

# Mud Springs Messenger

BROUGHT TO YOU BY SAN DIMAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Chartered - June 6, 1966

**2024 - 2025**

**OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

- President - Sue Davis
- Vice-President - Selina Garcia
- Recording Secretary - Dave Harbin
- Corresponding Secretary - Cheryl Avelar
- Treasurer - Terry Templeman
- Archivist - Susan Davis
- Museum Manager - Dave Harbin
- Gift Shop and Volunteer Coordinator  
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- Web Page / Social Media - Cheryl Clarke
- Historian - Curt Morris
- Programs and Projects  
Abel Burke, Dave Bratt, Dave Harbin
- Parliamentarian - Margie Green
- Membership - Suzy Crawford
- Historic Walking Tours - Dave Harbin
- Photography - John Davis, Margie Green

**OFFICE, MUSEUM & GIFT SHOP**

121 N. San Dimas Avenue, San Dimas  
Walker House, 2nd Floor

**MAILING ADDRESS**

P.O. Box 871, San Dimas, CA 91773  
**Office Telephone:** (909) 592-1190  
**Email:** office91773@sandimashistorical.org  
**Web:** www.sandimashistorical.org  
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**Office, Archives, Museum and Gift Shop**  
 Tuesdays & Thursdays - 12:00 to 3:00 pm

**Museum/Gift Shop**  
 Friday & Saturday 6 to 9 pm

**Second Saturday**  
 Museum & Gift Shop - 10:00 am to 12:00 pm  
**Second Saturdays Tours**

Historic Downtown Docent-led walking tour  
 or Docent-led Walker House Tour 10:00 am  
 (which tour varies by month)  
 Call 951 990-3395 for information and  
 reservations

**President Message  
 from Susan Davis**



In 2001, when I first started volunteering for the San Dimas Historical Society, Paul Rippens (who was the archivist at that time) told me he would call if there was no work for me and save me the trip of coming into the office. In the seven years we worked together, I would occasionally tease Paul by saying "I'm still waiting for that call." Within a year I was on the Board and when Paul left in 2008, I became the archivist. The rest, as they say, is history. Just look at me now, both president and archivist. It is a great honor to accept this position and I would like to thank the board for their vote of confidence in me.

The San Dimas Historical Society is happy to welcome new board members Cheryl Clarke and Curt Morris.

Cheryl has lived in San Dimas since she was in the eighth grade. She is the proud mother of two children, Lacey and Anthony and a granddaughter, Tessa. In 2002, her home was featured on the SDHS Harvest Home Tour.

Curt moved to San Dimas shortly after his seventh birthday. He was elected to City Council in 1980 and appointed Mayor in 1996 and served as Mayor until 2020. Curt has extensive experience as a member of the board of directors of several significant non-profit organizations.

We extend a welcome to our newest members and are very glad that you joined us!

After 12 years our large format scanner wasn't working well, and it was decided to purchase a new scanner. After purchasing the scanner, we discovered that it wouldn't work with a computer that had a Windows 7 operating system. So, we purchased a new computer. I want to thank the board for recognizing the importance of scanning our old newspapers and authorizing this purchase. My husband, John, for working through all the frustrations of setting the system up. Also, a thank you to Bryan Fernandez who comes in once a week and scans the newspapers.

Our Programs and Projects committee is busy planning our annual Ice Cream Social. This event is FREE, for members and their guests, and will be held in the city's Senior Citizens Building on Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 to 4:30. Invitations will be sent out with more details closer to the event date. Please save the date to join the fun!

**This Date In Our History – From the July 1924 San Dimas Press  
 LIGHTS MATCHES TO BURN SPIDERS; HOUSE BURNED**

Tuesday evening a phone call informed Chief McIntyre that a house on West Third was on fire. The engine and crew was promptly at the scene of the conflagration, which they found located at 483 West Third Street, in a house owned by C. H. Copeland of Pasadena.

There had been some delay in turning in the alarm and when the fireman arrived the house was beyond saving.

The house was unoccupied. A boy in the neighborhood had wandered into it and, for amusement, lighted matches and engaged in the interesting experiment of burning spiders off the walls, with the result as above noted. ●

*The following article was written by Martha Glauthier, the first archivist for the San Dimas Historical Society and appeared in the July 1998 edition of the San Dimas Community News*

## **SAN DIMAS REMEMBERED - Smudging**

Before there was an AQMD, before there was an Air Pollution District, before there were Wind Machines – there was Smudging. At 8 p.m., every radio in the valley was tuned to hear Floyd Young, of the U.S. Weather Bureau, predict the night's temperatures. When they plunged below freezing, the calls would go out – to the grove workers, to the high school and college boys – who would put on their oldest, grimmest and warmest clothes and head for the ranches.

The fuel oil that was used in the smudge pots (the orchard heaters) was delivered by rail on the old Pacific Electric spur line to the huge storage tanks on Foothill Blvd., then trucked to the individual groves. The workers filled the pots, lit them, and then stayed nearby to refill if needed, and be sure the fires kept burning. One of the pioneer ranchers, Raymond Soper, said that he



thought the Evergreen Ranch in La Verne practically put some Pomona College students through school! A thick blanket of smoke was what was needed to save the fruit. In periods where temperatures were below freezing several nights in a row, the whole valley was blackened. The soot found its way into homes, no matter what the housewife did. Some tried stuffing towels in the cracks under the doors and windows, and covering the furniture, but it was all futile. There is even a record of a "Smudge Pot Sale" at Penney's as they couldn't keep the black soot out of the store, either.

San Dimas, particularly, remembers the freeze of 1913, for before that year, we had believed (and advertised) that we were "frostless". That freeze was general throughout the state and was accompanied by a cold wind from the north, so that every grove was below freezing for several days. The men worked night and day to try to save at least the trees, never mind the fruit. Some trees that year were frozen almost to the ground, the leaves were brown, the bark split. Lemons were hit harder than the oranges. Dean Way tells us that groves on North San Dimas Avenue had to fire up first.

If there was a community meeting someone would be delegated to listen to the Frost Report and relay the forecast by phone to be announced to the audience. Smudge pots had to be placed at least one to each two trees, and sometimes, one by every tree. This was a tremendous investment in heaters, oil, torches, lighter fluid, and storage space. Heaters cost from \$1 to \$2 each, and there is an account of a 20-acre grove that used four thousand gallons of oil (\$400 in 1937) in one night. The growers attempted to raise the temperature 7 or 8 degrees if the temperature fell to 20 degrees, and sometimes this meant keeping the heaters going into the morning, and for several nights at a time. When the oil was gone, they burned tires, boots, whatever came to hand, and this made the air even more dark and dirty.

We have several pages of clippings and photos of the big freeze of 1937, when the men worked for 3 days and 4 nights, with no sleep, trying to save their groves. At one time the temperature got down to 16 degrees and was at 27 degrees at noon. Heaters burned until noon, and sometimes all day.

Schools were closed, children were getting sick, and it was even hard to see. Some people had never seen cold such as this. One woman phoned the police as her husband's only work shirt had frozen to the line and she wanted to know what to do.

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There was smudging up into the early '60's, but gradually the Wind Machines took over, much to everyone's relief. They were a lot easier to live with, and much more efficient. The Covina "Argus" newspaper tried to uphold



our area's reputation as a "winter wonderland" and even tried to point out that the frost may have helped the ranchers by ensuring a higher price for the fruit that was salable. This probably had very little impression on the tired, grimy ranchers and their 50-cent-an-hour workers. ●

# San Dimas Historical Society Ice Cream Social

**FREE!** For Members & Guests  
**Sunday, September 15th**  
**3 to 4:30 p.m.**



At the **City Senior Community Center**

201 E. Bonita Avenue, San Dimas  
Historical Society members and their Guests  
are invited to our  
**Annual Ice Cream Social - Come join the fun.**  
**Make-your-own Ice Cream and Cookie Sundae**

## Newest San Dimas Historical Society Members

Linda Smith and Fernando Romero family,  
and Becky Gleason. **Welcome!**

## Descendants of Walker family visit the San Dimas Historical Society



These descendants of the Walker family that visited the museum with President Sue Davis are - Virginia Vargyas, her son Douglas Vargyas and nephew Kodee Iuraduri



Fred and Sue (Carruthers) Brunner were the grandparents of Virginia Vargyas. Sue Brunner was fourth generation descendant of James and Sue Walker. This photo was taken on their first date at the Cocoanut Grove restaurant in May of 1945. They were married in the Walker House on November 11, 1945.

## Our Valued Patrons - A Very Special Thank You

Members that have made donations of \$1000 or more to the Patron Program are: (listed in order of participation)  
 San Dimas Community Hospital, Ralph and Peggy Thomas, Paul and Willa McClure, Tom and Sue Nuss, Ryan Teague,  
 Jean Johnstone Rimpau, Curt and Glenda Morris, Jeff and Terry Templeman, Sharon Long, Bill and Joyce Emerson,  
 Winifred Rouse Willis, Bob and Connie Brown, Joe Vaniman, Matt and Julie Draayom, Mark Nelson, Linda Nelson,  
 Don and Margie Green, Georgia Florentine, Dick and Mary Lou Harbin, John and Susan Davis, John and Ann Vackrinos,  
 Dorothy A. Callanan, Howard C. Callanan, Allen and Lona Chen, Dave & Chris Harbin

*Their generous gifts allow the San Dimas Historical Society to purchase specially needed items to enhance our ability to save and share our history that otherwise would be unavailable due to limited funding. To find out how you too can become a patron call the office at (909) 592-1190. Your donation is tax deductible. We are a 501(c) (3).*

## Thank You - BUSINESS SPONSORS

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 Friend of the San Dimas Historical Society

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## Please Join the San Dimas Historical Society With A Membership

### Membership Benefits include:

Quarterly newsletters, invitations to two membership dinners with special speakers and programs,  
 invitations to hosted annual Ice Cream Social, and other Historical Society Events.

### Check your membership type:

Individual.....\$25 \_\_\_ (annually)    Family (two or more).....\$35\_\_\_ (annually)    Sponsors / Business .... \$100 \_\_\_ (annually)  
 Life Membership...\$500 per person\_\_\_ (one time fee only)

Additional Support / Donation for your Society are welcomed and are tax deductible. We are a 501(c) (3).

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Would you like to receive our newsletter by e-mail? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_



**Please MAIL TO: P.O. Box 871 • San Dimas, CA 91773 • call: 909 592-1190**

