

Smoke Signal

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



Co-Presidents: André & Linda van der Valk

June 2011, Issue #3

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

I can't believe that it is already summer. We have had a busy spring at the Acre. We had a great Garden Festival and we thank everyone who helped out and attended. Special thanks go to our Chair of the Garden Festival Bea Berman. She again pulled out a perfect day and a very successful one. We also would like to thank Jelena Csanyi for heading up the tea. That is by no means an easy job and she still manages to have a smile on her face after being in the cottage in the kitchen boiling water for well over 200 or 300 cups of tea.

My granddaughter Hunter held her Cross Over ceremony for the Girl Scouts at the Acre a couple of weeks ago. For those of you who remember us bringing Hunter to the Acre when she was a baby she is eleven years old now. The girls are the same ones who helped sell lemonade and cookies at the Garden Festival. What makes me happy was after the Garden Festival one of the girls told her mom that she liked going to the Acre because it was fun and everyone was nice. I guess that is what it is all about for us. Kids learning the history and learning that being a volunteer can be fun.

The Vincents and the van der Valks each have a family wedding in July, one week apart. Our son is getting married and the Vincent's daughter is getting married. When anything is asked of Ann or myself our standard answer is wait until after the wedding.

On a sadder note Chatsworth lost a wonderful and very active volunteer last month. Laurie Dager was an active member of the Women's Club and a member of The Historical Society. When Laurie took on a project it always got done. Our thoughts go to her husband Bob at this difficult time.

We will be dark all summer and hope to see everyone at the Membership Roundup in September.

Linda and André

Chatsworth Historical Society
Board of Directors 2011-2012

Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
Programs, Ways & Means.....	Bea Berman
Membership.....	Keith Watts
Treasurer.....	Ray Vincent
Recording Secretary.....	Elaine Campbell
Smoke Signal.....	Ann Vincent
Museum Curator.....	Virginia Watson
Cottage Curator.....	Betty Summers
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Garden Director.....	Jim & Betty Summers
Director-at-Large.....	Beverly King
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager
Permanent Member.....	Lila Schepler

Upcoming Events

Next Historic Acre Open House Sunday, August 7, 2011

Open 1-4 pm on the first Sunday of every month. Please join us for tours of the cottage, grounds and museum. Note: The July 3, Open House has been cancelled.

Membership Round-up Sunday, September 11, 2011

Mark the date and plan to join us for a casual afternoon gathering and barbeque to meet and greet our new and current members.

Pioneer Day Sunday, October 2, 2011

Come enjoy the surroundings of the Historic Acre as we provide the opportunity to see Chatsworth as it was in the early days of 1888, when the town was formed. Games and Chores of Yore will be available for the kids to experience. This year the museum display will focus on the construction of the Southern Pacific railroad tunnels built though the hills of Chatsworth. Our Chatsworth Pioneer Family information will also be on display.

DOCENT ACTIVITES

Virginia Watson

The Chatsworth Historical Society is an all volunteer organization. It has always been an all volunteer organization and that is the secret of its success. The most well-known of the volunteers in the Society are the co-presidents Linda and André van der Valk. They keep the Society in their thoughts most of the time because everything that happens to the Society is of interest to them. They have been co-presidents since June 2000 following John Thorpe, who was president from 1997 to 1999.

Many changes have been taking place lately at The Acre. Workers are finding better methods to do repairs and the docents have all been very busy every Wednesday when they work from 9 am to 12 noon.

Evelyn Hutcheson, a long time docent has recently been absent from The Acre due to illness. She provided a vital part of our volunteer network. She worked almost every Sunday that we were open for a long time. She would greet the visitors, quiet noisy children, watch for visitors with camera telephones for taking pictures, answer the telephone and kept the time and the birthdays of the docents. She has been very ill recently and is happy to be home here in Chatsworth. Her address is 10237 De Soto Ave., Unit D, Chatsworth, CA 91311. Her telephone number is (818) 709-7788.

New duties were assigned for our busy docents of the Society:

Connie Ager will work closely with Jelena Csanyi to keep track of and celebrate the docent's birthdays. Together they will plan the treat and keep track of it. Connie will also take over for Evelyn's place on Sundays greeting visitors etc. Connie will also work in the garden with Annette. Connie is a long time docent who has returned after an absence.

Bea Berman will still be a docent in addition to all of her executive board work that includes coordinating both the Pioneer Day and Garden Festival; she will give tours and work on Wednesdays with the docents.

Elaine Campbell will be doing much of the work she has been doing all along such as her collection of notebooks with subjects and photographs of our CHS events. She gives tours and is especially fond of giving the cottage tour. Elaine is another long-time docent with lots of experience volunteering at The Acre.

Annette Campbell (no relation to our Elaine) is our newest docent and is just beginning her first year. She is a garden docent who is going to be helping with the Memorial Rose Garden that the Society has recently

planned. Annette is a professional gardener and will be identifying our roses. We have many roses where the identity has been lost and others that need identifying with a name tag. Also there is a lot of work in keeping records for a Memorial Garden and we are looking forward to Annette's help.

Betty Summers, who with her husband is in charge of the gardens, has been doing much of the work so far. She is delighted to have Annette with us. Betty also is a hard-working docent who has worked many years for the Society. Betty has given hundreds of tours as well as she and her husband get the house and museum ready each time for the tours to happen.

Ann Vincent has many duties at The Acre. She is in charge of Information Technology and is our publicity chairman for events, she is the Smoke Signal Editor and she is in charge of our new telephone system, as such she will work with the dates on the telephone, telephone messages and write up the activities of the docents. Ann is also keeping up with logging into our collection the books for the library.

Beverly King will be in charge of the docent's lecture material. She will keep track of the cards used as "script cards" for the lecture; she will help new docents with learning the information needed for the talk. She will also be in charge of all the society "handouts". She will keep the supply copied for ready use and make sure they are ready to hand out. Beverly is also a garden docent and will help with the Memorial Garden.

Jelena Csanyi is another of our busy docents. She is a Jack-of-all Trades. She has worked on historical displays with Linda, helped organize the library display, she makes coffee and keeps docents happily working. She recently was in charge of a special Red Hat Tour of The Acre for members of that group. She keeps track of lost and found items, and is a good worker.

Linda van der Valk, besides being a co-president, is also in charge of all our docents. She works Wednesdays with the group, deciding what the theme is to be, keeping docents posted as to new events, she plans the events, and makes decisions about the duties of the docents.

Virginia Watson, our Museum Curator, will continue to monitor the care, storage and documentation of existing and new donations to the museum.

All of the docents are volunteers, dedicated & talented workers, who believe in the Chatsworth Historical Society and its programs.

CHATSWORTH PIONEERS

The Gray Family

Several articles have been written over time about one of Chatsworth's most influential pioneer families. This article, published in the "The Chatsworth Grapevine" in February 1, 1956, was written by the editors Viola Haskell and Betty Straks following a tour of the Gray Home. Photos have been added for this Smoke Signal reprint of the article.

Feature Section: The Chatsworth Grapevine 1956

Ah! Memories! Chatsworth abounds in them - a blending of the old with the progress of the new. It was our pleasure, the other day, to go through the old Gray home, and walk about the grounds at 22165 Lassen and just stand and listen to what the walls could have said, if they had voices.

Nelson A. Gray and his wife, Minnie, had their nine children (two were born here) came to Chatsworth in 1892 and acquired approximately 200 acres (reasonable in those days) from the hills south of Lassen to Santa Susanna Pass. The big house was built in 1898 at a cost of \$1200.00 and contained 14 rooms, 13 of



them opening on to a "court" which was their living room and dining room (except for special company)

24x24 with an 18' ceiling. The stairway leading up to the three bedrooms above is in the court, and one of the girls came down this stairway in her wedding gown as she was joined in holy matrimony with the local preacher. The upstairs bedrooms are flanked by two attics, and above is the roof attic, and wonderful receptacles for their own private rummage. All the rooms have 10' ceilings; the doors (26 in all) 7' with an additional 2' transom over each, wooden doorknobs on the inside doors and brass knobs on the outside.



In this court stood the annual Christmas tree cut from the cypress hedge at the back of the garden, which reached to the 18' ceiling, placed in the corner where it could be trimmed

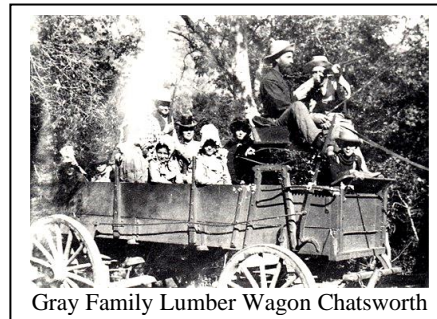
from the upstairs. Of course, there was the parlor, which still feels like a parlor today because all of the living is done in the court.

The Gray home was the first to be lighted with gas and they had their own gas plant with part of the machine in the cellar and the tank buried in the yard.

The old milk house, still standing there today although showing the ravages of time, was built from stone from the old Bill Bannon quarry above Oakwood; the walls are 18" thick. This is where the milk and perishables were kept, before the advent of refrigeration and freezers. Artesian water flows over the property today and in those early days was the water supply for the "neighborhood". The huge, old barn has since burned down and replaced by the buildings now on the property.

The grounds are beautifully covered with plants and huge, gnarled white oak and live oak trees, no doubt a sanctuary for play and privacy in those days before amusements. One also finds a headstone carved: "Bobie a good dog died Sept '08".

It was said of their father that he gathered the children about him on Sunday mornings before going to Sunday School (where they all went) and reviewed their lessons with them, while Mother got ready.



In 1903 the Grays donated the ground for the construction of the Community Church. They sold their home in 1927 to the interests that have it today, known as the Spinks Estate, which now comprises 55 acres. The Giddings first managed the property (parents of Mrs. Failor, 10116 Topanga); then the Alex Summers managed the interest for 13 years during which time Mr. Summers put in the 30 acres of lemons, 10 acres of oranges and 15 in alfalfa.

In 1948 the Bob Werrens took over its management and are still there, loving every inch of the old home and its grounds. (1956 as written in The Grapevine)



Smoke Signal Editor Note: One remaining clue that marks the location of this home, is the olive tree lined street along

the front of the original Gray property on Lassen Street. These trees have been classified as LA Historic Cultural Monument #49. The trees were planted around 1893 by N. A. Gray. They are believed to have been grown out of cuttings taken from olive trees at Mission San Fernando.

Ways and Means

Bea Berman

It seems like so long ago that we had our Garden Festival, but it wasn't. I want to thank everyone for pitching in and doing such a great job. Amazingly, we made \$5,000. So many volunteers were so helpful. If I forgot someone, please forgive me.

First of all, we have to thank Councilman Greig Smith for getting us the shuttle bus to help with parking because of the park being closed.

Our Duchess Tea was amazing thanks to Jelena and her crew who not only served our local guests, but many Red Hat groups who came for our Tea. The Tea Team consisted of Clara, Donna, Katherine, Catharina, Adrienne and Jelena. The food was delicious with homemade sandwiches, desserts and fruit prepared by Elaine Campbell, Ann Vincent, Betty Summers, Beverly King, Katherine Weisman, Linda van der Valk, Jelena Csanyi and several items prepared by Bea Berman and her family. Loretta and Rod Sandavol do such a good job with the baked goods and Jeanine Bergez handled the plant sale like a pro. Elaine Campbell handled the information booth while Connie Ager ran the White Elephant sale. Hannah Almstead showed us the wonderful veteran quilt display. Diana Dixon Davis enjoyed making flowers with the children.

Mrs. Pena, from Lawrence Middle School brought her Leadership class to fill in where ever needed and they helped serve the Tea. Jerry England was great in the museum talking about Iverson Ranch movie history. Beverly King, Betty Summers and Lila Schepler were a great team in the cottage providing the history of the building and the original occupants. Ray Vincent coordinated the parking and Ann assisted with the information booth as needed. Zena Thorpe and Randi, my daughter, collected money for the Tea. Irene



Connie Ager ran the White Elephant Sale

year. We had a great batch of volunteers from both Chatsworth High School and our community that stepped in to help. Special thanks to Erik Pampalone and John Huffman for the extra help with set up and take down. The Garden Clubs were wonderful, providing great displays and information for our guests and our vendors had a successful day selling their wares.

Jim Summers, Linda and Andre are every where when needed and I thank them and everyone for making me look like a good chairman.



Following the Tea, Girl Scout Troop 6322, did a fantastic job serving Lemonade and Cookies to our guests at the Acre.



Nalbandian, took charge of the front gate. My son-in-law, Gary, and the van der Valk children handled the snack bar. Set up and take down were much easier this

Don't forget
Pioneer Day
will be on
Sunday October 2, 2011

Wondering if your Dues are Due?

There is a code on the last line of your address label (if you are a life member, there is no code).

- The first digit represents membership type, 1 – individual, and 2 – family/organization.
- The next two digits represent the month that you last paid your dues.
- The last two digits represent the year that you last paid your dues.
- If the month and year on your address label is over one year old, then your dues are due!

Please use the form below to renew your Membership. And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join.

It's Your Community...It's Your History

The Chatsworth Historical Society would like to have you join us in preserving Chatsworth's past. If you have any old Chatsworth publications, like the Grapevine, or have old photos of the area, we would love to have copies of your photos, but we would also like to hear your stories about growing up in Chatsworth or what brought you to Chatsworth and why you stayed here.

Time creeps up on us and anything more than 30 years ago is suddenly history. This is the information we still remember, but our children won't, unless we make the effort to preserve it.

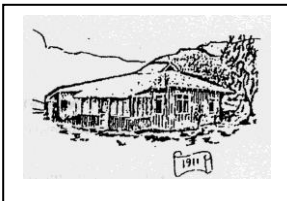
**OUR HISTORY slips away quickly and needs to be recorded...did you know that:
The people who are starting college this fall across
the nation were born in 1992.**

www.chatsworthpatch.com is now featuring "Chatsworth Then and Now" history articles written by our own Chatsworth Historian, Virginia Watson. These articles are listed in The Neighborhood Files Section of the Chatsworth Patch.com website. Please check it out. To find all of them, type in Virginia Watson in the search box.



CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Form



Your membership helps support our Homestead Acre and the educational and historical programs we provide for our community. Members receive our quarterly newsletters, and receive invitation reminders regarding our monthly programs and annual events – Rose Pruning, the Garden Festival, Membership Roundup, and Pioneer Day. Please mail this form with your annual membership dues and/or contribution made payable to:

Chatsworth Historical Society, 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311
818-882-5614 www.historicalsocieties.net

- Yearly:** New Member Renewal
Life Membership: Individual \$15.00 Family \$20.00 Organization \$20.00
 \$ 125.00

NAME _____ Phone: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ Email: _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

REMEMBRANCE:

Laurie Dager passed away Tuesday, May 17th. She went quietly and peacefully, surrounded at home by many of the family who loved her. Laurie will be missed by all of Chatsworth.



Do you have any Chatsworth Park Elementary School Class photos to share?

This one is May 1959, Mrs. Hughes B1-A1 Class

Seems like yesterday...it includes Debbie Rogers and one of our Board members.

Chatsworth Historical Society

10385 Shadow Oak Drive
Chatsworth, Ca 91311

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Check the code below your mailing label ...is it time to pay your dues? (See page 5 for details)