

The Echo

News from the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

“Be Part of History!”



MUSEUM EXPANSION UPDATE

Progress continues toward the planned expansion of the museum along with the renovation of the facade and parking lot. This has been a long time goal of PVHS and major steps have already taken place to achieve this objective. With the approval of the plans and studies required to obtain the approval by the City, the plans are being turned into construction documents. Much appreciation needs to be given to Bob Fierro for his efforts to work with the architect and consultants to prepare the final building plans for submittal for building permits, grading permits and zoning clearance. The PVHS Board, at the September meeting, authorized the plans to be submitted to the City. The plan check process will take several months, thus putting the actual groundbreaking opportunity into next year, 2021.

As you are aware, a fundraising program has been in place to continue raising the necessary funds for the completion of the project. The addition and new facade will offer more display space, updated accessibility, energy efficient enhancements and the opportunity to better accommodate group activities. Since we are now in a position to know that the project is technically feasible, we will supplement our ongoing efforts with a broader capital campaign. A major mail out to the membership as well as the community which the museum serves will soon take place. And as the sign states, “Be Part of History!”

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Both the museum and garden continue to look great as much work is ongoing in order to properly care for the artifacts and landscaping. It's just too bad that they could not be seen by the community at this time due to the current restrictions in place to protect the public. However, on a bright note, we have been able to reopen the garden for folks to stroll, view and delight in the butterflies. While the butterflies are safe in their habitat, those who partake in touring the grounds must use safe protocols including masks, physical distancing and handwashing. There you can see the recently completed "barn" exhibit, changes to the garden areas and new displays. The approaching fall season always highlights the changes to the plants and shadows.

The City of Camarillo has been coordinating a series of meetings to discuss the Scholle House. Based on the comments received from the community and San Buenaventura Conservancy, the applicant's representative has reviewed the comments. Dennis Hardgrave from DPS has met with his client and they are working on an alternative that would reposition the house to a lot within the development. The supplemental EIR is being updated to include revised mitigation measures to protect the home and document the current conditions. If that is successful, it will retain the building in order for it to be kept and renovated as a private residence. More information will follow and we will look forward to hopefully gathering support from the members of PVHS for the revised plan. Many thanks to Dennis Hardgrave, Jackie Lee (from the City) and Stephen Schafer from SB Conservancy for their expertise.

In order to support, these and all of the ongoing programs, the Pleasant Valley Historical Society relies on the generous effort of its Board members and the many volunteers. In addition, the support of the hundreds of members of PVHS makes it possible to maintain the operations needed for the museum and garden. This is even more critical when many of the programs have been curtailed for the time being. If you have not renewed your membership for the year, it's not too late. We would certainly appreciate it!

Bob Burrow



Before

This thin copper farmhouse soaking tub has been deteriorating in the garden bushes for years. Greg and Bill were able to restore its shape and enclose it in a simple wood frame similar to how it would have been in the early century. The internet supplied us with a similar picture.

Soon it will be joined by a copper sink and other household items in a special structure to be erected out by "the Barn."



After

ACCESSIONS

Accessions received two large collections this quarter. **Lynn Decker-Mahin** donated C. 1900 cauldrons, milk cans from the 1930s and two generations of Shirley Temple dolls. Our volunteers, Mary and Karin, spent hours researching each item and several are now on display including utensils that were new to us that have been lost to history.

Joan Rust has donated her family's china from the 1930s, and a remarkable set of Waterford crystal, from small liqueur to full sized goblets and tumblers. A full set, we could now set a complete table. Families took full pride of ownership for these items and we feel especially fortunate to have them to share with our visitors. We continue to archive items that the museum held that had been missed in the process of collecting. It is really fun!

GARDEN

The garden has been lovely this year; it is sad so much of it was missed. We are open now (as this is typed) and people can spend time and watch butterflies and see the fall coming. We had to change the sprinkler system—a good thing, we went to a battery-operated system which has no challenges from power outages. We truly appreciate the care of *Greenheart Gardens*, thank you Marie.

Tax-Deductible MEMBERSHIP

Please renew your yearly financial donation providing the major way that we can continue to preserve artifacts and documents. We have no paid employees. Annual membership levels are: Individual = \$25; Supporter = \$40; Patron = \$100; Corporate = \$150; Benefactor = \$250; Lifetime = \$500.

NEW members who sign up now will also be credited for the calendar 2021.

The Echo by e-mail

A growing number of members have already chosen to receive the Echo by email. If you are a person who likes to read on line, you might be interested in receiving our quarterly through your e-mail instead of through snail mail. Featured colored pictures will shine. If so, send an email to: pvhs@pvhsonline.org. Include your membership name, street address, and the e-mail address to which you would like the Echo sent. We will still keep your address on file for other possible correspondence.



“The Barn” is an amazing addition to not only the garden ambiance, but for the huge amount of additional display space for many of the items that were found when emptying the cargo bin. You have to see it to appreciate the many vintage farm, garage and home items that were used by earlier residents in Pleasant Valley. A must see!

2020 Daily Scholarship Essay
Awardee **Madison Mok**, graduate of Oaks Christian High School,
She will attend Williams College in Massachusetts, fall of 2020

St. Mary Magdalen Chapel

As a Saint Mary Magdalen School alumni and frequent altar server, the chapel on Ventura Boulevard has great significance to me. It is a place of worship for many, hosting daily mass; it is where I spent the majority of my childhood, gazing at beautiful stained-glass windows from creaky wooden pews. Not only does the chapel on the hill hold meaning in the present, its rich history goes back more than a century.

On July 1, 1913, the foundation was laid for the Saint Mary Magdalen chapel. A box of the Camarillo family's history and objects of memorable worth were placed inside the cornerstone. The chapel was built in 1914, with Juan Camarillo Jr. providing the land and resources necessary for the construction. The Camarillo family consisted of Californio

landowners, which were native born to California and descended from Spanish-speaking communities. When Juan traveled to Mexico City to visit the birthplace of his father, he was inspired by a mission-style chapel. Juan commissioned architect Albert C. Martin, who designed the Ventura County Courthouse shortly before the St. Mary's chapel. The style of the chapel correlates to the Spanish Colonial Revival in architecture, which consisted of stucco over brick exterior, plaster interior, asymmetrical design, half round arches, and tile roofs. The layout was also inspired by the Santa Barbara Mission, where it consists of a fountain, east wing, and family crypt. Juan wanted to build a more permanent structure to replace the wooden, one room chapel the family had used. He wanted to honor their parents, father Don Juan Camarillo and mother Martina Hernandez. His oldest sister Magdalena was also honored, hence the saint name Mary Magdalen.

One notable feature of the chapel is the ornate stained-glass windows, depicting scenes from the life of Christ. These windows were ordered from glass-blower F.X. Zattler, when Juan visited Munich, Germany in 1913. However, the windows were lost due to World War 1, and many attempts to find them ended in failure. The Camarillos thought it was very likely that the windows were on a ship that had been sunk due to the war. Finally, at the war's end, letters from a German official reached the family, claiming that several packages were found in Munich with Juan's name on them. The windows were delivered slowly and did not arrive until 1919. Until then, the chapel used heavy paper-white windows instead. The furnishing of the chapel was also generously attended to by Juan. The walls and altar were constructed of white marble, while the doors, floor and pews were made of oak. Three statue busts of The Sacred Heart, the Blessed

Mother, and St. Mary Magdalen reside near the main altar. Several Camarillo family members are buried in the white marble crypt underneath the chapel, including Adolfo, his wife, sisters, parents, and brother Juan.

The chapel was the dominant feature of the town along Ventura Boulevard. The bell tower overlooked the town and chimed three times a day to call the people to mass. A priest from Oxnard would have to travel to Camarillo to serve in each session. In 1914, the chapel was dedicated by the Bishop in a grand ceremony attended by most townspeople. Juan Camarillo Jr. died in 1936, leaving the chapel in the possession of the Order of the Friars Minor, a religious order in the Catholic Church. This group then gave it to the Los Angeles Diocese in 1940 to use as a parish church.

With the donation of several acres of land by Carmen Camarillo in 1958, priests, nuns, and seminarians could reside and study near the chapel. As the years passed, the city's population grew mostly due to agricultural work, the Naval Air facility at Point Mugu, and the construction of the Ventura Freeway. The chapel was becoming too crowded and could not serve everyone, even with extra masses. Parishioners were then allowed to attend mass elsewhere, at St. John's seminary, also within the land Juan donated to the Los Angeles Diocese. A newer, larger St. Mary Magdalen church was also constructed in the 1970s to serve the increasing population of the town.

The St. Mary Magdalen Chapel is a prominent landmark of the Pleasant Valley area. Thousands of people drive by its towering presence every day, as townspeople and school children visit the chapel to receive communion in this historic site. Further restorations are underway to preserve it, but not much will change. The chapel on the hill will continue to serve an important role in local church life, and will continue to serve as a stunning time capsule of Camarillo and its foundation.

The Agua-duck

A Two Year Old's Perspective on Camarillo's Slice of Heaven by Junior Docent Sawyer

(As told to his Mom, Rachel Burrow)

I have a lot of happy places in this city. The train tracks, Home Depot, the 'brary, all the parks, the airport, and I love a good stop at the recycling center. But, my favorite spot is definitely the museum. Sometimes I go there and sometimes I just look at pictures of it. I would save the best reasons why I love it for last, but let's be real, I am a very typical two year old and although my mama says I'm a patient paw patroller, I can't wait to tell you! Best part of this museum are the angels. One angel is named Joy and she is not only super super nice but she is a berry berry berryyy hard worker. She runs the show and works when no one is watching. She should get all the ice cream she wants. Typical me, I am getting very distracted!

!

Anyways, I was honestly in love with this place after taking one look at that choo choo and tractor. Let's just say "big wow!!" But then, I kept walking and saw the most magical place. The butterflies, bees, birds, bugs, oh my! I like to go over the bridges and through the berry tall trees. I hunt for pretty flowers and cross my fingers when a 'copter flies by in the sky. After a garden stroll, I love to visit the antique fire trucks, cars, and phones. Ring ring ring! So much to tell you but my mama says I need to go take a night, night, so I am going to wrap this up like my blanket.



My only complaint about this place is that my mama keeps saying it used to be an aqua duct, but I still have not seen any ducks. Love a good quack-quack, but I love this place even more. And surprise! You can come here, too. My Poppy will give you a tour! He is the best grandpa in town. My mama says we are biased, though. No idea what biased means but I hope to see you there soon! Gotta go drink some 'moo moo' and take a nap! Bye-bye!

(Left) There is a lot to entertain and educate a youngster like Sawyer at the Museum

DREAM GONE FOR NEW COUNTY CITY

Thus read the headline for The Daily News, 5 July 1981. It struck me how perspective changes one's view of the news. In 1969 the amazing sleepy town of Somis rose up to protect our agricultural heritage. The purchase of Berylwood, the 10,000 acre company that was owned by the Bard family, led to big dreams by Kaiser-Aetna. They wanted to use nearly 1,000 acres to build the new city of "Rancho Ventura."

A classic confrontation between 'big business and 'the little guy.' The rural Somis residents and the Los Posas Valley agriculture joined with environmentalists and concerned government officials to lead the fight which began in 1969. In 1971 the Board of Supervisors voted to ban urban development in the Los Posas Valley. The saga officially ended in 1981 with the defeat of Kaiser-Aetna's plans.

You can find the full history and article archived at the museum.

MEMORIALS

Donations were made by Fred Phipps and Cathy Trainer in memory of **Josephina Balderamma, Eleanor Banner, Priscilla Cattoll, John Davis, Jr., Reverend Bobbie McMullen, Ken Wilhite, Eleanor Winfrey**

Noella Belvedere in memory of **Barbara and Bill Lebert, Maria Martel, Fred Hammar**

John and Beverly Pearson in memory of **Betty Angle**

Ray Abbott in memory of **Linda Abbott**

Bob and Olivia Fulkerson in memory of **Bob Lutz**

Judith Murphy in memory of the **father of Peggy Smith**

Adele Walsh, Rita Faulders, Ginty Muldoon, Pat Wise in memory of **Eleanor Banner**

HONORARIUMS

Donations were made by Fred Phipps and Cathy Trainer in honor of:

Frank Roth for his years of service to the Pleasant Valley Historical Society

Bill and Raelene Manzer in honor of their 60th wedding anniversary

Don and Millie Seidler in honor of their 76th wedding anniversary

Don and Agatha Miller in honor of their 70th wedding anniversary

BUILDING FUND CONTRIBUTORS

Bob and Barbara Burrow

Charlotte and Mike Craven

Lynn Decker –Mahin

Chris Ehret

Bob Fiero

Bill and Raelene Manzer

Beth Miller

John and Beverly Pearson

Fred Phipps and Cathy Trainer

Bob and Joan Rust

Betty Sullivan



The *Daily News* letters were also recently found, but in rusted condition. Freshly painted and mounted on one of the out-buildings, they catch visitors' eyes as they come down the garden sidewalk. Formerly on Palm Drive, a new building was on corner of Adolfo and Calle Aseco where these letters were mounted on the side of the building.

Board of Directors 2020-2021

Bob Burrow, *President*

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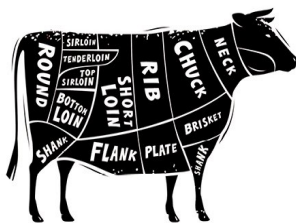
Standing Committees for 2020-2021

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

Facilities: Bob Burrow; Communication: Max Copenhagen

“Let’s Dine Out”
becomes

Let’s Take Out



**Tuesday
October 6**

&

**Monday
November 2**

5 PM TO 6 PM



Take Out Dinner from Bruce’s BBQ

The same great food we serve at the Don & Doña event

Meal includes

- Tri-Tip
- Hawaiian Chicken
- Vegetarian Beans
- Bread
- Salad

All chicken upon request

\$15

per person

Pay at pick-up with
Cash or Check

OR

Pay with Credit Card
at pvhsonline.org

**Reservations Required
by the Previous Friday**

Leave a message with name
and number of meals at

(805) 482-3660

OR

pvhs@pvhsonline.org

Camarillo Christian Church

1777 Arneill - corner of Las Posas and Arneill

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



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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.



Thank you to Ivy Lawn for providing a very generous grant for printing costs of the ECHOES and other materials.



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