

Do You Remember?

By Anne Homan



Al Caffodio and the Twin Valley Relays

Al Caffodio was born in Alameda in 1908 and graduated from the University of California with a degree in chemical engineering in 1929. After a conventional job with a San Francisco paint company, in 1935 he invented for himself the position of a paid rodeo secretary who could calculate the rodeo results quickly so that most of the winners would receive their money before the end of the show. He worked about 20 rodeos a year, some as far away as the East Coast. The Rowell Ranch Rodeo in Dublin was one of them. Cecil Jones, who took over the position from Caffodio at Rowell, said, "Caffodio was the master of all Rodeo Secretaries." His reputation grew, and he was hired by the Gene Autry Flying A Ranch Rodeo.

His induction into the Army Air Corps for World War II interrupted his work with Autry. His enlistment records showed him at six foot three, 171 pounds. Eventually a master sergeant, he worked as a meteorologist and set up weather stations in the West.

After the war, Caffodio worked as a bartender/manager in Pleasanton and then became a businessman and civic leader in Livermore. He owned the Village Canteen on downtown First Street from 1951 until his death in 1968. Caffodio, a nonsmoker himself, offered cigarettes, fine cigars and tobacco, imported pipes, liquor, beer, wine, newspapers, and a wide selection of magazines. One resident remembered, "It was a delightful, friendly place to roam around." "If you wanted to know anything, you went down to visit Al at his cigar store," Virginia Bing recalled. The store was open seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. In a *Livermore News* interview in 1955, he said that he had not had a vacation since opening the store—"That's one of the drawbacks, the way the store ties you down."

In 1933 California legalized pari-mutuel betting from which revenue could be used to subsidize county fairs; the state hoped

that such fairs would encourage agricultural excellence. At the Alameda County Fair, Al Caffodio was one of three men who operated the pari-mutuel machines.

Although he never had children of his own, he helped promote recreation for children in Livermore. He organized and largely funded the Twin Valley Relays, an annual track event held at Livermore High School beginning in 1958: "a community event, with literally dozens of service club members, parents, school and PTA officials and others working for weeks to arrange." Youngsters from Amador and Livermore Valley elementary schools, both parochial and public, met in the spring for one giant track meet. At the first one, 394 boys competed; the next year girls were included. The last meet was held in 1962, and the relays had expanded to include 1,368 runners. Competitors were from East Avenue, Fifth Street, Marylin Avenue, Junction Avenue, Joe Michell, Alisal, Pleasanton Elementary, Valley View, Dublin, and Sunol Glen. In June 1961 Caffodio thought he was attending an evaluation meeting of the year's relays at the Rod and Gun Club, but in reality it was a surprise barbecue in his honor. His friends chose this method of honoring him because, considering his modesty, they knew they would never succeed in getting him to a testimonial. They gave him certificates of appreciation from the city and the Board of Supervisors. According to the *Herald*, Supervisor Murphy said about the relays: "I have never seen so much confusion so well organized."

Caffodio was also instrumental in starting a Livermore soccer league. He was a director of Valley Memorial Hospital and an enthusiastic member of the Livermore Boosters and the Elks. One example of his generosity was his purchase of uniforms in the 1960s for the Livermore High School basketball team. LARPD named Al Caffodio Park for him in December 1968, and the Caffodio Soccer League also honors his work with young people. He died in April 1968 at Valley Memorial Hospital. He was survived

by his mother and two sisters.

Some familiar names on the Twin Valley Relay Teams in 1962:

St. Michael "Saints": Bill Bettencourt, Janet Fuchs, Fred Holdener, Molly Banke, Louis Viale, Richard Stanley, Charles Canfield, Pat Benapfl, Mike Greci, Robert Kamp, Carla Viale, Paul Ammendolia

Sunol Glen "All Stars": Tim Koopman, Kei Sugaoka, Brian Taketa, Rudy Robles, Carol Ducharme

Dublin "All Stars": Kirk Pope, Ben Waugh, Doug Hostetter, Darlene Loomis, Debra Gellerman

Pleasanton "Tartans": M. Inderbitzen, Paul Calderon, Danny Christian, Richard Garibaldi, Andy Jorgensen, Mike Vargas, John Burton, Dennis Swift, Danny Murphy, Lester Silveira, Tom Craig

Marylin "Roadrunners": Gary Scofield, Scott MacFarlane, Alan Duke, Joseph Leal, Alan Higuera, Patricia Armstrong, Martha Baroody, Verna Carlin, Laura Mustain, Barbara Fagundes, Donna Despy

Junction "Bulldogs": Lynn Carstensen, Brian Salemme, Raymond Coronado, Jean Quan, Jeanne Amaral, Jacqueline Williams, Sandra Gruhlke, Fred Quarterman, Norman Jensen, Doug Serpa

Fifth Street "Flyers": Al Gutierrez, Tom Buckholdt, John Humphrey, Frank Cuellar, Rick Volponi, Linda Ashworth, Melinda Robles, Jane O'Donnell, Charlene Struthers, Sidney Sladky, Kathy Svets

Joe Michell "White Eagles": Janet Reginato, Donna Sorenson, Margaret Brunke, Karen Sachau, Jim Frydendal, Philip Wente, Eric Wente, John Migliore, Craig Peverill, Clifton Wilhite, Jim Bowie

East Avenue "Dolphins": Patty Lamb, Beatrice Severin, Kathy Bireley, Carol Bargmann, Karen Larsen, Earl Basso, Bart Schenone, Stan Preftokis, Chuck Seaborg, Steve Runstrom, Jim Conniff, Marc Nordahl

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Wellness Festival This Weekend

A visit to the Pleasanton Public Library on Saturday, October 15, can include the opportunity to "Change 1 Thing" in order to be healthier.

That is the theme of the Community of Wellness Festival, to be held in the library's Community Room from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. More than 20 organizations and individuals will be hosting tables that offer visitors a wide array of options and information. The event is free of charge. Each visitor will receive a card that summarizes the six steps to effectively change behavior.

"We are constantly bombarded with messages about what we should do to prevent disease or stay healthy," said W. Ron Sutton, founder of Community of Wellness. "Instead of being overwhelmed with advice that is too much to deal with, our approach is to help people understand how to effectively modify their behavior so that they can select just one thing to change before next spring for a healthier lifestyle. We think our table sponsors exemplify a wide range of programs and services, literally offering something for everyone."

City Councilman Jerry Thorne will officially open the festival at 10 a.m.

Corporate sponsor for the event is ACCUSPLIT, makers of certified accurate pedometers and stopwatches. Special guest will be Steve Simmons, a former basketball player and All-American hurdler who has coached or managed over 30 national track-and-field teams. ClubSport representatives will be on hand. "ClubSport Pleasanton has been committed to health and fitness in the Tri-Valley community for 30 years," said Heather Stanek, general manager. "We are thrilled now to be working with Community of Wellness in this important effort. At the event, we will be offering baseline fitness assessments."

Another table sponsor is Mary Deggelman, marriage and family therapist, who has a "Get moving!"



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