

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

Dec 2011, Issue #5

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

I know I say this every year but I cannot believe how quickly this year has gone by.

Our thanks to Bea for another great Pioneer Day. Bea again arranged for perfect weather for us and I think everyone had a great day. The kids again lined up to make their very own horseshoe and pan for gold. They had an opportunity to be put in jail and even though my youngest grandson Brody did not want to go in it he was very happy to leave his brother Charlie and his cousins Brooke and Hunter in there. Pioneer Day is my favorite day at the Acre because the kids have a good time and learn how it was to be a Pioneer. Thank you to everyone who helped make it a great day.

The docents are still working on Wednesday morning even though Virginia has not been well enough to come. We all miss her and her wonderful smile. Elaine is working hard on some scrap books that we had and putting all of the newspaper articles in acid free sleeves. It is funny reading the articles from the seventies and seeing that we still have the same problems with developers wanting to over develop all of our open spaces. Ann is working on getting everything we have documented on the computer and Jelena is still trying to get us organized. Good luck to her. Our garden docents Annette and Beverly are working every week in the gardens and the gardens do look great. Connie has been helping Betty with cleaning the cottage and other things. Ray and Jim have been busy getting rid of the big limb that fell off the Black Walnut tree during one of the storms. We are lucky that no one was around when that happened. We are fortunate to have the active volunteers that we have.

We wish everyone a Happy Holiday and a very Happy New Year.

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

December 13th, 7:00 PM - Annual Chatsworth Historical Society Christmas Party

Please join us as we celebrate the holidays at the home of:
Andre and Linda van der Valk
10524 Eton Avenue, Chatsworth

All members are welcome and feel free to bring a guest. RSVP'S are not necessary but it would be helpful to let us know how many people to plan for the light refreshments. RSVP 818 882-5614

December 11, 2011 Sunday 1:00 pm Parade

The Chatsworth Holiday Parade is December 11th and the theme is The Polar Bear Express. There will be festivities in the Train Depot parking area before and after the parade from 11-5. The parade starts at 1:00 pm.

January 17, 2010 – Tues. 7 PM - General Meeting Mission Bells along the El Camino Real

On Tuesday, January 18th at 7:00pm, Chatsworth Historical Society will present a portion of the Huell Howser episode regarding the history of the Mission Bells. Find out about how the Women's Club was involved, how the bells were made and who still makes them.

Monthly - Museum Open House

The Homestead Acre is open to the public the first Sunday of each month from 1 to 4 pm, except for January 1st since it is a Holiday. The next open house will be December 4th then February 5, 2012.

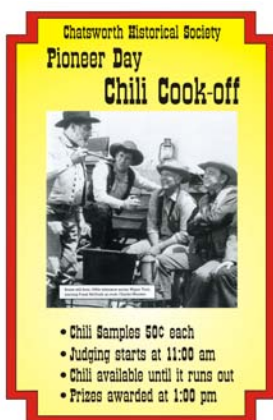
Ways and Means

By Bea Berman

Another event, another year and thanks to everyone, it turned out great. Even with the economy and park closure, we made close to \$4,000.

The weekend weather was great and for setup Saturday, we had a fantastic crew consisting of Ann & Ray Vincent, Betty and Jim Summers, Janine Bergez, Tom Harrison, Dr. Gary Standke bringing plants and helping. Gary Bercow, Connie Ager, her sister Carol and Tom Senior, Randy Mineo bringing plants and helping, Jelena Csanyi, Linda van der Valk, the Chatsworth High volunteers and me.

Sunday, the day was beautiful and we have to start going down the line with thanks for Councilman Mitch Englander providing us with the bus and also being one of our chili judges, Buck from the Munch Box who sponsored the First Place trophy and First Prize. He was also a chili judge. Our third judge was new this year, Virginia Watson's grand-daughter, Jody.



Thank you to all the participants.

Our winners were:

- 1st Place** – Chatsworth Fire Department #96
- 2nd Place** – Matt Jones
- 3rd Place** - Yorks & Lancs (John Thorpe & family)

Elaine Campbell and Betty Summers manned the museum, while Beverly King and Lila Schepler took care of the tours in the cottage. Connie Ager and my daughter Adrienne Betita manned the white elephant booth. Tim and Kathy Reynolds along with Harriet van Tiger handled all the kids events with Games and Chores of Yore. Jan Metzler and Liz Tracton, Librarians from the Chatsworth Library came and provided stories for the kids.



Dr. Standke had his great blacksmithing display and his wife Nita, cooked fresh baked biscuits and churned butter for us to enjoy. Pat Keene and his group once again provided gold for the children to find while experiencing the adventure of panning for gold.

Additional opportunities to see how crafts were made



the pioneer way, were provided by the Rock Chippers, and Wood Carvers. Our Spinners and Weavers provided a wonderful display.

Tom Harrison, Ray Vincent and my son-in-law Rico Betita took care of the parking. Kay Elder brought her beautiful old time doctors buggy and this year

we had the jail created and run by George Lightbody and his wife. Burrell Plucknett brought rope to display and teach us how to make. Janine Bergez ran our plant sales and Loretta and Rod Sandavol donated baked goods and ran our Bake Sale booth.



Hanna Ahlstrom displayed the Veterans quilts



and worked with the kids designing quilt squares. Ms. Pena and Mr. Van Dam, from Lawrence Middle School, brought their Leadership Classes to help wherever needed during the day. My son-in-law Gary Bercow along with Linda and Andre van der Valk's family worked hard at the snack bar. Diana Dixon Davis worked with kids

teaching them to how to make necklaces.



Irene Nalbandian and Keith Watts greeted our guests at the entrance. It was so great to have Dianne Kartiala helping at our information booth and to have Virginia Watson join us in the

museum signing books.

If I have forgotten anyone, forgive me, it was not intentional.

Bea Berman, Chairman

CHATSWORTH PAST & PRESENT

By Ann Vincent

November 2011

Did you know that at the top of Browns Canyon at



the end of DeSoto in 1958 there was an Army base with Nike Hercules missiles armed with nuclear warheads?

The Nike Missile Base LA-88 located in Chatsworth on Oat Mountain was part of the “Ring of Steel” that protected Los Angeles from 1958 to 1974.

The Cold War, between the Communist World (the Soviet Union and its allies) and the Western World (the United States and its allies), lasted from 1946 to 1991.

During this time of political, military and economic conflict, various strategies were undertaken by the United States to defend against a nuclear attack.

Nike Missile bases provided that defense. They were initially equipped with anti-aircraft missiles (Nike-Ajax in 1953), followed by the Nike-Hercules in 1958, which was armed with nuclear warheads and could intercept ballistic missiles.

By 1958, the Army had established over 200 Nike missile bases within the United States (including Alaska and Hawaii).

Los Angeles was defended by a ring of 16 Nike sites, referred to as a “Ring of Steel”. To protect its aerospace industries, Los Angeles received extensive air defenses. Oat Mountain towers over the San Fernando Valley and provides visibility in all four directions and far out into the Pacific Ocean.

LA-88 was the last of the scheduled 16 Los Angeles Nike sites to be completed due to the rugged terrain and only one usable road through Browns Canyon. Construction difficulties leveling a mountain peak and also digging deep into the ground for the three underground launchers caused delays. The site was completed and operational as of August 26, 1956.

Each Nike missile base contained three sections. The Control Area contained the radar systems to detect incoming targets and direct the missiles, along with the computer systems to plot and direct the intercept. It was located 3 miles away from the launch site via road, 1.5 miles as the crow flies.

The Launch Area held three underground missile magazines, each serving a group of four missiles, for a total of 12 missiles. The site had a crew of 109 officers and men who ran the site continuously.

The Administrative Area contained the battery headquarters, barracks, mess, recreation hall, and motor pool. The launch and administration areas were located next to each other at LA-88.

LA-88 was known for being the first in the Los Angeles area to convert to “HERCULES” nuclear warhead missiles for use alongside the earlier AJAX missiles.

LA-88 was the first in the Los Angeles Area to employ K9 sentry guard dogs to patrol the open mountain expanse surrounding the site.

Growing up in the 50’s and 60’s with the threat of nuclear attack, you would have been familiar with the Civil Defense test sirens sounding off once a month on Friday at 10:00 AM. If it had been a real warning, you would have found the closest Fallout Shelter.



Children in school were taught “Duck and Cover” drills. Duck and cover drills and still practiced today as earthquake drills in California.



The United States never fired a conventional Nike Ajax or a nuclear Nike Hercules missile against an enemy. By 1974, the Los Angeles area bases that protected 4,000 square miles were quietly closed

and the warheads disassembled, 20 years after the first one went into operation in Malibu.

Since then, the LA-88 control area has been occupied by radio relay and other antenna systems. The Administration area was occupied by the California Conservation Corps until 1990. LAPD Swat teams continue to use the Launch and Administration areas for practice.

Unfortunately, the Sesnon Fire in October of 2008 completely burned the area and only charred remains of the facility exist above ground today.

For additional information on LA88 and the Nike Hercules project go to www.nikemissile.org maintained by the Nike Historical Society.

GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM

By Ann Vincent

Our docents have been working hard cataloging items received and working to improve the storage and organization of the items on hand.

This year we received digital photos from Neil Jack, some of which are currently on display with our train exhibit in the museum. Besides train photos Jack also provided us with photos taken at Twin Lakes of homes and buildings in that area from the 50's – 60's. Some include rural locations in Chatsworth on Farralone and Andora Streets along with photos of the Gray family home after it was vacant for a while before it was torn down. These are the only photos we have showing the grounds around the Gray home on Lassen.

Frank Vargas has been sharing his collection of photos of the Freid Ranch in Chatsworth. Earlier this year Cathy Minardi brought us photos regarding the Chatsworth Pharmacy that her father and uncles owned at various locations.

In addition we are collecting class photos of various age groups taken at Chatsworth Park Elementary School for a future program. Do you have a class picture you could share? Email a scanned photo to us at chatsworthhistory@gmail.com, or send an email to that address and we will contact you and arrange to scan your photo.

Photos prior to 1963 show the entire class standing on risers or on the steps while photos after 1963 are individual head shots arranged on a page including the teacher.

Although the book Chatsworth Park Elementary School, The First One Hundred Years, by Ioline Cleveland, documents 1880 -1980, we are working to gather more information on the school from the 1960's to 2011 to make sure we have good records.

This month a tree fell and damaged part of the main school building and it is still under repair. On November 25, a set of bungalows estimated to have been on site since the late 1930's or early 1940's, were demolished and removed from the school grounds. They were not ADA (Handicap) compliant and not worth converting since they were no longer needed as classrooms. These events continue to create the history of the school as they happen.



2002 Photo of Chatsworth Park Elementary School

LEGENDS & HEROS

The "Legends & Heroes" luncheon was held Nov 9 sponsored by the Chatsworth/Porter Ranch Chamber of Commerce, to honor those who make a difference in our community.

The individuals honored included: **Bea Berman** (Chatsworth Historical Society & Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council); Chuck Hatfield (Chatsworth High School); Lucia Montaño (Chatsworth Kiwanis); **Barbara Pampalone** (Chatsworth Dental Group); Dudley Rutherford (Shepherd of the Hills Church); and Doug S. McCleerey (Los Angeles Fire Department – Station 96).

Bea Berman and Dr. Barbara Pampalone are both active members of the Chatsworth Historical Society and were on hand to receive numerous certificates and honors.



Barbara in the center shown receiving all of the proclamations along with the Legends and Heros Award.



Rana of the Chamber of Commerce presenting Bea with the Legends and Heros award. Bea also received all of the additional proclamations seen above.

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, the Chatsworth baseball field, any of the schools, or churches here in 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.

We are trying to document some of the established businesses that have been part of the community, so if you have photos showing those businesses...or history on them....please share. 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.

Wondering if your Dues are Due?

There is a code on 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!

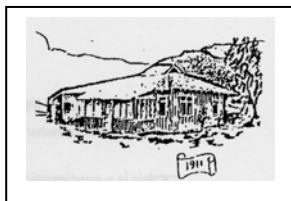
Please use the form below to renew your Membership. And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join...

To contact the Chatsworth Historical Society
Email: chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

or call us at 818-882-5614



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

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

NAME _____ Phone: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ Email: _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

Chatsworth Historical Society
Virginia Watson Museum & Gift Shop

The following items are available for sale at our Gift Shop for you history buffs that would like to share some Chatsworth History with others.

The Museum will be open for tours December 4th from 1-4 pm and these items can be purchased at that time. To arrange to purchase items other than the first Sunday of the month, call the museum at 818-882-5614 Or email chatsworthhistory@gmail.com to make arrangements for shipping if necessary.

Booklets and Books

CHATSWORTH HISTORY by Virginia Watson \$10.00

CHATSWORTH PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL The First 100 Years
by Ioline Cleveland \$10.00

WINDOW INTO THE PAST by William Schepler \$10.00

QUIET ON THE SET by Robert Sherman \$15.00

OUR PIONEER MOTHER As told to Lenora Johnson MacDonald \$10.00

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Chatsworth Historical Society

10385 Shadow Oak Drive
Chatsworth, Ca 91311

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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