



# Pacifica Historical Society

*Newsletter Volume 15 Issue 2 Spring 2022*

## *President's Letter*

Hello and welcome back everyone. Really!! Welcome back in person. We hope you will be as excited as we are to be doing some almost "normal" events and seeing live people, for goodness sake! We had an in person PHS meeting March 27 and our Board meeting in person this week. Seeing everyone just felt celebratory. So, let the celebrations continue.

In addition to the Museum being open (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 1 to 4 pm) we also have some sweet events planned. How about a tea on May 1, catered by Lovey's, and a flute concert May 22, featuring Gail Edward's Bel Canto group, and a picnic luncheon June 4 in Vallemar, right beside the Ocean Shore Railroad passenger car, work in progress, warts and all. Come and enjoy.

Also, the past editions of the Pacifica Tribune newspaper are still available. These papers are extra copies that we no longer need to keep. They are yours for the taking, so come and load up on your personal history. But only available through April 23!

Sadly, this could be your last newsletter if you have not yet paid your dues. So, pay up if you need to and let's keep the good times rolling. Think hard. You remember good times. Together we can make some new good times!

Historically Yours, Judy Heldberg, President PHS, [judyece@aol.com](mailto:judyece@aol.com)

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## *Your Last PHS Newsletter?*

If you haven't renewed your membership for 2022 this will be your last newsletter. Please renew. We value your membership. All dues are valid for the calendar year.

See <https://pacificahistory.org/join> to renew or join online, or mail a check to PHS, PO Box 752, Pacifica, CA 94044. Be sure to include your name, mailing address, phone number, membership level and email address.

Membership Levels:

Senior or Student \$15

Individual or Senior Couple \$20

Family Membership \$25

Patron \$100

## *Afternoon Tea and Other Upcoming Events*

After last year's successful afternoon tea with Mr. Twining, we've scheduled another, this time in honor of Mother's Day. It takes place not on Mother's Day, but the Sunday before, on May 1 at the museum at 12:30 p.m. Traditional English sandwiches, salads, scones, and tea will be provided by Lovey's Tea Shoppe. Tickets are \$30 per person.

While enjoying the tea, a PHS historian will give a short presentation about the history of honoring mothers in various cultures, from ancient times to the present.

The deadline to reserve for the tea party is April 22.

To reserve your seats, fill out the form below and send it with a check to the Pacifica Historical Society, P.O. Box 752, Pacifica, CA, 94044. Mail it in by April 22. Or drop it off at the museum when we are open (Tues, Thurs, Sat 1-4). All proceeds benefit the museum and the PHS, a non-profit organization.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

No. of persons \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed a check for \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$30 per person

Check here if you want only vegetarian sandwiches \_\_\_\_\_

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## *Flute Concert May 22*

A second PHS event scheduled at the museum for May is a flute concert by Bel Canto, a local group of musicians under the direction of Gail Edwards, on Sunday May 22 at 2 p.m.

The performance, the group's first in-person event in more than two years, is free and reservations are not required. Donations to the PHS, as always, are encouraged.

# *Fundraising Lunch for OSSR Rail Car*

Date: Saturday, June 4, 2022

Time: Noon – 4:00 pm

Location: corner of Reina Del Mar & Coast Highway

(Under what looks like a big green caterpillar behind Vallemar Station)

Come see the progress that has been made on our very own historic Ocean Shore rail car that we are restoring to its original grandeur. We will partially uncover the car so that you can walk around the car and view both the interior and exterior work that has been done by master carpenters.

Enjoy a “hobo lunch” at 12:30 pm. Per person admission is \$20.

Puzzles and coloring contests for the children with great prizes!

Silent auction and displays!

Reservations may be made by phone to Kathleen Manning at 415-509-6685.

See you there!

The Ocean Shore Train Committee

## *And Mark Your Calendars....*

\* a July 20 Zoom presentation about Golden Gate Park history by the Western Neighborhoods Project;

\*Ohlone Native American luncheon on Aug. 14 at the museum.

More details to come. Watch for your PHS emails.

## *New Tribune and Bill Drake Exhibit*

A new exhibit made its debut at the museum: the beautiful old desk of Bill Drake, the Tribune's editor and publisher for 30 years and a wall display of Tribune headlines over the decades, created by PHS Vice President Pat Kremer.

On top of the Drake desk is an antique typewriter such as the one he would have once used, and a modern laptop that is connected to newspapers.com for visitors who would like to research the Tribune online.



PHS also unveiled crates of extra copies of the Tribune dating back to the early 1960s. The copies are fascinating to look through and are available to the public -- free to take home -- during museum hours or by appointment through April 23. Come and take a look!

Above left, longtime Pacifica Tribune sports editor Horace Hinshaw, sitting at the Drake desk, is one of the museum's visitors who have recently enjoyed looking through old copies of the Tribune.

Above right, Patricia Lee Wommack, who has lived in Vallemar since before incorporation, when her husband was head of security at the Nike base on Milagra Ridge, found papers that mentioned the Nike site.



Along with the new exhibit, the Tribune was the topic of the first in person PHS meeting in two years on March 27. A panel discussion of the importance of the Tribune and community journalism to Pacifica drew about 40 people, including the families of Bill Drake, the late editor and publisher, and Paul Azevedo, the late Tribune columnist.



The March 27 panel included (left to right) Clay Lambert, the Tribune’s current editor; Renee Batti, former editor in the 1980s; Laura Del Rosso, Pacifica native who was an intern reporter in the 1970s; and Horace Hinshaw, longtime sports editor.

All agreed: if you aren’t a Tribune subscriber, please subscribe and support Pacifica’s hometown newspaper and community journalism. Photos by Denise Buckley Crawford.

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The PHS’ historian Jerry Crow, also a Train Committee member, found this delightful 1917 report about an Ocean Shore railroad journey in the Coast Side Comet newspaper and shared it recently in Coastside magazine. The author is unknown. Who knows? Maybe he rode on our very own Car #1409!

## ***A RIDE ON THE OCEAN SHORE RAILROAD***

Intending to take a holiday ... and not knowing which way to go...I decided on the Ocean Shore Railroad... and got me a seat in the train...(At first) There did not seem to be much to see...Then we were passing through some wonderful vegetable gardens...

The broad Pacific Ocean lay like a sea of glass to the right, and to the left the land grew more broken, and dunes higher, and the invasion of the truck patches crept nearer and nearer to the shore and higher and higher upon the hills.

The brakeman kept on calling the names of the towns...Once the name was "Brighton Beach." It had the look of a great...aquatic pleasure resort, judging from the extensive bath house, and boats...and the flags flying...

And then there was "Valleamar"... a long narrow valley running back from the sea into the hills...a wonderful black soil in the valley...

Then another long narrow valley..."Pedro" sang out the brakeman. A great headland jutted out into the ocean. But the train nosed its way round the point, and straight...stood the mountain wall...(Shelter Cove)... "zip" we went into a tunnel... and then the country was too rough for town sites, but masses of yellow lupine spread their glory upon it. "Green Canyon" shouted the brakeman...just an adorable little green dent in straight up and down-ness of the land, where the train stopped to take on water for the engine.

Then we swept around a magnificent curve and the whole scene changed... approaching Montara...whizzing through the famous artichoke section of California, perhaps of the whole world.

Another whistle, and another scrambling of people on and off the train and this time it was Farallon, and if you had been looking only toward the ocean side of the town you might easily think you had landed on Farallon Island, so close to the brink of the water it stands.

"Moss Beach" was called just when we had fairly started, it seemed, and here was a new old place, famous for its brilliant wonderful mosses, fishing, and its ancient hedge of cypress, through which the wildest wind does not so much as whisper.

Then the country is spread out "flat as a pancake" – we were passing through a great sea of artichokes, miles and miles of artichokes. Somebody said "That's Granada with the hills and trees back of it." And I began dreaming of tales of old Spain.

"Next station is Half Moon Bay" and out of the long ago came a memory...about two young men who rode away one day from the great San Joaquin Valley...on horse back...to the ocean. And they came back some months later and told of a country...where the wheat fields grew right up to the surf, and the name of the place was "Half Moon Bay." So I said to myself, "It's for me to see this historical town and go to the end of the railroad another time.





## *And Much More....*

We were thrilled to see this Facebook posting on the OSSR Facebook site of an old postcard of The Hermitage, which was a popular hotel and restaurant in Pedro Valley (Linda Mar, today) in the 1910s.

Before that it was the country estate of the Tobin family, the prominent San Francisco banking family that owned most of Pedro Valley. It was located on today's Shamrock Ranch property, across from the Linda Mar Rehabilitation Center on San Pedro Terrace.

It's not clear when the Tobins stopped using their country estate for personal use and leased it out but, according to the Coast Side Comet newspaper, by 1917 it was a booming hotel and restaurant operated by an Italian, Philipp Forneron.

Ocean Shore Railroad passengers could walk to The Hermitage from the Pedro Point train station, which was named "Tobin" after the Tobin family, which were OSSR investors.

According to the Coast Side Comet, The Hermitage was a rather swanky establishment and Forneron served up dishes that included fruit from a beautiful orchard of pear, apple and other trees on the property. Forneron, sadly, died in a coastal auto accident at age 36 in 1917. His wife, Frederica, then took over running The Hermitage. She sold it in 1920.

Later in the 1920s, The Hermitage became one of the coast's many speakeasies, drawing people from San Francisco for the illegal booze that was no doubt brought in from boats anchored just off the beaches of today's Pacifica.

The Hermitage was destroyed in a fire in the late 1920s. Before seeing this photo, the only other photo we had of the building was a picture on a faded Ocean Shore Railroad ticket from 1908. The original of that ticket is in the archives of the California Historical Society in San Francisco. A photograph of the train ticket is part of the Pedro Valley exhibit at the Pacifica Coastside Museum. —Laura Del Rosso



THE HERMITAGE - PEDRO VALLEY, CALIF.

## *Bay Curious*

PHS board member Mike O'Neill recently noted that KQED's radio show and podcast Bay Curious has some wonderful local history episodes. One episode that was done September 2021 is about our own castle. It's a terrific account about that always intriguing castle history. Check it out.

Rumrunning, Ghosts and Speakeasies: The Many Lives of Pacifica's Castle | KQED

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

## *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](mailto:info@pacificahistory.org). --Carolyn Miller

## **Pacifica Historical Society (A Non-Profit Organization)**

Mailing Address: PO Box 752, Pacifica, CA 94044

Museum Location: 1850 Francisco Blvd., Pacifica

Phone number: 650-355-1909

Email: [Info@PacificaHistory.org](mailto:Info@PacificaHistory.org)

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

President: Judy Heldberg

Vice President: Shirlee Gibbs

Vice President: Pat Kremer

Vice President: Stephen Johnson

Secretary: Carolyn Miller

Treasurer: Janet Ang

Board of Directors: Clorinda Campagna, Mary Dougherty, Shirlee Gibbs, Denise Buckley Crawford, Laura Del Rosso, Sue Digre, Judy Heldberg, Steve Johnson, Pat Kremer, Kathy McGuire, Carolyn Miller, Mike O'Neill, Susan Stallard, Diana Zollinger.

Emeritus Members Kathleen Manning, Jerry Crow

Newsletter Editor: Laura Del Rosso



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 Tuesday, 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.



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PO Box 752  
Pacifica, CA 94044