



# Smoke Signal



CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth CA 91311  
(818)-882-5614

Co-Presidents: Andre & Linda van der Valk

Editor: Keith Watts

JANUARY, 2004

## FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS:

We hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday. We certainly did with our children and grandchildren. Having our good friends with The Historical Society at the house for the annual Christmas party was especially meaningful this year.

The year did not start well for The Historical Society. We lost two of our members, Bill Schepler and Claire Barker. Bill was one of our founding members. Virginia has written a tribute inside this Smoke Signal for Bill.

Claire Barker was the wife of Ed (Buck) Barker, together they owned The Munch Box. Claire had been battling cancer for the last couple of years. Claire had made hand painted wood signs for our Garden Festival and Pioneer Day and even judged our Chili Cook-off for us. Claire will be missed and our sympathy goes out to her family.

On a happier note, we had an unexpected fundraiser at the home of Rick and Jerry of the Chatsworth Florist. They graciously offered us the opportunity again to sell tickets to their home to see their Christmas decorations and for those of us that are nosy to see their new home. With one and half week notice we were able to raise thirteen hundred dollars. They opened their home to us and also sold most of the tickets for us to their customers. This was not only a great fundraiser for us but it also helps to get the word out about The Historical Society. Our thanks to Rick and Jerry we really appreciate all that you have done for the Historical Society and glad that you are members.

Linda and Andre

## BILL SCHEPLER



1916 - 2003

William Frederick (Bill) Schepler was born in Detroit, Michigan on July 25, 1916, and passed away suddenly on December 31, 2003.

When he was 16 years old, his parents Frank and Eleanor Schepler, moved to a ranch in Chatsworth. It was during the Great Depression in 1932 and Bill often told of the early years in Chatsworth when, much later, he showed slides of local interest and lectured to school children and other groups.

Bill graduated from Canoga Park High School, the closest high school at that time, and later attended



the California Nautical School majoring in Marine Engineering. He served in the the United States Maritime Service and taught Marine Engineering at Catalina Island during World War II. He saw service on oil tankers, lumber schooners and liberty ships.

A founding member of the Chatsworth Historical Society, Bill was chairman of the committee that moved the 1903 Pioneer Church from its former location at 10051 Topanga Canyon Boulevard to its present location in the northwest corner of Oakwood Memorial Park. He and his brother Frank H. Schepler, Jr., physically helped move the building up on the big rollers, took down fences in the church's path and then put them back up again after the church was on its way. Funeral services for Mr. Schepler were held in the same relocated Pioneer Church on January 6, 2004.

A writer, Mr. Schepler wrote a book about his reminiscences of life in Chatsworth entitled *Window Into the Past* and it was published by the Chatsworth Historical Society in January, 2000. He also wrote articles for magazines and has an article in the book, "Time Was." He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Lila; his daughter Leuise Mitchell (Eddie); two grandchildren, Christina Mitchell and Matthew Mitchell (Kristin.)

**REMEMBERING BILL.....**

Bill had a brother Frank, who was four years younger, and they were very close. They came to Chatsworth in the 1930's. Bill was the farmer and Frank drove the tractor. When war came, they both went into the service and, after the war, came back to Chatsworth, built their homes and raised a family.

They both worked for the City; and after Frank retired at 55, he would get on his bicycle and ride over to see his brother on Lassen St. almost every day. Bill was always busy and always thought he would die first, but his brother died at 59 and Bill lived to be 87.

We celebrated birthdays together and never a cross word was spoken. The brothers are together now, both buried in Chatsworth, the town they loved so much.

.....Lillian Schepler

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Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board 2002-2003

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I like to remember Bill Schepler outside in the sunshine at our Pioneer Day or Garden Festival, showing one of his hobbies, such as his collection of indian baskets; or his huge wooden propeller that probably came from one of the planes belonging to the Wright Brothers; or some of his lighter-than-air memorabilia that included dinner ware from the Hindenburg. He was always willing to answer any questions and to engage in any conversations about his many interests.

I always like to remember him telling about the history of the Valley, especially when he was showing the slides and remembering something amusing or unusual that we had not heard before, usually followed by one of his infectious chuckles

I often called Lila to ask if they remembered if a certain movie was made in Chatsworth or about a family that lived here and Bill always carefully thought about it and gave me his sincere recollection and never got annoyed at the interruption.

.....Virginia Watson

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A memorial fund is being planned by the CHS and all donations to honor Bill Schepler should be addressed to Chatsworth Historical Society, 10385 Shadow Oak Dr., Chatsworth, CA 91311, and identified as a memorial donation.



## JANUARY PROGRAM MEETING

The program meeting for January will be held on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm at the Homestead Acre Museum. The program will feature Mr. Al Knight, an archaeologist who specializes in Native California Indians.

Did you know that more people lived in California in prehistoric times than anywhere else in North America? With the help of slides, Knight will give an insight on the remains left by local natives, such as rock paintings, etc.

We look forward to a very interesting and informative meeting. Refreshments will be served. The public is invited, so tell your friends and neighbors.

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## A REQUEST for MEMORIBILIA

Do you have any old photographs of Chatsworth or the Homestead Acre area, or of any of the events that CHS has enjoyed? We would appreciate having them for our collection. Please bring them to Elaine Campbell at the next meeting. Also please bring a copy of any favorite tried-and-true recipes for a recipe book being planned for the future.

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