



The Grapevine

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The San Marino Historical Society
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SPRING 2000

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

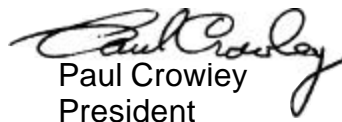
Dear Members:

Not a lot has changed since our last Grapevine, but things are still on course.

Our headquarters, the Michael White Adobe, remains in good shape and has attracted the interest of several high school students who have visited it and have included it in various essays. Unfortunately, the current construction and parking congestion at the high school has made regular use of the Adobe difficult. Major decisions on the future of our headquarters will probably be made this year.

The series on histories of our volunteer groups continues in this issue, with the Garden Club featured. The Tribune is faithfully publishing one of our old photos on the first Thursday of each month. Favorable comments on both of these series have been received.

Our winter program on the Republic of San Marino drew a full house at Southwestern Academy and we thank the Reitnouers very much. On June 26th we will have a George Patton program at City Hall. (See details on page 2). It should be a unique event and we hope you can attend.


Paul Crowley
President

LACY PARK

By Judy Carter

Lacy Park, with its mature trees and rolling lawns, is one of the most beautiful spots in the San Gabriel Valley. Before the founding of the Mission San Gabriel, Native Americans camped beside a small lake on what is now the park. Later the padres from the Mission dammed a stream to supply water to El Molino Viejo and called the body of water Mission Lake. A photograph from the files of the San Marino Public Library, dated 1904, shows a group of bare-skinned boys hip-deep in water, cooling off on a summer day. They appear to be standing near where the baseball backstop is today. This idyllic photo does not show the swampy state of this ground most of the year.

In 1923, the lake's future as a sometime swimming hole was questioned when Robert Frick bought the land on which it stood. He planned to subdivide the property into small lots. Alarmed that the subdivision might ruin the neighborhood, the City of San Marino bought the property from Frick for \$65,000, assisted by a gift from Henry E. Huntington. The city of San Marino then

(Continued on page 4)



June 4, 1938

Set and dance floor for Fiesta celebrating San Marino's 25th anniversary at Lacy Park

**San Marino Historical Society
Officers 1999-2000**

*President	Paul Crowley
*VP, Membership	Kirk Helm
*VP, Programs	Ave Maria Bortz
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*Librarian	Veronica Romero
*Historians	Kenneth Veronda
	Peggy Winkler
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City Representative	Betty Brown, Mayor
Alternate	Eugene Dryden
Docent Co-Chairs	Ave Bortz, Peggy Winkler
Communications	Carolyn Holstrom
Stoneman Mural	Marilyn Peck
Social	Katy Benton, Dorothy Ohlsen

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Adobe Restoration and Preservation
Paul Crowley, Eugene Dryden, James Elliott, Kirk Helm

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Shirts and Totes
Marilyn Peck

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Graziella Almanza, Katy Benton, Mary Payne, Lillian Campbell, Beth Yale, Dorothy Ohlson, Veronica Palma-Romero, Vera Wrobel, Sandy Morris, Marilyn Peck, Peggy Winkler, Ave Maria Bortz, Jim Elliott, Bea Hutter, Carolyn Waldo

*Board Officers

Society Presidents (1974-1999)

Midge Sherwood.....	1974
Mary Smith.....	1976
Jack Sherwood.....	1978
Ed Ford	1980
Graziella Almanza	1982
La Verne Smith.....	1985
Jeanne Imler.....	1989
Gary Fleming	1991
Lillian Campbell.....	1993
Marilyn Peck.....	1995
Paul Crowley.....	1999

SAN MARINO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PROUDLY PRESENTS
"GENERAL PATTON'S LAST VISIT
HOME"

by
HONORABLE JOHN ROUSSELOT
MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2000, 7:30 P.M.

SAN MARINO CITY HALL
2200 HUNTINGTON DRIVE
SAN MARINO

55 years ago, General George Patton, native of San Marino and son of our first Mayor, returned from Europe to visit his home for the last time. He died the following December and is buried in Luxembourg.

Our City Officials will conduct a short ceremony on the same steps at City Hall. The program to follow will be inside the City Council Chambers and will feature the Honorable John Roussetot, a student of Pattons history and one who was present on that day in 1945.

Public input will be welcome.

PUBLIC INVITED - Admission is FREE!



Summer 1945

SAN MARINO GARDEN CLUB

Founded 1935

By Arlene Kelly

Like quite a few other ideas here in the Southland the concept of a San Marino Garden Club was born of the desire to reduce driving time. In 1935 the closest such club for avid San Marino gardeners was in the San Fernando Valley. Driving to a meeting way out there one day Muriel Ensign and Grace Thomas decided they needed a garden club of their own and on May 21st of 1935 sixty San Marinians met to form one.

The original objectives as stated in the club's constitution were "to coordinate the interest in cooperative gardening toward city beautification; to aid in the protection of wildflowers and birds; and to study in all its aspects the fine art of gardening." Those remain the guiding principles of the club today.

The club's first project was the elimination of a civic eyesore, the Pacific Electric Railway right of way on Huntington Drive. The native California poppy was selected for the job, seeds were imported from Germany to augment those available here and soon visitors were treated to a profusion of red, orange and white blooms. Then birds discovered that the poppy seeds were delicious and too many visitors left with dug-up plants so the poppies were replaced with more than 2000 giant aloes and mesembryantheums, all too large to be toted away.

The club campaigned for a flowering tree in every front yard in the city and by 1942 National Geographic magazine was lauding San Marino for its "flower bordered streets". Those war years presented another opportunity for the San Marino Garden Club to be of service. Camouflage was required for the anti-aircraft batteries installed from San Diego to Seattle. Club members responded to an appeal from the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) for 50,000 seedlings of acacia, Catalina cherry, salarums, holly and myrtle by growing the plants and transporting them to the OCD.

Club projects since then have included restoration of the Hugo Reed adobe at the Arboretum, campaigns against littering, planting of 36 eucalyptus trees at the high school, and erection of granite markers at the city's boundaries. The preservation and restoration of the rose garden and pergola at Lacy Park and planting of borders at city hall and the library are continuing efforts. One of the club's largest contributions to date was their work to develop a master plan for the grounds of El Molino Viejo. They solicited sponsorship of areas of the gardens from local garden clubs and adopted for their own special project the restoration and maintenance of the Pomegranate Patio at the east end of the property.

Back in 1935 membership dues were set at \$2, a sub-

stantial amount in that Depression Era. Dues have increased since but not proportionately with the economy so the underlying theme for the club's projects is to provide leadership and ideas and to seek financing for major works outside club resources.

All of the wonderful work done by the San Marino Garden Club over the past 65 years has been accomplished with the close cooperation of the San Marino City Council. The ladies of the club have kept well in mind that the beautification of San Marino is the club's prime reason for being.

Each year the incoming president chooses a new beautification project for that year. Among the annual tasks selected have been the donation of trees to Lacey Park and the median strip of Huntington Drive, plantings for the Memorial Island at the juncture of Lorain Road and San Gabriel Blvd. and the installation of a sprinkler system for the grounds of El Molino Viejo. Below are listed the ladies who have championed those and other efforts.

Past Presidents

Mrs. Wilbur Thomas	1935-37	Mrs. Earl S Condon	1966-67
Mrs. Roy F Ensign	1937-39	Mrs. Donn D Peters	1967-68
Mrs. J T Whittemore	1939-40	Mrs. G P Sprague	1968-69
Mrs. Chester A Swift	1940-41	Mrs. Jack Sherwood	1969-71
Mrs. Howard Seidell	1941-42	Mrs. Clyde J Lanehart	1971-72
Mrs. Harrison Guio	1942-43	Mrs. Richard Sprague	1972-73
Mrs. Robert M Allen	1943-44	Mrs. M Mgrublian	1973-74
Mrs. Paul C Merrill	1944-45	Mrs. Joan T Day	1974-75
Mrs. G Walter Evans	1945-46	Mrs. Vernon Sharpe	1975-76
Mrs. Alex. Robertson	1946-47	Mrs. John B Norberg	1976-78
Mrs. W F Weirick	1947-48	Mrs. Kenneth Riley	1978-79
Mrs. Frances V Stay	1948-49	Mrs. W F Brownlee	1979-80
Mrs. Charles E Atkins	1949-50	Mrs. Floyd M Lewis	1980-81
Mrs. Harold E Dryden	1950-51	Mrs. John E Meskell	1981-82
Mrs. Clark E Bell	1951-52	Mrs. A M O Smith	1982-83
Mrs. Joseph Dobson	1952-53	Mrs. Daniel P Bryant	1983-84
Mrs. George W Miller	1953-54	Mrs. Leon Marder	1984-85
Mrs. O T Wilkinson	1954-55	Mrs. J W Cady	1985-86
Mrs. Alex. Davidson	1955-56	Mrs. G W Tackabury	1986-88
Mrs. M N Thackaberry	1956-57	Mrs. M Mgrublian	1988-89
Mrs. Elder Morgan	1957-58	Mrs. C A Marshall	1989-90
Mrs. C E P Jeffreys	1958-59	Mrs. Vernon A Ingle	1990-91
Mrs. Harley E Doerr	1959-60	Mrs. John E Meskell	1991-92
Mrs. Austin W Strong	1960-61	and Mrs. AMO Smith	
Mrs. Elmer H Howlett1	1961-62	Mrs. Richard Ohlson	1992-94
Mrs. W L Chadwick	1962-63	Mrs. James Marovich	1994-95
Mrs. Grif S Pharo	1963-64	Mrs. Hervey Segal	1995-97
Mrs. John Henderson	1964-66	Mrs. J F Tromble	1997-99
		Mrs. William Eyler	1999-00

LACY PARK

(Continued from page 1)

floated a bond issue to raise the additional \$80,000 to turn the swampy lake into a park.

William Hertrick, designer of the gardens surrounding Mr. Huntington's estate, drew up the plans for a park and Armin Thurnher supervised the development of what became known as the City Park. According to Thurnher, work began in February 1926, and final landscaping touches were completed in 1932. When San Marino's mayor, Richard H. Lacy became ill in 1938, the park was renamed in his honor. The first phase of the park's construction required draining water from the old lake bed and installing a permanent drainage system to keep water from accumulating in the low areas of the land. In what seemed an endless procession, trucks hauled in more than 100,000 cubic yards of dirt to fill and level the center of the park.

Only after this preliminary work was completed could the workers plant more than 2,000 trees and shrubs shaping the bare land into a park. Over six decades later, Engleman oaks, incense cedars, redwoods and white birches dot the perimeter of this mature park. Two paths encircle the nearly thirty acre expanse revealing clusters of palms, cypress, pines and sycamores that provide shade on even the hottest summer days.

Each year when San Marino residents and their guests gather in the park on July 4th to celebrate the anniversary of American independence, some of us also celebrate the vision of men who imagined a park where the swampy lake once stood. We are grateful to Henry Huntington, William Hertrick, Armin Thurnher and many nameless workers who created Lacy Park in the heart of San Marino.



Wilson Lake—1875

Photo by Carleton E. Watkins



1927

*Tract 6012, North of Huntington Drive,
West of Virginia Road*



Aerial View—1937

WEBSITE

Visit our web page to learn more about your Society's programs and activities:

www.smnet.org

(Click on "Community Resources" and then on "San Marino Historical Society")

or go directly to:

www.smnet.org/comm_group/historical/

Want to volunteer with your Historical Society? Docents, assistants, and other helpers are needed around the wonderful White Adobe. Oral history interviewers and transcribers are needed, assistance with the architectural survey and our historical collections is welcomed—lots of ways to help around our active group! Call (626) 796-6023

SHIRTS 'N TOTES

We are still selling sweatshirts, T-shirts and tote bags with the colorful map of San Marino. They make wonderful gifts or souvenirs of our city. Profits go to our services to the community. If you wish to purchase them call Marilyn Peck at (626) 449-4572.