

Dr. Paul Neiby and Wife Louise Named 2009 Citizen(s) of the Year by Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce

By Bill Coburn



The Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce announced today that for the first time, it has named two people as its Citizen(s) of the Year. Dr. Paul Neiby and his wife Louise were chosen to receive the Chamber's 2009 Citizen(s) of the Year award. Chamber president Matt Krantz presented the couple with a bouquet of flowers as the announcement was made by Susan Henderson, a member of the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and president of Sierra Madre Kiwanis. The couple were nominated for the Chamber's annual honor by Kiwanis, of which Dr. Neiby is a long-time member and former president. Louise Neiby, while not officially a member of Kiwanis, is also actively involved with the organization. "Paul will

sometimes volunteer for things, and then Louise makes it happen" said one Kiwanian, noting that Louise cooks the sausage for the organization's annual pancake breakfast, and the corn bread that is served with the chili annually when Kiwanis provides dinner for the volunteers at the Sierra Madre Rose Float barn during the Rose Float Association's decoration week.

Louise is a member of the Sierra Madre Garden Club, and sits on the Board of Directors of the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society. Dr. Neiby is also active with the Historical Preservation Society and has been described as one of the driving forces behind the Society's recently released history of Sierra Madre titled "*Southern California Story: Seeking the Better Life in Sierra Madre*" by Michelle Zack, a project that was eight years in the making.

Dr. Neiby is also actively supporting the Kiwanis and Sierra Madre Fire Safe Council's efforts to finance the town's new AM radio station, which will be used to update Sierra Madreans with the latest news and information during emergencies. He sat on the Library Board of Trustees, and spearheaded the continuation of the Library's Oral History Project after the death of the project's originator Janie Kistner. Over the last seven years, Neiby has overseen the interviewing of forty local Sierra Madreans of note, creating an important audio archive for local historians. Dr. Neiby also served on the Senior Commission, and enthusiastically supported the renovation of the Hart Park House, used as the town's Senior Center. Dr. Neiby in 2008 received the George Maurer Lifetime Achievement award for his contributions to Sierra Madre.

He received his medical education at the Universities of Iowa and Pennsylvania. In 1961, he joined the Navy and was assigned to Okinawa, prior to the Vietnam War. He was an attending surgery staff member at USC for seventeen years. Louise was also in the medical field, she is a retired nurse.

The announcement was made at Ramada at a gathering of the couple's friends and members of Sierra Madre Kiwanis. Ramada is the historic back house on the Neiby property, built in 1931 to enclose the (formerly) outdoor fireplace built by prior property owner Gutzon Borglum, the designer and sculptor of Mt. Rushmore. Dr. Neiby bought the property in 1976, prior to his 1983 marriage to Louise.

The Sierra Madre Chamber has honored a Citizen of the Year annually since 1966. The Neiby's will be feted at the Chamber's annual Citizen of the Year Dinner, which also serves as the Installation Dinner for

the incoming Chamber Board of Directors. The dinner will be held in the Chandelier Room at Santa Anita Park on January 29, 2010. Tickets for the dinner are \$60, with a table for ten available at a reduced rate. Dinner will be preceded by a cocktail hour featuring jazz performed by the Mercy Powell Quartet. For information about the dinner, contact the Chamber at (626) 355-5111 or visit the Chamber's website at www.SierraMadreChamber.com and click on the link to the "What's New" page.