



President's Message

Richard B. Rothwell



Our first fundraising event was an unqualified success. Over 100 guests gathered at Camp Pendleton's historic Las Flores adobe on October 11 for an

evening of Western entertainment and music and a down-home BBQ dinner. Code of the West, an acting troop, performed historically accurate skits of the early West. Our financial officer, Joe Kirkpatrick, revealed a hidden talent as a country and western singer and bandleader. His group, which unashamedly calls itself "Older Than Dirt," led a lively barn dance after dinner. One of our volunteer members, Yana Navarre, organized and ran a very successful auction.

Overall, CPHS netted over \$7,500 from its first fundraiser. We will add this to our capital fund to support our goal of raising \$125,000 to complete the restoration of the Las Flores adobe.

Among our guests was Major General Michael Lehnert, Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations West. In my last report I thanked him for donating two of his hand made wooden bowls to CPHS. We donated one bowl to the Base for permanent display at the Ranch House. The second bowl sold for \$720 at our auction.

I want to thank our sponsors, who helped make our fundraiser so successful.

Diamond Level (\$1,000 or more)

Anonymous CPHS Member
Hawthorne Rent It Services
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Gold Level (\$500 or more)

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The Las Flores Adobe

The Las Flores Adobe, located just inside the Las Pulgas gate at Camp Pendleton, was built in 1864. The Forster family had the adobe built and gave it to their son as a wedding gift. Over the years it has served as a home to ranchers and farmers working that part of the property. Las Flores Adobe is an outstanding example of a two-story 19th-century "Monterey style" residence. In 1968 it was designated a Registered National Historic Landmark by the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.



By the mid 1990's the building had degraded to the point that the National Parks Service listed it as one of the most endangered National Historic Landmarks in the United States. Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Pendleton and Headquarters Marine Corps began planning the stabilization of this landmark in the late 1990's. MCB Camp Pendleton has partnered with the National Park Service and the University of Vermont to study and develop stabilization measures approved by Base engineering and the California State Historic Preservation Office. The program was designed to rehabilitate the building to its 1942 condition.



Under the supervision of Stan Berryman, the AC/S Environmental Security and Cultural Resources Management Branch, students from the University of Vermont's Advanced Architectural School come out to the adobe each summer and work on the structure. Obviously they originally found the adobe in poor condition.

The students began the painstaking job of renovation. You can see by the picture at the right, structures were erected so they could work on the outside of the two story adobe. This picture shows students working on the south wall. Primary goals of the restoration plan include: structural stabilization; seismic retrofit; roof replacement; porch reconstruction; window and door repair; exterior restoration; interior restoration; carriage house repair; and landscaping.



Continued page 4, Adobe

More Memories of Chappo...

a letter from J. Peter Baumgartner

My Dad, John J. Baumgartner, Jr. was manager of the Baumgartner interests in the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores (principally the San Onofre grant) in 1942 when the Navy Department condemned the land. He had the greatest respect for Ambrosio Valenzuela, Sr., who was older than Dad. Dad worked summers on the Santa Margarita after he moved to San Francisco to attend school in 1910. (From 1901 when he was born until 1910 when his Grandfather, Richard O'Neill, died, he lived on the Ranch and rode with the vaqueros.) Ambrosio was Dad's mentor and taught Dad all the skills of the traditional vaquero; everything from breaking a California Reined Cowhorse to husbanding cattle. If Don Estevan (Steve Peters) was top Vaquero on the Rancho, Ambrosio was his equal in the skill of the Vaquero. Ambrosio's son (Chapo, Jr.) was younger than Dad. He worked as a Vaquero on the ranch, and after Ambrosio's tragic death, was often partnered with Dad working cattle. (He was not a Mexican since he was born on the Rancho. I would call him a "Californio.")



I remember Chapo, Jr. during the summer of '42 when I rode (as a boy of 9) with the Vaqueros. Dad had hired Chapo to work cattle. (Dad always spelled Chapo with one "p"). The situation for us was chaotic. Dad had to gather and sell 1500 head of cattle together with many horses, farm equipment etc. that summer and the Marines moved in and began constructing training facilities or conducting battle exercises on the San Onofre. Chapo, Jr. was my mentor. Dad was too busy to be my teacher and delegated to Chapo the education of a 9 year old vaquero apprentice.

I remember how straight he sat in the saddle, and how he was in such total control of his horse that the two were as one. When he threw his reatta (we never used ropes) he never missed. He taught me how to throw a figure eight and how to repair a loose shoe, and doctor a sick animal. In fact, with the possible exception of Dad, who was taught by Amrosio, Sr., I don't think I have ever known a more accomplished Cowboy. Like his father, Chapo made his own reattas, horsehair ropes and other equipment. Like the reattas his Dad made for my Dad, the one he made for me is as strong today as the day he made it.

In September, 1942, when the last cow had left the Santa Margarita forever, Dad had a Bar-b-que under an oak tree on the San Onofre for all the vaqueros who helped him that summer. Aunt Jane Magee came over from the Las Flores in a spring wagon bringing the beans, salad, and pies for desert. That was the last time I saw Chapo. Dad had offered him a job on the Elkhorn Ranch near Hollister, but Chapo decided to stay in Southern California. He may have worked on the Mission Viejo Ranch after we left.

I have no idea for who the Marine Corps named "Chappo 22 Area." I would like to think it was for a great Vaquero.

Two Memories from Randall L. Mitchell, Major, USMC (Ret)

I recall a visit to the Los Flores Adobe while I was the Public Affairs Officer at Camp Pendleton from August 1960 to June 1963. I do not recall the exact date of the visit.

Col. A.C. Bowen, USMC, was Base Groundwater Resources Officer for some 15 or more years. 'Ace' Bowen was helping legal people fight water rights ownership along the Santa Margarita River. He called me one day and said he would like me to meet the resident of the historic adobe. We drove there and were greeted by a gracious lady dressed like a typical Spanish Duenia. She had a man servant dressed in black pants and white shirt.

Our brief, less than one hour, meeting included a look through the house and tea/coffee in a row of small rooms near the adobe entrance. It was pleasant, she was most hospitable and asked us to come again, but our visit was never repeated.

I believe after she died the house was used by the Orange County Boy Scouts.

Transportation off base was a problem in the early days since no one had a car. When you went ashore on liberty you usually did so by Marine Corps truck pulling a trailer originally designed to haul cattle or horses. You stood up all the way. This was not unlike riding the RF&P passenger train from Quantico to Washington, D.C., except nothing caused the truck to pull over and stop. With the RF&P every freight train had the right-of-way. As soon as we officers hit Oceanside, we disembarked and found a bus or train to L.A.

CORRECTION

Part of an E-mail from Diania Caudell



Good afternoon, my name is Diania Caudell. I am a Native American and born in Oceanside. My family has a long history of the San Luis Rey Valley, Oceanside and the Camp Pendleton area. I am sorry to inform you that the picture that is shown in the issue of the 2008 Groundbreaker of Chappo, Jr. is NOT Chappo, Jr., but a great uncle of mine and his name is Ralph Camarrillo.

Editor's note: We appreciate letters and articles from readers. The opinions expressed by the writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of Camp Pendleton Historical Society (CPHS). CPHS neither endorses nor disagrees with such views. Moreover, CPHS makes no representations as to the accuracy or completeness of the information provided by the writers.

Western Hoedown at Las Flores Adobe

Saturday, October 11, 2008

The Camp Pendleton Historical Society would like to thank all who attended the Hoedown and supported it with their donations. It was very successful and we plan to make it an annual event—even bigger and better next year!

Great music was provided for an old-fashioned barn dance by the *Older than Dirt* band.



Code of the West, an historical group, entertained Hoedown guests with events that represented the Old West.

And, a silent auction let guests bid on several interesting items.

With an orange sky and the Las Flores Adobe as a backdrop, an old-fashioned BBQ dinner was served complete with tri-tip beef and all the trimmings.

Tours of the the Las Flores Adobe were provided by the Rancho Santa Margarita Docents.

Guests appreciated the opportunity to enjoy a few libations and comaraderie at the Hoedown—a time to visit with friends and share stories and interests at this Camp Pendleton historical setting.



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Howard Blair, a member of our Board of Directors member deserves a special thanks for chairing the fundraiser committee. He has agreed to continue in that capacity and is already making plans for a similar event in 2009.

Our project to reframe the Charles Waterhouse original oil painting collection is now complete. The paintings are on display in the Ranch House and will be available for loan to other museums upon request.

Our efforts to spread the word about CPHS and Camp Pendleton history are ongoing. During this quarter I spoke to two local community organizations. On both occasions listeners expressed considerable interest in the history of Camp Pendleton. I will speak to a third group in November.

I wish all members and their families a happy holiday season. Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to another successful year in 2009.

Richard B. Lathwell

Continued front page, Adobe

These pictures are examples of some of the work that has been done to the Las Flores Adobe by the University of Vermont students. A lot of work has been completed but there is still much to do. In order to complete the restoration process, it will take another \$129,000.



The Base has a proposed long term budget for the restoration and maintenance through the year 2013. Funds are limited for these types of projects, and most of the dollars are going toward winning a war, as well they should be. The Camp Pendleton Historical Society (CPHS) has as one of its goals to hold fund raisers and functions to help supplement the money for the completion of the renovation. We believe this historical site is well worth preserving, and we hope you agree, and will continue to support our efforts.

Get on Board

One of the keys to building awareness of CPHS is networking with our friends. To help members become familiar with our story, we are offering two brochures for distribution. Please order your free copies by e-mail to Howard Blair at hgblair@cox.net or phone 858-583-0067.

Stay Tuned

We invite our readers to contribute stories of their experiences aboard Camp Pendleton for publication in future issues. Humorous pieces would be particularly welcome. Please e-mail your 300 words or less to hgblair@cox.net, subject line "CPHS." Submissions may be subject to editing.

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