



Volume 1, No. 2

Antelope Valley Rural Museum

SEPT 2017

AVRM EXECUTIVE BOARD

OFFICERS

Chairman

Giovanni Simi

Vice-Chairman

David Pickus

Finance Officer/Membership

Bill Rawlings

Secretary

Ruth Godde

DIRECTORS

Dayle DeBry—Military & Aviation
Newsletter Editor

Lynn DuPratt—Public Relations

Jeff Godde—Agricultural Equipment

John Knapp—Vehicle Mechanics

Luci Pickus—Volunteer Coordinator

Brandy Royce—Curator & Librarian

Sheila Sola—Timeline Displays

Barbara Sterk—Farm & Garden

Jerry Sterk—Ag. & Dairy Research

David Williams—Vehicle Mechanics

Kristi Word—Student Field Trips

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AVRM Officers & Chairman’s Message	1
Bill Rawlings & Upcoming Events/Meetings	2
Fund Raisin’ for a Ground Breakin’ 2017 Fundraiser	3
Scrapbooks Give History of Local Oldtimers Group	4
1919 Antelope Valley “Aeroplane” Rides!	5-6
2017 Bullfrog Wild Ride Poker Run Photos	7
AVRM Gift Store & Information	8

CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

Giovanni “G” Simi



The 2017 Antelope Valley Fair and Alfalfa Festival is now behind us. It was great seeing the interest in the museum during the Fair! Two recent donations of restored equipment and tractors from Rob Parris and the Bozigian Family, were displayed and also ran in the Rural Olympics opening parade. Both of them looked great. Thanks to all of the volunteers for enhancing the displays of equipment and artifacts. What a herculean effort and what a huge amount of organization and cooperation it took to make everything look so good. Thank you all.

Our fund raising efforts are going along well as we have a Jeep and organ for sale in the museum. The 50/50 raffle went well and we raised over \$500.00. We still have a little over \$50,000.00 to raise to reach our commitment for the new building and it appears with everyone’s help we will break ground in September of 2018. The Pickus Challenge for the new building is in high gear again and if you want to meet the donation challenge, please check out our website.

We have our September fund raising dinner coming on September 30, 2017 with tickets at \$40.00 each. Please call and reserve yours for the dinner or help sell some tickets. We need to fill the room with donors for the dinner/fundraiser and raise the roof so we can raise the roof of our new building!

It is amazing that the Fairgrounds has been so cooperative with the building we are in and are willing to enhance what we do have with an even bigger one, but we do have the inventory to fill the new building.

The Museum is open the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month from 10:00 to 2:00. Please stop by to tour or help. There is always a project going on and if you are interested we would love your help. If you have a particular interest that follows the history of Antelope Valley, please jump in with some ideas and labor to get that interest in a display. Sports, Car Clubs, School Districts, Parades, Racing and Off Road are just a few that could easily get started. If you have the time and interest we are looking for you!



RAWLINGS' REVIEW

VOLUNTEERS are needed for a couple of future activities. We would like to build two teams of about four to five people each. One team would be responsible for our participation in PARADES, which would involve driving tractors & vehicles in the AV Fair Parade & possibly others. The second team would work to prepare and participate in the Spring and Fall FLEA MARKETS, by organizing, setting up, selling, and taking down our collection of sellable items. For information please email me at avmuseum@verizon.net or call 661-478-4841.

As a 100% volunteer organization the AVRVM depends upon those members and other individuals who give their time so generously to accomplish the wide variety of tasks necessary to keep the museum growing and improving. We have invested over 26,000 volunteer hours creating this museum. On that note, I wish to congratulate Brandy Royce, an AVRVM Board Member and our Curator/Librarian for the past four years, on her new job with the State of Mississippi Archives in Jackson as a Historical Resource Specialist 3. Brandy begins on October 9th, and will be missed by all of us, but we wish her the best.

Lancaster, California Through Time, a history book written by AVRVM members Norma Gurba, Dayle DeBry, Bill Rawlings and Karl Peterson will be available on December 11th and may be pre-ordered on Amazon for \$17.95. Signed copies may be purchased at our Flapjack Fundraiser on January 13th at the Lancaster Applebee's. Tickets are \$10 per person for breakfast. Contact us for ticket information and purchase through PayPal, cash, or check. All profits from the breakfast and the book will be designated for the AVRVM Building Fund.

PICKUS CHALLENGE: I would like to take a moment to explain what the Pickus Challenge is. In 2012 David and Luci Pickus, owners of Pickus Repair Service in Lancaster, donated \$1,000 to the AV Rural Museum Building Fund. They then wrote letters to several local businesses and individuals challenging them to match their \$1,000 donation. While we welcome donations of any amount, donors must give at least \$1,000 to have their name on the PICKUS CHALLENGE DONOR BOARD. Each year those donors are listed as PC donors for that year. The 2017 PICKUS CHALLENGE has added \$14,000 to our Building Fund so far.

Thank you all for your continued support.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2017

SEPTEMBER 2: Board meeting the 1st Saturday of the month and the Museum is open from 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 16: Museum open the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10:00—2:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 30: Annual fundraiser at the AV Fairgrounds, 5:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m. See page 3.

OCTOBER 1: Flea Market 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

OCTOBER 5: Annual Board meeting on **Thursday** at 5:00 p.m. Pot luck dinner and elections. All positions are open for nominations.

OCTOBER 7: Museum is open from 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

OCTOBER 8: Old Timers BBQ at the Van Dam Pavilion, AV Fairgrounds, 11:00—2:00 p.m.

OCTOBER 12: Bill Rawlings presentation to Kern-Antelope Historical Society at 5:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 21: Museum open the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10:00—2:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 4: Board meeting the 1st Saturday of the month and the Museum is open from 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 18: Museum open the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10:00—2:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 2: Board meeting the 1st Saturday of the month and the Museum is open from 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 16: Museum open the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10:00—2:00 p.m.

JANUARY 13, 2018: Flapjack Fundraiser at Lancaster Applebee's. \$10.00 per person.



We are pleased to announce

HOURS OF OPERATION

First and Third Saturdays of Each Month
From 10am to 2pm

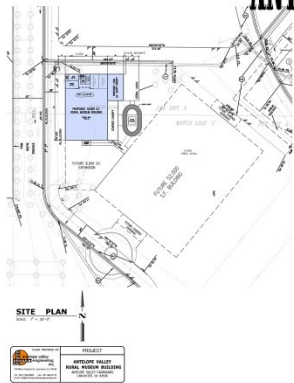
Open dates subject to change due to other events at the AV Fairgrounds or holidays. Please verify by email :

avmuseum@verizon.net

or by phone: 661-478-4841

The museum is located on the west side of the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds
2551 West Avenue H, Lancaster, CA 93534
Enter through Livestock Gate #3, follow road to 3rd barn on right

Coming soon on this corner!
Groundbreaking - September, 2018
ANTELOPE VALLEY RURAL MUSEUM



A HUGE THANKS to the ANTELOPE VALLEY FAIR ASSOCIATION from the AV RURAL MUSEUM and the RURAL OLYMPICS HALL of FAME for giving us so much support, room to grow, and a permanent home since 2005, and THANKS ALSO to the FRIENDS of the FAIR for pledging \$250,000 in matching funds.



It's finally happening! The groundbreaking for our new, permanent home is scheduled for September 2018! We still need about \$50,000 to reach our pledge for the building, so please join us at our annual fundraiser:

**“FUND RAISIN’ FOR A GROUND BREAKIN’
 2017”**

Our fundraiser takes place on SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2017 at the AV Fairgrounds in the Harley Davidson Building, next to the AV Rural Museum. Join the fun at 5:00 p.m. with a delicious BBQ chicken and pulled pork dinner catered by Friends of the Fair. We will have numerous items and gift baskets to raffle off, along with a beautiful cedar storage bench handcrafted by Ken Swapp; music with DJ; wonderful company, and brand new museum displays!

Tickets are \$40 per person. Happy Hour and the Museum open at 5:00 p.m. with dinner served at 6 p.m. PLEASE order your tickets early as we have to give a firm commitment to the caterer very soon. Contact any AVR M Board member, order on our website www.avmuseum.org and pay with PayPal, or email Bill Rawlings at avmuseum@verizon.net. You can even call Bill to order tickets at 661-478-4841!

Please attend and invite friends, family, and neighbors to help us get our Building Fund built up in time for our groundbreaking ceremony a year from now!

As the sign says: A HUGE THANKS to the Antelope Valley Fair Association from the Antelope Valley Rural Museum and the Rural Olympic Hall of Fame for giving us so much support, room to grow, and a permanent home since 2005. Thanks also to the Friends of the Fair for pledging \$250,000 in matching funds.



SCRAPBOOKS GIVE HISTORY OF LOCAL OLDTIMERS GROUP

Antelope Valley Ledger Gazette—September 16, 1954

Doug Holloway

AV Ledger Gazette Editor's Note: The author of this article about Antelope Valley oldtimers is the great-grandson of one of them, Mrs. Myrtie Webber, and great-nephew of another, Mrs. Susie Oldham Davis, both present day residents of Lancaster. His story is based on information obtained from family scrapbooks.

AVRM Editor's Note: With the Old Timers BBQ coming up on October 9, I thought this might bring back some memories and revive some of the history of the event.

Another Valley Pioneers and Oldtimers League came into being on Saturday night, March 31, 1934 at Lancaster Inn when 116 residents, present and past, whose arrival here dated back 20 or more years, gathered to renew acquaintances.

The reunion was the work of a committee consisting of George Webber (the writer's great-grandfather), Bert Cripps, George Kinton, Joseph Geier, and Rawley Duntley. Many Los Angeles people responded to the invitation to attend the banquet, which was served in the Inn Grill.

Music during the dinner was provided by Roy Weir's orchestra, and the "Lancaster Song" was offered by Dr. P.D. Gaskill and Bob Cameron.

According to the minutes of that get-together, "The first meeting of the Pioneers and Oldtimers was held...for the purpose of organizing a League. Its object is to be social, beneficial, and historical; and to arrange certain times for the reunion at least twice a year...A yearly membership fee of \$1 was decided on to assure the necessary finances of the League."

Officers elected that night were John C. Knecht, president; George Webber, vice-president; A.F. Cripps, secretary-treasurer; B.C. McMurray of Lancaster, Everett W. Martin of Littlerock, and Rawley Duntley of Mojave, member of the advisory board.

George Webber was made the first honorary member of the League.

Among the out-of-town pioneers who attended were Ted Kornelissen, Newhall; Charles E. Jones, editor of the Ledger-Gazette in 1914, Los Angeles; Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Hamilton, Cottonwood; Jimmie Austin, Los Angeles; Blanche Blasdel; Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Grant, Whittier; Mr. and Mrs. Dave Menzies, Los Angeles.

Those pioneers of the 1880 -90 period who posed for a picture that night were Dave Menzies, Bob Hooper, Joseph Geier, Fred Price, George Webber, Rawley Duntley, Arthur Forsyth, John Specht, Mrs. Duntley, Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson, Mrs. Anna Radloff, and William H. Evans.



Back of photo: Not dated but I'm sure it's from 1934. Front row, L to R; Fred Price, Mrs. Rawley Duntley, Mrs. Dave Menzies, Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson, Mrs. Anna Radloff, Bill Evans. Back row, L to R; Dave Menzies, Bob Hooper, George Webber, Rawley Duntley, Art Forsyth, John C. Knecht, Henry Specht and Joe Geier.

1919 ANTELOPE VALLEY FAIR “AEROPLANE RIDES”!

Dayle DeBry

THE PEOPLE OF ANTELOPE VALLEY
INVITE YOU TO THE

Antelope Valley Fair

LANCASTER September 17 - 20

AN AGRICULTURAL AND LIVE STOCK FAIR SHOW-
ING ALL THE PRODUCTS OF ANTELOPE VALLEY.
THE BIGGEST COUNTRY FAIR IN LOS ANGELES
COUNTY.

A full line of amusements: races, football and baseball games,
broncho busting and aeroplane rides. The Mercury Aviation Com-
pany will have two passenger carrying planes at the grounds dur-
ing Fair Week.

Large camping grounds with plenty of shade and water. Bring
your camping outfit if possible on account of the probable crowded
condition of the hotels.

Dancing every night in the BIG ALFALFA PALACE.

FOR INFORMATION ADDRESS:
Frank B. Rutledge, Sec.-Treas. A. V. Fair Assn., Lancaster, Calif.

The AVRМ just finished another successful ten days, open during the entire Antelope Valley Fair from August 18—27. One of the new displays in the aviation area featured airfields around the Antelope Valley area. As the director of military and aviation, I am always on the lookout for interesting events having to do with aviation.

While searching for information about the Fair, I came across an ad from the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper dated September 7, 1919. In small print (see ad on left) it states, “A full line of amusements: races, football and baseball games, broncho busting and aeroplane rides. The Mercury Aviation Company will have two passenger carrying planes at the grounds during Fair Week.” This piqued my interest, especially being from 1919.

Upon further investigation I found the following article from the *Los Angeles Times* from August, 1919:

LIKES THE AIR

(Local Correspondence)

Lancaster, Aug. 14.—Miss Alta Rowsey, a Lancaster girl, was honored recently with an airplane flight at Hollywood. Miss Rowsey went up in one of the machines of the Mercury Aviation Company, in charge of Lieut. Hawkins, and sent word to her friends here that they must all take advantage of the flights to be made at the Lancaster

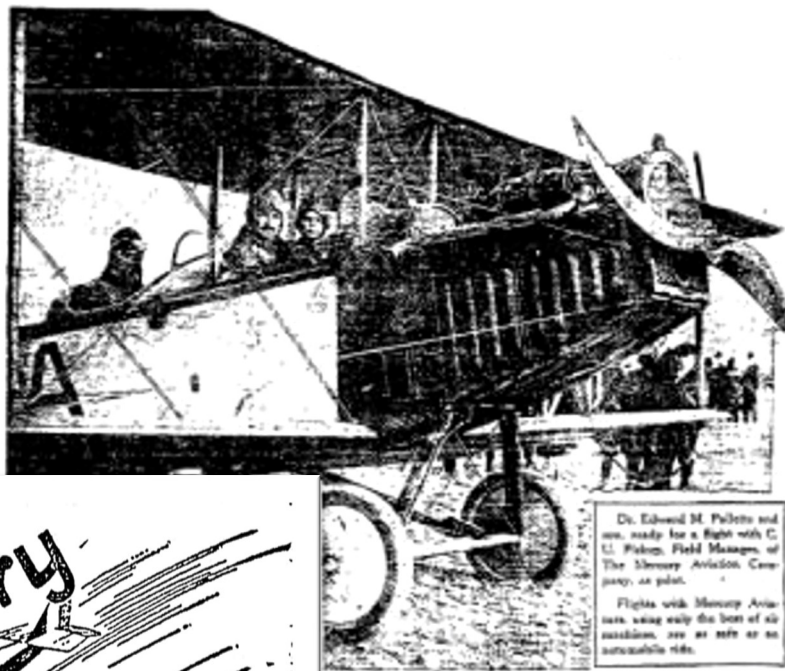
fair, September 17-20, and take a ride in Lieut. Hawkins’s plane. The company above mentioned has signed contracts to make daily flights at the Antelope Valley fair to be held here.

One of my favorite past times is go through old newspapers found online. You never know what you will find in those vintage issues. The Mercury Aviation Company (Mercury Air Lines) was one of the first (possibly *the* first) U.S. company to carry passengers and freight as part of a commercial venture along with regularly scheduled passenger flights with more than one destination. The company chose a new Junkers-Larsen JL-6 airplane for this endeavor, which was delivered to DeMille Field #2 in August of 1921. A decorated pilot (Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross—seven times—and Legion of Honor and Croix de Guerre from France) of World War I delivered the plane to the air field— American fighter ace, Eddie Rickenbacker.

Mercury Aviation Company, was founded in 1918 by legendary Hollywood movie director/producer Cecil B. DeMille. They were based out of DeMille Field #1 which was located across the street from the Fairfax High School (Fairfax and Wilshire Ave.) with a fleet of surplus WWI Jennys before purchasing the new Junkers.



*Mercury Aviation Company
DeMille Field, undated—Los Angeles Public Library photo.*



Antelope Valley Ledger Gazette
August 1, 1919

There will be two passenger-carrying planes here at the fair which will be piloted by experienced Army aviators. At DeMille Field, Hollywood, about 2,000 passengers have been carried to date and not a single accident has occurred.

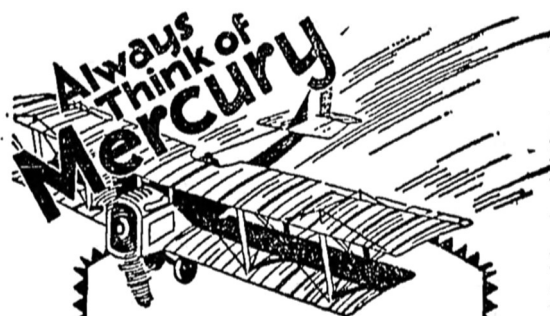
With the absence of numerous wires, poles, and tall buildings in and around Lancaster, there will not be a chance of an accident. Managers from Mercury Aviation Co., were here in Lancaster one day last week in the interest of their coming flights during Fair Week.

Accompanied by G.A. Brooks and Manager Frank Rutledge, the gentlemen were shown several likely sites for a landing field and finally decided on a strip just north of the northern fields of the Fair Grounds. After looking over the field, they decided to make their regular charge of \$10 for a ride of from 10 to 15 minutes which will take place in a distance from 10 to 20 miles.

Just imagine the thrill of seeing those "aeroplanes" in the skies over Lancaster! I can only dream of what it must have been like to actually catch a ride in one of those World War I Curtiss Jenny biplanes.

Just after the 1919 Fair, the landing strip was used by Cliff Durant when their plane encountered a heavy storm over the Tehachapi mountains. They cleared the storm but decided to sit out another storm that was brewing in the mountains south of Lancaster. In 1946 Darrell Curtis and his partner Walt Waldrip featured an Ercoupe airplane at the Fair claiming "they could teach students to solo in five hours."

And what of Mercury Aviation Company? Over 25,000 passengers flew with Mercury Air Lines before they discontinued operations in 1921.



Whenever you see an airplane, always think of "Mercury."

Mercury Airplanes have been the pathfinders of Southern California Cloudland — the Mercury Aviation Company is the pioneer of Commercial Aviation.

Trips for pleasure are made daily over regular routes on schedule and special trips anywhere can be arranged at any time. Ask at the nearest hotel.

Only Government reserve instructors act as pilots, and they know how to fly a "ship."

Mercury Aviation Company
Pioneers in Commercial Aviation

De Mille Field, Hollywood,
Cal., Wilshire Blvd. and
Crescent Ave.

Phone 567363



Top photo ad from the Los Angeles Times, July 29, 1919. The L.A. Times was offering a free ride in a Jenny from Mercury Aviation as part of the "Times' Flying Circus" promotion.

Above: Mercury Aviation Company ad, Los Angeles Times.

Aug. 1, 1919 AV Ledger Gazette article/Cliff Durant information courtesy of Norma Gurba.

**REMEMBERING SGT. STEVE OWEN - JULY 15, 2017
BULLFROG WILD RIDE POKER RUN AT THE AV RURAL MUSUEM**



1

- 1) Steve Owen's family: Tania, Mildred, Shannon, Chadd & Nicole.
- 2) Line to get poker cards and to see Steve Owen and First Responders exhibits.
- 3) L.A. County Station 33 firemen visited the new exhibits during the 1st Bullfrog Wild Ride Poker Run hosted stop at AVR.M.
- 4) Susan Chaisson-Walblom with her father's uniform.
- 5) Some of the approximately 400 motorcycles and cars that showed up for the first poker card and first public viewing of the First Responders exhibit.



2



3



4



5

Website: www.avmuseum.org

[www.facebook.com/Antelope Valley Rural Museum](http://www.facebook.com/AntelopeValleyRuralMuseum)

Mailing address:

AVRM
P.O. Box 1316
Lancaster, CA 93538



Contact us:
avmuseum@verizon.net

Donate and pay dues via PayPal on our website

ANTELOPE VALLEY RURAL MUSEUM GIFT STORE

Annual membership dues (Existing members)	\$20.00
New members (Balance of 2017+2018)	\$30.00
Hats—all baseball hats (Members)	\$10.00
Hats—all baseball hats (Non-members)	\$15.00
History books—all books are priced at:	\$20.00
Images of America “Lancaster”	
Images of America “Palmdale”	
Legendary Locals of the AV	
(Above AV history books signed by Norma Gurba)	
P-38 Lightning	
Images of America “Edwards Air Force Base”	
DVDs Listed DVDs are priced at:	\$20.00
Jane Pinheiro Wildflowers NEW!	
Yester Years—AV History 1876—1942	
1987 Rural Olympics (narrated)	
Evolution of the Rural Olympics book	
(On DVD—Excel & Word Doc format)	

The AVRM is a 501(c)(3) public charity
EIN: 27-1002922

DONATIONS

Pickus Challenge 2017 Building Fund	\$1,000
Honor the Past Plaques and Display Sponsorship (Custom laser cut wood plaques with Personal memorial or message)	\$1,500
Bronze Sponsorship Donor	\$100
Silver Sponsorship Donor	\$1000
Gold Sponsorship Donor	\$10,000

Antelope Valley Rural Museum
P.O. Box 1316
Lancaster, CA 93538