



THE HERITAGE SOCIETY OF PACIFIC GROVE NEWSLETTER

Maintaining the Heritage and Individuality of Pacific Grove

Winter 2024
Volume 24, Issue 1

ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 25TH

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2024

It is that time of year to renew your membership in the Heritage Society of Pacific Grove.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, Feb. 25th at 2 p.m.

Annual Meeting
Chautauqua Hall in PG,
corner of 16th and Central

May 4-5th

Good Old Days

Sunday, May 26th. At 2 pm

Heritage House Awards ceremony

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Membership
Board of Directors

Annual Meeting Sunday, February 25

Please join us for our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 25, at 2 p.m. in Chautauqua Hall in PG, corner of 16th and Central. The guest speaker will be Sherry Flumerfelt, the Executive Director of the Western Flyer Foundation. She will talk about the history of the Western Flyer, its incredible restoration, and the organization's programs to inspire the next generation of marine scientists, writers, and artists. All Heritage Society members are invited.

Lecture on Western Flyer: Literary History Heads Back to Sea

In 1940, John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts chartered the fishing vessel Western Flyer for a six-week exploration of Mexico's Gulf of California, resulting in the famous publication *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951). The boat returned to fishing for decades, changed names and owners, disappeared, sank, and was in disrepair when marine geologist John Gregg purchased it in 2015. Inspired by a vision to restore the iconic boat and bring it back into service for research and education, he launched the Western Flyer Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission "to stir curiosity by connecting art and science in the spirit of John Steinbeck, Ed Ricketts, and their journey on the Western Flyer." On November 4th, 2023, the Western Flyer returned to Monterey for the first time in 75 years. The vessel is now in Moss Landing being outfitted for the next phase of its journey, taking students and researchers on the water to learn, observe, and create. Sherry Flumerfelt, Executive Director of the Western Flyer Foundation, will talk about the history of the Western Flyer, its incredible restoration, and the organization's programs to inspire the next generation of marine scientists, writers, and artists.

The Heritage Society of Pacific Grove is a nonprofit organization formed in 1975 to foster an appreciation of the city's historical and architectural resources through preservation activities and public education. The Heritage Society also works to encourage the preservation and restoration of the buildings that contribute to the beauty and unique character of Pacific Grove.

Sherry Flumerfelt

Sherry Flumerfelt joined the Western Flyer Foundation as its first executive director in July 2022, with over two decades of experience working for ocean nonprofits. Before joining the Foundation, she was the executive director of the Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust, where she spent eight years working to support the local fishing community and build consumer demand for local, sustainably harvested seafood. She also spent eight years as a consultant on various ocean conservation projects, supporting clients such as the Environmental Defense Fund, California's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative, the California Fisheries Fund, and EcoTrust. Between 1999 and 2007, Sherry worked for the Coral Reef Alliance, leading education and conservation programs in Fiji, Micronesia, Indonesia,

Hawaii, Papua New Guinea, and the Caribbean.

Born and raised in London, Ontario, Canada, Sherry moved to California in 1999 for a two-month internship and never looked back. Sherry holds an MA in Anthropology and International Development from the University of Guelph and a BA in Anthropology from McMaster University. She lives in Pacific Grove with her two teenage sons.



Spotlight on Board Member David Laws

Our newest Heritage Society board member is David Laws. Born in London, England, David's interest in science culminated in a BSc. in physics and employment in the nascent semiconductor electronics industry of the 1960s. While working for the UK operation of Fairchild Semiconductor of Mountain View, CA, he saw a way to combine his fascination with travel, particularly Central California, after an early exposure to the works of John Steinbeck, with working at the heart of the fast-growing computer chip business.

David arrived for a two-year stay in California in 1968. Marriage to his wife Jean, the arrival of sons Matthew and Mark, and opportunities offered by the emergence of Silicon Valley as a world center of high technology changed those plans. "When I arrived, a silicon chip contained just tens of transistors; today, they hold billions. It's been an incredible ride," he said. After serving in management roles at Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) and a couple of start-up chip

companies, he retired to enjoy time with his family and develop his interests in writing and photography.

As a curator at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, he continues to stay in touch with the community by writing about and recording oral histories of industry pioneers for the museum and Stanford University.

Following his original interest in Steinbeck Country, David discovered Pacific Grove, which aroused fond memories of childhood vacations at English seaside resorts. Jean and David moved here from their Portola Valley home of 40 years in 2010. With his writing expanding into local history and travel, his work has been widely published online and in print. Most recently, he authored *Secret Monterey, A Guide*

to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure. David also enjoys spending time as a docent at Pt. Lobos, where he and Jean spent many happy hours before she passed away in 2021.



DAVID LAWS

Heritage House Awards ceremony on May 26

The annual Heritage House Awards ceremony will recognize Pacific Grove houses that have been newly remodeled, have interesting additions, or are new construction. If you have seen a house around town that fits one of these categories, and you know the work has been completed in the last few years, please contact the Heritage Society. We will need the address and any other information you can offer. Nomination deadline is February 10. info@pacificgroveheritage.org

Question of the Month

By Michael Groshong

Not all of our members may know that we have a feature on our website called “Question of the month”. It is located under the “Archives” tab on the top right hand side of the website. <https://pacificgroveheritage.org/question-of-the-month/>

Is there any truth to the rumor that a strange sea creature washed ashore briefly at Lovers Point only to be taken back out to sea at the next high tide? Wow – what a timely question.

I will attempt to answer your question, but in the name of honest journalism, I have to admit that my response may have been influenced by a bit of Carmel Valley’s finest red during our meal at Lovers Point.

It was a lovely, slightly foggy evening when we finished our meal. My friend turned right and I went left towards downtown. I had walked a few paces and turned the corner when I saw a two headed sea monster with black beady eyes in my path. I stood stock still in panic. In the fog, I could not tell if the creature was coming towards me or moving away from me. I was unsure whether to slowly move away or stand completely still in the hopes it would not see me.

In a few moments, the fog suddenly cleared and I could see that the creature was no creature at all, but the two heads I had seen were merely attached to both ends of a strange white boat. When my breathing returned back to normal and my heart rate slowed down, I approached this strange craft. I managed to make out the words “Swan Boat” in the dim light of the moon. I decided to head home and research the net.

The internet (Archive in a Box) had much information about this particular “Swan Boat”. From an article in a 1976 newspaper article “Glass bottomed boats were first introduced to the area some time around 1894 by Nathaniel Roscoe Sprague, who operated the business for more than 50 years under a concession agreement with the city. When "Dad" Sprague died in 1948, his son, J. Russell Sprague, took over the fleet, which by then also contained paddleboats, rowboats and motor launches for sport fishing trips. During the early years, the glass bottomed boats were dispatched from the end of a long, wooden pier that bisected what was then just a narrow cove between two rocky shores with a small sandy beach at its end.”

And from the Summer 2008 Board and Batten, published by the Heritage Society of Pacific Grove, I found this gem: “A fleet of glass-bottom boats with wooden swan heads once plied the shallow waters of the cove and bay around Lovers Point. These boats were first introduced in the early 1890s and were launched from the end of a wooden pier in the middle of the beach cove at half-hour intervals whenever water conditions were favorable. They gave Retreat passengers a canopied window on the "living carpet of color" in the rocky canyons and caverns that make up the garden floor of Pacific Grove's "Marine Fairyland.”

I hope you found this story as interesting as I did.

Pt. Pinos Lighthouse update

By Dennis Tarmina

The Heritage Society Lighthouse Preservation Team begins its 16th year of work on the Pt. Pinos Lighthouse project. The new year did not start off well as the main light went dark on December 29 without warning and seemingly without cause. Keep in mind that this lighthouse is an active aid to navigation. Later that night it came on again, but went dark a second time on December 30th. That time it did not fix itself. The good news was/is that the backup light came on just as it was designed to do. Several team members and public works employees worked a good part of the 31st to try and

relight it, without success. The Coast Guard repair team was called and they committed to send a crew the week of January 7th. In the meantime the light (probably with the aid of the resident ghosts) came back on. At the time of this writing the light remains on, and the Coast Guard team is still committed to try and ascertain the problem to prevent future blackouts.

A goal for 2024 is to install a new roof on the main building. It will match the roof that was on the building during the time of our chosen restoration period. Stay tuned and have a Happy New Year.

MEMBERSHIP

Please consider supporting The Heritage Society's preservation and public education activities by becoming a member. Membership with The Heritage Society offers free admission to all lecture series events, discounted prices on some Heritage Society produced materials and mailed newsletters.

To become a member, sign up online with a credit card or Paypal at <https://www.pacificgroveheritage.org/get-involved/become-a-member/>. Or send a check payable to

The Heritage Society of Pacific Grove
P.O. Box 1007, Pacific Grove, CA 93950.

INDIVIDUAL \$25, FAMILY \$40, SENIOR (OVER 65) \$20



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DID YOU KNOW?

The Barn at Laurel and 17th in Pacific Grove, fondly known as "Ketcham's Barn," was built in 1891 by H. C. Ketcham who used it to house animals. The property was purchased by the City in 1979 and is now leased to the Heritage Society, who use the barn to house local museum articles.

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