

Pacifica Historical Society

Newsletter Volume 15 Issue 3 Summer 2022

President's Letter



Welcome to the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer. Well, at the museum we aren't ever lazy, but we are hazy with the lovely, cooling Pacific Ocean fog and right now we are crazy with construction all around us. If you have not been on Francisco Street for a while you are in for a surprise. City buildings are being gutted, fences and cones are everywhere you look. But we at the PHS museum are an island of sanity amid the chaos.

We are open for business as usual and have a well-stocked larder of ever-popular Pacifica Jack cheese for your culinary enjoyment. Parking is at a premium, but just know you are allowed to park in the city lot just south of the museum building. That is a city lot, and we are a city building, so park away!

Last week we had our first rental since the start of the covid-era shutdown. It was lovely to have people in the building enjoying themselves. If you are planning an event, consider the museum for your venue. Give me a call. We will make it work (650-922-9496 or 650-359-6874.)

As you read this newsletter you will realize we are continuing with virtual and in-person events and planning much more for the future. If you have an idea for an event or program, please let us know. New thoughts seem to generate great future growth. And new blood in running things is always welcome. Shaking things up is good too. By paraphrasing "Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer" and "All Shook Up" there is now no doubt about my age. But you must agree, there is a song for everything.

Fog Fest is back this year, and we will be involved. The museum will be open so bring your friends and get out of the sun for a bit. I know it's "Fog Fest" but it usually isn't foggy. Take care of each other and come visit when you can. Now that sounds like my grandmother talking, but the sentiment still rings true.

Historically and Herstorically Yours,

Judy Heldberg

OSSR Rail Car 1409 Fundraising Continues



Kathleen Manning (left) and Shirlee Gibbs, part of the PHS's Train Committee hard at work on fundraising for the continued restoration of Ocean Shore Rail Car 1409. The Hobo Lunch in June raised \$1,200 for the project.

The tarp covering Rail Car 1409 was raised that afternoon to show the latest restoration work (see below).

Fundraising is focusing on the final stages, including installing windows, a roof and exterior painting and, of course, moving the rail car to its "final stop" – across the street from the museum in the civic center parking lot.

Donations (which are tax deductible) for this exciting project and fundraising opportunities are most welcome. Contact PHS for how you can contribute.



Up, up, up. Faster and faster and faster and faster the little engine climbed until at last they reached the top of the mountain. — from "The Little Engine That Could" by Watty Piper

Dear Ocean Shore Railroad Car 1409,

At times, it seems, the ghosts of the old Ocean Shore Railroad have come back to haunt us as we work to restore your glory. We've experienced the same delays that you incurred in the early 1900s: labor problems, route changes, vandalism, and construction issues. We can't tell you how sorry we are that you, who once carried and introduced so many passengers to our city, had such a short life span – from 1909 until your retirement in 1920. Of course, you wanted to serve more and only you know your whereabouts until 2004, when we discovered you in a backyard in Sebastopol. We also apologize that we have been unable to bring you back to your 1900s' glory with a speedy restoration.

You are not yet where you should be as far as your polished looks, but you are ours, and you are the most beautiful train car in the world!

We know that you want to stay in Pacifica, and with all the talent in our Historical Society organization – leadership, journalism, grant writing, enthusiasm and positive thoughts – we can bring "life" back to you.

Shirlee Gibbs, Train Committee

P.S. It would be difficult to estimate the historical importance of the Ocean Shore Railroad to the San Mateo County Coastside and the City of Pacifica. The Pacifica Historical Society volunteer-led Car 1409 project is confident that what we accomplished for the City of Pacifica with our Pacifica Community Museum, we can do for the last remaining OSRR passenger car.

Volunteering for PHS

PHS is an all-volunteer organization that needs to draw on the interests, skills and talents of its members to function at its best. Please consider volunteering to help out. If you have good computer skills and a moderately techie mindset, we would appreciate your input. There are always ongoing projects at the museum, such as filing clippings or copying and labeling. Volunteers can become involved in the docent program or work in the museum shop. If you'd enjoy participating in any of these areas, please drop us a line at

info@pacificahistory.org. --Carolyn Miller

More Pacifica History on KQED Bay Curious and PCT

KQED's radio show and podcast *Bay Curious* featured Pacifica three times in the last year with looks into three very different aspects of our fascinating history. As a result, we've gotten great publicity for PHS.

The most recent was a dive into a dark period of Pacifica history: the Sharp Park internment camp where Japanese, Italians and Germans were interned during World War II.

The podcast discussed many details that were not known to many of us about the internment camp, which lies on San Francisco Archery Club property. The focus is especially poignant as it comes during the 80th anniversary year of Executive Order 9066, which set in motion the internment.

PHS's fall meeting will delve more into that history. Our guest speaker, Steve Okamoto, will discuss both the Tanforan assembly center and the Sharp Park camp, Executive Order 9066 and its impact on Japanese Americans in the Bay Area.

Mr. Okamoto, whose family was sent to Tanforan, is a former Foster City council member and a member of the Tanforan Assembly Center Memorial Committee. Mark your calendars for his presentation Sunday, November 13 at 4 p.m. at the museum.

This link is to the *Bay Curious* podcast and its transcript:

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11918432/pacificas-wwii-prison-camp-has-been-largely-erased-but-it-was-there>



A view of the Sharp Park internment camp (today the archery range) during World War II.

Pacifica was also featured in a second *Bay Curious* episode, this one a lighthearted discussion of Pacifica Jack cheese. The PHS's Kathleen Manning, who first discovered the Mori family link to the cheese years ago, was interviewed in the episode.

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11916538/move-over-monterey-pacifica-lays-claim-to-iconic-jack-cheese>

Pacifica Jack cheese also was also the topic of a recent *Footprints of Pacifica* broadcast on Pacific Coast Television (PCT). Kathleen Manning and PHS Board Member Denise Crawford, who has done extensive research on the Mori family, discuss the origin of the cheese and the history of Mori Point. The show is available to view on YouTube.

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Zhz2D_o8leM&list=PLFUunuheJ0ZXgXJJ05bBk6a8fQeEIpbdL&index=1

And, as mentioned in our spring newsletter, KQED's *Bay Curious* produced a wonderful September 2021 episode about the wild and intriguing history of Pacifica's castle, owned by the Sam Mazza Foundation.

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11889508/rumrunning-ghosts-and-speakeasies-the-many-lives-of-pacificas-castle>

From the PHS Archives



One of the more interesting photographs from our Pedro Point-Shelter Cove exhibit on display at the museum, this 1908 photograph shows the development of the Ocean Shore Railroad (the track beds are clearly visible along the shoreline and up along Pedro Point). Artichoke fields of Pedro Valley at the time sprawled as far west as Pedro Point, where there were few structures.

School District Open House

PHS Board Member Steve Johnson

On Friday, May 13, the Jefferson Unified School District officially opened the Daly City building near Serramonte that will house 122 resident teachers and their families, one of the first projects of its kind in the nation. The facility includes apartments, a laundry, exercise room, and a recreation room.

As part of the celebration, the Pacifica Historical Society and the Daly City and Colma historical associations were invited to set up information tables for people to visit. Unfortunately, after listening to an hour of speeches in the cold wind everyone wanted to go home.

However, the time wasn't wasted. I had a nice long conversation with Heather Olsen, the superintendent of the Pacifica School District, who stopped by our PHS table. I said the museum is open for school groups, and that we can provide docents to give presentations either online, in the museum, or in the classroom about the Ohlone people, Spanish explorers, the Mexican/Californio periods, and the history of Pacifica. She was quite enthused and we will have a meeting in mid-August to discuss it further.

I also spoke with Richard Rochetta of the Daly City History Guild, and we agreed that it would be advantageous to visit each other's museums and share some presentations that both groups would be interested in. This idea will be presented to the board for consideration for future events.

At left, Steve Johnson at the school district event celebrating the opening of new housing.

Editor's Note: The PHS welcomes donations of Pacifica school yearbooks, including from Ocean and Terra Nova, to build our archives. We have several from each high school currently, but there are gaps in the years.



New at the Pacifica Coastside Museum

The renowned 20th century documentary photographer Dorothea Lange took thousands of photographs around California during the Great Depression when she was working for the New Deal program, the Farm Security Administration. Among them was this 1938 photograph of Rockaway Beach, entitled “Fishing village south of San Francisco.” The original Gust family restaurant is visible in the cluster of buildings. The massive quarry, which dates to the Native American period when its limestone was used for building and decoration (and later used during the Mission period to build and whitewash the Sanchez Adobe and even later to rebuild San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake), dominates the photograph. A copy of the photograph, framed by Denise Crawford, was recently added to the main hall walls of the museum.



In other news from PHS:

-- As we go to press, the Ohlone luncheon event on Aug. 14 looks like it's popular. If you haven't gotten your tickets, please email info@pacificahistory.org to see if there are spaces available.

-- Board member Denise Crawford has been busy digitizing all the interesting DVDs of Footprints of Pacifica (more than 120 episodes) so that they will be able to stream online for easier viewing. Look for details about the expansion of PHS's YouTube channel that will have more Footprints episode available.

-- The PHS learned recently that the *Sharp Park Breakers*, the newspaper that covered today's Pacifica, is now online at *newspapers.com*. The years are 1938 through 1950.

The *Breakers* have been available online through the Internet Archive online, thanks to the efforts of Denise Crawford, who arranged to have the microfiche digitized several years ago. However, this new online *Breakers* -- on *newspapers.com* -- is easier to read than the Internet Archive format. The PHS laptop at the museum is available free of charge for *Breakers* research (as it is for the *Tribune*); otherwise, you need a *newspapers.com* subscription.

As with the *Tribune's* agreement with *newspapers.com*, after a three-year period, both *Sharp Park Breakers* and the *Tribune* will be available for free at the California Digital Newspaper Collection, a nonprofit operated at UC Riverside. The *Coastside Comet*, which covered today's Pacifica in the early 20th century, has long been available online at the CDNC website and is a treasure trove for history buffs, particularly for Ocean Shore Railroad research.

-- Denise and PHS member Deb Wong have digitized amazing old photos from our archives, including those by Lloyd Easterby taken in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The aerial shots of Pedro Valley and other spots along the coast are fascinating to museum visitors. Those and other historic photos are being prepped for sale in our gift shop and at the PHS booth at the Fog Fest September 24-25. Make sure to stop by our booth to see these and say hello.

-- If you, a family member, or friend works for a company that offers matching funds for nonprofit organizations, please be aware that PHS participates in matching fund programs. Send us an email at info@pacificahistory.org for more information.

By Laura Del Rosso

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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Newsletter Editors: Laura Del Rosso, Susan Stallard

The Pacifica Historical Society welcomes everyone to join our organization and join our committees. We hold monthly Board Meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, 7 pm.

The Planning Committee for events and activities meets monthly on the first Tuesday of each month, 4 pm.

The Pacifica Coastside Museum and gift shop is open every Thursday and Saturday, 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 (aka The Little Brown Church) is a great venue for meetings and events, and it's a revenue generator for the PHS. Please spread the word that it's available. For rental information, contact Judy Heldberg at 650-359-6874.

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

To join the Pacifica Historical Society, see our website <https://PacificaHistory.org/join>. Information is there on how you may join by credit card, check, or online. Membership categories vary from \$15 to \$100. Dues are good for the calendar year.

Donations are always gratefully accepted. Our Federal Tax ID # is 943117665.



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