

# Smoke Signal

**CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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www.chatsworthhistory.com



Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

July 2023, Issue #3

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

It is hard to believe that we are already in July. Time is going by quickly for us. Last month we attended three of our grandchildren's graduations. Our oldest, Hunter, who spent a lot of her Wednesday mornings as a baby docent at the acre with me, received her Masters in teaching from Pepperdine. Our granddaughter Brooke graduated from high school and our grandson Brody graduated from middle school. We are beyond proud of all of them.

We have good news about the museum roof. Councilmember John Lee has agreed to contribute \$10,000 towards the cost of the new roof. Plus the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council is giving us a \$2,000 grant to purchase a new ride on lawn mower for the acre. Ours is somewhere between 25-30 years old. The Historical Society purchased two new fire hoses for the acre. Our fire hose had a lot of leaks and when Andre used it during one of the fires to wet down the cottage, I think he ended up wetter than the cottage.

Our first Vintage Fashion Show and Tea was a great success. It was so successful that Ann is already thinking about having one next year featuring wedding dresses. Ann will be filling in the details in another article in the newsletter, but I want to especially thank Ann for all of her hard work on this event. She went through all of our clothing collection and managed to find models who fit in the pieces that were used. She coordinated the music and did a great job in detailing each of the costumes for the audience. All in all, I think that everything went very well, and we learned what works and doesn't work for next year.

Next on our list is Pioneer Day on October 1<sup>st</sup>. I hope everyone has a great summer.

Linda and Andre

## Chatsworth Historical Society Board of Directors 2022-2023

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

## Upcoming Events

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

**Open houses continue each 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month.**

## General Meeting Welcome Back Membership Roundup ICE CREAM SOCIAL

**September 19, Tuesday 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 our plans for the upcoming year.

## PIONEER DAY

**October 1, Sunday  
11am -3pm**



FAMILY FUN for everyone!

Flyers available online

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

## General Meeting TBD

**October 17, Tuesday 6:30pm**

Program will be available in person and Zoom

## DOCENT DOINGS at the ACRE:

Our docents keep busy with projects throughout the year.

### OUT IN THE GARDEN:

If you need some outdoor fresh air therapy, come join our gardening team. Roses need pruning to keep them at their best. Everything is growing now, it's beautiful!



**IN THE MUSEUM:** Our docents continue to reorganize and catalog our early photograph collections. We have displays set up that we look forward to sharing with you, come check them out. Expecting our roof repair in July.

**OPEN HOUSE** is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month from 1-4pm. Our volunteers enjoy greeting guests and have fun sharing the history of the Homestead Acre with visitors. Come join us!

**IN THE COTTAGE:** An inventory project is in process to confirm and learn more about the history of the items on display so we can provide more information on our tours.

### DOCENTS: SPECIAL RECOGNITION

This year at the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council Awards Dinner on May 12, two of our Docents were honored. **Dottie Acker and Gloria DeMuri** both received recognition for outstanding volunteer service.

## 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, 2023

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

## Included in this newsletter:

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.

- **Garden Party & Vintage Fashion Show Review**
- **Pioneer Day Flyer**
- **Tribute to John Thorpe**
- **Western Fun Review**

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

### OPEN HOUSE Guests

Our Open House events the first Sunday of each month have continued to bring new people to the Acre. We have been hosting up to 40 people each month, but recently in June we provided tours to over 70 guests during the 1-4 time slot.

## Ancient Peoples of the Channel Islands



In April, we shared the Documentary: Ancient Peoples of the Channel Islands.

Beginning with the discovery of the oldest human remains ever found in North America – 13,000 year old Arlington Springs Man

– to the true story of the Lone Woman of San Nicolas – the inspiration for the best-selling children's book *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

Evidence that people had arrived on Santa Rosa Island 13,000 years ago demonstrates that watercraft were in use along the California coast at that early date. This leads to a theory that the earliest peoples to enter the Western Hemisphere may have migrated along the Pacific coast from Siberia and Alaska using boats, along the "Kelp Highway".

Although we are not able to post *West of the West, Tales from California's Channel Islands, Part 1* on our YouTube channel, the DVD is available for purchase, or can be viewed by borrowing it from the Los Angeles Public Library, or you can buy the episode from Amazon Prime Video for \$0.99.





# 2023 Garden Party & Vintage Fashion Show

By Ann Vincent

**Our event held on April 30<sup>th</sup> was a big success.** Previously held as our Garden Festival which included a Duchess Tea, this year we held a fashion show featuring vintage clothing from our museum collection. We had a buffet of desserts, tea and beverages for our guests to enjoy.

Our Rose Gardens exploded with full bloom on schedule for the event. Thanks to the San Fernando Valley Rose Society for pruning our Rose Gardens in January which made a difference for this event. As a fundraiser, it was successful since we were fortunate to sell out our tickets two weeks before the event. Our goal was to limit the attendance to 75 guests to be seated at tables in the shade of the walnut tree in the center of the Acre. This made it possible to have all of our parking on site at the grass lot adjacent to the Acre. The parking lot was set up and supervised by John Kuhn, Bill Dushman, Terry Tanner and Ray Vincent, who made sure Handicap places were available and helped coordinate easy drop-offs at the gate.

We were fortunate to have our tickets available in advance through our website on PayPal and by mail. Check in was easy with our two gate keepers Donna Boswell and Wendi Gladstone with a prepaid ticket list prepared by our ticket coordinator Donna Nachtrab.



Our beautiful buffet of desserts, tea and beverages were coordinated by Linda van der Valk, Jelena Csanyi, Donna Nachtrab and Dawn Osbrink. They did an amazing job acquiring the variety of desserts and were responsible for all the time and preparation to display them. Rebecca



Cannady along with Donna Boswell and Wendi Gladstone all

stepped in to help as needed once the event was under way.

As our guests arrived, they were greeted by Linda van der Valk and Carol Lucas at our Chatsworth History table, sharing information about our Homestead Acre. Guests were encouraged to walk around our beautiful gardens, listen to harp music and enjoy the dessert buffet.

The Vintage Fashion Show started at 1:15 giving everyone time to settle in and find a seat. Ann Vincent welcomed everyone and introduced each model, providing a time period, appropriate music and a description of their outfit. In addition, a tidbit or two of time period Chatsworth history was included as our models walked around the large walnut tree so the guests could enjoy their outfits.



Our models included representatives from organizations throughout Chatsworth hand picked for just the right outfit. Most of the outfits were selected from our museum collection that has been acquired over time. Some of the dresses were time period costumes created and donated for our docents while some dresses were originals donated by local Chatsworth families. A few of the outfits modeled belong to our society members personal collections provided for the event. The fashion show couldn't have happened without the help of our coordinators Jennifer Romano and Angela Rochetti who made sure the models were ready and on cue for their introductions.

A special thank you to historical society members Sue O'Connor, Donna Nachtrab, Donna Boswell and Jelena Csanyi who helped transport dress forms, boxes of items and clothing racks to the cottage where we could work on them for a few months determining what to use. Now that we have improved our inventory of items on hand...we plan to focus next year's fashion show around wedding dresses.

This fashion show and inventory challenged me to learn much more than I knew about fashion. I spent late nights studying websites on fashion history and hoping I could gather enough to make our show interesting. I will share what I learned for our show as I introduce the participants below.



**Victorian Era starting 1820**

Donna Victor (left), a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution... She assembled this stunning outfit and shared it with us.



**1860 through 1880 Civil War era**

Dottie Acker and Gloria DeMuri (right) entered wearing costumes depicting the Civil War period. They both volunteer as Docents for our Historical Society providing tours of our Hill-Palmer Cottage during our Open House Events.

**1880's – 1900's Pioneer Dress**

Please meet our Historical Society Docents representing our Pioneers: Left to right Rebecca Cannady, Jelena Csanyi and Carol Lucas. Next is Wendi Gladstone, Donna Boswell, Linda van der Valk, Donna Nachtrab.



Our Docent Pioneers are wearing what is known as a wash dress, with aprons worn to protect their clothes. The one-piece dress could easily be washed as needed and the aprons had multiple uses throughout the day.



**1910 Clothing Trends**

Barbara Pampalone. Barbara has been a member of our Chatsworth community and many of its organizations since 1967. This silk floral print has a tight waistline of that time period and the bodice is shaped with whalebone stays showing off the bodice. Tops were loose and blousy helping to emphasize a top-heavy shape. Sleeves were also dramatic and long, heavy skirts were enhanced with frilly petticoats. Day dresses emphasized modesty, covering the body from neck to the floor with long sleeves covering the arms.

This dress was donated by Valeta Koller of the Butler Family. We found just the right hat and beaded bag to complete the outfit.



## Let have some fun with the Roaring 20's



Anne Hughes, one of our docents is sporting this fun and fabulous Flapper dress of the 1920's. This floral print dress is made of chiffon with a neutral color slip beneath it. During that time period, waistlines had dropped to hip level, hiding natural curves for a tubular look. Young, very fashionable 'flappers' wore their hems at knee level, with neutral colored stockings and colorful garters.

## The Big Band era brings us to the 1930s

Emily of Chatsworth High School would have enjoyed an evening of dancing wearing this black velvet floor length evening gown with a sleeveless lace bodice. It includes a velvet matching jacket with a quilted collar and shoulder pads.

## 1930's & 40's brought us Movies on the Silver Screen...

Representing our Western Heritage, are Daphne & Daisy with their horse Bam Bam. Grandpa Andre van der Valk was wrangling Bam Bam to make sure he behaved.



When television became popular in the late 1940s and 1950s, Television Westerns featuring our own Chatsworth resident Roy Rogers. His merchandise including decorated children's western wear with fringe became popular across the country. Daisy is wearing an original collectible Dale Evans costume from the van der Valk collection.

## In 1942 during WW2 - Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service aka WAVES

Ann LaManna is one of our active community members in a variety of Chatsworth organizations. Ann is wearing a 1942 WAVES uniform worn by Valeta Koller, the grand-daughter of James Butler who played an early role in the citrus industry here in Chatsworth and built the shopping center on Devonshire and Canoga.

We would like to thank the Chatsworth Chapter DAR for donating flags for everyone. Valeta Koller was issued 3 uniforms a Seersucker working uniform, dress blue wool jacket and skirt and white dress jacket and skirt along with a long wool coat, all donated to our museum.



## The 1950's brought us Poodle skirts!

Cindy Lerma and her two children Julie and James. Cindy is wearing a Chatsworth High Lettergirl's sweater, while the Letterman's jacket she is carrying belongs to her Dad, Ray Vincent. James makes an excellent tough escort for the two ladies.

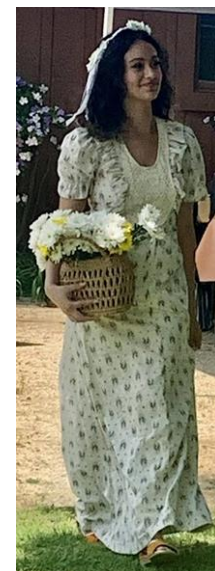


## Remember wearing flowers in your hair in the 60's

Bianca of Chatsworth High School looks like she stepped out of the 60's with her flowers and long flowing dress.

OK... Lets just call this the Hippie Period –The San Fernando Valley was the location of one of the largest events of that time period. Devonshire Downs, previously a race track on Devonshire just west of Zelzah, hosted the Newport Pop Festival in the summer of 1969 with over 200,000 young people attending over a 3-day period. It hosted stars including Jimi Hendrix, Jethro Tull and Joe

Cocker. Devonshire Downs continued to host major performers through the 1980's. The property is currently part of California State University Northridge.





## 1970's had a style of its own



Allyn, Gaby and Marlee of Chatsworth High School are here to show off their 70's attire. The two mini-skirt dresses in the bright colors of the 60/70's are worn by Allyn and Gaby. Andrea Rochetti donated this authentic leather jacket for Marlee to wear with her bell bottom pants.

Yes the 70s had a wide variety of styles from party wear worn on nights out, to bright colorful clothes. Women's disco style was typically flared pants, cape-like sleeves, tube tops, and bright colors.

## The 1980s arrived with some fun workout clothes and fitness programs. Sportswear Workout Fashion took off...

Ali of Chatsworth High School is a champion of physical fitness. The 1980's continued a trend of sportswear but made it extra bright and colorful. Now women were seen in bright-colored leotards with tights and leg warmers.



## Old and New come together in 2000-2020

This beautiful wedding dress worn by Siena of Chatsworth High School brings the old and new fashions together again. Victorian puffed sleeves, lace and beads and sequins all represent the perfect dress for the young bride. This dress, donated about 20 years ago has everything including a spectacular train to be revealed.



Having found so many great outfits, we will have fun next year with a fashion show based on Wedding Dresses.

Thank you to all of our models who made the event fun and memorable. It was fun working with Chatsworth High School student participants and School Councilor Andrea Rochetti. THANKS!





# In Tribute to John Thorpe –1937-2023

John Thorpe passed away on May 10, 2023 at the age of 86. He has been an active member of our Chatsworth community for the past 51 years.



John was born in Sheffield, England. Sheffield, England is only 17 miles from Chatsworth House. Our Chatsworth CA was founded in 1888 and named after the Duke of Devonshire's estate, Chatsworth House.

Zena and John originally met when they were 18 and 20 years old. He did his military service as one of the last conscripts in Britain when he was 21. Following military service, John moved to the US in 1964. In 1967 they renewed contact when Zena moved to the US. They returned to England for their wedding and their marriage was announced in 1968 on the BBC Northern News.

In 1972 John founded his auto repair shop, Yorks & Lancs, on Canoga Avenue, specializing in the repair of English cars, but qualified to repair all makes. As of 2023, that would now be 51 years in business. John and Zena have two sons and two daughters. Oliver and Johnny assisted him as highly skilled auto mechanics and now own the business. Their daughters are Kathryn and Alice. There are four grandchildren in the Thorpe family.

For the Chatsworth Branch Library, in 1985, John organized a Meet the Author fundraiser event with author Ray Bradbury which filled the Lawrence Junior High auditorium. He helped get our Chatsworth Chats Newsletter started and he took a strong lead in making sure our library was represented in the Library System, helping to get our new library on the list for new construction. The question was should we build a new larger library on new land or have the city buy land adjacent to the existing small one and build bigger. We were delighted with the second option being chosen and our new library was completed in 2005. We all benefitted from the committee work and meetings John participated in to help us get where we are today.



John and Zena participated annually in the Chili Cookoff at Pioneer Day



Both John and Zena have also been involved with the annual parades since they moved here, and every year, John made sure there was a sports car ready for him to drive honoring someone in the community to be represented. He and Zena would participate in the parade representing the Chatsworth Historical Society or help build floats for the Docents to ride in.

The 1903 Pioneer Church was also one of their passions. It was relocated to the Oakwood Cemetery by the Chatsworth Historical Society in 1965.

In January of 1988, Zena sent a letter inviting the Duke of Devonshire to our Centennial Celebration; she got a reply personally and one addressed to the Citizens of Chatsworth. Zena stayed connected to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, becoming the US distributor of the Duchess of Devonshire's Chatsworth Food. This included tea, jams, puddings and more.

Always active in the community, John was selected as Citizen of the Year in 1992.

John was the President of the Chatsworth Historical Society from 1997-2000, spearheading the plans for the 2000 California Sesquicentennial celebration here in Chatsworth. He and Zena worked together making it one of the major events held in Los Angeles to celebrate 150 years of statehood. Zena coordinated the making of the California Sesquicentennial Quilt which was gifted to the people of California. The quilt was created by 300 quilters throughout California. It is now used during special ceremonies in the rotunda of the Capitol Building.



With a new library in 2005, John helped create our Book Club, coordinated our Library Book Store, participated in Giant Book Sales, and worked with Zena to select movies for our monthly Library Movie event once a month.

John will be greatly missed by Zena, his family and the many community organizations of Chatsworth.

**31st Annual  
Chatsworth Historical Society**

# Pioneer Day

Sunday, Oct. 1, 2023

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Bring your children  
& grandchildren

Take the  
Pioneer  
Challenge

## ***Old-time fun for everyone!***

- Panning for Gold
- Blacksmith
- Leather Crafts
- Chores and  
Games of Yore
- Bake Sale
- Woodcarvers
- Spinning Wheel Demo
- Design a Quilt Craft
- Rock Chippers
- Bee Keeping
- Telegraph Station
- Butter Churning  
and more!



### Chatsworth Museum Exhibits

Featuring  
Pioneer Families  
and the history of  
Chatsworth

### Tour Minnie's 1911 Cottage

**Location:** Homestead Acre,  
Chatsworth Park South  
(West end of Devonshire St.)  
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA

**Information:** (818) 882-5614  
chatsworthhistory@gmail.com  
www.chatsworthhistory.com

**Admission** Adults: \$5,  
**Donation:** Children: \$1  
(Free for kids under 5)

Park your car at the Chatsworth Train Depot (10038 Old Depot Plaza Road)  
and use our free shuttle service, every 15 minutes from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



## WESTERN FUN filmed in Chatsworth

by Ray Vincent

Our May general meeting featured the TV westerns Fury and stop action movie Blaze Glory, along with Mattel's Blaze the galloping horse all filmed in Chatsworth.

### BLAZE GLORY



Tony Krizan, a friend of member Wendi Gladstone, shared this movie with us. Tony is one of the henchmen, wearing the reddish-brown vest and dark green shirt.

He explained that most of the filming was within the mountains surrounding Chatsworth Park South.

The technique used in the film is stop-motion pixilation, written and directed by Chuck Menville and others. Chuck also plays the lead as Blaze Glory.

The film was first advertised at the Bruin Theatre in Westwood in December 1968. In December 1969, it was seen on the Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour. It is fun to watch this 10-minute film, [1968 Blaze Glory](#), posted on our YouTube channel chatsworthhistory1

### BLAZE Commercial

I came across this commercial, "filmed" at Iverson Ranch, searching for "Blaze" on YouTube (looking for Blaze Glory)

This commercial used Iverson Ranch footage as a background for the chase scene...

In December 1961, you could buy Blaze the Galloping Horse at Toytown for \$30 (around \$300 in today's dollars)

You can watch the 1-minute commercial at:

[1961 Mattel Blaze the Galloping Horse at Iverson Ranch](#),

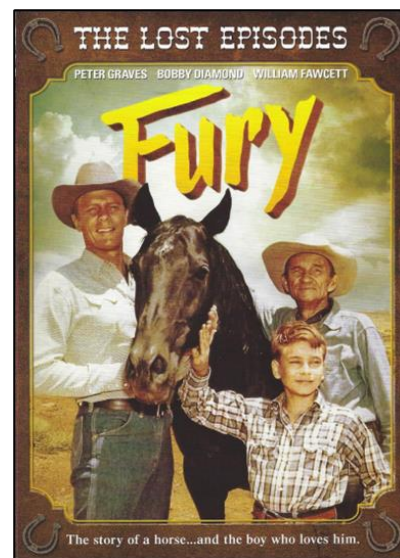


### FURY 1955-1960

Last up in our program was a full episode of FURY. This segment was inspired by a recent find from the Valley Times Photo Collection, showing Peter Graves at the May 1959 Devonshire Golf Course official opening at Roy Roger's Sports Center in Chatsworth, which was documented fully in our [April 2023 Smoke Signal](#).

Remembering Peter Graves from Mission Impossible and the Airplane comedies, I was wondering why Peter Graves was in Chatsworth for the photo shoot.

Peter Graves starred in the 1955 to 1960 television series "Fury", as Jim Newton who operates the Broken Wheel Ranch. Much of the outdoor footage was shot on the Iverson Movie Ranch in Chatsworth, where the "Fury Set" was built in 1955, specifically for the series.



We watched Episode 5 of the first season, "[Scorched Earth](#)", which shows the television series moving to the new 1955 Fury Barn at Iverson Ranch in Chatsworth.

To see our May presentation, go to [Chatsworth Westerns Blaze Glory, Mattel's Blaze Horse & Fury](#)

# 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



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

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

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

**SLIDESHARE.NET**  
<https://www.slideshare.net/ChatsworthHistory/presentations>

Slideshare has a listing of our CHS presentations that can easily be watched online. We now have a total of 41 PowerPoint presentations posted. Enjoy!

### 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.

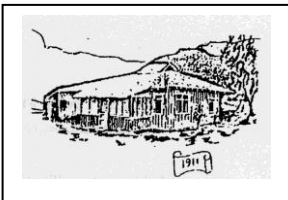
Please use the form to renew by mail or the link below to renew by **PAYPAL or Credit Card:**  
<https://www.chatsworthhistory.com/membership.html>

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)

- |                         |   |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
|                         | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>New Member</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Renewal</b> |   |
| <b>Yearly:</b>          | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization \$20.00 |
| <b>Life Membership:</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 125.00          |   |   |

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY / STATE / ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest / Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reminder: If you got this mailed to you, an asterisk on your label means your dues are due!**