

The Grapevine

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WINTER 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

February 2016

The members of the Board of the San Marino Historical Society send their best wishes to you all for a wonderful New Year. At our January 25 meeting, John Ryan was nominated to become the President with John Morris serving as Vice President. I will become Past President and will remain as Archivist. The remainder of the board will stay in place and all will be confirmed at the upcoming Program Meeting on February 22. This meeting will serve as an annual meeting and all members are encouraged to attend.

Memberships for the fiscal year from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 are rolling in and we are pleased to welcome twenty-five new members. We encourage those of you who have not yet renewed to take the time to slip a check into the blue envelope and send it off to us. Your participation is important to us.

A few weeks ago the family of Midge Sherwood donated several boxes of her papers, books, photos, maps and letters to the archives. Two other donations have come our way since the beginning of the year.

We are so grateful to historian Linda Mollno, PhD for her series of articles on the history of San Marino. In this issue, she profiles author Harriet Doer and her connection to El Molino Viejo.

On a sad note, we mourn the passing of Lyle Umehoffer, our Spring 2015 speaker. Lyle was a survivor of the USS Indianapolis during WW II. He spoke to an overflow crowd at the Crowell Public Library in May. His talk was one of the most memorable in our series Before the Colors Fade.

It has been a pleasure to lead the San Marino Historical Society for the past two years. John Ryan will continue the tradition begun by our founder Midge Sherwood and build on the experience of all the presidents who have succeeded her.

Judith Carter

SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROUDLY PRESENTS

**Lowe, Dobbins and Barnes:
Three Generations of a Unique
and
Fascinating San Marino Family
By
Ken Veronda**



Ken Veronda is a well known historian and sought after speaker. He is especially at home with subjects about the greater San Marino area. Veronda has several degrees in history from Stanford University, is a San Marino native and is the headmaster of Southwestern Academy. This exciting program is not to be missed.

Monday, February 22, 2016, 7:00pm
Crowell Public Library
Barth Community Room
1890 Huntington Drive, San Marino
Public is Welcome, Admission is Free

**San Marino Historical Society
Executive Officers and Members of the Board
2016**

From the Archives
February, 2016
Judith Carter

Officers

President..... John Ryan
Vice-President..... John Morris
Secretary..... Pat Salvaty
Treasurer Bob Houston
Immediate Past President Judith Carter

Committee Chairs

Archives Judith Carter
Historian..... Linda Molino
Membership Wayne Carter
Newsletter Chris Datwyler
Oral Histories Ave Bortz
Programs John Morris
Publicity..... Ed Tom
Thurnher House Docents John Ryan
Legal Consultant Shahen Hairapetian
Social Chairman..... Carolyn Chapman
Community Liaison..... Jennifer Goldman
Isaac Hung

Emeritus Board Members

Robert and Graziella Almanza
Jim Elliott
Marilyn Peck
Peggy Winkler

Society Presidents (1974-2015)

Midge Sherwood 1974
Mary Smith..... 1976
Jack Sherwood..... 1978
Ed Ford 1980
Graziella Almanza 1982
Laverne Smith..... 1985
Jeanne Imler 1989
Gary Fleming..... 1991
Lillian Campbell..... 1993
Marilyn Peck..... 1995
Paul Crowley 1999
Gene Dryden..... 2004
Benjamin Salvaty 2008
Ave Maria Bortz..... 2008
John Morris 2010
Judith Carter 2014

We welcome Jenny Cheng to our Tuesday volunteers. She is a newly retired teacher whose computer skills have already been helpful with updating the membership files.

A telephone call from the daughters of Midge Sherwood culminated in an offer of many boxes of materials from Midge's collection. The wealth of material will take some time to process and we are looking forward to utilizing the entire team of volunteers to work on this project. After an initial quick look, we found some significant material on the founding of the Historical Society and its early members and events. Photographs, postcards, letters and scrapbooks round out the collection.

There is a possibility that some material from Paul Crowley's collection will come to us. We received a telephone call from the School District office and in the next few months we will be talking with them about this opportunity.

For many years, the Historical Society and the Crowell Public Library have each purchased a copy of the San Marino Tribune on microfilm. Our collection runs from 1928-2014. Andrew Salter, the new owner of the Tribune, asked to borrow our copy so that it can be indexed and digitized. We agreed and the work is in process now. It will be so much easier for us to provide answers to research questions once the project has been completed.

Membership Renewals Are Due

The response to our October membership mailing have been terrific. We have twenty-five new members and a noticeable increase in the number of members who have stepped up their dues to the \$100 level. Our benefactors contribute over \$100 and we have seen more contributions at that level this year as well. One generous member decided we were worthy of a \$1000 gift. Each member is important to us and we are grateful to all of you.

If you have not taken the opportunity to renew, look for the blue envelope included in this mailing and fill it out and enclose a check or go to our website and use the PayPal option. At that time you can also indicate that you wish to receive the Grapevine via e-mail if you are going electronic.

Thurnher House Hours

The Thurnher House is open on the first and third Sunday afternoon of each month from noon to 3:00pm. It is also open for tours by appointment. If you would like to visit the house on Tuesdays, please call 626-304-9375 or info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org for an appointment.

**THE SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA 91118-8222
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info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org**

Harriet Doerr

By
Linda Mollno, PhD.

Harriet Green Huntington, daughter of Howard E. Huntington, granddaughter of Henry E. Huntington left Stanford in 1930 to marry. Forty-five years later, she returned to Palo Alto, completed her degree and became an author.

Born in 1910, Harriet grew up in an old California family in Pasadena. Neither parent wrote creatively but they enjoyed beautiful prose and encouraged intellectual curiosity in their children. At age 16 Harriet met Albert Doerr at a party hosted by her parents. He was an engineering student at Stanford.

A year later she left Westridge for Smith College and soon realized how much she missed Albert. The next year she transferred to Stanford. When Albert graduated in 1930 she left college to marry. At the time it was not uncommon for women to leave college before graduating, as few fields were open to women. She never regretted her decision believing her married life was nearly perfect.

From 1931 to 1936 the Doerrs lived in the Old Mill in San Marino, renting from her parents. Arabella Huntington left the property to son Archer in 1924 and three years later he transferred ownership to his stepbrother's widow, Harriet's mother, Mrs. James R. Brehm. The Brehm's wished to preserve the mill and hired Frederick H. Ruppel, a contractor experienced in early California construction techniques. His restoration made the Old Mill a suitable residence the Brehm's rented out until their deaths in 1962.

They gifted the Old Mill to the city of San Marino and Harriet and Albert donated two Mexican fountains for the gardens. Albert helped keep them working and Harriet gave yellow Banksia roses for the patio entrance arbor. Although the Huntington family had connections with the Old Mill for over sixty years, Harriet was the only one to live there. They moved following the birth of their children Michael and Martha, needing more space.

Harriet's third book *The Tiger in the Grass*, a collection of short stories and essays, includes this enchanting description of the Old Mill.

"How is it to come in from the street and step through the gate in your wall?" people asked us. And we said, "Magic."

For it was all enchanted. The high beams tied with leather thongs, the windows set in walls four feet thick the whitewashed interior, the border that took the place of baseboards, painted with vegetable colors in an Indian design.

The old mill absorbed anachronisms. No matter that my first typewriter occupied a table in a bedroom or that a model airplane hung from a sycamore tree. No difference the diapers drying in front of the living

room fire or the tricycle in the patio. If Junipero Serra himself had walked in, he would only have had to touch the walls to know that he was home.

The garden claimed a few witnesses from the past—a bent black walnut tree, a gnarled olive, and a Castilian rose. Filling up the space around them, orange trees flowered and bore fruit, the red blossoms of a hedge turned into a hundred pomegranates in the fall, and a dozen plants that looked like giant thistles produced long stemmed artichokes.

In 1935, with one small child and pregnant with another, they visited Albert's family-owned copper mine in Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Poverty in the small rural town horrified her at first; however, they returned often and once she understood the language better she developed a lasting appreciation. In the late 1950s they moved to Mexico and remained until 1972, when Albert died of leukemia.

After his death Harriet returned to college. At age 67 she completed a history degree, took creative writing courses and found she liked to write. Her impressive work earned her a place in Wallace Stegner's writing workshop, one of the most renowned creative writing programs in the country. The other students did not immediately accept her. She was old enough to be their grandmother. Then she read aloud from her work; they were stunned. After that she fit right in and once a month hosted a party entertaining them with stories of her life.

Life in Mexico was "impossibly flawless" she claimed. Her memories and the spirit of her life fill her books. The first, *Stones for Ibarra*, won a National Book Award; she was 73 years old. It is reminiscent of her family's experiences in Mexico but she declared, "My stories are all made up; they're not autobiographical. But I have lived them."

Doerr lived out her life in Pasadena, on a hillside of formal gardens, in a house decorated with furniture and artifacts she and Albert collected in Mexico. She died in 2002 but her memories endure in *Stones for Ibarra*, *Consider This Señora*, and *The Tiger in the Grass*.



Harriett Doerr

Crowell Public Library Selects Materials on California History

Recently the Centennial Book Committee of the San Marino Historical Society made a generous donation to the Crowell Public Library for the purchase of materials on California history. Librarian Irene McDermott reported, "The library has spent the money you donated. We purchased numerous Huell Howser DVDs and many children's books on the California missions. They have been cataloged and processed! We will get them out this week on a special cart." Mc Dermott expressed her appreciation to the book committee and the Historical Society for making these purchases possible.



*John Ryan, President
of the
San Marino Historical Society*

John Ryan Elected President of San Marino Historical Society

At the January meeting of the Board of the San Marino Historical Society, John Ryan was nominated as President to succeed Judy Carter in leading the group. His selection will be confirmed at the annual meeting of the society at the Crowell Library on February 22.

Ryan, a San Marino resident since 2004, graduated from Arcadia High School and Humboldt State University where he majored in Industrial Arts and minored in Geography. Ryan has been in the railroad industry for twenty-four years. On the first and third Sunday each month he is a docent at the Thurnher House and has been giving tours there since 2007.

Among his interests are local history, woodworking, and hiking in the local mountains. His wife Kim and their sons Calvin and Dean are all active in the community.

2016 Calendar of Events

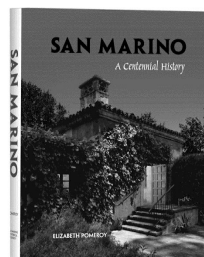
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| February 7 | Noon to 3 p.m. Thurnher House at Lacy Park open for docent led tours. |
| February 22 | 7: p.m. Crowell Public Library, Program Meeting. Ken Veronda, speaker. |
| March 6 | Noon to 3 p.m. Thurnher House at Lacy Park, Noon to 3 p.m. open for docent led tours. |
| March 20 | Noon to 3 p.m. Thurnher House at Lacy Park Noon to 3 p.m. open for docent led tours |
| May 23 | 7 p.m. Barth Room of the Crowell Public Library. Program Meeting, TBA. |

Order San Marino Centennial Book Now

\$55 per copy + 4.95 tax = \$59.95. Add \$7.50 if you wish the book to be mailed to you for a total of \$67.45.

Order on-line via PayPal at www.sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org or by stopping by the Thurnher House on the first and third Sunday from 12-3 or on Tuesdays from 9:30-3.

Books are also currently available for sale at San Marino Toy and Books, Julienne, A Stitch in Time, Diana D's, The Old Mill, The Huntington Store, Vromans, Sweet and Savory, Fedde Furniture and the Pasadena Museum of History



WEBSITE

Visit our website to learn more about your Society's programs and activities as well as viewing current and past issues of our newsletter – the "Grapevine":
<http://sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org/>