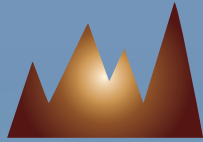


SUMMIT LIFE

VOLUME 3, #25



JULY 2015

THE CHATSWORTH CHOO, CHOO



A Day of Summer Fun:

ONCE YOU RIDE THE CHATSWORTH CHOO, CHOO TO DEL MAR,

By Garry Wormser, Editor

They say only two horse races exceed the excitement and pageantry of Del Mar, The Ascot in England and the Kentucky Derby. Whereas the Ascot is Royal, the annual meet at Del Mar is immensely practical thanks to the good people at Amtrak.

Google "Amtrak.Com" or call 800-872-72145, and you'll have all the information you'll need to obtain low cost, round trip seating on the Pacific Surfliner to Del Mar. If you call three days in advance and have an Auto Club card, the stress

free round trip should cost no more than \$64 for a single adult.

As part of the fare, a free shuttle service will provide the five-minute ride from Solana Beach to the race-track itself. The Amtrak website will allow you to plan your whole day at the races with admission options including reserved seating, trackside dining tables and various admission ticket options. This year's meeting ends September 7.

In case you didn't know it, Amtrak single-handedly saved the passenger train business in the U.S. after World War II. Improved aircraft, efficient automobiles

and newly constructed highways combined to relegate privately owned passenger trains to the back burner as freight carriers. People flew more and drove less. Except for Penn Station in Philadelphia and Grand Central Station in New York, the great gothic structures that housed such legendary trains as the Daylight, and The 20th Century Limited were never to appear again.

In an attempt to get to a business meeting in Washington, D.C. during an airline strike in 1964, I called a Union Pacific booking agent who laughed over the phone. "The last time we booked a roomette



Automated Chatsworth Station was recently rebuilt and contains memorabilia as well as boarding information. *Larry LaCom/ Summit Life Photos*

YOU'LL KNOW WHAT "OFF TO THE RACES" REALLY MEANS

from California to D.C. was after Lincoln's assassination," he told me.

To counter the rapidly diminishing use of passenger trains to service the nation's cities; Congress passed the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970. This legislation established the National Railroad Passenger Corporation to take over the intercity passenger rail service that had been operated by private railroads. Amtrak began service on May 1, 1971, serving 43 states with a total of 21 routes.

Now for the second time in less than a century, the shoe is again on the other foot. Airlines are cutting costs and raising prices while the price at the gas pump has climbed and major highways continue to crumble. That's why Amtrak's fares to Del Mar or to just about anywhere in the U.S are currently unbeatable.

The unmanned Amtrak train depot in Chatsworth is located at 10040 Old Depot Plaza Road. It's an easy five-mile drive from the Summit. So, as the song goes, if you can make it there, you can go anywhere. By planning correctly, using all available discounts, you could conceivably transfer in downtown L.A. to a train headed to the Big Apple for less than \$3,000 round trip. That would include your own deluxe bedroom suite with private bath and shower. How do you like those apples? ❖



Amtrak Surf liner passengers hurry to seats, as train gets ready to depart for a day at Del Mar. *Larry LaCom/ Summit Life Photos*



Chatsworth Train Station replicates original station lost in 1897 fire. Other than protection from the weather, the station has few amenities yet appears warm and intimate. It handles about 64,000 paid passengers annually. *Larry LaCom/ Summit Life Photos*

MAJOR DROUGHT THREATENS WILD LIFE IN CHATSWORTH'S ECOLOGY POND

Los Angeles's only nature preserve at the North East edge of Chatsworth is barely noticeable from the road. Within the preserve, further hidden by fencing and trees, lies a three-acre Ecology Pond that has gone dry.

"While migratory birds can fly out of this fenced-in ecology system, fish and displaced animals cannot and are facing a terrible death as the pond turns into a mud puddle," said Kip Drabeck, spokesman for the Chatsworth Lake Manor Citizen's Committee, a fierce protector of the Pond's environment.

The CLMCC has joined forces with L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti and City Councilman Mitchell Englander, to determine why the L.A. Department of Water and Power has turned off the Pond's freshwater spigot entirely when the City itself has proposed far less drastic cutbacks.

For the last 30 or more years, the pond has always been filled with drinking water by the LADWP because that was the only source of water on the site of the former Chatsworth Reservoir. Thanks to pushback by the CLMCC and city officials, a small amount of non-potable water managed to trickle into the pond until late this month.

"In a single week in mid-month, about 70,000 gallons of non-potable water was delivered to the Pond by tanker trucks," said the CLMCC spokesperson. "That water, a fraction of what is needed to fill the 3-acre pond, has quickly evaporated in the summer heat. Additional water deliveries have not materialized and the pond is now virtually dry."

LADWP's geology division is currently investigating the possibility of installing ground water pumps to fill the Pond. Other challenging long-term options would be re-channeling Box Canyon Creek, Woolsey Canyon Creek and local storm run off into the Nature Preserve area. Storm water was diverted to by-pass the area years ago so it would not mix with reservoir drinking water.

"We thank the LADWP for working for a technical solution that could solve the water distribution problem over the long term," said the CLMCC spokesman. "But frankly, without the prompt attention and ongoing interest of Messrs. Garcetti and Englander, the Ecology Pond and everything in it might have been a dead issue by now." ♦



LADWP tanker driver pours potable water into the Chatsworth Pond. About 70,000 gallons were poured this month. *Larry LaCom/ Summit Life Photos*

PUBLIC MEETING

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) invites you to attend a public meeting regarding the Chatsworth Ecology Pond. The Pond, owned and managed by LADWP, is located within Chatsworth Nature Preserve in the Chatsworth community of the City of Los Angeles. At the public meeting, LADWP will give an update on the ecology pond's management in light of drought conditions and required water conservation measures, and provide an overview of options under study for future ecology pond maintenance.

Thursday, August 6, 2015, 6 – 8 pm

St. Johns Eudes Church, Grill Hall
9901 Mason Ave, Chatsworth, CA 91311

For more information about the Chatsworth Reservoir Property please contact Heidi Hiraoka, LADWP Property Manager, at Heidi.Hiraoka@ladwp.com or phone (213) 367-1057.

IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON AT A CONSTRUCTION SITE GUESS AGAIN



Summit Life staffers often drive past these two architectural homes on Woolsey Canyon Road. They were under new construction recently even though the structures were completed several years ago. Most of us decided that a swimming pool was being installed along side the more traditional home (top), and that a dog run was being installed along the side of the barrel vault home shown below. We were wrong on both counts. The top home now sports an enlarged driveway, while a tasteful gazebo can be seen behind the fencing of the home below. *Larry LaCom/ Summit Life Photos*

Young, Old, Gentle or Bold:

THE WEST VALLEY ANIMAL SHELTER HAS A PET FOR YOU

By Marci Wormser, Contributing Writer

On hopeful anticipation, Juddah perks up, wags his tail and comes close to the bars on his cage, meeting the eyes of his potential owners with an optimistic gaze. But in an all-too-familiar scenario, the senior cat's hopes of finding a forever home are dashed when the duo look at the information card printed on the outside of the cage and utter, "He's old." They then walk away in search of something younger and more energetic.

The 15-year-old orange tabby has been through this routine dozens of times already since he first came to the West Valley Animal Shelter in May. The sweet-tempered feline was brought to the shelter with 76 other cats when someone reported his owner for hoarding. Most of the other cats, which were younger, have already been adopted.

Older cats – and dogs – are the hardest to find homes for, according to Jan Selder, director of field operations for the six Los Angeles City-run animal shelters. The West Valley Animal Shelter serves the West Valley area, including Chatsworth, Reseda, Tarzana, Woodland Hills and Canoga Park.

"But I think it's worth it to take an older cat," says Selder, who has two cats of her own. "Kittens are fun, but they're a lot of work... The older ones are easy-going and they're already trained. Juddah is healthy and has a couple more good years."

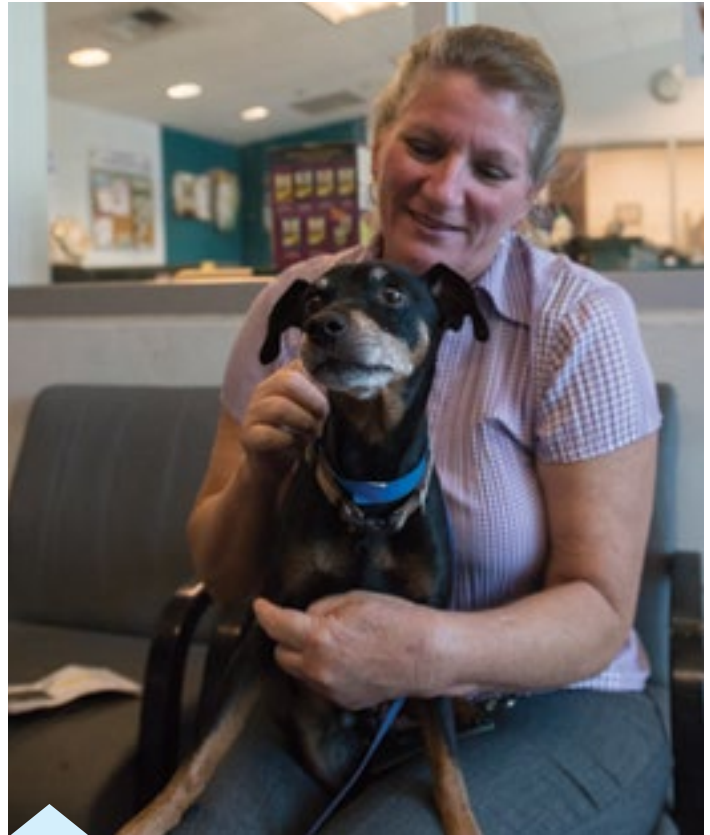
But whether you're looking for a young or a more senior companion, Jan urges all prospective animal owners not to discount their local shelters.

"If you want any animal, check a shelter first," she says. "That's where you are truly going to save a life. These guys have a time limit on them, and pets at a pet store obviously don't. No one's going to euthanize a pet at a pet store."

Other advantages of adopting an animal at a shelter, she says, are that the animals are already spayed or neutered and are micro chipped and vaccinated. Animals from pet stores and "backyard breeders," she says, aren't always healthy and they are a lot more expensive to buy.

Although the city shelters are not no-kill, "the life-saving rate has gone up tremendously," Jan says, adding that 85%-90% of the dogs and 50%-55% of the cats that are brought in to the shelter are saved.

The city's animal foster programs, in which community members act as temporary "foster parents" to needy cats and dogs, help to free up space at the shelters, thereby reducing the euthanasia rate, according to Jan. Some of the animals that need foster parents are unweaned kittens that need to be bottle-fed. About half of the foster parents decide to permanently adopt their foster pets.



Jan Selder, director of field operations for L.A. City animal shelters, holds up Clyde, a 9-year-old miniature pinscher. The docile-mannered canine hasn't been able to find an adoptive family because of his age. But older dogs, Selder says, make good pets because "they've already been trained." *Larry LaCom/ Summit Life Photos*

Rescue groups also take some of the harder-to-adopt pets. "It's a last resort," Jan explains of euthanasia. "We try everything else first."

During the Fourth of July weekend - a time when frightened pets sometimes get disoriented and run away - the shelter holds "foster marathons" to free up space for the additional animals that are brought in.

In addition to cats and dogs, the shelter has seen its fair share of chickens, roosters, ducks, geese, pigs, horses, rabbits, eagles, turtles and snakes. The shelter is currently rehabilitating a hawk with a broken wing.

According to Jan, many of the animals are brought in because the owners are no longer able to care for them, because of owner deaths or arrests or because people don't want to care for an aging pet. On several occasions, she says, owners have surrendered their pets because they recently remodeled their homes and their pets no longer



Beverly Gafford holds up Thomas, a tabby kitten that she is adopting from the West Valley Animal Shelter. Because the already-crowded shelter gets thousands of un-weaned kittens each year, “foster” parents from the community are urgently needed to care for the felines until they are old enough to be placed for adoption.

match their furniture or carpeting.

Animal control officers bring some of the animals in after receiving reports that they are homeless, abused or injured. The officers also investigate reports of dog barking and dog bites.

As an organization that exists in order to serve the community, Jan urges local residents to take an active role in helping the shelter and in reducing the need for its services.

“All the animals come from the community that’s around us,” she says. “We want community involvement.”

And that community involvement, she says, can come in many forms. The shelters rely on community donations for such items as animal toys, treats, blankets, crates, cat carriers, litter boxes and grooming supplies.

Involvement, she says, can also come in the form of volunteering. Because the animals are confined to their cages for hours at a time, volunteers are needed to walk the shelter dogs and run “animal play groups;” and also to clean the animals’ cages. All the volunteers are trained and must work a minimum of eight hours a month.

Other ways the community can help to reduce the large unwanted animal population, Jan says, is to report “backyard breeders” who contribute to pet overpopulation. She also urges pet owners to spay or neuter their pets. Unspayed cats, she says, can give birth to up to 40 kittens a year.



This lucky Chihuahua found his forever home earlier this month when an area resident walked into the shelter to choose a canine pal. Animals that are purchased from the shelter are spayed or neutered, micro chipped and vaccinated. *Larry LaCom/ Summit Life Photos*

“The community has the power to eliminate the need for animal shelters,” she says.

Sisters Alyssa and Katie Toro, who reside in Chatsworth, visited the animal shelter earlier this month in search of a canine companion for their pit bull mix. A pit bull puppy named Skipper caught the ladies’ attention.

“We’ve adopted before,” Alyssa said. “We don’t want to support puppy mills. The dogs have health issues.”

Katie said they chose to adopt from a shelter because “so many dogs need homes.”

According to Jan, adopting shelter pets may actually save two lives – that of the pet’s and that of the owner’s.

“There’s actually a lot of proof that pets help you live a longer life,” she says. “They reduce stress and lower blood pressure. Walking your dog makes you more fit. These guys help keep you balanced.”

The West Valley Animal Shelter is located at 20655 Plummer Street in Chatsworth. It is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. It is closed to the public on Monday.

Reports of animal abuse, neglect, or homelessness, dog barking or dog bites can be made 24 hours a day by calling (888) 452-7381.

For more information about the shelter or to see photos of pets that are available for adoption, visit www.LAAAnimalServices.com. ❖

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