 4 p.m.