



DANA POINT  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

# The News Drogher

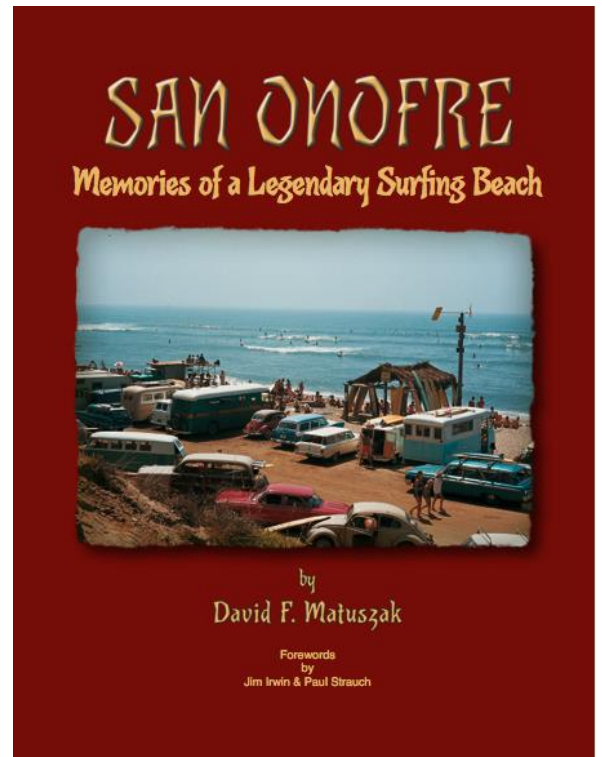
Spring 2020

## Spring Events Postponed Because of Covid-19 Outbreak

Our April 22 meeting, which was to feature author David Matuszak and his book *San Onofre: Memories of a Legendary Surfing Beach* (pictured right), has been postponed pending further guidance from the State of California regarding public meetings. We have tentatively set the new meeting with Mr. Matuszak for October 28.

Likewise, our *Founders Day* gathering in May could be postponed depending upon further developments concerning the coronavirus. We will keep the membership apprised of any changes.

Scholarship Chair Heidi Hyde continues to work on setting up our June *Fiesta Dinner* fundraiser to honor our high school scholarship recipients, although it is unclear if the event will be held this year. Due to the interruption of the school year, Dana Point and Capistrano Beach high school students can get the scholarship application online and can submit it online, as well. Students should contact their academic advisor if they have questions about the application process. \$1000 scholarships will be awarded to two deserving senior graduates.



## DPHS Board Establishes Virtual Meetings



The Society's board of directors is currently preparing to participate in virtual meetings with computers and cell phones. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the State of California does not allow the board to gather at a meeting since the board is not an essential service group. Grant Earl, our technology chair, has facilitated getting the board up and running with *Microsoft Teams* software, supplied free of charge by Grant and his employer, Microsoft. Over the past couple of weeks, the board has

been experimenting with the new software and has been successful in dragging itself into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! During a virtual meeting, the board is able to simultaneously see and speak with each director or chair attending the meeting.

## President's Message

In contrast to now, the Society's first two and a half months of 2020 were very active. Your Board of Directors met in January to conduct business and plan our annual meeting on January 22. In late January we accepted an exclusive February 18th invitation to our members from Mission San Juan Capistrano to view the Lincoln Document, an original patent of title signed by Abraham Lincoln on March 18, 1865 returning Mission San Juan Capistrano to the Catholic Church after more than 20 years of private ownership. (See page 3 for more details about our visit.) At our March board meeting we finalized plans for the *Festival of Whales*, we planned the April and May meetings and discussed our June *Scholarship Fiesta Fundraiser*. The museum was open with our volunteer docents, and DPHS scholarship applications were delivered to public high schools attended by students living in Dana Point. That was then. Now, as I write this message, we are in the midst of what will forever be known as the COVID-19 pandemic and the precautions needed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus locally, throughout our nation and the world.

In spite of another conflicting event and the travel schedules of some of our most active members, the 2020 annual meeting was off to a good start with a delicious potluck dinner and the installation of board members and chairpersons. Our *City of Dana Point Program* featured City Manager Mark Denny, who brought three additional city staff guests with him. He introduced Brenda Wisneski, the newly hired Director of Community Development, and Senior Planners Belinda Deines and Johnathan Ciampa. Brenda Wisneski is delighted to return to Dana Point after nearly a decade. Johnathan Ciampa continues as the city's contact for historic buildings. Belinda Dienes presented a Microsoft Power Point review of the Capistrano Village Plan. Following Mark Denny's overview, our members asked questions regarding currently approved building plans and what can be done to preserve the Seaside Inn in Capistrano Beach, the Woodruff 1920s real estate building at the Del Prado and PCH intersection and the Blue Lantern Gazebo at the Ken Sampson Overlook park.

Our February exclusive tour of Mission San Juan Capistrano featured the Lincoln Document, held over especially for us from the previous President's Weekend. Staff members greeted us with coffee, water and pastries

The activities of the first weekend of the March *Festival of Whales* were fun and a success thanks to Bob Minty, who provided his authentic 1929 Oldsmobile Woodie station wagon as the Society's entry in the parade. Bob and his daughter Trish were in costume, accompanied by her dog 'Pugsley,' while the DPHS banner and historic photos were carried by Bruce and Marlene Beal, Kat Wallace and son Ryan Wallace. Lee and Terry Walsh led Saturday's Historic Walking Tour and Keith Johannes led Sunday's tour—both were well attended. Chair Max Brown and Society volunteers

staffed our out-

reach booth along the harbor walkway during both days, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., where we answered questions about historic buildings, explained historic photos, recruited new members and sold related merchandise.

As we observe social distancing and stay home, we may have time to get some items organized. Do you, or someone in your family or a friend, have old photographs or artifacts such as early menus or newspaper clippings to organize, scan or share? If related to Dana Point history, please think about allowing our Society to scan them and either archive or return the originals to you. In the meantime, wash you hands in soapy, hot water, enjoy your home, and stay well.

*Barbara Force Johannes*



*Festival of Whales parade participants Barbara Johannes, Bruce Beal, Marlene Beal, Trish Minty, Bob Minty, Kat Wallace and Ryan Wallace.*



*The Society's Festival of Whales Outreach Booth*

## The Significance of the Lincoln Document & Presidents Day --- Barbara Force Johannes

Thirty Dana Point Historical Society members viewed the Lincoln Document on the day after Presidents' Day, a federal holiday celebrated on Monday, February 17. Admission was free to our members as special guests of Mechelle Lawrence Adams, Executive Director, and an Orange County Historical Commissioner from the 5th District. Mechelle welcomed us and gave a brief history of the Mission San Juan Capistrano's Foundation, a nonprofit organization, and its goals to conserve the mission's treasures dating from the 1700s to the present. The Lincoln Document is only removed from the mission's archives on special occasions because of its delicate condition.



The document is an original patent of title signed by Abraham Lincoln on March 18, 1865, returning Mission San Juan Capistrano to the Catholic Church after more than 20 years of private ownership. As a special treat, Mechelle also invited us on a behind-the-scenes tour of the restored sacristy and the 1600s Serra Chapel retablo (altar).

Why was the document featured as part of Presidents' weekend? In a presidential election year we compare and contrast United States presidents even more than usual. According to a February 17, 2020, *Los Angeles Times* article, "Hail to the Chief," David Shribman writes that presidential rankings go up and down over time. Shribman states that in the 1948 Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. survey of 55 historians, Lincoln, Washington and Franklin Roosevelt were ranked in the top three. While other presidents have moved in ranking, based on how we see them today, these three presidents remain at the top. "The latest comprehensive poll, conducted among 91 historians and authors by C-SPAN in 2017, placed Lincoln first."

Do you remember when there were two "long weekends" in February? One was closest to Lincoln's February 12 birthday and the other closest to that of George Washington's February 22, 1732, birthday on the Gregorian (New Style) calendar (instead of his February 11, 1731, birthday on the previously-used Julian calendar). Congress declared Washington's birthday a federal holiday in 1879 to honor our first president, effective first in Washington, D.C., and then expanded the holiday to include all federal offices in 1885. Ironically, when the *Uniform Monday Holiday Act* changed Washington's birthday to the third Monday in February in 1971, it was placed between February 15 and 21, thus it can never occur on either of Washington's birthdays. An effort to create a Presidents' Day was started in 1951 by Harold Stonebridge Fischer of Compton, California, to honor the office of the presidency on the first inauguration day of March 4. The effort failed but the idea of a Presidents' Day became popular in many states. An early draft of the Uniform Monday Holiday Act suggested a Presidents' Day honoring the birthdays of both Washington and Lincoln, but this proposal failed and the federal holiday remained Washington's Birthday, although it was placed between their two birthdays. During the Civil War in 1862, Washington's Farewell Address was read in the United States Senate and this has continued as a tradition ever since. Today, according to *Wikipedia*, "the various states use 14 different names" for Presidents' Day in the individual states, including "Washington's and Lincoln's Birthday." Both Washington and Lincoln are honored in California where the third Monday in February is named Lincoln's Birthday, a separate state holiday, as it is in several other states, although not in the south.

Why did President Lincoln return the mission to the church? After California became a state, the United States Land Commission was created in 1851 to determine whether Spanish and Mexican land grants were valid. Rather than assuming existing ownership unless challenged, the Land Commission ruled that all owners had to prove their ownership. The decision was popular in northern California with those filing gold claims, but those in southern California had to go through a costly and lengthy process to prove their title, if the document existed. This allowed Bishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany of San Francisco to petition the Land Commission on February 19, 1853, for the return of mission land since the Mexican government did not have the right to sell the missions. In the case of San Juan Capistrano, the mission had been sold with its lands to Governor Pio Pico's brother-in-law, Juan Forster. After more

than two decades of residency there, the Forster family moved their home to Rancho Santa Margarita on what is now Camp Pendleton (where the home is occupied today by the Marine Commandant).

When we viewed the Lincoln Document, we could clearly see Abraham Lincoln's neat signature on the patent of title returning Mission San Juan Capistrano to the Catholic Church. The document was signed on March 18, 1865, three weeks before Lincoln was assassinated, removing the ownership from the Juan Forster family. Because it was difficult to read the somewhat faded words on the patent of title, Jennifer Ring, the mission's registrar, has written the words for us.\*

After touring the Mission Treasures exhibit, we entered the recently restored sacristy where Mechelle explained the accomplishments of Father St. John O'Sullivan (1910-1933). We entered the altar to view the famous 1600s



retablo (altar) sent to the mission in 396 pieces by the Bishop of Los Angeles in 1922. Father O'Sullivan and others labored for years to assemble the wood, gesso and gold leaf altarpiece --- even extending Serra Chapel to accommodate the carved golden retablo, a sacristy room and an additional priests' quarters. While seated in the chapel and listening to Mechelle describe the recent restoration of paintings, one could reflect on all the people who have worshipped and visited the chapel where Father Serra, now St. Junipero Serra, once said mass. Is there any doubt why President Lincoln is highly regarded by those who appreciate California's history?

*\*Now know ye, that the United States of America, in consideration of the premises and pursuant to the provisions of the Act of Congress aforesaid of 3 March, 1851, have given and granted and by these presents do give and grant unto the said Joseph S. Alemany Bishop of Monterey and to his successors, "in trust for the religious purposes and uses to which the same have been respectively appropriated," the tracts of land embraced and described in the foregoing survey; but with the stipulation that in virtue of the 15th section of the said act, the confirmation of this said claim and this patent "shall not affect the interest of the third persons."*



*To have and to hold the said tracts of land with the appurtenances, and with the stipulation aforesaid unto the said Joseph S. Alemany, Bishop of Monterey, and to his successors in trust for the uses and purposes aforesaid.*

*In testimony whereof Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, have called these letters to be made patent and the Seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.*

*Given under my hand at the city of Washington, this eighteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty five, and of the independence of the United States the eighty ninth.*

*By the President Abraham Lincoln*

*M. Granger Recorder of the General Land Office  
Recorded Vol. 4 pages 154 to 163 inclusive.*

NOTE: Our invitation to the Lincoln Document Exhibit was received after *The News Drogher* was sent to our members in January. We announced the invitation at our January 22 annual meeting and we sent an email blast to all our members. Occasionally, we receive other invitations from nearby museums and from the City of Dana Point. Please let us know your email or a newly changed email if you wish to take advantage of these opportunities. Email [museum@DanaPointHistorical.org](mailto:museum@DanaPointHistorical.org)

## Remembering the big Pilgrim



It is with great sadness that we share the disappointing loss of the beloved brig Pilgrim and its demise in Dana Point Harbor. Around 5 a.m. on Sunday, March 29, the Ocean Institute's ship was found keeled over and sinking. The Society remembers so many historic events taking place on board and dockside: our city's incorporation, our city's 20th anniversary, Dana's 200th birthday celebration, the Dana Point Symphony concert, the many student visits and all the historical re-enactments at the Ocean Institute's Tall Ships Festivals. It was tragic day for Dana Point citizens and for all those who visited her.



*The brig Pilgrim on Sunday, March 29, 2020. On board, celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Richard Henry Dana, 2015.*



*School children visited the Pilgrim over the course of many years. Photo courtesy of the Ocean Institute.*



*City of Dana Point's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of incorporation in January, 2009.*



*The Pilgrim  
as we would  
always like to  
remember  
her.*

DANA POINT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. BOX 544  
DANA POINT CA 92629

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
LAGUNA NIGUEL, CA  
PERMIT NO. 243

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## 2020 DPHS Calendar

**May** Founders Day via *News Drogher* Publication

**June** Scholarship Announcements

## Membership

Welcome new members **Francisca Feddersen, Darin Kerbs and Joyce Spriggs!**

**As a reminder, the annual dues for 2020 were due in January.** The membership categories are:

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

**Please remit your dues at this time via mail at P.O. Box 544, Dana Point, 92629.**

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

Questions? Contact me at [rmlarusso@msn.com](mailto:rmlarusso@msn.com)

Marsha LaRusso

## Founders Day Honorees

The Dana Point Historical Society has chosen **Richard and Geody Deffenbaugh** as this years Founders Day honorees. Long time citizens of Dana Point, the Deffenbaughs have owned local businesses and participated in many community organizations and area events. Dick and Geody are well known for running the local ARCO station on Pacific Coast Highway. Although the franchise was sold several years ago, they maintain their car repair business as Dana Point Auto Service, now celebrating over 50 years in business. A member of the Dana Point Chamber of Commerce since 1971, Dick was awarded the Ambassador of the Year in 2014 for his numerous hours volunteering and for spearheading the Chamber's high school scholarship fund.