



# Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society Spring 2025 Newsletter

## Lizzie's Chicken and Ravioli Dinner is Back Again!

The return of the *Chicken and Ravioli Dinner* last year was so popular, and enjoyed by over 80 people, that we are doing it again this year! On Saturday, May 31, you will once again have the opportunity to enjoy an old-fashioned Lizzie-style dinner in the park next to the two museums.

Choices of food will once again be a choice of white meat chicken with ravioli, dark meat chicken with ravioli, all cheese ravioli (vegetarian), or a wonderful salad with lots of good stuff in it (vegan), along with coleslaw, fruit and dessert. We will throw in non-alcoholic drinks and some entertainment, and Lizzie herself will be there! All this for only \$40 a ticket!



Food will be catered by Nano's – same as last year – and tickets will be limited to 100 people. Last year we sold out in less than one week. Tickets are now on sale at Eventbrite (same as last year too!) and you can purchase them using the QR code posted below.

On top of the great food and fantastic camaraderie, we will once again have a silent auction. This is our annual fundraiser, and money raised goes to the historical Archives at the Library and to the upkeep of the museums, so we hope you will join us.

If you have any questions about the tickets or the dinner, please reach out to Diane Sands at [DianeLSands@yahoo.com](mailto:DianeLSands@yahoo.com).

*Hope to see you on the 31st of May!*



**Saturday, May 31 • 5 - 7pm**

**Don't Miss Out - Order your tickets today!**

Scan the QR code, or go to <https://tinyurl.com/4p5ej4f8>

## President's Message

So much has happened in our town and surrounding areas since our last newsletter! My heart goes out to all those who have lost their homes in the fires on January 7th. Many of us experienced evacuation protocol during this time. The people of our town came together to help and support all those in need. I think that is one of the very special attributes that we in Sierra Madre love about our town.



Our most recent event was the Wistaria Day Festival. Our world-famous vine and all the booths and activities brought in over 6,000 visitors to our town! Our Historical Society booth was busy in Ker-

sting Court all day helping people learn about the Wistaria Vine and share some of the many stories of our town's history. Thank you to all who stopped by, joined, or renewed your memberships, and volunteered that day.

We are looking forward to our Lizzie's Chicken and Ravioli Dinner on May 31st. It will start at 5:00 p.m. in Mt. Wilson Trail Park right next to our museums. There will be music, a silent auction, and tours of our two museums. It is a wonderful afternoon to bring your family and friends and enjoy some of the history that will be shared by our docents and Lizzie!

Many years ago, when Lizzie was still running Lizzie's Trail Inn, she would make a dinner for the Sierra Madre Firemen as a thank you for all their hard work in protecting our town. The Historical Society Board has decided to bring that tradition back this year as an extra thank you for all the work our firefighters have done to help save our town and the surrounding areas during the Altadena Fire.

As you will see after reading the newsletter, we have had some wonderful speakers this past year and I am looking forward to some of the speakers we are lining up for June and this fall. Our speaker nights have always been well attended and we try to offer a good diversity of topics to our members.

This message wouldn't be complete without mentioning the push to restore the back room of the Richardson House and fix the roof on Lizzie's Trail Inn. The City Manager and City Public Works Manager have been very supportive, and we are hoping to "break ground" on these projects in the next few months. It has been a very long process, but our City Council members have been behind us, and I know that we shall get this completed!!

Respectfully,  
Leslie Ziff

## Up at the Museums By Diane Sands

Since our last newsletter, autumn 2024 saw the leaves fall from the trees and more people than ever show up on Saturday to hike the Trail. We had good visitor attendance at both museums, and shared a lot of local history with folks. As the end of the year approached, the 2024 Holiday Open House drew quite a few visitors to enjoy our festive buildings, and partake of refreshments. Even singing!

Of course right after the New Year, the terrible Eaton Fire raged across Altadena and our own hamlet and disrupted so many lives. Our hearts go out to those who lost so much. The fire came into the hills above the museums, but I guess Lizzie was watching over us and they were spared. However, the Trail suffered a lot of damage and had to be closed. The following rain storms added to that damage with the result being that the Trail is now closed for the unforeseen future, perhaps reopening at the end of the year.

This left us with almost no visitors at the museums! The docents would be there on Saturday talking to each other and the guys on the porch, but with no visitors it became rather uneventful. So we decided to close the museums indefinitely.



An interesting fact is that on a couple of Saturdays while I was up at Lizzie's porch talking with the usual gang that gathers, a group of ladies from other

counties stopped by to see the museums. They were closed after the fire, but since I had my keys with me, I took them on a private tour, and got a lovely donation each time for SMHPS. Very nice people!

Our hope is to schedule Saturdays where we do announced tours, or possibly a special event such as a rock painting party for the kids, or a local history talk, or local entertainment. If you have ideas, please let me know! And watch the website for updates of events and then please join us!

The parking is soooo easy right now!

On another note, our collection of Alfred James Dewey paintings hung at the Richardson House went into the historical Archives at the Library at the end of 2024, where Archivist Debbie Henderson has them wrapped and tucked away, safe from harm. These are the only Dewey paintings that are known to still be in the ownership of the Archives.

Until we open up on a regular basis once again – don't forget us! We look forward to seeing any and all of you there! Contact Leslie or me for any private group tours you may be interested in, and we will try to oblige you.

# Wistaria Festival 2025

What started out as an overcast day with fog and a few sprinkles, turned into a beautiful sunny and warm day. The morning of April 12 brought out vendors galore, a huge car show, and all of the usual non-profit booths to Kersting Court, as well as buses taking tons of visitors up to see our famous Wistaria Vine.

Our President, Leslie Ziff, who also is part of the Chamber of Commerce, was assigned by the Chamber to overseeing all the festival's booths in both Kersting Court and around the town, so was only able to drop in to our booth now and again. She worked hard all day, but was right next door to us for emergencies! Our own John Capoccia was in charge of the buses, and called upon Christel Chang and our teen volunteers for assistance. Thanks to those volunteers for managing the bus tours and sharing Sierra Madre history along the way!

Those left at the SMHPS booth got to stay put, but were very busy answering historical questions, selling LOTS of books and merchandise, and getting new memberships. We got to meet so many new and lovely people! Many have moved to town since the Eaton Fire - for which we are so sorry for their losses - but we are thrilled to have them here in Sierra Madre now.

It was a long day for some, and we thank those members and friends that helped us set up, tear down, and staff the booth all day long, teen volunteers included. We were able to dissipate a large amount of historical info, meet and greet wonderful people (old and new!), and share a gorgeous vine-day with each other. The purple flowed and we shared in a lot of laughter.



*Left to Right:*

*Board Member Andrea Thorsen and husband Don, along with Diane Sands, greet visitors at the booth.*

*Christel Chang goes over the bus script with Teen Volunteers Lexi Rodriguez and Franco Castillo.*

*Looking great in purple, Shannon King!*

*Leslie zipping around the town, and Christel getting a ride to and from the buses.*

*The whole world is purple on Wistaria Day! With Christel, Lexi behind Christel, and SMHPS member Jan Wiles hiding behind Diane.*

*SMHPS President Leslie Ziff popping over to our booth and showing off "Sierra Madre's Old Mount Wilson Trail" book, while Diane enjoys Les' visit.*

*So many wonderful people to meet and talk to!*

# Building a Goodwill Garden

*Josh Pearlman's presentation was a standing room only event.*

*The garden as it appears today.*



Photos by Diane Sands  
Garden photo from DiscoverNikkei.org

**M**onday, November 18, 2024, the Hart Park House was filled to standing-room-only for our member Josh Pearlman's presentation on the Japanese Americans in Sierra Madre.

Josh began his talk by sharing some insight into Japanese traditions, and some of the anti-immigrant backlash they suffered, as well as the many cross-cultural good connections that were made. Even living in Sierra Madre, they were exposed to the effects of World War II, Japanese Internment and the Civil Rights movement in general.

The main part of his presentation was about the Japanese Goodwill Garden at the Sierra Madre Elementary School - from its early beginning prior to the war and the school communicating with a sister city in Japan, to the aftermath of the destruction of the school after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The joyous part of the story was the rediscovery of the garden as a whole entity, and not just broken pieces, by sixth graders in the early 1990s, and the ultimate restoration of the garden with the help of the school, the community and special people like Lou Watanabe.

We were honored to have in the audience members of the class who worked with their teachers to set the restoration plan in action, as well as members of various Japanese families who lived here in the early days and were involved in the re-creation. Many of them still live in this area. We were thrilled to have them in attendance.

Our social event chair, Christel Chang, created a Japanese "garden" of refreshments, featuring flowers, fresh persimmons, hot Japanese tea, and Japanese sweet treats to set the mood for us.

We thank all our volunteers who helped out, and we especially thank Josh for a brilliant and heartwarming presentation.

## 2024 Holiday Open House at the Museums



It was a lovely late afternoon up at the museums when we held our annual Open House on Saturday, December 14, 2024. Both museums were decorated for the festivities, and a wide spread of snacks and drinks were offered to the public. Members of SMHPS took visitors on docent tours and answered questions about the museums, and our own Christel Chang oversaw a children's craft table. A huge thank you

to those volunteers who helped us set up and tear down the event – they made the work seem easy. And thanks also to our teen volunteers who pitched in.

A very pleasant highlight was the women's vocal group, **Remember When**, entertaining all with new and favorite holiday songs.

## The Scarecrows Arrived at the Museum...

**B**oo! Last year's SMHPS entry into the Creative Arts Group autumn scarecrow contest was the creation of Jan Wiles (our genius behind so many of our past scarecrows) and Diane Sands.

Much like the cover of *The Old Mount Wilson Trail*, our group of four hikers in their finery is ready to hit the trail along with their rented donkey for the day. Although we did not win one of the coveted black crow awards this year, it was nevertheless an entertaining and humorous look at how our forefathers would hike back in the early 1900s.





Photos by Diane Sands and Leslie Ziff

## Pioneer Picnics - Early Settler Henry Dalton's Ranchos

March 3, Monday, brought approximately 30 people to the Hart Park House to hear Layne Storal speak about her new book, *Pioneer Picnics: Settlers of the East San Gabriel Valley*. What started as a personal family story became a larger tale of the early settlers of Azusa, Glendora, and surrounding areas. Layne shared how huge family picnics and get togethers helped the early homesteaders build their communities.

A wonderful refreshment table was designed by Chistel Chang and featured a picnic theme and old fashioned ice cream treats. Everyone enjoyed the talk very much based on the comments and applause.

# WE ARE SO VERY PLEASED TO WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

**Welcome:**

Carolyn Brown  
Steve and Debbie Gewecke,  
Laurie Godfrey,  
Maria Leiva,  
Kelly Kriebs,  
Huan Gu and Frank Mayor,  
Andrew Crabtree,  
Jake Brown,  
and thank you to our current members for your generous support.

**We now have over 220 members!**

Thank you for your membership dues, donations, and offers to volunteer. Your faithful support and generosity is truly appreciated. If you've not had a chance to renew your membership please do so. Your dues are critical to the running of our vibrant Society. Thank you in advance! Andrea Thorsen, Membership Chair  
Download a membership form at: [smhps.org](http://smhps.org) or scan the QR code

**Our Sierra Madre City's memories are kept alive because of your memberships and donations. Thank you all!**

A shout out to our great Executive Board of Leslie Ziff, Diane Sands, Richard Mays and Shannon King for working very hard to improve our website, and make it so renewing and new members can access the website with a QR Code and join on-line.

If you've not renewed your annual membership yet, your doing so would be greatly appreciated. It's easy!  
**Just use this QR code! And Thank You!**

Membership questions?  
[SMHPSMembership@yahoo.com](mailto:SMHPSMembership@yahoo.com).



Teen Volunteer Eva Anderberg, Members Christel Chang and Diane Sands enjoy the festivities.

A lovely November day with Christel, Eva, member Shannon King, and Diane staffing the booth.

SMHPS President Leslie Ziff, Eva, Christel, Treasurer Richard Mays, and Diane greet people at the booth.

# Winter Village 2024

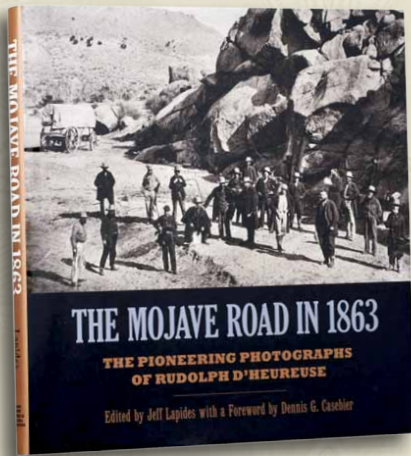
**H**eld on November 30, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, was Sierra Madre's Winter Village festival, promoting local shopping on Small Business Saturday. The non-profits were also out and offering great gift ideas for the coming holiday season. The weather was beautiful this year unlike some previous years, and the smiles on faces showed it. Thanks to all the volunteers!

Photos by Shannon King and Jan Wiles



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society  
 P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0202  
 www.smhps.org

## The Mojave Road in 1863: Photography by Rudolf d'Heureuse



On a very hot September 5, 2024 evening, SMHPS member Jeff Lapidis took about 25 of us for a wagon journey on the Mojave Road from the Port of Los Angeles to the mines of the Colorado River. We learned a little about early photography and travel in the desert, as well as the many talents of Rudolf d'Heureuse including surveying, map making, photography, and inventions, and got to view many of the glass negative photos that he created on this journey.

The temperature outside that evening was soaring, but our trip along the Mojave Road was cool and comfortable, thanks to the wonderful refreshments and the air conditioning in the Hart Park House!

## Calendar

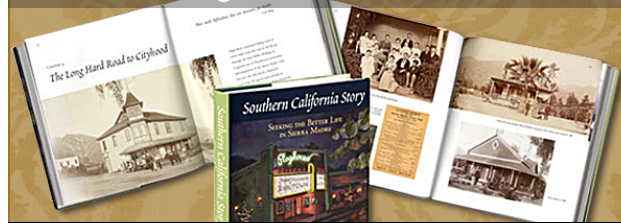
May 15	SMHPS Board Meeting	6pm-Hart Park House
May 31	<b>Chicken and Ravioli Dinner in the Park</b> – 5pm Tickets on sale beginning of May	
<b>June 19*</b>	<b>Annual SMHPS membership meeting</b>	<b>6pm – Hart Park House</b>
July 17	SMHPS Board Meeting	6pm – Hart Park House
September TBD	Historical Tour in Pioneer Cemetery	
October 4	SMHPS Booth at Kersting Court for the MWT 5K Trail Recovery Run	

*\*June 19th - Guest Speaker: Christopher Nyerges, who teaches survival skills at his School of Self-Reliance, will present a program on the wildflowers and plants in our local mountains and hillsides.*

## SIERRA MADRE HISTORY



### Southern California Story: Seeking a Better Life in Sierra Madre



On Sale at Arnold's Hardware,  
 Lizzie's Trail Inn, and the Library **\$25**

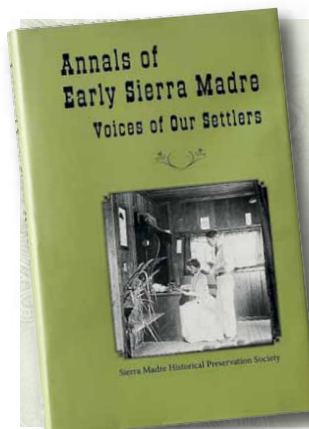
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## ANNALS

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- Collective Co-op (next to Monsieur Crepe)
- E. Waldo Ward
- Lizzie's Trail Inn Museum
- Pax Pharmacy
- Savor the Flavor
- Sierra Madre Library