



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society

May 2017 Newsletter

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Sierra Madre School

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Photo by Michael Ellis

(Enjoy archive photos of the School on page 2)

Education in early Sierra Madre began in a one-room school house, built by Nathaniel Carter, the town founder, in 1882. By 1884, the first schoolhouse built by N.C. Carter in 1882 was already too small. N.C. Carter came forth and offered land a second time. Once he designated the land for the school, \$3,000 in bonds were secured to build the structure. The two room frame school was located on the northwest corner of Central Avenue (Sierra Madre Blvd.) and Baldwin Avenue, now part of Kersting Court. It opened in September 1885. Mrs. Chloe Jones, the principal and teacher urged the planting of pepper trees on the school grounds. The school bell was donated by citizens of the community.

With the coming of the Pacific Electric "Red Car" in 1906, the Victorian-style schoolhouse was taken down and replaced with a train depot. Four acres of land at Highland and Auburn were used for the third schoolhouse in the Craftsman style, complete with a wooden pergola gracing the front lawn. It was designed by C.H. Brown and consisted of five rooms. This school became an important location for community events and social gatherings.

In December 1929, not long after Black Tuesday, Sierra Madreans passed a \$210,000 bond measure to build a new elementary school. The bond campaign was entitled "Give the Kiddies A Chance" and resulted in the construction of the building we still use today. This was a huge capital outlay for a town its size when unemployment was over 10 percent. In its construction, many local workers were employed. The school was dedicated a year

later on December 12, 1930. Of the Mission Revival Style school, general contractor J. C. Bannister said, "The building is one of the best planned structures of its kind in Southern California." A student remarked, "Gosh, ain't it a peach!" The lovely architecture makes it one of the most beautiful campuses in the district. The auditorium and cafeteria are unique with their dramatic vaulted and carved beam ceilings. The original construction included a bell tower for the historic school bell. Unfortunately, as earthquake damage took its toll on the bell tower, it could no longer house the bell. Sierra Madre School was extensively renovated in the late 1960s at a cost of \$600,000 so it could be repaired and retrofitted to withstand further earthquake damage. In 1974, the Sierra Madre Historical Society returned the 1885 school bell to its original home near the pepper trees of what is now Kersting Court, where it can be seen in its modern wooden tower frame.

During the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, middle school grades (6-8) were moved to the Upper Campus at 160 N. Canon, formerly known as Sierra Mesa School, one half mile from the original Lower Campus (141 W. Highland). During 2012-2013, the addition of a Pre-K wing and upper grades wing was completed. Additionally, in 2013, the Sierra Madre Middle School became a separate school and is a state of the art facility, dedicated in 2016.

Today Sierra Madre Elementary School is a thriving Pre-K-5 school, with a proud heritage of academic success and a continued commitment to the visual and performing arts.

President's Message

June 30th is the end of the Historical Society year, and on June 17 we'll be holding our popular Lizzie's Famous Chicken & Ravioli dinner event, which is also the general meeting of the membership. It's the time we heap well-earned praise on everyone who volunteered during the year. It really bowls me over how many people jumped in to help with our projects and programs, and the enthusiasm they brought to everything they laid their hands to. Yes, there are the attractions that we have a lot of fun, and that everyone learns great little Sierra Madre history factoids in the process. I know that for people who love our history, the things we undertake are just catnip. And of course, volunteering gives that great feeling you can't get anywhere else.

But when I think about the collective time people have put in – well, it's just amazing. All that hard work is the reason we were able to put on the holiday party with its postcards of old Sierra Madre slide show (and cookie feast!), the wildly successful cemetery event with a gourmet dinner and lively music and of course the dearly departed, and the program about TB's huge impact on Sierra Madre's history. Many hands are already at work for the Lizzie's event. Helpful hands also made it possible for us to have a booth at the community festivals, and ensured that our museums were kept up and improved – and amply staffed with history-buff docents once a week. There were special museum tours too for various groups. People were busy

in our archives, oral histories were transcribed, handsome and informative newsletters were created and distributed far and wide, and history talks were given to community groups. Our Facebook page was brought back to life. Teens were trained and mentored – future historians! We even had a scarecrow at Lizzie's that won a prize. As I say, just amazing.

Right now I want to shine the spotlight on two volunteers who are retiring from the board after years of service. One is Norma Bachwansky, long-time curator of our museums. This year she was co-curator just to help others transition into the care of the museums. Don't miss the article about her on page 4.

The other is Amy Putnam, who joined the board in 2003 and went on to be treasurer from 2009-2012 (she was treasurer again in 2015-2016) and president from 2012-2015.

I salute them for their extensive service, and I also salute this year's remarkable board for their collective hard work and dedication. They're the ones who handle the nuts and bolts, and make sure it all works. It worked splendidly. My heartfelt thanks to them and to all our members who made it all happen, those who provided hands-on help, those who provided financial help, and those who provided moral support just by being members.

Maggie Ellis, *President*

Membership Report

A warm welcome to new members Harriett Lyle, Sherman & Debi Lee, and Reneé Marquedant.

Maggie Ellis, *Membership Chair*



*Images of Sierra Madre School,
courtesy of the Sierra Madre Archives
Left: June 1917. Above: circa 1887*

Calendar of Upcoming Events

2017

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| May 6-7 | Art Fair booth |
| May 18 | Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:00 pm |
| May 27 | Mt. Wilson Trail Race booth |
| June 15 | Board Meeting at Hart Park House, 7:00 pm |
| June 17 | Lizzie's Chicken & Ravioli Dinner and Annual Meeting |
| June 30 | End of SMHPS year |

Board Report

February 2017: A lower price was set for the big Sierra Madre history book, \$25 for one copy, \$125 for a box of 6. Our remaining copies will be moved from members' homes to a protected storage unit. Photographs and other items that were loaned by the Perry family for the creation of the history book were located at the archives and returned to them. Museums co-curator Mike Manning regaled us with reports of the delightful encounters he has had with museums visitors. He plans to do a model of the pack mules that once served the Mount Wilson Trail. The board voted not to place a sign on the side of Lizzie's as it wasn't historically consistent. A QR code at the museums, giving access to their history, was discussed. Education Chair Leslie Ziff reported on her slide show presentation at Kiwanis of the Donnelly postcard collection, and gave an update on the Teen Docents. We addressed staffing for our booth at the Art Fair and Trail Race, and discussed plans for the Chicken and Ravioli Dinner event in June.

March 2017: As we have done some fundraising for the restoration of the back of the Richardson House, it was voted to add \$1,000 to the existing \$20,000 we have earmarked for that project. Extra copies of our last newsletter, which focused on the restoration, will be presented to various community groups

to help raise awareness of the deteriorated state of the structure. Joe Catalano pointed out that the museums are interpretive, as the buildings themselves, not just the contents, are historically significant. Joe will calculate the estimated price of the restoration, and then we will approach the city to see how we can partner on the project. Museums Co-Curator Norma Bachwansky reported on a special tour she gave the Pasadena Village group, and on the upcoming tour she will give a group of homeschooled students. Archives Chair Casey Seyb is working on a partnership with the Pasadena Digital Historical Collaboration and will attend the Society of California Archivists Annual General Meeting. There was discussion of the booth staffing for upcoming community events. Education Chair Leslie Ziff discussed our display table at the upcoming Library Open House, and said she will be giving a slide show on Sierra Madre history to the Womans Club. She also will be giving tours of the museums to the fourth graders for Sierra Madre elementary school. The board voted to hold the cemetery event every other year, with the Adams Pack Station tour to be held in the alternating years. Library Liaison Rod Spears presented the general plan for the library and talked about the costs of ADA (the disability act) compliance.

2016-2017 Board of Directors

Officers:

President	Maggie Ellis
Vice President	Amy Putnam
Secretary	Pat Karamitros
Treasurer	Richard Mays

Committee Chairs:

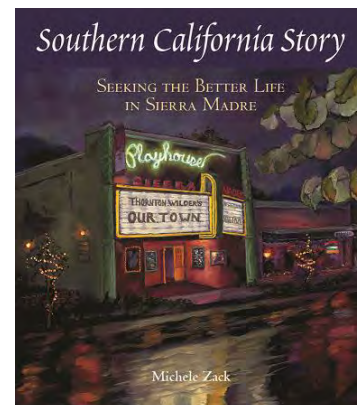
Archives	Casey Seyb
Education	Leslie Ziff
Facebook	Jan Wiles
Membership	Maggie Ellis
Museums Curators	Norma Bachwansky
	Mike Manning
Newsletter	Diane Sands
Oral History	Louise Neiby
Ways & Means	Christel Chang
Website	Maggie Ellis

Directors at Large:

Joe Catalano
Teresa Chaure
Matt Malley
Joan Spears

Non-Board Members:

Library Board of Trustees Liaison	Rod Spears
Board Development	Rod Spears
	Judy Webb-Martin



Our Sierra Madre History Book's Price is Now Reduced

Michele Zack's award-winning *Southern California Story: Seeking the Better Life in Sierra Madre* is now being offered for **only \$25** (tax included), down from \$50 (tax included)! A box of 6 is now \$125, a savings of \$25. Sierra Madre business owners take note: This handsome and hefty tome, chock full of images from Sierra Madre's history, would make an excellent gift for your valued clients, or for your employees.

You can purchase your copy at the library, Lizzie's Trail Inn, or Arnold's Frontier Hardware. For a box of 6, please contact us.

www.smhps.org
SMHPS@outlook.com



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society

Up at the Museums

By Norma Bachwansky

As another year comes to a close for the Historical Society, there are many people to thank for the continuing growth of the museums. Our volunteers have been busy during the past month.

The storage sheds have been cleaned out and reorganized due to the efforts of Christel Chang, Jan Wiles and Leslie Ziff. They also labeled the shelves so that everything has a place and supplies are easier to find and to put away.

Richard Mays completed an inventory of our books and supplies, ensuring that we are well covered not only for events, but also for our visitors at the museums. These books and supplies are an important source of revenue that goes toward the operation of the museums.

This spring has been a busy time in our garden. The much needed rain brought not only welcome water, but huge quantities of weeds! Thanks to Dan Schluer, the tack shed area and the east side of Richardson House was cleared of tall weeds and grass and looks tidy again. It was a big job, but Dan got it done.

The Sierra Madre Garden Club pitched in and cleared the front of the museums of weeds and cleaned up the garden. Louise Neiby and Debbie Moser removed bags of weeds and dug up

plants to be cleaned and replanted. Their efforts have had a big effect, as the garden is much improved already.

The teen docent program, led by Leslie Ziff in conjunction with the Sierra Madre Library, continues to train our young people to help out at the museum and events.

Pasadena Village seniors enjoyed early morning coffee and donuts after visiting the museums this month, and then took a hike up the Trail. They were entertained with history and stories by Jay Whitcraft, Bob Vlcek, Dr. Bill White, and Terry Terrell. The seniors reported that they had a very good time and enjoyed their time with our knowledgeable docents!

Recently, a group of 10 home-schooled students of various ages, and their parents and grandparents, enjoyed an afternoon visit led by Leslie Ziff and our above-named docents. Bob and Terry generously purchased our coloring/story books for each student, plus a few for the teachers to use in the classrooms.

It's been a busy time up at the museums, many thanks to those who lend an hour or two here or there to accomplish one task or another that all contribute to the success of the museums. If you think you'd like to volunteer, there are various ways you can also add to the SMHPS's mission to preserve and educate the history of Sierra Madre, Lizzie's and Richardson House, and the Mt. Wilson Trail.

Norma Bachwansky Stepping Down as Museum Curator

Norma Bachwansky will be stepping down as museum curator. During her tenure she was responsible for organizing and implementing many improvements at Lizzie's and Richardson House, many in partnership with the City's Public Works department, and with the help of many volunteers, without whom it wouldn't have been possible.

Richardson House, which had been open only for occasional viewings, underwent a thorough cleaning and de-cluttering. It was filled with items that had been donated over 25 years that, while vintage, were not related to the history of the House or the town. At the first Dinner in the Park event, the Society held a "Museum Yard Sale", turning those extra donated items into much-needed revenue. Norma, along with a team of volunteers, spent months cleaning and organizing our exhibits. Then the building was painted inside and, eventually, outside, giving it a fresh, clean appearance. The building was staged to tell the story of its history and to represent the times past and how people in town lived.

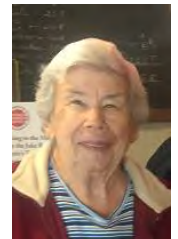
Norma arranged two significant acquisitions of Sierra Madre History during her tenure. A large collection of Petalware made by Suman Pottery, whose plant was on Montecito Ave in the '40s, was purchased after negotiations with the gentleman who had

spent a lifetime collecting it. About the same time, a comprehensive collection of fine pottery figurines made by McCarty Pottery, who also manufactured them here, was donated to the Society by a collector who wanted to remain anonymous. These collections were featured during one of the recent annual Dinner in the Park events.

Norma was instrumental in partnering with the Garden Club to renovate and maintain the museum grounds. She also arranged for the purchase and installation of a storage shed to store museum supplies.

Norma's cousin, Maurice Orme, lived in Richardson House when he was a boy and his family worked at, and then operated, Lizzie's Trail Inn Restaurant. Norma spent time there as a child with Maurice, who passed away this year. Both of them have been an invaluable resource to the Historical Society and to the museums.

Our many thanks, and best wishes, to Norma for all her hard work and her success.



Jay Whitcraft Named Older American of the Year

(photo courtesy of the Mountain Views News)

We were elated to hear that Historical Society Lifetime Member Jay Whitcraft is being honored for everything that he has done for Sierra Madre. His contribution to the Historical Society has been enormous - he has been a hard-working and dedicated member for years. He has been very involved with our museums; he was Curator for 5 years, and a docent for going on 20 years. He puts his hand to whatever is needed - and old buildings need a lot! You might even see him pulling weeds - no task is too small, or too large, for Jay.

Congratulations, Jay, on this very well deserved honor!



Sierra Madre Senior Commissioners surprise Jay Whitcraft with their announcement that he has been selected to be honored as Sierra Madre's Older American of the Year. Left to right: Sally Olson, Suzanne Decker, Jay Whitcraft, Jacquie Pergola and Nina Bartolai.

A Day at Lizzie's Trail Inn

Every Saturday, from 10:00 to noon, Lizzie's Trail Inn is bustling.

Here's some activity from a recent Saturday.



Docent Bob Vlcek (left) talking Sierra Madre history with a museum visitor.



Docent Dr. Bill White is seen here demonstrating the pinball machine inside Lizzie's. You can come play pinball - it's free! Kids love it and we've noticed that adults are not immune to the temptation to let the ball fly.

Notice this machine dates to before flippers were added on the sides.

Wistaria Festival Booth



The Historical Society booth at the Wistaria festival. Archives Chair Casey Seyb is seen giving out information and Isaac Martinez is helping out.

Blasts from the Past

From the vaults of SMHPS's Newsletters and Facebook pages



Dane Lenton, Viola Williams, and Phyllis Chapman pose for a picture in front of the Vine. Photo by Marilyn McKernan.

Vee Visits the Vine

In March 2002, Viola "Vee" Williams returned to Sierra Madre to revisit the beloved wistaria vine. Her parents owned the wistaria house from 1913 to 1939 so she has some fond memories of growing up with the vine. Phyllis Chapman, Dane Lenton, and Marilyn McKernan were on hand to greet Ms. Williams during her enthusiastic visit. Ms. Williams has also lent some materials to the Archives for duplication.



Brooke Knowles, grand-daughter of Sierra Madre resident Mary Otte Tessier who moved here in the '20s, presented SMHPS with this beautiful school house clock. The clock, believed to be cir. 1912, was rescued from the 1906 Sierra Madre School on Highland Ave, before it was demolished to make way for the current school in 1930. Brooke inherited it from her grandmother and has kept it safe all these years, but felt it should come "home" to Sierra Madre. It is a beautiful piece of our history and we are grateful to Brooke for her kindness! Thank you, Brooke!!

October 2012 (Above)



Sierra Madre Historical Society lemonade stand at the Art Fair, May 21, 1981. Pictured left to right: Charles Peterson, Marjorie Peterson, Gertrude Gerke, Celeste Morrison, and Norm Morrison



Lemonade and laughs at the 1983 Art Fair. Sierra Madre Historical Society members Elsie Dammeyer, Elva Johnson, Ross Tyree, and Joseph Grippi work our booth.

The Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society volunteers spend a few minutes this morning relaxing on the porch at Lizzie's Trail Inn Museum right after closing. Left to right: Jay, Bill, Amy, Bob, Norma, Glenn, and Charlie

September, 2012 (Right)



Lizzie's Famous Chicken and Ravioli Dinner Event

Saturday, June 17

It's almost time for the delightful chicken and ravioli dinner on the park lawn by our museums. Why chicken and ravioli? Because that's what Lizzie served at her inn alongside the very popular Mount Wilson Trail.

This year, we'll have some vintage cars on display, music by Joe & Cory, and a silent auction. If you look carefully, you'll catch a glimpse of Lizzie herself. The museums will be open for touring and we'll be opening the door to the back of the Richardson House so that you can peek in and see why it's in desperate need of restoration. Be prepared to see a falling ceiling, holes in the walls and rotted floorboards. This will be your chance to see the "before" of the restoration.

Tickets will be on sale at the Sierra Madre Public Library, Arnold's Frontier Hardware, Savor the Flavor and at Lizzie's during museum open hours Saturdays 10:00 a.m. – noon. You can also purchase tickets using the ticket order form that is coming to you in the mail soon. Note that ticket sales will be cut off the week before the event, and that no tickets will be available the on the day of the dinner.

Here are the event details:

Saturday, June 17

5-8 p.m.

Mount Wilson Trail Park

189 East Mira Monte. Sierra Madre



**SIERRA MADRE HISTORICAL
PRESERVATION SOCIETY**
presents its

2017
CHICKEN & RAVIOLI ANNUAL DINNER
& FUNDRAISER



LIZZIES ≡
TRAIL INN
Ravioli Chicken **Dinners**

SATURDAY, JUNE 17
5-8PM

Mount Wilson Trail Park ≈ 189 East Mira Monte Avenue

— Featuring —

Lizzie's Famous Chicken & Ravioli Dinner
Music by Joe and Cory
Vintage Cars
Museums' Open House & Silent Auction

\$35 per person
Space is limited!
No tickets will be sold the day of the event!

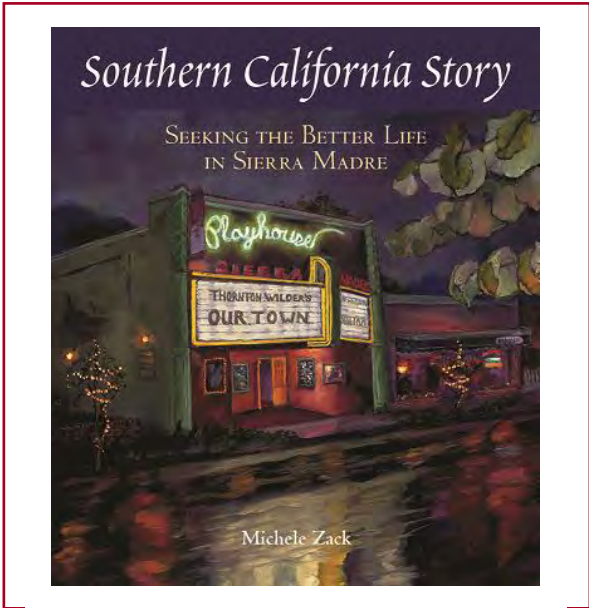


Meet Lizzie
in person!

TICKETS AVAILABLE IN SIERRA MADRE AT
Arnold's Frontier Hardware ≈ Sierra Madre Public Library
Savor the Flavor ≈ Lizzie's Trail Inn (10am-Noon on Saturdays)



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society
 P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0202
 (626) 836-6709
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 Membership / Donation Form

Name _____

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Membership Level	Specific Donations
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual	\$ _____ Sierra Madre Historical Archives
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Family	\$ _____ Oral History Program
<input type="checkbox"/> \$5 Student	\$ _____ Museums
<input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Contributing	\$ _____ Richardson House
<input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Patron	\$ _____ Lizzie's Trail Inn
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Supporting	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Lifetime	

Total Enclosed: \$ _____
Please make check payable to SMHPS.

The Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society is a 501(c)(3).
 Your contributions are deductible within the limits of the law.
 Thank You.

Yes, I would like to be a volunteer for the SMHPS. _____