



# Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY June 1989  
 Chatsworth, California Volume 27, No.1  
 Sheila Watts, President

## BOARD MEETING

Wednesday,  
 July 5th  
 The meeting will start at 7 p.m., at the museum at the Homestead Acre. The last event before the summer break.



**INSTALLATION.** The 1989 installation of officers was a very pleasant event with a picnic lunch at the Homestead Acre.

The program was a slide show presented by Linn Stuckenbruck who had pictures covering the last eighteen months of events involving the Historical Society starting with the 100th birthday party and covering the dedication of the time capsule, photographic coverage of a mock wedding at the Acre featuring Ann Thomas, granddaughter of docent & member Helen Thomas and concluding with a photo essay of the interior of the Hill-Palmer cottage.

Zena Thorpe served as installing officer and used puns on the names of the elected officers so the new president is known as old Watts-her-name. Zena also presented a check for \$100 to treasurer Lillian Schepler, earned by the Centennial Quilt in competition in the annual Heritage Quilt Association. Well done quilters!

Marlys and Linn Stuckenbruck were awarded Certificates of Appreciation for their outstanding assistance with our photographic collection. In the photograph shown here, Jane Matthews presented a plaque to Assemblywoman Cathy Wright symbolizing her new Honorary Life Membership in the Society for outstanding assistance to the group over the years.

Sorry there wasn't a larger crowd for such an interesting afternoon - we had about 25 members and friends present.  
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PAULINE AUE attended a centennial of her high school early in June. Auburn, Nebraska (pop.3800) High School invited all alumni to celebrate the school's 100th birthday which increased the population by 25% for the two day event. It is now in a larger and newer building than when Pauline attended the school. Those in charge gave special recognition to two 96 year old women of the classes of 1911 and 1912 at the special banquet attended by 1039 diners.

Class breakfasts, lunches, games, sports

and tours kept the visiting alums in a delighted mood till the closing program on Sunday afternoon when a chorus lead by Louie Magor of San Francisco serenaded their classmates and there wasn't a dry eye in the house as they ended with "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."  
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**CONGRATUALIONS** to Bea Berman and Len Chenard, both long time members of the Chatsworth Historical Society - the two were named Citizens of the Year at the annual Awards Banquet of the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council. Bea moved here with her then young family 20 years ago and since that time has been involved with the local PTA's on all levels, the Rockpointe Homeowners Association, she has held numerous offices in the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce including 3 years as parade chairman and most recently two years as chairman of the Chatsworth Centennial Committee.

Leonard Chenard's name is synonymous with the Chatsworth Junior Baseball League, with the Chatsworth Rotary Club and the Canteen Club that did much to help the morale of local service people during the Vietnam War.

Others from our Society who were recognized for outstanding contributions to the community are Louise Mitchell and Ramon Avila.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

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A quick word from the new president: The members of the board are all wearing at least two hats and we are a busy group. If anyone out there would like to help in any way with the objectives of the CHS - call me at 341-4489. Have a great summer - see you in September, Sheila.



Assemblywoman  
 Cathy Wright &  
 President Jane  
 Matthews



# Window Into The Past

## CHATSWORTH TO ETERNITY

There is one way among the Valley Communities that Chatsworth is unique. If you want, you can remain here for what passes for eternity. A great many of our residents have chosen to do so at Oakwood Memorial Park.

Rituals of Internment vary almost as greatly as Funerals themselves. From the huge, almost tribal, spectacles such as those given for a Police Officer killed in the line of duty. Hundreds of Police cars and Officers from all over the State as well as a neighboring State- all very impressive. I can recall another where a young woman died in a horse accident, where many riders on horseback made their appearance. Another- a young flyer died and his fellow birdmen flew by- dipping in salute to a friend.

Military funerals are a little more common with their firing of Salutes and the playing of "Taps" in the still atmosphere.

There are simple burials where only a few gather or maybe just the family such as when Fred Astaire was laid to rest a few years ago.

Sometimes it is only a graveside ceremony. We attended one of these a few years ago for a lady who was being buried almost three miles from where she was born 89 years before; a lady who had spent her entire life in Chatsworth and who (I would be surprised to hear) had never left our State. A lady who I am sure, had covered more local territory on horseback than anyone, I dare say, before or since. She was Emma Johnson Graves, the first anglo-saxon child born in the San Fernando Valley, A lady who should have an entire article about herself, alone. I hope someone will write it.

When we have traveled to old mining towns in the West it has always seemed strange to us to see as many as half a dozen cemeteries in such small towns: some for Masons, Catholics, Protestants and, in many cases, Chinese. The Chinese who were buried there may have been those who could not afford to have their bodies shipped back to China- in some cases in a barrel and pickled! We wondered if a divided Cemetery could happen at Oakwood. It almost did.

In days long past everyone went to the local Church- Protestants, Catholic and Jews. When the time came they were laid to rest along side of their neighbors at Oakwood. In our Slide Collection we have an early picture of the entrance to Oakwood with a large sandstone arch- but you will notice today it has two entrances. Which brings up a story.

Many of you know there is a Catholic Cemetery near the San Fernando Mission. It wasn't always there. After it was finished it was slow to fill, and the Catholic Authorities sent down a decree that henceforth Catholics were to be buried there if they were to receive the final Rites of the Church. As you can guess this did not sit too well with a lot of people (Catholics included)- families in death would be separated. But it took a courageous wife of one of our wealthy Italian farmers who insisted that her husband be buried at Oakwood with the rest of their family. The Church was just as firm- until it looked like she would not only leave the fold but would take her financial support elsewhere. I am not suggesting that was the reason the order was eased, but I do think it may have given them the idea that if a person felt that strongly, maybe there was another side to the question.

But they had one more condition to make. Even though Christians might go through the Pearly Gates together, they couldn't start their journey on earth together. They must not go through the same gate at Oakwood.

Do you suppose all of this may be a modern folk tale? I wonder. But, then there are now two entrances!

William F. Schepler  
April 1989