



Marina del Rey Historical Society



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40 Years Later

It was 40 years ago, on November 25, 1971, that the late David Asper Johnson, Founder and Publisher, put out the first edition of *The Argonaut*, a twice monthly publication.

In the Beginning

Initially, Johnson's intention was to publish a newspaper covering only the Marina. However, because of people's increasing interest, Johnson began to publish it weekly and other cities were added.

Memories

To celebrate this 40th anniversary, a gala party was held on November 6, 2011 at the Marina del Rey Hotel.

The Argonaut staff produced an over-the-top trip down memory lane with many photographs, displays and videos of Marina history. An extensive exhibit by the Marina del Rey Historical Society completed the retrospective. Arlene Ruiz, Argonaut publisher welcomed everyone; Vince Echavaria, Argonaut editor was an excellent emcee; and General Manager Rikki Barker completed the program by presenting awards to the Argonaut's long-time advertisers.

Kudos to Chef Gallegos and staff of the Marina del Rey Hotel whose specialty hot and cold hors d'oeuvres were



David Asper Johnson
"Signature" caricature for *Snoopin' Around*
was created by artist Lenn Redman

outstanding. The celebration concluded with the cutting of a commemorative anniversary cake.

David Asper Johnson would have been impressed but maybe a tad chagrined at the multitudes of accolades and praises the Argonaut received from fellow Marina admirers, dignitaries and government officials alike, all justly deserved.

David always downplayed his importance but believed strongly in his brand of communication about local happenings. David Johnson's homespun, gossipy style was always fair to both

sides of any issue. His publisher's prerogative and wry sense of humor created reporting masterpieces that his faithful readers eagerly awaited to read.

"Snoopin' Around"

Snoopin' Around, the headline of Johnson's column, is also the title of a new book about Johnson and the Argonaut. It was researched and edited by Argonaut staffer, Helga Gendell. The book is available from Amazon.com and www.argonautnewspaper.com, click "Snoopin'."

The Argonaut is still the major source of local community news and activities. It's popular, going strong and looking forward to its 50th anniversary and the next 40 years. //



Argonaut Photo by T.W. Brown
Arlene Ruiz (left) and Rikki Barker

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Greg Wenger, Photographer

Discovered Again

It was a sunny Sunday afternoon in Burton Chace Park for *Discover Marina del Rey Day*, an annual family and community event that took place on October 9th.

People leisurely strolled about stopping at the exhibitors' booths where

information about the environment, health and safety was provided.

Activities and Entertainment

Visitors could also access the always popular "inflatables," arts and crafts, games and the pumpkin patch.

There was live entertainment featuring

the Allegros, the Venice High School Choral group; a performance by the Venice High School marching band; and music and dancing, from the east, by Sarah.

The Bob Baker Marionette puppet shows were performed hourly. In addition, there was an arts and crafts workshop, offered by the Los Angeles County Dept. of Parks and Recreation; leisure kayaking in the main channel by the W.A.T.E.R. Youth program; a "Smart Gardening" Workshop, hosted by the Dept. of Public Works Environmental Programs Division; and a tour of the White Sea Bass Grow-Out Pen, maintained by the Marina del Rey Anglers/Ocean Resources Enhancement Program as well as Youth Fishing.

And, not to be missed, was a simulated search and rescue demonstration, with a helicopter and boat in the main channel, by the U.S. Coast Guard

Take a Break

You were also able to just sit and relax, people watch and enjoy a refreshment, as food and beverages were available all day.

There was something for adults and children alike. At the end of the day, everyone left looking forward to "discovering" the Marina again..... next year. //

Playgrounds in Early Marina del Rey

Marina History

Happyland, with its merry-go-rounds was a playground in the Marina. There was another called the *Motordrome*. The MdR Historical Society received an issue of *HORSELESS CARRIAGE GAZETTE* published November-December 1965 which had a letter from Fred Hayward, Editor to R. Landon, Small Craft Harbors Administration (now Beaches and Harbors). He told of a racecar playground built in 1910 before the harbor was built. It stood between

Fiji Way, west of Linclon Blvd. and north of Culver Blvd.

Los Angeles Pacific Co. built a destination station to bring racing (and betting) enthusiasts from all L.A. areas for fun and racing thrills. The *Motordrome* was a perfect wooden circle, one mile long, 45 feet wide and banked 15 feet at the outer edge. Racing giants of the era, including Barney Oldfield, participated in the opening series on Friday, April 8, 1910, with about 5,000 spectators. Automobile and some

motorcycle races were held until the last "Pie Pan" sanctioned race was held January 12, 1913.

The *Motordrome* disappeared piece by piece for other construction projects in the burgeoning Venice canals real estate area. No trace of "Pie Pan" foundations, ashes, or even bent nails has been found, although the concrete abutments of the railroad right-of-way are still evident next to the current Culver Blvd. bridge overpass on Lincoln Blvd. as you head west to Playa del Rey.

(Continued on next page)

Historical Society Exhibits

- ~ **Community Building** in **Burton Chace Park**, on Mindanao Way
- ~ **Lloyd Taber Marina del Rey Library**, on Admiralty Way
(Please call 310-821-3415 for library hours.)
- ~ The **Marina del Rey Hotel**, on Bali Way



Culver City Race Track, Lincoln and Washington, circa 1930s

Photo Courtesy of the Culver City Historical Society

Playgrounds...

(Continued from previous page)

Canines at Costco

Another historic racetrack playground, for dog racing, in the pre-prohibition era with all the bawdry places of sordid repute, was located at the Lincoln and Washington Blvd. area, now the site of

Costco and adjacent shopping centers.

Julie Lugo Cerra, Culver City Historian, has written: "Originally the track was built for greyhound races. Many speculate that west end annexation in the mid 1920s intended to include the revenue from its pari mutual betting.

But according to the city records it was not until March 8, 1932 that the Culver City Kennel Club was granted a permit and license (ordinance #368). The location was listed as 13455 Washington Blvd. and it was for 'canine racing, coursing with canine sales and exhibits.'" //



Marina del Rey Historical Society Membership Application

Please Print

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone No: _____ Email: _____

New Member

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Founding Member | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Business Member (Annual Contribution) | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Supporting Member (Annual Contribution) | \$ 25 |

Renewing Member

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$ 25 |

Please make check payable to: **Marina del Rey Historical Society**

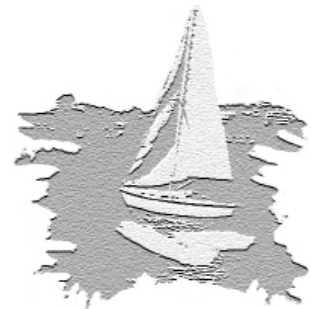
Mail to: **Greg Wenger**
Post Office Box 9550
Marina del Rey, CA 90295-1950

Credit Card: **Visa or Master Card**

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Security Code (on Back): _____

The Marina del Rey Historical Society is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization. For information call: 310-578-1001



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## Membership Perks



- ◀ Access to Collections
- ◀ Notification of Upcoming Exhibits and Events
- ◀ Quarterly Newsletter
- ◀ Marina del Rey Historical Pictorial by Greg Wenger (New Members)
- ◀ Snoopin' Around:  
*The Story of David Asper Johnson and the Argonaut* (Renewing Members)
- ◀ One 8-1/2x11 Historic Marina Photo (at a discounted rate)

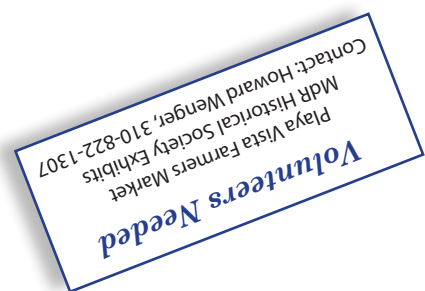
## Our Collections

The MdRHS database is used to identify privately and publicly held archives. The collections that document aspects of Marina del Rey life and history are recognized by community historians. Since our collections are scanned and electronically filed, all original contributions will be returned to donors. This online directory provides a unique resource of cultural materials that will be retrievable and accessible to the public.

To learn how you can donate, contact Greg Wenger (310-578-1001). //

## Save the Date

Marina del Rey Historical Society ANNUAL MEETING  
Marina del Rey Hotel on Bali Way - Monday, January 16, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.  
Light Refreshments will be provided.



Marina del Rey Historical Society  
P.O. Box 9550  
Marina del Rey, CA 90295-1950

