



LAGUNA BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



P.O. BOX 1526, LAGUNA BEACH,
CALIFORNIA, 92652

1995 - SUMMER

JULY/AUGUST

The Historical Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt, non-political community organization committed to preserving the places, things, and memories of Laguna.

Board Members

Belinda Blacketer Pres.	497-4439	Nelda Stone - Sec.	494-5268
Pauli Buzan - Treas.	494-7870	Jane Janz	499-4976
Ed Perry	497-2207	Anne Frank	494-2318
Eric Jessen	499-2131	Terri Quam	494-2113
		Donna Martin	494-6138

CALENDAR of EVENTS

July 4th, 3 PM to 8:30 PM -Stop by the Murphy-Smith House on your way to view the fireworks and see how Laguna celebrated the 4th in the past. Lemonade Stand and 4th of July Photo displays.

Summer Hiatus- no General Meeting until September.

September General Meeting- will feature the History of El Toro Marine Base, and it's influence on Laguna Beach. This meeting will be held on a Saturday Afternoon.

History Booklets Available

We now have 4 booklets on Laguna History available at the Murphy-Smith House.

A Short History of Laguna - \$3
Karen Wilson Turnbull

History of Laguna Canyon - \$3
Belinda Blacketer

Glorious Fourth of Julys - \$3
Jane Janz

Brayton Pottery - \$3
Belinda Blacketer

You can also order them by mail. Send check plus \$1.00 for postage to the P.O. Box and we will send them right out.

Our Past



The Glorious Fourth

(by Jane Janz)

The date of the first firecracker, rocket, or Roman candle is lost in the fog of Lagunas history, but you can bet that it wasn't long after the first homesteaders filed their claims in the 1870's. People came to escape the inland heat and were camping on the beach and building summer homes very early.

When my grandfather, Nick Isch, came in 1888 the hotel was filled and he had to find lodging elsewhere. During the winter the town was wonderfully quiet, but during the summer months the population swelled - so much so that around 1895 Joe and Kate Yoch bought an abandoned hotel, did the first recorded "renovation job," starting the Hotel Laguna, and the rest is history.

In 1889 the Yochs had built a small cottage on the beach front, and with other cottage owners in that row got together and built a boardwalk. With six daughters it's hard to imagine that there weren't more than a few firecrackers lighted off of the old boardwalk.

In 1896 the first pier was built off Heisler Point, and from there I would bet that Laguna was well into the Roman candle stage. Following are some of the stories I have heard and accounts from old newspapers that I hope will give you a look back at Laguna in the old days, when, as 1914 settler Lynn Aufdenkamp says, "The Fourth of July was the biggest day of the year!"

In 1921 they put on quite a show. Believe it or not, the fireworks show was launched not from the pier or the end of the beach but from an airplane! At eight o'clock there was a hushed silence and all eyes looked skyward as the plane took off from Park Ave., just below the old two-room schoolhouse.

Out over the ocean Captain Frank Hawkes lit off flares and smoke of different colors as he did loops, spins, and turns. The flares were attached to both wingtips, and he started with white. When those burned out all was inky blackness until off went the blue or red. After the show they did at least have a search light to help him find the place to land. The poor pilot was probably exhausted - he had spent the day taking off and landing.

Part of the amusement planned was that for a price (unknown) townspeople and visitors could be taken for a ride in the airplane to get a birds-eye view of Laguna and the coastline.

The only road into Laguna in those days was down Laguna Canyon, and it was packed. On Saturday night it was estimated that thirty thousand campers

stretched their tents from the ocean back four or five blocks. One passenger alone had counted 422 cars between here and Tustin.

The sale of fireworks was brisk. Over the three-day weekend one person said that the daytime was made joyfully noisy (I wonder) with the explosion of firecrackers and torpedoes. Messrs. Tom Sayles and Brown had just finished enlarging their dance hall and they had the largest crowd they had ever had. Mr. Hofer's amusement hall was packed to capacity with people playing bowling and billiards. The hot dog stands and the White House Restaurant dispensed food as quickly as it could be prepared.

It was reported that even the fish were biting - just cast your line into a wave and you had a fish.

The Hotel Laguna had the only phone in town, and Mr. Whitten, the manager, got a call from someone saying a friend of his was down there in Laguna and would the manager mind finding him? Constable Jubb was kept busy for two hours helping a man who, had helped his friends pitch a tent, but he could not now find them. The visitor gave up and curled up in the sand and went to sleep.

Constable Jubb and two deputies some how managed to keep things in relative order. Jubb had spent two sleepless nights controlling and settling disputes, and somehow keeping the traffic if not under control at least not deadly. The town felt lucky - they had escaped without fire, without accident, without drowning. The town resolved to find some way in the future to protect themselves from fire, to better pay for more police protection, and to create some kind of lifeguard service.

One incident did occur about this time that always brings a smile to the faces of the old timers. Local lawyer Tanneberg who was

very tall and lanky and usually dressed in a long black coat, and native son Maurice Isch staged a duel with Roman candles on the streets of downtown Laguna. Amid much hooping and hollering it ended without disaster, and following chastisement for doing something so dangerous, it did not become a tradition in town. Many thought that a shame.

In the year 1923 there is a touch of the Old West to Lagunas celebration. At eleven in the morning the cowboys, cowgirls, and Indians are to assemble at the head of Ocean Ave. They are to take over the town, and following that there are to be demonstrations of Indian dances and bareback equestrian stunts. The store owners have donated prizes that are to be awarded.

The other big 1926 event was the coming of the highway. The opening wouldn't be until later in the year, but the grading had begun. The state had agreed to open the road on some weekends even though the work was still in progress. It was in poor condition, but five thousand people came into town this way on the Fourth. One man went out and took count and reported that on the rough but passable Coast Highway, cars were coming into town at the rate of three per minute. Eight thousand cars came down Canyon Road. It was estimated that twenty thousand people were turned away because of lack of rooms. It was said they had to go to Santa Ana. Certainly there were fewer places to pitch a tent. Citizens had been advised to put up signs on vacant lots and on the bluffs saying that there could be no camping there. Even with that the holiday estimate was sixty thousand people had visited Laguna - a new record.

It was said the amount of money spent in Laguna was one third more than last year. The Arch Beach Tavern turned hundreds of people away, the White House Made \$350

more than last year, the Green Goose Ranch in the canyon did twice the business of last year. Nick Isch was ahead \$500 from last year, the Cabrillo Ballroom booked 1200 people on Saturday and 1500 on Sunday. The Lynn Movie Theater did the best holiday business in years. The editor even mentions that there was a fine fireworks display.

Notes to Members

At our May Board Meeting, we appointed two new Board members, Donna Martin of the City's Heritage Committee, and Terri Quam.

We also reelected the Board Members for another term, since everyone was willing to serve again. If you would be interested in serving on the Board of Director's please contact a Board member and let us know.

MURPHY-SMITH BUNGALOW REPORT

Well, we are out of money. Eric Johnson, manager of Coast Hardware has donated 7 Gallons of paint and given us a discount on the remaining 7 galleons of paint we need so that we can paint the outside of the house.

Steve Kawaratani, from Laguna Nursery has agreed to look at the yard and see if he can do anything with it.

When Last We Met

We were honored to have Dick Jahraus as the speaker at our last General Meeting. It was interesting and informative to here what Laguna and Laguna Lumber was like in earlier days.

We are sad to see Marriner's Stationary close after so many years of service to Laguna Beach. We will miss you.

Presidents Message

We would love to revive a lost tradition. In the article above a house is referred to as "Keepsake Cottage". Until well into the 1960's homes and cottages in Laguna and South Laguna were "named" by their owners.

This started because in the early days there were no street addresses and to distinguish between one house and another, people gave them names. "Gardenia Cottage", "Ebbtide", "Summer Idle" and "Fools End" are just a few. Most name signs were 4-5" high and 15-18" long and hung next to, on or above the front door.

They were hand painted and whimsical. If you need someone to paint you such a sign, call Belinda at 497-4439. For \$25.00 (\$5.00 to the Society) you can have your sign in any colors you choose.

Docents Needed

Would you please volunteer 3 hours per month, on a Thursday, Friday, or Saturday to answer questions and give brief tours of the Murphy-Smith bungalow at 278 Ocean Avenue. We will train you, give you special handouts and offer as much help and support as we can. In between visitors, you can rock on the front porch, read a novel and watch Laguna stroll by. Please call one of us and volunteer. Takes no special skills, knowledge, or personality. Just a friendly face.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NAME: _____ SEX: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE #: _____ OCCUPATION: _____

VOLUNTEER TO: _____

MEMBERSHIP DONATION: **\$15.00 per household**

This newsletter and it's contents are copywrited.

**LAGUNA BEACH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1526,
LAGUNA BEACH,
CALIFORNIA
92652**

