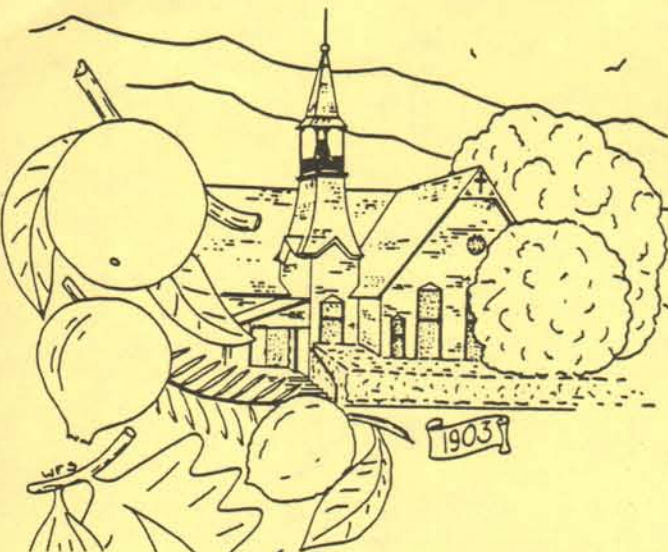


April



# Chatsworth Historical Society

Box 3102, Chatsworth, California

Lila Schepler, President

## Smoke Signal

Sheila Watts, Editor

### GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, April 21

Glendale Federal Savings  
21800 Devonshire St. 7:30  
for refreshments and 8 p.m.  
for the meeting!

Jan Hinkston of the Santa Susanna Mountain Park Assn will present a slide show "The Past is Present," and tell of the association's efforts to secure the beautiful Santa Susana Mountains as a state park.

The annual election of officers will be held based on the slate found elsewhere in the Signal.

PLEASE ATTEND THIS IMPORTANT MEETING!

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM LILA.....

What a terrific two months upheaval at the Homestead Acre! Our full report will be in the next Smoke Signal when all work will have been completed.

You will be so pleased when you attend the Open House on Sunday, May 3rd. Accolades to all who helped, but a special thank you to Lillian Scepler and Virginia Watson who worked with me each week on Monday, Thursday and Friday for six hours each day.

Watch for the full report next month.

If you haven't had a chance to see the marvelous exhibit at the Southwest Museum, I urge you to do so. It is a great

exhibition of North West Indian Art which you would all enjoy. It ends in two weeks so hurry!

Lila.

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WATTS WHAT!

We're sorry to learn that Lorna Ahlstrom is ill - we're thinking of you Lorna and we have you in our prayers.

Jane Matthews has returned from an interesting journey through Africa where she did research on African art.

Fern Jack is visiting Illinois to attend her high school class' 50th reunion.

Please send the editor the tear-off that appears elsewhere in the Signal with your birthday and month (not year) and your anniversary day and month if appropriate. Thanks. State or country of birth if you wish.

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Betty Summers and Marian Hyland of the 1987 Nominating Committee have submitted the slate as follows:

- President, Virginia Watson
- 1st V.P. Jane Matthews
- 2nd V.P. Lillian Schepler
- 3rd V.P. Marian Hyland
- 4th V.P. Mildred Goff
- Rec.Sec. Zena Thorpe
- Treasurer & Permanent Board Member, Charles Janess

(continued on page 2

(Nominations continued)

Curator & Permanent Bd. Member  
Virginia Watson  
Dir. of Photographic  
Materials Wm. Schepler  
Member at Large, Betty Summers  
Chairman of Grounds Committee,  
Candy Craig  
Auditor Eileen Janess  
Member at Large, Ramon Avila  
Editor Sheila Watts  
Co-chairman, Grounds,  
Member at Large, Dean Craig  
Director of Docents,  
Lila Schepler.

Nominations from the floor  
will be accepted on election  
night, April 21, 1987.

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#### FRATERNITY HELPS.

Dean Craig, Member at Large,  
has expressed sincere apprecia-  
tion to all 55 members of the  
Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity and  
their advisor, Thomas Lawrence,  
for the excellent work perform-  
ed recently.

At the Acre:

Sanding & Painting the museum  
doors; cleanup of walls,  
ceiling and windows of museum  
and house; furniture and  
silver polishing; sanding and  
exterior tables and benches;  
hauling and spreading 11 cubic  
yards of mulch material to  
rose and flower gardens;  
assembly and welding of steel  
rose arbor; laying of cement  
steps; repairing roof shingles;  
extensive weeding and brush  
removal; replacing 1 inch  
water supply pipe together  
with new valves & pressure  
regulator; installing PVC

sprinkler system to both rose  
gardens; tree pruning and  
removal plus the cleanup of  
the 150 foot creek bed.

At the Pioneer Church, the  
fraternity men accomplished:

The sanding and painting of  
pews; the painting of floors  
and doors; exterior cleanup  
and the rebuilding of double-  
door casement and installation  
of the new doors.

Then there were members who  
voluntarily stayed beyond  
the agreed-upon hours to help  
with the door installation and  
member Eric May who brought  
his personal welding equipment  
to assure the welding of the  
rose arbor.

The members of Lambda Chi  
Alpha fraternity are an asset  
to the San Fernando Valley  
Community.

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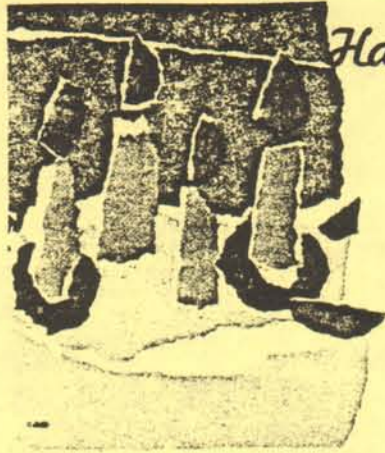
#### ROSE FESTIVAL

The fourth annual rose festival  
will be held SATURDAY, MAY 9  
from 1 to 4 p.m. at the  
Homestead Acre.

Free admission, lots of  
parking, and on sale will be  
old, rare and unusual rose  
bushes. There'll be homemade  
lemonade, baked goods, cottage,  
museum and garden tours plus a  
mini-book sale.

Join us for an old fashioned  
Saturday afternoon at the  
Homestead Acres (extreme west  
end of Devonshire St. For  
further information call  
341-4461 or 341-3447.





*Happy Birthday*

**99th BIRTHDAY!!!**

The birthday party held for the community of Chatsworth at the faculty center at CSUN was a memorable event.

The dinner was great and about 45 celebrants were on hand to enjoy the video tape presented by Dr. Del Stelck that portrayed the San Fernando Valley's history from early Indian days up to today - did you know that D.W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" was filmed in Chatsworth?

The event occurred on March 17th with much green in evidence from balloons to dress and was a fitting kick-off toward the centennial celebration next year.

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**CALIFORNIA  
CONSERVATION CORPS CELEBRATES  
ITS 10th ANNIVERSARY HERE!**

CHUCK JANESE was part of the program, BOB WILKINSON was an honoree and president LILA was mentioned with great affection at this 10th anniversary event held in the recreation room at Chatsworth Park South.

Ed Miller, proud director of the Corps, had help outlining the many contributions that the corps has made to the quality of life throughout the state. Towards the end of the program, Ed handed a check to Chuck Janess and two other younger and future taxpayers. The check was for millions of dollars representing the savings made by using the corps throughout the state.

Assemblywoman Cathy Wright read a congratulatory letter from Governor Deukmajian and then it was announced that the new amphitheatre at the Oak Mountain site of the Corps is to be named the Bob Wilkinson Amphitheatre in honor of our life member and former Councilman. Bob was instrumental in assuring that the city of L.A. purchase the property for Corps use. And it was Bob who introduced Lila as the recreational director of the valley for the city parks, and thanking her for her personal interest and assistance for supporting his request for the purchase.

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We have learned of the death of Betty Barksdale with sincere regret. A more fitting obituary will appear in the next Smoke Signal but in the meantime Betty's family has requested that any contributions may be made to the City of Hope, 1500 E. Duarte, Duarte, CA.

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Happy Passover\*\*\*\*\*HAPPY EASTER

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

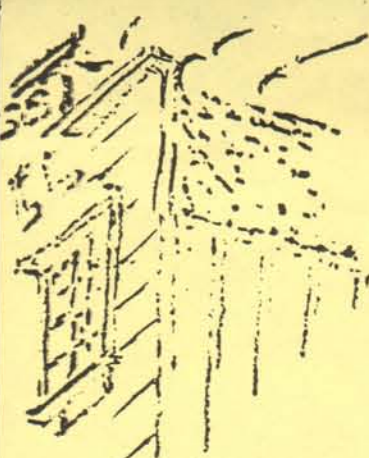
Day, month, state or country

of birth \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Window Into The Past Vol. II No. 1

How Much Is Your Time Worth ?



Like most people in Historical Societies we attend Antique Shows with mixed hopes of not seeing too many things that we can't afford to pass up. Old books and post cards to us are a special weakness; it seems almost like you are looking over the shoulder of someone who lived many years ago.

Sometime ago I bought a booklet published by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce telling people about our area. It was published about the same time that people who are applying for medicare now, were born. All of Los Angeles County only had a little over 400,000 people and an assessed valuation "including railroads" of \$384,051,746. We would think of this as a promotional brochure, but really they were frank about who they didn't want as well as who they did, maybe more so. They didn't really want any more doctors, lawyers or parsons. They didn't encourage clerks, bookkeepers or small store keepers. But they did want laborers and said the going pay rate was 17½¢ to 25¢ per hour ! But remember there were no taxes of any kind, no union dues either. There were other wages mentioned as well : carpenters at \$3.50 to \$4.50 a day; painters \$3.00; brick setters \$3.00; machinists 35¢ to 45¢ per hour. Street car conductors had only a little better than doubled their 23¢ per hour when thirty two years later they were receiving 53¢ per hour. I know, I was there. It was my first steady job after high school and after a period of hard work, hit and miss at best, as a farm laborer at 25¢ to 30¢ per hour. I loved it, the street car job, that is !

Not long ago I was talking to one of our members, Bob Swartz who is a General Contractor, and I asked what labor was being paid by the hour. He responded " \$5.12 per hour but when I hire them there is an additional \$2.00 per hour to the Union for fringe benefits such as yearly paid vacation and \$800.00 a month pension after they have worked 25 years under covered employment and have reached retirement age." He also said that really wasn't the total cost because he also had to pay the employer's portion of their Social Security and insurance for Workmen's Compensation; then there was bookkeeping and tax records to keep and other expenses that made it necessary for him to present their cost, when he figured a "job", at about \$10.50 per hour. Which, I must say, seemed pretty high for the "hope-to-be home owner".

But what you were paid for labor wasn't important without knowing what you could buy with the money. And some things, even in 1907 were very dear. Good bearing orange groves were selling for \$2500 an acre. In 1916, T.D. Murphy in his book on "Sunset Highways" speaks of having a picnic dinner in a Valencia orange grove that was valued at "five or six thousand dollars per acre". He also said that the crop on the trees at that time must have equalled "one third to one half the value of the land itself ". This gives us an idea what people paid for oranges at that time ! Eggs were about as bad, my booklet says "eggs always command a good price, seldom falling below 20¢ per dozen and running from that to 50¢". No wonder the San Fernando Valley- Week's Colony, mainly- had so many chicken farms. Can you believe working for an hour or more for a dozen eggs?

Los Angeles had many fine cafeterias before World War I and the going price for a good dinner was 25¢. And you have all heard about the free lunches at the saloons- they were really there. But there was a time when even 25¢ for a meal was pretty high, and 25¢ an hour was very good if you could find it. That of course, was during most of the so-called "Fabulous Thirties". I can recall while standing in line to collect my unemployment check hearing about a meal in the basement of Clifton's Cafeteria on Broadway that I had to try. It was meat loaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, summer squash, a slice of bread, coffee & bread pudding- the price was 5¢! Clifton didn't expect to make money at that rate. But I recall another meal on Main Street where they did. It was a T-bone steak with shoestring potatoes (not frozen either) for 15¢. True; the steak was only ¼ inch thick. And that in turn brings to mind today, when a friend told me his sister-in-law who is Japanese had written him and said they were paying \$13.00 a pound for sirloin steak!

There is a lot to be said for low wages and low prices, but that isn't the reason most of us would like a vacation backward in time!

-William F. Schepler 1/73