

THE LAGUNA BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LAGUNA BEACH LIFE | PAST PRESENT FUTURE

Grammar School: Dick Metz can be seen in the center top row with tilted head directly below the number two.

NEWS AND UPDATES FOR THIS MONTH:

- JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL DICK METZ PRESENTATION
- BOOTLEG FOUND AT THE BUNGALOW

Dick Metz: Boyhood Adventures in Laguna

Presented by Dick Metz



Boy Scout Troop 7: As a youngster, Dick became an unofficial member of the San Gorgonia Mountain Tribe at Camp RoKiLi.



WWII Civil Defense Program: Helmet belonging to Dick Metz will be on display along with other items.

Tuesday, February 28th
Susi Q Community Center
7:00-8:30 pm

Born in 1929, Dick Metz began a life of adventure in a bassinet on the sand at Main Beach. His father, Carl Metz, owned two restaurants: The Laguna Diner, an old railroad car, which was moved to another spot and The Broiler, a popular restaurant and bar. Dick's mother, Edna May, taught school in town. With two working parents and proximity to the sand, Dicks' parents made sure they could keep an eye on him out the restaurant window.

When Dick was 5-6 years old, his father gave surfers Brennan "Hevs" McLelland and George "Peanuts" Larsen a hamburger and a beer to watch his son. This experience encouraged him to become interested in surfing and being in the water.

The depression era of the 1930s brought Shirley Temple, among other Hollywood stars, to Laguna Beach, Dick could be seen sitting in the sand with a group surrounding the child star like she was just another Laguna kid.

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A Message from our President

KAREN LAGREW, PRESIDENT

History and adventure making, they often go hand in hand and with a good storyteller we can all go down the rabbit hole peaking our curiosity and our need to learn more, ask more questions, find more answers.

Dick Metz provides a combination of all of the above and is our next guest speaker, no PowerPoint needed here!

Dick is a storyteller for many generations. In the upcoming program he will focus on his early years in Laguna Beach in a town he loves and knows well. A town that lends itself to adventures and exploration, less so now but imagine the early 1920s through the 1940s!

He seems to have been born in the right place at the right time to develop a life of adventure and tales to tell. It leaves me wondering, did the early days in Laguna form Dick or would this have happened in any-town USA?

Our program coordinator, Jane Petty, was taught by Dick's mother in grade school and along with Dick, shared a Laguna childhood. It was an era of a different Main Beach boardwalk and downtown.

We hope you can make it, and please come with questions as Dick remembers when Laguna Beach was a very, very small town. We are fortunate to have him back from the big wide world he explored in his early adult and later years.



Dick Metz: Cub Scouts

(continued from the front page)

Dick enjoyed many adventures with his local Boyscout Troop. He was not concerned with earning badges as he was more interested in what he considered the adventuresome ways of Native Americans and being outdoors.

World War II began when Dick was 12 years old in 1941. Laguna became heavily fortified amid fears of Japanese after the Pearl Harbor attack. He was among many on the school track team that were recruited to a Civil Defense Program as a relay team delivering messages since radio frequency was poor or could be taken out.

This relay team started at Top of the World where there was artillery positioned, and the runners practiced bringing messages down to the school on Park Avenue where Dick would run them to the Police Station.

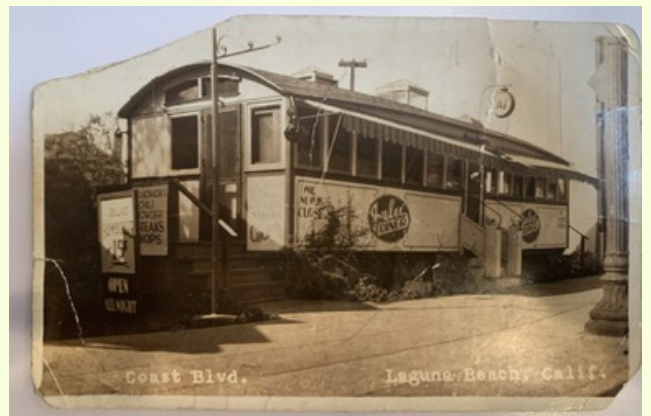
The war ended in 1945 when Dick was 15-years old.

As a child and pre-teen, Dick was front and center in the goings on of Laguna Beach in the 1930s and 40s and is a gifted storyteller who will share what it was like during that time.

A question and answer session will follow with a chance to view archival items from this time period.



3rd Grade Class with Mrs. Metz: Jane Janz in 1943 with Dick's mother standing to her left.



Main Beach Restaurant: Late 1920s

Karen Lagrew

Bootleg History on Display!

1920-1933:

In the United States from 1920 to 1933, a nationwide constitutional law prohibited the production, importation, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages.

Laguna during the Prohibition:

Dick Metz recalls there were two ships off the coast where people could gamble and drink. Whiskey and rum were smuggled by rumrunners onto the beaches of Laguna.

Vernon Murphy and the Trap Door:

Bungalow Legend says that when Vernon Murphy owned the cottage during Prohibition times bootleg liquor was hidden in its basement.

Last month our team finished a functional trap door display for guests. Visitors can locate the hidden stash for themselves. The secret trap door in the hall floor can be lifted to expose the lighted basement and see the hidden bottles below (with docent supervision.)

Come see for yourself on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday afternoon!



Photo: Nelda Stone, courtesy of Douglas Miller

When asked what historical feature of Laguna stands out as a favorite, Nelda answered BC Space Gallery and the 1960s era.



Look for our entry in the March 4th Patriots' Day Parade

Board Member SPOTLIGHT

Nelda Stone

Nelda Stone is part of the fabric of Laguna as a long-term library employee. She considered herself an "information-aholic" starting from a very young age. You can often find her assisting researchers in the Laguna Beach Local History Room.

Why did you choose to serve on the board?
My family has a long history in town and I had always heard stories about Laguna from my mother.

Why do you think your position on the board is a good match for you? I manage the local history collection at the public library and I help a lot of patrons with their research. We get a lot of questions from out of town people also just like what happens at the historical society.

What is your favorite part of working with the LB Historical Society? I love discussing Laguna's varied aspects. When people think of Laguna they think art. But actually Laguna has so many varied elements including architecture, theater, and most predominantly the environment which includes water sports, as well as ocean environment and open space preservation.



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Thank you!

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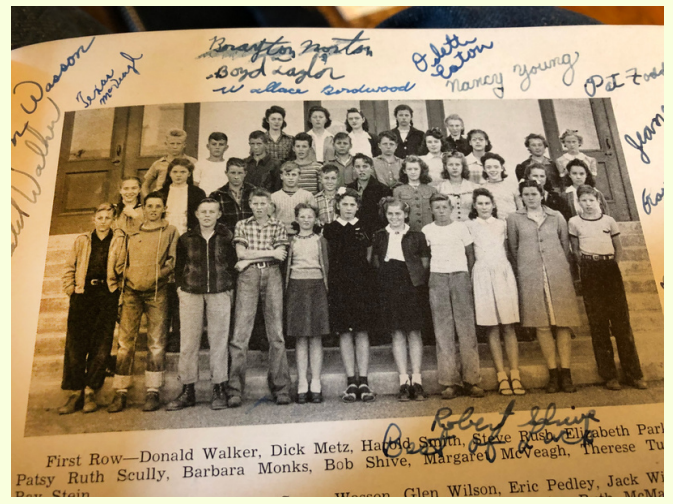
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Laguna Beach Historical Society
278 Ocean Avenue
Laguna Beach, CA 92651



Main Beach Restaurant: The Broiler



School Photograph: Dick Metz in Levis, bottom left

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With your support, we are able to maintain our beloved Murphy Smith Bungalow,  
present historical programs, send this newsletter, and host other events - thank you!

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