



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends,

We are off to a good year at the San Marino Historical Society, and I want to thank all of you for your continued support.

We are especially happy to welcome a number of new members this season. Your interest, participation, and generosity help make our programs and projects possible, and we are grateful to have you with us.

One of the highlights so far this year has been the continued success of our Centennial Home Project. We have now recognized 18 homes and counting, with the earliest dating to 1902. It has been wonderful to see the enthusiasm for this project and the pride homeowners have in the history of their homes. Special thanks to Hector Gutierrez, who has been doing a wonderful job contacting recipients, delivering signs, and helping document each home with a photograph and short video for our archives.

We also had a terrific turnout for our recent speaker program featuring author **Danny Jensen**, with approximately 100 people in attendance. The highlight was Danny creating a special poem of clues to solve just for our organization after spending time researching both **The Old Mill** and the **Michael White Adobe**.

We look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming private tour of the Tournament House. There are still some spots available, so members who would like to join us need to respond quickly in order to be included.

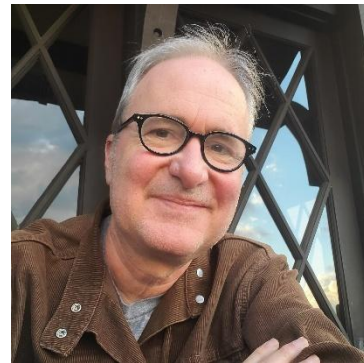
Thank you again to our members, donors, and friends for helping us continue to celebrate and preserve San Marino's history. We look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events.

Christa Lakon, President

The Grapevine

Published by the San Marino Historical Society
Spring 2026

SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PROUDLY PRESENTS:
AUTHOR PAUL HADDAD



Inventing Paradise: The Power Brokers
Who Created the Dream of Los Angeles charts the improbable rise of Los Angeles through the prism of six visionaries -- Henry Huntington among them -- who had outsize influence on the city's growth. Other titans of industry included Phineas Banning, Harrison Gray Otis, Harry Chandler, William Mulholland, and Moses Sherman.

Paul Haddad has penned several nonfiction books exploring the contextual roots of his native Los Angeles, which includes his most recent *LA Times* Bestselling book, *Inventing Paradise: The Power Brokers Who Created the Dream of Los Angeles*. His other books include *Freewaytopia: How Freeways Shaped Los Angeles* and *10,000 Steps a Day in L.A.: 57 Walking Adventures*. As a writer and contributor, he has examined Southern California for such media as the *LA Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Washington Post*, *The Times* (UK), *LAist*, *NPR*, and *HuffPo*. An MFA graduate of USC's School of Cinematic Arts, Haddad has been nominated for multiple Emmys as a documentary producer. He lives in Los Feliz.

Please join us on
MONDAY, May 18, 2026
7:00 - 8:00 P.M. (doors open 6:30)
SAN MARINO COMMUNITY CENTER
1800 HUNTINGTON DR.

Kindly RSVP to
info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org
Public is welcome, admission is free

2026 BOARD AND COMMITTEES

Executive Officers

President - Christa Lakon
Vice President - Ed Tom
Treasurer - Isaac Hung
Secretary - Pat Salvaty
Immediate Past President - Isaac Hung

Board Members

Joyce Batnij, Judy Carter, Wayne Carter,
Michael Mancini, Michael Moran, John Morris,
Gretchen Shepherd Romey, John Ryan

Volunteer Archivists

Judy Carter, Katie Manning, Sylvia Uriarte

Hospitality Committee

Nicole Basseri, Shelley Boyle, John Dustin, Made-
line Gutierrez, Katie Manning, Sylvia Uriarte

Centennial Home Chair

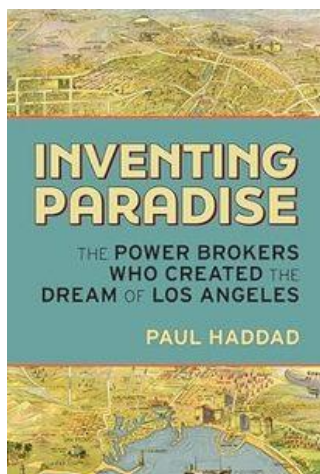
Hector Gutierrez

SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOOK CLUB

Sunday, April 19 marked San Marino Historical Society's first book club, and it was smashing success! The table was filled with enthusiastic and engaged participants. The attendees were especially surprised that so many knew such interesting facts about the Pattons, which added a special flavor to the discussion. Make sure to mark your calendars for the next book club, **September 20**. We will bring more chairs, more tea sandwiches, and more cookies.

-Nicole Basseri

Our next selection is ***Inventing Paradise: The Power Brokers Who Created the Dream of Los Angeles*** by Paul Haddad. We invite members to join us for a book club discussion on **Sunday, September 20**, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., at the historic Thurnher House in Lacy Park. Light refreshments will be served. We hope you'll read along with us.



CENTENNIAL HOME PROJECT

We want to celebrate your
100-year-old house.

Was your home built in 1926 or earlier?
The Historical Society invites San Marino residents to request a yard sign by sending an email with your address, year built and a house photo to our project chair, Hector Gutierrez, at lacitybroker@gmail.com



If you are not sure when your house was built,
email us to find out at
info@sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org

BECOME A MEMBER



Single – \$25.00
Family – \$30.00
Sponsor – \$50.00
Patron – \$100.00

Be a Benefactor with your donations of \$250 or more!

Please support your local Historical Society!
Scan the QR code with your camera, which will take you to our website, then click on membership to join.

**Your contributions keep the memories of
San Marino alive!**

THE FLORAL FLAG

San Marino's Living Tribute to the Bicentennial



The year 1976 marked the Bicentennial of the United States, and communities across the country found ways to commemorate the historic milestone. Residents of San Marino answered the call with a spectacular and lasting tribute: a breathtaking American flag brought to life entirely in vibrant flowers.

The “living” flag was located on the northeast corner of Huntington Drive and Sierra Madre Boulevard. It was a coordinated effort involving the San Marino Historical Society, the City’s Beautification Committee, and the Parks Department. Designed and planted as part of the city’s Bicentennial observance, the installation measured approximately 40 by 30 feet and was intended as a lasting visual expression of civic pride.

The dedication ceremony reflected the spirit of the moment. Huntington Drive was closed to traffic as residents gathered to mark the occasion, many dressed in colonial attire. The program included remarks by Mayor Maurice Jones, Jr., the introduction of dignitaries, patriotic readings, and community singing. Boy Scout Troop 351 presented the colors, and the San Marino High School marching band performed selections appropriate to the event. Local businesses joined in by decorating their storefronts, creating what was described as a “Street of Flags.”

The floral flag received attention beyond the city, including a message of commendation from President Gerald R. Ford, who recognized the effort as a meaningful contribution to the nation’s Bicentennial celebration. The project was also described at the time as the only installation of its kind in the country.

Often referred to as a “blooming flag,” the installation was designed to be viewed both during the day and at night. With evening lighting, the flag remained visible after sunset, and it quickly became a point of interest for visitors as well as residents.

The planting complemented the surrounding landscape and reflected the city’s longstanding emphasis on horticulture and civic beautification.

In addition to the floral flag, San Marino’s Bicentennial activities included a commemorative medallion issued by the San Marino Historical Society. Designed by Frank Harman, the medallion featured the city seal on one side and an American flag with the Bicentennial dates on the other. Cast in bronze, silver, and gold, it was offered to the community as a keepsake marking the occasion.

The floral flag served as a centerpiece of the city’s Bicentennial observance and as a visible expression of local participation in a national milestone.

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary on July 4, 2026, this earlier Bicentennial project offers a local example of how the nation’s 200th anniversary was commemorated in San Marino.



Members of Boy Scout Troop 351 in dress rehearsal at Lacy Park for their presentation of colors at the dedication of the “living” American Flag.

CENTENNIAL HOME PROJECT



Shelley Boyle, from Fleur Drive, is one of the first recipients of the Centennial Home sign. Her house was designed by Harold Bissner in 1926 and retains many of the original features, including an original Batchelder tile bathroom.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR 2026

April 25, 2026 113th Anniversary of the City of San Marino, founded in 1913.

May 3 and 17, 2026 (Sunday, 12-3 PM) Thurnher House docent-led tours with John Morris and John Ryan.

May 18, 2026 (Monday, 7-8 PM) San Marino Historical Society presents author **Paul Haddad** at the San Marino Community Center.

May 21, 2026 (Thursday, 12-2 PM) Tournament House Private Tour, members only. Please email to reserve your spot.

June 7 and 21, 2026 (Sunday, 12-3 PM) Thurnher House docent-led tours with John Morris and John Ryan.

July 19, 2026 (Sunday, 12-3 PM) Thurnher House docent-led tours with John Morris and John Ryan.

August 2 and 16, 2026 (Sunday, 12-3 PM) Thurnher House docent-led tours with John Morris and John Ryan.

September 6 and 20, 2026 (Sunday, 12-3 PM) Thurnher House docent-led tours with John Morris and John Ryan.

September 20, 2026 (Sunday, 2-4 PM) San Marino Historical Society's Book Club held at Thurnher House.

October 26, 2026 (Monday, 7-8 PM) San Marino Historical Society presents **Robert Petersen** at the San Marino Community Center. Details to follow.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

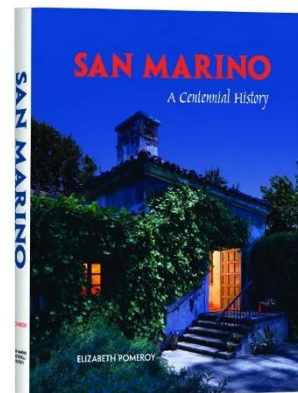
We would like to thank the **Rogers Family** for their recent donation of planning documents for the original Lacy Park Patton Memorial and a Caro Nan basket purse from 1975.

Sylvia Uriarte is working diligently to maintain the obituary project started by **Judith Newell**.

Judy Carter is pleased to announce that she has almost completed inventorying the **Chamber of Commerce Collection** donated to the Society following the Chamber's closure.



General Patton visiting San Marino right after World War II. A parade was held to promote the nation's final wartime bond drive.



Order the San Marino Centennial Book
online via PayPal at
www.sanmarinohistoricalsociety.org
Also available at
The Huntington Store
and **Vroman's Bookstore**