



LANTERMAN HOUSE

NEWSLETTER

FALL ~ 2022

**LANTERMAN HISTORICAL
MUSEUM FOUNDATION**

4420 Encinas Drive
La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011
(818) 790-1421
lantermanhouse@gmail.com

HOURS OF OPERATION

Tuesday/Thursdays
Sunday (1st and 3rd)
1:00 to 4:00pm
(Reservation only @ www.lantermanhouse.org)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 1
The History of Viewpoint

Page 2
Letter from the Director
2022 Virtual History Internship

Page 3-4
*From the Archives...Virginia
Robertson, Postal Worker, Artist,
World Traveler*

Page 5-6
Viewpoint (continued)

Page 7-8
*Tile & Iron: Preserving
Viewpoint's Architectural
Treasures*

Page 9
Spring 2022 Happenings

Page 10-11
Fall 2022 Calendar of Events

Page 12
Membership Information



The Lute Player, one of the four musician tiles from the Batchelder fireplace which was carefully removed from Viewpoint. Photo by Joanne Wilborn.

THE HISTORY OF VIEWPOINT, THE BULLOCK'S COUNTRY HOUSE

Last year, the La Cañada Unified School District demolished their old school district office, located on the Palm Crest Elementary school grounds. The wood-paneled building, a familiar site to many, had fallen into disuse. Other than a few newspaper accounts, no photos or other documentation of the original building have been found. The magnificent iron gates to the property and remnants of the original landscaping give tantalizing hints of a lavish lifestyle on the grounds where schoolchildren now play. Lanternman House archivist Julie Yamashita reconstructs the history of the house and its owners.

The property at 5039 Palm Drive has had its ups and downs. It began life as an empty lot owned by local Mary Carter, who acquired it from early homesteader and lawyer Will Gould. In 1923, wealthy oilman and geologist Bert Chester Morrison (1885-1962) purchased the lot from her. Morrison was, at the time, President of the U.S. Royalties Company, a prominent oil drilling corporation headquartered in downtown Los Angeles. He chose the peaceful Alta Canyada location for its quick commute by car to work. The name of the architect isn't known, but the Cooper Brothers, local contractors, built the house.

Construction was swift as it was not long after, in 1924, that the completed home was put up for sale. Morrison's luck had run out and he resigned his position at U.S. Royalties and moved to South America to rebuild his fortunes. In an oral history interview in 1972, contractor Edwin Cooper recalled building the house for Mr. Morrison. "Morrison was one of those high-pressure guys. I don't know what he was really doing. He got into a financial scrape some months after they had moved in up there and he decided it might be better for him to live in Brazil."

Letter from the Director

Things are bustling at the Lanterman House! Last spring, our visitation returned to almost normal numbers with the return of school and group tours. We spent the summer doing maintenance and preservation projects at the house and are looking forward to reopening for tours on Thursday, September 6th.

Under the guidance from our Conservation Assessment Program grant, the City repaired several crumbling concrete patio slabs around the house and added a safety railing to the back kitchen stairs. Our garden volunteers have been working hard in both the vegetable garden and the native plant garden. This summer, they experimented with planting the Three Sisters: corn, beans, and squash (a traditional Native American grouping). Other volunteers cleaned silver in the house, reset the dining room and breakfast room tables, and continued to catalog the necktie collection of the Lanterman men (several hundred and counting...).

We're looking forward to a busy fall season at the Lanterman House. Please take a look at our calendar (pages 10-11) and attend one of our events or take a tour. It's always free for members! And if you have any spare time on your hands, consider joining our group of volunteers! We have jobs available for many interests and skill sets.

Laura Verlaque

VIRTUAL HISTORY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

During the summer of 2022, we hosted our third season of the Virtual History Internship program! Five local high school students interviewed ten members of different community organizations. Their interviews will be submitted to the California State Library and, ultimately, preserved in both the Lanterman Archives and the California Revealed database (www.californiarevealed.org). The interns and their interviewees were:

- **Lena Bolotin**, La Cañada High School, interviewed **Joan Bartoli-Porto** of the La Cañada Thursday Club and **Pat Anderson** of the La Cañada Flintridge Chamber of Commerce.

- **Cole Cacho-Negrete**, Village Christian School, interviewed **Wendy Nicoll** of the La Cañada Flintridge Orthopaedic Guild and **Randy Strapazon** of the La Cañada Flintridge Trails Council.

- **Danny Evans**, La Cañada High School, interviewed **Carl Christensen** of the Kiwanis Club of La Cañada and **Martha Burns** of the Kiwanis Club of La Cañada AM.

- **Katelyn Hung**, La Cañada High School, interviewed **Alice Ryan** of La Cañada Valley Beautiful and **Katie Ginzton** of the Flintridge Riding Club/equestrian history.

- **Arianna Kim**, La Cañada High School, interviewed **Lynn Thompson** of the Assistance League of Flintridge and **Chuck Terhune** of the La Cañada Flintridge Tournament of Roses.



L-R Katie Ginzton, Katelyn Hung, Alice Ryan, Chuck Terhune, Arianna Kim, Lynn Thompson, Lena Bolotin, Randy Strapazon, Cole Cacho-Negrete, Danny Evans, Martha Burns. Photo by Candy Dougherty

From the Archives: VIRGINIA ROBERTSON: POSTAL WORKER, ARTIST, WORLD TRAVELER

The Lanterman Archives contains the story of long-time local resident Virginia Robertson who lived a life of service, adventure, and love of community.

Virginia Robertson (1917-2012), moved to La Cañada with her parents from Pennsylvania when she was ten years old. She attended La Cañada School and Muir Technical High School. Her love of the post office began when her mother took on the job of substitute for the postman (there was only one at the time) when he was on vacation. Robertson assisted her mother with deliveries, and soon, she began helping the postman as well. She rode along with him in his Model T Ford, earning 50 cents each morning she worked.



*Virginia Robertson (far right) and her co-workers at the Post Office, June 1948.
Image courtesy of the Lanterman Archives.*

In 1935, Robertson took the civil service exam and officially started working for the post office as a clerk. She was a unique witness to La Cañada's development from a small town to full cityhood. During her 40-year tenure, the staff at the post office increased from just three to over fifty. The post office had itself changed locations three times during that period, from shared accommodations at 1105 Foothill Blvd. with Miller Real Estate to a specially built, 18,000 square foot Spanish-style building at 607 Foothill Blvd. In 1976, after forty-one years on the job, Virginia Robertson retired from the post office, but her life was far from winding down.

Once retired, she began pursuing her other loves: art and travel. She took lessons in painting at the Roger Barkley Community Center (now the Community Center of La Cañada Flintridge) and became an accomplished watercolorist of landscapes. She often showed her work in local exhibitions, including the Hospitality House at Descanso Gardens.

Robertson also pursued her interest in photography, joining the local camera club.

According to the Los Angeles Times, Virginia Robertson went on exotic trips every year with friends even before she retired from the post office. In 1955, she sailed with three friends from the Sierra Club to Gibraltar. There, they picked up a German car that they had pre-purchased and drove through Europe for three months. As a retiree, she combined her passion for art and travel, journeying throughout the world to take photos and fill her sketchbooks with enough material to keep her busy painting until her next adventure. In 1979, she intended to go on a six-month trip to South Africa to visit friends from JPL, but instead came back nine months later having extended her travels from South Africa to Egypt, Turkey, and Norway. Robertson happily came home with numerous rolls of film and full notebooks. Calling herself an adventurer, she said that "I like the more rugged trips. I like camping and hiking and anything outdoors."



*Virginia Robertson at her 8th grade graduation, 1931.
Image courtesy of the Lanterman Archives*

From the Archives:

VIRGINIA ROBERTSON: POSTAL WORKER, ARTIST, WORLD TRAVELER

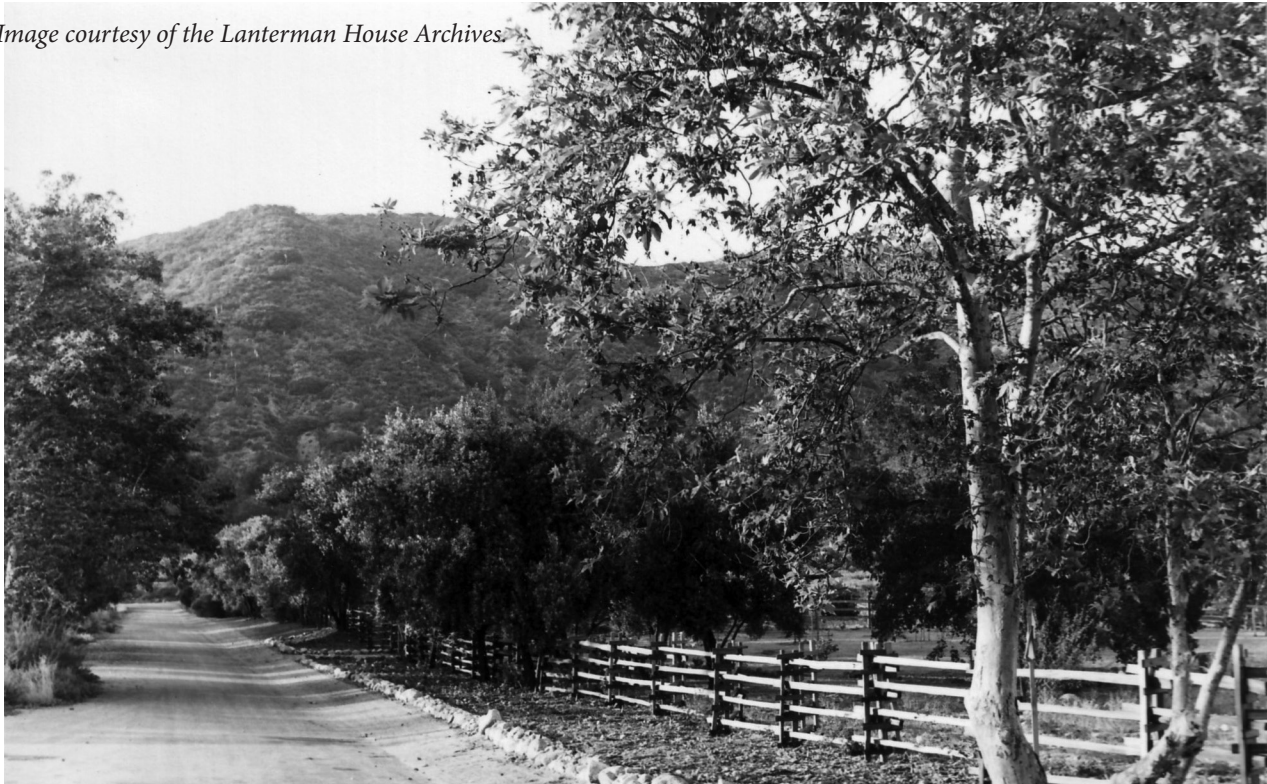
When not traveling, Robertson lived in the same house on La Cañada Blvd. that her parents had bought in the 1930s. She was active in the community and although she loved to be a globetrotter, “there is no place quite like [La Cañada]. I guess you’d say I am living proof.”

Some of the organizations that she was active in included the local public library, the Church of the Lighted Window, the Lanterman House, the Verdugo Hills Art Association, and the California Art Club.

Virginia Robertson passed away in 2012 at the age of 94. Her legacy lives on at the Lanterman House through the many illustrations she created for the museum. They can be seen in the La Cañada history booklets given to every third grader that visits the Lanterman House on a school tour to this day. Robertson also recorded an oral history in 2006, which has been digitized and is available online through California Revealed and donated family papers and photographs to the Archives.

~Julie Yamashita, Lanterman House Archivist

Image courtesy of the Lanterman House Archives



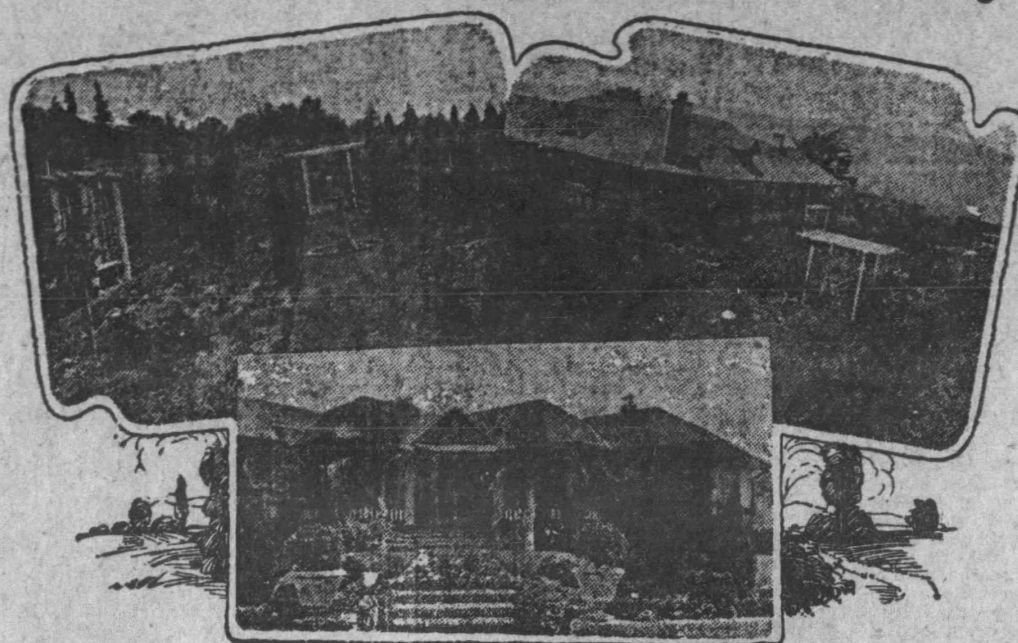
The photographs that Virginia Robertson donated to the Lanterman Archives include many scenes of local interest, including this lovely photo of Gould Avenue from the 1940s.

Notice of sale of Morrison house, Los Angeles Times, November 11, 1924

R
E
A
L

E
S
T
A
T
E

of Alta Canada In Beautiful La Canada Vally



F
U
R
N
I
S
H
I
N
G
S

Magnificent Estate and Exquisite Furnishings

of the home of Mrs. Bessie Morrison

AT AUCTION

Wednesday, Nov. 12th, 11 A. M.

Special Evening Sale at 7:30 P. M.

Corner Palm Drive and Mountain Ave., Alta Canada

Advertisements for the auction of the house and its contents in November 1924 provide important details about how magnificent the house and grounds must have looked in its glory. The stucco house had spacious porches and rooms in addition to a burglar alarm with intercom, a solar heater, and a large basement. Though the specific size of the main house is not given, the gardener's lodge was itself a four-room house with a bathroom and double garage. The main home was decorated with expensive paintings, rugs, tapestries, and imported furniture. This was accompanied by the latest in electronic appliances in the kitchen and laundry room. Of particular note was the large Batchelder tile fireplace in the living room.

Outdoors, the most spectacular sight must have been the aviary, which was one of the largest in California and housed over 400 exotic birds at the time of sale. The manicured grounds were full of fruit, walnut, and citrus trees in addition to a grape vineyard. The property even had its own well, a pool, and an elaborate irrigation system.

“THE HISTORY OF VIEWPOINT, CONTINUED”



*Louise Bullock, 1935.
Image courtesy of the Los Angeles Times Photographic Collection, University of California, Los Angeles.*

It is not known if the house and all its furnishings were sold together, but in 1925, the home was purchased by John Gillespie Bullock, founder of Bullock’s Department Store. In addition to his retail empire, Bullock was heavily involved in Los Angeles civic affairs, serving on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District and as a Trustee of Caltech. He and his wife, Louise, used the home, which they called “Viewpoint”, as a mountain retreat from their home on Plymouth Boulevard in Hancock Park.

Following Bullock’s death in 1933, Louise Bullock married Russ J. Avery and continued to use the home. Avery was a prominent judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court from 1917-1925. The couple became known for throwing exotic parties and suppers at the Bullock house. In April 1937, they threw an “aviary” party, the invitation requesting guests to “bring a bird” because “it’s going to be a lark.” As the aviary was empty at the time, the couple wanted to repopulate it in style.

During the 1940s and 1950s, the Bullock House was rented out to different tenants, though still owned by the Averys. There was Vernon A. Eaton, a civil engineer and his wife, Aleathea, as well as cement salesman Arthur J. Cleary, his wife Maria, and their son and two daughters. In 1955, the La Cañada Unified School District took possession of the property through eminent domain. Palm Crest Elementary School was built on the southern-most part of the property. The Bullock House became the school district’s administrative offices. Much of the house was remodeled to suit its new purpose, its porches enclosed, and vertical wood siding was applied to the original stucco exterior.

The house was used as the headquarters of the school district until 2005 when new offices were built at 4490 Cornishon. After that, the house was mostly used for storage. During the past decade, the school district announced plans to demolish the house to make way for a parking lot, and the house was torn down in 2021.



*LCUSD Headquarters on 5039 Palm Drive,
Circa 1955. Image courtesy of the Lanterman Archives.*

~Julie Yamashita

TILE & IRON: LCUSD'S QUEST TO PRESERVE VIEWPOINT'S ARCHITECTURAL TREASURES



The mountain retreat called Viewpoint had to be demolished in 2021, but the La Cañada Unified School District, owners of the property, were careful to preserve certain elements of the original property: most notably the massive Batchelder tile fireplace from the living room and the decorative wrought-iron gates made by local company Huntington Ironworks.

The Batchelder tile fireplace which took pride of place in the living room gave a hint to the home's luxuriously rustic décor. Measuring a full 12 feet wide, the fireplace featured the muted earth-tone tiles popularized by the tile company as well as several of its most iconic figural tile designs.

In the early 1920s when Viewpoint was built, the Batchelder Tile Company was enjoying a nationwide expansion of tile sales. The tile company famously started in humble beginnings in the backyard of Ernest Batchelder's house in the Arroyo Seco, a mere ten miles away from Viewpoint. By 1920, it expanded to a seven-acre modern factory site in Los Angeles. Batchelder Tile had several showrooms across the country, and the tiles were featured in catalogs put out by the company, as well as construction industry catalogs. A consumer could pick and choose their favorite patterned tiles, to be complemented by the plain field tiles, colored with Batchelder's distinctive soft earth tones, blues, or greens. The Batchelder catalog of 1923 stated that "color schemes [are] luminous and mellow in character, somewhat akin to the quality of an old piece of tapestry."

The Viewpoint tiles include four corbel which supported the mantelpiece. Each depicts a medieval musician: a lute player, a cymbal player, a singer, and a trumpeter. Among Batchelder's earliest and most popular tile designs, the same corbels are also installed in the rear of the Culbertson House, a Greene & Greene masterpiece located in Pasadena (built 1911).

TILE & IRON: LCUSD'S QUEST TO PRESERVE VIEWPOINT'S ARCHITECTURAL TREASURES CONTINUED

The centerpiece of the Viewpoint fireplace was a 12-inch square tile titled "The City of Hearthside Dreams", flanked by four matching smaller tiles. The tiles depict a medieval cityscape seen over a rustic stone wall, a fitting motif for the country escape that Viewpoint was designed to be. This design appears in the 1920 Batchelder Tile catalog as #152, retailing \$3.60 for the large tile, and \$.90 each for the matching smaller tiles.

Astonishingly, given the property's many residents and uses, the fireplace is in excellent condition. The school district retained the services of an experienced tile conservator, Amy Green of Silverlake Conservation, to carefully catalog, label, remove and clean each tile. Local artist, Cha-Rie Tang of Pasadena Craftsman Tile, was invited to make molds of the fireplace as another avenue of preservation. She has a rich history with the Batchelder Tiles and was eager to add these molds to her collection.

The wrought iron gates stood for many years as the most visible remnant of Viewpoint. They were made by Jim Huntington, founder of Huntington Ironworks (profiled in the Spring 2022 Lanterman House Newsletter). This local company was founded in 1914. After World War I, Huntington created decorative ironwork for many of the luxurious homes in the Flintridge development, as well as Alta Canyada.

The fireplace and the iron gates are, at the time of this publication, in storage. The school district has committed to preserving these elements of Viewpoint, recognizing their local historical value, as well as their craftsmanship and beauty. Hopefully, a solution will be found that will allow members of the community to appreciate these relics of La Cañada's past.

~Laura Verlaque



Center tile from the Batchelder fireplace. Photo by Joanne Wilborn.



At age 90, Jim Huntington posed with Joy Wilson and Maxine Reilly, members of the La Canada Historical Society in front of the gates at Viewpoint, 1965

SPRING 2022: Happenings at the Lanterman House



Eagle Scout Bruce Wiles and volunteers from Scout Troop 509 spent a long weekend constructing a composting enclosure near the Lanterman House garden.



Eagle Scout Laura Konefat organized a massive transfer of Lanterman House property from a rented storage unit to the newly-cleaned out shed near the Lanterman Visitor Center.



In May, La Cañada Flintridge Sister Cities Association hosted a cocktail party at the Lanterman House to honor the visiting delegation from Villanueva de la Cañada.



In April, Paul Revere Williams homeowners gathered at the Lanterman House for an informative lecture and discussion of the famed architect who designed many homes in the community. Tim Gregory, the Building Biographer and former archivist of the Lanterman House, presented the lecture.

The Lanterman House also hosted two other free events in the spring: a lecture on the history of Pachappa Camp, the first Korea Town in the US by Dr. Edward Chang of UC Riverside, and a screening of John Newcombe's latest film: CHiPs in the Crescenta Valley.

FALL 2022 CALENDAR

Please be sure to check the Lanterman House website at www.lantermanhouse.org for the most recent information.



In the breakfast room of the Lanterman House.

Docent-led Tours of the Lanterman House

If you are interested in taking a tour, please make a reservation on <https://lantermanhousetour.eventbrite.com>. Tours are offered on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month at 1pm. Please email if you need to request a different time.

The Lanterman House offers guided tours of the fully restored building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Tours are led by trained docents and last approximately 60 minutes. Self-guided tours are not available. All tours begin at the Visitor Center located inside the converted garage at the rear of the property. Visitors can also enjoy a preliminary history video in the Visitor Center.



Lanternman volunteers have fun on the annual silver cleaning day!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Join our dedicated team of volunteers at the Lanterman House! Volunteers can train to become docents, offer hospitality and organizational support for special events, join the gardening team, or assist with behind-the-scenes activities such as holiday decorating or preparing social media posts.

Volunteers are asked to become members of the Lanterman House and attend four to six one-hour training sessions to learn about the history of the family and their home.

An informal coffee hour will be held on Thursday, September 8 at 10:30am to explain the volunteer program. Please contact Laura Verlaque at (818) 790-1421 or via email at lantermanhouse@gmail.com for more information. Individualized training and time commitments can be arranged.



Historian Becky Nicolaides

Free Lecture: Segregating the Foothills

Sunday, October 1
2:00pm

Racial segregation in Los Angeles suburbs like La Cañada and La Crescenta increased rapidly in the first half of the 20th century, driven by real estate practices such as restrictive property deeds and redlining. In this talk, historian Becky Nicolaides explores the history of racial exclusion in Los Angeles, its lasting legacy, and proactive ways to achieve lasting racial justice in our communities.

Becky Nicolaides is a founding partner of the History Studio and author of the forthcoming book *The New Suburbia: Life in L.A. Suburbs since 1945* (Oxford University Press).

This talk is sponsored by the Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley and the Lanterman House. **No reservations required; however, seating is limited to 50.**



Free Lecture: Batchelder Tile from the Bullock House

Sunday, November 6
2:00pm

For one day only, selections of the decorative Batchelder tiles from the Bullock house will be on display at the Lanterman House. Enjoy an up-close view of these amazing tiles, followed by an illustrated lecture on the history of the Batchelder Tile Company by Lanterman House Director Laura Verlaque.

No reservations required; however, seating is limited to 50.

Family Free Day: Holiday Open House

Sunday, December 18
1:00 to 4:00pm

Celebrate the holiday season at the Lanterman House!

The free event will include peeks into the landmark Lanterman House, light refreshments, and live holiday music. The 1915 Lanterman House will be festively decorated for the season, including a Christmas tree decorated with botanicals. The Glendale Model Railroad Society will have a special display of HO model trains and displays of modeling. There will be craft tables for visitors to create holiday themed ornaments.

Visitors can also shop at a Holiday Boutique, filled with hand-crafted art, ceramics and other gifts made by local artists, including members of the Verdugo Hills Art Association.





4420 ENCINAS DRIVE • LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE, CA 91011
(818) 790-1421
lantermanhouse@gmail.com

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR LOCAL HISTORY!

The Lanternman Historical Museum Foundation, a non-profit organization, was founded to preserve, restore, operate and display the Lanternman House and Archives for the historic and cultural education and enjoyment of present and future generations of the City and State of California.

The Lanternman Historical Museum Foundation is eligible for Corporate Matching Gifts as a 501(c)(3) organization.

**Contact our Executive Director
at (818) 790-1421.**

LANTERMAN HOUSE

4420 Encinas Drive
La Cañada Flintridge, California 91011

**(818) 790-1421 • lantermanhouse@gmail.com
www.lantermanhouse.org**

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!!

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benefactor | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Associate | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sustainer | \$60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sponsor | \$35 |

*Please make checks payable to
the Lanternman Historical Museum Foundation*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Yes! Send my newsletter via email!