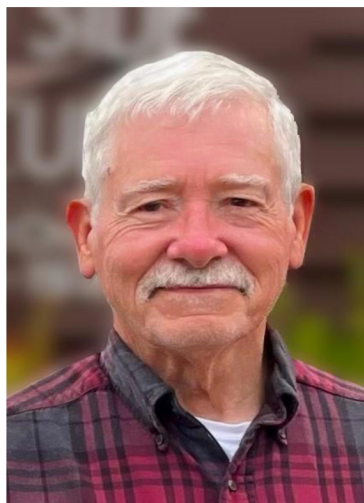


Pacifica Historical Society

Newsletter Volume 18 Issue 3 Winter 2024-2025

President's Letter

We had a nice turnout for our Annual General Meeting in October, during which I gave a presentation of events we sponsored or participated in during this past year. The latest restoration work on our Ocean Shore Railroad Car was unveiled, elections were held, and all the board members and officers were re-elected for another term. Members brought tasty and abundant potluck food, and we all enjoyed the social time together.



This fall, board member Mike O'Neill revived our historic walk of Pacifica, which starts at the museum and loops around Sharp Park to tell the history of landmarks, including Sam's Castle, Winter's Tavern, the Pacifica Pier, cottages dating back to the early 20th century, and more. There was a good turnout of folks, and we plan to make this a regular monthly event starting next year.

Also this fall was an event that was the brainchild of another board member, Jay Crawford. He produced an old-time radio show, and with volunteer helpers set up the museum as if it were a radio broadcast studio, complete with vintage type microphones, a sound-effects area, and a sound manager. The show had a Halloween theme, with voice actors reading tales from Edgar Allan

Poe. All the seats were filled, and the audience had the experience of listening to stories and using their imaginations to picture what they were hearing, just like the 1930's when radio was the main source of home entertainment. Jay is already thinking about another radio show for next year. (You can hear the show on the resource page of our website).

We have many challenges to face in the coming year. We need to find trucks (wheels) for the OSRR and track and rails on which to place the car. We will need to move the car to its permanent location on the east side of the parking lot. This will be very expensive, as it will require purchasing the wheels and rails, getting permits, and having a crane move the car. We are hoping to find grants and sponsors to help with these expenses.

We also have building maintenance issues to deal with, and a new lease to negotiate with the city. The board will be working hard to meet these challenges.

We celebrated the holiday season with our annual holiday party for members Dec. 8 at Sam's Castle. Members enjoyed music provided by Jay Crawford and Steve Clark, excellent foods brought by members, and of course the views from the castle. As always, it was a fun way to bring the year to a close.

On behalf of the Board, I wish you a very happy holiday and a healthy new year.

Stephen Johnson, PHS President

The 2024 Holiday Party at the Castle

Fun at the Sam Mazza Castle, December 8, 2024



Musicians Jay Crawford and Steve Clark entertain guests at the PHS Holiday Party.

PHS Honors Our Volunteers

Our Holiday Party at Sam's Castle was another wonderful celebration of our organization in one of the most beautiful and historic of Pacifica's venues. We welcomed new and longtime members for food, drink, music and a fundraising raffle. Three awards were presented to those we honored for their dedication and service.

Steve Johnson, PHS president, received the Grace McCarthy Award, recognizing his hours of work for PHS and stepping in last year after the sudden death of President Judy Heldberg. Pat Kremer, PHS VP, noted Steve's tireless work advocating for our organization with city leaders, his outreach to historic rail groups locally, writing articles, making presentations about local history at local schools, and being a featured personality at our Victorian Tea. "I hope we can distribute the organization's responsibilities more this coming year to give Steve the kind of help he needs. We are worried he is being 'used up' wearing several hats as President," Pat remarked.

The Community Award was presented to the Moose Lodge for its continuing support of PHS over the years, including providing the front doors for the Museum, hosting PHS events for many years including the Bob Milne performances, and last year donating a check for \$5000 to help support our cause.

Paul Levorini of the Moose Lodge Board (left photo with Pat Kremer on next page) accepted the award in the absence of Rick Russanto whose name is included on the award.

Rob Wullenjohn (right photo with Pat Kremer on next page) was honored as our Valued Volunteer of the Year. Wullenjohn has dedicated many hours at the Pacifica Coastside Museum, initially taking on the challenging job of getting the popular Ocean Shore Railroad model train operational. Since then he has been "on call" to keep the train chugging along and delighting kids and adults. Rob's song about Ocean Shore Car 1409 uses his musical talents to express ongoing enthusiasm for our long-term commitment to restoring the railcar.

Volunteers, Contd.



Pat Kremer with Pat Levorini of the Moose Lodge.



Pat Kremer with volunteer Rob Wullenjohn.



Kids lined up as PHS President Steve Johnson demonstrates using feather quill pens and ink during Rancho Days in September at the Sanchez Adobe. It was a natural role for Steve, a longtime history teacher in Pacifica schools, a historical re-enactor and recipient of this year's Grace McCarthy Award.

PHS Has Been Busy in 2024!

At the PHS Annual Meeting in October, President Steve Johnson did a presentation of many of our activities over the year. Here is a summary of that portion of his presentation. Whew, we have been busy!

January 2024:

We learned about the history of silent films in the Bay Area by David Kiehn and Rena Azevedo Kiehn. We learned about Evelyn Selbie, movie star of the silent film era – and a part-time Pedro Point resident in the 1910s. The Kiehns, help operate the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum

February - March 2024:

A month-long training course for new docents was held. Newly certified Tabitha Woods, Raquel Iverson, David Malloy and Ken Miles.

March 2024:

PHS joined three community groups in hosting Rosanna Xia, LA Times journalist and Gary Griggs, noted UC Santa Cruz professor and coastal erosion expert. Xia's book "California Against the Sea" includes a chapter about Pacifica. We are thrilled that Xia gives PHS credit for research material.

April 2024:

The player piano was restored.

May 2024:

Steve Johnson talks to the Central Coast Rail Road Club in Santa Clara.

The Central Coast Rail Road Club visits us, tours Car 1409 and lunches at Vallemar Station

A Victorian tea was held at the museum, with demonstrations of Victorian dress (both women's and men's, and tea service etiquette

June 2024:

Two presentations were held on the History of Winters Tavern. Once at the museum, and once at Winter's.

A couple of Catalanian consular visitors came to the museum to discuss our shared history. Portolá was from Balaguer, Catalonia. Catalonia is an autonomous principality whose largest city is Barcelona. Isidre Queralt, the head of the delegation and Michael Utsunomiya, the Catalanian Representative in Washington, DC, visited and took photos of the materials we had from our Sister City efforts several decades ago.

The Sharp Park Detention Center, an internment camp where Japanese, Italians and Germans were held during World War II, was the focus of an event June 20. The first stop was the archery range, site of the camp. The event's second part was a presentation at the museum. Signage is being created by a San Francisco Rec/Parks committee made up of Japanese and Italian community representatives, including our Board Member Laura Del Rosso. The interpretive panels are planned to be installed in 2025 at the site, which is owned by the City and County of San Francisco.

The City of Pacifica held its Civic Center Ribbon Cutting ceremony, marking the end of the revitalization of the Civic Center. The PHS invited attendees to visit the museum, and to see historic photos of the City Hall from a century ago.

July 2024:

We hosted a tour for Coastwalk California, about 20 hikers attended.

August 2024:

A walking tour was coordinated with San Mateo County Victorian days
Bel Canto Flutes performed in concert at the museum

September 2024:

Pacifica's Fog Fest. We opened the museum, welcomed 90 visitors one day (!) and sold lots of cheese..

October 2024:

Edgar Allan Poe Radio Show presentation. A scripted performance of an old-fashioned radio show.

November 2024:

Ohlone-Portolá presentation at the Community Center, followed by a hike to Sweeney Ridge.

December 2024

Annual Holiday Party at the Sam Mazza Castle

Viewing the train car prior to the Annual Meeting in October.



Susan Christopher (left), Mila Stroganoff (right) and Linda Hughes (center) were among PHS members who stepped inside OSRR #1409 to see the recently finished interior woodwork before our Annual Meeting in October. Our restoration of the historic rail car continues in 2025 and, as always, funds are needed and gratefully accepted. See [pacificahistory.org](https://www.pacificahistory.org) or <https://www.gofundme.com/f/PHSsorr1409>.

A Spooky Night at the Museum



In late October, PHS Board Member Jay Crawford produced and directed an entertaining evening of an old-fashioned radio show based on spooky Edgar Allen Poe stories. The cast and crew members were drawn from PHS, family, friends, professionals and amateurs. There was even a pitchman for Pacifica Jack Cheese. Jay is already thinking of producing similar events for PHS in 2025. Thank you, Jay!

Newspapers Available for Research

PHS is forever grateful to member Deb Hagler Wong who got a long-dreamed project rolling for us three years ago: to have the Pacifica Tribune available online. Deb, PHS Vice President Pat Kremer and I worked with the nonprofit California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) to digitize decades of the Tribune.

For the first three years, the Tribune was only available behind a paywall at Newspapers.com and for free on our museum laptop, donated by Deb. CDNC's funding doesn't allow it to undertake the huge job of digitizing the state's newspapers so it uses for-profit Newspapers.com, which is part of Ancestry.com, to do the job under such agreements. Last August the CDNC's three-year Newspapers.com agreement ended. That means that the Tribune, all the years from 1954 through 2013, is available for free at the CDNC website. To find it, do a search for "CDNC Pacifica Tribune" or use the link <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=PTP&>

CDNC continually adds California newspapers to its online database. This year, the South San Francisco Enterprise from 1895 to 1938 went up on its site. The Enterprise covered our area, including during Prohibition when there was no local newspaper here. The Coast Side Comet stopped publishing in 1923, and the Sharp Park Breakers started in 1938. So now there's even more local history online.
— Laura Del Rosso

Pacifica Memories: Santa is Saved!

We missed marking an important 60th anniversary last December. It was one of the few times Pacifica made the national – and international in this case – news for something besides cliff erosion and storms. On December 7, 1963, about 1,000 Pacifica parents and their children excitedly waited for Santa to glide down from the sky, parachuting into a marked circle at Eureka Square. Oldtimers know what happened next. Our museum has a little display about it that amuses our visitors.

Message from St. Nick: He's OKay!

SANTA: PACIFICA MY FAVORITE PLACE!

Eureka! Santa's Splash Echoes Around World

Santa Claus brought Pacifica and the Eureka Square Shopping Center at least a million dollars worth of international publicity Saturday.

Santa Claus' now-famous jump into the Pacific Ocean off Pacifica wound up on front pages across the nation and in foreign countries.

In Pacifica, however, Santa's dramatic and unscheduled plunge into the drink almost emptied the shopping center while everybody rushed down to the beach to help.

IT ALL started about 11:30 a.m. or so when a man with a short wave radio in his hand, standing in the midst of hundreds of screaming youngsters, shouted into the microphone: "Go ahead, Santa, jump."

At 11:32 a.m., Santa Claus jumped from an airplane high above Pacifica in the sunny, blue sky.

Santa was supposed to land in Eureka Square and calmly begin handing out candy and gifts to muggets with a candy ho ho ho.

WHAT HAPPENED after that has been told and retold all over the nation and in many foreign languages. Sure enough, there was a tiny red figure dangling from a parachute "right up there."

Plans For Unification Receive A Setback?

Two meetings held in San Mateo during the past 10 days may well have an effect on plans to unify Pacifica's schools into one north county school district.

The county committee on school organization was in two separate meetings, "reorganized."

IT APPEARED that the opponents of the controversial north county unification plan could perhaps claim a small victory.

The action also drew a blast from a former committee member that local school trustees acted only in an effort to "perpetuate themselves" and frustrate unification. The board members were accused by Charles D. ...

PM Homes Caught In Legal Fix

Local realtors, homeowners and city officials were also ... ed this work over a situation ...

Sends Wire

Santa Claus last night proclaimed Pacifica "The City of Christmas for the whole world" and said "It's my favorite city."

In a wire received by The Tribune just at press time, Santa Claus said "The world will never forget that Pacifica was the city which saved Santa Claus."

Santa also said that he and his assistants have been overwhelmed with inquiries about his health following his fall into the Pacific Ocean off Pacifica last Saturday.

"Tell the kids I'm fine," Santa said. "I'm a little bit hoarse and I can't get all the salt out of my beard, but I'll be back Christmas."

Santa's telegram said that messages have been pouring in from "everywhere" to him at his headquarters and nearly all of them "express gratitude to the wonderful people of Pacifica for saving me from the cold, cold ocean."

"Yes," he said "no presents were lost in the fall, and that he'll be able to be right on schedule tomorrow day."

"However," Santa said, "I'm having the harness fixed up again for the reindeer. Airplanes and parachutes are a little too risky."

Santa said he'd heard Pacifica was a city of controversy. "But as far as I'm concerned, it's my favorite city, even if it is a wee bit windy."

Santa said "I had a wonderful view of your beautiful city while I was floating in the air out to sea and I saw the homes of all the best and good in Pacifica."

Santa told your children and neighbors to get out and enjoy the weather. "It's a beautiful day, and the weather is just what you need. So get out there and enjoy it!"



As the Pacifica Tribune reported, "Suddenly screams of delight turned to cries of anguish." A strong wind carried parachuting Santa not to Eureka Square but out into the Pacific. He plunged into the water along with his heavy parachute about a half mile offshore.

"By auto, on foot, by bicycle, and motor scooter, everybody went west, pouring across the highway, down Montecito Avenue" to help save Santa.

Luckily, two surfers, Frank Baratta and Guy Giedzinski, were nearby and they paddled out. Two other surfers who had been at Eureka Square, Roger Allen and Bill Greely, rushed to the beach with their boards.

Santa (aka Ron Young, a 25-year-old from Alameda) was pulled out of the frigid water and he climbed atop Giedzinski's board, shaken and shivering. Sirens blaring, a fire truck and an ambulance arrived at the beach as the soaked and beardless Santa came ashore. He was whisked into the ambulance which then "roared" into Eureka Square, the Trib reported. Once Santa dried off and a substitute Santa outfit was found for him, he emerged to cheer. Santa then did what he originally came to do and valiantly gave out treats. "Santa is okay!" the kids exclaimed. In true Pacifica style – by surfboard – Santa was saved. – Laura Del Rosso

New Docent Training in February

Are you interested in learning more Pacifica history? And sharing that information with interested visitors? The Pacifica Historical Society will hold a **Docent Training Course** the four Saturday mornings in February 2025, 10am – noon. On the first and last Saturday, February 1 and 22, we will meet at the Pacifica Historical Society's museum (former Little Brown Church) at 1850 Francisco Blvd, in the Pacifica Civic Center. On the second and third Saturdays, February 8 and 15, we will meet online via Zoom.

There is no charge for this training, but, upon completion, you are expected to volunteer to help with a docent shift on Thursdays or Saturdays, from 1pm – 4pm, about once a month. Remember, the course is the four Saturday mornings in February, 2025. February 1, 8, 15, and 22, 10am - noon.

Do you think you might be interested? We need you to make a reservation if you plan to attend so that we will have enough copies of resource materials for you. Email your name and contact information to info@pacificahistory.org. Please use "Docent Training" as the subject line when making your reservation. Use this same address for any questions about the course.

We look forward to having you join our family of friendly docents! We will make sure to help you when you are first starting.

Renew Your PHS Membership! Or Join as a New Member!

PHS memberships are based on the calendar year, this is a gentle reminder that most memberships will expire December 31, 2024. If you have already renewed your membership for 2025, as many have, we thank you!

It is our hope that current members will want to continue your association with the Pacifica Historical Society. The easiest way to renew is online at <https://pacificahistory.org/join>. You may also join either online or mail a check to PHS, PO Box 752, Pacifica, CA 94044. If mailing, please include your name, email address, home address, phone number, and membership level.

Membership Levels

\$25 (Senior or Student Individual)	\$100 (PHS Patron)
\$30 (Individual, Senior Couple)	\$250 (PHS Silver)
\$40 (Family, Couple)	\$500 (PHS Gold)

We thank you for your past and/or future support of the Pacifica Historical Society.

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

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: Steve Johnson

Vice President: Shirlee Gibbs

Vice President: Pat Kremer

Vice President: Susan Stallard

Secretary: Carolyn Miller

Treasurer: Janet Ang

Board of Directors: Karen Bacheller, Jay Crawford, Deidra Crow, Shirlee Gibbs, Laura Del Rosso, Sue Digre, Steve Johnson, Pat Kremer, Terri McCann, Kathy McGuire, Carolyn Miller, Mike O'Neill, Susan Stallard, Brigid Voss

Emeritus Members Kathleen Manning, Jerry Crow, Clorinda Campagna

Newsletter Editors: Laura Del Rosso, Susan Stallard

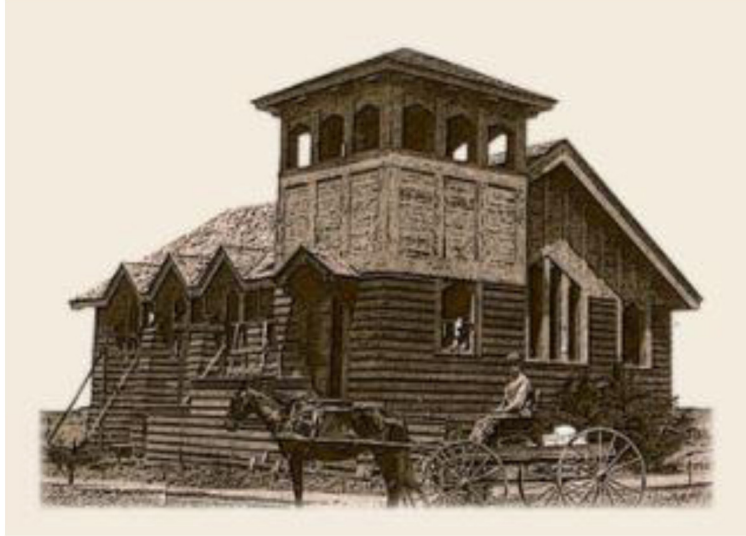
The Pacifica Historical Society welcomes everyone to join our organization and join our committees. We hold monthly Board Meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, 7 pm. The Planning Committee for events and activities meets monthly on the last Thursday of each month, 4 pm.

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 (aka 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 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 <https://PacificaHistory.org/join>. Dues are good for the calendar year. Donations are always gratefully accepted. Our Federal Tax ID # is 943117665.



Pacifica Historical Society
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