



# The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 42, Issue 2

March - April 2016

## Calendar

### Saturday, March 12

Lecture and bus tour of Saint Francis Dam disaster  
11:00 AM Saugus Station  
See pages 4 and 5

### Saturday, March 19

The Wine Heist  
2:00 - 5:00 PM Saugus Station  
See pages 5 and 10

### Monday, March 28

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Friday, April 1

Deadline for the May-June *Dispatch*

### Monday, April 25

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### OutWest Concert Series at The Repertory East, 24266 Main St in Newhall. 8:00 PM

Thursday, March 24: An evening with Mike Beck. Discount for SCVHS members

Wednesday, April 20: An evening with Syd Masters & The Swing Riders. Discount for SCVHS members

Check [www.scvhistory.org](http://www.scvhistory.org) for other upcoming events.



Articles and inquiries regarding *The Dispatch* may be made to 661 254-1275

To arrange for filming at Heritage Junction, contact Cathy Martin at 661 645-0107

## President's Message

by Alan Pollack



In this final chapter of our three-part series on the story of the Francisco López Placerita gold discovery and the Oak of the Golden Dream, we will examine additional accounts of the discovery, visit the dedication ceremony for the famous oak tree in 1930, and then decide if the Golden Dream story is indeed fact or legend. You may be surprised at the final conclusion!

### CHARLES J. PRUDHOMME, HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA, 1922

Charles J. Prudhomme, the historian for Ramona Parlor 109, Native Sons of the Golden West, discussed the gold discovery

controversy in the Annual Publication, Historical Society of Southern California | Los Angeles 1922: "This we will proceed to set forth in detail, and give ample proof to show that Marshall was not the first real discoverer of gold in California, nor was Sutter's Mill the place where the first discovery was made; but on the contrary, we earnestly allege that this discovery was first made by Don Francisco López, and in southern California several years prior to the discovery by Mr. Marshall, that this was in 1842, and at the locality known as Placerito Canyon, and his second discovery was made the same year at a place known as San Feliciana, and not very far from the City of Los Angeles. . . Mr. Cyrus Lyon in his youth came to Pueblo de Los Angeles in 1849. He soon became an employee of Mr. John Temple who had his store, an adobe  
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## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

building, where now stands Temple Block. In Mr. Lyon's daily notes we read: 'I was so informed that in 1842, forty-five miles northwest from the Pueblo, were discovered the Placerito Placer by Francisco López. And the same year he discovered the San Feliciana placer mine.'

Prudhomme also brought up for the first time an account of the López gold discovery by Francisca López de Belderrain (Bilderrain), a great-grandniece of Francisco López, who claimed to have been at a family reunion in 1914 where Catalina López, niece of Francisco López, recounted her personal memory as a 11 year old of the first anniversary celebration of the Placerita gold discovery in 1843. Both the 1843 and 1914 gatherings presumably took place on the spot of the gold discovery in Placerita Canyon. In November, 1920, Prudhomme rode out with Mrs. de Bilderrain, and San Fernando resident Mrs. Romona López Shung (another relative of Francisco López) to Newhall and Placerita Canyon. Said Prudhomme, "The circumstances of the discovery, as related by our guides, are these: Don Francisco López, who was greatly trusted by the padres, had at this time charge of their cattle and stock in this section. And one day in the year 1842, when in company with another herdsman he sought some stray animals, they happened to ride into this Canyon, known as Placerito. These men, being weary, tethered their tired horses, and proceeded to make themselves comfortable, taking their siesta under the shade of the oak tree. After resting awhile, Don Francisco spied some bunches of wild onions growing nearby, and calling to mind that his aunt, at parting with him recently, had requested him to bring her home the first of these he could find, he began to pluck up some of these wild onions by the roots, and while thus engaged, to his astonishment he noticed attached to the roots of the onions, certain curious shining pebbles. So he then pulled out his hunting knife, and proceeded to dig more and more and still found attached to the bunches more and more of the same kind of shining stones. His curiosity being aroused, he filled his handkerchief with these shining stones, and having bunched up a lot of the onions for his aunt, mounted his horse and returned to his home. There he found his father, Don Juan Francisco López, and requested him to take them to the Pueblo, and find out what they might be. Upon due research, they were found to be nuggets of gold. The news soon flew abroad, and many men flocked to this Canyon, and worked these placers in a primitive way." Prudhomme was then taken to a place in the canyon where Mrs. de Bilderrain, pointing to a certain spot, said: "This is the place of the discovery; this is

the exact location."

In conclusion, Prudhomme stated: "Having in a measure gratified our desire to get first-hand data, and also original views of the identical spot where in the days of the missions Don Francisco López made the first discovery of gold on the Pacific Coast, and having viewed this spot in company with his near relatives, who verify all our assertions in regard thereto, our mission being fulfilled to our satisfaction and joy, we turned our hustling auto about, and headed for the City of the Angels. Last, we add, let the truth of history prevail, and let justice be done, though the heavens fall. Let Mr. Marshall yield up the laurel of fame as the first pioneer discoverer of gold in California to the brow of Don Francisco López, to whom it justly belongs."

### **FR. ZEPHYRIN ENGELHARDT, "SAN FERNANDO REY, THE MISSION OF THE VALLEY", 1927**

In his 1927 book "San Fernando Rey, The Mission of the Valley", Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M, the Church's official mission historian, cited the Catalina López version of the gold discovery story. His sources were mission records indicating that another friar, Rev. Eugene Sugranes, C.M.F, had heard the story from Catalina on some unknown date. There again was no mention of a golden dream or golden oak in Engelhardt's book. Per Engelhardt: "The discovery, briefly, came about in this way, according to the Rev. Eugene Sugranes, C.M.F, who had the facts from the niece of the discoverer, Catalina López. On March 9, 1842, the feast of St. Frances (Francesca) of Rome, Francisco López, then in charge of San Francisquito Rancho, determined to celebrate his birthday by adding to the dinner some fresh vegetables he had cultivated. From a bed of onions he pulled up a bunch of the plant. On shaking the soil from the roots, López observed several yellow particles which on close examination proved to be genuine gold. In his excitement he forgot all about the dinner, and hastened to make known his happy find. Many fortune-hunters, especially from Sonora, crowded into the country, and the placer, as well as another discovered in the following year in the San Feliciano Cañon, on the same San Francisquito Ranch, but about eight miles to the west of Newhall, was worked more or less continuously till the year 1846."

### **ARTHUR B. PERKINS AND ADOLFO G. RIVERA, 1930**

The very first time we would see mention of a golden dream and golden oak was in 1930 by historians Arthur B. Perkins and Adolfo G. Rivera. They based this on the testimony of Francisca López de Belderrain. The two

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## President's Message

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historians were preparing a celebration to commemorate the 88th anniversary of the López gold discovery. On February 23, 1930, they had Mrs. de Belderrain sign an affidavit attesting to the authenticity of her version of the story. She testified that Catalina López had been shown the exact location of the gold discovery in 1843, and that in 1914, at a family reunion, Catalina had shown Mrs. de Belderrain and others in the family the exact location of the discovery. The exact location was described as "the tree under which Francisco López slept during the afternoon of March 9th, 1842 . . . located on the property of Mr. Frank E. Walker, in Placeritos Canyon. . ."

Frank Walker himself signed an affidavit for Perkins on March 1, 1930, stating "That he has been shown the site of the first gold discovery of gold [sic] in California, by Mrs. Francisca López de Belderrain and that said site is located in the W.½ of N.W.¼ of S.E.¼ of Section 5, Township 3 North, Range 15 West, S.B.M."

### DEDICATION OF THE OAK OF THE GOLDEN DREAM

On March 9, 1930, Adolfo Rivera organized a dedication ceremony for the Oak of the Golden Dream as the purported location of the gold discovery by Francisco López. According to Leon Worden, "It was Adolfo who determined which tree would be associated with the legend of López's golden dream, on the word of relatives of a López descendant who pointed it out to them 70 years after the fact." The ceremony was to be hosted by Rivera's La Mesa Club along with Ramona Parlor No. 109 of the Native Sons of the Golden West (which Rivera also represented), the Kiwanis Club and Chamber of Commerce of Newhall-Saugus, the latter two organizations represented by Perkins. The program called for the unveiling of "a temporary tablet, over a mound of granite boulders unearthed in Placeritos canyon by Mr. F. E. Walker, after being covered by brush and debris for 75 years, marking the spot where gold was first discovered in California, on March 9th, 1842, by Francisco López, a native Californian." Rivera officiated as Master of Ceremonies. Speeches were made by, among others, Mrs. de Belderrain, State Senator Reginaldo F. del Valle, Arthur Perkins, and Frank Walker. After the speeches, the program for the ceremony stated "You will be shown the 500 year old oak tree, under whose shade Francisco López enjoyed his mid-day siesta on the day of his discovery."

Rivera said in his speech that day, "This date marks the 88<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the discovery of gold, on this very spot,

in 1842. That the world may know, that the Northern historians may learn, that our State authorities may take notice and insert these facts in our school text books, we are placing a temporary tablet over a mound of boulders placed here 3/4 of a century or more ago and but lately unearthed by Mr. Walker, the owner of these premises. La Mesa Club, with a membership of Native and Adopted Sons of California, will place a tablet on yonder oak, 'neath whose shade, the discoverer slept his siesta on that eventful day." He also proclaimed, "We of this Southland do now inform the historians of the North and announce to the world that we proclaim our right to be recognized in the history-making epochs of our state, that this discovery must be presented in the textbooks in our schools, and we advise legitimate writers on California history to take heed, or they will be branded as falsifiers and concealers of the truth."

In Perkins' speech he stated, "...we wish to recall March 9, 1842, when Francisco López arose from under that Tree of the Golden Dreams, and made that epochal Discovery of Gold." Thus it appears that in 1930, the concept of the Oak of the Golden Dream was first introduced.

There were two plaques placed at the Oak of the Golden dream that day. One plaque affixed to the tree itself had the inscription: "ENCINO DE LOS ENSUEÑOS DORADOS DE FRANCISCO LÓPEZ. OAK OF THE GOLDEN DREAMS. PLACED BY LA MESA CLUB. MARCH 9TH 1930." The other plaque affixed to a pile of boulders next to the tree said: "FRANCISCO LÓPEZ HERE DISCOVERED THE FIRST GOLD IN CALIFORNIA. MARCH 9, 1842. THIS PLATE PLACED MARCH 9, 1930 BY THE RAMONA PARLOR No 109, N.S.G.W., LA MESA CLUB, KIWANIS CLUB OF NEWHALL-SAUGUS." Both plaques were stolen by 1957. The tree plaque has never been seen again, although the boulder plaque was said to have been recovered.

### IN CONCLUSION

So, was the story of the Oak of the Golden Dream fact or legend? The one thing we can say for certain is that Francisco López did make the first documented gold discovery in California history in the Santa Clarita Valley, most likely in Placerita Canyon. There are obviously differing opinions as to the exact location of the gold discovery, the exact date, and the exact circumstances under which López discovered the gold. With the evidence we have, as presented in this article, we conclude that we may never know for sure what really happened! That truth may have died with Francisco López.



PRESENTS

# St. Francis Dam Disaster

## LECTURE & BUS TOUR TO DAM SITE

Saturday, MARCH 12, 2016

# 88th Anniversary

With Guest Speakers:

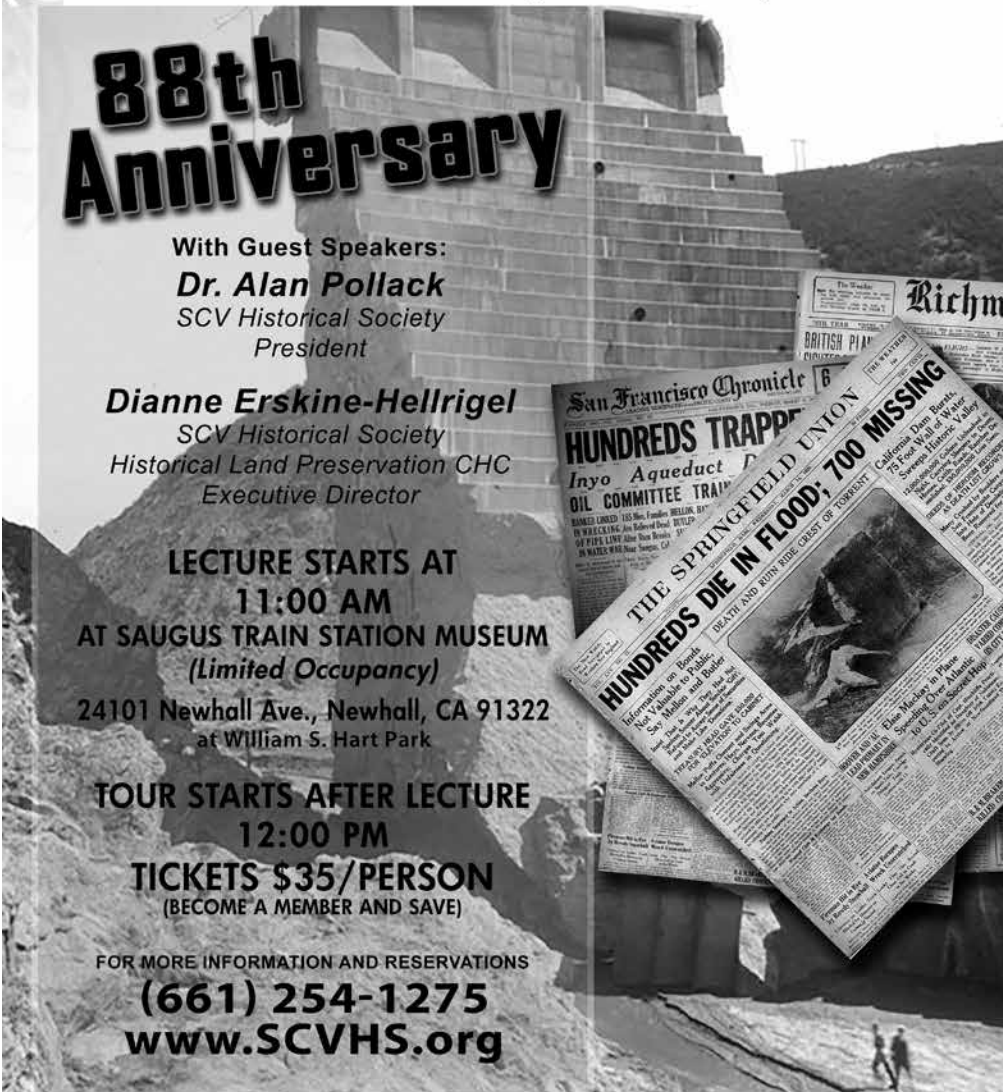
**Dr. Alan Pollack**  
SCV Historical Society  
President

**Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel**  
SCV Historical Society  
Historical Land Preservation CHC  
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**LECTURE STARTS AT**  
**11:00 AM**  
**AT SAUGUS TRAIN STATION MUSEUM**  
*(Limited Occupancy)*  
24101 Newhall Ave., Newhall, CA 91322  
at William S. Hart Park

**TOUR STARTS AFTER LECTURE**  
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### SPONSORS SPACE:



## St Francis Dam Lecture and Tour by Alan Pollack

The SCV Historical Society will be presenting its annual lecture and tour to the site of the second worst disaster in California history.

Guest Lecturers and Tour Guides This Year to the St. Francis Dam disaster site will be Dr. Alan Pollack, President of the SCV Historical Society, and Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Board Director of the SCV Historical Society and Executive Director of the Santa Clarita Community Hiking Club.

Just before midnight on the evening of March 12, 1928, William Mulholland's majestic St. Francis Dam suffered a catastrophic collapse, causing a wall of water to travel some 55 miles to the Pacific Ocean and killing up to 431 people in the second-worst disaster in California history, after the San Francisco earthquake and fire 22 years earlier. The St. Francis Dam had been completed in 1926. Legendary Los Angeles water chief William Mulholland was greatly responsible for designing the dam, which turned out to be flawed both in its design and in geologic location. Soon after the reservoir reached full capacity in March, 1928, it collapsed and sent massive flood waters cascading down San Francisquito Canyon and into the Santa Clara River Valley. Mulholland took full responsibility for the disaster and was never the same after that; he died in 1935 a broken man.

This event will be held on Saturday, March 12, 2016, on the 88<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dam disaster. The tour will begin with a presentation about the disaster at 11:00 AM in the freight room of the Saugus Train Station in Heritage Junction. At noon, ticketed passengers will board a motor coach for a trip up to the dam site in San Francisquito Canyon and a hike to the dam ruins.

Tickets are \$35 per person for all ages, and include the lecture, snacks, and bus transportation. A \$5 discount is available to those who sign up as new Historical Society members. Funds raised will benefit programs of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society.

Tickets may be reserved by calling 661 254-1275 with credit card and contact information. Or, purchase online via PayPal at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)

The tour includes an approximately one-mile walk and a steep uphill hike at the dam site. Participants should wear long pants and comfortable hiking shoes. Water will be provided. Because this tour is a very popular fund-raiser, it is impossible to guarantee that seats will be available for purchase on the day of the tour. Order your tickets now!

For more information on this and other upcoming programs from the SCVHS, please call 661 254-1275 or visit the Website at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org).

## The Wine Heist by Cathy Martin

The Wine Heist was an interesting event that took place during prohibition at the Saugus Train Station.

The story started in Los Angeles at San Antonio winery, where a shipment of sacramental wine was transported to Central Station and loaded onto a northbound train. As the train made its stop at the Saugus depot, the crew went across the street to dine at the popular Saugus Café.

Meanwhile... Some locals were breaking into the freight car containing the barrels of wine. They quickly siphoned off wine into their containers and successfully slipped away back into town. No one was aware that a "wine heist" had taken place. Hence, there are no police records to corroborate the story. Decades later, at a barbeque, one of the participants spilled the beans and retold the story of how they had taken the wine.

Almost 90 years later the Saugus Station will host another Wine Heist. This Heist will include a variety of wines from wineries from Los Angeles County to Paso Robles. You really don't want to miss it!

Tickets are on sale now. You can purchase tickets by going to our Website [scvhistory.com](http://scvhistory.com) and look for the Wine Heist logo. Or, you can call 661 254-1275.

When you arrive you will receive a commemorative wine glass and experience some truly fine wines. In addition, light snacks of cheese and crackers will be served. All the funds raised from this event will benefit the Pardee House Museum move.

Date and Location: Saturday, March 19th, Saugus Station

Time: 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Price: \$50.00 per person



## The Lambs

by Margi Bertram



One day while here at the Hart Museum, I came across the poster seen in this photo. As a fan of hand drawn sign lettering, this piece was amusing. And clearly there was a story behind it. Bill Hart was hosting a “crazy” pool tournament. Who were these

friends of his, the Lambs? And in what year did December 4 fall on a Saturday?

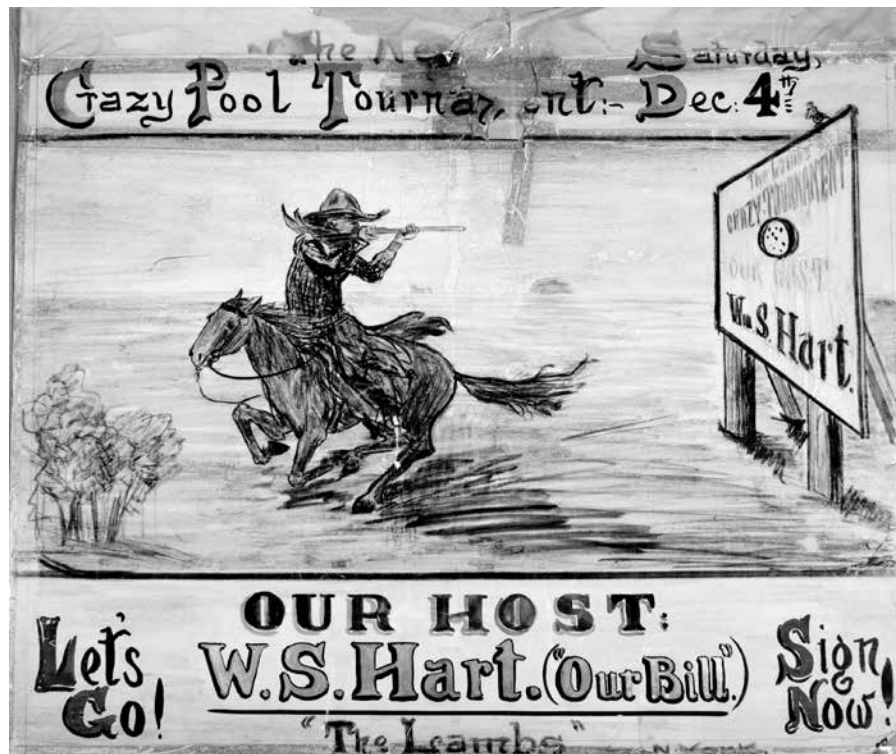
It turns out the Lambs were The Lambs, America’s first professional theatrical club. It began as a casual group of English actors who attended frequent gatherings hosted by the English writer Charles Lamb, and his sister Mary. These meetings quickly turned into salons, where discussions were spirited, inspiring, and educational. In the spring of 1869, the group was formalized and named in honor of their hosts. Five years later, a chapter was formed in New York, and the club has thrived for more than 140 years.

The roster of the past and living Lambs reads like a *Who’s Who of American Theatre*: John and Lionel Barrymore, Joe E. Brown, Cecil B. DeMille, Douglas Fairbanks, James Montgomery Flagg, Bert Lahr, Will Rogers, John Phillip Sousa, and our own William S. Hart, among many others.

Fred Astaire said, “When I was made a Lamb, I felt as if I had been knighted!” Originally a males-only club, the group eventually extended membership to include both ladies and gentlemen. Not just a social organization, The Lambs contribute to charitable causes through The Lambs Foundation. A World War I transport ship was named in honor of The Lambs for its contribution to war relief. A cigar maker from Texas, while visiting New York, attended an event put on by The Lambs. That night was so memorable, he created a hand-made Dominican Republic cigar and named it in the club’s honor. These cigars can still be purchased today.

The Lambs have been such a prominent group in the theater, film, television, radio, and music industries, they have connections to the founding of many other modern support organizations: Actors’ Equity, The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), The Masquers, Screen Actors Guild (SAG), American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), and Paramount Pictures.

And back to the date of the tournament...I have found that during Hart’s film days, December 4 fell on a Saturday in 1915, 1920 and 1925. Right now we have no way of knowing which of these days it was, but what do you think?



## LMU EXHIBIT FOCUSES ON ANOTHER FACET OF RANCHO CAMULOS

By Maria Christopher

From now until June 7, 2016, you have a special opportunity to further explore the history of Rancho Camulos. "The Del Valle Vestments: The Devotion and Performance of a Matriarchy," is an exhibit which explores the lives of this prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century Californio family that lived at Rancho Camulos. It is open to the public at the Loyola Marymount University's William H. Hannon Library (LMU) in Los Angeles, Monday - Friday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

This exhibit is the result of the collaborative efforts of Rancho Camulos Museum and several LMU departments. It was curated by students in Professor Leon Wieber's Costume Research Methods course. They were inspired by an archival collection of clerical vestments that were donated to LMU in the 1940s by Josefa del Valle Forster, the eldest daughter of Ignacio and Isabelle del Valle. These vestments were used in the chapel of what is now the Rancho Camulos National Historic Landmark. **A selection of the vestments is the focus of the exhibit.** They are supplemented by other del Valle family documents, photographs, and artifacts. The exhibit even includes a screening of the 1910 silent film "Ramona," starring Mary Pickford, which was filmed at Rancho Camulos and shows the chapel as it was then. That movie further solidified Camulos's reputation as the "Home of Ramona," one of the settings for Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel that she wrote to call attention to the mistreatment of Native Americans, but also generated the first tourism boom to California.

Rancho Camulos is what remains of the 1839 Mexican land grant of the 48,000 acre San Fernando Mission lands, Rancho San Francisco, to the del Valle family. It once included most of what is now Santa Clarita. In 1861, Ignacio del Valle moved his family permanently from Olvera Plaza in Los Angeles to the four-room adobe constructed at Camulos in 1853. In addition to expanding the adobe to meet the needs of his growing family, at the behest of his wife in the mid-1860s he built the family chapel to meet the religious needs of his family and the rancho community.

The small chapel was a consecrated Roman Catholic church. It survived many disasters, including the St. Francis Dam flood and the Northridge earthquake, and still stands today. It has everything normally found in a traditional Catholic church, such as religious statues, Stations of the Cross, and even a confessional. In the del Valle period, it was a center of rancho life. Several times a month, a priest

would come from either Ventura or San Fernando to say Mass and perform other Catholic rituals, such as marriages, baptisms, and confessions for the extended Camulos community. However, the del Valles were devout Catholics so the chapel was used daily. It is said that the Senora del Valle would lead the family and workers in prayer several times a day. These gatherings also served as a time for socializing and sharing the news of the day. The chapel was sometimes referred to as the "Lost Mission" because of its location halfway between the San Fernando and San Buenaventura Missions. The family provided the clergy with the sumptuous vestments that are now part of the LMU exhibit. The Rubel family, who purchased Camulos from the del Valles in 1924, was not Catholic, but they maintained the chapel because of its historic significance. It is still visited today as part of the museum's docent led tours, and it is occasionally used for services.

To learn more, we encourage you to visit the LMU exhibit and the Rancho Camulos Museum, which is open only by docent-led tours or for special events. Tours are usually Sundays at 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 PM. Check [www.ranchocamulos.org](http://www.ranchocamulos.org) first, as we sometimes close due to weather or special events.

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## My Favorite SCV Bucket of Blood: The Trails Bar

by John Boston

*"After about 500 street fights, you start to get a sense of who you are."*  
—Vin Diesel

Invariably, you get a group of women together and they will talk about sex, relationships, sex, other women, sex, shopping, Brad Pitt with other women and, sex.

Guys are simpler. Together in groups, they will speak about sports, the price of gasoline, and agricultural futures even though they have nothing to do with agriculture except for maybe piling blueberries on their instant oatmeal in the morning.

And, they will speak in reverent whispers of great bar fights. Sorry ladies. It's something in our genes.

We used to have the second best cowboy bar on the planet in Newhall. The best, of course, is the See 'em Dead Zoo Bar in Columbus, Montana. I still miss that place.

But the silver medal for all of Earth is no small thing, and The Trails on San Fernando Road was that. It's been closed for eons. My friend, Herb Simpson, ran the place and I remember in one of his darker days, there was a double homicide in the dirt parking lot.

The next day, I moseyed over for lunch and understandably, Herb was a little down. I sauntered in and made a big production of slapping at my boots. Curious, Herb inquired what the problem was and I asked for a rag. From behind the bar, he started to hand me one.

"Can't seem to get that darn police chalk off from homicide outlines in the parking lot," I said.

Herb threw a bar towel at me and had some rather robust suggestions about my trying self-involved procreation.

The Trails was the stuff of legend and years earlier, when I was a boy, had been the site of one of the best barroom brawls in local history. I think I started going into The Trails when I was 13. According to local stool monkeys, an event of Homeric proportions took place, involving two German construction workers employed at the construction of the Castaic Dam. The Paul Bunyan version was that the two of them pretty much just dug the entire reservoir by themselves, without any tools.

Supposedly, some unkind words were exchanged between the Germans and more than a dozen patrons, most of whom were local cowboys. It still pains me because of my Western roots, but the Germans mopped the floor with everyone. I mean, they beat people, their Stetsons, their canteens, their belt buckles and their horses. Grown men were thrown not only through the window, but through a wall outside.

*Continued on Page 9*

## Thanks to those who volunteered since the last issue of the *Dispatch*:

### Weekend Docents:

Sandra Cattell	RuthAnne Murthy
Sioux Coghlan	Alan Pollack
Evan Decker	Jeff Prange
Sara Floyd	Brent Roberts
Anna Kroll	Anna Schindler
Debra Martin	Konrad Summers
Barbara Martinelli	Gordon Uppman

Interested in becoming a docent? Visit our website at [www.scvhs.org](http://www.scvhs.org)

### Those who open and close for the docents:

Evan Decker	RuthAnne Murthy
Cathy Martin	Alan Pollack
Barbara Martinelli	

### Weekend Questers\*

Linda Hinz	Dee Roche
Pat Horanberg	Jenewyn VanWie
Johnsie Manlow	Dee Ann Wood
Cathy Martin	Sue Yurosek
Becky Novy	

### School Tour Docents:

Evan Decker	Barbara Martinelli
Bob Feder	Anna Schindler

### Grounds:

Diane Erskine-Hellrigel	LDS Young Adults
Mike Jarrell	Cathy Martin

\*Don't know who the Questers are? See [www.questers1944.org](http://www.questers1944.org)



## John Boston's Tale

*Continued from page 8*

I heard that the Sheriffs arrived in force, took quick inventory of the situation and decided to sit on the hoods of their prowler cars as bodies were being tossed across San Fernando Road into distant oak trees way past Placerita Creek.

Polite as pie, after there was no one left to pound, the pair polished off their beers, marched outside and climbed into the back of the patrol cars without comment or incident.

I read in an old police report about an oil worker once was accosted by bikers in front of The Trails in the 1950s. He bent one of their handlebars into a pretzel. I stole the fable for my novel years later.

My favorite Trails tale? My best pal Phil Lanier and I once took one of Phil's artsy-craftsy buddies to The Trails for their legendary cheeseburgers and fries. Cripes, they were always just perfect.

Craig Holt was an established film and TV director and a bona fide great guy, despite the fact he was from Hollywood and was the poster boy for yuppies. Lanier and I had spent years building up the legends surrounding The Trails, carefully planting seeds of terror in Craig while dismissing that "most of the time, nothing can happen to you there."

On a warm, rowdy Saturday night, the place was packed with blue-collar types, cowboys, jocks and a few bikers — one of whom was my pal, Randy. Garbed in weathered road leather and sporting thick shoulder-length Sir Galahad hair, Randy was one big drink of water and a bona fide Force of Nature.

Phil, Craig and I are standing at the crowded bar, waiting for our order. Craig is both giddy and terrified. He said muttering things like: "Everyone in here looks like they've escaped from prison" or "I'm not dressed right for this place. I'm just not dressed right for this place."

Craig had a point. He was wearing 1930's-ish tennis pants, a short sleeve polo shirt with a canary yellow cashmere sweater casually draped — DRAPED — over his shoulders and penny loafers without socks. Craig was as straight as Interstate 5 past Bakersfield, but even gay guys would think: "That's a little too over the top."

Phil's wearing his black leather motorcycle jacket and I'm in my signature Western duds. I spot Randy down at the end of the bar, wink and nod at our poor mark. Randy grins, nods and slowly makes his way down the bar, one-by-one, pushing about 12 patrons out of the way.

"Oh-oh," said Phil, playing along.

"Trouble," I said. "Pure trouble. This is not going to end well."

"Omigod. That guy who looks like Frankenstein is coming towards us," said Craig.

At 6-foot-6, Randy didn't exactly hover over the demure cinematographer from two mountain ranges over. Randy was so close to our friend and his yellow draped Rock Hudson sweater, that every time he exhaled, Craig's lightly tousled Miami Vice hair moved.

"Don't show him you're scared," Phil said.

"Stand up to him. We'll back you up," I promised.

Randy took Craig's cheeseburger from out of his hand and took a bite. He washed that down with Craig's beer. All of it.

"You cannot stand for that," I harshly whispered. "Punch him! As hard as you can! He's all show."

Craig did something I've never seen a grown man do, except for once when my nephew-like substance Paul Garrett got married. Craig started laughing AND crying at the same time. I mean, hysterically. Phil just stood there, mouth agape, and asked: "How do you DO that?"

Before other bodily fluids were unleashed, we broke the scam and introduced Craig to Randy and you had a chorus of about 60 husky male voices laughing their a-double-dollar-signs off.

We spent our paychecks in beer and burgers that night, closing the place down. I remember Randy around two in the morning waving good-bye. Before he kick-started his Harley, he just pointed at Craig's fashion ensemble, started to say something and just shook his head. "I'm not throwing them away," Craig said, somewhat drunk. "In fact, I'm going to go buy you a set in triple-extra large/tall and make you wear it."

"I'm throwing them away," Phil interjected.

Randy nodded, then brodied a big circle of dust and gravel before taking off for wherever bikers and vampires live.

Craig swore quietly and promised that next time he saw the guy, he would kick the fellow's rear end until his nose bled.

Phil and I nodded. That's the spirit.

*(With some 10,000 essays and opinion pieces, SCV author John Boston is one of America's most prolific writers. He also writes his regular Mr. SCV column for the new SCV Reader. Weekly, he pens The Time Ranger & SCV History for the SCV Beacon. Every two weeks, he writes the SCV History for your SCV Gazette. Don't forget to check out his national humor, entertainment & swashbuckling commentary website— [thejohnbostonchronicles.com](http://thejohnbostonchronicles.com). You'll be smiling for a week...)*

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The Heritage Junction Dispatch  
P.O. Box 221925  
Newhall, CA 91322-1925  
info@scvhistory.com

Telephone (661)254-1275  
Headquarters: Saugus Train Station  
24101 Newhall Avenue, Newhall 91321  
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