

Laguna Beach  
Historical Society  
Murphy-Smith Bungalow  
278 Ocean Avenue  
Laguna Beach CA 92651  
949-497-6834

# Laguna Life

The Laguna Beach Historical Society Newsletter: May 2012

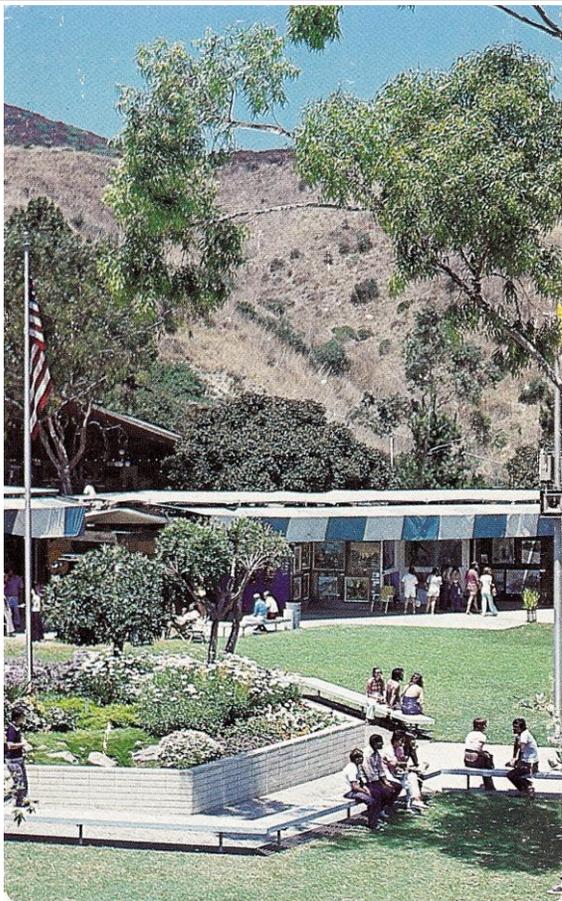
Please attend Historical Society Program to be held at Laguna Beach City Hall Council Chambers, 505 Forest Avenue

**Tuesday, May 8th – from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.**

**The Making of a Laguna Beach Masterpiece**

**Looking Back: 80 Years at the Festival of Arts**

by Diane Challis Davy, Dan Duling, Sharbie Higuchi, and Martin Betz



Festival of the Arts  
Tom Pulley Postcard Collection

In celebration of Heritage month and in anticipation of the Festival of Arts 80th Anniversary, the Laguna Beach Historical Society will host a multi-media presentation and panel discussion. Since 1932, the Festival of Arts has played an integral role in reinforcing Laguna's art colony identity.

The public is invited and there is no charge. The program will be videotaped and is to be televised on the local Cox Cable channel 30. The program will include a screening of a 1950s-vintage Festival of Arts video and a presentation of highlights and key moments in the history of Festival of Arts. Presenters include Pageant Director Diane Challis Davy, Pageant Scriptwriter Dan Duling, Marketing and Public Relations Director Sharbie Higuchi and Festival Exhibits Director Martin Betz.

From an article in the 1933 Festival of Arts program:

*"Laguna Beach stands unique among all the cities of Southern California in that it was builded upon the foundation of an Art Colony that has become famous throughout the world. The painters came many years ago and drank in the beauty of land and seascape and paused to build their studios. There followed the craftsmen whose handwrought objects stood out among their contemporaries as did the works of the painters who have helped to make fame for California. Last year (1932) John H. Hinchman, one of the distinguished painters, conceived the idea that Laguna Beach should hold an annual Festival of Arts that the world might come and view, in the festival spirit, the works of the painters and the craftsmen. The first Festival of Arts was a success and this year (1933) Laguna Beach is holding a bigger and better festival and an association is to be formed to insure its perpetuation as one of the outstanding annual festivities of the United States. Many noted authors and stars of the first magnitude in the motion picture world have been lured to Laguna Beach by the beauty that attracted the painters. They are helping to make the Festival of Arts a worthwhile exposition from the standpoint of culture and entertainment."*

# Learn How Florence Lowe Barnes Got the Name “Pancho”

Pilot License Application

Photo by George Hurrell 1928

Pancho Barnes Trust Estate Photo



## “Pancho” Barnes

Did Florence Lowe Barnes get the nickname “Pancho” impersonating a man and hiring on a freighter? According to the 1996 book “Pancho” by Barbara H. Schultz, the story is much more interesting. In the book, Barbara H. Schultz writes: “She and a dozen or more of her friends were sharing travel stories around the bar in her Laguna Beach home when someone suggested they hire on as crew aboard a boat sailing for South America. By the end of the evening, six men and Pancho committed themselves to just such a voyage. ... the vessel was now a banana packet between San Pedro and South America. In May 1927, the “El Camino” left San Pedro harbor with its three experienced seamen and amateur crew. The slow trip down the coast of Baja passed rather uneventfully until the boat neared the small seaport of San Blas, sixty miles south of Puerto Valiarto on Mexico's western coast. A chubasco, or violent thundersquall, drummed down on the vessel and threatened to toss it up on land. ... into San Blas' harbor and dropped anchor, unaware of the danger awaiting them on shore.

Mexico was in the middle of what later became known as the Cristero rebellion - an armed uprising of fanatic Catholics against the country's anti-church policy. ... Roaming bandits took advantage of the soldiers' absence

to pillage at will. ... When the El Camino arrived in the small seaport, its citizens were desperate. Bandits demanded a 2,000 peso bribe to lift their blockade and stop bombarding the town with musket balls from their camp atop a nearby hill. That was nearly the entire wealth of San Blas! To protect their money and valuables, the police interned the El Camino, its crew, and passengers in order to stow their valuables on board.

Six weeks of this chaotic rescue operation and ridiculous semi imprisonment passed before Roger Chute decided to escape. ... When Pancho discovered Roger's plans, she demanded to go along. ... On July 4, riding mules ... Roger and Pancho quietly left San Blas. ... The sun-lit sky allowed Pancho to notice the appearance of Roger's mount for the first time. The following conversation with Roger resulted in her famous nickname:

"If that isn't the skinniest mule in all of Mexico", she declared.

"Looks like Cervantes' Rosinante and you look like a modem Don Quixote, riding such a skate!" When Roger realized that her mule was even shorter, he replied: "In that case you are Sancho Panza. That might be a good name for you."

"I like Pancho better," she replied.

"Pancho it is then," Roger agreed. "That's better anyway because that's about the commonest name in Mexico."

Roger unknowingly liberated Pancho from a title which was, and always had been, contrary to her natural spirit. As unsuitable as Florence, suggestive of a flower, was for Pancho's character, the Spanish name for Frank, meaning one who is uninhibited or unreserved, fit her like a glove.

The odd couple abandoned their mules in Tepic and used carts or wagons to traverse the 700 miles to Mexico City. When none were available, they walked, climbed, or forded streams on foot, sometimes joining others who were also fleeing from the fighting.

In August, they found themselves in the midst of a rebel celebration in Mexico City. ... Roger and Pancho continued traveling east another 300 miles to the busy seaport of Yen Cruz. There they arranged passage on the Tampaulipas, a steamer bound for Campeche and the Yucatan.

In late October, Roger and Pancho received word that the Raja sat dockside taking on cargo in El Progreso. ... They left immediately for the port town, boarding the Ma two days later. ... before their departure for New Orleans.

The El Camino was still in San Blas as of October 25, 1927 according to a letter written by Evans Terrell to his wife. It is not known when the ship was finally released by the San Blas authorities. The Cristero Rebellion continued until June 1929.”

**Richard Halliburton  
Hangover House**

Built in 1936 overlooking Aliso Canyon "Hangover" recently sold and has been in the news regarding interior demolition. Richard Halliburton (1900-1939) graduated from Princeton and wrote numerous bestselling adventure books.



Famous adventure author and lecturer Richard Halliburton's Hangover House was built in 1936 at 31172 Ceanothus overlooking Aliso Beach and Canyon. From the City's Historic Resource Inventory: "A large, two-story Moderne house with Brutalist influence. It is composed of many square and rectangular angles, large panes of glass. A round room is the focal point of the lower floor. The house straddles a ridge with steep sides and is built in a very precarious position. The location itself is a great part of the uniqueness of the house. The home was designed by architect William Alexander Levy of Los Angeles. It was built of 100 tons of concrete and 50 tons of steel.

This was the home of well-known adventurer and writer Richard Halliburton. He was born in 1900. Among the books were The Book of Marvels, The Flying Carpet, New Worlds to Conquer, and The Royal Road to Romance.

He decided to sail a Chinese junk The Sea Dragon, from Hong Kong to the San Francisco World's Fair. He and his crew left Hong Kong March 4, 1939. They were last heard from March 24, 1939, 1200 miles west of Midway. The ship probably went down in a typhoon that night. Richard Halliburton was never heard from again."

***View Laguna Photos at [www.Laguna-Historical-Society.smugmug.com](http://www.Laguna-Historical-Society.smugmug.com)***

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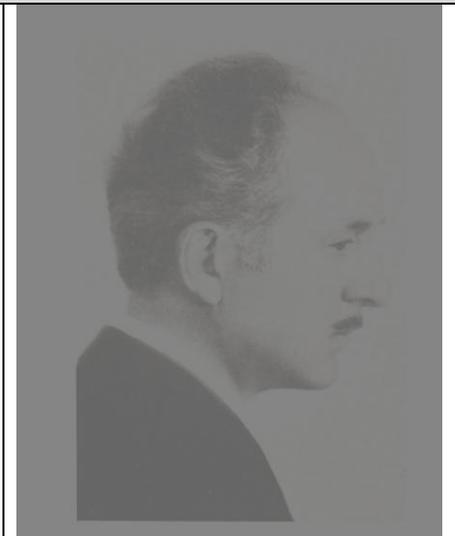
**Roy M. Ropp Father of the Pageant of the Masters**

From "Pioneer Days of Laguna Beach" by Merle and Mabel Ramsey "It was now 1932, ... It was here that the first "living pictures" came into being in Laguna Beach. Lolita Perine presented "Mona Lisa" with Hilda Mackey posing."

According to Laguna Beach Historical Society President Emeritus Belinda Blacketer "Lolita Perine, an artist and vaudeville player put on the "living pictures" in 1932, 33 and 34. In 1935, local builder, and artist, Roy Ropp took over the "living pictures" and developed them into the "Pageant of the Masters", which he designed and produced until 1941. Roy Ropp was the father of the Pageant."

For example the Laguna Beach County Water District Building 306 Third Avenue was built by Ropp and Mackey c1929. The Mediterranean Revival style was designed by architect Aubrey St. Clair.

Roy M Ropp 1936 Father of Pageant of the Masters - Painter & Builder



## Irvine Bowl Park at 650 Laguna Canyon Road



Festival of Arts

Laguna Beach, Calif.

According to Andy Hedden: "On Oct. 10, 1939, Festival of Arts President Frank Hevener announced that a permanent site for the Pageant of the Masters would be created. ... they agreed on a steeply sloped 25-acre parcel in Laguna Canyon, then part of the Irvine cattle ranch. Owner James Irvine agreed to donate the land, with the caveat that the city would provide tax allocations and that the Festival would also contribute. The site was deemed a recreational park, open to the public, with amenities such as festival grounds, tennis courts and a 'temporary theater.' When Irvine died in 1947, the Irvine Recreation Park and Bowl was deeded to Laguna Beach with no further payments due."

# President's Message by Kimberly Stuart

**The Making of a Laguna Beach Masterpiece, Looking Back: 80 Years at the Festival of Arts** by Diane Challis Davy, Dan Duling, Sharbie Higuchi, and Martin Betz

**Tuesday, May 8th from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.**

Please attend the Laguna Beach Historical Society program which is our Heritage month program. It is of course free, and will be held at the Laguna Beach City Hall Council Chambers, 505 Forest Avenue. The program will be videotaped and is to be televised on the local Cox Cable channel 30.

A large crowd filled the council chambers for the great "Pancho Barnes, Moye Stephens & Richard Halliburton" program presented in April by Barbara H. Schultz. Thanks so much to the program committee.

We also thank Historical Society member Roger Kempler for facilitating the Festival of Arts program.

View historic photographs at [www.Laguna-Historical-Society.smugmug.com](http://www.Laguna-Historical-Society.smugmug.com). Viewers are invited to leave comments to help the Society better identify or date the photographs. At the web site, prints can also be purchased; for example an 8" by 10" glossy for \$6.97 plus tax and shipping. Send questions, photographs, or pieces of Laguna Beach history using [info@LagunaHistory.org](mailto:info@LagunaHistory.org).

Step back into 1920s Laguna by visiting the Laguna Beach Historical Society Murphy-Smith Bungalow, located at 278 Ocean Avenue, which is open to the public at no-charge every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Those interested in supporting the Laguna Beach Historical Society should send \$15 per individual, \$25 per household or \$50 per business/organization to 278 Ocean Avenue, Laguna Beach CA 92651. The Laguna Beach Historical Society is a section 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Tax ID #33-0519882.

**If your Dues are due (check your mailing label) Send \$15 per person, \$25 per household or \$50 per business or organization to Laguna Beach Historical Society, 278 Ocean Avenue, Laguna Beach CA 92651**

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