

Laguna Beach  
Historical Society  
Murphy-Smith Bungalow  
278 Ocean Avenue  
Laguna Beach CA 92651  
949-497-6834



# Laguna Life

The Laguna Beach Historical Society Newsletter: Nov 2010

Please attend Historical Society Program to be held at  
Laguna Beach City Hall Council Chambers, 505 Forest Avenue  
Monday, November 15th – from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.

## **"Laguna Beach Art Galleries, its Perils and Pleasures"**

by Richard Challis and Gene Crain moderated by Janet Blake

Richard Challis opened Laguna Studio Gallery, later renamed Challis Galleries, in 1950, Laguna Beach's first commercial art gallery. His first show featured Leonard Kaplan and John McLaughlin. Prior to that arriving in Laguna Beach in 1946, Challis rented space for a frame shop from Councilman and Temple Hills Developer Harold Reed. Reed owned the property where Ralph's market is now [at Cleo Street and South Coast Highway]. The first paintings displayed were by Laguna Impressionist Virginia Woolley.



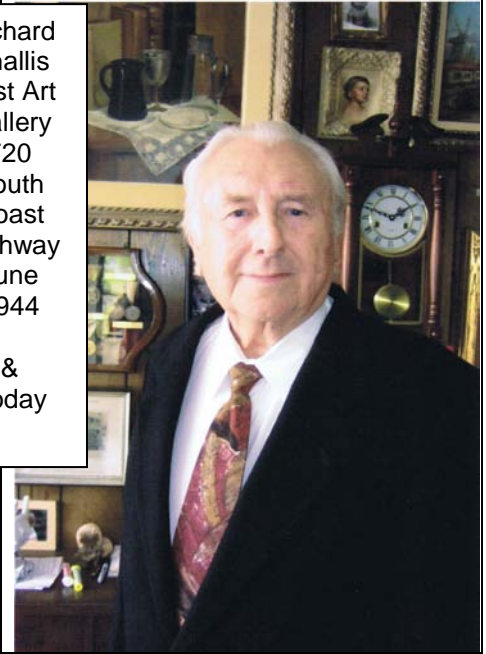
Millard Sheets, Gene Crain, Phil Dike, Jane & Robert E Wood,  
Richard Challis, Joan Irving, Rex Brandt, Ward Ritchie  
Photograph from E. Gene Crain Collection

According to former Mayor Ann Christoph's "Laguna Home Companion" "At the time, he [Reed] ran an ice house, and a fruit and vegetable stand. Challis would convert the vegetable stand into a frame shop, buy Reed's framing equipment, and pay rent, \$60 monthly."

E. Gene Crain is a significant art collector. "California Holiday: The E. Gene Crain Collection" was a major art exhibition at the Laguna Art Museum in 2002. The Crain collection includes artists known as the California School including Rex Brandt, Phil Dike and Millard Sheets. The collection began in the early 1960s when Crain met artist Rex Brandt at the artist's home in Corona del Mar.



Richard  
Challis  
First Art  
Gallery  
720  
South  
Coast  
Highway  
June  
1944  
  
&  
Today



View Laguna Photos at [www.Laguna-Historical-Society.smugmug.com](http://www.Laguna-Historical-Society.smugmug.com)

## Laguna Beach Historical Society Board of Directors

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**Thanks to Historical Society Business  
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## Remember the Laguna Beach Historical Society in Your Planned Giving



**W. M. Boring Groceries; Fred Trefren In back  
Wagon Transporting Water  
Jean Nemeyer Photo Collection**



**Fred Trefren with Truck 1908  
First Sherriff & Driver  
Jean Nemeyer Photo Collection**

## Fred Trefren

Fred Trefren's great-granddaughter Jean Nemeyer visited the Murphy-Smith Bungalow and allowed us to scan numerous family photographs. Come by the Bungalow and see the binder contain copies of all of them.

From 1947 book by Joseph S. Thurston "Laguna Beach of Early Days" page 99 - 100, Fred Trefren: "A man by the name of Fred Trefren came from the middle west. He got a group of lots on the south side of Park Avenue. He kept a cow and some chickens, finding enough work so that he appeared to be making a good living. Finally he decided to go into the transportation business. He traded what he had for two passenger cars and a truck, and started to haul passengers and freight from Santa Ana, while he would also meet certain trains at El Toro. He was a familiar sight along these roads for a number of years, where he gained quite a reputation as an Irish wit.

The roads were bad, and the demands for repair of his rolling stock were numerous. One at a time his two cars fell by the wayside and found their way to the inevitable boneyard. But the old truck, which was capable of making about ten miles per hour, managed to stay on the road for some time. The seat of this truck was constructed in such a way that it was easy to get out and walk around the flat bed. Then there was a trap door made in a place where it was convenient to open it and look at the gears, which as time went on became more of a necessity.

Traffic in both passengers and freight was light, but if he happened to have a passenger on one of these trips there was room on the seat. However, if he happened to have two passengers, there was room on the platform. If one of the wheels dropped into a chuck hole it might throw the passenger off into the street, but this did not matter much because no one would undertake the trip if they had on good clothes. Even if there had been a railing around the platform it would not make much difference as far as the clothes were concerned.

This old truck could be seen on the road even after its usefulness had vanished, but finally it came to the end of the journey. There was no money or credit for new equipment for transportation, and Fred had to seek other work."



Fred  
and  
Ada  
Trefren

Jean  
Nemeyer  
Collection



## Vice-President's Message by Kimberly Stuart

Please attend the Historical Society Program, which is of course free, and will be held at Laguna Beach City Hall Council Chambers, 505 Forest Avenue. The discussion will be moderated by Laguna Art Museum curator of collections Janet Blake.

Monday, November 15th – from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.

## "Laguna Beach Art Galleries, its Perils and Pleasures"

by Richard Challis and Gene Crain

**For those who cannot attend, the program is to be broadcast live on television Cox channel 30**

View historic photographs at [www.Laguna-Historical-Society.smugmug.com](http://www.Laguna-Historical-Society.smugmug.com). Viewers are invited to leave comments to help the Society better identify or date the photographs. At the web site, prints can also be purchase; for example an 8" by 10" glossy for \$6.97 plus tax and shipping. Send questions on photographs or Laguna Beach history to [info@LagunaHistory.org](mailto:info@LagunaHistory.org).

Step back into 1920s Laguna by visiting the Laguna Beach Historical Society Murphy-Smith Bungalow, located at 278 Ocean Avenue, which is opened to the public at no-charge every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Those interested in supporting and joining the Laguna Beach Historical Society should send \$15 per individual, \$25 per household or \$50 per business/organization to 278 Ocean Avenue, Laguna Beach CA 92651. The Laguna Beach Historical Society is a section 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Tax ID #33-0519882.

**If your Dues are due (see label) Send \$15 per person, \$25 per household or \$50 per business or organization to  
Laguna Beach Historical Society, 278 Ocean Avenue, Laguna Beach CA 92651**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_