

Sundar Shadi
By Mervin Belfils

During the Christmas holidays, if one wants to see a beautiful, outstanding Biblical display scene, they would only have to drive up to the Sundar Shadi home at 944 Arlington Avenue. His Christmas display was started in 1951 and is a complete Biblical story. It has won him many local and national prizes. From year to year he has added to his scene and has now completed it.

He starts working on his paper mache figures, which are his hobby, in September or October. After that he takes a few weeks to assemble the scene and to have it all on display two weeks before Christmas. His scene is on the hillside, which lends itself well to the pastoral scene he depicts. People by the thousands drive up to the front of his home and slowly drive by to admire his beautiful work.

Mr. Shadi is a retired businessman and when not working at his hobby, is taking care of his various properties. He is a member of the Dad's Club and is very active in city and school affairs. He has taken a very active part in the United Nations events in El Cerrito for a number of years.

Mr. Shadi came originally from India in 1921 as a student and graduated from the University of California with a M.S. Degree in Subtropical Horticulture. He built his home in El Cerrito in 1936 and has been living there ever since. He is married and has three children, all daughters. His wife has a Ph.D. degree and has been an Associate Professor at the University of California.

Almost any time one drives by his home on the Arlington, one can see him working on the large variety of beautiful plants he is growing. People passing by stop, look and admire his gardens, as he is well known for his beautiful flowers and their arrangements. [Editor's note: Sundar Shadi died in 2002 at age 102. His Christmas exhibit is still maintained by the Soroptomist International organization and several other city groups.]

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