



Smoke Signal



CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Co-Presidents: Andre & Linda van der Valk

Editor : Keith Watts

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CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Pioneer Day was a great success thanks to Program Chair Bea Berman. Bea and her connections managed to stop the fires, wind and give us a sunny day. We are so lucky to have Bea chair for us year after year. She puts in several months getting prepared. It wouldn't surprise me if she is already working on the Garden Festival next Spring.

One of the highlights was the firemen that had been sleeping in the park. They were from Tulare, and Fresno area. Andre had talked to them the night before and told them to come to Pioneer Day and have some lunch. Andre had also offered the Acre the night before to bunk down and they said they didn't want to mess it up before our party. Of course, without them we may not have had our Pioneer Day. They came to the gate and **Irene Nalbandian** told them to wash their hands before they ate. (Once a mother always a mother.) They received a round of

applause as they walked through The Acre. After they all cleaned up, they had hot dogs and sodas. Many generous people gave us money to feed them, although it was not necessary, as we would have fed them anyway.

Many thanks to everyone who helped and participated. Mark your calendars for The Chatsworth Florist Home Tour Fundraiser for The Acre. The dates are Nov. 30th and Dec.13th. The tickets will be \$15.00.

Linda and Andre

WILDFIRES AND MUSEUM NEWS

.....Virginia Watson, Curator

Our Pioneer Day this year was such an up and down affair! First the fires--and the question of will we have any monuments left when they are over, The really well-coordinated fire department saved our Pioneer Church (flames came up to the edge of the cemetery property) and our Homestead Acre, stopping the fire at the western edge of Chatsworth Park South. A lot of the ground cover in the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park was burned and we are looking at blackened hills. Our faithful, efficient Pioneer Day chairwoman, **Bea Berman**, who lives near the hills in Rockpointe, was evacuated early in the week before our Sunday event - kind of hard to keep track of a coming event when you are away from all your paperwork. But she got back into her home in time to get everything done. We

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- Director-at-Large.....Dianne Kartiala 886-5210 (Bus.)
- Permanent Member.....Lila Schepler 341-3447

had calls from many different locations wondering if we were going to cancel the event but we made it! Our crowd was a little smaller and since the event we have had people calling to say they thought we would re-schedule, but we had a beautiful day, lovely weather, happy volunteers and a good crowd.

Our new railroad game was a huge success thanks to **Ann** and **Ray Vincent** and our Chores of Yore was great, as usual, thanks to **Tim** and **Kathy Reynolds**, their family, the **Chaminade** students as well as **Karine Panichi** and the other volunteers. In the museum our never-before-exhibited pictures of the building of the three tunnels above Chatsworth were beautifully framed and arranged thanks to **Linda van der Valk**, **Rick Angel** and **Ann Vincent**. Linda arranged for the pictures and the frames, Rick hung them for us, and Ann made the captions for the pictures. Some of the pictures were from **Bruz** and **Doris Bryant**. Bruz is a Johnson descendent - he is Queenie Billingsly's son. They live in Montana but they allowed us to copy the pictures. Other tunnel pictures were obtained by **Ann** and **Ray Vincent**.

Melvin Woodard, Minnie Hill Palmer's great nephew, came to Pioneer Day this year as he has for the past few years, and this year he had a table right outside the cottage and sold a book about a Hill family relative.

Jeff Beard, my grandson, from Bridgeport, California was attending Coroner's school in Orange County this year and he volunteered to help set-up on Saturday and Sunday and also helped judge the chili cook-off. Also **Tom Harrison** came Saturday and Sunday to help us set-up and take-down.

The Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks loaned us the canopies (and we own a few.) And the park crew was really helpful in setting up the canopies this year. Another new volunteer this year was **Sandy Robinson**; she

has been a member a long time but this year she helped **Lillian Schepler** in the Information and Prize booth.

I am sure there are many other people who volunteered for the first time this year but these are a few I know about.

PIONEER DAY THANKS ..Bea Berman, Chair

Another event has come and gone. I can't believe we pulled it off after the scare of the fires. The volunteers all pitched in and we had a success. It couldn't have been done without all the help. I will name some names, but if I forget someone please forgive me, it's not intentional. First of all, thanks to our co-presidents, **Linda** and **Andre**, who supported me and do so much; **Virginia** for doing such a great job with publicity and being at the Acre when I couldn't; **Betty** and **Jim Summers** for having the gardens look so great, and taking care of the plant sale; **Lillian Schepler**, for always taking care of the money and making sure that each booth is well-supplied; **Elaine Campbell** for taking care of the white elephant booth; Ruth Grant for handling the children's quilt-making booth; **Kathy** and **Tim Reynolds** for doing such a good job with the children's activities; and **Loretta Sandavol** for her wonderful baked goods and making the bake sale such a success. I want to give a special thanks to **Lois Orr** for coming back and donating her time and money to us from the sale of her wonderful eyeglass pins.

We had many **vendors** and **exhibits** who deserve our thanks, and I want to thank **Ann** and **Ray Vincent** for their idea of the railroad ties, which so many enjoyed. Since we didn't have the band originally scheduled, **Art Bergen** and **Glen Caulkin** stepped in and entertained.

The chili cook-off contest was a success, and

our winners are:

Becky Mineo - 1st Place,

Alice Thorpe - 2nd Place,

Steve Cervantes - 3rd Place.

Jessica's chili got the People's Choice Award. It was made by **Randi Bercow**.

I also want to thank my son-in-law, **Gary**, for fixing the light switch in the museum and selling hot dogs. By the way, if you haven't seen the train exhibit in the Museum, don't miss it!

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN in the Valley

(From Americansuburbs.com).....Linda

This is a continuation of former places in the Valley that were widely known or esteemed by residents of the San Fernando Valley and environs.

RANCHO MILLING CO.

Major San Fernando feed mill was at 1703 Truman Street until closing in 1959.

RANCHO SOMBRERO

Sylmar ranch of G. Henry Stetson, of the Stetson hat family, was reputed to have the largest private swimming pool in the country. Most of the 285 acres were sold in 1958 to the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Part of the land today features a city-run riding ring.

THE RED BARN

Located at the corner where Parthenia Street begins in Panorama City, the restaurant that was at 8701 Van Nuys Boulevard is remembered by its longtime fans for the cheese sauce, kitschy decor and generous helpings.

RED CARS

Pacific Electric Red Cars connected the fledgling Valley towns to Los Angeles in 1912, making it possible to live on a ranch and still reach the city. Routes ran from North Hollywood to Canoga Park and San Fernando. The last Red Car trolley left the Valley in 1952.

REINDEER OF PANORAMA CITY

Panorama City's flagship shopping center became known after 1950 for the reindeer that were put on display each Christmas, including a youngster designated as "Rudolph." For many families, it became an annual ritual to wait in long lines to see reindeer and put the kiddies on Santa's lap. The reindeer came from the herd of Fritz B.

Burns, the developer of Panorama City. He began his herd with 26 deer from Hearst Castle in San Simeon, Calif. but by 1967 he had 478 head, the largest private herd in the U.S. The deer also appeared at other Burns developments around Los Angeles.

RKO STUDIO RANCH

The ranch in Encino north of Burbank Blvd. and east of Louise Ave. was the site of filming for many pictures, among them It's a Wonderful Life and The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Its 110 acres featured a large Paris set, mock street, airplane hangars and pastures kept in check by a herd of sheep. The ranch closed in 1953.

RODGER YOUNG/BASILONE HOMES

This makeshift community of Quonset huts was erected as low rent housing for returning World War II veterans in Griffith Park. The site is now the Greater L.A. Zoo and its parking lot. Another housing community, the Basilone Homes, was in converted barracks on Glenoaks Blvd. in Pacoima.

RONDELLI'S

Italian restaurant of ill repute was at 13359 Ventura Blvd. in Sherman Oaks. Mobster Mickey Cohen was present at the gangland execution of Jack (The Enforcer) Whalen in 1959.

RUNNYMEDE POULTRY COLONIES

These egg farms were so large in the 1920's and '30s they showed on maps as distinct settlements. They straddled Reseda Blvd. north and south of the Reseda town center

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Quesada, 77, of West Hills recently died following a lengthy illness. She died at the home of her daughter in Agoura Hills. She had been a member of our Society for the past three or four years and worked on Pioneer Day.

Mrs. Quesada and her late husband were long-time friends of Ramon and Mary Avila. She liked to cook and brought items for our bake sale and also enjoyed our white elephant items. Her children wrote a beautiful tribute to her for the funeral services which took place in the Valley and continued on to the other side of Los Angeles. Buses were provided for those attending.