



Smoke Signal

VOLUME 28, NO. 8

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CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10385 Shadow Oak Drive Chatsworth, CA

Sheila Watts, President, Editor



MAY ACTIVITIES

Sunday, May 5 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. we'll have Pioneer Day. All the details are on a special page in this newsletter.

Monday, May 6 the docents will give tours of the Homestead Acre to 65 members of the Sierra Cahuenga District of the California Federation of Women's Clubs.

Tuesday, May 21st at 7 p.m. we'll hold installation of officers at the Royal Dynasty Restaurant, 21356 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth.

In addition to these events we also have weddings booked for most weekends in May so we are busy people.

FOR PIONEER DAY.....

WANTED - helpers, workers, green plants, white elephant items so if you can help call Sheila, 341-4489 Betty Summers, 341-2714 or Zena Thorpe at 882-3572.

DUES INCREASE APPROVED.....

- Single membership, \$15
- Family membership, \$20
- ~~Life membership, \$125~~
- Student membership, \$3

General members will be billed May 15 and payment should be received by the Society in June.

The Acre looks beautiful thanks to the ongoing efforts of Dean and Candy Craig. Our new gardener, Trini, is excellent and keeps the weeds under control!

INSTALLATION BANQUET.

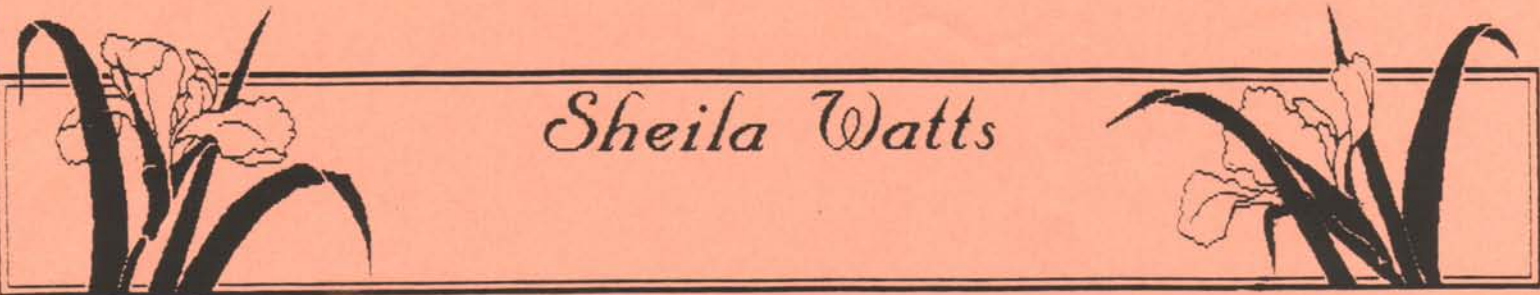
Nanci Oliva, deputy to Councilman Hal Bernson, will serve as installing officer for the 1991-92 Society year. Nanci was a founder of the Chatsworth Beautiful organization and has worked for many years as a representative of the Councilmen for our district. Nanci is knowledgeable in the area of recreation and parks, conservation, wilderness and parkland preservation. We are fortunate that Nanci is such a good friend to our group.

The officers to be installed are:

- President.....Sheila Watts
- 1st U.P.....Zena Thorpe
- 3rd U.P.....Donna Afflerbach
- 4th U.P.....Betty Summers
- Treasurer &
Photographer....Lillian Schepler
- Editor.....Sheila Watts
- Directors at Large.....Bea Berman,
Ramon Avila & Keith Watts
- Director of Photographic
Materials....William Schepler
- Director of Docents.....Lila Schepler
- Curator.....Virginia Watson
- Founding President....Charles Janess
- Honorary Board
Member.....Eileen Janess

Reservations for the installation banquet must be received by May 15. The cost is \$18.50 per person and you can either mail a check to the Chatsworth Historical Society, 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311 or call 882-5615 or 341-4489. Space is limited to please make your reservations as soon as possible.

REMEMBER - the Acre is open each Wednesday afternoon for members to gather to work & play!



Sheila Watts

Dear friends,

I am very happy to announce that Virginia Watson's book, Chatsworth History, is about to be reprinted for the third time. We have been waiting for this for some time and give thanks to Virginia for her effort and to board members Louise Roberts and Lila and Bill Schepler who helped fund the printing. The book will be available for sale at the next Open House.

More good news! It is time to scrape and paint the cottage and the best bid turned out to be \$1500! I called Councilman Bernson's office and asked Nanci Oliva if she knew of any funding for which we might be eligible. I received the good news that that amount would be available to us from an emergency fund. This is such a relief and the painting will take place within the next few weeks. We have already paid for painting the trim on the museum.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each member of the board of directors of the Chatsworth Historical Society for all of the assistance that they provided during the past year. It could have been a most difficult time as I started my term of office shortly after having hip replacement surgery - and soon after that, Bill Schepler suffered a major heart attack. In spite of these set-backs it has been a good year. We are all still concerned about Bill's health and pray that he will improve even more in the months ahead.

It was a very good year, we're in sound financial shape and the Homestead Acre and the Pioneer Church are in good condition. All of this is because we had a very hard working and cooperative Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

Sheila

Pioneer Day

11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 5

Homestead Acre,

Chatsworth Park So.

Turn-of-the-Century Arts
and Crafts:

* Quilting * Crocheting

* Knitting * Spinning

* Bread Making * Tatting

* Laundering * Gardening

* Candle Dipping

* Indian Crafts

PLUS

Petting Zoo and LOTS MORE!

\$1.00 ADMISSION – FREE DOOR PRIZES

..Chatsworth Historical Society..

Chatsworth Historical Society, 882-5614
10385 Shadow Oak Drive
Chatsworth, CA 91311

Sheila Watts, president,

Zena Thorpe, event chairman,

The pioneer activities of the early days of this century will be recreated at the Homestead Acre in Chatsworth on Sunday, May 5 when the local historical society hosts its annual pioneer day celebration.

Family activities will include hands-on demonstrations of home making skills using washing and baking equipment from the site's 1911 Hill-Palmer Cottage. A petting zoo will be supervised by the Chatsworth 4-H Club. Other skills to be demonstrated include spinning, quilting, tatting, crotcheting and knitting while strolling musicians provide back ground music.

A teepee with American Indian artifacts will be provided by Standing Bear, a local Chumash Indian. Other booths will feature wildlife and wilderness experiences.

Costumed docents will staff booths selling plants, soft drinks and gifts and the Chatsworth Rotary Club will be in charge of a barbecue luncheon. Numerous other activities will be offered.

The Homestead Acre, a city historic monument, is in Chatsworth Park South at the west end of Devonshire Street. In addition to the Hill-Palmer cottage the Acre includes the Chatsworth Museum and grounds featuring over three hundred rose bushes, a Victorian swing and other memorabilia. Admission is \$1 and the hours will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

An Interview With Ramon Avila

by Virginia Watson

Ramon Avila's collection of antique-type toy banks and model cars that have been on display in the museum will be held over through May due to the increased public interest.

"They will be especially appropriate for the display for our "Pioneer Day" on May 5," said Sheila Watts.

Only a portion of Avila's collection is on display--he has many more at home competing for space with his wife Mary's doll collection. Her dolls are well-known to Society members and take up a whole room in their house.

Avila has been collecting for about 10 years and his collection includes animals that move such as a cow being milked, golfers, football and baseball players and a jockey on a horse that deposits the money in the bank as well as William Tell shooting an apple off his son's head. All are copies of antique iron banks. His most unusual is a trick dog that jumps through a hoop to deposit the coin.

One of the wooden model cars on display is musical--it plays "King of the Road" while it drives forward and backward.

The month of May includes Memorial Day and so a special collection of Avila's war memorabilia will be added to the exhibits. He served with the Second Armored Division under George Patton. He was attached to Company A, 17th Battalion. A half-track operator and truck driver--heavy equipment, Avila was a T-Corporal training in the Carolinas when he met up with General Patton.

The group was having trouble crossing a shallow stream and Avila's commanding officer sent him to find out what was happening. He saw Patton there and heard him ask a question of a nearby soldier but Patton evidently didn't like the answer for Avila was surprised to see Patton kick the soldier in the behind. Avila says he began to wonder if he also was going to get the boot, but luckily, Patton only asked him what he was doing there and when Avila told him, Patton said he was doing a good job--he was doing what he was told!

Avila trained at Fort Benning, Georgia, having been inducted from Los Angeles and sent to Fort MacArthur. "I was selected," Avila says with a smile. He served in both North and South Carolina, Texas and Louisiana and then was sent to North Africa for the invasion, the largest amphibious operation to that date.

He spent his 25th birthday on the ship before they arrived and he remembers happily that the cook made him a birthday cake to celebrate.

He was wounded in the right knee near Bizerte in June of 1943 when the truck in which he was riding struck a mine. They were participating in amphibious landing practice for the landing in Sicily. He spent about a year in the hospital before being sent back to the United States.

Born in Safford, Arizona, Avila is almost a native son. He came with his family to San Pedro when he was only five months old. His family settled in Canoga Park in 1919 and Avila grew up in the West Valley. 1919

When asked if he attended Canoga Elementary School he replied, "They wouldn't let us." He said the Mexican and Japanese children had to go to a special school on Vanowen at Eton Avenue. ✓

Last year Avila was the recipient of the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council's "Man of the Year Award" and has been honored by the Chatsworth United Methodist Church for his community and church activities.

He has served as a Member-at-Large on the Executive Board of the Chatsworth Historical Society for the past five years and is a very dedicated member of our Society called upon to wear many hats--which brings up another of his collections--he collects hats, too!