

# Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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(818) 882-5614

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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

February 2015, Issue #1

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

The Acre has received some much needed maintenance this past month with more to come. The two walnut trees, two palm trees, the apple tree and a tree growing against the chain link fence have been trimmed. The Society has paid for it, but this was money well spent. The Black Walnut, which is our pride and joy, has received a much needed trimming by professionals. There was mistletoe growing on it and that is now gone. It had some branches that were too heavy and low which could have been an accident waiting to happen.

We had a termite inspector out to check out the cottage and there are old and new signs of termites. The house will be tented for fumigation at some point but we are not sure if it will be before or after the Garden Festival. This will be taken care of by Recreation and Parks.

There was a leak behind the cottage and a Rec. and Park crew came in and replaced the plumbing. We are now waiting for the Rec. and Park carpenters to come and take a look at the flooring in the cottage. We have some portions of the floor that are weak and need repair. Our 1911 cottage maintenance is always a work in progress, and we would like to extend a thank you to L.A. Recreation and Parks for taking such good care of us.



We are preparing for the Garden Festival on April 26th. Ann Vincent is the Event Chair for the Garden Festival. If you

would like to volunteer for set up the day before the event or for tear down on Sunday please let Ann know.

Linda Dunham and myself have volunteered to chair the tea. If you would like to help with that please let us know.

Linda and André

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2014-2015

Co-Presidents .....	Linda & André van der Valk
Programs .....	Linda Dunham
Ways & Means.....	open
Membership.....	Keith Watts
Treasurer.....	Jim Van Gundy
Recording Secretary.....	Elaine Campbell
Smoke Signal.....	Ann Vincent
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Cottage Curator.....	Betty Summers
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Garden Director.....	Annette Campbell
Director-at-Large.....	Beverly King
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager
Honorary Member.....	Lila Schepler
Honorary Member.....	Bea Berman

## Upcoming Events

### HIGHWAY PATROL TV Movie Night Tuesday, February 17th, 7:00 pm



Join us as we discuss Highway Patrol Episodes filmed in Chatsworth. We will show the 1956 episode "Motorcycle A" featuring 25 yr. old Clint

Eastwood at various Chatsworth Locations.

### Chatsworth Historical Society Event at the Chatsworth Branch Library Saturday, March 7th, 2-4 pm –

THE HARVEY GIRLS: Opportunity Bound  
see page 4 about this special screening.  
Program Includes the Celebration of  
Chatsworth's 127<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

## Open House

The Homestead Acre is open to the public the first Sunday of each month from 1 to 4 pm.

The next two will be Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> & May 3<sup>rd</sup>  
(no open house on Easter Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>)

## GARDEN FESTIVAL & TEA Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> 11-3 pm

Put this on your calendar...share the date with  
Friends and Family....Come Join Us!

# Fun 1880's History on Pocket Watches.....

If you were in the market for a watch in the 1880's, would you know where to get one? You would go to a store, right?

Well, of course, you could do that.

But if you wanted one that was cheaper and a bit better than most of the store watches, you went to the train station!

Sound funny? Well, for about 500 towns across the northern United States, that's where the best watches were found.

Why were the best watches found at the train station? The railroad company wasn't selling the watches, not at all. The telegraph operator was.



operators to set up a display case in the station offering high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travelers.

It worked!

It didn't take long for the word to spread and, before long, people other than travelers came to the train station to buy watches. Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watch maker to help him with the orders.

That was Alvah.

And the rest is history.

Most of the time the telegraph operator was located in the railroad station because the telegraph lines followed the railroad tracks from town to town.

It was usually the shortest distance and the right-of-ways had already been secured for the rail line.

Most of the station agents were also skilled telegraph operators and that was the primary way they communicated with the railroad.

They would know when trains left the previous station and when they were due at their next station.

And it was the telegraph operator who had the watches. As a matter of fact, they sold more of them than almost all the stores combined for a period of about 9 years.

This was all arranged by "Richard," who was a telegraph operator himself. He was on duty in the North Redwood, Minnesota train station one day when a load of watches arrived from the East. It was a huge crate of pocket watches. No one ever came to claim them. So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches.

The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they wired Richard to see if he could sell them. So Richard did. He sent a wire to every agent in the system asking them if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit.

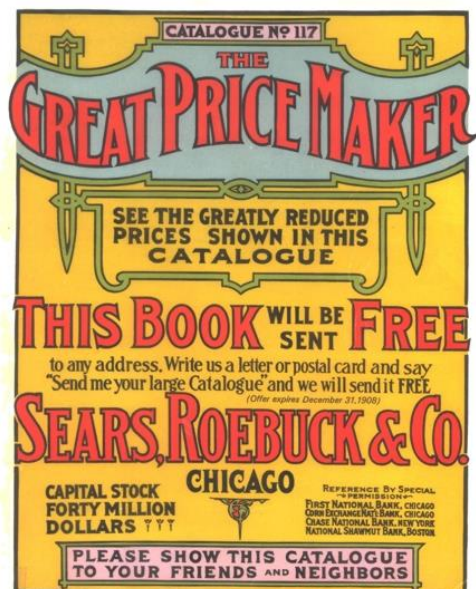
That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph

The business took off and soon expanded into many other lines of dry goods. Richard and Alvah left the train station and moved their company to Chicago. And it's still there.

It's a little known fact that, for a while in the 1880's, the biggest watch retailer in the country was at the train station. It all started with a telegraph operator, Richard Sears, and his partner, Alvah Roebuck!

Bet you didn't know that!

Now that's History



<http://www.searsarchives.com/>



## CHATSWORTH PAST & PRESENT

By Ann & Ray Vincent

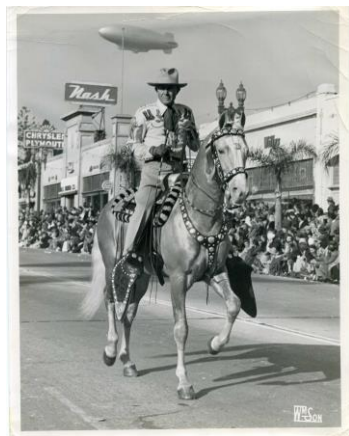
February 2015



Harvester Farms, located on the north east corner of Glade and Devonshire, is Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument #645.

Harvester Farms includes a 1920's style Barn and the surrounding buildings. The main house is a California Ranch style structure. The barn is described as a two-story barn complete with a hay loft, stables, ranch hand living quarters complete with rest room, showers and old telephones.

It all started with the breeding endeavors of William Randolph Hearst and a trainer by the name of Jim Fagan on the Hearst Ranch in Hidden Valley, Camarillo. THE HARVESTER, a golden Palomino, was foaled on April 28, 1938 and was purchased and trained by Jim Fagan. Starting as a yearling, The Harvester was undefeated in



breeding classes as a trick and reined horse. As a four year old, The Harvester was retired from competition, and went on to sire more than 100 Palominos registered in The Palomino Horse Association, Inc.

Jim and Edna Fagan owned and or trained a selection of 30 golden Palomino horses sired by The Harvester, all trained as trick, reined and parade horses. Jim Fagan is shown above on The Harvester in the 1950 Rose Parade.

In 1950, The Harvester starred in the movie "The Palomino" filmed in the rugged hills above Chatsworth Lake.

The Harvester's most famous offspring was Bamboo Harvester, who was later known as MR. ED – the talking horse, in the 1961-66 TV Series. Mr. Ed was born in 1949 in El Monte and was purchased and trained by Les Hilton. Les Hilton had apprenticed under Will Rogers and worked with the mules in the Francis the Talking Mule movies.



Jim Fagan was president of the Palomino Horse Association and his wife Edna was secretary. There were three famous Movie and TV horses registered in the Association - Trigger, Trigger Jr. and Mr. Ed.

The photo below shows Edna and Jim Fagan presenting an official Palomino Horse Association Registration Certificate to Trigger Jr. and Roy Rogers.

Jim Fagan died in a tragic horse accident, when a horse he was training slipped in gravel and fell on him in



1952. Following that, Edna continued as secretary and registrar for the Palomino Association along with training horses.

Edna Fagan moved to Chatsworth around 1953 and purchased the property that became Harvester Farms in 1956. The Harvester lived in the big red barn on Devonshire, and continued to be available for stud service "to approved mares" until his death in 1963.

In 1971 Edna, riding Highland Harvest, was recognized as having ridden in her 28<sup>th</sup> Rose Parade, and would eventually participate in 36 Rose Parades. In 1980, Edna sold Harvester Farms, and moved up to Ducor, California to be with her family.

The Harvester is buried in the driveway in front of the barn that he made famous as a Champion Golden Palomino.

### THE HARVESTER



SPECIAL MOVIE SCREENING EVENT

# THE HARVEY GIRLS OPPORTUNITY BOUND



**Saturday, March 7, 2015**

**2 - 4 pm**

Sponsored by: **Friends of the Chatsworth Library**  
and the **Chatsworth Historical Society**

**"The Harvey Girls: Opportunity Bound"** is a new 57 minute documentary film that explores how, starting in the 1880's, over 100,000 brave young women, Harvey Girls as they were called, made an unusual decision to leave home and travel west to work as waitresses along the transcontinental railroad opening the doors of both the West and the workplace to women. The screening will be followed by a question and answer session with **Katrina Parks, the film's Director, Writer & Executive Producer.**

In 1946, MGM turned the Harvey Girls into legend when they released the motion picture "The Harvey Girls" starring Judy Garland. Until now, this fictional Hollywood movie has been the only film to immortalize the Harvey Girls. Opportunity Bound examines this important part of America's history in much greater depth, and tells the story of the Harvey Girls using the voices of those closest to them, including rare interviews with the few remaining Harvey Girls and author and expert on Fred Harvey, Stephen Fried.

In addition, the film explores the life of Fred Harvey and his company which left its mark by not only providing work opportunities for women, but by being among the first companies to promote cultural diversity in the workplace by hiring Hispanic and Native American women to be waitresses along with their Anglo peers. The Harvey Girls, whose workforce continued to flourish until the 1960s, were true pioneers and set a new standard of excellence for women in the workplace, paving the way for generations of independent young women to come. This is their story!

Following the presentation there will be Birthday Cake as we also celebrate  
Chatsworth's 127 Birthday!

*Sponsored by the Chatsworth Historical Society*

**Chatsworth Branch Library**

21052 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth CA. 91311

818-341-4276



LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY



For ADA accommodations, call (213) 228-7430 at least 72 hours prior to event.



Over 300 Rose Bushes in Bloom

The Chatsworth Historical Society Presents

# A GARDEN FESTIVAL

Featuring Roses and Crafts

## The Duchess Tea

- \$10 per person
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.



**Museum Exhibits** Featuring  
Chatsworth Pioneer Families and our  
Equestrian Heritage

Tour the Rose Gardens

Vendors and Garden Clubs

Live Plant Sale

White Elephant Sale

Quilt Display

Tours of 1911 Homestead  
Cottage



Bake Sale

Arts & Crafts

Hot Dogs and Soda

For information and tea reservations (+10 persons), please email [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com)

**Note: Parking is  
limited at  
Chatsworth Park  
South**

Park your car at the  
Chatsworth Train Depot  
(10038 Old Depot Plaza Road)  
and use our free shuttle  
service, every 15 minutes  
from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Sunday, April 26, 2015  
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

\$5 Admission Donation – Children \$1  
Kids under 5 Free

**THE HOMESTEAD ACRE**

At the First Stop Sign in **Chatsworth Park South**  
(West End of Devonshire Street)

10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311

[www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net) 818-882-5614 [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com)

*All Proceeds go to the Chatsworth Historical Society for the preservation of the  
Minnie Hill Palmer Homestead Acre and the Virginia Watson Chatsworth Museum*

# CHATSWORTH's 127th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Chatsworth's Birthday officially falls on March 10<sup>th</sup> but this year we will celebrate on March 7<sup>th</sup> at the Chatsworth Branch Library. Join us for cake following the screening of The Harvey Girls Opportunity Bound

## GARDEN FESTIVAL SUNDAY APRIL 26<sup>th</sup>

Make plans to attend a beautiful day in the garden. The event runs from 11:00-3:00 pm at the Homestead Acre. Admission is \$5 per adult, Children \$1 and kids under 5 years are free. All proceeds go the preservation of the Homestead Acre and Museum.

Highlights of the day will include our wonderful Duchess High Tea served from 11:30-1:30 pm. Large groups over 10 are encouraged to make reservations by emailing [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) or you can simply purchase your ticket (\$10) in the Garden for you and your guests during the event.

Garden Clubs will be providing information and community groups will also be on hand. We will have the wonderful Veteran's Quilt Display and many vendors on hand with a variety of items. A homemade bake sale, white elephant booth, live plant sale and arts and crafts will add to the event.

Tours of the Minnie Hill-Palmer Cottage and the Virginia Watson Chatsworth Museum, will be from 11:00-3:00 pm. A shuttle bus will be available at the train station with plenty of parking running every fifteen minutes from 11:00-3:00 pm.

### Can we Email our newsletter to you?

In an effort to reduce costs, save paper, and provide you with a color copy, we now email newsletters to those of you that have given us an email address. However, we also continue to send you a snail-mail copy until you advise us not to. Please email us at [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) to stop future newsletter mailings and save us some money. And also please email us to provide your email address. Thanks!

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.

### Wondering if your Dues are Due?

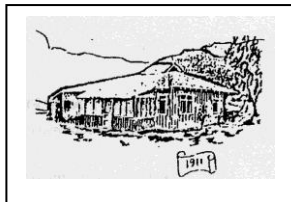
For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due. With a life membership there is no code on your address label. If there is a code on your address label, then this is what it means:

- 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! .



## 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:

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[chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) 818-882-5614 [www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net)

Yearly:

Life Membership:

☐ New Member

☐ Individual \$15.00

☐ \$ 125.00

☐ Renewal

☐ Family \$20.00

☐ Organization \$20.00

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY / STATE / ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest / Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_