

Smoke Signal

VOLUME 29, NO. 4

JANUARY, 1992

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10385 Shadow Oak Drive Chatsworth, CA

Sheila Watts, President, Editor

Quarterly Meeting



The meeting will be on Tuesday, January

21st at the Museum at 7:30 p.m.

Milt McAuley of the Ventura County Archeological Society will present a slide show and speak about nearby archeological sites. McAuley is the author of several books including one written about Topanga State Park and a second one on the archeology of Santa Monica State Park. Refreshments will be served and there is no admission charge.

Plan to attend and bring a friend.
+++++

March Quarterly Meeting

Save the date and plan to attend the meeting scheduled for March 17th. We have a unique program scheduled though we haven't made a final decision on the meeting location as we expect quite a crowd.

Chuck Kovacic will portray Will Rogers bringing to us the wit and wisdom of one of America's folk heroes. Kovacic bears an uncanny resemblance to Will Rogers and has presented this program to such diverse groups as A.T. & T., American Express and Farmers Insurance.

Will on the U.S. Congress, "If congress wasn't so much of a joke...it would be funny!"

The meeting time will be 7:30 p.m. and the site will be announced in the February "Smoke Signal."
+++++

From the desk of the president:

The November meeting was a great success. We covered the entire six year history of World War II with recordings of BBC archives as a background. The writer started the program with reminiscences of wartime England and the evacuation of 3 million school children followed by Zena Thorpe remembering air raids as a very young child. Joe Pampalone followed with personal memories of North Africa. Pat Reed shared his painful experiences as a young sailor aboard the St. Louis at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Bill Schepler was an officer in the Maritime Service and he shared the numerous events he experienced in the perilous Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. Keith Watts recounted his experiences as a glider technician with the 82nd Airborne in five campaigns - and meeting the writer in England while waiting for D-Day! Dean Craig shared his own experiences in England and throughout Europe and also served as MC for the evening.

Marian Hyland served in the Canadian Air Force for several years and had several fascinating stories to tell including the fact that she and Ralph met during their time in the service. Jim Summers gave a first hand account of Chatsworth during the war when there were soldiers guarding the railroad tunnels and barrage balloons for protection.

John Thorpe wound up the evening with a story of an unexploded bomb that was discovered in some elderly gent's garden about 40 years after the war.

A fitting end to the program was provided by Dean & Keith who discovered the air raid siren stored in the Society's shed that used to be located at the McGinnis' ranch (now Santa Susana School.)



Chuck Kovacic as Will Rogers

President, continued....

The sound of the siren was just as distressing as the ones I heard with regularity during World War II.

I would like to thank all of the people who participated whether as a speaker or by supplying artifacts for display in the cases at the museum. We had a little bit of everything from ration books to photos and uniforms of all types.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a healthy and happy new year in 1992.

Sheila.

+++++



Lila Schepler, director of docents, has announced plans for a docent training session to start in February. We have two applicants for the training and we would really like to increase the size of the class.

If you would like to assist the Society by becoming a docent and giving tours and discussing the history of the Homestead Acre as well as the history of Chatsworth we really do need your help!

We have fewer docents than we've ever had and so we are asking men and women to attend the training course and become a member of the team. We do not expect male volunteers to wear prairie dresses and sun bonnets! We do have a bonus for the first female to volunteer as a result of this advertisement. One of the community's most qualified dressmakers Jackie O'Reilly, has offered to make a prairie dress costume for one of our docents!

Roberts

If we could increase our docent program it might be possible for us to hold open house at the Acre twice each month rather than just once.

Please call Lila at 341-3447 if you are interested in the docent training program.

+++++

Congratulations!

Best wishes to Dr. Jennifer Watts and Dr. Mitch Green who announced their engagement at Thanksgiving while visiting Chatsworth. The couple also announced plans for a September wedding in New York City. Jennifer is the younger daughter of Keith & Sheila Watts. Mitch is the eldest

son of Mrs. Nancy Green of Long Island, N.Y.

+++++

Thank You!

Many thanks to all the members and friends of the CHS who donated food, gifts or clothing to the holiday drive for FISH of West Valley. Whether this was given to the Society or to a local church, it was very much appreciated. FISH operates a food cupboard for the hungry all year round and then mounts a special appeal for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets. This Christmas 196 baskets were given to those in need.

+++++

Two members mourned.....

In December, just days apart, two life members of our Society died.....Ruth Miner and Louise Butler Roberts.

Ruth was a member from the early days of the Society when she was housekeeper for the Roy Rogers family. She lived for many years in the Chatsworth Lake area and was active with the Methodist Women's Club and the church. A little known fact about Ruth's early days was that she had been "Miss Kansas!" Ruth is survived by her daughter Joline Labour.

Louise had been a life member for many years and an active docent from the start of the docent program. In addition to being generous with her time, Louise was generous with financial support of Society programs such as the help she gave for the third printing of Virginia Watson's "Chatsworth History."

Louise grew up in Chatsworth and her biggest interest in life was the world of dance. She was a talented ballet dancer who financed her early career by working at the movie studios. In New York she was a member of New York Ballet and was in the road companies of several popular musical shows. She was married to Chuck Butler and after his death she taught ballet at the Glendale YWCA. Since retiring Louise had lived with her sister, Valeta Koller, in the family home. She is survived by Valeta and a brother.

+++++

+++++

The March 17th meeting will be a celebration of Chatsworth's 104th birthday, March 10, 1888 and also a commemoration of the founding of the Chatsworth Historical Society, April 1963! Let them eat cake!