



THE SCARECROW

2010 Home for the Holidays Special

The 2010 Home for the Holidays Special Edition



It is a wintry Northern California evening. We park down the street and around the corner from our destination.

My wife and I are helping on the late shift for our garden club's bi-annual Christmas fundraising tour of a member's dazzlingly decorated home. The front lawn is a magical scene of white lights blinking in time with Christmas music and tasteful wire figures. (I especially like the animated polar bears.)



We are merrily greeted from the porch by our friends from the early shift—their noses and ears slightly tinted from the evening air.



Ron Schager, Bonnie Jones and Diana Raymond greet us at the door

We don our booties on the stoop, and endure the chiding remarks of friends while they *stamp* our tickets and fill us in on the evening's news.

When the first volunteers arrived, there was already a line of ticket holders winding down the street from the front door, including a gaggle of Red Hats who were anxious to get in.

The host and hostess warmly welcome us as we enter their home—surrounded by more friends with enthusiastic greetings and are happy to see the relief party arrive.

Our host and hostess



Joel and Karen French, our host and hostess

What can I say! Joel and Karen French have opened their home to hundreds of guests, spent three months decorating their home and fifteen Christmas trees, and solicited donations to raise funds for the Elk Grove Community Assistance Program and the Gardeners of the Grove.

Because of the French's hard work the Gardeners of the Grove in partnership with the Raley's Food for Families Program donated **4,375 pounds of food** to the Elk Grove Community Assistance Network's Food Bank.



GOTG Treasurer, Diana Raymond, presents check for \$1,750 to Bel Air Store Manager, Milo Crist

ter a long day conducting tours at the Elk Grove Hotel and Stage Stop Museum.



Bowery boy, Dennis Buscher, sporting his bowler

Wei Hsieh



The French's friend and neighbor, Wei Hsieh, volunteered to entertain the evening's guests with a large selection of traditional Christmas carols.

Wei has played the violin since he was six years old and was a member of the Sacramento State University's Symphony Orchestra as a Cal State student. He welcomed the chance to play for the *Home for the Holidays* fundraiser since his busy life does not allow him many opportunities to play—aside from the fact that he is a good guy.

...friends indeed

Just as the evening was nearing its end, our friends from the Elk Grove Historical Society (EGHS) dashed in, some still wearing their period costumes af-



The Hotel's ladies of the night, sisters Lucille Christesen and Lorraine Croup.



EGHS President, Jim Entrican and wife Annaclare, after Jim's TSA pat down—recorded by Diana Raymond

Sue and David Richter, and Jeanette Lawson were also there, as well as guests from the River Valley Garden Club, the Elk Grove Garden Club and The Meadows assisted living home.

Most prominently present were the Sacramento, Galt and Lodi Red Hatters. They were an animated group that arrived early and were chomping at the bit to get in. *They had never seen anything like this in their lives.* Lingering longer than others, they added a festive air with bright and cheery apparel. As one elf remarked, "They went nuts once they got in there." The following picture will give you idea of how their official uniform added to the holiday décor.



"The Red Hat Society began as a result of a few women deciding to greet middle age with verve, humor and élan. We believe silliness is the comedy relief of life, and since we are all in it together, we might as well join red-gloved hands and go for the gusto together. Underneath the frivolity, we share a bond of affection, forged by common life experiences and a genuine enthusiasm for wherever life takes us next."

- Sue Ellen Cooper, Queen Mother
<http://www.redhatsociety.com/>

That explains it all!

Deck the halls

The most frequent comment by visitors was that each time they turned around there was some small detail they had missed before.

Karen had decorated the rooms thematically.

There was an angel theme,



A bird theme, and



A Disney theme to name but a few.



Eleven minstrels and five full-sized Santa's were the French's latest acquisitions. Diana Raymond accompanied Karen and Joel to Oakland to help transport the manikins. A few of the minstrels had been used at the Saint Francis Hotel; with the exception of the Santa's, the remainder had never been used.

Santa's elves



One of the new minstrels



Elf, RosieBrown, and another of the minstrels in the background



One of the new Santa's



Elves Jeanne Williamson and Lynn Clark



Elf Ruth Hayes and two more manikins



A gathering of elves including Karen French, Rosie Brown Diana Raymond and Patricia Teeters

Gay Rigmaiden managed to escape the camera.



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GARDENERS OF THE GROVE

PO Box 2418

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<http://www.gardenersofthegrove.org>

Web sites

National Garden Club Inc. <http://www.gardenclub.org/home.aspx>

Pacific Region of National Garden Club, Inc.

<http://www.pacificregiongardenclubs.org/>

California Garden Clubs, Inc.

<http://www.californiagardenclubs.org/>

Sacramento River Valley District of California Garden Clubs, Inc. <http://srvd.org/>

The Elk Grove Citizen: www.egcitizen.com



CLASSIFIED

Volunteers—GOTG

2010

HELP WANTED volunteers for the horticultural [chairperson], fund raising, and membership committees.
