

Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311
(818) 882-5614
www.historicalsocieties.net



Co-Presidents: André & Linda van der Valk

May 2010, Issue #3

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

Under the leadership of Bea Berman, the Garden Festival was a great success. We were able to raise almost half of our yearly budget which is what we strive for with The Garden Festival and Pioneer Day. Bea had surgery just a few weeks before but still managed to get it all together and she even made sure the weather was perfect. Thank you Bea for everything you and your family do for these events.

Our Tea under the leadership of Jelena Csanyi also was a big success. Jelena and the team of ladies that worked with her managed to serve 175 teas, which is not easy in that little kitchen. Everything in the tea is donated and we are grateful to everyone who made the sandwiches and desserts. Thank you, Jelena for all the work that you do.

Our new display in the museum features the moving of the Pioneer Church. Working on this project makes me realize what a great community Chatsworth is and was. I can't imagine a group of people now being able to move a church from Topanga Canyon Blvd. to Oakwood Cemetery and having everyone's cooperation. Lila Schepler was the president of the Historical Society at the time. Wires were cut so the steeple could remain on the church and the project took three days. It was January, 1965 and the whole project was done by 1976 when they were able to rededicate the church. Virginia Watson was the publicity chair then and she told me it was on TV. Thanks to Ann Vincent we were able to enlarge many of the pictures of the move and we are running a movie in the museum that Keith Watts and his wife Sheila created in 1965 from Super-8 movie film they took showing the church moving. Jelena helped me put up the displays so if you haven't seen it yet come and see our display. Our General Meeting this month is a presentation on the church.

We are not going to have any General Meetings during the summer. Our next event will be the Membership Roundup on Sept. 12th.

We hope everyone has a great summer.

Linda and André

Chatsworth Historical Society
Board of Directors 2009-2010

Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
Programs, Ways & Means.....	Bea Berman
Membership.....	Keith Watts
Treasurer.....	Ray Vincent
Recording Secretary.....	Elaine Campbell
Smoke Signal.....	Ann Vincent
Museum Curator.....	Virginia Watson
Cottage Curator.....	Betty Summers
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Garden Director.....	Jim & Betty Summers
Director-at-Large.....	Beverly King
Director-at-Large.....	Evelyn Hutcheson
Permanent Member.....	Lila Schepler

Upcoming Events at the HOMESTEAD ACRE

May 18, 2010 – Tues. 7 PM

The Adventure of Moving the Pioneer Church

Rescuing the Church, built in 1903, was the first official act of the Chatsworth Historical Society. Join us to see the Church museum exhibit, footage of the church being moved in 1965 and a program designed to share Chatsworth's past and the people who made this happen. In addition, the 2010-2011 officers will be installed.

Sept. 12, 2010 – Sun. 4:00 PM – Membership Roundup

An opportunity mingle and get to know each other over dinner at the Acre.

October 3, 2010 – Sun. 11-4 PM – Pioneer Day

Mark you calendar now for this next major community event held by the Chatsworth Historical Society. This event features a Chili Cookoff, Chores of Yore for the kids and Chatsworth Pioneer History.

Weekly - Docent Workshops

Workshops meet every Wednesday, 9:00am to noon under the direction of Virginia Watson. Docents are trained to provide tours and assist with projects related to the museum and gardens. Contact Virginia Watson at 818-341-3053 for additional information.

Monthly - Museum Open House -

The Homestead Acre is open to the public the first Sunday of each month from 1 to 4 pm.

Ways and Means

By Bea Berman

Another year, another event and another success... I have so many people to thank for doing such a great job, especially since my unexpected surgery hindered me a little, but everyone was great. My husband said "the mark of a good executive is to delegate and give orders". It felt kind of funny, but that's what I did. Most of the preliminary work was done, except for the day of the event.

There are so many people to thank, so bear with me. First off, I want to thank Councilman Greig Smith for getting us the shuttle bus which was tremendous along with Andy Gump for donating the Porta Potties. For our Plant Sale, Mel-O-Dee nursery donated four rose bushes, and Randy Mineo of Chatsworth Landscaping donated all the rest of the rose bushes. Many more plants were donated by Dr Gary Standke. Jannine Bergerz also brought plants and worked at our Plant Sale all day along with Betty and Jim Summers. Betty continues each year to prepare cuttings and propagate plants from the Acre to have on hand for our sales.



Our bake sale was successfully managed by Rod and Loretta Sandavol who also bakes for the event along with many others. Leuise Mitchell assisted Loretta at the sale all day.

The front gate staff, Irene Nalbandian and Keith Watts greeted over 600 guests

and our museum staff included docents Evelyn Hutcheson, Karine Panichi and of course Virginia Watson, our curator. The cottage tours were conducted by our knowledgeable docents Beverly King and founding member Lila Schepler.

Elaine Campbell and her daughter Janice again ran our extremely successful White Elephant sale of items donated throughout the year by the community for this event.

The Tea is advertised as our big activity at the Garden Festival, but this year it was even larger since special efforts were made to accommodate over 100 members of the Red Hat Society, with separate seating. In addition regular seating for the guests at the festival were served as usual, both events sold out. Serving all of these people was an amazing achievement accomplished by Jelena Csanyi and her team of efficient and hard working individuals. Zena Thorpe and Gretchen Martin greeted the guests selling tickets, while the students from



Lawrence Middle School's leadership class supervised by Ms. Pena, served the tea and the prepared plates to each table. My granddaughter, Jessica was in charge of delegating and

training the servers. Behind the scenes in the kitchen, under the supervision of Jelena, were Connie Ager, Adrienne Batita, Clara Woll and Dianne Kartiala, preparing the plates and keeping a constant flow of hot tea for the guests. Even further behind the scenes were those that prepared hundreds of sandwiches and provided supplies for the tea included Randi Bercow, Betty Summers, Virginia Watson, Elaine Campbell, Beverly King, Ann Vincent, Vicki Briskman, Katherine Weisman, Linda van der Valk, Jelena Csanyi, my daughter Mindy Berman and myself.

Thank you to Elaine Henry-Tavares and her daughter Amy, for bringing us the wonderful Polynesian Dancers who entertained our guests.



For those guests just looking for food, not tea, the food booth, provided hot dogs prepared and served by my son in law Gary and my daughter Randi who helped as cashier.

The information booth was where I worked from this year, as I was forced by family and friends to take it easy and try to stay seated by Ann Vincent and Barbara Pampalone who sold our museum gift store books

and items.

The Chatsworth High School community service volunteers supervised by Ray Vincent and Tom Harrison kept the parking and shuttle buses under control during the event, and following the event the students assisted with the takedown adventure. The usual crew was on hand plus more for either takedown or the day before for set-up.... John and Zena Thorpe, Erik Pampalone, Marie Patterson, Kenny and John Huffman, Tom Harrison, Bob Dager, Randy Mineo, the Vincents, Gary Bercow, Betty and Jim Summers, Jannine Bergerz, along with Linda and Andre van der Valk. Even Al Pinerio and his wife helped with take down. All the help was appreciated.



I know I try to thank everyone, but a special thanks to Linda and Andre who are my sounding boards.

CHATSWORTH PAST & PRESENT

By Ann Vincent

May 2010

The Chatsworth Community Church, built in 1903, was originally located at 10051 Topanga Canyon Boulevard. It was a landmark in the community for sixty years before it was moved to its present location within Oakwood Memorial Park, at 22601 Lassen Street, Chatsworth.



The Chatsworth Community Church is shown located on the west side of Topanga, when Topanga was still a dirt road. The parsonage house is shown on the left.

The Church was built by volunteer labor in 1903 and also served as a high school from 1904-1906. In 1914, the bell was added to the church steeple, acquired from the old Santa Susana School building when it was torn down. The bell had been ordered and shipped to the school in 1890.

In 1921, White Oak Hall was added adjacent to the church building. This became the first community gathering place. The church was one of the first Protestant churches built in the San Fernando Valley and it served the West Valley area for 63 years. Social activities, youth events and town hall meetings as well as church services were held in the distinctive white frame building. During fires, floods, and disasters, the conveniently-located church doubled as headquarters for the Red Cross and other emergency services. This Church was the center of community life until the 1950's when other churches were built in Chatsworth.

In 1958 the name changed from Community Church to Chatsworth Methodist Church. In 1962, it was sold and leased back from the owner until the structure could be relocated.

At that point in time, Los Angeles had a city rule prohibiting the moving of any building over 50 years old. However, on February 15, 1963, efforts were successful to have the church declared Los Angeles Cultural Historical Monument Number 14. This allowed the structure to be rescued from demolition so it could eventually be moved to a new location. To accomplish that goal, the Chatsworth Historical Society was formed on April 17, 1963. In November, Oakwood Memorial Park offered a site for the relocation of the building. In April 1964, one year later, John Spinks, owner, donated the building to the Chatsworth Historical Society, giving them title to move the Church.

In June 1964 a reception was held by the Chatsworth Historical Society in appreciation, to honor Mr. John Spinks and the Board of Directors of the Oakwood Memorial Park Association at the home of Mr.

and Mrs. Roy Rogers. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, early members of the Society, donated \$1000 to honor their daughter Debbie.

Chatsworth Historical Society founding members and officers at the time included Bill and Lila Schepler, Keith and Sheila Watts, Virginia Watson, Arthur Honey, Charles Janess, Katherine and R.L. "Kelly" Johnson.

An example of Victorian architecture, once commonly used in churches throughout the United States, it is one of the few remaining buildings of this type now preserved in California.



According to Virginia Watson, on January 27, 1965 television cameras ground away as the 60-year-old building creaked and groaned out onto Devonshire and turned toward Oakwood Memorial Park. Charles Janess was later quoted in The Daily News saying "We moved the Church up there and didn't crack a window."

The long, slow process of restoring the building was finally completed in time for the Chatsworth Bicentennial when Dale Evans Rogers and Dr. Carl Dentzel headlined the Re-Dedication Ceremony on April 25, 1976.



In 1981, the Rev. Noel Stipkovich, rector of St. Mary the Virgin congregation arranged for use of the Church for worship. In 1985, the Rev. Russell Fry became rector and he stayed until 1988. The Rev. Anthony Rasch became rector in 1989 and continues now as the Right Reverend Anthony F. Rasch, Bishop Coadjutor.

Over the years, repairs and improvements have continued. A new window and new bell were added for the 90th birthday celebration of the church. Roy Rogers attended and spoke mentioning that his parents were buried there at the cemetery. Funeral services were held for Monty Montana in the Pioneer Church and a Memorial Service was held for Roy Rogers after he died in 1998.

St. Mary the Virgin, Anglican-Rite Catholic Church currently holds worship services at 10 a.m. every Sunday morning. Call (818) 988-9740 for information.

Chatsworth Historical Society – May 2010

Curator's Corner

By Virginia Watson

We are lucky to have so many local people who support us and our circle is widening as The Chatsworth Historical Society grows and develops. Huell Howser is one of the well-known people who have helped us. He first taped two shows in Chatsworth, The Munch Box and one about Chatsworth and our local monuments. We voted him an Honorary Life Member and have a Certificate for him but we haven't presented it to him yet. Nonetheless he has helped us several times and so recently when we were planning our Garden Festival, I called him and asked him to re-schedule the tapes he made of Chatsworth to play again because so many people came to The Acre before when he ran the tapes just before the event. He is such a wonderful person, he said he would not only run the tapes again he would tell people about our event. And he did! We had more than 330 people come into the museum and many of them said that they had seen us on Huell Howser. Remember that really nice shot of all us gathered with him in front of the museum waving goodbye?



We had three special people contact us from the recent programs. The first one is John Glinn, who found out that he is a descendant of our Hill Family after he called on the telephone to ask about our Garden Festival. He is the grandson of Clarence Glinn, a great nephew of Minnie Hill Palmer. He came out to our festival and brought his family including two of his grandchildren. They really enjoyed pictures we had on display and we were able to find him on the James David and Rhoda Jane Hill Genealogy chart that the family had given us.

Wayne Preston sent us an email telling us that his father had been a minister at the Chatsworth Church in the thirties. Mr. Preston was in the 5th grade at Chatsworth Park Elementary School at that time. He remembered that they were still in tents following the 1933 earthquake and that he has fond memories of he and his brother sneaking through the railroad tunnels, watching movies being made at the train station and climbing rocks on the edge of town.

I checked and his father was listed on the official list as a minister of the church in 1933-34. Preston, 87,

wasn't able to come to the Festival but he emailed a picture of his father and mother, The Rev. Harold Preston and his wife Virgie, which we were able to display in the museum.



Joan Seligmann brought her sister and other family members to the Garden Festival. She had visited us earlier one Wednesday-at-the-Acre and had donated items to our collection from her grandmother who was the second president of the Chatsworth Women's Club. She was Mrs. A. H. Haworth and she was president from 1923-24. Mrs. Seligman had discovered that the Craftsman House built by her grandfather is still in use in Chatsworth and is registered at CSUN. She became our latest Life Member following the festival so we will hear more from her.

Time Capsule Restoration

By Bea Berman

Our Time Capsule, installed following the Chatsworth Centennial event was vandalized several years ago. Jeff Hammond, a board member of the Neighborhood Council, has repaired it for us and it looks great. Thank you, Jeff, for your help.

Installation of Officers 2010-2011

The following individuals have been nominated to serve for the 2010-2011 term of office:

Co-PresidentsLinda & André van der Valk
Programs, Ways & Means.....Bea Berman
Membership.....Keith Watts
Treasurer.....Ray Vincent
Recording Secretary.....Elaine Campbell
Smoke Signal.....Ann Vincent
Museum Curator..... Virginia Watson
Cottage Curator.....Betty Summers
Hospitality.....Jelena Csanyi
Garden Director.....Jim & Betty Summers
Director-at-Large.....Beverly King
Director-at-Large.....Evelyn Hutcheson
Permanent Member.....Lila Schepler

It should be noted that voting on the above positions will take place by the CHS membership at the May meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor (with the approval of the nominee) and voted upon to determine the outcome. Installation of the new officers will follow.

“Help your community plan a better future by retaining the best of it’s past”

This was the slogan for the Chatsworth Historical Society in 1964 when organizing to save the Community Church. It still stands today.

The Chatsworth Historical Society would like to have you join us in preserving Chatsworth’s past. If you have any old Chatsworth publications, like the Grapevine, or have old photos of the area, the Chatsworth baseball field, any of the schools, or churches here in the area, we would love to have copies of your photos, but we would also like to hear your stories about growing up in Chatsworth.

We are trying to document some of the established businesses that have been part of the community, so if you have photos showing those businesses...or history on them....please share. Time creeps up on us and anything more than 30 years ago is suddenly history. This is the information we still remember, but our children won’t, unless we make the effort to preserve it.

Wondering if your Dues are Due?

There is a code on the last line of your address label (if you are a life member, there is no code).

- The first digit represents membership type, 1 – individual, and 2 – family/organization.
- The next two digits represent the month that you last paid your dues.
- The last two digits represent the year that you last paid your dues.
- If the month and year on your address label is over one year old, then your dues are due!

Please use the form below to renew your Membership. And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join...

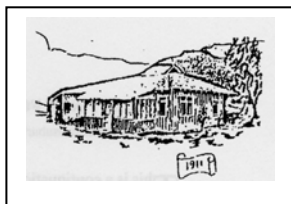


Join us May 18 at 7:00 pm for the History of the Pioneer Church

Program to include footage of the Church being relocated and the story about the people who made it happen.



CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership Form



Your membership helps support our Homestead Acre and the educational and historical programs we provide for our community. Members receive our quarterly newsletters, and receive invitation reminders regarding our monthly programs and annual events – Rose Pruning, the Garden Festival, Membership Roundup, and Pioneer Day. Please mail this form with your annual membership dues and/or contribution made payable to:

Chatsworth Historical Society, 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311
818-882-5614 www.historicalsocieties.net

Yearly: New Member Renewal
 Individual \$15.00 Family \$20.00 Organization \$20.00
 Life Membership: \$ 125.00

NAME _____ Phone: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ Email: _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

OLD PHOTOS - from Chatsworth's Past

DID YOU KNOW....that back in the 40's the Chatsworth Parade used to be part of the 4th of July celebration and would end up at the south base of Stoney Point for a big community barbeque. The parade itself was still held on the 4th of July through at least 1971. At some point it was revived by the Kiwanis Club and the event was moved to December...a good idea, I recall marching in the parade in July in the Drill Team. It was extremely hot. But as I've been told in the early days of Chatsworth, Devonshire was once lined by large cork oak trees that would have provided shade for the participants and the observers during the heat of summer.



Janess Moving and Storage with Girl Scout troop 81 - 1960 photos - Cub Scouts riding in Pony Cart pulled by a dog



1971 Chatsworth High School Drill Team in 4th of July Parade

Do you have any Chatsworth Parade Photos you can share with us? Email them to annvincent@aol.com or contact me and I will scan them for you. We would love to add them to our collection.

Chatsworth Historical Society

10385 Shadow Oak Drive
Chatsworth, Ca 91311

Check the code below your mailing label ...is it time to pay your dues? (See page 5 for details)