

SEAL BEACH

SBHCS

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL SOCIETY

JAN/FEB
2001
NEWSLETTER



**DON'T MISS THE
MARCH COMMUNITY
MEETING!**

*Thursday, March 22, 2001
7.30 p.m.*

Mary Wilson Library (Senior Center)

P.O. BOX 152 SEAL BEACH, CA 90740 + LAURA ALIOTO, PRESIDENT (562) 683-1874

The society is proud to announce the results of the

2000 Photo Contest...

Seventeen local photographers submitted thirty-four exceptional photographs celebrating different aspects of Seal Beach. The wide variety of the entries provides a testament to the quality of their photographic talents.

The first place winner was Kay Zahn of Long Beach for her exquisite portrait of the city hall clock tower, "Seal Beach Clock Ticking Since 1969." Ms. Zahn's vision for Seal Beach is "that it will remain quaint."

Ken Henry took second place for his "Nature Entertains" which captures a vivid Seal Beach sunset as viewed by a large crowd on the pier. Tom Merola of Lakewood won third prize for his study of a lone surfer at dusk still "Waiting for the Perfect Wave."



2001 Board of Directors

New officers were elected at the January community meeting

President: Laura Alioto

*Vice President:
Jackie Fitzpatrick*

*Treasurer:
Helen de la Rocha*

*Secretary:
Kathy Morton*



Kay Zahn keeps rolling along with her first prize winner, Seal Beach Clock Ticking Since 1969

These black and white reproductions of the winning photo contest entries only hint at the vibrancy of the full color originals.



Nature Entertains in Ken Henry's second prize winner



Tom Merola's celebrates perpetual anticipation in his third place winner, Waiting for the Perfect Wave

Two local businesses and their owners deserve special thanks for their contributions to the contest. John and Greg Crose of Seal Beach Camera and Ian Park of PC 30 Minute Photo System generously donated the contest prizes.

The Red Car Museum will feature all thirty-four entries including the three winners in an upcoming exhibit.



Wish List

- Docents for the Red Car
- Manila File Folders
- Copier Machine
- Bulletin Boards
- Display Cases
- Paint or Painters for Red Car (exterior)

What's All White, Has Big Ears and a Trunk, And Uses Too Much Garage Space?

Mark April 7th on your calendars, and start searching your garages, attics, closets, and cupboards. Yes, this year's White Elephant Sale is fast approaching, and we will need your donations. Compact discs, appliances,

equipment, books, posters, gadgets, art, furniture, stereo equipment, tools, jewelry, knick-knacks, Luggage, magazines, musical instruments, or whatever, we'll take them off your hands! (No clothing, however.) The next newsletter will include contact information for the sale. Remember one man's junk is another man's beloved treasure!

A Tree Grows in Seal Beach *January's Community Meeting:*

Twenty-five people attended our January 25th community meeting where local resident Jim Caviola made a lively presentation on grassroots efforts to plant trees in Seal Beach. Mr. Caviola detailed the history of his tree planting efforts in town and shared some of his research into funding possibilities for future projects. The aesthetic, health, and economic benefits of trees were also covered.

Happy Birthday, Seal Beach Historical & Cultural Society!

The year 2001 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of our Society. We need to begin our plans for how and when we will celebrate this momentous occasion.

The organizational meeting for forming an historical and cultural society was held in Attorney Paul Gray's office March 12, 1971. At this time legal papers for by-laws and incorporation were begun. Incorporation as a non-profit organization was signed by Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown November 30, 1971.

By November 7, 1972, the decision was made to procure a Pacific Electric Red Car which would become a focal point for the collection of historical artifacts and memorabilia. The society purchase the Red Car from Richard Fellows for \$360.00. This was financed by a

federal grant of \$750.00. This grant from the Rediscover America Program was obtained through the efforts of founding member Joan Stegman.

The Red Car purchased was a tower car, number 1734, which had been built in Torrance in 1925. It was a service car designed to contain everything needed to repair any breaks that occurred on the line. An elevator could be raised above the roof to hold a railroad worker to repair any damage to the roof and overhead wiring.

The Red Car was moved from Wilmington to Seal Beach by Rockwell International using a large flatbed truck. It was placed at Fifteenth Street and Electric Avenue. Commander Madera of the Naval Weapons Station donated the railroad tracks. The "trucks" or

wheels were donated by Kaiser Steel of Fontana and delivered by Rockwell International.

Founding member Bruce Frenzingler began the overwhelming task of repairing the Red Car. He discovered copper electric cable under the flooring. By pulling this out and stripping it of insulation, money was raised to start renovation.

April 5, 1975, ground-breaking ceremonies were held on the site where the Red Car is now permanently located. What is now known as the Green Belt was the Pacific Electric right-of-way for trains traveling the Los Angeles to Newport route. The ground-breaking ceremonies were marked by the planting of a Heritage Tree.

Dozens of volunteers, including Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, began scraping, sanding and painting. A new floor was installed by long-term member Cliff Evans, and he designed

the entry staircase.

Cowcatchers, doors and window frames were made by woodworking classes at Long Beach City College.

By 1979, the Red Car was ready to be converted into a museum. Barbara Rountree directed this enormous endeavor. The Red Car Museum had its formal opening May 3, 1980.

Also in 1980, an Orange County Historical Plaque was installed in Heritage Square. The Red Car was placed tenth on the list of historical sites in the county. The Orange County Environmental Agency awarded the Society a commendation for beautifying the city by rehabilitating the Red Car as a museum.

In 1986, the Red Car Museum was placed on the list of California Interest Sites by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. Small plaques on the south and north side of Pacific Coast Highway were

placed for this purpose. Water damage from rain had been an on-going problem for the Red Car. The flooding was so bad in the mid-1990's that the Red Car Museum was closed for more than two years. July 17, 1997, the Red Car Museum was rededicated and opened.

A canvas bonnet placed over the roof during the rainy season has helped alleviate many of the water problems.

By 1990, the Society was on the Internet. August 27, 1999, was the Red Car Stamp Unveiling Proclamation. The City of Seal Beach declared August 27 as Red Car Day, a designated day to last fifty years.

Members and friends, we need your ideas for when and how we should celebrate our Society's thirtieth birthday. Please give us a call at (562) 683-1874 or write us at P.O. Box 152, Seal Beach, CA 90740.



Historic Photos

Can you help?

We are always looking to update our historic photo collection. If you have old Seal Beach photos or postcards, we would love to have a copy. Family photos taken in and around Seal Beach and the stories that go along with them would also be terrific.

The Next Hundred Years

Experts tell us that 2001 is the actual first year of the new millennium. Since this is the first newsletter of 2001 it feels right to take a few moments for reflection and taking stock. This new year brings us two significant anniversaries in the history of Seal Beach that are worthy of note.

One hundred years ago, John C. Ord became the area's first permanent resident when he hired a thirty-mule team to haul his general store from Los Alamitos to what would become the southwest corner of Electric Avenue and Main Street. A Civil War veteran, Ord was not only our first resident, but he was also Seal Beach's first mayor, its first postmaster, and its first judge. A report on Ord's war and pension records will appear in a future newsletter.

Today, the world of 1901 seems distant and hazy. The people from that time have left us few tantalizing clues to what their lives were truly like. They peer out at us from a handful of old



The photo of Seal Way from the 1940's shows that storm flooding is not just a recent problem.

photographs. Newspaper clippings and personal letters only hint at the fuller lives that they undoubtedly lead. Personal anecdotes and adventures have either faded into half-remembered family mythologies or are irrevocably lost.

Much has happened since 1901: New generations. New triumphs. New tragedies. The flight at Kitty Hawk. Films. Two World Wars. Radio. The Depression. Rock and Roll. Television. The Moon Landing. The Internet. And millions of other events, big and small... Incremental changes that led to our world of 2001. Decisions made and actions taken ten years, twenty years, fifty years, and even hundreds of years ago

still affect us.

The past defines us. Without knowledge of our past, we cannot truly know who we are and we can only drift through the future. It is vital that we do not forget the past.

Which brings us to the other anniversary of note. Thirty years ago, local residents founded the Seal Beach Historical and Cultural Society to preserve and celebrate our history and heritage. In doing so, they became an important part of that history. Today, thirty years later, we enjoy a growing archive of historical materials, bi-monthly community meetings, and many exhibits housed in our unique and popular Red Car Museum; past efforts of our society's leaders.

Their example should inspire us. Individually, we should make greater efforts to preserve the past. Hunt thorough attics and garages for old photographs and mementos. Talk to aunts, uncles, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Record or write down what they say and share. We should also do our best to save and record today for future generations. Date and label photographs. Clip newspaper articles and save them in a notebook with date and source information. Write a life history or anecdote collection. Share your memories with the younger generations. Who knows what will be significant or interesting one hundred years from now? Did John Ord have any idea that we would

be intrigued by photographs of his general store or Pacific Electric timetables or silverware from the Jewel City Cafe? No, but time has made all these mundane details of his everyday life fascinating and precious to us.

You can also help the society. We will be celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Seal Beach Historical and Cultural Society later this year. If you have any ideas for that event or future community meetings, please share them. Donate photographs or other historical items to the museum. Become a docent for the Red Car. Write an article for this newsletter. Start contributing to the next hundred years of history today.

**The Red Car will be open
1-4 p.m. on the following Saturdays in 2001**



February	10, 24
March	10, 24
April	14, 28
May	12, 26
June	9, 23
July	14, 28
August	11, 25
September	8, 22
October	13, 27
November	10, 24
December	8

To Join:

To become a member of the Seal Beach Historical Society, or for more information on society events, call:

(562) 683-1874

- Single* \$15.00 yr.
- Youth w/I.D.* . . . \$7.00 yr.
- Family* \$25.00 yr.
- Sponsor* \$50.00 yr.
- Patron* \$100.00 yr.
- Life* \$200.00

**January is
Membership
Renewal Time**

We would like thank all the members who have renewed their membership. Renewal fees become due at the start of each new calendar year. If you have forgotten to send in your payment, please do so soon.

Merchandise for Sale

HISTORY RELATED ITEMS MAKE EXCELLENT GIFTS!

- RED CAR T-SHIRTS \$15.00
- "A STORY OF SEAL BEACH" (BOOK) \$10.00
- L.B. PIKE (BOOK) \$15.00
- 8" X 10" MATTED PHOTOS (EARLY SEAL BEACH & JOY ZONE) \$15.00

MEMBERS GET 10% DISCOUNT!

Graphics: Rick Murphy



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