

The Mail Cart



Newsletter of the Simi Valley Historical Society and Museum

UPCOMING EVENTS

- October 24 -
Dias de los
Muertos
- November 5 -
SVHS Annual
Meeting
- November 20 -
Creepy Doll
Twilight Tour
- December 5 -
Holiday Open
House
- December 9 -
Volunteer Holi-
day Party

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President's Message

Greetings to all,

Strathearn Park has been buzzing with a wide variety of activity since my last message. We held our first Barn Sale the beginning of May in the Wood Ranch Barn. We had 30 volunteers, 450 visitors and 4 days of brisk sales netting the Historical Society almost \$12,000! The proceeds from the Barn Sale will be used for the interior renovation of the Printz/Powell Colony House. The Printz/Powell Colony House was opened to the public in late April. The house currently shows as a "diamond in the rough".

Pat Havens has announced her official retirement as Museum Director as of March 2022. The Historical Society will host a retirement celebration of Pat's 45 years with Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District on March 5, 2022. Tentative plans include a county picnic themed daytime celebration to honor Pat. The community will be invited to participate in family friendly activities that highlight Pat's career and Strathearn Park. Later that day, an evening dinner party with music and toasts honoring Pat in the Wood Ranch Barn is planned - more details to follow.

Our volunteers have already been hard at work this year. The Mechanical Restoration team received a donation of a Strathearn tractor. The Textile team has created several new clothing exhibits in the Strathearn House - see article below. Docents welcomed the public back on April 25, May 15 and June 26 and docent led tours began again on July 25. Nancy Kidd's Chumash 101 class started it all off, followed by docent led tours beginning at 1pm.

Jeannie Liss, our interim Park Specialist, has been on the job for three months. Jeannie is a phenomenal individual and comes to Strathearn Park with 15 years of experience with the Park District as a volunteer coordinator, recreation supervisor and accounting team member. Stop by the Visitor's Center and say hello.

Warmest regards,
Linda Bosley



HERE COME THE BRIDES

It's bridal season at Strathearn Park! We have a fabulous wedding gown exhibit in the Strathearn House until the end of September, thanks to our creative textile team - Linda, Jane and Jody.

Regularly scheduled docent led tours:
Friday at 1:00pm
Saturday at 1:30pm
Sunday from 1:00-4:00pm (last tour at 2:30)



PRESIDENT'S AWARD

This quarter we would like to recognize two of our outstanding docents and volunteers at Strathearn Historical Park – Harry and Nellann Wilson!

Harry and Nellann have been volunteers and docents at Strathearn Historical Park and Museum since 2018. Individually and as a team, Harry and Nellann are forces of nature with an admirable work ethic.

In addition to working as docents leading tours on weekends (pre-Covid), Harry and Nellann have supported the School Tour program working with Simi Valley third graders. This interactive Chumash program and building tour field trip to Strathearn Park teaches students about Simi Valley local history.

Since the start of 2021, Harry and Nellann have volunteered in almost every capacity to improve the park and staff events for the public. They are currently restoring the exterior of the Montgomery Playhouse by sanding, priming and painting the building to the original color scheme of white with pink trim. The powerhouse Wilson team acted as docents at all three of our soft reopenings to the public in April, May and June. Additionally, Harry and Nellann assisted with set up, event staffing and clean up of the wildly successful Barn Sale in May. They were on hand to greet the public and provided vital support for the Corset and Crinolines clothing demonstration in June.

In their spare time away from Strathearn Park, Harry and Nellann are active with Kiwanis, serving on the board and event planning. At home, they were indispensable to their grandchildren providing a structured learning environment with the distance learning pandemic program on computer during the last school year.

Our hats are off to Harry and Nellann. Thank you both for all you contribute to Strathearn Historical Park.



Printz/Powell Colony House Update

The stairs from the Printz/Powell Colony House arrived on June 30, 2021. A heart felt thank you to Larry Powell for making it happen. Kudos to Simi Pacific Building Materials crew for transporting and placing the stairs in front of the house. The stairs make a great photo op on your next visit to Strathearn Park. The Historical Society began fundraising earlier this year to complete the interior renovation of the house. So far we have received approximately \$25,000 in donations toward our goal of \$75,000.



VOLUNTEERS KEEP STRATHEARN PARK ALIVE!

Thank you to all our volunteers who are keeping the history of Simi Valley alive. Here are just a few of the activities this year that volunteers have participated in.



Boys and Girls Club of
Simi Valley Tour



Corset and Crinolines
Clothing Demonstration



Ring Toss
Workshop taught
by Louise Kaul



VOLUNTEERS KEEP STRATHEARN PARK ALIVE!



Docents in the
Park program
April, May and
June 2021



Volunteer training for new and
current members hosted by
Bruce Matzen



Docent
Refresher
workshop
June 2021





A PIONEER SPEAKS BY R.E. HARRINGTON

Enterprise – Sun & News

Wednesday, July 2, 1969

Honey cans for school desks

Robert D. Shryock and wife built a nice home on the back road (now Royal Ave.) about 1903.

The couple's courtship started in the Torrey Wells oil well camp in the hills between the Simi Valley and Piru. She taught school there in the little one room school house and he was an oil driller. An old road used to go up Tapo Canyon and westerly across the Trepass and finally over the top and down to the Torrey Wells.

About the time the railroad came through the Simi Valley she taught school in the S.P. Milling Company warehouse at Santa Susana, using barley sacks for seats and honey cans for desks. The first Santa Susana school was built just after that. She taught school in nearly every school in the valley and I think Valley residents now in their sixties or over can remember her as their teacher.

As stated in the beginning, the Shryocks built a nice home on Royal Avenue, just west of where Sycamore now crosses. Their ranch here was planted to apricots and later to oranges. It was only 10 acres in size and extended back to what is now Fitzgerald Road. In addition to this ranch the Shryocks owned a walnut ranch just west of Currier's.

I bought 18 acres off the back of this ranch, a portion extending back into the Arroyo and not planted. I think that I paid \$50 per acre for this land, but spent a lot of hard work clearing it of willows, elderberries and watermoti. After clearing I put down a 100 inch well and raised alfalfa. Later I raised with the cooperation of Mr. Currier some very heavy crops of tomatoes.

At one time Mr. Currier and I built a wire dam across a narrow place in the arroyo at the lower end of this ranch. The wire caught trash flowing down the arroyo and worked fine until the eucalyptus posts, that we used, rotted out and then of course it went out.

Mr. Shryock's well on the top of the bank with which he intended to water his walnut orchard was very interesting to us. As I have said he was an oil man and so tried to pump water as they do oil. He put down 2 wells about 20 feet apart and attempted to pump them as they do oil. The heavy timber, about 12 inches square, was hinged in the middle to some heavy well braced posts and a plunger cylinder pump was attached to either end of the heavy timber (called a walking beam). As the cylinder in one pump went down, the other came up. Everything was in perfect balance, so that it took a very small motor to keep the walking beam going up and down. As the plunger in one pump went down, the one in the other came up, bringing a little water to the surface each time. Everything went all right except that there was too much sand in the water and the plunger leathers wore out too fast.

Mr. Shryock had one of the first cars in the valley. It was a Maxwell I think. He took a vacation trip back to his old home in Southern Illinois and on the return trip had all kinds of trouble with his car. In those days there weren't many garages and few mechanics. The car bothered him most of the way home and spoiled his vacation. Finally at Berkeley he found a mechanic familiar with his car who fixed his troubles for a few cents.

One day I was going down what is now Royal Ave. with my tractor to cultivate beans at my new ranch on Sinaloa St. As I passed the Shryock house their eldest girl named Dorothy ran out brandishing her arms to tell me that our first world war was over. My beans needed cultivating so I went right on. Later, when I heard of the big celebration they had in Los Angeles, I wished I had turned around.



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Pat Havens
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Strathearn Historical Park & Museum

Historian Pat Havens
Park Staff Jeannie Liss

Weekend Park Hours: Saturday and Sunday: 1:00 to 4:00 pm
Week day Park Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am to 3:00pm

For information, please call (805) 526-6453
Email: strathearnpark@gmail.com
Website: www.simihistory.com
Facebook: facebook.com/Strathearnpark

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The Mail Cart is sent quarterly to all current members. The Simi Valley Historical Society & Museum's membership year runs from January 1 through December 31.

The Mail Cart is electronically sent to all members with an email address on file. If you are receiving a "paper copy" of the Mail Cart and would like to receive it via email (there are extra articles in the electronic version!), please send us your email address. Any changes to your email address should be included to continue receiving the electronic Mail Cart. If you do not have an email address, or have requested a printed copy of the Mail Cart, the postal service will continue to deliver your copy. Questions regarding your membership? Call our business office at (805) 526-6453 or email strathearnpark@gmail.com.

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