

THE LAGUNA BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LAGUNA BEACH LIFE | PAST PRESENT FUTURE

NEWS AND UPDATES FOR THIS MONTH:

- JOIN US FOR OUR FIRST POST-PANDEMIC IN-PERSON PRESENTATION AT THE SUZI Q!
- LOOK INSIDE FOR BUNGALOW UPDATES

The History of Little League Baseball in Laguna Beach

Presented by Frank Aronoff



Jack Norworth, Laguna resident and writer of the song: "Take me out to the Ball Game" with Little League trophy

Tuesday, May 17th
Susi Q Community Center
7:00-9:00 pm

THE FIRST 50 YEARS 1952-2002

Little League Baseball was organized in Pennsylvania in 1939 and arrived in Laguna Beach thirteen years later. The Optimist Club of Laguna Beach researched the program and persuaded three other local service clubs to join them in starting our league, the third league to be chartered in California and the oldest league in Orange County.

Four teams were organized in 1952 sponsored by the four service clubs: Optimist, Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary. Joe Roberts was elected the first league president, Nolan Doss was the first majors commissioner, and Jack Norworth was appointed honorary league president. Tryouts were held and the first teams had players from ages 8 to 12 years of age. The first home game was played on Tuesday, June 3, 1952 where the current high school diamond is located with Lions taking Rotary by a 10-3 score. Steve Ramsey hit the first home run.

(continued on the following page)



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A Message from our President

ED STORKE, PRESIDENT

As I write my last column as President of the Laguna Beach Historical Society, I am most thankful for the contributions, memberships, advice, and volunteer work you have given. I have learned a great deal about the history of Laguna Beach and appreciate how many have shared their ideas and talents. This is definitely a wonderful place to live and I hope to continue living in and contributing to our hospitable village for many years.

Much has been accomplished in collecting, disseminating, and preserving our local history. I have consistently relied on you in many ways, especially since I have lived in Southern California only for 17+ years. I came to Laguna with a degree in history and experience teaching U.S. History at a small, private university and a large community college in the Chicago, IL area.

This has given me a chance to delve into local history and practice that vital aspect of history. Although I am pleased with our accomplishments, I am greatly impressed with how we handled the pandemic even though we had to close our Murphy-Smith Bungalow (our museum) doors for a period of time. In fact, our treasury is healthier now than it was four years ago.

We are now approaching full staffing on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1-4 pm. However, we are still looking for more dedicated volunteers. This is an all-volunteer, non-profit, tax-exempt organization [Section 501 c3] that has flourished despite outside diversions of the last few years and I'm sure will continue to promote local history and appreciation for what we have here.

Thank you every one!

Ed Storke

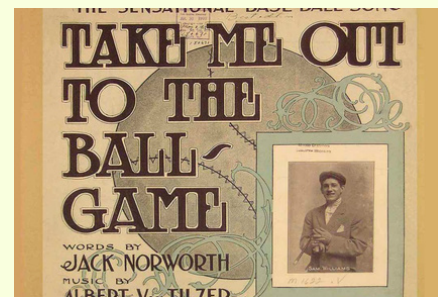
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Two more teams were added in 1953 and the last two in 1954. From 1954 to 1970, the league divided into two 4-team leagues that held a playoff to determine the "City" championship. The National League represented the El Morro Elementary School attendance area (north of Thalia) while the American League was represented by the Aliso Elementary School attendance area (south of Thalia).

Lions, VFW, Rotary, and Ray & Al's were National's teams with Kiwanis, Laguna Federal, Optimist, and Elks represented the American League.

For most of the years, the leagues shared playing facilities, issued one combined yearbook, had a combined opening day ceremonies, but had separate boards, charter, and all-star teams. The two leagues re-unified in 1971.

Minor Leagues were established in 1954 and were supervised by Laguna Beach City Recreation until 1989. Senior league was originally the separate Babe Ruth League from 1957-76 but was absorbed by Laguna Beach Little League under the Senior League banner in 1977. T-Ball, originally a program of the Boys Club was transferred to LBLL in 1999. Damon Berryhill (Kiwanis, 1975-76) is the only Laguna Little League player to make it to the Major Leagues. A 9-year veteran as a catcher, Berryhill did make an appearance in a World Series for Atlanta.



Original 1908 cover for the famous song written by Laguna resident Jack Norworth



Cracker Jacks will be handed out to guests who attend the program on May 17th

Photo above: DoDo the Clown hands out Cracker Jacks

The Bungalow gets Tented!

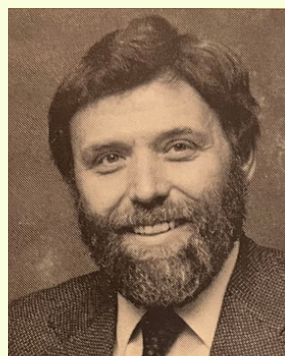


During regular check-ins on the bungalow John Hoover began to notice the droppings of termites, especially collecting in the enclosed back porch.

Knowing the house hadn't been tented for quite some time and with due diligence John got three quotes, the board voted and in April the tent went up. Areas of wood trim were also replaced.

Prepping including pulling items away from the building, opening up the attic and storm cellar for better circulation and cleaning up afterwards, all without disruption to our docent schedule and opening hours!

Thank you John and thank you for your member support in the bungalow upkeep that Wells Fargo so kindly lets us operate from.



Board Member SPOTLIGHT

Ed Storke

Serving as President for two terms, Ed is also an active member of the Laguna Beach Rotary Club and a grandpa to two Laguna Beach High School students.

Why did you choose to serve on the board?

"I had an interest in history, particularly U.S. history from an early age. However, I wasn't motivated enough to really pursue my interest until my undergraduate courses at Wheaton College in Wheaton, IL. My interest grew exponentially when I taught U.S. History at middle school, high school, community college, and university, all in the Chicago area.

Why do you think your position on the board is a good match for you?

"Quite by happenstance. I visited the bungalow shortly after moving to Laguna Beach. I attended a few historical society meetings and was asked by the president at the time to serve on the Board. I had never specialized in local history but with my background was strongly encouraged to run."

What is your favorite part of working with the LB Historical Society? "Learning about Laguna and what a wonderful place it is to live."



Ceramic Plaque by Peterpaul Ott

Courtesy of Jane Janz

Peterpaul Ott (1895-1992) was a Czechoslovakian artist and sculptor who visited California in 1939 and moved to Laguna Beach the following year. He remained here his entire life, living in Canyon Acres and raising five children. 7-year-old Alexander Peterpaul Ott designed the Little League plaque shown here marked with an Ott stamp.

In Other Bungalow News:

An easy way to help support:

Listed under the Historical Society tab on our website at: <http://lagunabeachhistory.org/> there are links to Amazon Smile and Ralph's to sign up and donate part of your shopping tab to non-profits like us. We would appreciate your support!

Get Involved by Volunteering as a Docent:

Get Involved by Volunteering as a Docent: Our docent program is up again and we always need regulars or subs. We open from 1-4 pm on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday



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Carol Tomlinson
Gayle Waite
Robert L. Ward
Village Laguna
Warren Watkins



Laguna Beach Historical Society
278 Ocean Avenue
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Photo below: Amy and Jack Norworth at the opening day parade down Park Avenue to the ocean before the library was built



Photo below: The early days of Laguna Beach Little League



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*If you prefer to receive this newsletter by email, drop us a line at [info@lagunabeachhistory.org](mailto:info@lagunabeachhistory.org)*

**With your support, we are able to maintain our beloved Murphy Smith Bungalow, present historical programs, send this newsletter, and host other events - thank you!**

Thank you to the Boat Canyon UPS store for printing our newsletters

**Visit us on YouTube:** Laguna Beach Historical Society

**Visit our Website:** [lagunabeachhistory.org](http://lagunabeachhistory.org)

**Contact us at:** [info@lagunabeachhistory.org](mailto:info@lagunabeachhistory.org)



*Little League  
History Inside*