

### A Message From Our President Don Williamson

Dear Members:

Here we are, in 2013, a year that is full with celebrations of Corona’s past accomplishments.

The first road race around the Corona Grand Boulevard took place on September 9, 1913. Corona had a population of approximately 4,000 people; about 100,000 more were here on that day to see the best racers drive the fastest cars in the world around “The Circle”. The logistics of providing food, facilities and accommodations for that large of a crowd is alone a fascinating story.

Our Vintage Home Tour will take place on Saturday, May 4. We consistently receive requests for them, and this year we will be presenting some of the historic homes that line the old racetrack on Grand Boulevard.

In 1913, two significant buildings opened on South Main, the Corona City Hall on the northeast corner of Eighth and Main and the Woman’s Improvement Clubhouse on the southeast corner of Eleventh and Main. We are grateful that the Clubhouse remains and that the Corona Woman’s Improvement Club has allowed us to include it on this year’s Vintage Home Tour.

Our first Quarterly Meeting of the year will be held at the historic Glen Ivy Resort. The ancient hot water springs were first opened to the paying public in 1860 giving the premises a very long history. The March date for this meeting will be announced soon.

In the summer months, we are looking forward to again opening our lemonade and antique stands at the Heritage Park Museum’s Antiques and Collectibles Faire. In July, look for us in the Fourth of July Parade.

Plans are well under way for the September Centennial Celebration of the 1913 Road Race. The Corona City Park, also turning 100 years old this year, will be the central site of the festivities. We are enthusiastically participating in this event as team members of Mayor Jason Scott’s planning committee. We will keep you updated as the date nears.

In October, the Corona Norco Unified School District will be celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first public school in what became their jurisdiction. Events will



take place marking this milestone including a gala that will appropriately take place on the grounds of the Historic Civic Center. As most of you are aware, this site served as Corona High School for over forty years.

We are going to have a great year and look forward to all of our members enjoying each of these and other events and activities.

A final note on 2012, our Holiday Party was a grand success. Thank you to our board member Doris Osko for all of her hard work in organizing and executing a most enjoyable evening. We also appreciate Nancy

Fay, president and all the members of the Woman’s Improvement Club for allowing us to have our party in their beautiful building. Special thanks to Eugene and Paula Montanez of Allegra Marketing • Print • Mail for debuting their stupendous historic calendar that night and distributing it to all in attendance.

For those that did not realize it, our Society is a proud member of the Greater Corona Valley Chamber of Commerce. This year we are equally proud to say that we now also belong to the Greater Corona Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Both of these organizations serve our community in the critical task of bringing new commerce to town and providing existing businesses with the tools necessary to increase their success. We are happy to support their efforts.

This is our first newsletter since the November election. Although it is old news, we congratulate Jason Scott on his re-election to the Corona City Council. Jason has also been selected to serve as mayor this year. Also congratulations to departing Corona City Treasurer, Dick Haley on winning a council seat. We look forward to working together with these two fine citizens on our shared goal of keeping Corona a wonderful place to live and work.

We thank former City Councilman Steve Nolan for his eight years on the City Council and all the contributions he made to the community. We wish you well Steve.

So forward we go into an exciting New Year!

Sincerely,

*Don Williamson*



# Our Holiday Party Festivities

By Doris Osko & Mary Winn

The Woman's Improvement Club of Corona was aglow with holiday spirit on December 6<sup>th</sup> as members of CHPS and their guests gathered to celebrate the season and hold the annual election for Directors and Emeritus Directors. The parlor contained not only a seven-foot lighted tree, but a sizeable grapevine sculpted moose a-twinkle with lights and contributed by Board member Christine Gary.

Pres. Don Williamson welcomed members and guests and introduced civic leaders and members of the CHPS Board. Present were Mayor Jason Scott, Mayor Pro-tem Karen Spiegel, City Council members Eugene Montanez and Dick Haley, Chairman of the Planning Commission Aaron Hake and Parks and Recreation Commissioner Kevin Button. We certainly are aware of the many invitations extended to our city leaders and appreciate that they chose to spend their time commemorating the holiday season and Corona's precious past with the Corona Historic Preservation Society.

The spirit of giving was epitomized by Eagle Scout candidate, Jacob Delgado, who presented Treasurer Richard Winn with a check for more than \$800.00 covering the costs of the Society's purchase of the marker plaque for CHPS Historic Site marker No.17 at Sunnyslope Cemetery. The money was a result of fund raising by Jacob, his family, and members of Boy Scout Troop 999 to erect a historical marker which Jacob designed and constructed. Jacob was accompanied by his father Dale and brother Ethan who have also performed countless acts of service for the community. (The Delgado home on Garretson Avenue was one of those featured in this year's Vintage Home Tour.)

Vice-President Mary Winn emceed a game with questions and answers related to Corona's history to remind us of some of the important places and events in our past. She also conducted the elections for Directors (two year terms) and Emeritus Directors (one year term.) The slate proposed by the Nominations Committee was elected. This included: Christine Gary, Mark German, Paula Muñoz, and Mary Winn as regular directors and Marla Benson, Janette Neumann, and Ted Taylor as Emeritus Directors.

*Continued on page 6*



## Our Preservation Grant Program

The CHPS Grant Committee along with the Board of Directors of the Corona Historic Preservation Society would like to assist local homeowners in making necessary improvements to their historic homes.

We will process any application within 60 days after submittal. Once a grant has been approved and reimbursement limits established, funds will be made available upon completion, inspection and onsite final approval.

Take this opportunity to do some fixing up and have part of the material cost covered by CHPS. Remember we are interested in helping people beautify their homes for others to see, so applications are primarily for curb appeal projects.



If you have a place that you feel needs help, either your own or a neighbor's, please feel free to contact Chairman Mark German (951) 500-2767 or send him an E-mail at <mgerman@ca.rr.com>. He will help in any way possible to provide the information you need.

Grant applications are available at the Community Development Department at Corona City Hall, 400 South Vicentia, and at the Heritage Room of the Corona Public Library.

More information and grant applications can be downloaded from our Website:  
<<http://corona-history.org/grants.html>>

***Please share this information with others!***

# RACING DRIVERS AND OTHER NOTABLE MEN TO BE HERE

## Oldfield and Tezlaff, Together With Officials of the Western Automobile Association to Come Tuesday.

+ A rousing and enthusiastic meeting of automobile drivers and owners is planned for next Tuesday, when Wm. Pickens, manager for Teddy Yetzlaff and Barney Oldfield, together with these famous drivers will be in Corona for the purpose of viewing the Grand Boulevard and convincing themselves that the to-be-famous speedway is really a three mile circle with no sharp turns.



Famous pioneer racer Barney Oldfield is seen here zooming along the Grand Boulevard speedway in his Mercer racecar during the inaugural race of 1913. At the time, the stately home at 1136 East Grand Boulevard belonged to city trustee William J. Pentelow who in 1913 also served as president of the Corona Chamber of Commerce. Henry H. Holmes served as Corona's mayor in 1913. Pentelow was mayor during subsequent Corona Road Races held in 1914 and 1916.

*Photo is courtesy of the Corona Public Library.*

# "CAN MAKE AVERAGE SPEED OF 90 MILES PER HOUR ON THIS"

## This Was the Opinion Given Out After Barney Oldfield Circled the Proposed Improved Speedway.---Mayor Holmes Gets Fast Ride.

+ The largest crowd of auto enthusiasts ever assembled on our streets in such a short space of time, turned out Thursday afternoon on Main street near the city hall, to give welcome to Barney Oldfield, Wm. Pickens, A. McCass and other racing enthusiasts on their inspection trip of Corona's proposed improved speedway.

**Editor's note:** Since 1913 was pivotal in Corona's history, this year's CHPS Newsletters will include snippets from newspapers from the city's past.

One hundred years ago, **the top headline** appeared on the front page of *The Corona Independent* on January 9, 1913.

In the article that followed, Coronans were encouraged to show off their civic pride by providing a spirited welcome to the highly anticipated visitors. This is reflected in the following quote: "It is suggested that automobile owners and drivers have their cars decorated with Corona pennants. If not in possession of one of the Royal blue pennants with the gold lettering, they may be purchased at The Independent, or at Billing's or Bates' stores for 50¢ each."

**The bottom headline** is from page 1 of the January 16, 1913 issue of the *The Corona Independent*.

Barney Oldfield, the world record holder for fastest speed at the time, entered the city in his "Blitzen Benz." Soon after, "it was decided to show the master driver around the 'Pride of Corona,' the Grand Boulevard." After the tour, it was declared that drivers "can make an average speed of 90 miles per hour on this," speeds greater than those reached at the course in Santa Monica "which is something Corona can brag about." Convinced of the potential for great success, Corona City officials then set about immediately to form an automobile club to sponsor the first Corona Road Race which was held some nine months later on September 9, 1913.

# Historic Site Marker Update by Richard Winn

This year has been a very good year for historic site marker placement. Several were planned for the last couple of years, that for various extenuating circumstances did not materialize. The marker numbers referenced represent the order in which the plaques were ordered, not when the projects were completed.

The first marker placed this year was for the historic Lemonia Grove as Site Marker No. 16, located at 3750 Rimpau Street, seen below: This was an Eagle Scout Project for Life Scout Joey Clark, from Troop 421, in Corona.



The next marker placed occurred on November 8, when Site marker No. 18 was placed on the northeast corner of Ramona and Sixth Street



honoring the Corona Theater/Landmark building located at 201 East Sixth St. by Life Scout Spencer Eccles from Crew 399 in Corona as his Eagle Scout Project. This project had an interesting history that is tied to that of Historic Site Marker No. 15 which will conclude this update.

The third marker placed occurred on December 2 when Life Scout Jacob Delgado from Troop 999 in Norco poured a concrete pedestal near the office of the Corona-Sunnyslope Cemetery, commemorating the city's fourth Historic District. A black granite plaque identifying Historic Site Marker No. 18 was affixed the next week. The last marker for this



year is one we have been waiting for since 1978. This marker was anticipated in 2007 when a medical office building was planned for 801 South Main Street, the historic site of Corona's first public library, funded by an \$11,000. grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation in 1906, and placed on the national Register of Historic Places in 1977. The marker plaque has resided in our office for more than two years waiting for the opportunity to place it on the property. Life Scout Spencer Eccles gathered his crew to construct a concrete monument, which would later be moved to the site, upon which to place the granite plaque. Spencer sought donations, raised the funds and the Scouts built the forms, tied the rebar, poured the concrete, dug the hole and did every other necessary thing to construct the obelisk, but were unable to contact the owner for final permission to place it and complete the project. We agreed that we would just tie two markers together with one project, so Spencer and his team built a marker base, but placed a plaque for another project in our inventory, the Corona Theater-Landmark Building.



The City of Corona ultimately came through for us and is permitting us to place the marker in the public-right-of-way in an empty tree well on the Main Street sidewalk near the intersection with Eighth Street. You will shortly see Historic Site Marker No. 15 appear in this location, giving us the answer to a Corona trivia question: What intersection in town has four historic site markers and what do they honor?

The answer is Eighth and Main where the city's first fire station is honored on the northeast corner, Corona's First Baptist Church on the northeast corner, Corona's first hospital on the southwest corner and now, Corona's Carnegie Library on the southeast corner.

**Editor's note:** A map featuring the locations of our Historic Markers will appear in a future CHPS Newsletter.

## I Remember When... Jim "Chayo" Rodriguez By Don Williamson

Babe Ruth was still in the prime of his career when Corona's own baseball legend, Jim "Chayo" Rodriguez was born. A midwife performed the delivery in his parents' Corona home on North Buena Vista. A brother assigned "Jim" his nickname.

In the early years of his life, his father was a migrant worker. Chayo traveled along with his family from crop to crop with the seasons. Corona though was always home. He remembers visits to his

"compadres" (godparents') home in Prado and hearing the bells from the first St. Edward church on Sixth and Merrill ringing to welcome all to Mass.

Sadly, when he was about 10, his father passed away ending the family's agriculture odyssey. Chayo's Mom and older brothers supported the family by picking area citrus and grapes in and around Corona. With the start of World War II, both his brothers joined the service.

The old Washington Elementary School on West Grand Boulevard and Second Street was where Chayo began attending school. "Letha Raney was my fifth grade teacher, she was really nice to us," he said. By the time he entered seventh grade at Corona Junior High School, Letha Raney had become the principal of his new school.

Near young Chayo's home in the area of Railroad and Buena Vista streets there was a baseball field. It was here that he developed his skills spending hours playing the game. Chayo says, "Sports became my life."

Baseball was the most popular form of recreation in Corona for most of his life, and for over sixty years Chayo was at its center.

While in junior high, Chayo began playing ball in the Corona Recreation Department leagues. He became renowned for outstanding play and he says his notoriety had a positive impact on his everyday life, "It always made it easy for me to be accepted by everyone." During an era when race was an especially divisive issue, he played on teams that in the vernacular of the day included "whites" and "Mexicans".

There is a legendary team in the annals of Corona sports, true old timers remember the Corona Athletics for their high caliber of play. A little about the team, which started in the 1930s and continued into the 1970s, is chronicled in the book *Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire*. The book includes pho-



Jim "Chayo" Rodriguez holding a bat that was presented to him engraved with the names of all the teams on which he played.

tos of Chayo and his teams. The book was celebrated in Corona last summer reuniting many old teammates and friends. Chayo was just 13 when he was recruited by Athletics' leader Art Miguel and played on the team for years alongside other Corona stars Ray Delgadillo, the Uribe and Ragsdale brothers, Tito Cortez, Bobby Perez, etc.

Chayo recalled, "We played at Railroad and Merrill, that was our field. We played every Sunday and for most of the years we only played at

home. There would be some exhibition games against single and double A professional players that we would win."

In addition to baseball, Chayo also played fast pitch softball belonging to many teams over the years, some outside of Corona. He was often the team manager. In the early 1950s, he was even the founder of another memorable team, the Corona Merchants.

He quit playing ball in 1983, but has continued to manage teams and coach players ever since. Chayo donated hundreds of items including uniforms, equipment and photos to the Latino Baseball History Project Museum at California State University, Los Angeles.

It was not baseball that would lead Chayo to the love of his life. "I was doing some amateur boxing in 1947," he remembered, "and after one of my fights I met Emily Delgadillo. I walked her home and we have been together ever since." Chayo began a three-year stint in the U.S. Army in 1950. In 1952 he and Emily, also a Corona native, married and have remained so for over sixty years. He emphasized, "My wife backed me up in everything I did and I could not have done any of it without her support."

Chayo spent his work career in civil service for the federal government as a quartermaster at several area locations including the military base in El Toro and at Norton Air Force Base.

As a coach and mentor, Chayo has contributed much to the ballplayers of Corona. In the 1970s he began helping many "at risk" young men by forming the Chicano's softball team. Chayo mentioned, "We hosted a tournament for 23 years at St. Edward's Park where a sign was put up that told everyone the place was our home." He named the tournament after Art Miguel, his old Athletics coach.

*Continued on page 7*

## Our Holiday Party Festivities *continued*

We were again fortunate to have the Corona High Madrigals present to entertain us with their magnificent voices and musical pieces from around the globe. This has become a favorite tradition with our society. They are preparing to visit Hawaii during their Spring Break next year and funds donated during their musical performances help defer the costs of their trip. We thank all in attendance at the party for their generosity with monetary donations to the Madrigals' trip. The Madrigals have become famous for the variety of their music recognizing various cultures and traditions, and for the clear harmonic perfection of their delivery.

Members of CHPS and Madrigals enjoyed the delicious potluck dishes and appetizers contributed by the excellent cooks of the Society. CHPS Board members Jackie Bland, Christine Gary, Mark German, Tom Muñoz, Doris Osko, Pres. Don Williamson, and Richard and Mary Winn decorated and setup for the party-making it an enjoyable evening for all. Eugene and Paula Montanez provided all present with a Corona Historic Calendar for 2013, which commemorates the Corona Road Races of a hundred years ago.

The party was a huge success mainly due to Doris Osko who organized and planned the event. Kudos to you once again, dear Doris, for your invaluable organizational skills and warm hospitality.



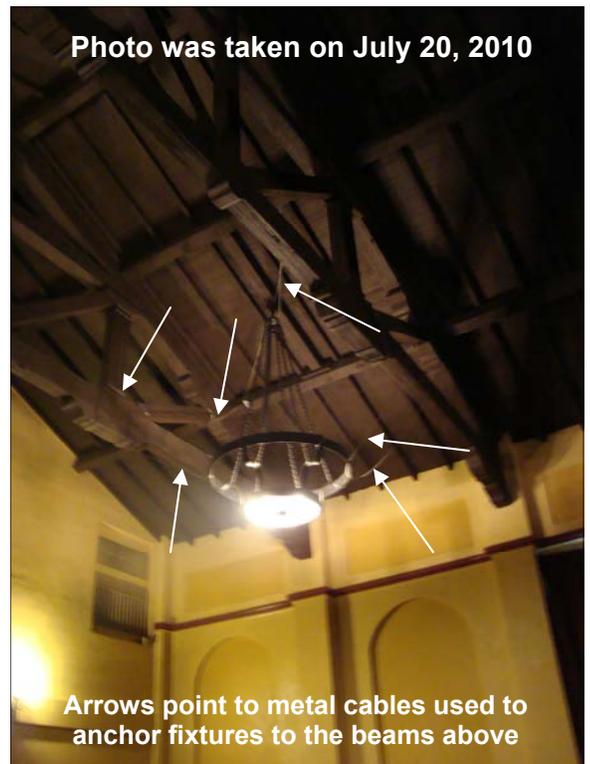
## Historic Civic Center's Auditorium/Theater Lights

In the CHPS role as consultants to the City Planning Commission, City Council and City departments we were invited by the Parks and Recreation Department to assist in some improvements to the auditorium. In July 2010 we were notified of a safety issue with the chandeliers in the auditorium of the Historic Civic Center. Several bolts securing two of the fixtures to the ceiling had loosened over the years and had been found on the floor below. Metal cables were utilized as a "temporary fix" to anchor lights to beams above. The department was considering replacing all the fixtures. CHPS Board members met with city folks and options were discussed to prevent the ultimate removal of the chandeliers forever from where they'd hung since 1923, for nearly 90 years.

We are pleased to report that the Parks & Recreation Department hired an engineering firm to evaluate the situation and an amicable solution was reached. The chandeliers have now been properly secured in their original positions, a pulley system was installed to allow theater light bars to be lowered for spot focusing and maintenance, and LED bulbs replaced previous bulbs for better light, less maintenance and they will use less electricity.

This is just one example of how CHPS strives to work with others in "Preserving the Best of Corona." **NOTE: This magnificent building is on the National Register of Historic Places.**

Photo was taken on July 20, 2010



Arrows point to metal cables used to anchor fixtures to the beams above

# Membership Information

**When joining or renewing your membership, please make your  
tax deductible check payable to "CHPS"**

Individual Member	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>I'd like to volunteer!</b>	
Family	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospitality refreshments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Newsletter writing articles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business	\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vintage Home Tour	
Patron	\$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	docent / volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life	\$500.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Board of Directors	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Gift from \_\_\_\_\_



Membership Status: Renewal  New

**Please complete form and mail to:**

**CHPS  
P.O. Box 2904  
Corona, CA 92878**



## We Welcome Our New & Continuing Members

Patricia Barker Kevin Bash & Brigitte Jouxtel Barbara Becker Judy Biggs Wanda Cleveland Aaron & Lauralynn Hake Lee Hansen Mitch & Karen Lloyd Jerry & Jean Neumann Mark & Nancy Parrish	George & Carrie Pope Georgia Lambert Randall Gretchen Scoggins George & Pat Scott Carl & Sue Simmons Julie Stern Ted Taylor Don & Diane Unkenholz Peter & Connie Weber
--	--

## I Remember When... Jim "Chayo" Rodriguez *continued*

Chayo's years of coaching have earned him CIF and state championship rings. His den has letters of thanks from many NCAA women's softball players thanking him for all of his guidance. Most recently, Chayo has been an assistant coach for Santiago High School's girl's softball program. His contribu-

tions to local youth sports are his greatest legacy.

Today, Chayo Rodriguez is a happy man as reflected in his stating, "I enjoyed all that I have done. I was thinking the other day, if I had it to live over again, I wouldn't change a thing."



## Board of Directors

President - Don Williamson  
Vice-President - Mary Winn  
Secretary - Doris Osko  
Treasurer - Richard Winn

### Directors

Jackie Bland  
Christine Gary  
Mark German  
Paula Muñoz  
Tom Muñoz

### Directors Emeritus

Marla Benson  
Janette Neumann  
Ted Taylor

To contact us call  
**951.898.2044**

*Please leave a brief  
message*



## Our Mission Statement

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization dedicated to preservation and revitalization of Corona's historic buildings, neighborhoods and sites.

Through education, persuasion, legislation and organization, CHPS acts as an advocate for the preservation of Corona's historic resources.

## Monthly Meetings

CHPS Board meetings are held each month to transact Society business, discuss issues affecting the Society and preservation of local historic resources.

**All members are invited to attend.**

The next meetings will be:

**Thursday, Jan 17, 7:00 p.m. at CHPS office**

**Thursday, Feb 21, 7:00 p.m. at CHPS office**

---

**Visit us at: [www.corona-history.org](http://www.corona-history.org)**



P.O. Box 2904  
Corona, California 92878-2904



*A happy NEW YEAR*



Don't forget your  
Valentine in February!

**Our first 2013 Quarterly Meeting will be  
in March ~ details will be provided as they develop.**