

NEWS

Holiday Fun Found at Annual HSCV Party



Photos by Charly SHELTON

ABOVE: Guests at the holiday party of the Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley on Monday night had the chance to watch silent movies provided by Joe Rinaudo.

RIGHT: The movies were shown using a 1909 Power Cameragraph Model Six projector provided by Rinaudo (seated).

By Charly SHELTON

It's the end of the year and that means many of the groups and organizations around town hold their year-end holiday parties. For the Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley, the holiday party was a trip back in time to a time of five-cent admission to movie theaters, pratfalls and intense makeup. In classic itinerant cinema style, Joe Rinaudo brought his hand-crank projector to the La Crescenta Library on Monday night and screened old silent films.

"Itinerant projectors traveled from town to town with machinery like this and showed films, silent films, even into the [talkies] era," said Rinaudo.

His 1909 Power's Cameragraph Model Six projector is a hand-cranked projector that Rinaudo himself ran for the duration of the five silent shorts that

were screened. The lamp house, projector head, glass slide projector and all the tiny parts are original from 1909. The power supply was replaced and it was put on new legs, but all of the working parts for projecting the 35mm film are over 100 years old. Rinaudo takes his projector and films around Southern California, doing 10 or 12 shows a year, including the Silent Films in the Park series in La Crescenta every summer.

For the holiday party, Rinaudo screened five one-to-two reel shorts: "What Price Goofy?" starring Charley Chase from 1925, "Why Pick on Me?" starring Harold Lloyd from 1918, "Giddap!" starring Billy Bevin from 1925, "Oceantics" starring Felix the Cat from 1930 and ending with "Big Business" starring Laurel and Hardy from 1929.

Live music accompanied silent films until the talkies came along. They had no score or sound effects. In traditional

silent film style, pianist Dean Mora watched the film and improvised a soundtrack along with the action on the screen.

"I extemporize on everything so each show was different," said Mora. "For movies, I prefer to do my own score just because it's more difficult for me to look at a piece of music and then look at the movie then look at the piece of music. It's kind of difficult and it hurts my neck."

As could be heard from the laughter during the screenings, and the thanks to Rinaudo and Mora afterward, the guests who attended the holiday party enjoyed themselves immensely and many were glad to take part in this rare and special occasion.

Many of these films, Rinaudo said, have been lost to

time because the medium they were printed on, celluloid, does not age well and is highly combustible. Unless a safety print could be found, printed on plastic, the celluloid likely will not have survived to the modern-day. The prints that were shown at the holiday party were on those safety prints and, with proper storage, they should survive for another 300 years at least.

"It almost goes without saying that [silent films are] probably one of our richest treasures because not only is it an art form that has disappeared but it's a time capsule," Rinaudo said. "We can look back to who we were and see how far we've actually come."

IN BRIEF

CVTC MEETS TONIGHT

The last general meeting of 2015 for the Crescenta Valley Town Council takes place tonight, Thursday, Dec. 17 at the La Crescenta Library community room at 7 p.m.

On the agenda are the presentations of the Christmas Spirit Award by the CV Youth Town Council, the CVTC year-end report and a Land Use letter. Certificates will also be given to outgoing councilmembers including President Robbyn Battles and councilmembers Kyle Studebaker and Kevin Kang. The new councilmembers will be sworn in and the 2016 council officers will be elected and sworn in.

All are invited. The library is located at 2809 Foothill Blvd. in La Crescenta.

COMMUNITY-WIDE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEETING

The Glendale Police Dept. – North Area is hosting a community-wide neighborhood watch meeting on Monday, Dec. 21 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church of La Crescenta, 4441 La Crescenta Ave.

ROSEMONT PRESERVE OPEN GATE AFTERNOON

An "open gate" event is taking place at the Rosemont Preserve on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 20. This is a chance for residents to visit the Preserve and wander the trail at their own pace and enjoy the tranquil setting, the wildlife and the natural beauty. Photographers: bring your camera to capture the late afternoon light.

The gate will be open from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and Friends of the Rosemont Preserve Committee members will be available to answer questions and present this community resource.

The Preserve is located at the north end of Rosemont Avenue, just past the chain link fence. As street parking is limited, please park at Two Strike Park, 5107 Rosemont Ave. Those planning on walking the trails should wear sturdy shoes.

This event is free to the public and suitable for all ages; no reservations required. Rain cancels. Sorry, no pets please.

For further information, contact the Friends of the Rosemont Preserve at RosemontFriends@gmail.com.

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