



# The Grapevine

Published by the San Marino Historical Society

Spring, 2019

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May 2019

It is my pleasure to begin my term as the President of the San Marino Historical Society. I thank John Ryan for his leadership for the past three years as he hands over the gavel to me. The organization has flourished under his leadership. John will serve as Past President and I will consult him as I take on this new responsibility. I also thank each member of the board for their decision to select me to lead the organization and their willingness to continue to serve.

One of my goals is to foster collaboration among community organizations. Our first step was to hold our April 22, board meeting at the Michael White Adobe. We hope to bring about renewed interest in the historic adobe located at San Marino High School. During my tenure as president, I will strive to connect with other community organizations thereby achieving complementary relationships which will strengthen each organization's purposes.

We look forward to our spring program on May 20, "The San Marino Citywide Historical Resources Survey," when Mary Ringhoff, Associate Architectural Planner with Architectural Resources Group will discuss the first comprehensive citywide survey which will identify potential historic resources in the community. We are pleased that our members and guests will have the opportunity to hear about the project and its progress. There will be a question and answer period at the close of the presentation.

The Historical Society office, located at the Thurnher House at Lacy Park, is available for tours on the first and third Sunday of each month. John Ryan and John Morris will continue to welcome visitors from noon to 3 p.m. and share the history of the community through photographs, maps, models and items of memorabilia. Tours are available by appointment at other times. Call 626-304-9375 or email to [info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org).

We hope the articles on the establishment of Lacy Park, the replicas of the El Camino Bells, a tribute to Kathy Fiscus, and By the Numbers help you to understand the history of San Marino.

I look forward to meeting each of you at our program meeting on May 20, at the Crowell Public Library.

Isaac Hung  
President

## SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROUDLY PRESENTS

### The San Marino Citywide Historical Resources Survey

by  
Mary Ringhoff



On Monday, May 20, the San Marino Historical Society welcomes Mary Ringhoff, Associate, Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner from Architectural Resources Group. She will discuss how the need for historical structures reports developed over the years, why they are important and conclude with an explanation of the study the Architectural Resources Group is currently conducting for the city of San Marino.

**Monday, May 20, 7:00 pm**  
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 2019

### Officers

President.....	Isaac Hung
Vice-President .....	TBA
Secretary .....	Pat Salvaty
Treasurer .....	Bob Houston
Immediate Past President .....	John Ryan

### Committee Chairs

Archives .....	Judith Carter
Membership .....	Wayne Carter
Newsletter.....	Chris Datwyler
Programs.....	John Morris, Wayne Carter & Judith Carter
Publicity .....	Ed Tom
Thurnher House Docents .....	John Ryan
Advisor.....	Ken Veronda
City Council Members.....	Steve Talt & Gretchen Shepherd Romey

### Emeritus Board Members

Robert and Graziella Almanza  
Jim Elliott  
Marilyn Peck  
Peggy Winkler

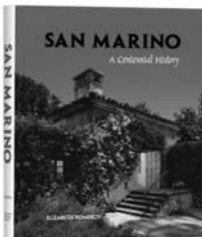
### Society Presidents (1974-2015)

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
John Ryan .....	2016

### 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 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, Port O' Call, The Old Mill, The Huntington Store, Vromans, and the Pasadena Museum of History



## Mary Ringhoff of Architectural Resources Group Explains

“San Marino has long been known for its distinctive residential properties, particularly its Period Revival estates dating to the 1920s. For years the San Marino Historical Society has maintained a list of significant buildings but a comprehensive citywide survey identifying potential historical resources (including historic districts as well as individual properties) has not been conducted until now. In late 2018, the City of San Marino embarked on such a survey, assisted by Architectural Resources Group (ARG). At the upcoming Historical Society program on May 20, I will provide an overview of the goals and methods of historical resource inventories in general and progress report on the current state of the San Marino project.”

Mary Ringhoff is an Associate Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner at Architectural Resources Group in Los Angeles, California. In her former life as a Great Basin archaeologist, she managed dozens of projects and published one book: The River and the Railroad: An Archaeological History of Reno (University of Nevada Press, 2011). Mary is on the faculty of USC's School of Architecture as an adjunct lecturer in the Heritage Conservation program, where she teaches a graduate-level Advanced Documentation course.

### By the Numbers

• Docents who give tours of the Thurnher House .....	2
• Places one can purchase San Marino: A Centennial History .....	5
• Volunteers who work in the Historical Society Archives on Tuesdays .....	7
• Years since the establishment of the Historical Society Archives.....	14
• Number of Past Presidents of the San Marino Historical Society.....	17
• Current members of the San Marino Historical Society.....	215
• Visitors who have taken a docent tour of the Thurnher House .....	996
• Copies of San Marino: A Centennial History that have been sold.....	2543

### 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](mailto:info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org) for an appointment.

## Lacy Park's 95th Birthday

This year marks the 95th anniversary of the establishment of Lacy Park. The Board of Trustees of San Marino, the precursor of the San Marino City Council, called for a bond election to be held on December 9, 1924. Its goal was to raise \$80,000 to purchase the land for the development of a City Park consisting of approximately 27 acres. In previous years the land of the proposed park had been a lake. The lake went by several names over the years. Wilson Lake and Kewen Lake were two of the names used most often. The water level of the lake had declined over the years and the Board of Trustees was looking for a better use for the land in the city, which was incorporated in 1913.

At first, the owner of the property, Mr. R.N. Frick refused an offer of \$75,000. After some discussion, Frick reduced the price of the parcel to \$65,000. Henry Huntington donated \$10,000 to the city to help purchase the property for the establishment of a park. The funds raised by the bond issue allowed the city to move forward with the park's development.

The park's design was completed under the supervision of William Hertrick, who volunteered his services to the city. Armin Thurner was given the responsibility of carrying out the original design. For more than a decade and a half, the park was known as San Marino City Park until 1940 when it was renamed Lacy Park. The new name honored R. H. Lacy, who was a founding member and the longest serving member of the Board of Trustees.

In the nine and a half decades since that bond issue was passed, Lacy Park has become the centerpiece of the city and the site of many important events. Each year the Fire Department's Pancake Breakfast, July 4th celebration, the San Marino Motor Classic, and Easter Egg Hunt are a few of the many events attended by thousands of citizens. Most attendees do not know they are standing on a former lake bed.

### Two ways to be in touch with San Marino history between issues of the Grapevine and our program meetings

- First: Follow the Historical Society on our Facebook Page which is maintained by Joyce Gatsoulis Batnij.
- Second: For a quick history of the city, go to Youtube and search for "A Sketch of the History of San Marino". This 17 minute video is good way for students and new residents to understand the underpinnings of the community. Two San Marino High School students produced this narrated film before graduating and heading off to college.

Welcome Port O' Call to the list of stores that carry [San Marino: A Centennial History](#). Stop by the shop at 2646 Mission Street in San Marino for a copy of the book. Take a look at all the other item this unique store carries while you are there.

## El Camino Real Bells in Lacy Park



On June 11, 1968, at 10:30 am, representatives from a host of civic organizations gathered in Lacy Park for the dedication of the El Camino Real Bells that line the inner loop of Lacy park from the Virginia Road entrance to the Rose Garden. These bells are replicas of the the original bells that marked the route of "El Camino Real" from San Diego to Sonoma. The 700-mile-long El Camino Real linked California's 21 missions, which were founded by Father Junipero Serra and spaced one day's journey apart by horse.

According to the California Department of Transportation, the bells were first paid for and erected by the El Camino Real Association in the early 1900s. Originally there were about 450 bells along El Camino Real, but because of theft and vandalism the number dwindled to about 75. In response, the Legislature appointed Caltrans as guardian of the bells in 1974, responsible for repairing or replacing them. Replacements are made of concrete, rather than cast iron, to discourage theft.

First recommended by the San Marino Beautification Committee, the financing of the Lacy Park Bell project was made possible by contributions from Chamber of Commerce, the Women's Republican Club and the American Legion, Post 239. The bells lit the way from the original Veterans Memorial to the Rose Arbor on the east side of the park.

The goal was for these ornamental lights in Lacy Park to be turned on during special evening events such as the Fourth of July picnic and other community-wide events. Seven of the bells with their soft lights still exist and are maintained according to Michael Throne, Park and Public Works Director/City Engineer.

## The Kathy Fiscus Tragedy

On April 8, 1949 Kathy Fiscus fell down a well shaft located what is now the upper field of San Marino High School. Despite a herculean effort to rescue her, Kathy died of her injuries. Even though this event occurred 70 years ago, many people have vivid memories of the 48 hour ordeal. San Marino residents recall the television cameras that broadcast the live event on KTTV with Stan Chambers and Bill Welch reporting, Ken Veronda remembers, "I was there, with my father, all day Saturday, Saturday night, and Sunday, eight years old, carrying water to the workers." Others viewed the drama unfolding on television, hundreds of miles away.

The San Marino Historical Society Archives contains four large binders of photographs of the attempted rescue and newspaper articles and letters from the men who participated during the two day period.

The Historical Society is pleased to announce that the speaker for our October program will be Bill Deverell, Professor of History at USC and Director of the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West. Deverell's book on the Kathy Fiscus tragedy will be published near the time of the meeting. We hope it will be available at the event that evening.

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## Calendar of Events

- May 5, 2019 Sunday, Thurnher Open House, 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House at Lacy Park, headquarters of the San Marino Historical Society.
- May 19, 2019 Sunday, Thurnher Open House, 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House at Lacy Park, headquarters of the San Marino Historical Society.
- May 22, 2019, Monday, 7 p.m. "The San Marino Citywide Historical Resources Survey," by Mary Ringhoff, Architectural Resources Group, Crowell Public Library, Barth Community Room, 1890 Huntington Drive, San Marino, CA.
- June, 2, 2019 Sunday, Thurnher Open House, 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House at Lacy Park, headquarters of the San Marino Historical Society.
- June 16, 2019 Sunday, Thurnher Open House, 12-3 p.m. Docent led tours of the Thurnher House at Lacy Park, headquarters of the San Marino Historical Society.
- October 28, 2019 Monday, 7 p.m. San Marino Historical Society Program, "The Kathy Fiscus Tragedy," by Bill Deverell, Crowell Public Library, Barth Community Room, 1890 Huntington Drive, San Marino, CA.

## From the Archives

Recent additions to the archives include The Mayberry Family by Mary E. Whitney, donated by historian Nick Curry. Edward Mayberry once owned, but never lived in the El Molino Viejo. Later one of his homes became the location for the first San Marino School. Many remember the Mayberry House. In September 9, 1913, the school and was opened in the Mayberry House at the corner of Monterey Road, (then called Calle de Lopez) and Oak Knoll. There were three teachers and thirty-five pupils, grades kindergarten through the eighth grade.

Kay Romer recently donated four issues of The San Marino Conscience, from 1982 and 1983. Ben Austin published this newsletter in a desire to make the City of San Marino "observe the basic tenets of the standard virtue of frugality, prudence and economy in the spending of taxpayer money." Romer donated the issues in memory of her mother, Jeanne Cornwell who opposed Austin's stance on cutting funds for the library.

Archive volunteers Christa Lakon and Joyce Gatsoulis Batnij continue to support city efforts to uncover the history of the Rose Arbor in Lacy Park and work with representatives from Architectural Resources Group as work on the Historical Resources Survey progresses.

The Historical Society Archives contains a wealth of information on the history of the city, including books, photographs, letters, oral histories, videos, and ephemera. Items donated by Boyd Smith from Huntington School of the 1960s are now on display in the glass case in the small conference room.

### Michael White Book

The Story of Michael White a California Rebel Pioneer 1801-1885 by Dorothy Jenkins Ross is a fascinating story which provides a unique view of the San Gabriel Valley's development during this notable period in California history. The book may be purchased at the Crowell Public Library, San Marino Toy and Books or by contacting the San Marino Historical Society. The price of the book is \$27.20 for a hardcover copy including sales tax and \$19.57 for soft cover.



### 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/>

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