



# Smoke Signal



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

Co-Presidents: Andre & Linda van der Valk

Editor : Keith Watts

OCTOBER, 2004

## CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

**B**ea Berman (Program chair) did it again! Another very successful Pioneer Day with perfect weather! Bea starts working on Pioneer Day the minute the Garden Festival is over and now I am sure she is gearing up for the next Garden Festival.

We sincerely appreciate all the hard work, and thank everyone who came out and volunteered their time, bake goods and white elephants, parked cars and oversaw booths and exhibits, etc. PioneerDay was another great fund raiser for us and with all the extra volunteers this year it made it a bit easier for everyone. L.A. city brought in new pop-up canopies for us and they looked great.

Twenty-one kids from Chaminade Middle School signed up for community service hours and that was a great help.

Our next fund raiser is set for December 9th at the home of Rick and Jerry of Chatsworth Florist. For the price of \$10.00 you can tour their home and look at all the Christmas decorations. There will be more information in the next Smoke Signal.

Hope to see everyone at the next meeting.

Linda and Andre

## ED AHLSTROM VISITS MUSEUM

By Virginia Watson

Ed Ahlstrom, great grandson of Ann and Neils Johnson, recently visited the Chatsworth Museum with his sons, John and Russell Ahlstrom. He came down from Citrus Heights, where he lives, to bring a donation of family photographs and Boy Scout memorabilia for our collection.

Ahlstrom was a Boy Scout when the local Troop 12 was the first troop in the Valley. Later the Troop became Troop 26 and is still active in Chatsworth. Ahlstrom was a leader and received

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2004-2005

Co-Presidents.....	Linda & Andre van der Valk	882-3661
Programs, Ways & Means.....	Bea Berman	341-5449
Membership.....	Keith Watts	341-4489
Treasurer.....	Lillian Schepler	341-2697
Rec. Secretary.....	Elaine Campbell	341-4954
Smoke Signal.....	Keith Watts	341-4489
Museum Curator.....	Virginia Watson	341-3053
Cottage Curator.....	Betty Summers	341-2714
Hospitality.....	Keli Jacobson	
Garden Director.....	Jim & Betty Summers	341-2714
Director-at-Large.....	Barbara Pampalone	882-2395
Director-at-Large.....	Dianne Kartiala	886-5210 (Bus.)
Permanent Member.....	Lila Schepler	341-3447



the Silver Beaver Award for his many successful years in scouting.

He also donated yearbooks from his years at Owensmouth High School and one for 1934 when the name was changed to Canoga Park High School. He grew up in Chatsworth and lived most of his life here. He has a wonderful memory and at 94 years of age clearly remembered where the railroad tracks had been that went from the area around Marilla Street and Farralone Avenue up to the rock quarry behind the relocated Pioneer Church in Oakwood Memorial Park.

The railroad spur line was to carry the rocks from the quarry to the regular railroad line and thus to the harbor to be used for the breakwater. There were also several buildings in Los Angeles that were built from the stone from the quarry. All three Ahlstroms took our curator, Virginia Watson, over the area pointing out where the curves in the track were and where there had been a bridge and remembering a large pile of dirt at the area that is now the front gate of Oakwood Memorial Park.

(Ed. note: This precise historical information may be of use to the adjacent State Park.)

John Edward "Ed" Ahlstrom is the son of Reuben Ahlstrom who was the son of Hanna, the oldest daughter of Ann and Neils Johnson (who established the original Homestead Acre property.)

#### **FELICIA ROBINSON (1910-2004)**

**A** Celebration of the Life of longtime CHS member Felicia Winter Robinson was held on

Saturday, Oct. 9, 2004 in the Madison Middle School Library in North Hollywood with many historical society members attending. Mrs. Robinson died July 11, 2004 at Kaiser Hospital in Woodland Hills as a result of complications from an earlier surgery.

Felicia was born July 24, 1910 in Vienna, Austria and would have been 94 on her birthday this year. She had lived more than 50 years in Chatsworth and will be remembered by many for helping Betty and Jim Summers with the plants they sold at the Garden Festival and Pioneer Day. She was very knowledgeable about plants and their care and donated many plants and white elephants to our events. She grew beautiful roses at her home on Vassar Ave. and was known as a gourmet cook. She was a Cafeteria Manager for the Los Angeles Unified School District for 25 years and volunteered as a classroom tutor and reading mentor where she was known for her love of learning. In the past she had been a cook at the 160-acre ranch where Ann and Neils Johnson settled in the Santa Susana Pass. It was much later when she worked there when the Brandeis family owned the property, but her sharp memory enabled her to answer questions about the ranch when she was interviewed by newspaper writers.

Mrs. Robinson is survived by her daughter, Sandra (also a long-time CHS member) and an "adopted" daughter, Karen; and a sister, Margaret Bitter.

#### **GIFT OF ART**

One of the highlights of the CHS Membership



Roundup in September was a gift of art by Steve Bell who presented to the Society three paintings by the late and well-recognized local artist Marty Bell. The Chatsworth Historical Society thanks Steve Bell and is sincerely grateful for this thoughtful gift.

---

#### PROGRAM MEETING - TUE., OCT 19 - 7 P.M.

Collector Norm Johnson will "show & tell" on the subject of *baskets*. Public invited; tell your friends and neighbors and attend this informative and interesting program at the Homestead Museum.

---

#### HISTORIC HOLIDAY ORIGINS

This month Elaine takes a look at Hallowe'en, a key celebration date in October.

It goes back to "All Saint's Day" observed by Christians for centuries. Christians were adamantly opposed to black magic, witches, goblins, fairies etc. and for them it was a religious holiday. In many countries it is still a religious occasion. Halloween began in the U.S. in the 1840's when the Irish immigrated bringing with them their "Eve of Samhain" - the legend of the fairy folk or little people -which they celebrated on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October. Jack-o-lanterns were an Irish tradition, but they used oversized rutabagas, turnips and potatoes.

Dressing up and going door to door for treats is strictly a U.S. tradition started in the early 1900's.

---

#### VALLEY STREET NAMES (Continued)

OXNARD STREET -Named for Henry T. Oxnard, sugar beet magnate in the Ventura County area. Name dates from 1916, when Valley was developing into a major beet producer.

OWENSMOUTH STREET - Designed to evoke the image of being at the mouth of the distant Owens River, was the original name of the town of Canoga Park.

PARTHENIA STREET -Named for Miss Parthenia Station of Lafayette Park, Calif. in 1916, when it opened

between Van Nuys Blvd. and Kester Ave.

PLATT AVENUE -George E. Platt was a Los Angeles dairyman for whom the Platt Ranch was named.

PLUMMER STREET- John Plummer owned a ranch along the street.

RINALDI STREET -Street formed southern boundary of the ranch of Carl R. Rinaldi, 19th century citrus grower in the area of Granada Hills and Mission Hills.

SHOUP AVENUE. Paul Shoup was vice-president of the Southern Pacific Railroad and president of the Pacific Electric Railway.

TAMPA AVENUE - Origin unknown but first called Maple Avenue south of Roscoe Blvd.

WOODMAN AVENUE - Named for the Woodman Ranch in 1917, after being called Castro Avenue. There was also a mayor of Los Angeles named Woodman in the same period.

ZELZAH AVENUE - This was part of the 19th century wagon route from San Fernando to the Hawk Ranch, in the town of Zelzah, now Northridge.

---

#### NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Little Landers Historical Society has a new exhibit on the theme "Boxes, Boxes and more Boxes" The exhibit includes boxes from all over the world using a variety of materials from wallpaper to marble and semiprecious stones.

The Chatsworth Fine Arts Council will present their "Fine Arts Show" at the Chatsworth Metrolink Depot on Sunday November 1<sup>st</sup> from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. They will be featuring a variety art works by West Valley artists. This will include paintings, prints, sculpture, glass, photography, multimedia and cowboy folk art. There will also be an exhibit of art by Chatsworth High and middle school students as well as an exhibit inside the depot lobby.

---