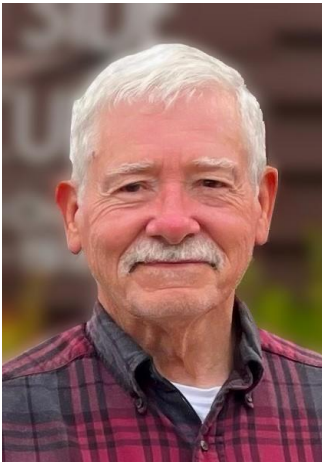


Pacifica Historical Society

Newsletter Volume 20 Issue 2 Summer 2026

President's Letter



Our monthly walking tours of historic Sharp Park have proved successful, averaging 10 people each tour, thanks to the intrepid dedication of four volunteer guides.

Also successful are the monthly programs we offer free to the community, such as the recent talk I gave on the history of the Presidio of San Francisco and its ties to what is now Pacifica. About 30 people showed up on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, which showed that history can attract people as well as our pretty beaches do.

Thanks to the efforts of Raquel Iverson, Steve Clark, Jay Crawford, Laura Del Rosso, Pat Kremer and David Malloy we are re-designing our permanent exhibits on both floors; we have acquired new exhibit cases donated by the De Young Museum which will add class to the museum's collections. These were transported from San Francisco due to the kind efforts of member Quentin Smith, who donated his truck for this project.

Our archives assistant Priyanka, whose work is being funded by the Alessio Ge Foundation, is making progress in putting paper items in our collection (posters, newspaper clips, documents, etc.) into a digital format so they can be stored safely for future reference. We are also embarking on a big project to catalogue every item in the museum so they can be easily accessed. We can always use help in this ambitious endeavor.

We cancelled the rummage sale this month because the museum was rented to Ocean Light parents who organized a summer camp for their children. The kids have been learning about coral reefs, tide pool plants and animals, and using art to depict these denizens of the ocean. We are glad we could make the museum available for this educational event; the rummage sale returns next month August 14-15.

Coming up are two musical offerings at the museum. The first is a concert by the Bel Canto Flutes on August 2 at 4:30 pm. The second is a musical journey with the Wandering Bow String Band on August 9 at 1 pm; they will play tunes from the Spanish-Mexican period all the way up to the 1920s Prohibition songs.

We have a busy summer and fall ahead. As always, check www.pacificahistory.org/events for more information and keep an eye out for event details in your email inbox.

Thanks for your continued support for our town's historical society, which maintains and operates the Pacifica Coastside Museum.

Steve Johnson

PHS President

Handmade Pacifica: Our Cheese

We are excited to have been invited to participate again this year at the Handmade Pacifica event taking place for one day only on July 26th from 1-5 p.m. at the Sanchez Art Center, 1220 Linda Mar Blvd. The Pacifica Historical Society will be one of 28 local vendors but we will be the only one selling Pacifica Jack Cheese!

Handmade Pacifica is an incredible group of artists, makers, and small businesses who come together for this event. Stop by and you'll have the opportunity to meet vendors sharing handmade ceramics, artwork, textiles, woodwork, specialty foods, sewn goods, and so much more. If you love discovering talented local makers and finding truly unique gifts and treasures, this is an event you won't want to miss. – by Michele Tausch

Pacifica's Pier: History and Memories



Pacifica's landmark pier, a beloved part of the city, will be celebrated on Sunday, Aug. 30 with an afternoon of good food by the Chit Chat Café and fond memories at the Pacifica Coastside Museum. It's an event designed to share favorite pier stories and learn pier history (not to discuss the pier's future).

Maybe your first kiss? Your biggest catch? The unforgettable walk you took with a loved one? Seeing whales and dolphins close up? Chatting with Andy Pappas and other pier regulars?

More details will be coming soon, but mark your calendars for Aug. 30 at the museum, and spread the word to friends and family who know and love the pier.

We also hope to see you at these upcoming PHS events:

Aug. 9, 1 p.m:	Wandering Bow String Band concert
Sept. 26-27:	FogFest Open House
Oct. 18:	PHS Annual Meeting and 2026 Review
Nov. 8:	PHS's 50th Anniversary Celebration

Vallemar Station Memorabilia

PHS's Ocean Shore Railroad Committee gratefully accepted the OSRR memorabilia that has for decades enthralled diners at the beloved and now-shuttered Vallemar Station restaurant, operated by the Ash family at the historic OSRR depot.

The Vargas brothers, Terra Nova High grads who created the two dioramas that were displayed at the restaurant, donated them and the Ted Wurm OSRR photo collection to PHS. The Ash family also donated OSRR items that were part of their restaurant décor.

Some of the items may eventually be put on display at the Pacifica Coastside Museum and some may be displayed inside Car #1409.

The hard-working crew that dismantled the displays were Bob Twigg, Bob Boles, Will Joya, David Alonzo, Anthony Taganap, Pete Butler, George Frank and Kathleen Manning (OSRR Committee Chair). In photos, Kathleen and Dan Vargas at the Vallemar Station (upper), and Dan at his OSRR diorama (lower).



PHS Refreshes its Exhibits and Displays

If you've been by the museum recently, you may have noticed some big changes! On June 15 and 16, Jay Crawford, Steve Clark, David Malloy, and Raquel Iverson executed Phase 1 of the museum exhibits refresh project.

The large case that previously contained artifacts from the 1939 Golden Gate Expo was moved (through sheer brute force!) from one side of the room to the other, and the Expo artifacts were replaced with Ohlone artifacts previously housed on the second floor (see photos below).

The team also moved the mammoth bones to the first floor and consolidated OSRR relics to the second floor. These rearrangements were done to align the exhibits into a more chronological order, where possible.

Our intent is to improve the flow from one exhibit to the next along a common storyline, and to weave Pacifica's story from one floor to the next.

Over the next six months, the Exhibits Committee will be refreshing all of the exhibits, poster displays, and the display cases themselves, beginning in August with the acquisition of three new cases (free of charge!) from the surplus warehouse of the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco.

The end goal of the refresh project is to improve the visual impact and to enhance the visitor experience. As we look for opportunities to improve the look and presentation of exhibits, as well as create exhibits with new focus, we welcome any suggestions or comments from PHS members.

– by Raquel Iverson



New City Manager Visits Our Museum



We had a first-time visitor to our museum and June rummage sale. Sean Charpentier, Pacifica's new city manager, stopped by, made a purchase or two and was introduced to our museum and its hard-working crew by PHS's Kathleen Manning, emeritus board member. Our rummage sales are our primary fundraisers for the restoration of OSRR Car #1409. We took a pause in July; our next sale is set for Aug. 14-15.

PHS Celebrates its 50th Year

This year marks the 50th year since our founding. How did it all happen? In 1976, a dedicated group of longtime Pacificans and local history buffs got together to form the Pacifica Historical Society.

According to a Nov. 11, 1976 Tribune article, the first meeting took place at the Fairmont West Recreation Center and the first presentation was about Captain Robert Dollar's radio station at Mussel Rock.

Dema Savage, city historian, was the first (temporary) chairperson of PHS and Bob Siebert started the membership drive. The group was ambitious, even planning to take over the old OSRR station on Pedro Point for a museum.

It's time to celebrate 50 years of preserving, learning and educating the public about Pacifica's history – and achievements, such as opening a museum, along the way.

If anyone has contact information for PHS founders or their families please let us know at info@pacificahistory.org because we would like to include and honor them at the 50th anniversary party Nov. 8. Keep a look out in your email inboxes for an invitation.

Pacifica's Past: Street Name Stories

Brighton, Firecrest, Kent, Yosemite, Picardo, Crespi. How did Pacifica get its street names? Over the years, we've gotten clues how wildly different names came to be attached to streets and roads from Edgemar to Park Pacifica.

One source is a 1965 Pacifica Tribune article "From Essex to Kohala: A Young City Seeks Identity" by Lois McNally. "Street names in Pacifica have provided immortality for a few, in some places convey a sense of the city's beauty and unique setting," she wrote.

Some of the streets of Edgemar, Sharp Park, Rockaway and Pedro Point received their names in the early years of the 20th century, as developers laid out subdivisions for the Ocean Shore Railroad boom that never happened, McNally said.

The English origins of many of the street names is believed to be due to the English background of the OSRR executives. As a result, Pedro Point is lined with English counties -- Sussex, Kent, Essex -- and British explorers, Stanley and Livingston.

One section of Sharp Park was named for California cities: Carmel, Santa Rosa, San Jose, Merced, Vallejo, Fresno were all laid out but not all the streets survived over the years. Of course, some were naturally named for their settings: Shoreview, Shell and Surf, among them. No word from McNally on why Kohala or Moana received Hawaiian names.



Westview shows the Scottish background of its developer, Bill Blackburn with Glasgow, Inverness, Loch Lomond, Heathcliff, Loch haven and Heather.

Much of Linda Mar was named for Spanish explorers or cities due to the Portola` expedition's impact in the valley: Crespi, Valencia, Zamora, Granada, De Solo, among the many.

The streets of Vallemar were named by developer George Rich in 1907. McNally was able to interview Rich's daughter, Dora, but Dora could not remember why particular names were chosen. She said she thought most reflected the Spanish influence or literature and arts, especially the women's names: Winona and Ramona.

Many names were the decisions of subdivision developers. Albert McKinney, developer of Manor Village and parts of Brighton Terrace, left his name on a street. Some Pacific Manor streets were decisions by executives of the Pacific Development Company in 1947. Johnson Avenue was named for Axel Johnson, president; Perry Avenue after Perry Bygness, vice president. Hibert Court in Pacific Manor was named for the salesman who sold the first 500 houses in that subdivision.

However, Doelger executives who developed Fairmont told McNally the company had a policy of never naming streets after company officials. Instead, they named the streets after their settings: Seahaven, Crestmoor and Farallone are some examples.

Others named streets after relatives.

Regina Way in Linda Mar was named for the daughter of Chuck Olivia, an Oddstad executive. Clara Lane was named for Oddstad's wife.

Oddstad also liked to use general themes in subdivisions. Park Pacifica streets were named for national parks: Yosemite, Point Reyes, Aspen, Grand Teton, Kings Canyon and more.

Some of the city's founders are commemorated with Fassler Drive honoring the city's first mayor, Jean Fassler; early councilman George Mason has a Linda Mar street named him.

Halling Way on Pedro Point is named for San Francisco firefighter Charles Halling who was active in the local volunteer fire department. Danmann Avenue was named for German-born Harry Danmann, the larger-than-life 19th century Pedro Point pioneer who lived on the point for decades, ran a tavern across from the OSRR stop and served on the Rockaway Beach School District board for an amazing 46 years.

Ray Higgins, early real estate developer, is remembered on Higgins Way in Linda Mar. His secretary was Reesa Wolf, mother of postmaster Bill Wolf. Reesa Road in Sharp Park is named for her.

Both McNally and, later in the Tribune, PHS's Paul Azevedo, wondered why the farmers who sold land to developers were not commemorated with street names.

But two were: Luigi Picardo, who owned the 300-acre ranch where Terra Nova High and surrounding subdivisions were built has Picardo Court named for him. Malavear Court off of Sheila Lane is named for Mexican-born Gabriel Malavear, who married into a local Italian family. His wife, Frances, was the sister-in-law of Victor Magrin, an Italian immigrant who owned vast land at the front of Pedro Valley, including today's Linda Mar Shopping Center.

My own family lore is that our last name was too unwieldy for a street name and that Oddstad decided to shorten it by naming the street where our farm was located as simply Dell Road. Who knows? It seems the origin of some street names are destined to remain a mystery.

In fact, one resident, Edna Calhan, told McNally that she knew Edna Lane in Edgemar was named for her, but she had no idea why.

People often wonder about Palmetto Avenue since we live in a region with no palmetto trees, native to the southeast. Deb Hagler Wong, our researcher, asked AI about this and got this answer, condensed here:

"Palmetto Avenue ...directly traces its layout and name to the historic Ocean Shore Railroad and the era of early 20th-century coastal land speculation... When the railroad laid its tracks through the area... land speculators and the railroad company heavily marketed the San Mateo Coast as sunny, idyllic and an exotic resort destination.... To play into this resort aesthetic, developers chose names that evoked a warm, coastal or tropical paradise."



The AI report concludes:

“Today, Palmetto Avenue stands ... as a direct physical imprint of a 120-year-old railroad boom that tried to brand a chilly, windswept surfing town as a palm-lined tropical getaway.”

Deb also found a 1938 Sharp Park Breakers letter to the editor griping that “County Road” (photo above) was “now known as Palmetto” written by a resident urging it changed to Main Street. So, it’s a confusing story whether it was known as Old County Road or Palmetto. PHS’s Pat Kremer, a Sharp Park native, remembers it was known as Old County Road.

According to a Jan. 19, 1956 Tribune article, the San Mateo County Planning Commission changed several street names that month and that’s when Palmetto Avenue became the official name of the street. The article does not say why the name was chosen.

Other street names were changed at that same time. Pedro Valley Road in the new subdivision of Linda Mar was changed to Linda Mar Boulevard. Sanchez Adobe Road, from the intersection of Ladera Way and the old Pedro Mountain Road, became Crespi Drive.

And, in Westview, Partridge Lane between Lomond Drive and Kavanaugh Way became Mina Lane. --by Laura Del Rosso

A Heartfelt ‘Thank You’ from Deidra

Deidra Kennedy Crow, one of our hardest working board members and volunteers, has been ill and, after hospitalizations, is now resting at home with her husband, PHS’s Jerry Crow. She’s the backbone of our museum rental program – an important fundraiser for PHS -- and she’s been missed. We’re wishing her a speedy recovery and looking forward to seeing her back at the museum soon. She sent this note to our members:

“My profound gratitude for all the cards, visits and well wishes during the last three months of my health issues and hospitalizations. Thank you to all who have taken over my duties and commitments both at the museum and the castle. Returning to better health, Deidra Crow.”

Pacifica Historical Society

A Non-Profit Organization

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Visit our website <https://PacificaHistory.org> for news and materials, including links to historical resources and videos.

Subscribe to our Facebook page: Pacifica Historical Society

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Emeritus Members Kathleen Manning, Jerry Crow

Newsletter Editors: Laura Del Rosso, Susan Stallard

The Pacifica Historical Society welcomes everyone to join our organization and our committees. We hold monthly Board Meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, 4 pm. The Planning Committee for events and activities meets monthly on the last Thursday of each month, 4 pm.

The Pacifica Coastside Museum and gift shop are open Thursdays and Saturdays, 1 to 4 pm. The shop features books, postcards, and other items of interest, including the famous Pacifica Jack cheese. The museum is free to the public and ADA accessible, and our docents are there to assist.

The museum (formerly The Little Brown Church) is a wonderful venue for meetings, weddings, parties and events, and it's a revenue generator for the PHS. Please spread the word that it's available. For rental information, contact Deidra Crow at 650-303-1670.

Bargains are available at PHS's popular rummage sales, usually held during the second Fridays and Saturdays of each month. Donated items are welcomed for drop-off on Thursday mornings before the days of each rummage sale.

To join the Pacifica Historical Society, see <https://PacificaHistory.org/join>. Dues are good for the calendar year. Donations are always gratefully accepted. Our Federal Tax ID # is 943117665.



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