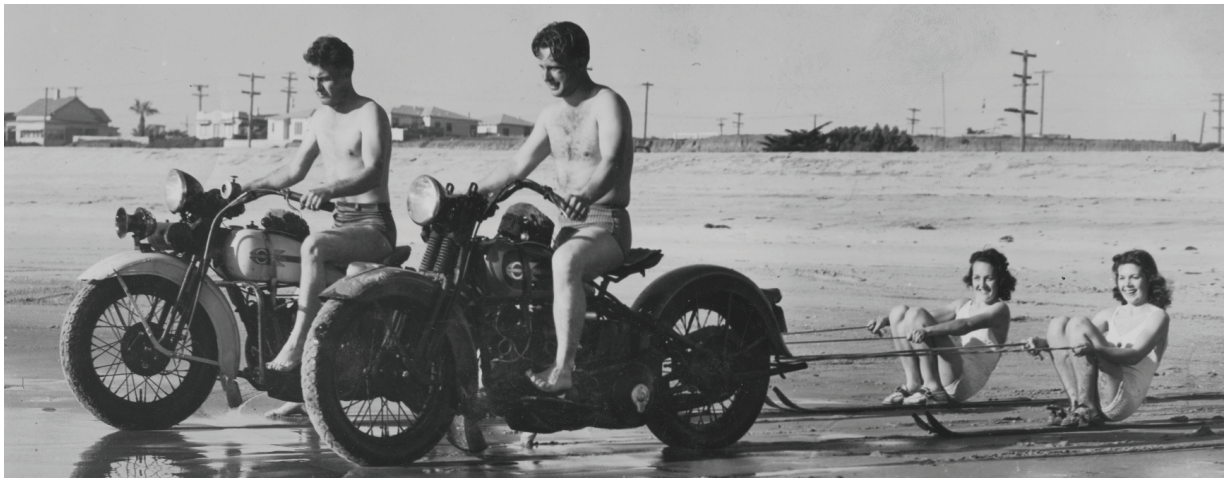

NEWSLETTER FALL 2020

Marjorie Pauline (Johnson) Breen 1922-2020

Header Photo: One of the coolest images in our collection: Ben Hunsaker and Russ McKenney pulling Marjorie Johnson and Marie Frazee on skis north of the Oceanside pier, circa 1940

Many local residents may have been aware of the passing of Marjorie Johnson Breen in September of this year, but we wanted to share the news, along with a few of our favorite photos of Marjorie with our members and friends.

Marjorie Pauline (Johnson) Breen was born November 18, 1922 in her family home at 607 North Freeman Street in Oceanside. She was the only child of Walter and Virginia (Everett) Johnson. Both her maternal and paternal sets of grandparents arrived in Oceanside shortly after the turn of the century.

A lifelong area resident, Marjorie attended the Oceanside grammar school and graduated from Oceanside High School (then Oceanside-Carlsbad Union High School) in 1941. Marjorie's father was one of Oceanside's best known citizens, Walter Johnson, Oceanside Fire Chief and Fire Station No. 1 has a plaque that bears his name.

Marjorie shared her memories, which spanned nearly a century, of growing up in Oceanside in a 2019 interview. Stories included her father's dairy farm in the San Luis Rey valley, riding horses along the river and out to Whelan Ranch.

She and her best friend Marion Clayton, who lived just one block away, would go to Sweetwood's Sweet Shop and the movies at Palomar Theater on Hill Street (Coast Highway). Although she never learned to swim, Marjorie spent her summers at the beach in Oceanside with her host of friends.

Her fondest memories are that of her father, whom she adored. Marjorie would visit her father at the fire station and she and her friends would take turns sliding down the fire pole. She recalled that her parents were protective of her, not allowing her to walk to school or to even date.

Walter Johnson with daughter Marjorie

Marjorie shared her great sense of humor and told stories about her mischievous ways and admitted that she "was good bad." After graduation she and 40 other high school seniors caravanned down to Tijuana where "she danced on the bar" and laughingly confessed, "I thought I was so darling!" The group did not return until 4:00 am to very worried parents and Marjorie remembered that her father spanked her, but Marjorie felt it was well deserved.

She spoke fondly of growing up in Oceanside. "I had everything I wanted and I grew up not spoiled," she said with a smile. She continued to speak lovingly of her parents: "I loved them dearly and they loved me."

(Continued on Page 3)

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Do you have history questions?
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Office Closed

Due to County and State COVID-19 restrictions, our Office is closed until further notice.

Dues Increase and New Membership Levels

You may notice that we have recently made a dues increase. We have not raised our membership dues for nearly ten years. We still have a very affordable annual membership fee but have also added additonal levels for those who may wish to support us on another level.

Website Updated

Take a moment to visit our website as we have added new content including several oral histories from long time residents. You can read about the history of our harbor, the first pier, and other items of interest. We've also added an early map from about 1913. For those wanting to do a self-guided history walk, you can download a map that will take you to several historic buildings and homes.

www.OceansideHistoricalSociety.org

In November we celebrate both Veterans' Day and the 245th Marine Corps Birthday. Thank you to all who have served our country. We salute you.

Thank you

Linda and Peter Weseloh made a generous donation in the amount of $5,000, in memory of Linda's mother, Marjorie Johnson Breen.

NEW MEMBERS

Susanne Borden Cornutt

Susan P. Guarino

Megan Suster

Victoria R. Hanes

Welcome and thank you for your support!

San Luis Rey Pioneer Cemetery

Thank you for participating in our ballot issue regarding the San Luis Rey Pioneer Cemetery. We were seeking to amend our bylaws and Articles of Incorporation in order to add specific wording "to maintain, manage, improve, and operate a cemetery", as required by the State of California.

We received a total of 99 ballots, with 98 voting in favor and 1 against. As mentioned previously, the Oceanside Unified School District has unknowingly been trustee of the San Luis Rey Pioneer Cemetery since it took over the San Luis Rey School District several decades ago. OUSD is seeking to transfer the cemetery to the Oceanside Historical Society.

The Oceanside Historical Society's sole interest in this Cemetery is to ensure its preservation.

New History Book

We are excited to announce a new History of Oceanside that will be available in early 2021. This will be a LIMITED edition history of our City, with new stories and features, along with many new historic photos from our ever-growing photo collection. The history will be complete from Oceanside's earliest days through 2020.

This book is made possible by a grant from the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, donations from Walmart Store #2245, Smart & Final, and Peter and Linda Weseloh.

We will have more information about the new history book, which will be published in a limited amount, in our next newsletter. Stay tuned!

Marjorie Johnson Breen (Continued from page 1)

Marjorie first married Donald Penning in 1951. He had decided to make his home in Oceanside after serving in World War ll as a fighter pilot with the 14th Army Air Force, the "Flying Tigers." They had two daughters, Jill in 1952 and Linda, in 1957. They owned and operated Oceanside Photo in downtown Oceanside for many years.

Marjorie married second to Patrick Breen in 1978. Patrick was an Oceanside police officer and San Diego County Sheriff Deputy. As a young woman, Marjorie worked for Pacific Bell Telephone as an operator. For many years she also worked as a receptionist for Pacific Savings and Loan and the Del Mar Racetrack.

Marjorie was a loving grandmother to three grandchildren and lived to know and love her four great-grandchildren. All four were fortunate enough to know her for several years, and to them she was "Gigi".

Marjorie had a very unique personality. She was a "people person" known for both her friendliness and feistiness. She was naturally kind and sincere, easily making friends both young and old throughout her life. In her later years, a few of her closer young friends came to call her their "second mother." She loved to entertain friends, to visit, or just sit and talk whenever possible. She was that person who always seemed to know the right thing to say to make family, friends, or strangers feel special.

Marjorie was blessed with good health living in the home she loved with her dog "Mimi" and still driving until the age of ninety-one.

Marjorie is survived by her daughter Jill Reilly (Penning) and husband Bill of Vista, her daughter Linda Weseloh (Penning) and husband Peter of Oceanside, grandchildren Kyle Weseloh and wife Jeannette, Erin Leonardo (Weseloh) and husband Jason, and Julienne Weseloh all of Oceanside, great-grandchildren Grayson and Daxton Weseloh, and Isabella and Ryland Leonardo, and stepdaughter Becky Kilgras (Breen) and husband Scott of Medford, Oregon.

Private services were held September 25th at Eternal Hills Memorial Park in Oceanside.

Norma King and Marjorie Johnson with fishing poles circa 1940

Oceanside Historical Society
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Fall 2020 Newsletter

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Donations & memberships may be made through our PayPal account

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