

# Smoke Signal

**CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311

(818) 882-5614

chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

www.chatsworthhistory.com



Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

April 2024, Issue #2

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

It is hard to believe that Spring is here. The Acre is looking good with all the rain. The roses are sprouting new leaves and soon will be in full bloom. The focus right now is to get ready for our Vintage Wedding Fashion Show on April 28<sup>th</sup>, our spring fundraiser. Ann has found some beautiful wedding dresses in our collection for the show. One thing that is being realized is that waists were a lot smaller in the early 1900s or the corsets were really pulling the ladies in to fit in the dresses. We hope that you can join us for a wonderful day under our walnut tree and enjoy the show, desserts and tea.

The day before our fashion show is the Chatsworth Nature Preserve Earth Day Open House. This is the one day of the year that the Chatsworth Nature Preserve is open to the public. It is Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> and is from 10:00 AM - 2:00 pm. There will be an opening ceremony with a Native American Blessing and guided Nature Hikes along with other activities. If you have never visited the Nature Preserve in the past this is a great day to see the Nature Preserve up close.

We are looking forward to our next general meeting when Ray and Ann will be presenting a program about the Fountain of the World that was located in Box Canyon. It should be a very informative meeting.

Please join us either in person or on Zoom. April 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm.

Happy Spring  
Linda and André



### Chatsworth Historical Society Board of Directors 2023-2024

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

### General Meeting

April 16, Tuesday 6:30pm

### The Fountain of the World Chatsworth Lake Manor



From 1949 to the 1960's, the cult "The Fountain of the World", run by Krishna Venta, resided in two places in Box Canyon. In 1958 two suicide bombers, former cult members upset by their leader's

sexual misconduct, blew themselves up at the compound, killing Krishna Venta and seven others.

Program will be available at the Homestead ACRE and on Zoom; [Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Or go to: [www.Zoom.us/join](http://www.Zoom.us/join)

or Dial: (669) 900 9128

Meeting ID: 848 4323 4310 Passcode: 100200

### General Meeting

May 21, Tuesday 6:30pm

Annual Meeting

### History of the Chatsworth Historical Society

## 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 always need pruning to keep them at their best. Everything is growing now and the garden is 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.

**IN THE COTTAGE:** An inventory project is ongoing, as we confirm and learn more about the history of the items on display so we can provide more information on our tours. Currently the cottage is also where we are preparing for our fashion show. A variety of beautiful wedding dresses & bridesmaid dresses are on display during Open House this month as we prepare.

## 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, 2024

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.

- **Andrea Lounsbery Donation**
- **Wedding Fashion Show**
- **Orrin Sage Jr, Warren Stone**
- **Tom Reay – George Reay Ranch**
- **Tim Bowman – Elementary School**
- **Skeet Shooting – Andy Griffith Show**

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

### Andrea Lounsbery Donation

Andrea Lounsbery Severe grew up knowing Minnie personally since Minnie would babysit her and her brothers at the Homestead.

Andrea recently donated a beautiful crocheted 18" white doily that Minnie made and gave to her as a gift. We will have this framed and on display in the Cottage.

Andrea said, "Minnie was so talented and did not sit quietly during her TV shows...her hands were always busy with her crocheting. She took special pride in her crocheted beige bed cover that was placed over beautiful burgundy satin." She also mentioned that Minnie had a headboard with a book shelf built into it where she kept a large selection of western novels.

"I will be planting her hollyhocks in pots soon. Thank you for this amazing memory of her pioneer heritage." *Note: We shared hollyhock seeds from Minnie's Garden with Andrea at her recent family visit.*





**Garden Party & Wedding Fashion Show  
Sunday April 28, 2024  
12:30 to 3:00 pm**

**Pre-Paid Admission/Donation \$35 per person by April 16**

Gates open at 12:30 pm to enjoy harp music in the Garden, come smell the Roses.

A Vintage Wedding Fashion Show with desserts & tea  
will begin at 1pm. held under our spectacular walnut tree.

Prepaid Tickets are available at <https://www.chatsworthhistory.com/Events.html>  
Seating is limited.

The cottage and museum will be used for staging the Fashion Show  
and will not be available for tours.

HOMESTEAD ACRE 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311

Located just inside the entrance to Chatsworth Park South.

Parking available at Chatsworth Park South,  
please carpool as space is limited.

For more information contact: [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com)  
818-882-5614

# Passing of Orrin Sage Jr. and Warren Stone

**Orrin Grant Sage Jr.**

**May 31, 1946 - February 12, 2024**

Cindy Sage shared this with us..

*Orrin died unexpectedly Monday afternoon, Feb 12th.*

*He left us peacefully, just slipped away in his sleep. He wasn't sick and had a full morning of working out, driving around fixing rain-rutted roads and 'working' with the dog. He went upstairs to read while I did some chores, and slipped into bed for a nap and didn't wake up. No distress on his face. We kept him here for some hours for Amy and Scott and the kids to come and sit and say goodbye. So stunning. So abrupt, but yet, we are grateful he didn't suffer, and in his exacting own way just quietly tiptoed (or flew) up the trail and away.*  
Cindy



Orrin and Cindy both went to Chatsworth Elementary School, Sutter Junior High, Canoga Park High, and then Chatsworth High when it opened. They went through the same schools two years apart. Cindy's family lived on the property adjacent to Lionel Barrymore off of DeSoto. We have enjoyed getting to know them as members of the Chatsworth Historical Society and the opportunity to learn the history of their Sage Ranch property.

In 2017 Al Knight wrote [A History of Sage Ranch](#), available on our Chatsworth Historical Society website under Digital Archives, Publications, Technical Papers. It covers the details of their life, living at the Sage Ranch, raising their family and dealing with the challenges created by the adjacent Santa Susana Field Lab.

**Warren Stone**

**June 9, 1939 - March 25, 2024**

Warren passed away on March 25 and will be greatly missed. His dedication and work on behalf of SSMPA-Sky Valley, the FPSSM, the Chatsworth community, and to Twin Lakes his home community since



1981 has been exceptional and greatly appreciated by many. Carla Bollinger sent this photo of them working one of the SSMPA booths and shared..."He leaves his spirit of goodness and community service for all to remember."

Warren and his wife Linda (who passed in 2013) were the keepers of the records and had been Board Members for the Twin Lakes Community Association for many years. Their involvement and recordkeeping provided much of the background for the CHS program we were able to provide on the [History of Twin Lakes](#).

**Fun Fact:** *The home they purchased in Twin Lakes was previously rented by The Captain and Tennille. Many people thought The Captain and Tennille had owned Eagles Nest.*

*In 2012, I contacted Daryl Dragon (aka The Captain) and he confirmed that he had also heard that rumor, but they actually lived on Cree Trail in Twin Lakes, not at Eagles Nest.*

## Andy Griffith Show – Skeet Shooting in Chatsworth Park South

Last month in March, we presented the 1961 Andy Griffith Show episode that featured Gail Davis and Andy Griffith skeet shooting at the Roy Rogers Sports Center, today's Chatsworth Park South. **“Andy Griffith Episode - Skeet Shooting at Chatsworth Park South”**



Gail Davis starred in 81 episodes of the "Annie Oakley" TV series from 1954 to 1957. Andy Griffith starred in 249 episodes of the "Andy Griffith Show" TV series from 1960 to 1968.

In 2016, we made a presentation on "**Aqua Sierra and the Roy Rogers Sports Center**".

This new 2024 presentation included a recap of the 2016 presentation, followed by the 1961 Andy Griffith Show featuring skeet shooting in our park. Both presentations are available at:

<https://www.chatsworthhistory.com/Presentations.html>

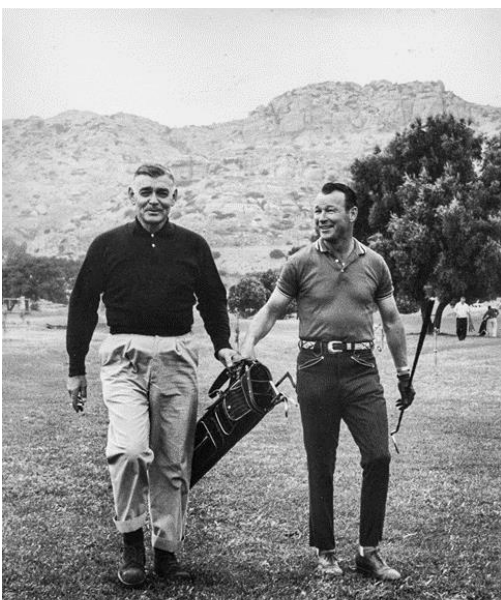
The 25-minute episode of the Andy Griffith Show "The Perfect Female", filmed at the Roy Rogers Sports Center (today's Chatsworth Park South); 1961, Season 2,

Episode 8, is available on YouTube for purchase using Paramount Plus, or a DVD set can be purchased from Amazon. A short four-minute video clip of the episode showing the skeet shooting is available at <https://youtu.be/R3-ft8KXeUQ>

Portions of three undeveloped homestead parcels were combined from 1951 to 1969 to create the 127-acre sports center at the west end of Devonshire, on what is today's Chatsworth Park South and part of Rockpointe. The Sports Center included a Shooting Range, Golf Courses, and Fishing Lakes.



Five Skeet and Trap Stations and the Skeet Hi-Tower. Notice the sidewalk behind the stations that is still in existence today.



*1957 Clark Gable and Roy Rogers playing golf in Chatsworth*

### Chatsworth Park Closure

For those that don't remember, Chatsworth Park South was closed February 14, 2008, because of reported lead contamination on a portion of the acreage due to skeet shooting.

Remediation work (grading, storm water controls, capping the surface soil, and trails improvement, refreshing of park equipment, etc.) began in early April 2016.

On August 31, 2017, after 3,485 days of closure, Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks along with City Council District 12 Officially Re-Opened Chatsworth Park South.

# Chatsworth Park Memories – Tim Bowman

Recent member Tim Bowman, friend of Buck Barker of the Munch Box, shared some memories with us

*I grew up in Chatsworth on Mason Avenue at 9625, just north of Plummer St. In those days our five-acre property was called Twin Barns Ranch. At Plummer and Mason on the NW corner there was a ten-acre parcel owned by Al Severance our neighbor. There was no house on his walnut tree covered property. Our property was the next five acres, Twin Barns Ranch. Walnut tree covered. Two houses at 9601 & 9625. My dad William J. Bowman and my grandfather William A. Eull harvested walnuts and raised 10,000 chickens. I attended Chatsworth Park Elementary school at Topanga Cyn. Blvd. & Devonshire in the fifties. Devonshire & Topanga was a two-lane concrete intersection then. From my classroom window I could see the old five shoot palm tree that was on the edge of the Topanga Cyn. Blvd. sidewalk. It was saved and moved near to the school building when Topanga was widened. Is the palm tree still there? Well, I've gotten long winded!*

*I am now going through old photos I have of my early days on the ranch and will forward them to you. Thank you all. Tim Bowman.*



Above left, the 1949 NW Corner of Topanga and Devonshire before the street was widened, the palm tree was north of the Chatsworth Community Sign., circled in red. Eucalyptus trees also lined Topanga before it was widened in 1958. Above right, a 2024 Google Maps photo of the relocated five shoot palm tree after the street widening.



Above left, the Chatsworth Community Sign circa 1950's, notice the palm fronds at the top right of the sign. Above, right, 1955 Class photo, Chatsworth Park Elementary - Mrs. Holliday, grade A2 B3. Tim is located front row #5 from left. Age 7.

Note: If you zoom in, the kid in the second row just left of Mrs. Holliday is wearing a Davy Crockett t-shirt.

## The beginnings of the Lionel Barrymore Estate – The George Reay Ranch

Tom Reay contacted us in March 2024 to share some photos of his great-grandfather George Reay's ranch in Chatsworth, in Brown's Canyon. George Reay sold the ranch to Lionel Barrymore. In 1938, at the age of 60, Lionel purchased 22 acres in Brown's Canyon at 11050 Independence Ave, Chatsworth.



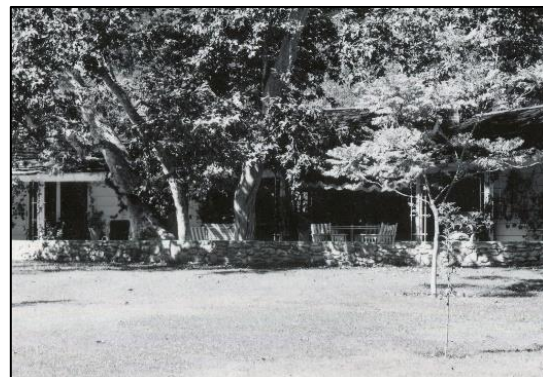
At left, a 1926 photo of George Reay (1872-1941) at the “ranch” before it was sold to Lionel Barrymore in 1938. The photo shows a wooden building/shed in the shade of two huge sycamore trees. And another smaller building back against the hillside further east that looks like an outhouse. They lived in downtown Los Angeles and motored out to enjoy their ranch property. Other photos include hiking in Brown's Canyon and visiting the 1896 Chatsworth DeSoto Dam, which still exists today north of the end of DeSoto Ave.



The photo at right shows Tom's grandmother Faye Reay cooking on an outdoor fire, in front of the shed, labeled “At the Ranch, Easter Sunday, 1925 – a Rainy afternoon”.



The photo at left is a general view of the ranch, from August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1926, looking east. The flat plain with the huge sycamores in the background (in the middle of the picture) is where the 1926 shed, and Lionel's 1938 estate house was built. The rise behind the sycamores is DeSoto Ave.



The circa 1960 photo at right is a crop of the Barrymore estate, showing the house just east of the sycamores. Below that is a 1926 picture of a crowd eating under the shade of the sycamores, looking west.



At left is a 1929 photo of Tom's father, George Farris Reay (1927-2008), sitting on a meat packing box in front of the sycamores looking east.

The [location](#) today is just north of the Sierra Canyon football field.

For more information on the Lionel Barrymore Estate, see the [Presentation](#) at [chatsworthhistory.com](http://chatsworthhistory.com), Digital Archives,

Presentations, Chatsworth Celebrities - Lionel Barrymore.

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

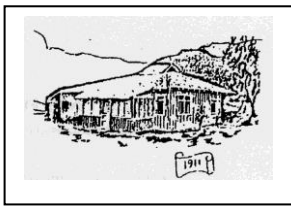
And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join.

## 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)



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