



# VCSDA Newsletter

## The Murder of Tom More A True Crime Story



We were pleased to welcome Elena Brokaw, the Barbara Barnard Smith Chief Executive Officer of the Museum of Ventura County, as the guest speaker for our April 1st VCSDA chapter meeting, hosted by Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District. Elena shared insights into the evolving role of museums, from simply storing artifacts to becoming dynamic cultural centers that engage communities. She highlighted how the Museum of Ventura County offers interactive exhibits that reflect local history and values. According to their mission, the Museum seeks to create meaningful experiences with history, art, and culture, encouraging curiosity and compassion to foster community and connection.

Elena concluded her presentation with the compelling story of Thomas More, whose murder over water rights in Ventura County captivated the audience. In the early hours of March 24, 1877, a mob of angry settlers set fire to Thomas More's barn and shot him more than eleven times. The violent act stemmed from a heated dispute over land ownership and water access, and the shock of his death quickly spread across California. The case, clouded by lies, bribery, and contradictions in historical accounts, remains unsolved. Today, More's story stands as a powerful reminder of the deep tensions and conflicts that can arise over scarce natural resources.

### President

Nellie Cusworth  
*Conejo Recreation & Park District*  
*Vice Chair*

### Treasurer

Dan Paranick  
*Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District*  
*General Manager*

### Next Meeting

#### Location:

June 3rd, 2025  
Port of Hueneme  
333 Ponoma Street  
Port Hueneme, CA  
93041

*Includes a Tour of Port of Hueneme*

## Highlights

### CSDA Annual Conference & Exhibitor Showcase

August 25-28  
Monterey, CA  
Visit [csda.net/annualconference](https://csda.net/annualconference) for additional details and registration

### Proposed Payment Schedule

Level 1: \$375/year  
Level 2: \$725/year  
Level 3: \$1,250/year



*The Board of Commissioners from the Port of Hueneme presented VCSDA with a Resolution Certificate in recognition of Special Districts Week*