SANTA CLARITA HISTORY CENTER
DISPATCH
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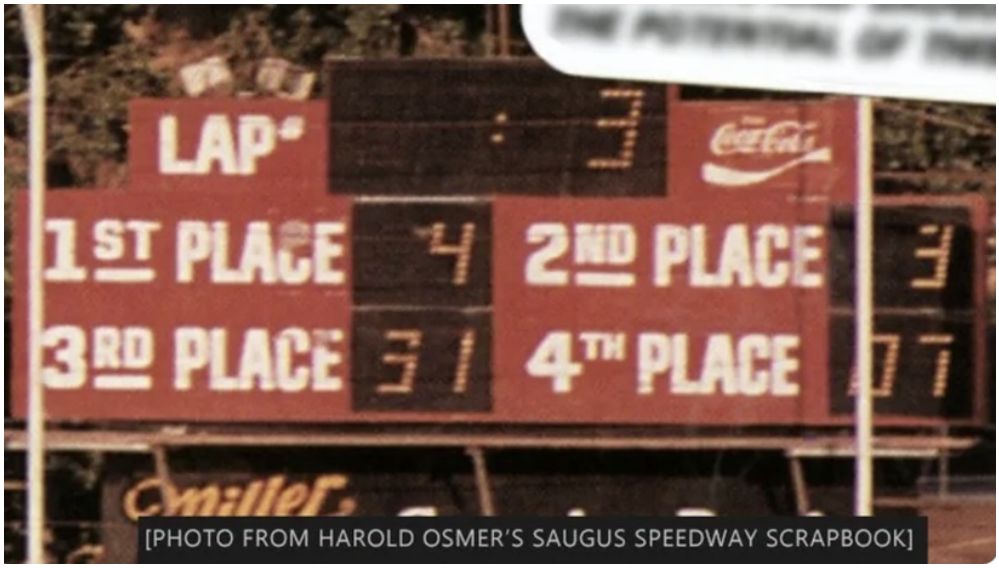
September 2025

Bring the Scoreboard back to the SCV!



[PHOTO FROM HAROLD OSMER'S SAUGUS SPEEDWAY SCRAPBOOK]

The Saugus Speedway Scoreboard is coming home! (but we need your help)

Valley Relics Museum has graciously offered to return the Saugus Speedway scoreboard to the Santa Clarita Valley! Based at the Van Nuys Airport, Valley Relics has cared for the scoreboard these past eight years. Now, it will join the big, **permanent** outdoor exhibition of important Speedway artifacts that the SCV Historical Society is assembling at the Santa Clarita History Center in Hart Park.

We need to reimburse Valley Relics for the cost it has put into preserving the scoreboard as well as the cost of bringing it back home. We're passing the hat to those of you who are as excited about it as we are! Please support our Go Fund Me campaign to raise the funds needed. Thank you for helping us save *your* history.Click HERE to help bring the scoreboard home

La Puerta achieves Point of Interest status

After many years of campaigning for recognition, La Puerta was named a California Point of Historical Interest in August.

On August 8, 2025, 256 years to the day that the Portola Expedition crossed a mountain pass and saw the Santa Clarita Valley for the first time, the State of California named *La Puerta*, a natural passage in Elsmere Canyon, as a Point of Historical Interest. *La Puerta* ("the door" in Spanish) is important as it is the location where the first recorded European exploration of California by land entered the valley.

The site also connects Rancho San Fernando and Rancho San Francisco via the historic El Camino Viejo. At the base of the pass, the party encountered the Tataviam village of Tochonanga, located where Eternal Valley Cemetery is today.

This designation has great meaning to **Councilmember Marsha McLean,** who has championed the protection of Elsmere Canyon for more than 25 years and is grateful that the state has recognized its importance to our local environment, history and identity. In the future, the City of Santa Clarita plans to create a hiking trail in the vicinity and install a monument sign, allowing residents and visitors to experience and learn about the site firsthand.

Chinese Historical Society President visits

Eugene Moy, president of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, and historical consultant Sue Fawn Chung visited the museum to advise on accuracy.

Putting together a museum takes a lot of help, including a cadre of experts who can advise on the authenticity of exhibits and proper expressions in our writings. **Eugene Moy**, the president of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, and historical consultant **Sue Fawn Chung** recently visited the Saugus Train Station Museum. In the spirit of "nothing about us without us," Leon had asked them to help us with our interpretation of the Chinese immigrant workers' involvement in the construction of the railroads, particularly the San Fernando Tunnel at the south end of our valley and the golden spike ceremony at Lang in 1876.

Moy and Chung offered to assist with the wording of future museum signage that will describe three railroad-related giclee prints by the Chinese-born artist Mian Situ in the main gallery, as well as the signage for a temporary (one-year) display of artifacts from Lang Station. Stay tuned for information about the 150th anniversary celebration of the "wedding of the rails" at Lang in Soledad Canyon that united Los Angeles with San Francisco by rail. Mark your calendar for Saturday, September 5, 2026.

In the run up to the 150th, the SCVHS would like to thank a long-time popular restaurant that has stepped up to support us - Rivers' End Pub & BBQ, not too far from the former Lang station location. Their food is delish and any "old timers" reading this will remember the park as a place for summertime and vacation fun! We're grateful for their support. Look for a fundraiser there in September 2026 celebrating the Lang Station golden spike - details coming soon!

Whistling down the track

Woodworker Michael Owston with the finished whistle exhibit.

In the category of “Delighting Museum Visitors While Driving Docents Crazy,” we’re pleased to announce that when you visit the Saugus Train Station Museum, you can now push a button and hear whistle tones just like the ones sounded by our own Mogul 1629 engine. Thanks to the creativity of **the Herrington and Owston families**, an interactive portion has been added to the real train whistle display near the agent’s office with sound that puts you right on the tracks. Come to the station on Saturdays from 1 to 4 and see what we’re so excited about!

Like museums? Then join ours!

The Santa Clarita History Center has launched its new membership program and we're inviting YOU to join us! Levels of membership in the SCHC Museums are available from $50-$2,500 and come with a variety of benefits. Become a Charter Member by joining prior to June 30, 2026 (why wait? Join now!) Dues are annual.

If you were a Life Member in the past, you are now considered a Legacy Patron and will receive benefits at the Patron level. Click HERE for complete information and application form.

But when is the museum open?

Thanks to the City of Santa Clarita who maintains the electronic sign in front of Hart Park, we are now able to announce our museum hours - 1 to 4 pm on Saturdays. Come visit!

De-acquisition is such sweet sorrow

Former archivist Madison Traylor with items from William S. Hart's family at the 2024 Silents Under the Stars event in Hart Hall.

We recently had to say goodbye to our archivist **Madison Traylor** and we really miss her! Madison came to us as an intern in May of 2023 as part of her graduate work at Syracuse University and was hired to assist Senior Archivist Eva Gritz in March 2024. She said that working with artifacts makes her feel like she's walking through people's lives. She received her Masters degree in Library Science, but said her experience with curating the collection here made her fall in love with museums. We wish her well as she begins the next chapter in her career working with an architectural firm in the San Fernando Valley.

Thanks for the dinners and donations

During the last week of August, six restaurants/bars on Main Street in Old Town Newhall showed their support for local history by donating a portion of their sales to the SCVHS. Many thanks go to **Brewery Draconum, Maginn's Pub, Teagan's Tea Room & Café, The Press Room, Eighth & Rail, and Newhall Refinery**. Please patronize them and recommend them to your friends - these establishments are partners in our forward progress and fundraising!

Generational outreach -

Did you visit the Saugus Train Station as a kid? Have any pictures from your field trip? We'd like to see them and maybe interview you for our 50th anniversary special. Reach out to crock@scvhs.org and let's chat!

Summer’s over, but our appeal isn’t

A local philanthropist has offered to match all donations to our Golden Dream Campaign, up to $20,000 if they are made prior to September 30 - so there’s still time to double your donation! Every donation of any size will have a major impact on our future as a historic resource for our community and beyond. Please make your gift HERE today … you are supporting the Santa Clarita History Center’s continued growth for future generations. Thank you!

Jorgensen named to 40 Under Forty List

Congratulations to our amazing volunteer **Brad Jorgensen** for being named to the Santa Clarita 40 Under Forty, a list of young community leaders worthy of the spotlight. We nominated Brad because of his inspirational outreach efforts on behalf of the SCVHS; he brings artifacts from his personal collection to boothing events so kids (and adults) have something to touch and look at up close. His knowledge of local history is vast and he shares it freely, getting people interested in the History Center and our programming. We’re so proud of him! He and 39 other rising stars

will be honored with a ceremony at the Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center in November.

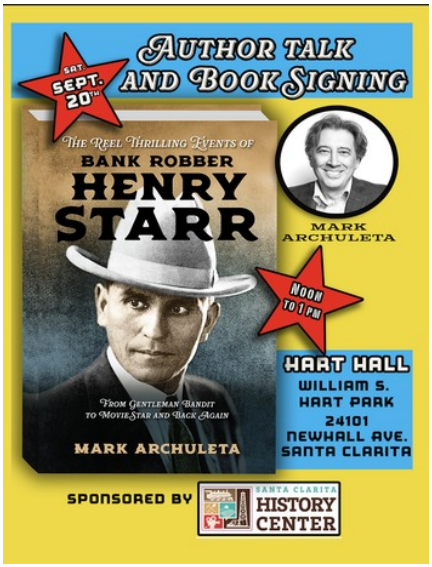
Dam expert J. David Rogers dies

The Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society mourns the loss of scholar and supporter **J. David Rogers**, 71, who died August 23. He was a registered civil engineer, an engineering geologist and a hydrogeologist whose reanalysis of the St. Francis Dam disaster sent him on a national lecture tour and brought him to Newhall twice. He freely shared his research and photographs with the SCVHS for use on their annual tour of the site.

“My hope is that people should be made aware of how much good can come out of such stark tragedies. A lot more credit should be given to the wisdom exuded by the jurors of the LA County Coroner’s Inquest. Their final salutation was: ‘A sound policy of public safety and business and engineering judgment demands that the construction and operation of a great dam should never be left to the sole judgment of one man, no matter how eminent, without …checking by independent experts.’”

Rogers was an extraordinary individual. Learn more about him *here.*

Outlaw movie star bio author to speak



In 1919, Cherokee outlaw Henry Starr quit robbing banks to pursue an even more despicable career - he went into show business. In his lifetime, Starr survived shootouts and death sentences and lived long enough to witness the invention of moving pictures. After being released from Oklahoma State Penitentiary, a hotshot movie producer convinced Starr that he had the looks, charisma, and 'wild and woolly' life story to become the next big movie star.

Emmy-winning screenwriter/journalist/performer Mark Archuleta has written the definitive book chronicling Starr's colorful jumps from thief to thespian and back, entitled "**The Reel Thrilling Events of Bank Robber Henry Starr**." At noon, Saturday, September 20, in Hart Hall, the SCV Historical Society will host Archuleta for a presentation, including a Q&A session and book signing, followed by a tour of the Saugus Train Station Museum at 1 p.m.. The event is free, and books will be available for purchase.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Plans are underway for a party like no other before! SAVE THE DATE - March 7, 2026 - for SCVHS50-Live From Santa Clarita, It's Saturday Night! Live from the Canyon Country Community Center, we will pay homage to the show that has made us laugh for the last 50 years with several local spins added.

From the cold open to the crowded goodbyes on the stage, you'll laugh, you'll reminisce, you'll wrack your brain for trivia answers, but most importantly, you'll be helping the SCVHS raise needed resources for it's next half-century of preserving and sharing the culture and history of our valley. Watch this spot for sponsorship opportunities and ticket sales - you DON'T want to miss this party!

Hart Park focus of State of the City

This year's State of the City event will be held on **Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.,** at the Canyon Country Community Center. This year's theme is **Celebrating Hart Park: History in Every Frame**. Join the Santa Clarita City Council as they highlight all the incredible accomplishments from the last year, what projects are on the horizon while also paying tribute to the City's 40th Park.

A cherished landmark in the heart of our City, Hart Park is a place where history, tradition and natural beauty come together. Just like the silent films that made William S. Hart a legend, every frame of this event is filled with meaning-from updates on public safety and homelessness to the unveiling of exciting new projects like the River of Lights and Pioneer Oil Refinery Park.

Tickets are $45 per person and $450 per table of 10. The ticket price includes appetizers, drinks and a commemorative gift. For more information, please call the City of Santa Clarita at (661) 255-4939 or visit SantaClarita.gov.

We welcome any and all donations to help us with restoration projects, programming and outreach efforts. Why not invest in your history today? It's as easy as clicking "DONATE" below. No amount is too large or too small.

DONATE

We need a little IT and website help

VOLUNTEER NEEDED - Have you noticed that our website has become more robust with information lately? Thanks to Leon for the update - but to take this off of Leon's crowded plate, we are looking for a volunteer who has experience with Elementor to help us keep the website updated, as well as someone who knows their way around information technology. Do you have a few hours every couple of weeks you could give us? Contact Carol at crock@scvhs.org and we'll put you to work!

LOOK WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING IN OUR HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD

31st Annual
HART OF THE WEST
pow wow
October
Saturday 4th
Sunday 5th
2025
William S. Hart Park
Newhall, California

21st annual
Night with the Stars gala
pukúu
CULTURAL COMMUNITY SERVICES
November 7, 2025
Skirball Cultural Center
Los Angeles, California

Native Dancers
Storytellers
Artists
Museum Exhibits
Kids' Activities
Fry Bread &
Indian Tacos
Dancers Welcome
Free Parking!
ANTELOPE VALLEY
INDIAN MUSEUM
15701 East Avenue M, Lancaster, CA 93535
(Between 150th and 170th East)
Annual
Native American
Celebration
October 18th & 19th
2025
11 AM to 4 PM
Adults - $10 each
Age 12 and under - FREE
For information call:
(661) 946-3055
711, TTY Relay Service
www.Facebook.com/AVIndianMuseum
www.avim.parks.ca.gov
Drug and Alcohol Free Event.

Placerita Canyon Nature Center Associates
proudly invites you to our FREE Bird Walks
BIRD
WALKS
FIRST AND SECOND
SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH
First Saturday
With our Docent/Naturalist Ellen Coleman
Second Saturday
With our Docent/Naturalist Ken Yasukawa
• 8:00 AM (March–November)
• 9:00 AM (December–February)
Bring binoculars, water, and a bird field guide.
PLACERITA CANYON NATURAL AREA
19152 PLACERITA CANYON RD
NEWHALL, CA, 91321
661-259-7721
PLACERITA.ORG

The Tejon Ranch Conservancy newsletter is coming back for a limited number of issues each year, which will be packed with fun and educational features on the unique ecology of the Ranch, updates on restoration and science projects and details announcements of upcoming public access and education events. It's FREE and the best way to stay connected. Sign up HERE.

HISTORY HUB

We will be featuring short items from the organizations that surround our Center in every issue; in the meantime, please visit their websites to get information on their upcoming events.

Friends of Hart Park

www.friendsofhartpark.org

Walk of Western Stars

https://oldtownnewhall.com/walk_of_the_western_stars/

Old Town Newhall Walking Tour

https://oldtownnewhall.com/walking-tour/

Placerita Nature Center

www.placerita.org

Vasquez Rocks

https://parks.lacounty.gov/vasquez-rocks-natural-area-and-nature-center

Rancho Camulos Museum

www.ranchocamulos.org

Ft. Tejon Historic Park

https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page-id+585

Ridge Route Communities

www.ridgeroutemuseum.org

Fillmore Historical Museum

fillmore.museum@gmail.com

Museum of Neon Art (Glendale)

www.neonmona.org

The Santa Clarita History Center Dispatch is supported, in part, by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture as part of the Creative Recovery LA, an initiative funded by the American Rescue Plan.

It's not too late! Donate to the SCVHS now by clicking the QR code. Thank you!

The Dispatch is edited by Carol Rock. Questions and comments can be sent to crock@scvhs.org.

SANTA CLARITA HISTORY CENTER

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