



# Smoke Signal

## CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

June 2025, Issue #3

Editor: Ann Vincent

### Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

The gardens at the acre are beautiful and the garden was already to be on display for the Vintage Fashion Show and Tea. Unfortunately, the event had to be canceled due to the rain and the cold. This decision was not easy to make since it is one of our two fundraisers for the year, but Mother Nature did not want to co-operate and she usually does. Ann and her team put many, many hours in getting the hats and clothes ready for the event. I guess next year it will be easier because everything was already ready to go. Let's hope for better weather for Pioneer Day.

There has been a lot of repairs and maintenance going on at the cottage. Gary Standke has been very busy touching up the paint on the cottage and fixing things that happen in a home that is over 100 years old. We do have termites on the porch of the cottage so we tented the house last week.

Jelena and I will be working on a new display in the museum over the summer. It will be ready for Pioneer Day. With the help of Donna Nachtrab, we have been putting together notebooks with old photos, newspaper articles and information of the various groups of Chatsworth.

June 21st is the date for Earth Day at the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. The Nature Preserve is only opened one day a year and this is the date. There are hikes that are led by volunteers and booths that have to do with preservation of the environment. It is a fun day. The Historical Society will have a booth there so come by and say hi.

We hope everyone has a nice summer and hope you can come out for our Ice Cream Social on September 16th at the Acre.

Have a nice summer.

Linda and Andre van der Valk

### Chatsworth Historical Society Board of Directors 2025-2026

Co-Presidents .....	Linda & André van der Valk
Treasurer.....	Jim Van Gundy
Secretary.....	Donna Nachtrab
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Gardens .....	Kathy Perger
Smoke Signal Editor.....	Ann Vincent
Research Director.....	Ray Vincent

### Upcoming Events

Taking July, August and September off from community presentations to enjoy the summer...

**OPEN HOUSE: Continues each  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month from 1 to 4pm.  
July 6, August 3 and September 7**

Drop by to say hello at our Sunday Open House... even if you have seen the museum and cottage, we have a group of members who enjoy sitting out in the shade just inside the gate where we welcome everyone, or on the front porch of the cottage. If you have a Chatsworth story to tell, or would like to hear more about our history or recent activities, come join us for these casual discussions.

### Welcome Back Membership Roundup ICE CREAM SOCIAL

**Tuesday, September 16  
6:00pm**



Join us outside under the walnut tree on Tuesday evening for a fun Ice Cream Social with a variety of toppings. Get a chance to say hello to other members and hear about plans for the upcoming year.

**PIONEER DAY  
October 5, Sunday 11am -  
3pm**

FAMILY FUN for everyone!

Flyers available online

[chatsworthhistory.com/Events](https://chatsworthhistory.com/Events)



## Garden Update

Kathy Perger has started identifying the roses with new markers for each. There are so many roses and so many names. Here is my new favorite, Ketchup & Mustard. Come find it in the garden.



## Included in this newsletter:

- CCCC Awards for CHS Volunteers
- Vellone family farm
- Frank Knapp great-grandchildren visit
- Marc Wanamaker visit
- Chatsworth Celebrities: Julius Fried
- Cottage Corner: Harker Pottery Dishes

NOTE: Watch for links in our articles that allow easy access to more information. Right click with your mouse to open the link in a new window, so you can easily get back to the original newsletter.

## Donations



A big Thank You to Teena Takata for the old metal wheels to have at the Acre.

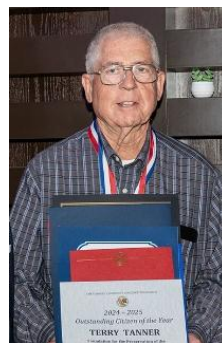
Ray and Gary found the perfect place for them in front of the museum.

## Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council Awards Dinner

We were proud to have several members who belong to multiple organizations who were honored that evening. Dottie volunteers each month at our Open house events providing tours of the Cottage. In addition, she is active in many other Chatsworth organizations.

### Dottie Acker – Citizen of the Year

Presented by CHS, Photo includes her husband Bruce.



### Terry Tanner - Citizen of the Year –

Presented by the FPSSM. Terry is also a CHS volunteer and member.

## Memorial Brick Plaza



Click the link below for the Memorial Brick Order Form, \$100 per brick.

[Brick Order Form.pdf](#)

Our next brick order will be August 1, 2025

For more information, send an email to [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) or call 818-882-5614.

CHS member Kathy Perger received a **Community Service Award** for her dedication to the Chatsworth Historical Society and our Gardens.





**William Biagio Vellone**, age 71, lifelong Chatsworth resident, passed away on Saturday, March 29, 2025.

As you drive north on Topanga, just past Chatsworth Street, you will see the 2-acre Vellone Farm on your right. Bill has been working that field his whole life. The family built the home on the parcel in 1954. The family also once owned the Blvd. Market on the SE corner of Canoga and Devonshire, today's Karate Studio.

The history of the family farm is in our [Nov 2013 Smoke Signal](#). In that interview with Bill, he told me that one of his prize possessions was the Future Farmers of America jacket that he earned when he was a student of Chatsworth High School. Searching Google for "Bill Vellone Chatsworth" finds additional articles.



## Visit from the Knapp Family

Six members of the great-grandchildren of Frank Knapp (1875-1952) visited the Acre on June 6<sup>th</sup>. They were the grandchildren (and related spouses) of Fred Knapp (1905-1968), Frank and Maria's 4<sup>th</sup> of eight children.

As a backstory, Frank and Maria immigrated from Austria to the United States in 1903 with their first three children. They eventually settled in Owensmouth in 1911. Frank Senior was a craftsman that worked in wood, stone, concrete, and plaster, and he did a considerable amount of work, much of it artistic, in those mediums in the then just-beginning modern development of the west San Fernando Valley. Their entire story and contributions to the history of the community are at [Knapp Family - Owensmouth and West Valley History](#)

After we gave them a tour of the Acre, we enjoyed sharing the stories/photos in the presentation that we gave at the Canoga Owensmouth Historical Society meeting and on Zoom in Sept. 2021. Frank Knapp statuary was donated in October 2022 to the Museum of the San Fernando Valley.

After their visit with us from 10 to noon, they were off to Chatsworth Memorial Park, then to Orcutt Ranch to look at some of the statuary, and then on to Knapp Ranch Park in West Hills.

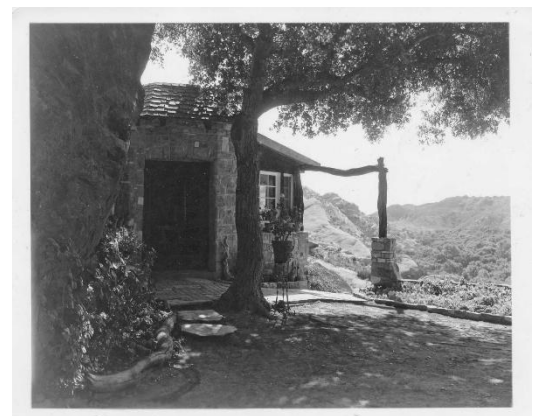


Photos above:  
The Castle, Owensmouth Ave.  
1926/27 Oakwood Mausoleum

Photo at right  
23529 Lake Manor Drive  
built in 1934 by Max Sr.



Photo far right  
Bill Hall-Betty Knapp  
rock house at [Burro Flats](#)  
1940's





## Marc Wanamaker Visit

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, Marc visited us at our open house, and shared some stories of his lifetime passion of sharing movie history. He also donated a book to us, “Hollywood’s Trains & Trolleys”.

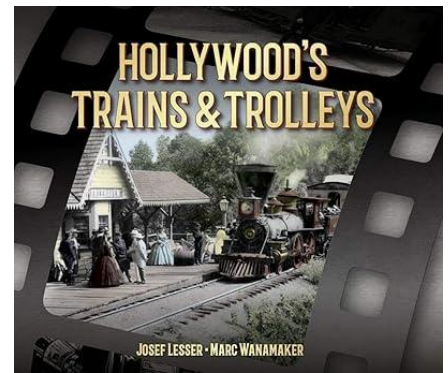
Marc is a renowned film historian, author, archivist, and lecturer specializing in the history of Hollywood and early Los Angeles. He has dedicated decades to preserving the legacy of the motion picture industry.

Marc’s website [Bison Archives](#) is a leading repository of motion picture history. The archive houses an extensive collection of over 150,000 photographs, documents, maps, and ephemera, documenting film production from the 1890s to the present, with a focus on the first half of the 20th century.

In the book “Hollywood’s Trains & Trolleys”, the first picture in Chapter 1 shows a scene (at right) of a train heading northbound after Tunnel 28 heading to Tunnel 27, at the bend just north of the famous Santa Susana Cut in Chatsworth.

The view is looking north. The bend and the Cut can best be viewed at the turnout on Santa Susana Pass Road at Redmesa Road, looking south.

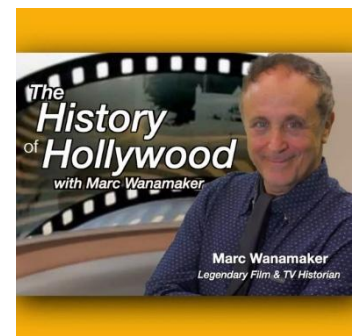
The caption in the book reads: “A typical sunny day in southern California with dramatic natural scenery in the Santa Susana Pass near Chatsworth. To complete the scene, a Southern Pacific train slowly crawls around the bend for the action”. Marc said it could be from a Paramount ‘Western’ silent film, circa 1927.



The [1912 Postcard](#) at left is of a train almost at the eastern portal of Tunnel 27. The view is looking north towards today’s Santa Susana Pass and Redmesa Rd. The train is just leaving the Santa Susana Cut, and the bend described above is just north of the cut.

Marc mentioned that he is also doing podcasts, and we have been listening to them on [iHeart Radio](#). There are a total of six podcasts so far...

For all of you movie fans out there...enjoy!



## Chatsworth Celebrities: Julius Fried

Julius Fried became a millionaire who bought a ranch in Chatsworth. Several fun stories were discussed at our May 20<sup>th</sup> program and are available online at [Chatsworth Celebrities: Julius Fried](#)



Julius Fried (1872-1958), pronounced "Freed," was a significant figure in California's oil industry and a notable resident of Chatsworth. Born in Healdsburg, Sonoma County, to Bavarian immigrant Heinrich Fried, Julius began his career in banking and railroads before entering the oil business. From 1901 to 1905, he worked in the Coalinga oilfields, gaining experience that led to his pivotal role in the Lakeview Gusher.

In 1908, Fried financed and acquired a major stake in 340 acres in Kern County, forming the Lakeview Oil Company. In 1909, facing financial constraints, he sold 51% of the company to Union Oil. On March 15, 1910, the Lakeview #1 well erupted, becoming the largest oil gusher in U.S. history, producing 9 million barrels over 18 months. This made Fried immensely wealthy, though Union Oil's William W. Orcutt, a geologist and president of Lakeview Oil, managed the operation. The gusher's scale required extensive recovery efforts, including sandbag barricades and sumps to prevent environmental damage.



In March 1910, The Lakeview #1 well erupted, becoming the largest oil gusher in U.S. history, producing 9 million barrels over 18 months and creating a 60 acre lake of oil.

Huell Howser visited the Lakeview Gusher site on California's Gold, as a part of his visit to the West Kern Oil Museum in Taft, CA, on November 11, 1995. Included here is a 6-minute clip of their visit to the [Lakeview #1 Gusher site](#). The full 27-minute visit to the West Kern Oil Museum is available at [Oil – California's Gold \(609\)](#)

In 1922, Fried and his second wife, Dorothy, purchased a 50-acre citrus ranch at 11110 Canoga Avenue in Chatsworth, managed by Harry Misumi in the 1930s and the Vargas family from the late 1940s to 1962.

The ranch, a vacation and investment property, featured a two-story house and a 10-acre citrus grove planted by Reuben Ahlstrom.



Note on Photo

*"Fruit trees planted by Reuben Ahlstrom on ranch north of Devonshire at the end of Canoga Avenue..."*



In January of 1939, Mrs. Julius Fried called the Southwest Museum and presented a soapstone artifact which had been unearthed by a plow at the Fried citrus ranch in Chatsworth.



A team of archaeologists and volunteers led by Edwin Walker documented and excavated artifacts over 23 days. The resulting excavation uncovered the [Chatsworth Cairn Site](#), revealing Native American artifacts from 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000, indicating a ceremonial and mortuary site.



Photos above:  
Two-story house at 11110 Canoga  
Julius holding a baby goat with borzois



Fried also ventured into other businesses, including serving as president of the Los Angeles Fig Cannery in Chatsworth in 1928, linked to [Docia Conley's](#)

[Kadota Fig Farms](#).

In 1915, he co-founded the Comique Film Company with John E. Brennan, producing silent comedies.

Fried lived primarily in Los Angeles, with residences in Santa Monica, Wilshire, Hancock Park, and Beverly Hills, including a home next to the future Playboy Mansion.

Notably, Julius Fried is distinct from the Butte, Montana, Julius Fried who founded the Orange Julius drink company in 1926 in Los Angeles. The two lived in Los Angeles concurrently, causing occasional confusion.

Upon his death in 1958, Fried left a multimillion-dollar estate, with half in trust for Dorothy and the remainder for his nieces, Edna Roseborough and Gladys Burtchett, and charities. Dorothy passed in 1966, and both are interred at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Glendale Great Mausoleum.



Fried's Chatsworth legacy includes the citrus ranch, archaeological contributions, and connections to local families like the Vargas', who were caretakers of Fried's ranch.

In a 2008 LA Times article, Joe Vargas Jr. was interviewed. The article stated Joe Vargas Jr. is the last member of the Vargas family operating the Chatsworth farm his grandfather, Valentine Vargas, founded in 1937.



Their family farm once encompassed 200 acres and employed 200 pickers. Many of us remember the Vargas produce stand on the NW corner of Tulsa and Topanga, last photographed in 2003.

## Cottage Corner: Harker Pottery Dishes

In the Cottage, we have on display a set of Pate sul Pate Harker Pottery Dishes donated by member Donna Boswell, who told us that her grandmother received them at the movie theater.



The dishes have a marking on the back indicating the year 1840 Harker Pottery was established. This particular style is called Royal Gadroon. It has a raised pie-crust edge. After dipping in the colored glaze, the edge was wiped clean to produce a decorative border of white.

The plate is identifiable by its distinctive rope-like edge design and the green color with white trim. Harker Pottery produced the Royal Gadroon pattern primarily in the 1940s.

This corresponds with the story that this collection was part of **Dish Night Giveaways**. In the 1930s -1940s, movie theaters used Dish Night promotions to boost attendance, especially during the depression and post-war years when disposable income was limited.

Weekly giveaways on designated Dish Night (often weekly, like Wednesdays), patrons who bought a movie ticket received a free piece of tableware, such as a plate, cup, saucer, or gravy boat. The dishes typically belonged to a matching set encouraging repeat visits to complete a collection.

Tickets were often as cheap as 10 cents, making the dish a compelling incentive. The promotion filled seats during lean times, as families prioritized these events to acquire "fancy" dishes.

Dish Nights became a cultural phenomenon, with some families amassing complete sets over multiple visits. Theaters partnered with dinnerware manufacturers like Salem China or Royal China Company to purchase dishes at wholesale prices. These dishes were then offered as premiums to ticket holders.



The practice began as early as 1928, before the Depression, and continued into the 1940s, though it waned post-war as television reduced theater attendance and economic conditions improved.

Many of us recall drinking glass giveaways at gas stations during the 1970's. In the 60's and 70's grocery stores also offered discounted promotions of dishes each week.





# Virginia Watson Museum & Gift Shop

The following items are available for sale during Open Houses on the first Sunday of the month. To arrange to purchase items at other times, email [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) to make arrangements for payment and shipping, if necessary.

CHATSWORTH HISTORY by Virginia Watson	\$10.00
CHATSWORTH PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL The First 100 Years by Ioline Cleveland	\$10.00
WINDOW INTO THE PAST by William Schepler	\$10.00
QUIET ON THE SET by Robert Sherman	\$25.00
OUR PIONEER MOTHER As told to Lenora Johnson MacDonald	\$10.00
GRANDMA ANN by Mary Huff	\$30.00



**DIGITAL ARCHIVES online at**  
<http://www.chatsworthhistory.com>

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**CHS FACEBOOK PAGE**  
[www.facebook.com/HomesteadAcre](http://www.facebook.com/HomesteadAcre)

**CHS YouTube Channel**  
[youtube.com/chatsworthhistory1/videos](http://youtube.com/chatsworthhistory1/videos)

## Can we email our newsletter to you?

Please email us to provide your email address.  
Thanks! [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com)

## Wondering if your Dues are Due?

Your dues are due one year after the last time you paid your dues.

For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due.

For snail mail, if you have an asterisk at the end of your name on the mailing label, your dues are due.

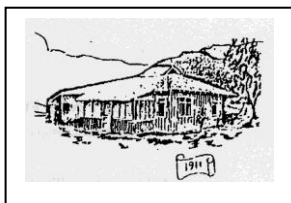
Please use the form below to renew by mail or the link below to renew by **PAYPAL or Credit Card:**  
<http://www.chatsworthhistory.com/membership.html>

And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join.



## 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  
[chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) 818-882-5614 [www.chatsworthhistory.com](http://www.chatsworthhistory.com)

Yearly:	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	
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**Reminder: If you got this mailed to you, an asterisk on your label means your dues are due!**