

# The Arcadia Bulletin

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF ARCADIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Arcadia Bulletin was  
Arcadia's first newspaper

## History Just Keeps on Happening !

**H**ur mission of "bringing history to life" is a many faceted endeavor. Educating the public about Arcadia's rich history remains a top priority for our Board of Directors. In 2023 we gave more than a dozen presentations to local groups and organizations, including Arcadia Rotary Club, Arcadia Travelers, and Arcadia Chamber of Commerce. In September, we made a special presentation at the Annual Mayor's Breakfast, entitled "Early Glimpses of Arcadia," to recall how we got here.

During March, we displayed vintage photographs, books and memorabilia at the Public Library, topped off by a lively media presentation, "The San Gabriel Valley in 1877" on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

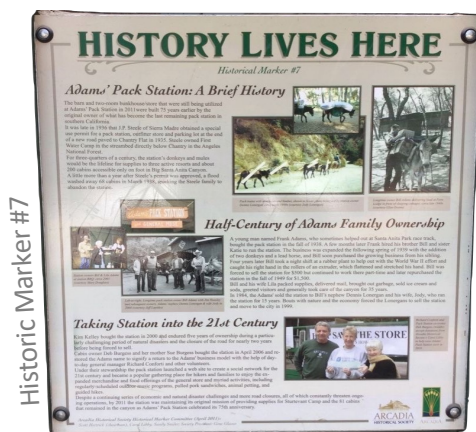
Thanks to Pattie Olson we have "upped our game" on social media, now offering more and more interesting content on Facebook, Instagram and other platforms.

Led by Tom Tomkins, we are making an assessment of our thirteen historic markers. Several of them are slated to be repaired or replaced. Marker #7 was dedicated in 2011 on the site of the old Adams' Pack Station at Chantry Flats. With the access road having been closed in the aftermath of the 2020 Bobcat Fire, we are unable to assess its condition.

Our intrepid board spent several days culling through historical records and artifacts in our Bekins Storage lockers. Wow, do we have a lot of old stuff!

We are interested in identifying other worthy projects that could use our help, financial and otherwise. If you know of a historic asset—plaques, markers, monuments, etc.—that needs a little "TLC," please contact us through our website. We may be able to help!

*Ed Andersen*  
Ed Andersen, President



Historic Marker #7

## News that Isn't

Halloween 2023 is old news, but we wanted to thank all the volunteers who staffed our booth at the Downtown Arcadia Halloween event last October 27<sup>th</sup>. Jolene Cadenbach, Bob & Patsy Harbicht, Pattie Olson and Ed & Debbie Andersen kept busy handing out goodies to an endless stream of costumed youngsters. More than 5,000 items made their way into the trick-or-treat bags of super heroes, goblins, witches, dinosaurs and others.



Patsy Harbicht hard at work!

## Board Member Spotlight



**Jolene Cadenbach**  
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

A native of San Pedro, California, Jolene has lived in Washington State, Michigan and as far away as Norway. She moved to Arcadia 22 years ago, when she was called to pastor Arcadia Congregational Church.

Jolene is an avid reader, movie buff and concert goer. She favors fine cuisine and is Arcadia Historical Society's official restaurant critic.

Jolene has served on our Board of Directors for the past five years. She also volunteers at Foothill Unity Center, Assistance League of Pasadena and the Creative Housing Options in Arcadia.

## Membership in A.H.S.

Membership fees are vital to support our programs and services. If you wish to join A.H.S., or need to renew your membership, please send us your contact information and mail your check to Arcadia Historical Society, P.O. Box 661332, Arcadia, CA 91066.

### Membership Rates:

Single: \$35 | Family (2 persons): \$50  
Corporate: \$250 | Student: \$10



Facebook

Get with it!  
Follow AHS on  
social media.



Instagram



## ROSS FIELD BALLOON SCHOOL . 1918-19

In June 1918, after the United States entered World War I, the Army established Ross Field balloon school on the grounds of what is now County Park. The land was acquired from Anita Baldwin, who owned and managed the vast estate of her deceased father Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin.

Ross Field, often referred to as "Camp Arcadia," was named in honor of Lieutenant Cleo J. Ross, an observer with the 8<sup>th</sup> Balloon Company of the U.S. Army's Air Service. In a mission over France in September 1918, his balloon team was attacked by German aircraft and Lt. Ross fell 3,000 feet to his death. Ross, believed to be the only balloon pilot or observer to be killed in action in World War I, was buried in France near where he met his tragic fate.

The balloon school was commanded by Colonel W. M. Hensley, who ordered the speedy construction of hangers, barracks, and a hydrogen plant. By the end of June, balloons could be seen drifting about in the air above Arcadia, but there was a problem. The Army had not reckoned with the persistent Santa Ana winds, which reeked havoc on the ponderous airships and restricted the unit's ability to properly train its pilots. To compensate for the limited altitude of the balloons on windy days, officers were trucked to the top of Mt. Wilson to simulate the feeling of being at higher elevations. Evidently this strategy worked because more than 200 men were successfully trained as pilots. However, none of these graduates were called on to serve overseas during the war.

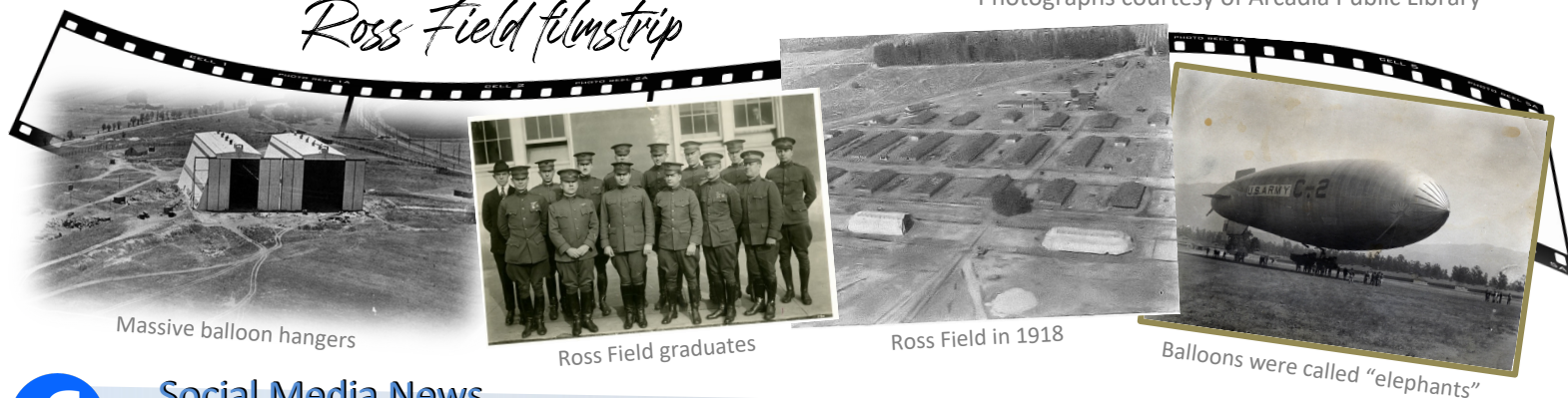
The field was abandoned in the spring of 1919 and the men were reassigned or discharged from the service. Ross Field was used as a civil aircraft airfield for a short time after the war. In 1933 the Army donated the field to Los Angeles County, which eventually led to the establishment of Arcadia County Park. The site of Ross Field is now largely taken up by the Santa Anita Golf Course.

In 2022, Arcadia Historical Society obtained an authentic set of discharge papers signed by Col. Hensley in 1919, which was appropriately gifted to the Gilb Museum of Arcadia Heritage.

Article by Ed Andersen

Photographs courtesy of Arcadia Public Library

### *Ross Field filmstrip*



Massive balloon hangers

Ross Field graduates

Ross Field in 1918

Balloons were called "elephants"



### Social Media News

In late October, we got a call from a retired antique dealer in Wisconsin who explained that he had an unusual photograph of Camp Arcadia that he wanted to donate to AHS. We received the photo in early November, but waited until our board's Christmas gathering to open it. We were amazed at what was inside the shipping box. You can view a video of this special piece of Arcadia history—an 80-inch long panoramic image from 1918. Go to the Facebook homepage, search "Arcadia Historical Society," and scroll down to the post of December 18th. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and other social media sites! It's fun!

### Ack Ack Plaque Attack!

With Breeder's Cup just days away, we received a distressing phone call. The person on the other end of the line said, "they're trying to steal your plaque!" In the middle of the day, two young women were hacking away at the sidewalk in front of Chase Bank on Huntington Drive in an effort to remove the Ack Ack Thoroughbred Walk of Champions plaque. The quick-thinking caller notified the police, and by the time we arrived the thieves had already been arrested and hauled off to jail. Thanks to this quick thinking citizen, the plaque remains in place as part of Santa Anita racing history.



### Questions & Answers

We are always happy to address questions and concerns regarding Arcadia's history. We are also available for presentations to your group or organization. Contact any board member, or call the number on our website!

If there is a topic of local interest that you would like to see covered in the *Arcadia Bulletin*, contact our editor Ed Andersen via email: [eandersen@arcadiahistoricalociety.org](mailto:eandersen@arcadiahistoricalociety.org)