



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society Spring 2019 Newsletter

THE FLETCHER HOUSE

By Kim Brandstater

1890



© Justin Brandstater

(Ed. note: The Historical Preservation Society is presenting a members-only tour of the Fletcher House and its stunning gardens on Sunday, May 19th, noon-4pm. We are very grateful to the Brandstater family for opening their showcase home, which has been designated a Sierra Madre Historical Landmark. See the tour details on the back page.)

The Fletcher house, built in the Victorian Farmhouse style and now 129 years old, was one of the first homes in Sierra Madre. Dr. & Mrs. H.C. Fletcher paid town founder Nathaniel Carter \$700 in gold coins for the parcel, then built this home not only for their family but also with a few rooms for tuberculosis sufferers from the East Coast. The tract this parcel is located in is called Ocean View, and even now you can still see the ocean on a clear day from the second story window.

The Brandstater family are the 13th owners of the home and have lived here longer than any other family - 23 years. They have done work and restoration to every room in the house and also landscaped all the yards. In 2006 they designed and landscaped the lower level of the back yard to include an outdoor kitchen, dining area, living area with fireplace, spa, potting shed and playhouse. The playhouse has since been replaced with a She Shed which was designed by the owner. The She Shed is made out of salvaged windows, doors, transoms, shingles and antique

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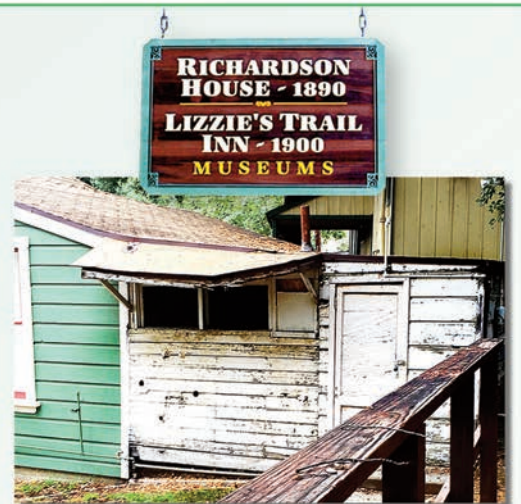
UPDATE ON THE RICHARDSON HOUSE SHED

By Maggie Ellis

The Historical Society has been planning for the longest time to restore the rotted-out 1930s shed attached to the back of the Richardson House, discussing our plans with the City, who owns the two museums, and with an architect who specializes in historic restoration, as well as with other architects. Plans had been drawn up. We have been gathering funds and now have about \$23,000 set aside for the project, with the intention of raising the remainder of the necessary funds when we discovered the complete scope of the project and its price.

Late last year the City estimated that the amount for the restoration project could be \$160,000 - \$200,000. We also know that construction projects have the annoying tendency to run into unexpected problems and therefore cost overruns. True historic restoration is a sophisticated and elaborate procedure, labor-intensive and requiring specialized materials. We realized we would not be able to raise the funds necessary for a project like this.

And so, at the November board meeting, we had to make the wrenching decision to abandon the idea of a true historic restoration. We will now consider other options, one of which could be to re-create the shed with all new materials.



Photos by Maggie Ellis

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New Members!

We are very happy to welcome new members **Bud Switzer** and **John Feters**, and **Paul Scranton** who immediately became a Lifetime Member!

Maggie Ellis, *Membership Chair*

Calendar of Upcoming Events

May 4-5	Sierra Madre Art Fair / booth	TBA
May 16	Board Meeting	7pm
May 19	Home Tour Fletcher House	Noon-4pm
May 26	Trail Race / booth	TBA
June 8	Lizzie's Chicken Dinner	5-8pm
June 20	Board Meeting	7pm

The Fletcher House *(continued from page 1)*

Victorian ceiling tiles, and has recently been featured in a new book, *She Shed Style*, and the 2019 *She Shed Calendar*. After this yard was finished, the home was included in the Methodist Holiday Home Tour for which the home and garden featured 28 Christmas trees, and every room in the house decorated for Christmas. The photos of the tour and an article were then published in *Victorian Homes Magazine* 2008 holiday issue. The back yard was also featured in an HGTV commercial as well! In 2016 the Brandstater's purchased the property directly behind their home. They pushed back the fence and designed and landscaped this new area to include an English conservatory, potager (vegetable) garden, drought-tolerant garden and French farm table. This property now is the home of Lavender Marketplace & Workshops where monthly workshops and events are held. Once a year, in November, the Brandstater's host a holiday charity marketplace event with 25 vendors. Part of the profits goes to charity. Their backyard was featured in a 2017 issue of *Romantic Homes Magazine*.

Points of interest:

Living room: Tall ceilings with Douglas fir wood trim and moldings. There are four fireplaces in the home - the two downstairs fireplaces have had tile work done and overmantles brought in from San Francisco and England. The carved staircase and window seats are a beautiful feature. Lincrusta friezes were also added by the present owners.

Lincrusta is a deeply-embossed wallcovering invented in 1860.

Dining Room: Bradbury & Bradbury hand silk screened wallpaper. The Brandstater's added large French doors when the back yard was landscaped in 2006.

Kitchen & Butler Pantry: Remodeled in 1999; a tin ceiling in the butler pantry installed.



© Justin Brandstater

Lower Area Backyard: Designed in 2006. Aluminum-topped table, poured-concrete counters, bluestone, Victorian detail in the pergola design. She Shed (description above). All the trees bloom different colors including a yellow dogwood.

A Visit to the Lanterman House Museum

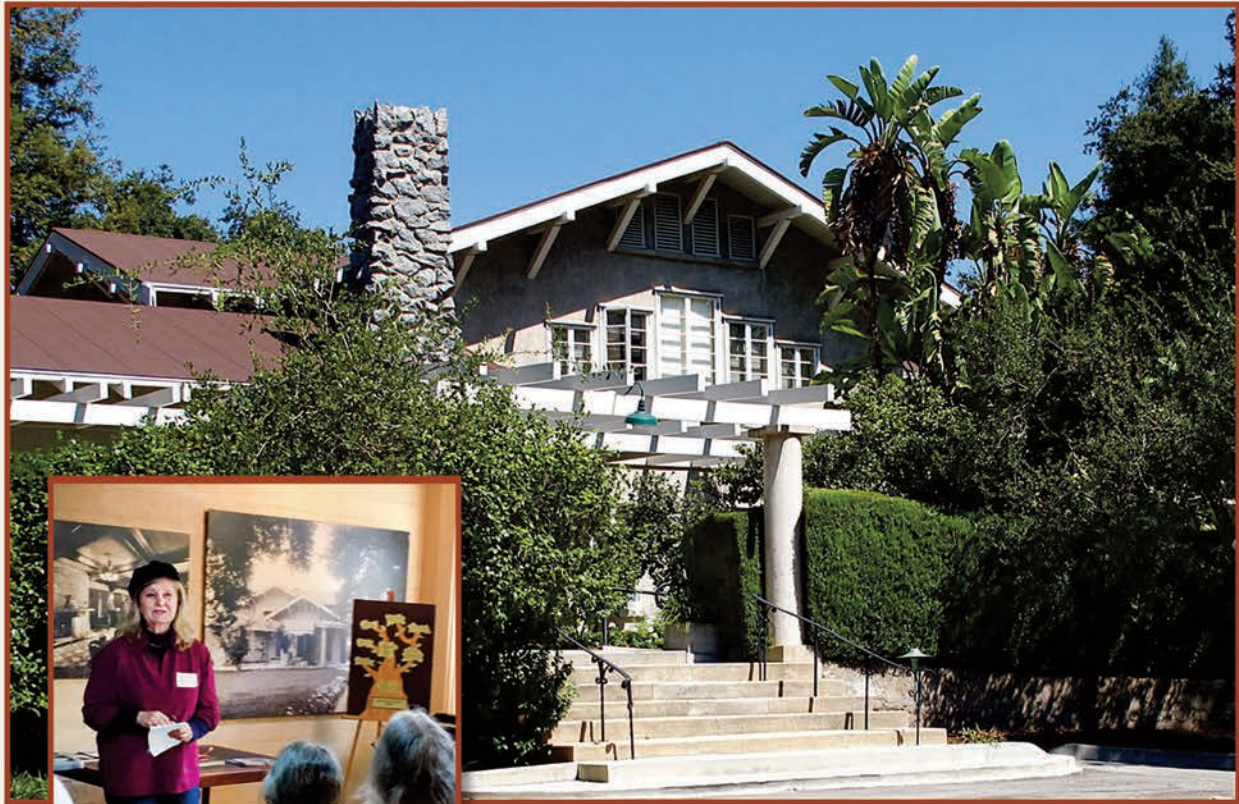


Photo courtesy Leslie Ziff

Photo: Wikiwand

A Visit to the Lanterman House Museum Participation in a Meeting of Historical Societies of the Greater Glendale/Pasadena Area

Leslie Ziff speaking at the meeting of area historical societies. Historic photos of the Lanterman House in the background.

By Leslie Ziff

On March 3rd I was able to represent the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society at this wonderful meeting in La Cañada. There were about 10 organizations represented and each shared what they have been working on this past year. It was interesting to learn what others are doing in their cities and how many of us have the same concerns. They loved hearing about our two unique museums, and several historical societies are planning to visit our museums in the near future.

One of the highlights was our tour of the Lanterman House. It is an amazing home that has been carefully preserved. I think that it would make a fun field trip for our membership to consider.



Holiday Party

Author and historian Jeff Lapides was a huge hit at our holiday party with his presentation about Rudolf d'Heureuse's 1863 photos of the Mojave Road



Photo: Jeff Lapides



Photo: Jean Coleman

Jeff Lapides



Photo: Jean Coleman

The room was packed

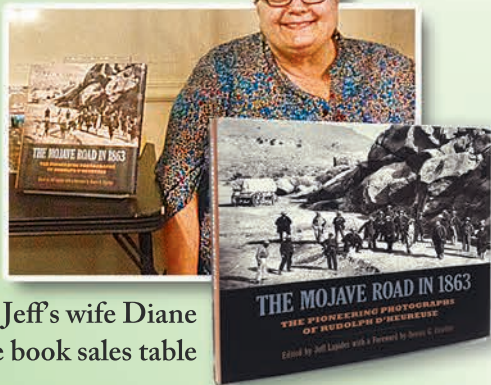


Photo: Jean Coleman

Jeff's wife Diane manned the book sales table



Photo: Maggie Ellis

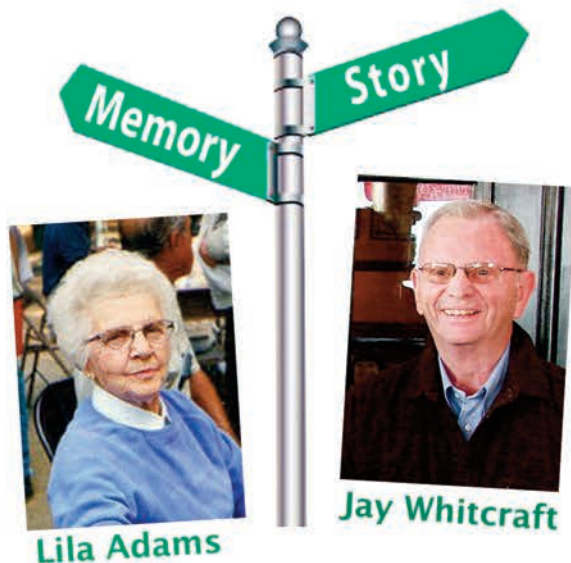
Members provided a fabulous cookie feast



Photo: Maggie Ellis

Museums Curator Jay Whitcraft enjoying hors d'oeuvres made by Ways & Means Chair Christel Chang





(Ed. note: This is from an oral history recorded in 2016. The speaker is then-85-year-old Lila Adams. Back in 1953 she was fresh from Canada and had just recently married Bill Adams, who ran the pack train, when a fire broke out in the mountains. The interviewer is our present-day Museums Curator, Jay Whitcraft.)

Lila Adams: But let me tell you, it wasn't six months we were married when we had a big fire on December 27, 1953.

Jay Whitcraft: Oh, my gosh.

L.A.: And we had to vacate animals – some of the animals. My husband Bill rode his palomino, Thunderbolt, and I took the little car we had and drove down with the flames coming all over.

J.W.: Oh, my gosh. This was up in the forest up there...

L.A.: No. This was right up Chantry Flats. And that night and the next couple of days we lost 36 cabins in the canyon. They all burned to the ground.

J.W.: Oh, my gosh.

L.A.: And the fire come around our place. We had to leave most of the animals there because we couldn't get them down too fast, and he only rode the one horse that he could... But anyway they were fine. But I just want to tell you I said to myself "What on earth did I get myself into?" You know, six months! And so anyway, fortunately, praise the Lord, our place was untouched and we came back and started, you know, looking after the cabin. All those cabins were burned down and that

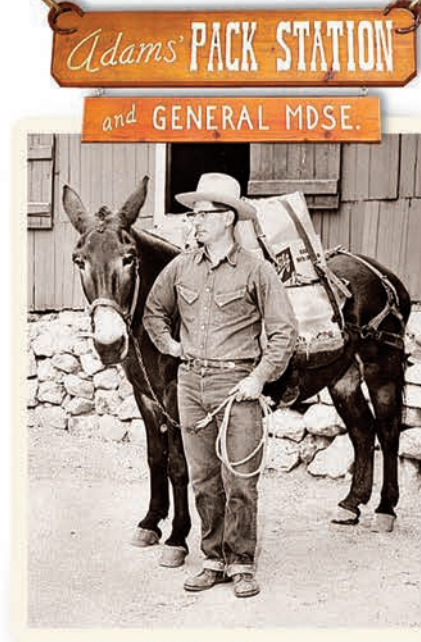


Photo: Sierra Madre Archives

Bill Adams

The Adams Pack Train and the 1953 Fire

left us 91 cabins from about 140, 141. So we continued packing for many, many years to come.

And then, in 1969, we had a big flood, and it took about ---I'm not sure now, but I think it's about nine or ten cabins. And another thought "Well, what am I here for?" You know, things just --- happened.

So – but we carried on and we remained there until 1984 when we were both 65. We were both the same age. I'm nine months older, so I'm the oldest one. And so we moved down to this house in Arcadia, grandma and grandpa's house.

Do you have a Sierra Madre memory our readers would enjoy? Send it to MaggieEllis04@msn.com.

The Sierra Madre Oral History Project attempts to capture and preserve first-hand accounts of the community's local history events through interviews with local residents.



President's Message

Welcome to Spring! We are busy getting ready for our booth at the Friends of the Library Art Fair on May 4th & 5th. We will have the double booth to sell our famous lemonade and some wonderful books that tell the history of our city, the Mt. Wilson Trail, and the surrounding mountains. We have historic postcards, posters and pictures. It is a great 2-day event in our city and we hope to see you there.

On Sunday, May 19th we will be opening up one of our city's landmark homes for a special tour. The **Fletcher House tour** will be of the lower part of the house, the gardens and the Victorian conservatory. This is a members-only event, \$5. This is a fundraiser to support our museums.

The **Mt. Wilson Trail Race** is on Saturday, May 25th. Hope you'll come down to join in the festivities and **visit our booth!** It is always fun to watch the runners take off and cheer them on as they come back down the mountain.

On Saturday, June 8th we will be having our **Lizzie's Chicken Dinner** at the Mt. Wilson Trail Park (Turtle Park) next to our museums at 167 E. Mira Monte. More information on this event will be out soon.

We had a great turnout at our booth during the Wistaria Festival. We always enjoy saying hello to our members and meeting new residents and visitors to Sierra Madre.

If you enjoy learning and sharing moments in history you are welcome to **join our Docent Program**. The docents help us at the museums on Saturdays from 10:00-12:00, and with our 4th grade school tours at the museums. They also help out at our Landmark open houses, our booths for various events, Lizzie's dinner and the cemetery tour.

Our focus right now is to work with the city to get the tree trimmed that is hanging over Lizzie's Trail Inn. The tree will need to be thinned out and part of Lizzie's roof will need to be reconstructed due to the fact that the tree is leaning way too heavily on the roof right now. Once the rain is done we are also going to paint Lizzie's. It is way overdue – and with the help of all of you we have raised enough money to get that building sanded, painted and the windows fixed. We had a very generous donation of \$100 last month to help with the painting. At the Richardson House we are ordering new sun-blocking shades and curtains that fit the era of the home.

I am continually meeting residents of our city who are not even aware of our two historical museums! We are very lucky to have these two buildings and need to acknowledge the responsibility we have as citizens of this great city to keep them for posterity.

Leslie Ziff

2018-2019 Board of Directors

OFFICERS

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Vice President	Maggie Ellis
Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Richard Mays

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Membership	Maggie Ellis
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Newsletter	Maggie Ellis
Oral History	Vacant
Ways & Means	Christel Chang
	Louise Neiby
Website	Maggie Ellis

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

www.smhps.org

SMHPS@outlook.com



Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society

Lizzie's Famous Chicken Dinner & Fundraiser

Saturday, June 8, 2019 5-8 PM

Mount Wilson Trail Park
next to the museums
189 East Mira Monte Avenue

Featuring
Lizzie's Chicken Dinner
Musical stylings by Joe Tortomasi
Museums Open House
Silent Auction

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

Tickets available in Sierra Madre at
Arnold's Frontier Hardware
Sierra Madre Public Library
Savor the Flavor
Lizzie's Trail Inn (10 am to Noon Saturdays)





Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society
 P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0202
 (626) 836-6709 www.smhps.org

HOME TOUR

89 Olive Avenue



© Justin Brandstater

1890 Fletcher House and its spectacular gardens

Sunday, May 19
 noon-4:00, last
 tour leaves at 3:30

\$5
 Members Only



www.smhps.org



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SIERRA MADRE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY
 P.O. Box 202, Sierra Madre, CA 91025-0202
Membership / Donation Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Membership Level

- ___ \$20 *Individual*
- ___ \$25 *Family*
- ___ \$5 *Student*
- ___ \$30 *Contributing*
- ___ \$60 *Patron*
- ___ \$100 *Supporting*
- ___ \$500 *Lifetime*

Specific Donations

- \$_____ *Sierra Madre Historical Archives*
- \$_____ *Oral History Program*
- \$_____ *Museums*
- \$_____ *Richardson House*
- \$_____ *Lizzie's Trail Inn*

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 _____