



DANA POINT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

The
News

DROGHER

May/June 2015



DANA POINT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP Fiesta Dinner Fundraiser

Join in support of our scholarship program again this year by reserving your tickets (see form inside) for our annual Fiesta Dinner to be held on **Wednesday, June 24, at 6:00 PM** at Doheny State Beach (includes parking). The Doheny State Beach Interpretive Association will again open the Visitor Center 5:30 - 6:30 PM to view the aquarium and exhibits. Jack Saunderson, of *Lucy's El Patio Café*, will once again serve up his delicious Mexican fare. Refreshments and parking are all included. Last year's turnout was tremendous! Be sure not to miss out on this festive event, which supports the \$1,000 Doris I. Walker Scholarship and the \$1,000 Lucy Chavarrias-Saunderson Scholarship and is annually given to two deserving high school seniors headed for college. Members and businesses are invited to contribute prizes for the opportunity raffle. Items such as gift baskets, show/sports tickets and gift or restaurant cards are appreciated. Please contact us at 949-248-8121 with any questions.

Historical Society Receives New Donations

DPHS has recently been the lucky recipient of several new donations. In April, Richard Burrhus and his son Braden (shown right) presented the Society two framed original letters penned by Richard Henry Dana and Richard Henry Dana, Jr. for long-term loan to the society.

Kathleen Carlisle, a descendant of a cousin of Richard Henry Dana, Jr. presented a gift of four books written by and about various Dana family members.

Bob Minty, who gives presentations about Richard Henry Dana, Jr., gave the society two framed letters written by Dana and an 1878 engraving of the wedding of Dana's son to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's daughter. In addition, he gave the Society a facsimile of an 1856 letter written by Dana to his wife.



President's Message



It is with heartfelt sadness and admiration for a life well lived that I begin this message. Our friend Mel Pierce passed away on May 19. To me, Mel has always been our patriarch as a longtime resident, who, together with his wife Helen, was officially named a Historical Society founder in 2007, and was a mentor to those of us interested in Sidney H. Woodruff's early development of Dana Point. It was just May 13th when the Historical Society officially named Mel our "Patriarch of Dana Point" and Judy and Buck Henderson were honored with the 2015 Founders Day Award (See page 3). Many local dignitaries attended the

event and special guests included large contingents of the Henderson and Pierce families, John Lashbrook, Patriarch of San Clemente, and Lois Divel, Matriarch of San Clemente, whose husband attended high school with Mel. My introductory remarks included my first conversation with Mel when he explained how, as children, he and his friends played in Keith's and my home, as well as others in Dana Point, as they sat empty in the depression's early years.



Mel Pierce (photo courtesy of Andrea Pappagianis / Dana Point Times)

The purpose of our Founders Day program is to honor individuals who have significantly contributed to the history of Dana Point or to the Historical Society. Mel Pierce's 85 years in Dana Point exemplify the life of a Founder and Patriarch. It was July 4, 1930, when he moved with his family from Pasadena to the new home his father had built for them on Chula Vista Avenue. (The home is still there, graced with a City of Dana Point Historic Home plaque.) Mel's father was employed by developer Sidney H. Woodruff in 1929 and stayed in spite of the depression that followed. Thanks to DPHS board members Paul Hinman and Bruce Beal, we have three oral histories about Mel. The first describes his total freedom roaming the beach and hills in rural Dana Point. There were no schools here, so he attended Serra Elementary in Capistrano Beach and San Juan Capistrano High School. The second oral history describes Mel and his sister Thelma's surfing experiences, both of whom were taught to tandem surf in Dana Cove by surfing legend Lorin "Whitey" Harrison. The third oral history describes Mel's training in Aircraft Maintenance at Pomona Junior College, followed by civil service jobs leading to his WWII service in the Army Air Corps as a flight engineer, part of a transport crew flying high-octane fuel to France and returning with wounded soldiers until the war's end. Mel's mother introduced him to his future wife, Helen, who would eventually teach at R. H. Dana Elementary, built just behind his parents' home.



Dave Pierce

Fellow firefighter Bill Dean spoke about Mel's 25-year volunteer service at the Doheny Fire Station (which Mel helped establish in 1958), the community and social center created there and the sacrifice and support required by the Pierce family. Mel's son, David Pierce, talked about the influence his father had on him: his exemplary role model as a father, as a fellow firefighter, which influenced Dave's career with the Orange County Fire Authority, and Mel's overall philosophy of doing a job *well*. Helen Pierce shared some interesting stories about Mel's parent's home and thanked the Society on his behalf for this honor. Mel's daughter, Sandy Samoff, also spoke about her father's priorities and recounted wonderful memories of growing up in our area. Paul Hinman was joined at the podium by Bruce Beal as he read the proclamation naming Mel Pierce as our Patriarch of Dana Point. Mel and Helen have shared Dana Point History in many of our meetings and their own story could make a Hallmark Channel program on the "greatest generation." Because Mel was in the hospital with pneumonia, Paul and Bruce promised to visit him Thursday to present him with the proclamation — and I can report that they did. An article about Mel's years as a volunteer firefighter appeared in a Dana Point Times article, which is online at: <http://www.danapointtimes.com/preserving-the-service-sacrifice>.



Helen Pierce, left, and Sandy (Pierce) Samoff share experiences of their lives with Mel in Dana Point.

This month we looked back on all that our honorees have achieved over so many years. Next month we look forward to celebrating the accomplishments and goals of young people when we honor two deserving high school graduates at our Annual Scholarship Fiesta Picnic on June 24, at Doheny State Beach. We hope to have your advance reservation, which helps *Lucy's El Patio Café* with food preparation. Please see page 5 for more information.

Barbara Force Johannes

Founders Day Celebration

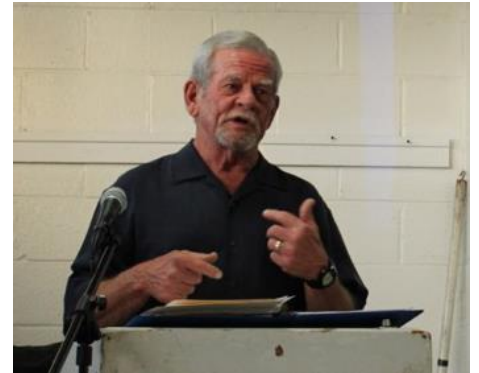
In addition to honoring Mel Pierce on Wednesday evening, May 13, the Society honored Buck and Judy Henderson with our Founders Day Award. A reception was held at 6:30 PM, followed by Heidi Hyde presenting a power point presentation featuring the highlights and service of Judy and Buck Henderson's life as narrated with entertaining stories from several guest speakers. Daughters Healy and Hedy described their parents' volunteer activities in PTA, Girl Scouts and Blue Birds and recounted family experiences raising 4-H guide dogs. Bill Dean's remarks as a colleague included inspiring and humorous examples of Buck's determination and their



Healy checks the projection screen while Hedy tells of family experiences.

experiences as firefighters. Harold Kaufman praised the Hendersons' many efforts on behalf of the Civic Association, as founders of both the Historical Society and the City of Dana Point, and reminded us that Judy was also named the Chamber's Citizen of the Year in 2012.

Mayor Carlos N. Olvera gave humorous examples of Buck's quiet assistance in setting up the Society's first museum in City Hall and of his talent as the gourmet BBQ chef of numerous Society scholarship fundraisers. Judy has the



Bill Dean

added distinction of being the only continuously serving DPHS board member since it was founded in 1987 and was named Director Emerita at the Society's 25th Anniversary celebration; she continues to serve as the board's Sunshine Chair. Judy



thanked the Society, her family and everyone in attendance for honoring Buck and herself. Elizabeth Bamattre presented Judy with flowers and a gift certificate and invited everyone to enjoy the Founders Day cake served at the program's conclusion. The Hendersons and Mel Pierce were also honored with Certificates of Recognition, sent from District Assemblyman William Brough, congratulating each recipient on their newly awarded recognitions.

Judy watches the evening's program.

Special thanks go to Heidi Hyde, Georgelean Olvera, Marsha LaRusso, Elizabeth Bamattre and Max Brown for the program, the lovely spread of appetizers and beverages and to the board members who assisted with publicity and technical arrangements. Our thanks also go to Rod Howorth, Jim Hyde, Joel Bishop and Keith Johannes who helped with the program and to the members who returned chairs and tables to storage.



California Preservation Conference by Keith Johannes

The California Preservation Foundation (CPF) Conference was held in San Diego at Liberty Station, the former Naval Training Center at Point Loma, April 29-May 1. Liberty Station is a prime example of the adaptive reuse of 1920s Spanish Colonial Revival architecture for a new urban mixed-use community. The Naval Training Center construction began in 1921, the center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and several of the buildings are also listed as historic by the City of San



Repurposed barracks at the Naval Training Center, now part of the complex called Liberty Station.

Diego. Distinct “district” uses in Liberty Station include commercial, nonprofit, educational, offices, hotel and residential. 125 acres of open spaces and parks are also included. Vons and Trader Joe’s are examples of anchor stores in former naval buildings that feature historic exhibits of the men who trained and served there. The Stone Brewery offers a huge restaurant and entertainment complex in former naval buildings. The Arts are represented with performance venues, dance studios and the current repurpose of a military auditorium into a multiplex film theater. Research has been done to return the buildings to the original colors, windows and doors wherever possible. The conference offered sessions and tours within Liberty Station as living examples of successful preservation due to the collaboration between the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency and master developer Corky McMillan Companies and illustrates what can be replicated by other communities.

Optional conference tours included visits to San Diego’s Gaslamp Quarter and East Village, unique success stories that, over the course of 40 years, carefully turned blighted and neglected neighborhoods into thriving residential, entertainment and business districts. The lesson learned here is to preserve the historic buildings of different eras and not allow new infill projects to overpower their historic significance.

A second conference tour was “Rancho Santa Fe: The Town the Rail Built.” Though the town began as a failed attempt to grow lumber for railroad ties, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway soon transformed the area into a community of ‘gentlemen estates.’ Santa Fe officials hired the best engineers, architects, landscape architects, and agronomists to create a utopian community. It was not long before Rancho Santa Fe became the home of many Hollywood celebrities. The community has retained its 1920s architectural style and ‘sense of place,’ meaning that it has the authentic historic elements that make a place special as well as those that tell its unique story, fostering a sense of human attachment and belonging. As such, it entices visitors to learn its stories. This is a proven example that quality has a price but preservation pays huge dividends in the long run.



Signage in Rancho Santa Fe emulates the period of the original buildings.

Other concepts presented included examples of cities updating local planning to ease bureaucratic requirements, conflicting codes and inconsistent government processes that can hamper preservation of even the most worthy buildings. Discussion among stakeholders, city departments, the private sector and preservationists as to what you want your city ‘to be’ have produced new historic reuse guidelines for commercial projects that preserve California’s heritage. The general session emphasized a more inclusive preservation program involving youth and protecting the areas important to our cultural heritage. We were challenged to find ways to engage young aspiring preservationists in discussing “the future of our past” as related to preserving the heritage of each unique community district.

The California Historic Tax Credit session focused on passage of California’s AB 771. The bill would establish a 20% historic rehabilitation tax credit for income-producing structures and for homeowners. A similar bill (AB 1999) passed last year without a single ‘no’ vote, but was vetoed. Strategic lobbying began earlier this year to include these tax credits in the state budget planning process. The coalition --- lead by CPF, California architects and preservationists --- is optimistic that with this strategy, AB 771 will be included in the budget to be adopted in June and signed by Governor Brown.



**DANA POINT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP
Fiesta Dinner Fundraiser**

Wednesday, June 24, 6:00 PM

Reservation Form for Doheny State Beach (includes parking)

Come and join us for a fun time, good food and support our annual mission to enhance the college experience of our two scholarship winners!

Mail by **Wednesday, June 17** to: **Dana Point Historical Society**
PO Box 544
Dana Point, CA 92629

(You may also pay at the museum during open hours: Tues & Thurs 1-3 PM and Sat 11 AM – 3 PM)

Number of Society member adults: _____ @ \$25 each (enclose check/money order)

Number of Society member children (12 & under): _____ @ \$10 each (enclose check/money order)

Number of NON-Society member adults: _____ @ \$30 each (enclose check/money order)

Number of NON-Society member children (12 & under): _____ @ \$15 each (enclose check/m.o.)

If you cannot attend, and/or you would like to donate money to the scholarship fund in addition to ordering ticket, please enter the amount of your donation: \$_____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

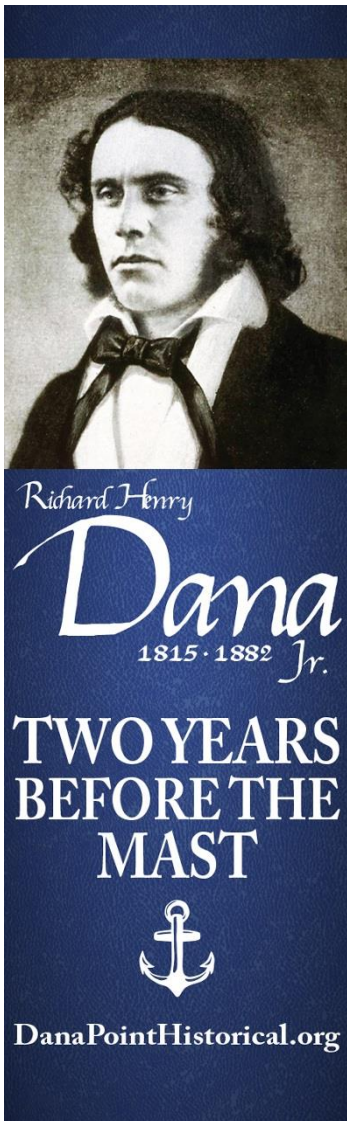
City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

For questions about this event please call the museum office (949) 248-8121.

Thank You, Dana Bicentennial Banner Sponsors!

The Historical Society's Dana Bicentennial Banners were installed on city light poles on March 16 in anticipation of the Fifth Annual Reading of *Two Years Before the Mast* the last weekend of March. We are especially grateful to The Strand, CR&R, the Docent Society of Mission San Juan Capistrano and all the individuals who contributed to the purchase and maintenance of the 42 banners. To date, generous sponsors have offset nearly half the cost of our banner project. Our deep-blue banners will be installed again this July/August for Richard Henry Dana's birthday on August 1, 2015, and again each spring, for the Annual Community Reading held near the time Dana first sailed to our shores in 1835. **If you wish to add your name to those who have donated \$125 or more to this cause, we invite you to join us in wishing Dana a happy 200th birthday this summer! Remember, each banner donation of \$125 is a TAX DEDUCTIBLE donation. For information, contact Elizabeth Bamattre: FairviewT@aol or leave a message at 949-248-8121.**



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MARSHA & RICH LARUSSO**

THE **HOBIE**
Memorial Committee



Hobie Alter's contributions to the surfing industry and culture have earned him the honor of having a memorial erected within Dana Point. A fitting location for the Hobie Memorial, Dana Point is where the first Hobie Surfboard shop opened on Pacific Coast Highway in 1954, where John Severson created Surfer Magazine, where Bruce Brown produced *The Endless Summer*, and where many more historically significant surfing matters occurred, all of which were the catalyst for the surfing industry's launch into the mainstream of society.

The surfing lifestyle that Hobie and a handful of surfers created in the 1950s and 1960s has long since been embraced by the citizens of Dana Point. Now it's time for the city to honor these pioneers, and it should begin with Hobie Alter.

Artist Lance Jost will create the memorial, which will depict Hobie's contributions; surfboard manufacturing, skateboarding, and boat manufacturing, the latter includes the Hobie Cat, which would become the "most produced boat in history," according to Yachting Magazine in 1999. Jost's resume includes two of the mosaics on the Doheny Pedestrian Bridge, the art on the Mary Ellen Thomas Memorial Fountain in La Plaza Park, and the 15 Stations of the Cross, located at Rancho Capistrano in San Juan Capistrano.

For more information regarding this project or how you can donate, please email President Robbie Roberson at hobiememorial@gmail.com or visit their website: <http://hobiememorial.com/>

Some Final Thoughts From Randy Biddle

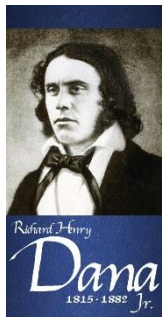
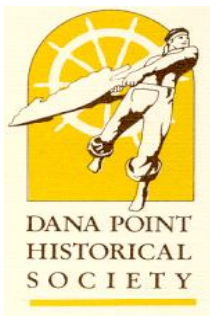
April's Guest Speaker, Randle M. Biddle of Windship Studios, presented a fascinating program about the brig Pilgrim. Randy was joined by Jeff Rosaler, former First Mate and Chief Rigger of the Ocean Institute's brig named the Pilgrim II. After the presentation, so many questions were asked at the reception that Randy has forwarded responses to the Society. The questions included information about ballast, cargo, the final days of the Pilgrim, as well as several others. All of this information is available on our website and also includes Randy's article about the Pilgrim which appeared in the newsletter of the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum. These articles can be found here: <http://www.danapointhistorical.org/randy-biddle-answers-more-of-your-questions-about-the-brig-pilgrim/2350/>

Dana Point History in the News

Corky Carroll: Remembering the breaks at Dana Cove: Dana Point News (O.C. Register), May 7, 2014 : <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/cove-659991-dana-point.html>

Lost Landmarks: The Arches: Development, the Depression, and the Scenic Ruins of Dana Point Inn by Hadley Meares, KCET, April 27, 2015: <http://www.kcet.org/social/departures/columns/lost-landmarks/the-arches-development-the-depression-and-the-scenic-ruins-of-dana-point-inn.html>

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2015 DPHS Calendar

June 24 Scholarship Dinner **August 1** Dana Birthday Party **Sept 11** Toshiba/Ocean Institute Tall Ships Festival

Membership

Please welcome new member **Stacy Frantz**.

Membership Dues

Your membership dues are important. Our activities, such as the newsletter, program meetings, collection and preservation of documents and photographs, are funded by your dues.

Annual dues for 2015 were due in January. The membership categories are as follows:

Individual	\$25 annual
Family	\$30 annual
Business	\$50 annual
Patron	\$100 annual
Life	\$500 lifetime

Look on your address label to see if you have a date of 1/15. If so, please remit your dues at this time.

All contributions are tax deductible as the Historical Society is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization.

Marsha LaRusso

IN MEMORIAM

MEL PIERCE

DPHS Patriarch of Dana Point, August 11, 1923 - May 19, 2015. Mel and Helen Pierce were honored as DPHS Founders in 2007. Mel lived here from the age of six, with the exception of his service in WWII, loved Dana Point and believed in serving his community. Services will be held Saturday, June 6 at 2 PM at South Shores Community Church.



Please see page 2 to read about the highlights of the lives of Mel and the Pierce Family.