

The Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley Ledger

Montrose

La Crescenta

Verdugo City

Highway Highlands

La Canada

Flintridge

August 2009

The Newsletter of the Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley

Issue 61

CURRENT HSCV INFORMATION

Skeletons in our Backyards: Human remains found along the Alameda Corridor

People have been dying in the Los Angeles area for thousands of years, and the majority of them are buried in the very ground we walk on. Here in the Crescenta Valley, we know that our founder Benjamin Briggs is buried somewhere on Briggs Terrace, one of our early pioneers reported attending three burials somewhere in La Canada, and when the 210 Freeway was being built construction crews unearthed an ancient headstone between Rosemont and La Crescenta Avenues. Every time we dig a hole in our gardens, we stand a chance of digging up a former resident. But what happens when we do?

We'll hear firsthand from someone who's had to deal with that. CV resident Elaine Sylvestro is the environmental manager for the company that constructed the Alameda Corridor, a huge trench that carries train traffic below ground between the port and Los Angeles. Several Native-American skeletons were exhumed accidentally during construction, and Elaine will describe the documentation and reburial process that took place. The process was a fascinating look into LA's history, and a testimony to the dignity only recently being afforded to Indian remains. It also provides an insight into what may lie just below the surface in our own backyards.



Archeologists excavate a find on a road construction project site.

Join us on Monday, August 17th, 7:00 p.m.

At the Center For Spiritual Living

(formerly known as the La Crescenta Church of Religious Science)

Located on the corner of Dunsmore and Santa Carlotta



**Another movie in the park:
Lucille Ball--The Long, Long Trailer
Plus a special appearance –
Lucy's chauffeur, Frank Gorey!**

at

**Two Strike Park
5107 Rosemont Avenue, La Crescenta
Saturday, August 29th, beginning 6:15 PM**

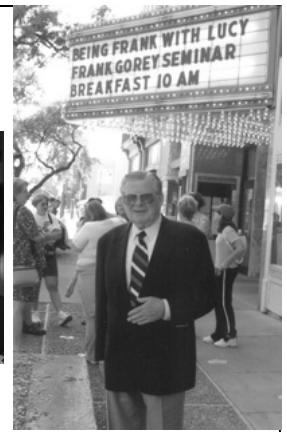
Event is FREE! Popcorn is FREE! BBQ is affordable!

In this classic comedy from 1954, co-stars and real-life husband-and-wife team Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz star in this hilarious movie. The story follows the misadventures of a newlywed couple as they tow their gigantic travel trailer on a cross-country journey. This movie serves as the perfect "vehicle" for Lucy's classic slapstick comedy routines. Also in the movie are the comedians Ed Wynn and Marjorie Main (Ma Kettle), who incidentally had a second home in the Crescenta Valley.

Along with the movie, we have a real treat for Lucy fans! Frank Gorey, who was Lucille Ball's chauffeur and personal assistant in Beverly Hills for 30 years will be our special guest. Before the movie, Mr. Gorey will talk about his experiences with the family, tell some funny personal stories about Lucy, and answer your questions.

Make an evening of it, as we'll have dinner for you as well! Starting at 6:15, we'll be BBQing up hot dogs and hamburgers for the ridiculously **low price of \$2 for a dog, chips and a drink, or \$3 for a burger, chips and drink.** Movie at about 8 p.m..

Umbrellas or shaders are an option with the late summer sun. Parks will again be supplying a popcorn machine for our use and enjoyment. We have CV Town Council President Steve Pierce, and LA County Parks to thank for this **free event.**



"An Evening in the Vineyard"

The Stone Barn Vineyard Conservancy invites the community to come out and commune with the ripening grapes of the Deukmejian Park vineyard, as we move towards harvest time. Come out in the cool of the summer evening, help a little in the vineyard, learn a little about winemaking, and enjoy a picnic dinner as the sun sets. During this session, besides doing a little maintenance in the vineyard, our wine-master Heather will demonstrate the scientific methods of determining the quality of our grapes. We hope you'll join us!

Friday, August 21st from 6:30 to Sunset.

Deukmejian Wilderness Park,
3429 Markridge Rd.

Bring your picnic dinner, and we'll meet at the vineyard, just below the big stone barn.



By Sharon Weisman

As you probably heard, **Wendy Greuel** intervened with **LA Planning** and got an extension of the comment period for the **Draft Environmental Impact Report** on the **Verdugo Hills Golf Course** potential development. Comments are now due on **August 19**. See:

<http://www.gcvoice.org/current-projects/vhgc.htm> for a link to the report and instructions on how to comment.

Please consider all the impacts that would result from construction of 229 homes on the property and express your concerns. You can also support the effort by making a contribution, the details on how to do that are also available from the website above. There's a fund raiser on **August 31st** at **Joselito's West**, 7308 Foothill Blvd., Tujunga, CA 91042-2727, (818) 951-2275. Let them know you support the **VHGC** and a percentage of your bill will go to toward saving this valuable community resource.

Highway Highland Neighbors turned out to let the **Glendale City Council** know how they felt about the proposed three-story, nearly fifty foot tall, mixed-use retail/office/medical office building at the

Foothill Lumber site at the July 21st city council meeting. The council voted 3 to 0 to deny the appeal, with Dave Weaver on vacation and Laura Friedman excusing herself because she sat on the DRB #2 when they sent the original project back for redesign. This is wonderful news for our valley but the property remains ripe for development as do several portions of the boulevard. Please keep thinking about the types of businesses you'd like to see in our area and encourage them to relocate here.

The **North Glendale Community Plan Advisory Committee** meetings started August 3 and will continue throughout the summer. The goal is for the committee to find consensus on areas where there is no clear agreement among stakeholders on the direction development should take.

Topics to be discussed this month are Designing the Community and Design Standards. Street Design & Mobility and Parks & Rec, Open Space and Schools will be considered in September. October's focus will be Infrastructure, Sustainability Issues and wrap up. A Community Meeting to let the public know the results of all this discussion is tentatively scheduled for November 9, 2009.

Please let me know your thoughts on these issues and anything else you wish to have the committee discuss. Bill and I are both on the committee and one or both of us will attend the committee meetings. You can also share your thoughts directly with **Alan Loomis** or **Laura Stotler** at the **Glendale Planning Department** (818) 548-2140 or by email at LStotler@ci.glendale.ca.us or ALoomis@ci.glendale.ca.us.

Residents in the **Crescenta Valley Water District** territory are restricted to watering their yards on Tuesdays and Saturdays only, while the **City of Los Angeles** has chosen Mondays and Thursdays for their two allowed days. **Glendale** generously allows the landscaping to be watered on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. We all need to be mindful of the scarcity of water and not waste it.

We also need to help our elected officials see the connection between development and water usage. With that in mind, three spots on the **CVWD Board** are up for election **November 3**. Candidate filing just closed so keep an eye out to see who's running.

Glendale has stirred up more media controversy with its ban on artificial turf in front yards, especially with the water restrictions currently being implemented. **Glendale** is still grappling with mandates for green front yards left in the municipal code from the past century, but will not allow the daily watering new sod requires. I watched the council debate allowing the artificial grass in front yards and there are very strong feelings on both sides of the issue. The city is gradually coming to appreciate the beauty of rocks, gravel, bark, mulch, and xeriscaping in favor of the lush expanses of green lawns favored in the past, yet don't seem to have come to grips with the fact that increased development uses water. You can share your thoughts on this issue with the **North Glendale Community Plan Advisory Committee**.

Plaques Abound!

The idea of listing the plaques here in our valley occurred to me recently when a long forgotten plaque was pulled out of the bushes at Verdugo Hills Hospital, and was remounted there by an Eagle Scout. It brought to light a fascinating story, which will be covered more fully when the monument is rededicated in September.

I'm a plaque addict, and stop to read plaques anytime I see one. Each one tells a story. There are many here in CV that are almost completely forgotten, and this our attempt to bring them to light.

I teamed up with my wife and Art Cobery, who is largely responsible for the majority of the plaques the HSCV has installed. We tended to skip the straight dedication plaques that one sees outside post offices and libraries, as those tend to be just a listing of government officials. We picked up a few of these if they were especially interesting.

As we traveled around the valley to document these plaques, we discovered a few that we didn't even know about. I would imagine that there are others we have missed. If you know of a plaque that we missed, let us know and we'll document it in a future issue of the newsletter. You can email me at lawlerdad@yahoo.com, or send a note to HSCV, c/o 2717 Altura Ave. La Crescenta, 91214.

In the meantime, we hope you note a few plaque locations here that pique your interest, and that you'll use that excuse to go out and discover something new about your own community. -- Mike Lawler

Center for Spiritual Living (formerly known as the Church of Religious Science)



There are a couple of plaques at our “home church” the La Crescenta Center for Spiritual Living (formerly Church of Religious Science), located on the corner of Dunsmore and Santa Carlotta. One on the stairway to a former parishioner, and the other a little more mysterious. It commemorates the death of Ensign Richard Bryce Wilkie in 1941. An internet search shows him having died on 06/21/1941, with no other pertinent info. It refers to him as being in the Naval Reserve, and another site shows him as a graduate of Kings Point Merchant Marine Academy. (Anyone know anything about Mr. Wilkie?)

Mt. Olive Lutheran Church

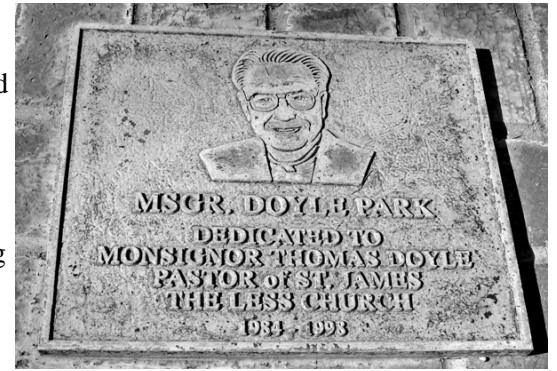


The Mount Olive Lutheran Church, located on Foothill and Dunsmore, has a cornerstone in the base of its bell tower that gives its build date.

St. James The Less Catholic Church



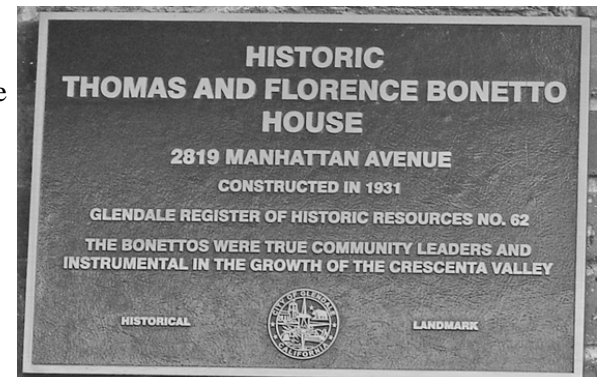
How many people know there is a Doyle Park in La Crescenta? It's the landscaped area in front of St James Catholic Church, located between the entrance and exit driveways off of Dunsmore (above Foothill), remembering Father Doyle. The plaque is located in the center of the park.



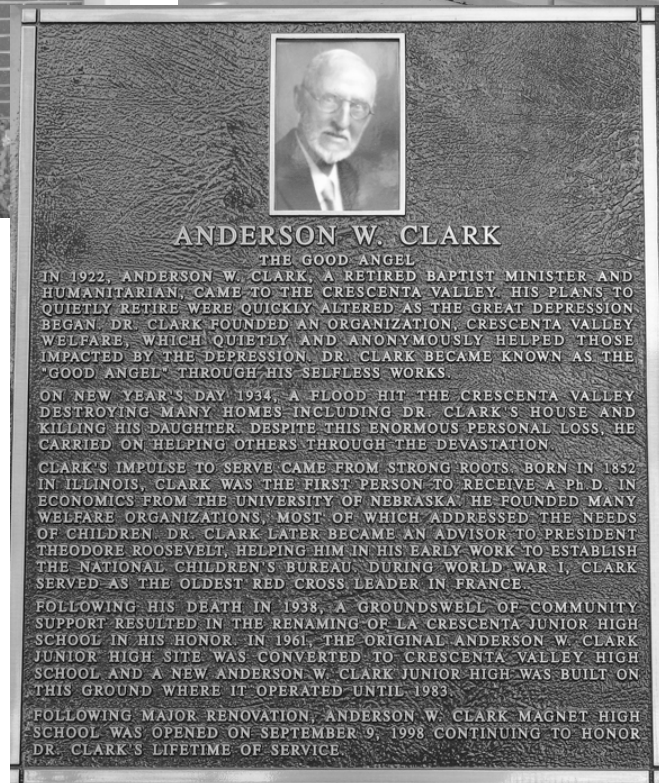
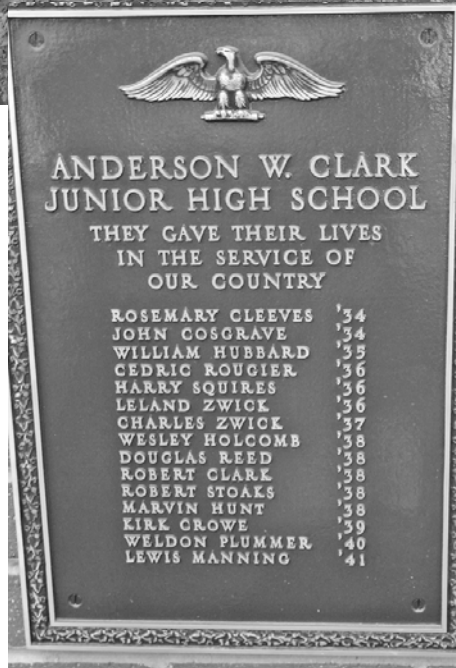
Bonetto House



Thomas and Florence Bonetto were valley pioneers, and with Bart Bonetto operated the iconic La Crescenta Feed and Fuel store for the best part of the 20th century. Their home, located at 2819 Manhattan Ave., has been lovingly restored by owner Barbara Hannigan, and was declared a Glendale Historic Landmark a few years ago. It's the first private home in the Valley to receive that distinction.



Clark Magnet High School



Anderson Clark had been a distinguished Midwestern minister before retiring to the Crescenta Valley in the '20s. He made such a name for himself in service to the community that residents renamed the local junior high school after him. There has been a school named after Clark since the '30s, yet very few knew who he was. The current Clark Magnet High School took this to heart and with a local Eagle Scout, dedicated a "plaque wall" a few years ago. Besides the new plaque that includes a photo and description of Andy Clark's life, there are several restored older plaques that graced the wall of the various schools named for Clark. One is particularly interesting in that it memorializes the graduated students of Clark Junior High that gave their lives in WWII. The plaque is located in the rose garden to the left of the school's front door, 4747 New York Ave.

La Crescenta Womans Club

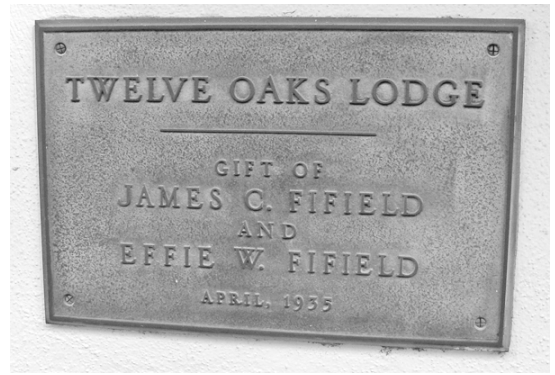


The venerable La Crescenta Womans Clubhouse, located at 4004 La Crescenta Ave., is graced with a granite cornerstone with its build date of 1925.

Twelve Oaks Lodge



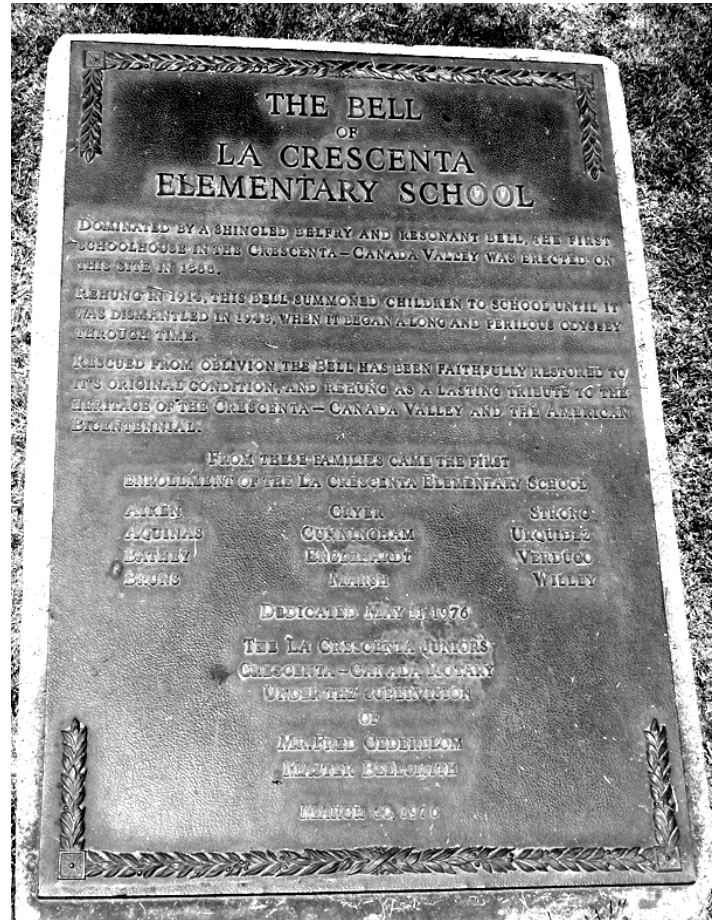
Twelve Oaks Lodge, located at 2820 Sycamore, serves the valley as a retirement home. We know very little about this beautiful wooded facility other than, according to the plaque by the front door, it was gifted by James and Effie Fifield in 1935, and that it's currently run by the Southern California Presbyterian Homes. If any of you know anything of Twelve Oaks' history, please write or email us.



La Crescenta Elementary School



The original school bell for La Crescenta, rang for kids to come to school to the one room schoolhouse built on this site in 1888. Put into storage in 1948, the bell was forgotten until local residents banded together and in 1976 had the bell reinstalled in this replica of the original belfry. The associated plaque tells its story and marks the names of the first students of this school, many of them recognizable in the history of CV. This bell is rung once a year during the 6th grade graduation ceremony. The school is located at 4343 La Crescenta Ave.



La Crescenta Library



When our new library opens at the end of this year, the lobby floor will have this beautiful bronze and cut stone historical plaque and compass rose in it. The plaque was completely paid for by donations from HSCV members, community individuals and businesses.

Two Strike Park – Dennis Morgan



Film star Dennis Morgan was a local resident in the '40s and '50s, and very involved in community service. He saw the need for a new park for kids to play baseball in the growing community. He latched onto the motto that "any kid that had to play baseball in the street already had two strikes against him, and the third strike would be getting hit by a car." He sponsored a series of celebrity



baseball games to raise money for this park, and it was developed in the late '50s.

A fan of Dennis Morgan from outside the area pushed for this plaque, which was installed about 10 years ago and located near center of parking lot to the right of stairs. Two Strike Park is located at 5107 Rosemont Ave.

Two Strike Park – War Memorial



A war memorial was erected at Two Strike Park soon after it opened, but has largely been forgotten, until recently when a group of Valley veterans adopted it as their own. Memorial Day services have been held here for the last couple of years, and concrete plans are afoot to expand the memorial to include the names of valley residents who have lost their lives in combat. Located off lower parking lot just inside park.



Wilhelm's Run

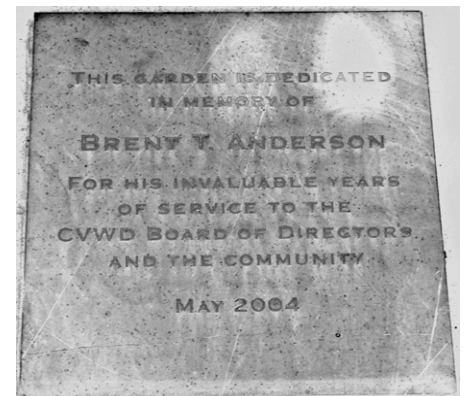


This cornerstone that has been incorporated into someone's landscaping once graced the entry gates to an estate that was once on this site. 1906 is still clear, but the former name of the estate "Wilhelm's Run" has been mysteriously chiseled off. The entry gates were demolished in the '80s.



Crescenta Valley Water District

In 2004 Brent Anderson, a community leader and member of the Crescenta Valley Water Board died prematurely of cancer. A plaque dedicating the native plant garden is just outside the entrance to the Water District office, 2700 Foothill.



St. Luke's of The Mountains



St. Luke's Church, located at Foothill and Rosemont, is of course one of the more historic sites in the valley, and

and so naturally has its share of plaques. It has its cornerstone, a plaque commemorating the gift of the chimes by the Watchorn family, in memory of their son who died of injuries sustained in WWI, and a small plaque nearly hidden in the landscaping on the north side memorializes Boone Sadler Sr. and Angelo Iannone.



1934 Flood



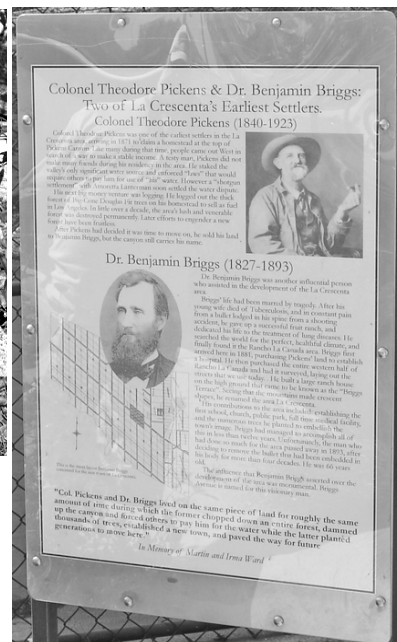
This site at Fairway and Rosemont is perhaps the most historic site in the Valley. It was here on New Years of 1934 that refugees gathered and were swept away when the American Legion Hall located here was gutted by a midnight flash flood. This monument was the first one in a series of plaque sites by the HSCV. It was dedicated on the 70th anniversary of the flood, on New Years Day 2004.

Holy Redeemer Catholic Church



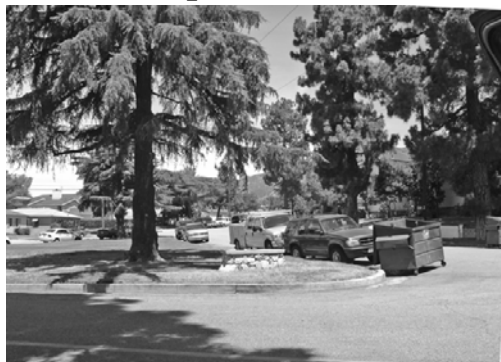
Holy Redeemer was rebuilt in 2003 and a plaque was installed commemorating the laying of the cornerstone. Out front on the side of the stairway leading up is a hand inscription by the stonemason "L. B. 1929" It's known that one of the prominent stonemasons in the valley had the last name of Binetti, so perhaps this is him.

Pickens Canyon Park



Pickens Canyon Park is a relatively new mini-park that showcases our first in a series of "Welcome to La Crescenta" signs. It already has some plaques. One is a memorial to local young man Nick Steinbacher, who was gave his life in the Iraq War. There are also two large informational signs put up by an Eagle Scout last year. One tells the history of Theodore Pickens and Benjamin Briggs and the other gives the history of the early natural resources of the valley.

McCarton Plaque



In 1928 a commemorative plaque and bench were placed in this park in honor of Paul McCarton, and Eagle Scout that had died in an accident. Over the years the bench and the plaque disappeared. In 2005 the HSCV and a local boy scout troop constructed this stone bench and installed a new plaque to memorialize Paul McCarton, at Orangedale and Mira Vista.

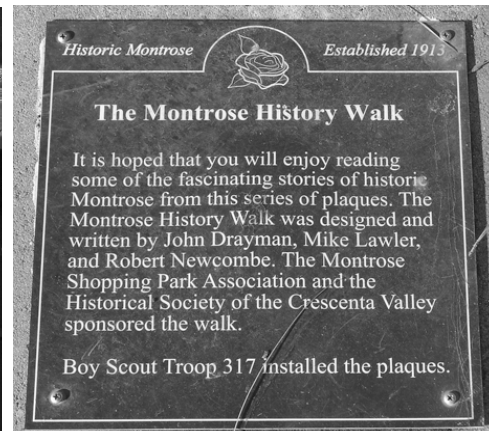
Montrose Library

In 1993 the local chamber of commerce placed a time capsule in this wall in front of the library, 2465 Honolulu, to be opened in 30 years; in 2023.

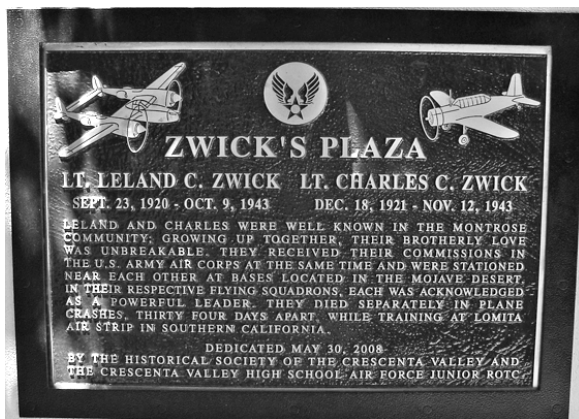


Montrose History Walk

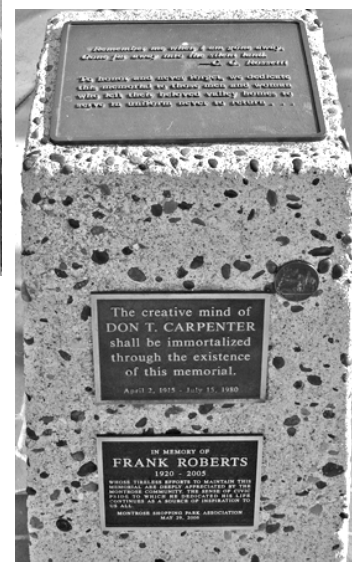
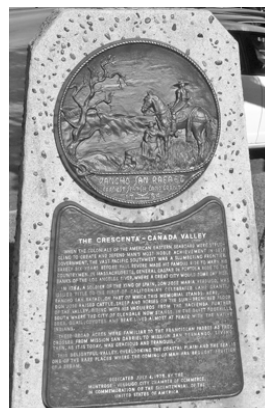
A few years ago a Montrose History Walk was conceived by a group of local historians. Twenty-some plaques that comment on various aspects of Montrose's history were installed at ground level in the landscaping of the shopping park by a local Boy Scout Troop. It is hoped that in the next year these plaques will be replaced by more elaborate markers.



A black and white photograph of a courtyard in a traditional Spanish-style building. A large tree on the left casts shadows on the wall and ground. A small table with chairs and a patio umbrella is visible on the right.



Vietnam Memorial site



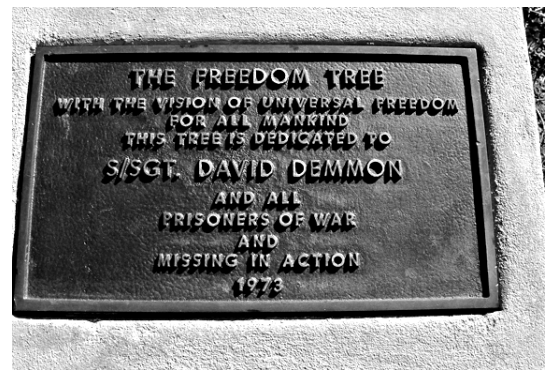
Lanterman House



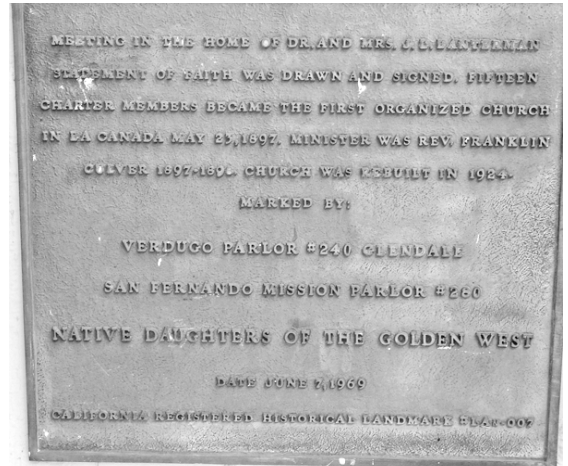
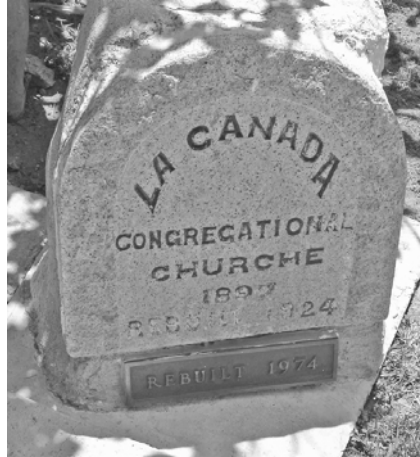
Verdugo Hills Hospital – Freedom Tree



This restored plaque in front of Verdugo Hills Hospital is in the planter to the west of the main driveway. This plaque was first dedicated in 1973 to David Demmon who was listed as missing in action in Vietnam. Demmon was not a local resident, but his sister is. Over the years the plaque was overgrown and forgotten. It was recently rediscovered and remounted by a local Eagle Scout, to be dedicated in September.

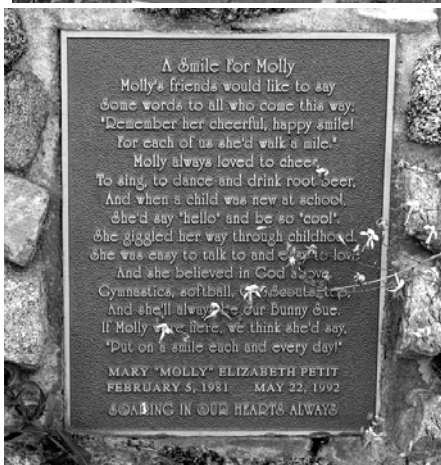
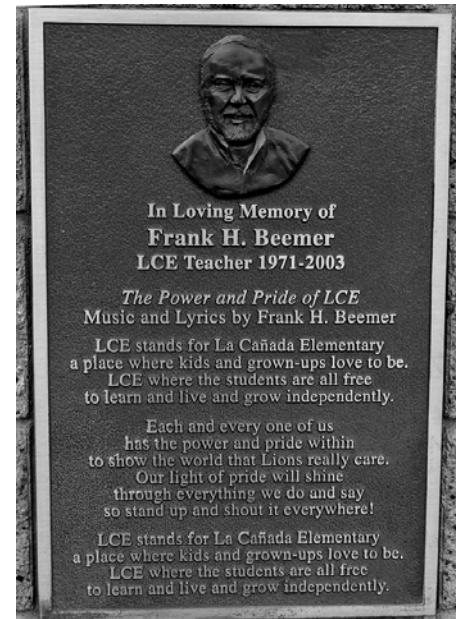
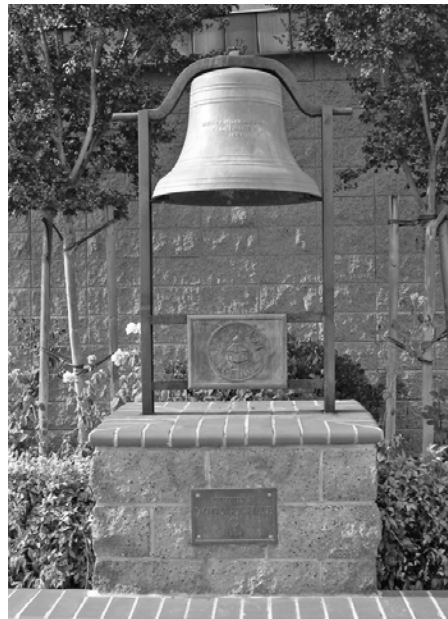


Church of the Lighted Window



The La Canada Congregational Church, better known as the Church of the Lighted Window, is the oldest church in La Canada. Next to the entryway off the patio is the dedication stone from the original structure, dated 1897, and an added plaque from its rebuild in 1924. Also by the entryway is the plaque denoting its establishment as a California Historic Landmark in 1969. Local lore says that this step was taken by the Lanterman family to preserve it during construction of the 210 Freeway, which dug a deep trench literally a few feet from the church foundations. It is located at 1200 Foothill.

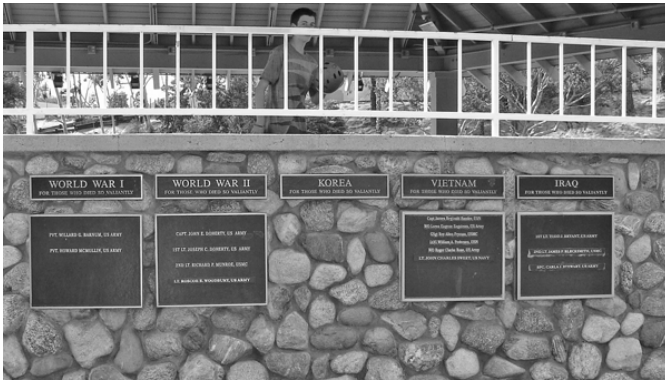
La Cañada Elementary School



A chance stop at La Cañada Elementary School turned up a wealth of plaques! The courtyard centered on the mounted ancient school bell is ringed with commemorative plaques. Two plaques, one very elaborate, are for former teachers, and one very touching plaque surrounded by a flower garden contains a poem to a former student, Molly Petit,

who apparently died in 1992 at the young age of 11. The bell is beautifully restored and has a forge date on it of 1886. It was a mate to the La Crescenta Elementary School bell that rang the students to school in the late 1800's and early 1900's. According to the accompanying plaques, the bell was remounted here by the La Canada Rotary Club in 1969, about the time this school was built at 4540 Encinas Dr.

Memorial Park



Memorial Park was built on an overpass of the 210 Freeway. True to its name it contains several plaques and a flagpole memorializing servicemen who have given their lives in various wars. The most recent addition is a memorial wall listing the names of La Canada residents, and the conflicts they lost their lives in; WWI, WWII, Korea,, Vietnam, Iraq.

Cramer, Carr Plaque



Twenty years ago a tragedy took place on this traffic island. A drunk driver speeding down Verdugo Road missed the curve and plowed through two families that were out for an evening stroll. Both mothers in the families died, plus a daughter from each family. The crosswalk was rerouted, the traffic island was beautified a few years ago with roses, and this plaque was installed. Located at Verdugo and Canada.

WPA Plaque



This is a really obscure one! This plaque sits by itself alongside Verdugo Road near Glorietta Park, seemingly commemorating nothing! It simple states that something here was built by the Work Projects Administration in 1940, but there is nothing nearby. A couple of guesses are that it might refer to some of the nearby flood control channels, or possibly to a city reservoir that is under Glorietta Park a block away. Located across street from 2963 Verdugo Rd.

GCC



This plaque little known, mostly hidden in the landscaping at the top of these stairs leading up to the administration building. It memorializes a GCC professor, Bonnie Koploy, who was swept away with several others in the 1978 Mill Creek flood in the San Gabriels.

Charles Bausback, Crescenta Valley Pioneer



Our most recent Crescenta Valley plaque honors Charles Basuback for being a Valley Pioneer. A tree was planted in his honor on the corner of Encinal and Pennsylvania, next to the Pennsylvania off-ramp, as part of the Arbor Day Celebration.





Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley
c/o 2717 Altura Ave.
La Crescenta, CA 91214

Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley

Presents:

Skeletons in our Backyards: Human remains found along the Alameda Corridor

Monday, August 17th, 7:00 PM

At the Center for Spiritual Living

(Formerly known as the La Crescenta Church of Religious Science)

Located on the corner of Dunsmore and Santa Carlotta

Please check your mailing label for accuracy.

Remember:

*****2009 MEMBERSHIPS RUN FROM MARCH 2009 TO MARCH 2010*****

***THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MEMBERS
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!***

Questions or changes?

Call Pam: (818) 957-2968



We're always interested...

We love to hear your recollections about Crescenta Valley from times past. Share your stories with us, please! Let us share your memories with our members.

Mail: 2717 Altura Ave.

La Crescenta, CA 91214

e-mail: lawlermom@yahoo.com



www.archaeospain.com/pintia

***Travel with us as
we...***

***Visit our Valley's
Plaques***

Our August Newsletter will feature
the plaques of the Crescenta Valley

(beginning with **page 3**)