



DANA POINT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

The
News

DROGHER

February / March 2016

Join Us for Our February 24th Program at 7 PM at City Hall

On Wednesday evening at 7 PM, the Dana Point Historical Society will feature newly elected board



Board Member Bob Minty pictured with a portion of his large scrimshaw collection now on exhibit at our museum.

member Bob Minty, who will showcase his collection of antique scrimshaw from the 19th century. Bob will give us an overview and brief history of scrimshaw as well as discuss the origins of pieces from his extensive private collection, some of which is currently on display in our museum. We will also have the young creators of an impressive National History Day project demonstrate their web site, which features the life of Richard Henry Dana Jr. For an



Webpage creators from Shorecliffs Middle School are Regis Pak, Chris Holt and Cameron Cobb.

advance preview go to <http://78747744.nhd.weebly.com>. Following the program will be a reception at the museum where guests can view our current scrimshaw exhibit and talk to the presenters. **The program will be held in the council chambers at Dana Point City Hall (2nd floor) at 33282 Golden Lantern.** Ample free parking is available.

Volunteers Needed for Festival of Whales, March 5-6 & 12-13

The Historical Society is once again preparing to highlight our mission by participating in the Festival of Whales weekends with our society's booth and walking tours. **Booth volunteers are needed for two-hour shifts on both weekends from 9 AM to 5 PM.** In addition, we would be grateful for hearty individuals to help set up and take down the small tent and store merchandise each day. Please contact **Max Brown at 949-547-7318** or at DPHSNewsletter@gmail.com if you can help.



Walking Tours of Dana Point's historic Lantern District will begin at 2 PM on March 5 & 6, beginning at the corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Blue Lantern. The tour takes about one hour and features historic buildings and homes from the early days of what is now Dana Point. The tour can also be booked by appointment for the following weekend of March 12 or 13. Contact **Terry Walsh at 949-248-8121** or at DPHSNewsletter@gmail.com.

President's Message



The January Annual Meeting and dinner was a success thanks to our Board of Directors who organized the meeting. More than 70 members and guests shared a delicious variety of potluck dishes and beverages. The meeting included brief annual reports and the installation of officers by past DPHS President and current City Councilman Carlos N. Olvera. We were pleased to welcome Lara Anderson, past Mayor of Dana Point, and Andrew Brunhart, South Coast Water District General Manager, both of whom spoke on behalf of our 2016

Pat Plepler Citizenship Award honoree Wayne Rayfield, SCWD President and former Dana Point Mayor. Additional guests included SCWD Directors Richard Dietmeier and Rick Erkeneff; Brad Fowler, Director, City of Dana Point Public Works, and Mits Arayama, owner of our local *Minuteman Press*, who is also incoming Dana Point Chamber of Commerce President. A special thank you must go to Nancy Jenkins, Arts & Cultural Commissioner and DPHS Director, who organized the program in Wayne's honor. Terry Walsh, past DPHS President and current board member, was congratulated on being named the 2015 Dana Point Chamber's Citizen of the Year.



Over 70 people attended the annual meeting and potluck dinner.



Barbara Johannes presents Wayne Rayfield with the proclamation of the Pat Plepler award.

In March, we celebrate the *Festival of Whales* when we participate in the city's parade, share history at our booth in the harbor and lead historic walking tours. Celebrating the "magical migration" and study of whales today is in sharp contrast to the time when whaling ships hunted whales for oil in the 19th century. An impressive scrimshaw, woodworking and woven-hemp exhibit is currently being installed in our museum and will be the featured topic of our February 24 meeting in the City Council Chambers. Exhibit Chair Kirsten Reynolds and Program Chair Bob Minty are curating examples of Bob's impressive collection. I am learning a great deal about the Quaker beginnings of the whaling trade in the areas of Nantucket Island and New Bedford, Massachusetts. We know that Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s journal, *Two Years Before the Mast*, (1840), was immediately popular and created a ready audience for the genre of sea stories that followed. Among those books is Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, a novel inspired by the 1820

sinking of the whaling ship *Essex* by a sperm whale in the South Pacific. Just as Dana spent two years as a merchant seaman, Melville spent 18 months aboard a whaler and later served on a frigate in the U.S. Navy. In his novel *White-Jacket*, Melville wrote, "But if you want the best idea of Cape Horn, get my friend Dana's unmatched *Two Years Before the Mast*. But you can read, and so you must have read it. His chapters describing Cape Horn must have been written with an icicle."

Taking Melville's suggestion to heart, YOU can read, and so we invite you to schedule your time to read as part of the Sixth Annual Book Reading of Dana's classic journal on the weekend of April 1-3, 2016, at the Ocean Institute Maritime Barn. We have come full circle. Just as Melville was inspired by Dana, our Society was inspired by the New Bedford Whaling Museum's marathon reading of *Moby Dick*, which prompted the Dana Point Historical Society to inaugurate the community reading of *Two Years Before the Mast*. To really appreciate and be a part of Dana Point, please read, listen or volunteer as others read our namesake's classic book. Call **949-899-0907** or email twoyearsbeforethemastdp@gmail.com to become part of our history.

Barbara Force Johannes

Readers and Volunteers Needed for the Sixth Annual Book Reading

By Elizabeth Bamattre, Event Chair and Ann Leibowitz, Reading Coordinator

Two Years Before the Mast by Richard Henry Dana Jr.

Friday, April 1: 1 PM to 4 PM

Saturday, April 2: 9 PM to 5 PM


Sunday, April 3: 9 PM to Noon

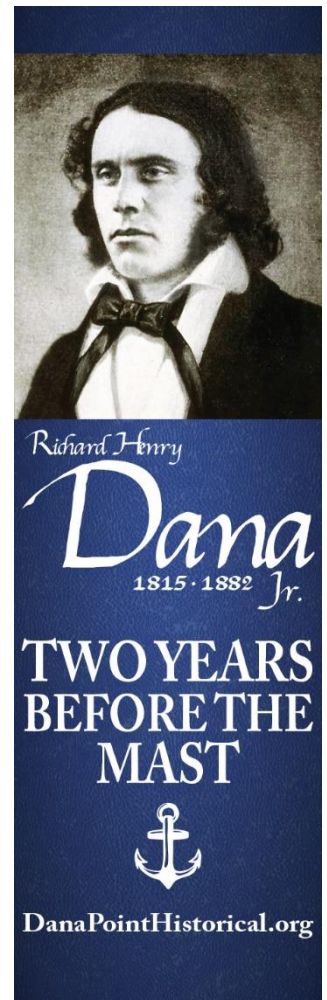


Note that we will have a **new venue** for this year's community reading. We will be located at the **Ocean Institute's Maritime Barn** at 24200 Dana Point Harbor Drive, located adjacent to the Ocean Institute's parking lot.

With a spectacular backdrop of the brig *Pilgrim*, a replica of the historic vessel that brought Dana to this coast, the Dana Point Historical Society, in collaboration with the Ocean Institute, presents the sixth public reading of the complete text of *Two Years Before the Mast*. Join us in celebrating our history! Look for our banners (pictured right) throughout the city starting mid-March.

To volunteer, send an email to twoyearsbeforethemastdp@gmail.com or call 949-899-0907. Please provide your name, email address, a phone number where you can be reached, and a preferred time to read aloud for 8 to 10 minutes or to volunteer for a 2-hour shift.

Follow us:  Two Years Before the Mast Dana Point



Historical Society Mourns Passing of Mitch Higginbotham



As we go to press, we have learned of the passing of Dana Point Historical Society Member Mitch Higginbotham. He died peacefully at his home in Rancho Mirage, California. Family members will make a formal announcement regarding memorial arrangements later this week. The Tuskegee Airman would have celebrated his 95th birthday on March 2. Society member Willa Porter (pictured left) recently visited Mitch at his desert home. If you want to read more about his remarkable life you can visit his "member profile" page at our website:

<http://www.danapointhistorical.org/mitch-higginbotham-tuskegee-airman/149/>

Remember to contact us if you are interested in joining the Ralph's Community Participation Program. For every dollar you spend on most groceries, Ralph's will donate a percentage to our organization. All you need is the barcode letter to hand to your checkout cashier. You can pick it up at the museum or contact us at DPHSNewsletter@gmail.com and we will mail you a copy.



RH Dana Elementary Celebrates 50 Years on March 4, 2016

By Barbara Force Johannes

Richard Henry Dana Elementary School had been open three years when I moved into the neighborhood. The school was then surrounded by some 30 acres of former grazing land. The remainder of a broken-down ranch wagon was still across the street from the school, just behind our backyard fence. When RH Dana Elementary was dedicated in 1966 by the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD), it was the first school in Dana Point and the only approach to the campus was on La Cresta Drive. We often walked the campus to enjoy the expansive ocean view and use the neighborhood's "weekend playground." Over the next 20+ years the rural "edge of town" feeling would end when Selva Road continued through to Pacific Coast Highway, the Niguel Shores development would expand up the hill to Dana Point's boundary and the Regatta Homes community would partially obstruct the school's view. Through it all, weekend cheers drifted from soccer games played by local youth on the school's field. Before additional elementary schools were built by CUSD, RH Dana Elementary enrollment is said to have ranged from as many as 800 to 1000 students on campus.

It was 1972 when John Terken, sculptor of the Richard Henry Dana Jr. statue in Dana Point Harbor, visited the school on April 27, the day before the statue was dedicated by the County of Orange. The sculptor presented the 500 students with a small model of the statue, as noted and photographed in historian Doris Walker's book *Home Port for Romance*. Both of Doris's sons attended RH Dana Elementary at that time.

1976 saw the addition of an Exceptional Needs Facility that shares the campus. The ENF school's individualized program, specialists and principal, Judy Dore, provide required services for students with learning disabilities.

Was it because of the school's whale mascot that a whale fossil was delivered to Richard Henry Dana Elementary School? Shortly after the fossil was discovered in Laguna Niguel in 1996, it was taken to RH Dana where it was studied and named "Splash" by the students. Thought by some to be one of the most complete whale fossils found in North America, then Principal Dave Gerhard created a program for his students to learn about paleontology through hands-on experience. Later, as Concordia Elementary Principal, he asked to move the fossil to that site in 2009 to create the program there and the YMCA after-school program replaced the Splash Science Lab at RH Dana.

However, ocean-related studies and activities continue at RH Dana Elementary. Fourth-grade students experience a Dana literary study program that culminates with an overnight stay on the Ocean Institute's brig *Pilgrim* each February. Later in spring, fifth-grade students sail to Catalina on an overnight excursion to allow time to study the island's ecology, oceanography and history. According to RH Dana Principal Dr. Christina Portillo, "For many of the students it will be the first experience spending the night away from home."

This year, *Dana Wharf Sportfishing & Whale Watching* has generously given the gift of a 2-hour whale-watching adventure in March to all 300 students to celebrate the school's 50th Anniversary. The idea for the trip came to company founder Don Hansen while attending the Richard Henry Dana Jr. Bicentennial event sponsored by the Historical Society last December. He realized the history of the school included active participation in promoting the Dana Harbor statue dedication in 1972. Donna Kalez, General Manager, stated, "We are thrilled to provide the kids with a chance to experience the gray whales and other marine life in their natural environment." In preparation for the excursion, Dana Wharf Captain Todd Mansur will conduct a whale-watching seminar at the school on February 24th.

Helen Pierce, DPHS member and 2007 Founders Day honoree with husband Mel Pierce, was a member of the original staff that opened RH Dana Elementary School in 1966, where she taught kindergarten. At Principal Portillo's invitation, Helen will speak at the **50th Anniversary Celebration on Friday, March 4, 2016, 1:00 – 2:00 PM, with a reception immediately following at the school. Past students and the public are also invited to attend.**

The Historical Society has also invited Helen Pierce, 2015 DPHS Founders Day honoree Judy Henderson, Dr. Portillo and several RH Dana's students to ride on the Historical Society's *Festival of Whales* Parade entry "A Whale of a Fire Engine" in celebration of their School's 50th Anniversary. In a call to Helen on her recent 91st birthday, I asked her thoughts. Helen replied, "I feel grateful that I was part of the development of the education system in Dana Point."

The RH Dana Elementary staff and students, past and present, can be proud of the rich educational tradition established over 50 years--a heritage that has been recognized with a National Blue Ribbon, Title I Academic Achievement Awards and as a California Distinguished School.



Preservation Update

By Keith Johannes, Preservation Committee Chair



The owners of a 1928 Sidney H. Woodruff house located at **24711 El Camino Capistrano** have submitted their application to be designated as a historic resource and be placed on the city's Historic Register and approved for the Mills Act. The Dana Point Historical Society recommends the designation of the unique Provincial Revival structure, one of approximately a half dozen remaining that exhibit this style from Woodruff's Dana Point era. Among the home's interesting features is a steeply pitched shingle roof, half-timbering and a charming structural archway connected to a one-story wing. According to the city's historic survey company, AEGIS, research performed by them in 1997 shows that the Holliday family were early residents in the home, one of ten houses financed by Lincoln Mortgage in 1928. Mr. Holliday was the managing editor of the Los Angeles Herald. Original photos of the home exist among those featured in Woodruff's publicity campaign.



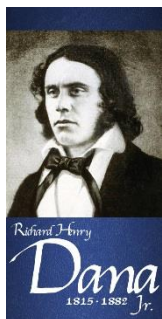
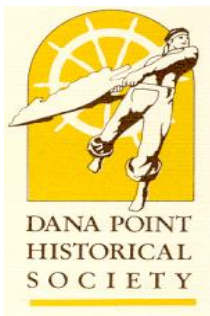
The location at **34090-92 Pacific Coast Highway** currently has an office building with apartments attached behind and above the property. It has been purchased by Christopher Keller of Casa Resorts (Hospitality Investments & Asset Management), who recently visited the Dana Point Historical Society to inquire about early Woodruff photos of the location. While the property is dated c.1928 on the city's 1997 historic

survey, Mr. Keller had a real estate document dated 1931, which may have been when the apartments were completed. It appears the original Blue Diamond Ice Co. was expanded to the current commercial office building it is today. A vintage photo (right) shows that the Spanish Colonial revival apartments at the address were already completed when what appears to be the wood exterior of the old ice house still existed. It is also possible that the structure of the ice house was incorporated into the Spanish Colonial office building it is today. The commercial portion of the building is currently vacant. The Society is actively searching for historic photos of the property and appreciates any assistance.



City of Dana Point Senior Planner **Erica Demkowicz** left her position with the city on January 25, after over 11 years. Erica had been our direct contact for the designation and preservation of historic sites and structures that have included historic homes, commercial buildings and a schooner. We enjoyed working with Erica and wish her every success. Erica informed us in December that Architectural Resources Group (ARG) completed its intensive survey work for a critical update to the city's historic inventory and submitted a draft report to the city. John Tilton, City Architect/Planning Manager, will be managing the update to the city's historic inventory in the interim until a replacement planner is hired. Erica informed us that once there is a copy of the report it will be shared with the DPHS. The Preservation Committee will share the findings with the Society once it receives the results of the new survey.

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2016 DPHS Calendar

Feb 24 Bob Minty Scrimshaw Exhibit & Lecture **March 5-12** Festival of Whales **April 1-3** TYBTM Reading

Membership

Please welcome new members **Diane Lewis** and **Joan Smith**.

As a reminder, the annual dues for 2016 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 1/16. Please remit your dues at this time either via mail at PO Box 544, DP, 92629; at the museum Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday; or at our meeting on February 24.

All contributions are tax deductible as the Historical Society is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.
Questions? Contact me at rmlarusso@msn.com

Marsha LaRusso

California Fire Museum Lends Use of Fire Engine for Festival of Whales

Look for the Society's "A Whale of a Fire Engine" entry in the Saturday, March 5, FOW Parade. It is so big that it is carrying Historical Society special guests and students from RH Dana Elementary who are celebrating their school's 50th Anniversary this year. This vintage 1961 fire coach is big --- about 30 ft. long and weighs approximately 12½ tons as compared to an average adult gray whale which measures 40-50 ft. and weighs 30-40 tons, more than twice the weight of this engine.

