



The Heritage Junction Dispatch

A Publication of the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society

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Calendar

Due to ongoing construction, Heritage Junction is closed until further notice.

Check www.scvhistory.org for upcoming events when Heritage Junction reopens

President's Message

by Alan Pollack



Big changes are happening in the Historical Society. And with those changes, we will also be revamping and repurposing the Heritage Junction

Dispatch. Starting with the next issue, former Historical Society President Carol Rock, now our new marketing consultant, will take over as the Dispatch editor. We owe a huge thanks to outgoing editor Gordon Glattenberg, who has worked with Carol and me over many years to get the Dispatch organized, printed, and sent out to our audience. The new Dispatch will have a fresh look and more of an emphasis on providing information on what is happening at the Historical Society. As with all Historical Societies, we face chronic challenges

in conveying our message and mission to the general public. I'm excited and pleased that Carol, with her extensive experience and knowledge in marketing, has signed up to help us remain viable as an organization and vital to the community we serve.

So, let's talk about some exciting things happening at Heritage Junction. As many of you may know, the Junction has been closed to the public since the beginning of the covid pandemic. We have been hard at work repairing and restoring our historic buildings during that time. Some of these repairs and upgrades were necessary to maintain the integrity and safety of our aging buildings, but we are also making significant changes to the educational content within the buildings. Our old museum within the baggage room of the Train Station is being

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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

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President's Message

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replaced with a brand new SCV History Museum inside the Pardee House. We are not just moving the museum contents to a different location. We are creating an entirely new museum, which we hope to be professional, world-class, and more engaging to our visitors. Because there is so much history to be packed into this limited space, we will be instituting rotating exhibits, so that each time you visit us, there should be something new for you to see. We will also emphasize the diverse cultures that have played a significant role in Santa Clarita's history.

To create this flagship museum of local history in Santa Clarita, we are hiring a professional museum consultant who will help guide us in the design and contents of the museum. We want to create a museum of which our community will be proud and which we hope will become a tourist mecca for Santa Clarita.

To help us in hiring the museum consultant and designing the museum, we have also engaged a steering committee with a cross-section of top community leaders in the history, education, journalism, government, arts, entertainment, real estate, business, community service, and non-profit fields in Santa Clarita. They have already given us valuable input in creating a vision for what our new museum should present to the public. This committee, chaired by our Board Member Merideth McGowan includes Society Board members Leon Worden, Ann Stansell, Sarah Brewer, Greg Wilzbach, and myself, along with community members Lois Bauccio, Zonta, Former Executive Director, Child & Family Center; Tim Burkhart, Corporate Vice-President, Six Flags; Tom Cole, City of SCV Planning Director; Mary Ann Colf, Rotary Club, Former SCVHS Board Member; Susan Falck, Executive Director, Rancho Camulos Museum; Don Kimball, Five Point (Valencia President); Mike Kuhlman, Superintendent, Hart School District; Phil Lantis, City of SCV Arts & Events; John Musella, Business Consultant, SCV Chamber of Commerce; Matt Nelson, Executive Director, SCV Boys & Girls Club; Lance O'Keefe, SCV City Parks & Recreation; Rudy Ortega, Chairman, Fernandeano-Tataviam Band of Mission Indians; Frank Oviedo, Assistant SCV City Manager; Patti Rasmussen, SCV City Arts Commissioner; Former SCVHS Board Member, Carol Rock, Journalist; Former SCVHS President, Fred Trueblood, Business Consultant, SoCal Edison, Signal Newspaper; Dr. Dianne Van Hook,

Superintendent-President, College of the Canyons; Jim Ventress, Former Executive Director, SCV Boys & Girls Club; Ivan Volschenk, Executive Director, SCV Chamber of Commerce; Shannon Vonnegut, SCV City Librarian; Tim Williams, Val Verde Historian; and Dr. Marc Winger, Former Supt., Newhall School District; Human Relations Forum.

Moving our main museum out of the Saugus Train Station allows us to re-create the Train Station's interior precisely as it appeared to passengers in its most active period of 1926 to 1956. There will also be displays related to Santa Clarita's railroad history. We have a committee of railroad and design experts who meet monthly to decide on our new Train Station layout, restoration, and displays. They are Mike Jarel, who has spent 40 years as a locomotive engineer on the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads and is a board member of the Southern Pacific Technical and Historical Society; Greg Wilzbach, a former designer and art director for Walt Disney Imagineering; Jean Guy-Dube, an architectural historian, and foremost expert in Southern Pacific train stations; Guy Horanberg, and Leon Worden. Mike and Jean-Guy have been enormously helpful in providing Southern Pacific Common Standards -- the railroad's rules and instructions -- for everything from paint colors to dimensions of various features to the type of toilet that belongs in a women's bathroom. Greg, among other things, will be designing the interior museum spaces. Guy has been a helpful "extra hand" with the depot restoration, but most of all, he has been restoring various artifacts, some of which will be displayed in the depot, such as our new velocipede. Mike also maintains the equipment in the rail yard.

There are a few people to single out for their time and dedication to the Heritage Junction restoration. Board members Leon Worden and Guy Horanberg have devoted countless hours almost every day for the last year, cleaning up the Junction and its buildings and doing major repairs and restoration projects in the interiors of the buildings. They have been invaluable in the progress already made at the Junction.

We must also give special thanks to Board member and Santa Clarita Mayor Laurene Weste for her efforts in working with the City of Santa Clarita to obtain very generous funding for our ongoing restoration projects.

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President's Message

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We also thank the City of Santa Clarita for their help in restoring the Junction and for recognizing the importance of Santa Clarita's historical resources.

As for me, I will continue as the Society's President but will take at least a short break from writing about our local history for the Heritage Junction Dispatch. Over the past 16 years, I have written about every local history topic I could think of. It has been my pleasure to learn, with you, the great history of our Valley. I'm sure there are many more stories to be told. If you have a topic that you would

like me to cover that I have not done before, please feel free to contact me. We can always squeeze some more stories into the Dispatch or on our website scvhistory.com. I will be combining all the stories I have written into a book to be published by the Historical Society in the near future. Leon Worden will be the editor. We will keep you updated when we are closer to a publication date. Meanwhile, Gordon and I will pass the baton to Carol Rock, and we know she will continue to provide you with the quality newsletters you expect from us.



Photo by Gordon Glattenberg

Southern Pacific X8485 East stopped at the Saugus Station, January 5, 1974

Why You Should Visit The Rancho Camulos National Historic Landmark

By Maria Christopher

Rancho Camulos lies along the Santa Clara River in Ventura County, about 15 miles west of Santa Clarita along Highway 126. Here are some reasons to visit:

1. Rancho Camulos is what remains of the 1839 Mexican land grant to Antonio and Jacoba del Valle, of the 48,000 plus acre Rancho San Francisco that once included all of what is now Santa Clarita.
2. Camulos is now an 1,800-acre privately-owned working ranch that includes a 45-acre privately owned National Historic Landmark, part of which is operated as a nonprofit museum dedicated to restoring and preserving the historic buildings and grounds, as well as providing access and historic interpretation of the location to the public.
3. It is one of the few remaining rancho properties of the 1800s preserved in its original rural setting.
4. It was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 2000 because of its significance in California history, and primarily because it is acknowledged as the "Home of Ramona", one of the settings for Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel *Ramona* that she wrote to call attention to the mistreatment of Native Americans; it actually caused the first tourism boom in California.
5. Visitors can learn about the only two families who have owned the property, the delValles (up to 1924) and the Rubels (1924 to the present).
6. Architectural highlights include the 1883 Spanish Colonial style adobe, the 1920 Spanish Colonial Revival style adobe, an 1867 Catholic chapel, an 1887 brick winery, and a 1930 ranch -style schoolhouse.
7. There is a Tataviam Interpretive area built through a partnership with the Fernandino Tataviam band of Mission Indians, to acknowledge the original inhabitants of the area.
8. The docent-led tour includes an opportunity to watch the 18-minute 1910 DW Griffith silent film *Ramona* that starred Mary Pickford and is believed to be the first film made in the upper Santa Clara River Valley.
9. You can enjoy the grounds that feature an arbor planted with Mission grapes, extensive rose gardens, and a wide variety of succulents, flowering plants, and shade trees that provide a relaxing refuge and perfect location for a picnic.
10. Come for the history, stay for the atmosphere... where the history, myth, and romance of old California still linger...

Tours are available by appointment, and there are also regularly scheduled tours Sundays at 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 PM. The suggested donation is \$5 per person cash.

Additional information is available at the website RanchoCamulos.org and on the Rancho Camulos Museum Facebook page.



A Century of SCV Lost Souls

By John Boston

I've always been struck by the disenfranchised in Santa Clarita.

There was the wolflady. She wandered the streets and would show up at our little cowboy coffee shop, The Way Station, in Downtown Newhall. There she'd sit at the long counter, all disheveled, dirty, and barely holding onto her mind, seated next to the town's movers, shakers and working folk. One morning she sat next to me, and I was bookended by our community transvestite, a bearded Corporal Klinger individual dressed in a yellow chiffon dress and giant hat that would have fit in at the Kentucky Derby. Flanked, I smiled and thought: "Is this a great town or what?"

The generations all have their small-town monsters, usually in appearance only. They are loners. They put people off just by being.

In 1933, Nels Anderson was the grumpy and mysterious town recluse. He kept a mailbox down at the post office and would check it every day, throwing away every bit of mail except for his pension check from the Spanish-American War. He fiercely fought off even a hello. Once, Anderson stormed into the local Ford dealership and picked out a brand-new truck from Jess Doty. The owner didn't think the unkempt and hostile Swede could make payments, but Anderson fooled him, pulling out a thick wad of large bills and paying for the vehicle in cash. He threw a tarp over the back, permanently parked the vehicle at the Shady Lane Trailer Park, and slept in the back until he died a decade later. Having no friends, two weeks passed before anyone checked the back of his truck.

During World War II, there was a half-naked indigent who hung around the campgrounds in Castaic, searching trash cans for food scraps. He had once fought for the bantamweight boxing championship of the world and was found one day, dead of exposure.

Another loner lived in an actual Conestoga wagon in Canyon Country, heir to a huge Denver mining fortune. Despite visits from family and attorneys, he never accepted any inheritance or help and was found peacefully dead in his wagon.

One of my favorite stories about a guy down on his life took place during the Depression. An older Polish gentleman named Joe was living up one of the canyons in a senior indigent home. Strong, able, he ran away one day

and showed up at Wayside Honor Rancho. Back then, it was a beautiful minimum security "country club" prison for white collar and low-risk criminals. Joe begged for a job. At the gate, deputies laughed at him, explaining he'd have to commit some crime.

Joe got himself arrested, on purpose, for a minor infraction and appeared before the local judge. He asked to be sentenced to life in prison for vagrancy and work the rest of his days at Wayside?

The good jurist took pity and made Joe a deal. The judge instructed the hearty senior citizen that if he called him a name during his trial, he'd find him in contempt of court and sentence him to six months — milking cows and raking — at Wayside. Then, come back in six months, call him another name and he'd give him another six months if he wanted. Joe was so happy, he attempted to kiss the judge's hand.

A friendly but distant hermit known only as "Mac" McMasters lived in a self-made lean-to in the hills above Forrest Park, in area then called Troutmen's Tract. McMasters somehow survived for decades. When they found his remains, authorities found Mac had graduated from Yale, did post-graduate work at Stanford, was a decorated WWI hero and married a French girl. What led him to his final 32 years of hermitry was anyone's guess.

Where today's "Welcome to Newhall" wagon wheel sat in front of Hart Park, there used to be a giant deodar tree in the 1930s. In its shade was a bird bath, in honor of Dick Lindsay, a rough-looking bachelor who kept to himself. Signal Editor Fred Trueblood called him "...as forbidding an individual as you would ever see. He had a heavy, stocky frame and a face that looked as though it had been hacked out of granite. So grim and severe was his aspect that folks were scared of him and gave him a wide berth when they passed by."

Few knew Lindsay had a huge heart for animals. Born in the Civil War, he kept a small monkey (who died from overeating) and a dog as his constant companions. When the dog died, it broke up Lindsay pretty bad. An old-timer now, he turned his attention to the birds at Hart Park. Lindsay would spend hours feeding and watering the little flying critters.

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John Boston Article

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A beautiful young nurse at the old Newhall hospital, Mrs. Ruth Christian, sort of adopted Lindsay, watching over him, feeding him and finally, caring for him through his final illness. After Dick met his reward, Ruth used her small savings to plant that young deodar tree and install a bird bath with the simple brass plaque: "In Memory — DICK LINDSAY, 1863-1940, 'He Loved The Birds.'"

Years went by. The tree got pulled. The simple little bird bath is buried in a landfill. There's no more memorial for Dick Lindsay.

My favorite lost soul? It's a man, just named "Red." In the 1950s, the ex-stuntman worked with John Wayne and had a role as a soldier in the Oscar-winning "King Rat." When not working in the movies, he was a professional scuba diver.

Red developed lymph cancer in 1957. After years of treatment, he had a lung removed. Still, Red worked, including as caretaker of Ronald Reagan's ranch in Santa Barbara.

Unable to even handle the pain of ranch work, Red had to move out of his home. His only income was a \$250-a-month disability check.

Illiterate at 59, his address the front seat of his old pick-up truck, he took evening classes at Golden Oak Adult School to learn how to read and write.

He said the hardest thing he had to go through in his last three years was his dog, Puppy, dying.

Every Christmas, while people were warm and cozy by holiday fires and Christmas lights, Red would drive the highways from Santa Clarita to Frazier Park or Palmdale in his beat-up old truck, with Puppy. He put food, blankets and gasoline in his car and drove, searching for people stranded or in need of help.

A church kept a tab for him at a local Denny's. But the manager said Red, often hungry, had to be almost forced to accept the gift. "In all my 30 years as a Minister I have never come across anyone like him," said the Rev. Donald G. Botsford of the Church of the Canyons in Canyon Country. "He is a wonderful man."

I have friends, people I grew up with, who went from being A Somebody to countless layers below, down on their luck. One gal pal used to be a successful actress, from a famous and locally historic family. On a scale of 1 to 10, she was a 14. And she's homeless. With all the attempts at help and

rescue, she just seems powerless to change starring in her own, lifetime tragedy.

History speaks of generals and politicians, sometimes the occasional werewolf. But there are stories in the tens of millions of nameless, scruffy souls, forgotten, making as much of a mark on civilization as a falling leaf.

Santa Clarita historian John Boston is the most prolific historian in world history. Visit his bookstore at johnbostonbooks.com.

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Back to School: Already?

by Cathy Martin

It seems like it was eons ago when I was going back to school. These days, some schools have already commenced. I know, how is that possible, it's barely September?! What happened to the Labor Day barbecues with friends and the "so long summer vacation" send off? Back to school didn't start to enter the collective family psyche until around the end of August, when our family started back-to-school shopping. What couldn't be ordered through the Sears and Roebucks catalog had to be gathered in town, meaning Newhall. Truthfully, nobody really started shopping until then. The list of items was pretty short, and it included new shoes and a few new outfits; that's it. Back then we were not required to purchase our personal school supplies. We bought a Pee Chee folder to bring homework home. That was about the extent of it. If I was lucky, I got a new lunch pail. I remember one of my favorites was a hunter green "Alvin and the Chipmunks". The only wrinkle was that girls had to wear dresses or skirts and boys had to have a collared shirt with buttons down the front. T-shirts were considered underwear at the time. Amazingly, blue jeans were Okay.

I remember conversations with my mom about school preparations in her day. I don't think anything had changed from her time to mine. You just showed up and everything was provided for you.

Even getting to school has changed dramatically. In my case, we kids that lived up in San Francisco Canyon were up before the crack of dawn. Really! We were all provided (Elementary to High School) with school bus pickup, and we rode together in the same yellow bus. My friend Margie and her brother David lived on the "flats" above Power House I. They were the first stop, ready for the bus by 6:15 AM. By the time the bus made its way down the canyon to our stop, it was 7:15 AM.



1st Day of School, Cathy and Dan Mehterian: 1967

Our classmates who lived in the Bonelli tract weren't even out of bed yet! Most of them walked or rode their bicycles to school. There was never a line of cars in front of Santa Clarita Elementary School for student drop off. We, of course, arrived early so we hung out on the playground or in the cafeteria. There was a crossing guard at Decoro and Seco. It was the wild west, just in cars not horses. Speeding on Seco was a real danger back then. When the clock struck 3:10 PM, school was out, and we were free to run across the street to the ice cream truck parked on Decoro. That truck had plenty of customers! I remember getting the freshest soft pink square of double bubble chewing gum from him. Then, another long wait for the school bus to take us back home. The kids up Bouquet Canyon had a similar routine. Not too many school buses are on the road these days, as the mom blockade of cars around the schools every morning has taken up the slack.

Things changed when my kids were in elementary school. Not only did I have to provide paper and pencils, but we had to send a box of earthquake supplies. Yes, you read that right. Water, snacks, extra socks, the works. I don't remember where everything was stored during the school year, but the classroom held a party the last day of school, with all of the contents of their boxes of food.

This year my Granddaughter's list of back-to-school supplies is long. The teachers e-mail their students a list of all of the things they will be needing for the upcoming year. All the usual supplies are on the list, but the earthquake box is missing. The school will provide a ChromeBook that will be turned in at the end of the year. Then there are the new backpack, reusable water bottle, and the new clothes and shoes. Whatever happened to all of that CA. Lottery money? Can they at least kick in for a box of crayons?



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*Santa Clarita Class Photo, 1965-1966
Grades 3-4, Miss Brown
See page 7*