



**PLEASANT VALLEY**  
HISTORICAL MUSEUM & GARDEN  
Established 1964

# The Echo

## ***WOW! ROCKS on PILLARS!***

Paint. Doors. Wallboard. Fire sprinklers. Lights. Yes! Have you driven by and seen the progress on OUR museum expansion? We are very grateful for the donations of money and kind that have brought us to 2026.

As a city-owned property, the City will help with the parking lot paving, though we will pay for the curbs, landscaping, plumbing and electrical.

*Tile City* made a generous donation of floor and wall tiles for both bathrooms. We still need sinks, toilets, faucets, and stalls. The rest of the building floors will be more economical polished concrete. *Sherwin-Williams* donated interior paint. *Amber's Light Lions* donated parking lot trees. THANKS to all.

Wallboard, insulation and other miscellany have been donated—thanks to our contractor, Bob Fierro, who watches every penny (while they are still in circulation!)

When we started this project in 2018, it was going to cost \$750,000. So far, expenditures have been \$1,200,000! Labor and materials, and changes in legal requirements have doubled the cost. We are expecting the project to cost \$1.6 million.

As you drive by and see the optimistic eagle weathervane, imagine what an impact this building will soon have as it presents the history of the whole Pleasant Valley to the Community and Ventura County.

**We are close enough to be able to finish late this spring,  
but we need your financial help now. Can you help in any way?**



## ***President's Message***

As the holiday season approaches, it is the time of year that invites reflection, gratitude, and a renewed appreciation for the people that bring meaning to our lives. We are truly grateful for you.

Your membership is helping to build our museum expansion. This expansion will allow us to offer new exhibits, to engage in more educational programs for both children and adults, and to provide a welcoming space where visitors of all ages can explore and learn. But we are not there yet and need help to complete the last phase of the project.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we hope you will consider making an additional gift to the museum. Every gift, large or small helps us move the expansion forward. Be sure to check out our progress when you pass the museum along Las Posas Road and look for the eagle! Also see inside the building on our latest video at [www.youtube.com/@PVHMG](https://www.youtube.com/@PVHMG).

Thank you again for being with us on this journey. We are truly grateful for your support. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a wonderful year ahead filled with love, hope, good health, and the joys of family and friends.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Ann Speck".

## ***Membership Support***

Separate from the building fund, membership dues support the operations and utilities. Yes, even under construction, we pay for electricity, internet, telephone, water and sewer. Archival supplies needed to preserve history and printing *The Echo* take an additional big chunk. Our excellent volunteer leadership carry the operations with no salaries.

Your new or renewed annual support with a membership allows us to stay active with exposure in the community. Dues are credited for one year from the date payment is received. You might get a friendly reminder later in the year! Use the enclosed envelope to send in dues or renew online at [pvhsonline.org/membership/](http://pvhsonline.org/membership/).



## *Pleasant Valley School Reunion*

Over cookies and photos, Pleasant Valley School pals, Paula Sotelo Griggs, 98, and Adele Flynn Stuebing Walsh, 95, shared many memories from eighty-plus years ago in Paula's sunny kitchen. The school reunion was organized by their daughters, Julia Griggs, and Debbie Thiessen, who reflected upon their mothers' many stories with one word: "Amazing!"



*Adele and Paula*

The laughter and stories poured out as they recalled exact locations of classrooms, names of teachers, students and much more. "You're the girl with the curly black hair and danced!" exclaimed Paula. "That's me!" laughed Adele. For a performance, she had worn a traditional Mexican costume called "China Poblana." It was one of the few costumes and dresses her mother, 1975 "Doña" Adele Hernandez Flynn, did not create. Her mother was a prominent seamstress-designer, librarian, and treasurer for the first Camarillo City Council. Both of their mothers had been honored by PVHM as Doñas with Paula's mother, 1965 "Doña" Julia Sotelo, being in the first group of honorees in 1965.



*Adele in China Poblana costume*

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## Pleasant Valley School Reunion

Paula and Adele also attended Oxnard High School. PV School students were always recognized by their unique “manuscript handwriting” recalled Paula. The students had been taught by long-time principal, Onorinda Jones, a method of connected printing. “Oh, you’re from Camarillo,” Paula remembered a teacher dismissively saying while reviewing homework. Paula and Adele’s mothers both worked for Mrs. Jones in various capacities. “Mrs. Jones was very helpful to my family,” said Paula. Adele’s mother created many of Mrs. Jones’ outfits. The principal was related by marriage to the Adolfo Camarillo family. Paula and Adele share a great admiration for Don Adolfo. For Paula he was a very kind man who also helped her sister find work. To Adele, he was “Tio Adolfo” a beloved distant relation.

The stories continued with an imaginary walk around Ventura Boulevard. “That is my chapel,” said Paula as they looked at photos of St. Mary Magdalen. “We had attended other churches, but none are so beautiful!” Adele agreed, adding “It’s my chapel, too!” She and her cousin, Bobby Hernandez, would ring the noon Angelus bell at the Chapel during the summer. “This was before it became a parish in the diocese. Bobby and I were young kids and Uncle Israel (Hernandez) would pull down the bell rope, and we’d take turns and jump on and ride the rope up,” she laughingly said. Paula recalled hearing Angelus bells. They are rung three times a day and are a call to brief prayer or moment of reflection during a busy day.



*Debbie Thiessen and Julia Griggs hold a Pleasant Valley School panoramic photo, taken in 1940, above their mothers. Adele and Paula are pictured in the entire school photo.*

# *Echo Sound Bites*

## ***“Getting Down the Hill”***

- 1861-1889: Butterfield Stagecoach route from Conejo Valley to Santa Rosa Road
- 1873-1875: Construction began on what would become the Conejo Grade Road. The contractor went bankrupt and the people of Ventura County privately raised money to complete it.
- 1875: El Camino Real came from Newbury Park down Potrero Canyon to Pleasant Valley.
- 1881: Achille Levy brought his new French bride, Lucy, down the newly cleared “Conejo Grade.” They tied the front and rear wheels together and slid it down the slope while the passengers walked the muddy road.
- 1903-04: Norwegian Grade first opened as a single, steep path.
- 1902-12: The VC Board of Supervisors approved funds to prepare a new grade 7,183' long with an 8% grade from the 841' summit.
- 1911: The Norwegian Grade, using part of the Butterfield Grade, between present day CLU and Santa Rosa Road was completed as a 2-lane road.
- 1914-15: Conejo Grade was shut down for 2 months to improve the road conditions. Re-opened April 15, 1915.
- 1937, May 1<sup>st</sup>: Dedication of the latest improvements to the 4-mile Grade cutting curves and switchbacks from 49 to 12 and was a mile shorter. Road width grew from 30' to 46'. Total cost was \$570,000. It had three lanes for a while. On the day, an elaborate parade went from bottom of Grade to the Camarillo Ranch house for a celebration BBQ.
- 1953-54: Relocated 51+ central Camarillo homes to make way for the RR overpass and route through town, eliminating the traffic nightmare at the grade crossing. Approximately 7,000 highway travelers daily now used the freeway instead of Ventura Blvd. The new road had four lanes to improve to freeway status. Estimated cost was \$3,000,000.
- 1957, May: Start of 5-mile construction of 6 lanes from summit to the Calleguas Creek bridge. 1,250,000 yd<sup>3</sup> of fill was needed for road embankment, at a cost of \$22,500,000. Water was piped up from Camarillo Oak Park to a 25,000-gallon storage tank on the hill.
- 1958, Nov.: Pedestrian railroad overpass opened connecting both sides of the platform at a cost of \$47,000.
- 1997: Fulton Street bridge over the freeway removed.
- 2010: Norwegian Grade upgraded with guard rails, new paving.
- 2012, June: Springville overpass opened. Cost \$23,000,000.



Donations Received September 15<sup>th</sup> through December 23<sup>th</sup>

## **MEMORIALS**

*Donations from Fred Phipps & Cathy Trainer in memory of:*

**Martha Cox, Paul Faul, 2013 "Doña" Jeannette Jannett, Craig Johnson,  
2000 "Doña" Janet Lingren, 2022 "Don" Curt Luft, Ginger Schulze**

*Donation from Gerry & Joan Olsen in memory of: Carol Olsen Bryan*

*Donation from Steve & Holly Kunkle in memory of: Alan Goldberg*

*Donation from Bill & Joy Todd in memory of: Alan Goldberg*

*Donation from Barbara Wagner in memory of: Howard Hamilton*

*Donation from Richard Honn & Marguerite Snow in memory of: 1989 "Don" Charles Honn*

## **TRIBUTES and HONORS**

*Honoring Steve & Holly Kunkle' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary from: Fred Phipps & Cathy Trainer*

*Honoring 2015 "Doña" Joan Olsen's 87<sup>th</sup> Birthday from: Fred Phipps & Cathy Trainer*

*Honoring Fred Phipps & Cathy Trainer for their commitment to PVHM from: Carol Johnson*

## **BUILDING and other DONATIONS**

**FIESTA Association**

**Ryan Charlton Insurance**

**Greg & Karin Farrin**

**Stella Harter**

**Lana Lynch**

**Mary Ann Novak**

**Paul Rockenstein**

**Karen Bulger**

**Gail Dewolfe**

**Judi Gill**

**Brian Hoover**

**Corrine Merritt**

**Fred Phipps**

**Philip Smith**

**Terry Zeiler Family Trust**

**Bob & Barbara Burrow**

**Sharon Edwards**

**Mary Goldberg**

**Bruce & Ellen Jochums**

**Linda Kay Morgan**

**Pat Putnam**

**Joann Tenorio**

Save the date: **September 12, 2026** for next Don & Doña Award BBQ



## We Need You!

...to volunteer to help clean and maintain the 1.6 Acre *Charles Honn Botanical Garden* behind the museum any morning. We need people who will get down on hands and knees to weed! Also, there is some heavier work with concrete and bricks. Please call PVHMG at 805-482-3660 to leave your name and availability.



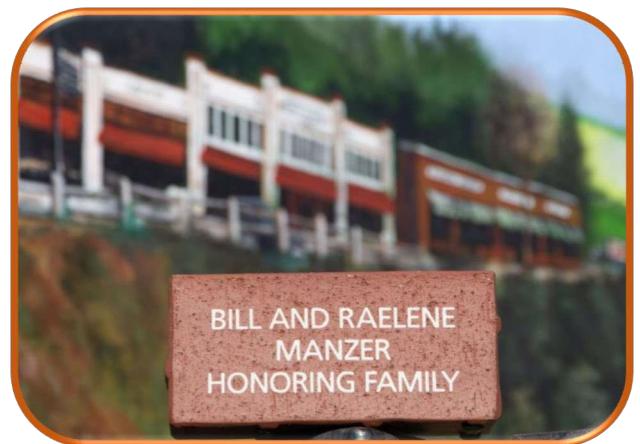
### ***Museum Expansion Fundraising: Sponsoring a Personalized Brick***

The Personalized Brick Fundraising Campaign is doing its part in the Museum Expansion Fundraising program. Since the Personalized Brick Campaign launch in July of 2021, and running through present, 348 bricks have already been ordered. The popularity of the Personalized Bricks has continued to escalate after the Expansion Building Groundbreaking Event in 2022, and popularity will continue through the construction project. Sponsoring a Personalized Brick today will ensure delivery with the first batch of bricks and secure an early prime location for the displaying of your brick.

Sponsoring a personalized 4" x 8" brick, which will be located and displayed at the PVHM&G Museum outdoor location, is more than a \$200 donation to the PVHS Museum Expansion fund:

- 1) A brick can be personalized with your name, and/or your family's name, allowing you to be part of the PVHS Museum history.
- 2) Or, a brick can be personalized to honor anyone, or anything, you want to be remembered.

The form to reserve and sponsor a personalized brick is displayed on the following page:



# PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## *Museum Expansion Project*

Personalized  
Brick  
Display  
Patio



*Buy your brick  
with a click...*



**SCAN ME**

### **“Be a Part of History”**

Reserve a place in PVHS Museum history by sponsoring a personalized brick to be installed on site as part of the project. You may sponsor a brick in your name or to honor anyone or anything you want to be remembered.

**PLEASE PRINT, maximum 16 spaces per line, including blank spaces and punctuation. All inscriptions will be centered and capitalized. Filler in the engraved area will provide a permanent contrast and protect the quality of the engraving.**


Enclosed is my \$200.00 contribution for a 4" x 8" paver with up to three lines of text.

Make checks payable to *Pleasant Valley Historical Society*; or to use PayPal (PayPal allows payment with a Credit Card), please visit our website at [pvhsonline.org](http://pvhsonline.org) and use the PERSONALIZED BRICK button at the top of the webpage.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail this completed form to:**

P.V.H.S.

PO Box 570, Camarillo, CA 93011-0570

*The mission of the Pleasant Valley Historical Museum & 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 education of the general public, and to recognize local residents who have provided outstanding service to the Pleasant Valley community.*

January 2026



## PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL MUSEUM & GARDEN

Established 1964

Location: 720 Las Posas Road, Camarillo  
(Presently closed for Construction)

Mailing Address: PVHS, PO Box 570,  
Camarillo, CA 93011-0570

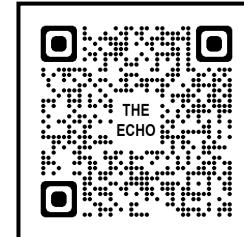
Telephone: (805) 482-3660

Email: [pvhmag@gmail.com](mailto:pvhmag@gmail.com)

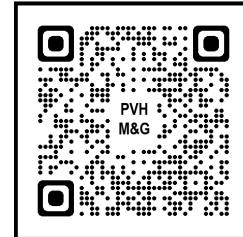
Website: [pvhsonline.org](http://pvhsonline.org)

Newsletter Editor: Manny Hatz

PVHM&G – The Echo



PVHM&G – Home Page



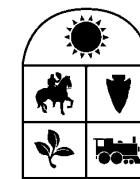
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Pleasant Valley  
Historical Society



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