

Legacy Links



**PRESERVING OLD LA VERNE'S
ENVIRONMENT:
MAKING HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE**

LA VERNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Every Picture Tells a Story:



A monarch of Kuns Park is failing. One of the two huge carob trees that were planted in 1910 by Henry Kuns lost a major limb on August 8, 2024. The tree, plagued by fungus and the ravages of time, is slowly being devoured from the inside out. Earlier in this year, LVHS President Sherry Best met with employees of West Coast Arborists to discuss the tree's fate. The La Verne Public Works Department is monitoring the trees but little can be done to address the tree's health other than maintenance support. Surrounding two carobs is a sturdy fence that prevents visitors from climbing on

the low branches, a tempting activity that further endangers the tree and may be dangerous to climbers. Visit the carob trees in Kuns Park and take a few photos for posterity!

President's Message

So many events have been planned for the 2024-2025 year that it will be hard to enumerate them all. The LVHS Board met on August 3 for its summer retreat to discuss major projects and plan the calendar. We've made good progress on the display cases and they went back to La Verne's four elementary schools with new content and a three-month rotation schedule to maintain student interest. In addition, Hillcrest Retirement Community has accepted two cases to be filled with residents' artifacts. Perhaps these can be shared at a future member/community meeting.

La Verne's National Night Out was held on **Tuesday, August 6th** in Las Flores Park and the LHS was there with a table and items for residents. The table next to us was sponsored by the Cultural And Social Inclusion (CASI) organization that had a display of a world map and pins that could be placed to designate people's counties of origin. Children and their parents had a great time with this experience.



A potential firefighter poses with her mother in front of the LVHS table at National Night Out

The LVHS also participated in the city-sponsored Senior Craft Fair at the Community Center on **Tuesday, September 10th** from 9:00am-12:00pm. The LVHS has decided to participate in as many city-sponsored events as possible. This is a good way to meet residents and show our community spirit.

On Saturday, September 28th, the LVHS team participated in the San Dimas/La Verne Trivia Night at Hillcrest. Team members included Sherry Best, Robin Carder, Robert Carder, Al Clark, Ed Hume, Susan Hume, and Bill Lemon. Our team, "History Buffs, Not in the Buff", battled bravely but did not take home the history trophy this year. That honor went to La Verne's Cultural And Social Inclusion (CASI) organization.

Look for the LVHS at the city-sponsored "Trunk or Treat" on **Saturday, October 12th** from 5:00-8:00pm in the City Hall parking lot. The International will make an appearance in a witch hat and appropriate Halloween decorations. This kid-friendly event is a great opportunity to support community spirit. Boo!

Our member/community meeting is upcoming on **Monday, October 14th** at 7:00pm at the Veteran's Hall. We will use this time to conduct a general business meeting and vote on By-Laws, elect officers, and receive the initial copy of our 2024-2025 activity

calendar. Our special guest speaker is Don Kendrick, who will tell us about a project he is leading to memorialize our veterans. To "sweeten the deal", this event will feature desserts. Please be part of deciding how we educate ourselves about history in La Verne.

Save time on **Saturday, November 16th**, for the **LVHS annual vintage sale and home tour**. We'll tour homes on Sixth and Fifth Streets, Bonita Avenue, "E" Street, and offer special tours of the Church of the Bretheran and their Peace and Carrots garden. The church, built in 1930, is an iconic landmark in the original Lordsburg area. Tour hours will be from 11:00am-4:00pm and attendees will be charged \$10. Some of the highlighted locations will feature opportunities to visit inside the homes and others will feature a synopsis of the home and its significance to La Verne's history. Come see our vintage items before or after the tour. What a bargain!

The LVHS was invited to participate in Cal Poly Pomona's "Day at the Farm" on **Saturday, November 23rd**, from 9am-3pm. We'll meet the public with lots of jam, jelly, marmalade, and other items for modest donation costs. It is time to expand our bank balance to get a bed and side boards on the International.

La Verne's holiday stroll is scheduled for **Saturday, December 7th**, from 3:00-5:30pm at Mainiero Square. The LVHS will be there with the International (in a Santa hat) to offer good cheer and holiday cookies.

After the holidays, visits to the Rubel Castle, Sam Maloof House and Garden, and the Huntington Museum, Library, and Garden are being planned. Look forward to educational and fun experiences with us.

If you are unsure of your membership status, contact Sherry Best at sbest@lavernehistoricalsociety.org or call 909/596-4679 for verification.

The back final page of this edition of Legacy Links serves as a statement of LVHS' accomplishments in 2023-2024. We continue to raise the profile of our organization and bring value to the community.

Peace and Carrots: Community Service in Action



The November 16th vintage sale and home tour will include a visit to the Peace and Carrots Community Garden at the Church of the Brethren. Nestled in what was once a modest playground in a church parking lot, the garden has blossomed into a vibrant hub of community and sustainability. Founded by Mike and Michael Wolfesen, this garden adopted an innovative allotment system, allowing community residents to cultivate their own plots throughout the year. This initiative not only empowers individuals to grow their own fresh produce but also fosters a deeper connection with the environment and the community.

A cornerstone of the garden's mission is its commitment to giving back. Peace and Carrots allocates 30% of its annual harvest to local food pantries, including Inland Valley Hope Partners, Holy Name of Mary Food Bank, and The Leo Food Pantry at ULV. This generous contribution helps to ensure that fresh, nutritious food reaches those in need.

Under the stewardship of Marvhic and Kristina Guinto-Flores, the garden has flourished with renewed vigor. The new managers have strengthened ties with local institutions and established partnerships with the ULV and Bonita High School. Through these collaborations, they've engaged younger generations, teaching them

about the importance of gardening and the value of community service.

Their dedication to the garden is so profound that it even inspired a unique celebration of love. Marvhic and Kristina chose to elope within its serene confines, with the ceremony officiated by a community garden member who is an ordained minister.

Look at the image below and celebrate this garden's bounty.



Turning on the Lights at Kuns Park

Kuns Park symbolizes La Verne's commitment to quality of life. Earlier this year, the LVHS was asked about the rumor that it was possible to turn on the lights at Kuns Park from a private residence that faces it. Impossible, we thought. After speaking with La Verne and San Dimas residents with a much longer history and greater knowledge of local history, and searching several articles about Kuns Park, we discovered the truth to this belief. Here is the story.

In 1890, brothers David and Henry Kuns were early settlers in Lordsburg. The next year, they were one of the four Church of the Brethren members who bankrolled the Lordsburg Academy. The Kuns family continued this support with lifetimes of community improvement.

Like his father David and uncle Henry, Henry L. Kuns was a successful businessman and leader in financial affairs. Kuns bought 18 acres of property and built a hotel that would later become the original David and Margaret Home for Children. He was President of the First National Bank as well as a member of the Lordsburg Academy Board of Trustees from 1905 to 1908. Kuns was an experienced rancher and the first mayor of Lordsburg in 1911. In this capacity, Kuns pushed to plant trees and improve city services.



In 1911, Kuns built two homes in La Verne: his own at Magnolia Avenue and Fifth Street and another for daughter and son-in-law Ora Lamb Kuns Johnson and J.M. Johnson at Magnolia and Bonita Avenue (which was then Fourth Street). As the owner of property in front of the houses, he laid it out as a park, planted and tended trees and flowers, and offered the property to Lordsburg officials for a public park. Galen Beery, former President of the LVHS, stated that the offer was initially rejected because they thought it was too far away from the heart of old Lordsburg.

Examination of the image on the previous page shows the Kuns and Johnson houses, as well as the small carriage house that lies between them. The park is in the foreground. The later image of the park below shows that it was laid out with a tennis court and lighting.



After Kuns died in 1930 and his heirs failed to pay county taxes on the park land, Walker W. Downs, city attorney and secretary of the La Verne Chamber of Commerce, bid for the city in a 1938 public auction and paid \$250, \$50 more than the highest bidder from Los Angeles. In 1939, Kuns Park became the city's second official park and contains what is officially recognized as the oldest tree in the city.

John Huie has the following memories of operating the lighting in Kuns Park from the Kuns House...

Regarding the Kuns house, I remember going on the back porch of the Johnson house and seeing the fuse blocks, but I do not remember specifically going onto the back porch of the Kuns house, but for some reason, believe the fuses were on the back porch. I do remember Mr. Harbin (George Francis Harbin, identified on the Registrar of Voters as living with his wife in the Kuns House in 1934-1940. George Harbin was a teacher at Bonita and contemporary of Ellsworth Green, John Price, and Rudolph Fischer). Mr. Harbin told me that he discovered that he was paying for the lighting of Kuns park and that he shut off the lighting once he discovered this situation.

Also, Mr. Harbin told me he was offered the entire park property by, I believe he said Pomona First Federal, for four thousand dollars. I assume the park was built by Mr. Kuns and was donated to the city after Mr. Harbin's tenure.

I was in the Kuns house when it was owned by Curley White and remember the house had a walk-in vault/safe. His daughter Marie and my sister were good friends. My sister and Marie were Class of 1946 at Bonita. I assume the White's moved after the 1946 school year. I know we visited Curley White at his new home in Corona, possibly as late as 1951.

Sometimes those stories, once lost in time, are really true. Kuns Park today remains a place of recreation and relaxation that was the gift of a generous and public-spirited resident.

History for Sale

You could own a piece of history! An important historical landmark, the Carrión Adobe, is for sale in La Verne. Originally owned by Saturnino Carrión, the adobe was built in 1868 and is currently on the market for almost \$2,000,000.

The adobe, with two bedrooms and two bathrooms, is a 2284 square foot dwelling on a little more than 2 acres. A watercolor portrait of the adobe, painted by Evelyn Keiser, an art teacher at Lordsburg College, belongs to the LVHS.



An interesting article written by former LVHS President Galen Beery for the March 2011 edition of the *La Verne Community News*, tells the following story of the adobe.



Saturnino Carrión standing by the adobe

Rancher Saturnino Carrión Built an Adobe – and Lost It

Galen Beery, LVHS President

On March 19, 1893, an orphan just eleven years old was given 380 acres of land in what is now La Verne.

It was the festival day of San Jose, when the first Christian religious service in this area took place just east of present-day Ganesha Park. Don Ygnacio Palomares and Don Ricardo Vejar and their families knelt as Padre Zalvideo of the San Gabriel Mission offered a thanksgiving mass.

The governor of California had granted Palomares and Vejar two square leagues of land, and the tract was named the Rancho San Jose. They soon built the first house, now known as Pomona's La Casa Primera.

The orphan boy was Saturnino Carrión, born in 1862 to Cassiano Carrión and Josefa Lopez. His mother was a sister of Ygnacio's wife Concepcion Lopez de Palomares, and when his parents passed away, Saturnino came to live with his aunt and uncle. They raised him as one of their own, and the land was given to him for his future.

Carrión chose to begin ranching near the small town of Los Angeles, at Paredon Blanco (now Boyle Heights). He married Dorothy Navarro. The family soon included sons Ramon, Julian, and Francisco.

The years 1862 and 1863 were dry years, with less than four inches of rain. With no grass or water, cattle starved and died by the score. Carrión realized that his property near his aunt and uncle had much better grazing land, and drove his herd there, placing it in charge of two vaqueros.

The next year Carrión returned. He found the cattle in good condition and some plantings doing well, so he decided to build a home for his family. Construction materials were brought from Los Angeles in ox-drawn carts and on pack animals. Adobe blocks were made on the site.

In 1868 the L-shaped structure was completed and the Carrión family moved into their new home. Five daughters – Josepha, Dolores, Rosa, Agnes, and Louisa, were born in the adobe.

Saturnino chose to do his farm work with oxen even after his neighbors used horses and wagons. Once, as he used his oxen to haul a load of hay, his cousin Francisco Palomares asked him why he didn't buy a wagon and use horses. He replied that when the price of wagons came down to one dollar each, he would buy one. Later a merchant held a drawing for a wagon. Chances were \$1 each, so Saturnino bought one – and won the wagon!

By 1887, when Lordsburg was founded, Carrión's sons helped with the ranch work. With the cattle and the crops, life was not bad at all. His daughters played in the shade of the eucalyptus tree planted southeast of the house.

In the 1890s other landowners proposed building a dam to create a reservoir to the southwest. Carrión was against it as some of his land would be flooded. He took legal action, mortgaging his property to pay

the costs. Sadly, he lost his case, and with it his property.

After the Carrións moved to a home in Pomona, the adobe was abandoned. It deteriorated and was vandalized. A company drilled for oil on the property but found nothing.

In 1941 Edwin E. Fuller bought the old adobe. Ten years later the next owner, Paul E. Traweek, began restoring the structure. It was then acquired by Robert M. Tatsch who made more improvements.

Once again livable, the adobe was designated a State Historic Landmark in #386 in 1959. Despite this, County officials had no interest in buying it to become part of Bonelli Park. It remained in private hands.

During the 1990s, San Dimas and La Verne third graders came on "Hands-On History" tours. New owners, a married couple, both pilots with planes at Brackett Field, invited them in. The children marveled at the rural setting, the thick adobe walls, the wood shake roof, and the enormous eucalyptus.

With Brackett Field to the south and the University of La Verne to the north, Carrión Adobe yet survives, our reminder of Saturnino Carrión and our Mexican heritage.

The color images in this article were copied from the Multiple Listing pages. Click on [919 Puddingstone Dr, La Verne, CA 91750 | MLS #P1-18387 | Zillow](#) to view a description and more images of the adobe.





La Verne is a Good Place to Live – For Now

La Verne is a good place to live – for now. People choose to live in a city for many reasons: the climate, the size, and schools, the affordability, the quality of life, and the list goes on.

In August of 2010, *Family Circle* magazine featured a piece about the 10 best towns for families. Their choices were national and unsolicited. Their annual “roundup” of “perfect places to raise kids”, were based on “...affordability, green space, blue-ribbon schools, and giving spirit”.

The following description of 2010 La Verne follows:

Nestled in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains 30 miles east of Los Angeles, La Verne has abundant hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails. At Heritage Park, residents not only enjoy summer concerts but can also pick oranges in historic citrus groves. “You’re with family and friends, out in the sun and having fun – what’s not to like?” says Lynn Del Toro, 54. Husband George, 55, who manages a local water municipality, thinks of La Verne as a cozy little village. “The best thing about living here is the friendships we’ve built,” he says. The couple, along with son Lucas, 15, and daughter Noel, 11, go on vacation with neighbors and spend holidays with families from the kids’ schools. La Verne’s teachers go all out for their students. Lucas’ high school freshman class, for example, didn’t just read Homer’s Odyssey. “They acted out scenes in our city

pool on a floating stage made of recyclable 2-liter soda bottles and set the whole thing to 1980s music for a cross-curriculum English, science, and social studies project,” says George. “That’s a production no one will forget!”

Kids of all ages put in hundreds of hours every year doing fundraising and volunteer activities. At Oak Mesa Elementary School, students made 100 blankets for two area hospitals, while students at Bonita High raised \$3,000 for Haiti relief by collecting donations on campus and at basketball games.

A beloved attribute of this city, still small by California suburban living standards, is a sense of timeless tradition and a friendly feel. But is La Verne still upholding this tradition? The pressures of increased urbanization, exploding housing costs, and loss of local control has created pressure for La Verne to change, and not always in ways that strengthen or even maintain values that contribute to our quality of life.

A friend recently asked me, “Going back to years, can you name specific activities of city government that has enhanced residents’ quality of life?” One way to inform and support policies is by updating La Verne’s General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Last updates in 1998, the General Plan will guide changes for the next 20 years. The following are some highlights that are specific to the LVHS.

1. La Verne’s Policy related to mature trees protected trees. La Verne supports the protection of mature trees by removing them only when necessary and prioritizing replacement trees on-site of removal areas.
 - ✓ LVHS response: The LVHS urged replacement of deodar cedars along Arrow Hwy. where trees had been removed to make way for the A Line operated by the MTA. Members need to follow the progress of this policy to contribute to the area’s visual quality.

2. The urban forest. La Verne's stated policy is to maintain existing streetscapes and develop an urban forest along the City's major corridors and in residential neighborhoods to provide avian habitat, sequester carbon monoxide emissions, foster pedestrian activity, and provide shade.

✓ Current residential projects fails to provide trees or even moderate landscaping, particularly in denser developments. The LVHS advocated for development of park space to help mitigate this deficiency. The residential area bounded by Williams Avenue Fruit Street, Baseline Road, and Foothill Boulevard was identified as "park deficient" in a 2016 survey conducted by Los Angeles County. The LVHS urged members to advocate for open space preservation and parks to enhance quality of life for its residents.

3. Historical Commission. The LVHS is exploring the possibility of requesting that the city create an Historical Commission to focus on preservation. More information will be available in upcoming issues of *Legacy Links*.

Displays for Schools and Community Center

School is in session, and the LVHS freshened up display cases at La Verne's four elementary schools with new artifacts from our collection. An additional collection was moved to La Verne's Community Center for city-wide viewing. Plans are being made to place a display case at Ramona Middle School and one at Bonita High School. Contents of the display cases will be rotated three times during the year to sustain student interest. Members of the LVHS are eager to attend the schools and conduct lessons about La Verne's history.



Future LVHS Directions

The LVHS strives to fulfill its motto of "Preserving Old La Verne's Environment: Making History for the Future." We will continue our restoration of the 1938 International truck as we pursue getting a truck bed and sides built onto the chassis. We offer six annual newsletters and arrange multiple visits to places of interest in La Verne and surrounding cities. We collaborate with the BUSD, city departments, and Hillcrest to keep history at the forefront of La Verne's priorities. We sponsor unique events like our cemetery and bronze marker walking tours.



2024 NEW LVHS Members

Steve and Lori Johnson
Marilyn Lee