

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

2019 Dons and Doñas Honored

This year's festivities were again held in the Community Center. As usual, a large crowd was there to join in saluting the newest honorees. For those of you who were unable to attend, we are including a thumbnail sketch of the men and women who are the newest to join the ranks of Dons and Doñas.

Doña Linda Ayerza was a teacher and Activities Director at Camarillo High School where she urged pupils to "be the best at what they like to do." She created an atmosphere where leadership was celebrated and had a passion that supported all students with excitement and enthusiasm. She served as a board member of *No Room at the Inn* (a public display of Nativity scenes), where she helped raise thousands of dollars for homeless shelters in Ventura County. Other volunteer time was spent with the Girl Scout Senior troop; ACHS PTSA; *California Association of Directors of Activities* where she was area coordinator and State Board Member; participated in *Aut2Run* and *Many Meals*. Awards include *Camarillo Chamber of Commerce* Educator of the Month, and *Noon-time Optimist Club's* Achievement in Education. As a member of Padre Serra Parish, Linda supports the *St. Vincent DePaul* group who provide services for those in need.

Don Steve Blois, a licensed general contractor, retired in 2013 and continued as a consultant serving the construction industry. He served as a board member and secretary of *Crestview Mutual Water Company* for 18 years. He joined the *Calleguas Municipal Water District* in 2014 and was appointed as the Division 5 representative of the Board of Directors. In 2008, Gov. Schwarzenegger appointed him to the *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board* serving a 4-year term. He serves as a management Trustee for the *Laborers of Southern California Health & Welfare Trust Fund*. Steve is an advisory board member of the *Camarillo Boys & Girls Club*. He was a member of *CSU-CI Foundation Board* from 2003-2012, serving as Chair in the years 2009-2011. He received the Robert J. Lagomarsino Award for his outstanding contribution to and support of the University.

Doña Lynn Decker-Mahin, who had started teaching general music in Minnesota schools, found her ideal jobs when she moved here: working with the *New West Symphony* as Education Director and serving as director of music at Camarillo United Methodist Church. At *New West Symphony*, she was instrumental in developing the Music Van program (which Pleasant Valley SD still uses), and organized the *Symphonic Adventures Concerts* for elementary students throughout Ventura County. At the church, she built upon a fine music program, adding a Fine Art Concert Series, English Madrigal Dinners, and the Christmas Concerts. One special program was the creation of a non-denominational summer camp for fine arts: *Journey Through the Arts* for elementary students. She also taught for Music Together, an experimental program for children--birth to 5 years--and their adults to see how they reacted to feeling and enjoying music, which was offered by the Camarillo Health District.

Doña Elaine Magner's special talent is identifying and supporting volunteers with youth sports and particularly *PONY baseball*. She has been a driving force for youth baseball in Camarillo since 1990, serving on the board of *Camarillo PONY Baseball* for over 13 years; She has been honored by PONY Baseball numerous times. She was honored by their Board of Directors by the inception of the Elaine Magner Award which is given annually to a CPBA Pony player who displays teamwork and scholastic achievement. She was recognized by

Continued on Page 2

The 2019 Dons and Doñas



From left to right: Beth Miller, Steve Blois, Edy Santangelo, Lynn Decker-Mahin, Tish Taylor, Fred Penney, Lyda Noble Sprinkles, Don Schoenewald, Linda Ayerza, Elaine Magner, Rebecca Pecsok, Felicia Schoenewald.

her employer, the Department of Justice, on two occasions with the Volunteers in America Award. In 2008, Elaine was elected to the board of the *Pleasant Valley Recreation & Parks District*. She is a member of the liaison committee that connects the Camarillo City Council and the Park board, using her collaborative skills to make the planned improvements to the Pleasant Valley Senior Center a reality.

Doña Beth Miller has volunteered her time and talents at numerous venues in Ventura County, including the Camarillo Ranch, the Camarillo Library, Hospice, and local schools. After she took her daughter to a delightful storytime at the Camarillo Library, she found they needed storytellers. She joined the library volunteers in 1984 and is still there today with weekly storytimes. She became an active classroom volunteer at Camarillo Heights School, presenting storytimes there and at other schools as well. Many parents from her early years now bring their grandchildren to Beth's programs. At the Camarillo Ranch House, she has filled many roles, researching and writing articles for the monthly newsletter, presenting programs, sharing her extensive knowledge and setting up wonderfully creative exhibits. She is also a Camarillo Hospice volunteer and listens and learns weekly from the lifelong memories of people dealing with serious health issues.

Doña Rebecca Pescok's family business was started by her grandparents as the Ventura Walnut Shelling Company, now well-known as the *Somis Nut House*. Together with her brother, Jeremy, they are the third generation owners/partners of this business. Starting as a teenager, she began volunteering as a member of *National Charity League Ticktockers*, and continued in the *National Charity League VC* and *Las Patronas Auxiliary of Assistance League of VC*. Serving on the Compliance Committee and Application Review Committee for the *Ventura County Community Foundation*, she reads over four hundred applications from local students applying for VCCF scholarships each year. She has been an active member of *AAUW* Camarillo Branch since 1991, serving as President and Secretary as well as Knowledge Bowl Director for 15 years, and *Brighter Horizons*, a program that exposes young women to careers in math, science and technology.

Don Fred Penney had a career as a General Contractor. In the late 1990s he provided free tractors and manpower for grading homes sites through *Habitat for Humanity* in Piru, and in 2006 provided equipment, manpower, and material for a Habitat home site in Oxnard. He is a member of the non-profit *Ventura County Contractors Association*. Fred worked with neighbors in the Montelena Tract in Mission Oaks to form a Neighborhood Watch program. He organized block parties and encouraged the neighbors to be aware of the happenings around them. At Adolfo Camarillo Ranch, he served as chair of the Operations Committee overseeing the maintenance of facilities and grounds. He has been on the *Friends of the Camarillo Library Board* since 2013, and President from 2015- 2017. In Ventura he was a VC Lt. Governor of the Jaycees where he developed lasting relationships.

(Continued on Page 3)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year's Don & Doña event was a delight. We are sorry if you missed it, but the honorees are a true credit to our community. Please read about each of them.

There are many people and organizations to thank for the success of the Don and Doña celebration. Judy Crenshaw and her team created a lovely venue and our thanks to Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park for their support. Bruce Jochums provided a fabulous meal. This year's booklet was exceptional, thanks to Heidi Hoover and Bill Todd for their hours of work.

Thank you to our sponsors, especially Ivy Lawn Memorial Park, who brought our profit to almost \$15,000, which is used as our operating revenue for the next year. We are grateful for the community support that keeps us independent and volunteer based.

Our visitor attendance continues to increase. They are very surprised by our unique hands-on collections and the chance to experience history. Thank you to Bill Nelson for the 1911 Aeolian player piano. One cannot help but smile when it begins to play. We have had it tuned and it really is "music to your ears." Bill also "fixed" our 1949 Admiral television so it plays...*Ozzie and Harriet*. History is alive!

The expansion planning committee is meeting regularly and we are on track to go to the planning commission this fall. We will keep you all apprised of the date of public hearing. A big thank you to those of you who have been contributing to the preliminary costs of expansion. PVHS has spent over \$70,000 to get to this point and your support has allowed us to meet these costs and keep our original building fund allocation intact. We have a new brochure available that features the proposed elevation of the new building. We also have a scale model that we debuted at the Don and Doña event. It will be used when we go to the city planners to help with the visualization of the project.

As Theodore Roosevelt would say when he wanted to express his enthusiasm, "Bully, Bully for you all."

Joy Todd



The audience watches the introduction of the honorees at the barbeque.

2019 Dons and Doñas (continued from Page 3)

Doña Edy Santangelo was Executive Director of Hospice for six years. She formed the Hospice bereavement coalition of Ventura County to bring together hospice grief counselors to develop stronger bereavement programs in the county. She founded the *VC Chapter of the National Alopecia Areata Association* that provided support groups for those with hair loss. Edy volunteered time with *United Way* on their Allocations Panel; with *Camarillo Health Care District* where she facilitated Alzheimer's Support Groups and Women's Auxiliary to the AMA where she lectured on teen and adult suicide prevention. She focuses on promoting the value of arts in our community and raising awareness of the needs of the underserved through Studio Channel Islands. She is on the Board of Directors of *Many Meals of Camarillo*-an all-volunteer organization that provides nutritious meals every Monday and Thursday to people in need.

Don Daniel and Doña Felicia Schoenewald have roots in Australia and Venezuela. Felicia was born in Australia, came to America in 1979 to go to college, met Daniel and stayed. He was born in Anaco, Anzoategui, Venezuela and moved to Libya for his formative years. He moved to America in 1971, and to Camarillo in 1991. Felicia has taught swimming at YMCA, and volunteered with the *YMCA Indian Guide* program and in various capacities with the kids' PTAs. Daniel is a member and past President of *Camarillo Sunrise Rotary Club*, and served on the Board of Directors of the Camarillo YMCA for many years. Quietly, behind the scenes, this couple has over the years given generously in time and financial support to a plethora of organizations both in the Camarillo area and in foreign countries. They have been major sponsors, donors and volunteers for the present YMCA building, the *Camarillo Boys and Girls Club*, the new St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital wing, the *Taste of Camarillo*, the *Care for Kids Golf Classic*, *Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation for Kids*, *Casa Pacifica*, *Ojai Cares Breast Cancer Support Group*, *Breast Cancer Symposium in Camarillo*, *Rotary International* with a significant match for a farming project in Columbia, SA. Sándor Barta and Daniel Schoenewald founded *ADVANCED Motion Controls* in 1987 driven by their shared desire to design, manufacture and sell the best servo drives. With their original private ownership still active, they have built and shipped nearly 3 million servo axes worldwide. Daniel has amassed one of the largest motorcycle collections in the country, *The Schoenewald Collection* and *The Lehmann Motorcycle Foundation*. He calls it a collection instead of a museum because many are still ridden by him and his friends.

Doña Lyda Noble-Sprinkles is one of the original founders of the *Fillipino-American Association of Camarillo*. The organization contributes to the quality of life within the local community through its fund raising projects. As a member of Rotary Club of Camarillo, she volunteers to serve at community fundraisers and special events such as: Viva La Comida, Hap Rapp Memorial Track Meet, Care for Kids Golf Classic and the Rotary Creates Magic Show. Lyda is passionately involved in supporting the *Boys and Girls Club of Camarillo* and is a volunteer for the *ManyMeals* program to serve homeless families. In 2000 the *Camarillo Chamber of Commerce* honored her at the Top 10 Awards as "Business of the Year," followed by the *Fillipino American Council of Ventura County* award as "The Business Person of the Year." Lyda was recently honored by the *Camarillo Chamber of Commerce* as "2019 Woman of the Year."

Doña Tish Taylor was a nurse to an entire high school of students and their families at Adolfo Camarillo High School for 32 years! She has volunteered with the *American Red Cross* for over 25 years as CPR & first aid instructor. She received PTA "Honorary Service" and "Oak Service Awards," served with *Ventura/Santa Barbara Counties School Nurse Association* and is co-founder of Camarillo Safe Rides for teens. She also volunteers for Dina LaVigna "Breath of Life" triathlon; is on the board of *No Room At the Inn*; and *Aut2Run* (supporting autism awareness). Tish's other awards include: Paul Harris Fellow Rotary International, *Rotary International*; Tish Taylor Vocational Scholarship (given annually at senior awards night); *Camarillo Health Care District* "Apple of Excellence--Nurse Professional;" *Camarillo Chamber of Commerce* "Educator of the Month;" and Ventura County Distinguished Service--HIV/AIDS Peer Education Program

Doris Pitts Mahan, Early Settler

Doris Pitts Mahan was born April 5, 1926 and came to the Camarillo area from Arkansas and Oklahoma during the mid 1930s. Those were the years of the “dust bowl” and the family came in an “old model T Ford with a mattress, 5 kids, 2 adults and all their worldly goods.” They drove by the Maple Leaf gas station, motel and luncheonette, near the foot of the Conejo grade and bought gas. Her dad asked for work and they told him to, “Go over to the ranch.” They did and Mr. Camarillo hired him. He took Doris and her sister to pick oranges—“we put them in our skirts. Doris said it was like Christmas. They had never seen so many oranges.



Her father cared for the animals on the ranch and kept the water flowing. Each morning he would get up and pump the water for the day. The water he pumped kept the house and all the farm animals going. He was in charge of all the animals and the butchering of the steers. The porch on the ranch had a separator for the cream and milk. The cream became the butter her mother made for the ranch. Her mother was the cook for the family and the ranch hands. She had to learn to cook “California” style. Doris had a friend from school, Lupe Lopez, whose mother came down and taught Doris’ mom to cook with spices and Mexican style. Doris loved Mr. Camarillo. “He was always smiling,” was her comment. He built a home on the ranch for her family.

With her twin sister, Doris started in the 3rd grade at Pleasant Valley School. Mrs. Onorinda Jones was the principal. If the boys misbehaved they were sent to the Principal’s office and were hit with a rubber hose. There were not a lot of repeat offenders. The only street was Ventura Blvd. and she walked it everyday.



When she went to Oxnard High School, the bus went all the way to Lake Sherwood. In the morning, the bus would come from the Thousand Oaks area, down the grade to pick up the students to go to school. The bus would stay down the hill and take the students home. The bus driver would spend the night in the Lake Sherwood area every other night.

Pictured left: Doris reading the school newspaper which she edited

Doris was out of high school when she met her husband “Burt” Mahan. He was born in Moorpark. He had been in the Army Air Force during World War II as a mechanic. He came home and got a job working for Herman China. Doris and Burt moved to Somis for the first year of their marriage, moving to Oxnard where their five children were born and grew up. Burt had gas stations on the corner of Arneill and Las Posas and on the corner of Ponderosa and Las Posas for over 30 years.

At the age of 43, Doris went back to school to finish the nursing degree she started as a cadet nurse during World War II. Her husband said that she would not have enough time to get her work done at home. She needed to be the “little woman.” The children were raised by this time and she stuck to her guns over his various objections. “I just talked him down,” she said with a smile. He finally accepted it and became proud of her. Doris worked for 30 years at Community Memorial Hospital, 20 of those years were for a surgeon.

In 2005 Doris was named a Pleasant Valley Historical Society Doña, an honor of which she is very proud.

MEMORIALS

Donations were made by Fred Phipps and Cathy Trainer in memory of
**Phyllis Bradford, Chet Eccles, Larry Lindgren, Bud Meuse,
David Spasino, Fred Drostan**

Contributions were made in memory of **Lou Bell** by Linda Ayerza, Olivia
Fulkerson, Beverly Hutchinson, April Yamamoto

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Pictured left to right:
Debbie Theissen and
Judy Crenshaw who
were in charge of the
barbeque reception.

Board of Directors 2019-2020

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Standing Committees for 2019-2020

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



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THE PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

invites you to

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1 am. To 9 p.m.

Please give this coupon to your server so that the Society can receive credit.

NEWS FROM THE PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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 COMING MONTHS

Dine Outs at

Sharky's on October 8

Marie Calendars on November 5

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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