

Smoke Signal



CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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CO-PRESIDENTS' REPORT

The park is still closed but we have some good news. The gym floor is going to be replaced in the recreation center and when it is done they will open up the rec center and the parking lot only. There are other locations in the park that do not have traces of lead but it would be difficult to open them without reconfiguring the fencing. The tennis courts are clean as is the parking area in front of them but the ground between the two is contaminated so the tennis courts at this time will remain closed. Even though the park has been closed we have been getting people wandering in and discovering the Acre.

We have decided to send postcards as reminders of our general meetings and send a Smoke Signal out once every two or three months. This gives us a chance to have articles about Chatsworth history such as Ann Vincent's series about businesses in our area that have been around for quite some time. The feedback we received from our last Smoke Signal was very positive. Remember if you have any historical tidbits you would like to submit for the Smoke Signal we would welcome it.

We are getting ready for our rose pruning day on February 21st. With approximately three hundred roses we can really use some help. We will have someone who can show you how to prune so if

you don't know how no worries come and learn.

Linda and Andre

GARDEN FESTIVAL ANNOUNCED

.....Bea Berman Chairman

Mark your calendars and plan to attend our Annual Garden Festival on Sunday, April 21st featuring our delicious Duchess' Tea, Growing Plants for Sale, Arts and Crafts Booths, Bake Sale, White Elephant Sale, Entertainment, and of course our beautiful gardens. All of this will take place from 11:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Homestead Acre.

If you have any white elephants merchandise for our sale, please call me at 341-5449 or you can drop it off at the Acre. Also, if you would like to bake for our bake sale, we would appreciate it.

Any questions or information, please call Bea Berman, Chairman -(818) 341-5449.

FROM THE CURATOR

The Chatsworth Historical Society recently received several new donations to our historical collection. The gifts were gratefully received and are in the process of being numbered and labeled.

The first gift was a handsome well-kept

wooden cuckoo clock from the Ahlstrom family. The clock had hung in the blacksmith shop here in Chatsworth and was saved by members of the family, Sharon Ahlstrom said. Accompanying the clock was a box containing the lovely 4-piece wedding dress of Reuben Ahlstrom's wife; three beautiful hand-crocheted collars; a long cotton apron with a crocheted edge; and several crocheted pieces.

The needlework is exquisite and some of the work will be on display at our coming Garden Festival on Sunday, April 26, 2009, along with some other handwork.

Another gift we received recently was a pair of (old-time) metal roller-skates from Fran Oschin who is well-known in the community. All of the items that we have in our collection were donated by local people and their friends and families.

LOCKHEED MEMORABILIA HUNT

Ann Vincent received the following request:

The Lockheed Museum is looking for ancient zippo lighters, ash trays, business card holders, writing pens, lapel pins, cuff links, maybe with the Winged Star logo. The team can also use any out of date paper products including Winged Star logo employment documents, pay stubs, maps, marketing items, ANVOs, Winged Star logo letterhead or document holders, personal photos or any original Lockheed "star" issue 1964 or prior.

If you have anything of these items or others..and want to make sure they are appreciated...Lockheed would appreciate the opportunity to add your items to their museum. Please Contact Terri Davis at terri.davis@lmco.com or you can contact Ann Vincent at annvincent@aol.com, or locally at (818) 792-6339 and she will arrange to have them sent to Lockheed.

STUDENTS TRIP TO D.C.Bea Berman

My granddaughter Jessica was very fortunate to be able to attend the inauguration of our 44th president in Washington D.C. She was one of 70 students from

Lawrence Middle School privileged to go. It was quite a grueling and whirlwind tour. They left California Saturday morning returning Wednesday night. They were on the go constantly doing all the important sights. They visited the Natural History Museum, Library of Congress, Capital Building and Supreme Court, Arlington Cemetery and of course the Washington Monument. She said the inauguration was "awesome" and in the evening they attended one of the formal balls. Other places they visited were the Lincoln, Korean, and Viet Nam Memorials.

Mr. Brent Smiley, the Magnet Teacher, sent this note to the parents about the children who went:

"I am so proud of all of you. School trips always present a variety of challenges, and because of the sheer volume of people at the site presented more than most. You handled yourselves with style and grace. You proved yourselves to be resourceful and resilient. You represented Lawrence Middle School in a way that brought great honor to our school, city and state. I thank you all" Jessica is still on a High!

FUN QUIZ.....Elaine Campbell

- How many sides does a stop sign have?
- Which way do fans rotate? Clockwise or not?
- Whose face is on a dime?
- Do books have even-numbered pages on the right or left side?
- How many lug nuts are on a standard car wheel?
- How many sides are there on a standard pencil?
- Sleepy, Happy, Sneezzy , Grumpy, Dopey, Doc -who's missing?
- How many hot dogs are in a standard package?
- On which playing card is the card maker's trademark?
- On the back of a \$1 bill, what is in the center?
- Does a merry-go-round turn counter or clockwise?

See how many you can answer without help.
Answers in the next Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH PAST & PRESENT

By Ann Vincent

January 2009

The Los Toros Restaurant is our featured business in this issue of the Smoke Signal. If you drive down Devonshire any evening, you will notice that it is the busiest place in town. And it has been a landmark in adding to the history and culture of Chatsworth.



Through the years, demand resulted in the growth of the restaurant and occupied many of the other establishments on the block. Those businesses included The Red Room (now the main bar), H&R Block, a typewriter

repair shop and Colleen's Dress Shop.

Nick remembers long hours at the restaurant as a kid and working weekends with the family. It paid off, as the outside and inside of the building has an authentic colorful Mexican decor with tile artwork inside and out. The front of the building along Devonshire lets you know you have arrived, and the back --- where the entrance is located --- includes valet parking and a corral should you arrive on horseback.

Los Toros has become famous for their House Margarita and bean dip, however you will enjoy choosing from the menu which includes specialties named for patrons over the years.



21743 Devonshire

The current owner of Los Toros is Nicolas (Nick) Montañó III, who runs the family business that was originally started by Nicolas Montañó II (Nick Jr) and his wife Dolores in 1967.

The original restaurant was located further east on Devonshire, which is the current location of Devonshire Preschool (across from Taco Bell). They began by serving tacos, hot dogs and hamburgers, and business grew.

In 1971, Nick Jr. purchased the Magdalena Mexican Deli owned by Joe Flores at 21743 Devonshire, which became Los Toros' current location. They started small, with a kitchen, café style counter top and six tables (photo below). They were the first sit-down patio in the Chatsworth area. Other eating establishments close by were Tony's House of Eggs and J.R.'s Roundup (now the Cowboy Palace).



The Montañó family has participated in our Chatsworth community supporting Chatsworth Little League for over 30 years. Nick now serves as the Kiwanis Club President and they currently meet at the Los Toros restaurant.

In addition to other community service, Nick's special effort in resurrecting the Chatsworth Parade has continued the long history of this event. The parade used to be a summer event scheduled in June or July back in the 60-70's, but was then discontinued. For the last 14 years it has been held in December and continues to draw large crowds and promotes community involvement.

Nick Montañó was recognized as Chatsworth Citizen of the Year for 2004-2005. Business owners such as the Montañó Family have helped shape our community and are now a part of our rich Chatsworth history.



The sign above advertises homemade Mexican food, ice cold beer and wine, air conditioning and a Beer Garden Patio. The sign mentions that parking is in the rear.

BIRTHDAYS OF TWO PRESIDENTS

During this month of February it is only fitting that we commemorate the birthdays of two of our most revered U. S. Presidents: George Washington, born on February 22nd, and Abraham Lincoln, born on February 12th. The following excerpt from *Wikipedia* discusses the relation between the two birthdays.

“Washington's Birthday is a United States federal holiday celebrated on the third Monday of February. It is also commonly known as Presidents Day (or Presidents' Day). As Washington's Birthday or Presidents Day, it is also the official name of a concurrent state holiday celebrated on the same day in a number of states.

Titled Washington's Birthday, the federal holiday was originally implemented by the United States of America federal government in 1880 for government offices in the District of Columbia (20 Stat. 277) and expanded in 1885 to include all federal offices (23 Stat. 516). As the first federal holiday to honor an American citizen, the holiday was celebrated on Washington's actual birthday, February 22. On January 1, 1971 the federal holiday was shifted to the third Monday in February by the Uniform Monday Holiday Act. A draft of the Uniform Holidays Bill of 1968 would have renamed the holiday to Presidents' Day to honor both Washington and Lincoln, but this proposal failed in committee and the bill as voted on and signed into law on June 28, 1968 kept the name Washington's Birthday.

In the late 1980s, with a push from advertisers, the term "Presidents' Day" began its public appearance. The theme has expanded the focus of the holiday to honor another President born in February, Abraham Lincoln, and often other Presidents of the United States. Although Lincoln's birthday, February 12, was never a federal holiday, approximately a dozen state governments have officially renamed their Washington's Birthday observances as "Presidents Day", "Washington and Lincoln Day", or other such designations.....’

FARRAGUT AT MOBILE BAY

Damn the Torpedoes -Full Speed Ahead!

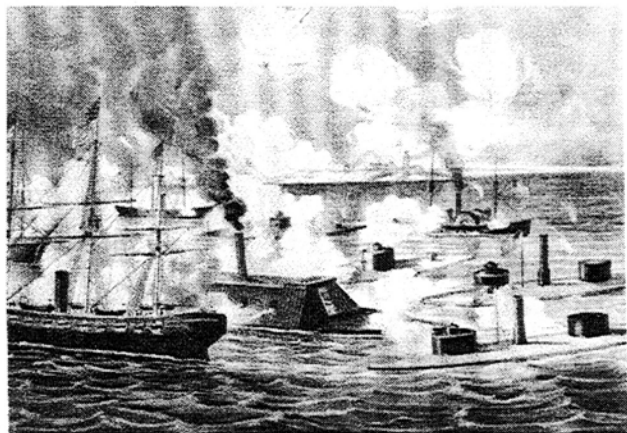
Although we are no doubt familiar with that famous battle cry, credited to Admiral David Farragut during the Civil War, we may not know some of the details surrounding that historical Battle of Mobile Bay, in August, 1864.

The Confederate naval forces of ironclad and wooden ships awaited attack inside the protection of Mobile Bay and were commanded by Admiral Franklin Buchanan. The entrance to the bay was a narrow inlet channel guarded by the heavy guns of fortifications on both sides of the channel.

Also, inside the entrance was a minefield. In those days, mines were called torpedoes!

Outside Mobile Bay, Farragut gathered his Union naval forces, including newly-acquired ironclad ships needed to match the Confederate ironclads. He advanced his ships in two parallel columns in order to better face the opposing cannon fire from the forts at the entrance.

A fierce battle ensued between the Union ships and the shore batteries. As the column of ships moved through the narrow entrance, the leading ships maneuvered to engage the Confederate naval forces, and were turned toward the buoys that marked the edge of the minefield. Nearing the buoys, the commander of the leading ship ordered his ship to stop.



Painting of the Battle of Mobile Bay

But Admiral Farragut did not want to stop with his column of ships under fire in the narrows, so he signaled to "Go ahead."

After several signals, back and forth, Farragut

climbed up in the rigging to see over the smoke of battle. Suddenly, the Union ironclad *Tecumseh* struck a mine and sank immediately. According to reports, Farragut directed his ship out of line and steamed directly through the minefield. As the "torpedoes" were pointed out to him, he reportedly shouted those immortal words "Damn the torpedoes!", full speed ahead! The column of Union ships followed him, making sure to stay in his wake, and there were no more sinkings from mines, perhaps because of malfunctioning mines or triggering devices.

Following a fierce naval battle inside the bay, after the column of Union ships had survived the narrow entrance, Confederate Admiral Buchanan was wounded and his forces were overcome and surrendered to Farragut, thus ending the Battle of Mobile Bay..

In addition to the fact that mines were known as torpedoes in the past, another curious thing about the U.S. Civil War naval battle in Mobile Bay is that Farragut was born in the South (Tennessee), raised in New Orleans, but fought for the North, while Buchanan was born in Baltimore, was from Pennsylvania, but fought for the South.

A POEMLinda

A clothes line was a news forecast
To neighbors passing by.
There were no secrets you could keep
When clothes were hung to dry .
It also was a friendly link
For neighbors always knew
If company had stopped on by
To spend a night or two
For then you'd see the 'fancy sheets' ,
And towels on the line; , .
You'd see the 'company table cloths'
With intricate designs.
The line announced a baby's birth
To folks who lived inside
As brand new infant clothes were hung
So carefully with pride.
The ages of the children could -
So readily be known
By watching how the sizes changed
You'd know how much they's grown.
It also told when illness struck,
As extra sheets were hung;
Then nightclothes, and a bathrobe, too,
Haphazardly were strung.

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