



# The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

Volume 45, ISSUE 6

November-December 2019

## Calendar

### Saturday, November 9

Photo Presentation by Gordon Glattenberg - Southern California Since the 1950s.  
1:00 PM Bolton Hall Museum  
10110 Commerce Avenue  
Tujunga, CA 91042  
See page 7

### Monday, November 25

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

### Monday, December 2

Deadline for the January-February Dispatch

### Monday, December 7

Christmas Open House,  
Noon-4:00 PM Saugus Station  
See page 4

### Monday, December 16

Board of Directors Meeting  
6:30 PM Saugus Station

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



Santa Clarita just got back a piece of its history. Missing since the 1950s, photocopies of a number of issues of the Newhall Signal from 1924 have recently been found.

The original copies of the 1924 issues had been brought in to the offices of the Signal in the mid-2010s by descendants of former Signal publisher Fred Trueblood, Sr. The significance of the issues was not recognized at that time and they were stashed away and forgotten....until now. It's time to see what news we have been missing from 1924:

From the January 4 Signal issue: The first dance of the year at Newhall's Hap-a-Lan dance hall was to be held on January 5.

It was to be a "leap year carnival dance given by five of Newhall's captivating young ladies." Arrangements were made with Foster's orchestra, "a brand new one to this vicinity and said to be a real live-wire bunch of musicians." Sadly, just four years later, this dance hall was used as a temporary morgue for victims of the St. Francis Dam disaster. It had to be closed down permanently after that.

"Mrs. C.A. Small, of the San Francisquito Canyon School, decorated a beautiful Xmas tree at the Ruiz home which was loaded with gifts." Cecelia A. Small was the schoolteacher at the school in San Francisquito Canyon. She and all of her students except one, along with six members of the Ruiz family, later perished in the St. Francis Dam flood in 1928.

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## President's Message

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January 18 issue: Young Birdie Bright of Newhall wrote a letter to her "dear Aunt Molly" describing her experience of driving on the old Ridge route: "Just got home from a long drive over the Ridge Route. Saw the beautiful sunset as the sun cast its last rays down in the canyon hundreds of feet below us. The curves made me kind of dizzy and scared and my ears just popped. I told Cousin Fred that I was glad when we reached the bottom of the grade, but he only laughed and called me 'fraidy cat'."

Also on the Ridge Route, a "Buick and Studebaker sedan collided on the Ridge near Mrs. Callahan's goat ranch. . . The woman riding in one of the cars was thrown thru the windshield. It is said that one of the cars was on the wrong side of the boulevard."

January 25 issue: "Paul Young, a lad 15 years of age, whose parents have a homestead near Gorman Station, was arrested. . . for setting a fire on the Ralph ranch. According to reports the boy is not inclined to be unruly or wayward in any respect but seems to be possessed of a mania for setting fires. In his confession. . . the boy admitted having set the Marshall canyon fire and also two others in Cottonwood canyon." Of note, the 2700 acre Gorman ranch was purchased by Oscar Ralphs in 1898. He was the brother of George A. Ralphs, who founded the grocery chain now known as Ralphs. The Gorman Ranch eventually became known as the Ralphs Ranch, where Ralphs family members raised cattle for their grocery stores.

April 4 issue: Hoof and Mouth disease was rampant in California in 1924. Dr. C.J. Wallen of the veterinary department of Southern California and Dr. Kirkpatrick of the County health office toured this area with Constable Jack Pilcher in April to check for any cases of the disease in Newhall animal stock. Luckily, no cases were found here. Not so lucky were the counties of San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Mariposa, Merced, and Los Angeles, which were designated as a Closed Quarantined Area. Within this area, transportation of stock animals was prohibited. No domestic animals were to be carried in vehicles or across public highways. Excluded from the regulations were horses and mules who were working in harness, as long as they had not entered areas where the infection existed. The Signal opined: "The quarantine passed last week to all residents in Mint and elsewhere, is causing real hardship as feed is almost a minus quantity on many ranches and pasturage

too short and scarce for cattle to feed upon. What are the farmers to do?"

A.H. Wilkie took out an ad in the Signal which stated: "ANNOUNCEMENT! Having purchased the merchandise store of A.B. McNutt, I will be glad to serve patrons to the best of my ability."

April 11 issue: the Foot and Mouth epidemic was worsening. The Signal warned local residents that they must observe regulations or go to jail. They appealed for everyone to take personal responsibility to stop the spread of the disease. They further warned of the possibilities of an embargo against shipment of crops and cattle, with their being destroyed if the situation were to worsen. Among the admonitions: "Don't allow any livestock off your premises. Don't congregate with an assembly of people. Don't go camping. Don't move livestock feed stuffs without special permit and supervision. Don't move livestock unless imperatively necessary, then only by permit. Don't enter any infected or quarantined area. And above all: don't fail to notify or report to your veterinarian at the first symptoms of anything unusual in your livestock, such as drooping ears, lameness, slobbering, or reduced milk supply."

From the "Saugus Items" section: "Harry Carey and company were shooting scenes in our town Wednesday. At no time did they lack for interested spectators."

April 18 issue: J.N. Olson was arrested near Lebec for violating the foot and mouth quarantine by transporting a dog over the Ridge Route. When stopped by Deputy Sheriff Jack Wilmot, Olson denied having the hidden dog in the car, but the dog gave his master away by sneezing. Olson was brought in to court by Constable Jack Pilcher and his Deputy Ed Brown, where he was fined \$25 by Judge Miller.

May 2 issue: People were complaining about the lack of 24-hour telephone service from the Telephone Company. The office of the Telephone Company was only open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on business days. After hours, only emergency calls could be made at the homes of Constable Jack Pilcher or the Forest station or residence. "Either Constable Pilcher or Ranger Peterson will get up any time of the night to put in calls of this nature and are quite willing to do so. But they refuse to be disturbed from their slumbers for any but emergency calls."

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## President's Message

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The Signal further stated: "Twenty-four hour service for Newhall, every day of the year, is asking none too much of the Telephone Company. If this organization has any logical argument to offer we would like to hear it and let it be known to the general public."

May 30 issue: "A large delegation of the Ku Klux Klan passed north through Newhall, Saturday morning. Most of the members were robed and hooded, but not masked. It was supposed they were out for a picnic, but they didn't state."

June 20 issue: "J.W. Doty began work Monday on the remodeling and rebuilding of his garage. The office section has been entirely torn down and the walls of the main part will be extended back 24 feet, while the north part will also be enlarged and rebuilt and a cement floor put in. The remodeling will add about 100 per cent to the floor space and is necessary to accommodate Mr. Doty's growing business as agent for the Ford automobile."

July 4 issue: The fourth year of the rodeo in Newhall was to be held on July 4-6. The arena was larger than previously, with a seating capacity of 10,000. Being in the middle of the Prohibition period, no alcohol was to be brought into the grounds and a "dry squad" would be present to confiscate from any rogue alcohol smugglers. Three thousand pounds of barbecue meat would be available.

"Judge Powell, who kind of runs his own affairs, even when sick, announced Saturday that he was tired of the hospital, and was going home - and he did."

July 11 issue: The Newhall Rodeo suffered from small attendance this year. Usually held near May 1st, it had to be postponed until July due to the hoof and mouth disease outbreak earlier in the year. In spite of the disappointing attendance, the show went on and featured celebrity attendance by Harry Carey, Buck Jones, William S. Hart and others.

A severe drought in California caused Southern California Edison and other power companies to request the public to cut power usage by 25 per cent to prevent serious complications during the water shortage. This same drought triggered the water wars in the Owens Valley along the Los Angeles Aqueduct, eventually leading to the St. Francis Dam's failure in 1928.

July 25 issue: The Frew Blacksmith shop was spared from a potentially devastating fire when a passing motorist saw fire on the roof of the shop. A few pails of water quickly extinguished the flames with only slight damage resulting. The fire was said to be caused by sparks from the forge.

Due to extreme fire hazard from the ongoing drought, campfire permits along the Ridge Route were to be issued only for the National Forest Inn, Airo Service Station, Tumble Inn, Kelly's Halfway House, and Sandberg's.

August 15 issue: A great engineering feat was accomplished in the Southern Pacific's Newhall train tunnel, with the enlargement and concrete lining of the tunnel. Since being built by predominantly Chinese workers in 1876, the tunnel had been lined only with timber. The timber lining required constant repairs to allow trains to get through. In addition to a complete concrete lining, the tunnel was made five feet higher and two or three feet wider. Progress in completing the job was greatly slowed by the requirement that the work not interrupt the ongoing train service.

A site for the new Newhall School was acquired for \$7500 from Judge Powell. The site consisted of four blocks amounting to nine acres and extending from Newhall Avenue to Chestnut Street.

September 19 issue: Gus LeBrun of San Francisquito Canyon murdered Deputy Constable Ed Brown and was himself killed in a fierce gun battle which took place between him, Brown, and constable Jack Pilcher. The gunfight was triggered by a troubled love affair between LeBrun and Bonita Darling. LeBrun claimed that Darling had promised to marry him in exchange for a \$200 loan which he gave her. Instead, she turned him down and "gave him the horse laugh". The dispute between the two lovers ended up in the court of Judge Miller and was settled by drawing up a note of \$150 to be paid by Darling to LeBrun in exchange for his agreement to stay away from her ranch. The next day however, LeBrun whipped himself into a drunken jealous rage and, armed with a rifle and revolver, drove to Darling's ranch, where he threatened to kill her and himself. Darling talked LeBrun into letting her leave the ranch to get something to eat.

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## President's Message

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She proceeded to Newhall where she notified Judge Miller of the incident. Pilcher and Brown were summoned and drove to the Darling Ranch. Upon arriving at the ranch, the officers were ambushed by LeBrun, who opened fire upon them with his rifle, the first bullet penetrating through the back seat of their vehicle and narrowly missing Pilcher's head. The officers got out of their car and returned fire. According to the Signal, "Both Brown and Pilcher made their shots count, and after emptying his rifle, shooting part of the time from the ground, Lebrun cried, 'You've got me, boys; I'll quit.' The officers had escaped injury so far, and walked over to where LeBrun lay crumpled on the ground, his hands clasping his body. As they stooped to lift him up, he suddenly jerked a large revolver from beneath his jacket and fired two shots, one at each officer. Quick as a flash both officers fired, and it was the finish for LeBrun. Brown clapped his hand to his side, remarking, 'Well Jack, he got me that time.'" Brown was taken to General Hospital in Los Angeles where he underwent surgery, but later that day passed away from his wounds. His body was found to contain 6 wounds, any of which could have been fatal.

Three days later, the funeral of Ed Brown took place at Grand View Cemetery in front of one of the largest crowds ever to assemble there. Out of respect for Brown, all businesses in Newhall were closed during the hour of his funeral. Businesses in Saugus also closed for a four-hour period that day.

November 14 issue: James Biddison was appointed Deputy Constable of Soledad township, to replace the murdered Ed Brown. He had previously been a peace officer in Denver and more recently was ranger in charge of the Bouquet division of the Santa Barbara National Forest.

Ok, so life was simpler back then. We should be so lucky now!

## Christmas Open House

by Cathy Martin

I hope in your busy schedules this year that you carve out a little time to relax and spend the day visiting our Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 7, and catch some Christmas spirit.

Some improvements have taken place at Heritage Junction this past year, and what better time to check them out than at our Christmas Open House. Our doors open at 12:00 noon. You can wander the grounds or take part in some of the activities we have planned for the kids and your pets (pets need to be on a leash).

- Volunteer Awards Ceremony 12:00 noon
- Home tours in Quester Court 12:00 noon - 4:00 PM
- Animal Blessing Quester Court 1:00 PM
- Santa Claus 1.00 - 3:00 PM
- Crafts in Saugus Train Station 12:30 - 4:00 PM
- Live Music
- Complimentary refreshments and sweets 12:00 noon - 4:00 PM

Our Museum will be open for tours, and our Museum Gift Shop will be open for shopping for unique gifts.

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## Renovations Reveal Repairs Needed at Heritage Junction

by Brennon Dixon, The Signal

In an effort to restore the historic buildings of Heritage Junction, community leaders and local businesses have undertaken a renovation project that's revealed additional damage to the area's landmark steeple.

The renovations commenced recently, when project leaders started tenting five buildings to eradicate termites. Santa Clarita Councilwoman Laurene Weste described the tenting as step one in a process that will eventually result in a world-class museum at the Pardee house, as well as a restored bell and steeple at the Ramona Chapel.

Marcelo Cairo, president and owner of Inertia Engineers, was on the scene at Heritage Junction this week assessing the area to determine what work will need to be completed in order to save the brass bell and supporting structure.

"Basically, we learned the entire steeple is structurally compromised, so we're calling it a collapse hazard at this point," Cairo said. "Because of its historic nature, we removed elements of its finishing that were still intact, so we can perfectly replicate exactly how it was built originally."

Cairo said he also exposed the supporting structure and determined that the way it's built isn't proper.

"The supporting structure is not historic in nature so we're going to design a support that is more able to withstand the forces it needs to," the local engineer said. "My hope is that we can reinstall the whole steeple with the bell and everything within two months, but part of the problem is funding the construction."

Cairo is part of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, so he and his company have volunteered to do a lot of the prospective work pro-bono, he said, "but we're trying to get more people involved to see if we can overcome the cost."

"The success of the project all depends on if we can get some funding," Cairo said, mentioning he is confident in his project partner Weste. "She's great at (fundraising) and she's pulling all the strings she can to make this happen."

On the bright side, Cairo said he believes the church as an entire structure is stable and in good condition. He added the treatment for termites will likely be completed in the next few weeks. Then the project will move into its second phase, which Weste said will include a re-roofing of the historic buildings. Despite being made of metal, the shingles will still be historically fashioned, and they'll also be fireproof, Weste previously said.

"After that, we hope to work on the rebuild of the steeple," Cairo said. "Then we hope we can crane everything in."

The Ramona Chapel was the centerpiece of Robert E. Callahan's Mission Village in Culver City from 1926 to 1962, according to Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society's website.

In 1963, the area of the Mission Village was paved to form the Santa Monica Freeway, and the chapel was eventually donated to the local historical society. It was moved to its present location at Heritage Junction in 1987.



Michelle Tucker, left, and Marcelo Cairo of Inertia Engineers discuss damaged pieces taken from the steeple atop the Ramona Chapel, seen behind them at Heritage Junction in Newhall on Wednesday, September 11, 2019.

Pieces of steeple atop the Ramona Chapel were removed to be re-engineered at Heritage Junction in Newhall on Wednesday, September 11, 2019. | 3 Photos: Dan Watson/The Signal.

## On the Origins of SClarita...

by John Boston

Some will remember the most eclectic entertainment sections, *Escape* and its sequel, *Son of Escape*, that ran in *The Mighty Signal* every Friday for years. Back in 1987, the City of Santa Clarita was formed, and *Escape* was not happy with the name. So, we launched a contest immediately to find a better handle.

Starting in the early 1930s, Signal editor A.B. "Dad" Thatcher had begun using a poetic Little Santa Clara River Valley and Santa Clarita to describe our riparian community. We've been called by many names. A dear old friend, Clem Cox, used to quip that since the 1920s, he had lived in eight different cities but never moved once.

The following article ran on November 13th, 1987, right after the election. And now, history reveals what we almost were called:

"A few weeks ago, on these same pages, we ran a contest. Not your ordinary, run-of-the-mill, Publishers' Clearing House, "Me And My Wife Bonita-Tiffany Won The Entire Island of Guam" contest, but a test of noble vision. We ran a "Name The New City" contest.

We had more than 11 entries. Twelve, to be exact. We said, if someone could come up with a better name than "Santa Clarita" for our new township, we'd pay them \$18.78. Cash. After hundreds of hours of much soul-searching, debate and review of these 12 trusty and visionary offerings, we made our choice. We have a new name for our new city. But, in true Bert Parks fashion, drumroll please; first, the runners-up:

George Mann of Valencia came up with my personal favorite for a new city name: "Western Skies." It's a darn pretty handle. One can almost hear the mellifluous melody of the Sons of the Pioneers blending in with the mournful wail of a lonesome coyote. But, one of our staff members, a girl, said it sounded too much like a Montana Drive-In, and that George was probably the Mann who owned the Mann Theatres and didn't need the money anyway (although George did graciously add he'd use the money to take his wife to dinner; bonus points for George).

Joleen Darcy of Canyon Country penned "Roble de Oro," which means "Golden Oak" in Spanish. If she had said, "Roble de Oreos," or, "Oak of Cookies," we might have given her the nod. Good hustle anyway, Joleen.

One name that nearly made it as our quasi-official title was "Canyonita," submitted by a Mr. Glenn A. Hopkins of Saugus. Glenn took the "ita" from Santa Clarita and added it to the wealth of canyons we have dipping in and about our valley. Glenn also parenthetically hoped that "Canyonita" didn't mean anything obscene in Spanish. Sorry, Glenn. It does. "Canyonita" is a Mexican term of derision, meaning, "...lady of the night with a large cross-your-heart you-know what." Canyonita was also the name of the hooker with the heart of gold in that Gene Autry movie who got shot for trying to take Gene's hat off and muss up his hair.

Mrs. Edwina Schroeder of Newhall came up with the name, "Emerald Crown." I once lost \$50 on a horse with the same name over at Santa Anita, so obviously, that was out. Edwina gets a hearty hand clasp and atta-girl for being the most prolific of the entrants: She submitted two other names: "Westhaven," (sorry — they've got one in Connecticut) and "Hillandale" (too close to the Disney chipmunks, "Chip and Dale.")

"The Sunshine City was the handy work of a Magdalena Oropeza of Valencia. We felt this was a nice try, but maybe a little too happy-face in concept. I think Ms. Oropeza should have submitted her own Christian handle. Magdalena is a wild, wonderful name for both a city and a lady. It conjures up a vision of mystery and blue blood. A heart-breaker, haughty, looks great in heels and evening gown. It's a Drink Champagne 'Til Four In The Morning name.

Larry Silverstein was kind enough to research the history of this valley. Surrounded by various mountain ranges. Mr. Silverstein suggested naming the city after one of them — Sierra Pelona. Which rhymes with bologna. It also sounds too much like, "palooka," as in (playful jab to the chin) "...ahhh, you big..." Personally, I wouldn't mind living in Sierra Palooka. The residents would all dance along the streets, jab, jab, bob-and-weave, and would sniff and have cauliflower ears. We'd have gravelly voices and blink a lot. We'd have the distinction of being the toughest city in California, although chaos would reign every time the train would come through and the crossing gate bell started ringing. Seriously though, Larry, nice name and thank you.

*Continued on Page 7*

## John Boston Column

*Continued from page 6*

Mrs. D.A. Cherry of Newhall came up with “Oak Valley” and Mr. Ned Kirkham of Burbank (yes, The Signal is read all over the world) composed “Horizon City” as possible names. We thought they were pretty, but seeing that we don’t have any more oaks or a horizon anymore. . .

Which leads us to our winner, one Ms. Marian Vollack of Friendly Valley. Marian thought up two entries. “Hartville” was the first. We thought that sounded too much like the old Monkees’ song, “Take The Last Train To Clarksville.” But it was Ms. Vollack’s second suggestion that rang the bell and struck home. As the Republicans always shrug and say, sometimes simple is the best. We are proud to announce that the new name of our recently-formed city is, blare of Roman trumpets, please . . . “SCLARITA.”

Ahem. I have to admit, there were some wags around the ESCAPE staff who made skunk/onion faces and who voiced disparaging remarks. References were made about its reminding them of some sort of epidermal disease where all of one’s skin slides off. Others said it sounded like a Scandinavian fish monger’s curse. Or that it brought to mind some designer disease for which Jerry Lewis would host in a telethon.

Scclarita. Gesundheit. Or “Does one add a ‘hock-ptooey’ after enunciation?” as one reporter quipped, envious that he hadn’t come up with anything better.

No, noble fellow people. There are a lot of benefits to having our town called Sclarita. For our city anthem we could acquire the rights to the old Beatle tune, “Lovely Rita, Meter Maid,” and change the words, “Lovely Sclarita, name that’s brave . . .” With our new city government, we could legalize gambling and prostitution. We could then raise revenue with tee-shirts emblazoned: “I Got Royally \*\*r\*w\*d In Sclarita.”

Sure, the “SC” sound at the beginning of the name is admittedly a little harsh. But, so were the men who founded this great and wondrous valley millions of years ago.

*(Having penned more than 11,000 columns, essays, blogs and articles and with 100-plus major writing awards, John Boston is the most prolific humorist in world history. Read his Mr. Santa Clarita Valley column Fridays in The Mighty Signal and his Time Ranger SCV history piece on Sundays.)*

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

### Weekend Docents

Cassie Croasmun	Annette Moulay
Debra Haynes	David Murillo
Harold Hicks	RuthAnne Murthy
Anna Kroll	Alan Pollack
Barbara Martinelli	Anna Schindler
Benn Miranda	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

Cathy Martin	RuthAnne Murthy
Barbara Martinelli	Alan Pollack

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

## Photo Presentation in Tujunga on Nov 9 by Gordon Glattenberg

This show will feature photos taken throughout Los Angeles county, mostly since about 1955. The emphasis is on things that are no longer around.

The show will include scenes in the area, along with recent earthquakes; and transportation, including streetcars, railroads, and airlines.

The show will start at 1:00 PM at:

Bolton Hall Museum  
10110 Commerce Avenue  
Tujunga, CA 91042

Parking available uphill at the Elks Lodge



Sylmar, 1971





The Heritage Junction Dispatch  
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**Dated Material: Please Do Not Delay**



*The world's largest steam locomotive revisited Southern California this October. Union Pacific 4014, a 4-8-8-4 "Big Boy", had been on display for many years at the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds in Pomona. It was returned to service by the railroad after a 5-year restoration in Cheyenne, WY. It is seen here approaching Cajon Pass on October 9, before leading a Colton - Barstow excursion the following weekend.*