



## President's Message

*Richard B. Rothwell*



As we enter the second half of 2009 the CPHS Board of Directors and friends are busily preparing for our second annual Hoedown. Our initial effort last October was an unqualified success and we have high expectations for this year as well. In recognition that some of our members prefer daytime events, we are starting earlier on a longer, summer day. Festivities will begin at 2 PM on Saturday, August 29 at the Las Flores adobe with live mariachis. Tours, a Mexican buffet and cash bar, western DJ, and an auction will round out the festivities. There is information at the end of this newsletter for those who would like to join or sponsor our Hoedown.

Those visiting the Las Flores adobe will see the significant restoration progress made since October. A major feature is a sophisticated fire detection and suppression system designed specifically to protect adobe structures. One of the challenges in protecting adobes from fire is that water sprinklers that douse flames can also disintegrate adobe walls. The system now in place emits a heavy mist that can put out a fire without further damaging the building.

In May Major General and Mrs. Michael Lehnert hosted a luncheon at the Ranch House in honor of Mrs. Alice O'Neill Avery. Mrs. Avery, now 92, is the granddaughter of Richard O'Neill who, in partnership with James Flood, purchased Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores in 1882. Previous editions of the Groundbreaker mentioned her exquisite doll and doll house collections that were on display at the Ranch House for several months. Her son, Tony Moiso, a member of our Council of Advisors, made a very substantial donation to our Society during the luncheon.

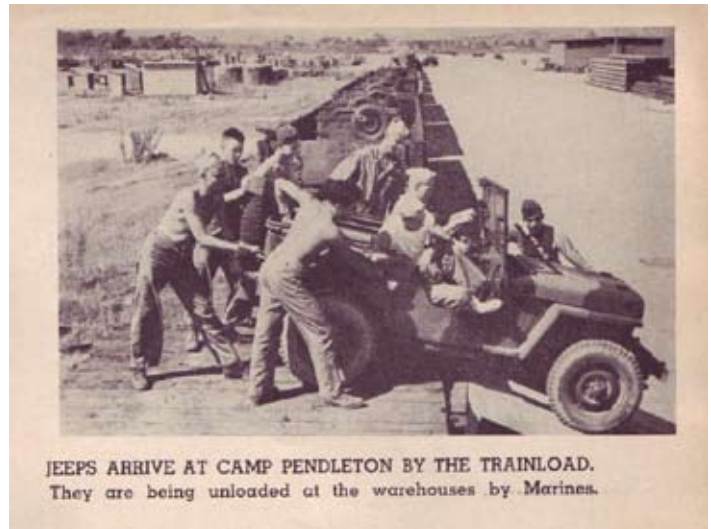
*Continued page 4, Message*

## RANCH CONVERTED FROM GRAZING LAND INTO HUGE, SPRAWLING CITY

*(Reprint from Oceanside Daily Blade-Tribune, Oct. 25, 1943)*

From 20,000 head of cattle to 20,000 Marines is Colonel James W. Flett's, Camp Pendleton Quartermaster, expression as to what has happened here since his arrival. During the latter part of 1941 and the early part of 1942 plans for taking over the former Santa Margarita Ranch were formulated and in April, 1942 actual work began, first with the construction of an administration building to house the resident engineer and his naval establishment, the construction contractor as well as the architect engineer.

Colonel Flett recalls the road leading into the camp from Oceanside as a narrow one-way trail rambling from Highway 101 into the base. Heavy equipment was moved in at the early stages and work on the existing four-lane highway was pushed rapidly. With completion of the highway the winding trail has been replaced by a modern four-lane highway.



JEEPS ARRIVE AT CAMP PENDLETON BY THE TRAINLOAD.  
They are being unloaded at the warehouses by Marines.

The Santa Margarita Development Board headed by Colonel Cruz, of the Engineer Corps, U.S.A., conceived and laid out the plan for construction in the division areas. The planning work closely followed the Japanese devastation raid at Pearl Harbor and with this picture of possible destruction in the minds of the Planning Board there resulted a plan which provided for a wide dispersion of buildings. The guiding factor in site planning required that each major structure would be located 3000 feet from its neighboring structure.

The construction plan contemplated and provided housing for a complete Marine Division divided into unit areas adequate to completely provide independent operations for the eight major units of a division. Within the areas allocated to each divisional area there were set up the following accommodations: (1) Administration Building, (2) Theatre, (3) Guard House, (4) Dispensary, (5) Officers' Mess, (6) Battalion Mess Halls, (7) Required Barracks, (8) Required Storeroom Space (9) Parking Lots, (10) Athletic Facilities, (11) Post Exchange. Additionally and as general use there has been constructed two training tanks, two sewage disposal plants, and four water reservoirs.

Separately and for amphibious operations there was constructed in the general area between the mouth of the San Luis Rey River and the Santa Margarita River a "Boat Basin" designed to provide security for small craft with facilities for the operations thereof as well as housing and other facilities for organizations engaged in training for amphibious warfare.

In the combat area north of the Santa Margarita River basin there was laid out and constructed, camp sites and other required installations which were designed to permit all combat units of a division to conduct field training more or less simultaneously.

## CPHS Enjoys Hospitality of San Juan Capistrano Historical Society in “Walk Around”

On a beautiful day, June 11, 2009, members of the Camp Pendleton Historical Society traveled to San Juan Capistrano for a visit to the old town, tour of the Mission, and a tour of the Mission Basilica. The group was hosted by the San Juan Capistrano Historical Society (SJCHS), who did a marvelous job of showing CPHS members their city.

Some CPHS members took the train from Oceanside, others drove and we all met at the San Juan Capistrano train station at 9:30 to start our walking tour. The group moved from the train station to the SJCHS museum, which is along Los Rios Street. The Los Rios District includes 31 historic structures which line both sides of Los Rios Street between Del Obispo and Mission Streets. The District comprises the oldest continually occupied residential streets in California (1)

We began the journey by gathering at the historic O’Neill museum (more about that later). We were greeted by Tom Ostensen, President of SJCHS. He welcomed us and invited us to the evening membership mixer.

The first stop in along Los Rios Street in old town was a visit to the Leck House. The Arlie Leck House was built in 1929 and has been restored. This house is a California Bungalow. Elements of a California Bungalow included direct, simple box-like shapes with a low pitched roof and informal non-symmetrical elevations.

Jan Siegel was our docent for the visit through the Arlie Leck House and stayed with us as we went along Los Rios Street. She did an excellent job and through her explanations made the history of this area alive and interesting.

The Leck House (*right*) is very well maintained with beautiful gardens. The SJCHS moved this house to Los Rios Street after it was donated from a party in another section of town. They did a very nice job and it was a delight to visit.



The group moved from the Leck House back to the O’Neill museum where they met Don Tryon who talked about the museum. Don has spent a considerable amount of time organizing pictures of the O’Neill family history and pictures of the history of San Juan Capistrano. The CPHS members were very impressed about the work Don had done, and enjoyed looking at the various interesting artifacts on exhibit in the O’Neill museum.

Another very interesting site to visit is the Rios Adobe. This Adobe is still home to the Rios family and is the oldest residence in California continuously occupied by a single family. (1) Because this adobe is still a regular residence it is not available to visitation. It is open only on specific occasions.

As we walked along Los Rios Street we noticed several small restaurants and eating places that looked very inviting and quaint. We understood that in order to have a restaurant on this special street, the owners of the restaurant had to live in the dwelling where the food was served. This old town rule has been in effect for years, and keeps flavor and charm of the old district.

Of several things of interest along Los Rios Street are some houses that were put together by ordering them in pieces through a catalog from Sears. Each section or block of the house had a number imprinted on it and by following the numbers, one could



put together their house. The house (*above*) is located along Los Rios Street and is a “catalog ordered by the piece” house. This fact was verified by the discovery of some of the numbers imprinted in some of the wooden slats inside the house.

From the walk along Los Rios Street, the group moved up along El Camino Real and was greeted by Ilse Byrnes, who took us through the Blas Aguilar Adobe Museum. This Adobe was one of the adobes built to house soldiers and the local Native Americans who worked at the Mission. This museum houses artifacts reflecting the different historical periods of San Juan Capistrano and the surrounding area, while accurately serving to educate its visitor. The Blas Aguilar Adobe Museum is maintained and operated by the Blas Aguilar Adobe Foundation, a non-profit organization. The museum is open Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 noon – 3:00 p.m., as well as by appointment.

After the walking tour of the Los Rios District and visiting the Blas Aguilar Adobe Museum the members strolled over to Sarducci’s Restaurant for a no host lunch (*right*). Sarducci’s is a very nice restaurant and was set up for the group. The members spent over an hour eating and talking over a relaxed meal.



After lunch it was time to visit the famous San Juan Capistrano Mission. The mission was founded in 1776 and is the seventh in the California mission chain and the centerpiece of San Juan Capistrano’s historic downtown. The “Jewel of the Missions” occupies a ten acre site and includes the beautiful central courtyard and numerous museum rooms and displays that bring the Spanish and Prehistory Eras to life. Serra Chapel, one of the oldest buildings in California, and the ruins of the Great Stone Church are also found within the Mission gates.(1)

*Continued page 3, “Walk Around”*



## “Walk Around” (continued from page 2)

Mission Docent Lee Goode (right) explains to the members how the wine was made that was consumed in the early days of the mission. Lee and his partner Johni Pittenger did a great job of explaining the various functions of the mission, and discussed historical facts and figures.



The last place that was visited was the Mission Basilica, which is a copy of the original stone church, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1812. Docent Jan Siegel once again joined the group and took the members through the Basilica. The New Parish Church is 30% larger than the original, whose ruins can still be seen within the Mission walls. The interior features decorative painting that uses motifs and colors found in the original stone church and a new 44' high grand retablo installed in 2007 (1) The Basilica is a beautiful place to visit and worship, well worth the time to see.

CPHS would like to thank the SJCHS for this very enjoyable and educational day. There is a lot of history in this town along the coast, and the San Juan Capistrano Historical Society is doing a great job, working with the city and the general population to keep the history preserved.

The CPHS Board of Directors are talking about having the same type of function next spring in San Clemente. There is a lot to see and learn in this sea side town, and we'll let you know what the plans are as they become solidified.

Information taken from the brochure:

“A Walking Tour” printed by the City of San Juan Capistrano.

“Juaneno Acjachemen Cultural Center” printed by the Blas Aguilar Adobe Foundation.

## The Hoedown is back, come join us

Questions?



Call Howard Blair  
at 858-583-0067 or  
Bonnie Benton  
at 949-830-3483.

### Western Hoedown at Las Flores

*(Net proceeds will support the restoration of Las Flores Adobe,  
A National Landmark aboard Camp Pendleton.)*

**Saturday, August 29, 2009 from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
at the Las Flores Adobe, Camp Pendleton**

*Mexican BBQ, Mariachi and Western Music, Silent Auction,  
Live Auction, No host bar, Docent led tours of Las Flores  
and the Estancia, Photos taken,  
and more...*



**Cost is only \$50 per plate**

The Las Flores Adobe  
dates from 1864,  
when Don Juan Forster, owner of Rancho Santa  
Margarita y Las Flores, built it as a wedding gift  
for his son. The adobe is undergoing extensive  
renovation to restore it to its former grandeur.

*Download the reservation form on the Society web site or  
make a check payable to: Camp Pendleton Historical Society  
and mail it to: CPHS, 10555 Meadow Glen Way East,  
Escondido, CA 92026  
Information and map mailed upon receipt of check.*

## CPHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Col. Richard Rothwell, USMC (Ret.)  
*President*

Col. Jim Williams, USMC (Ret.)  
*Vice President*

Col. Joe Kirkpatrick, USMC (Ret.)  
*Financial Officer*  
Linda F. Holmes  
*Secretary*

Howard G. Blair  
*Director of Marketing*

G. Wayne Eggleston  
Robert “Taffy” Stauss  
Col. Stewart Navarre, USMC (Ret.)

## COUNCIL OF ADVISORS

*A distinguished group of advisors is helping  
to guide us as we grow. We are pleased to  
acknowledge their support.*

Lt.Gen. M. T. Cooper, USMC (Ret.)  
L. Patrick Forster

Anthony B. Joseph  
Lt.Gen. Anthony Lukeman, USMC (Ret.)

Mary Lou Lukeman  
Maj.Gen. J. J. McMonagle, USMC (Ret.)

Anthony Moiso  
Maj.Gen. Wilbur Simlik, USMC (Ret.)

## NEW MEMBERS

### Ranchero Level

Alice O’Neill Avery  
Kathy Emmerson  
Trina & Marc Lamkin  
Frandy & Jeremy Laster  
Anne Marie & Jim Leonard  
Tom & Nina Ostensen

## GROUNDBREAKER STAFF

### VOLUNTEER PUBLISHER

Howard G. Blair  
CPHSmembership@cox.net

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Jerry Broeckert

*Continued front page, Message*

He also proved to be a master recruiter, signing up his four daughters and their families as members. On behalf of all members I thank Tony for his most generous, continued support and welcome his family to CPHS.

The training programs mentioned in my last report were successfully completed. You may recall that Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton provided significant financial support for them. I would like to recognize, one of our members, Cal Frantz, who participated in that training. Cal is a member of the Board of Directors of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, the organization that is largely responsible for financing the National Museum of the Marine Corps near Quantico, Virginia. He now lives in Southern California and is a member of CPHS. Cal has volunteered to take the lead in our grant request efforts. I appreciate his initiative and encourage members who may wish to assist in this important effort to drop him a line. You can reach Cal by e-mail at [calfrantz@verizon.net](mailto:calfrantz@verizon.net) or by phone at (951) 506-3585.

I look forward to seeing many of you on August 29 and thank all of you for your continued support.

*Richard B. Rothwell*

Howard G. Blair  
10555 Meadow Glen Way East  
Escondido, CA 92026

## History Happenings, Third Quarter

U. S. Army Air Corps Established, July 2, 1926  
Korean War Ended, July 27, 1953  
Operation Desert Shield Began, August 2, 1990  
U.S. Coast Guard Established, August 4, 1790  
First Atomic Bomb Mission, Hiroshima, August 6, 1945  
Second Atomic Bomb Mission, Nagasaki, August 9, 1945  
Purple Heart Medal Established, August 7, 1782  
Japan Surrendered Ending World War II, August 14, 1945  
Allied Invasion of Southern France, August 15, 1944  
V-J Day, Japan Signed Formal Surrender, September 2, 1954  
“Star-Spangled Banner” Written by Francis Scott Key, September 14, 1814  
U. S. Constitution Approved, September 17, 1787  
U. S. Air Force Established, September 18, 1947  
Operation Uphold Democracy Began, September 19, 1994

## 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 [hgblair@cox.net](mailto: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](mailto:hgblair@cox.net), subject line “CPHS.” Submissions may be subject to editing.



## Preserving a Rich and Colorful History

[www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org)

Camp Pendleton Historical Society, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3)