The Remarkable Life of John Weld

**He Never Said No to Adventure**

Introduction by: Roger Jones, Executive Producer

Friday, February 8th, 7:30-9:30 pm

On February 8th, 2019, a major benefit for the Laguna Beach Historical Society will be held at the Artists Theatre, Laguna Beach High School, at 7:30PM. *Chasing the Moon Films* has selected Laguna Beach for the premiere showing of “The Remarkable Life of John Weld”, a documentary depicting the incredible lives of John and Katy Weld, longtime residents of Laguna Beach. Tickets are $15.00 and can be purchased at [JohnWeldOfficial.com](http://JohnWeldOfficial.com). 100% of the proceeds for this event go to the Laguna Beach Historical Society.

John Weld was a stuntman during the golden age of Hollywood. His first job was a 137 foot dive off of the cliffs of Santa Cruz island just offshore from Santa Barbara into 14 feet of water. John performed stunts for many stars such as John Barrymore, Charlie Chapman, Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Laurel & Hardy and women too including Gloria Swanson and Zasu Pitts.

During the 1920s, John worked in New York as a reporter for a Hearst newspaper company and covered The Great Race. John traveled to Paris on a Belgian freighter arriving there two days after Lindbergh’s Lone Eagle landed at Le Bourget Airport.

He joined the Herald Tribune, and his first assignment was to cover Lindbergh and report every nuance. John remained in Paris for five years where he met and socialized with luminaries such as James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, Alexander Calder, Henry Miller, and Pablo Picasso. (continued on page 2)
Returning to Hollywood as a screenwriter for Columbia, John met beautiful Katy (the actress Gigi Parrish) at a party held at famed aviatrix Pancho Barnes’ oceanfront home in Laguna Beach. Five years later, Katy and John were married. In 1940, John and Katy left Hollywood and moved to South Laguna. John became the Ford dealer in Laguna Beach and later in San Clemente as well. He was also a great writer who wrote and published eleven books. In 1949, he and Katy purchased the Laguna Beach Post newspaper. For 20 years, John wrote a column entitled “Our Town” that always ended with “Laguna I Love You.” Since John was involved with the Ford dealerships, it was Katy who managed the newspaper in the early years.

John and Katy lived in Laguna Beach for more than 60 years and touched many lives. Those who are fortunate enough to have known them are richer for the experience. John died in June 2003 at the age of 98. Katy passed away a few years later at the age of 94.

Executive producer of the film, Roger Jones, gave us his account of how this film came to be.

“In 1999, Laguna Beach resident Nancy Bushnell introduced my wife Sherill and me to John and Katy Weld. Nancy had correctly thought since John had authored a number of books and I had written a few, we might enjoy each other’s company. We became good friends and visited with them every few weeks until their passing.

“We traded some books and after reading John’s Fly Away Home Memoirs of a Hollywood Stunt Man, I was taken back by the extraordinary lives he and Katy had lived. I mentioned to John that the public would be fascinated by Hollywood in its infancy and his accomplishments and that I would like to work on the project. He and Katy welcomed my suggestion and we signed an agreement.

“After a few false starts, I met for dinner with our good friend and executive producer Joe McKnight, his cousin actor/producer Nathan West and producer/director Gabe Torres. The documentary being shown is the result of that meeting.

“Hopefully most of you will be able to attend the premiere showing of “The Remarkable Life of John Weld” on February 8th. I will be introducing it and look forward to meeting you. For more information and tickets, please go to JohnWeldOfficial.com.” (Photograph descriptions on page 3)
Photographs:
1) The offices of the Laguna News Post with staff standing in front. John Weld wearing a necktie, Katy Weld seated. Historical Society Board member Glenna Matthews father is in the black turtleneck. Note the address of 300 Ocean Avenue and the "Tea Served at 4pm" sign.
2) John Weld, Age 20 in 1925. As a young man, John’s name was Jack.
3) Gigi Parrish as a Hollywood starlet.
4) John Weld and Craig Lockwood, August 1969. Craig Lockwood wrote a series, "From Where I Sit" featured in the News Post.

A Message from our President
Edward Storke

First, let me wish a very successful and enjoyable New Year to you and yours! Does it seem possible that it is already 2019? I’m sure we all expect a successful new year for the Laguna Beach Historical Society. We hope that you will join with us to help achieve our mission which is the collection, preservation, and dissemination of history of Laguna Beach, California. This mission requires the efforts of all our members and volunteers.

If you have not renewed your membership recently, please do so now! We can only achieve our goals by working together for the success of the Historical Society.

We also need volunteers to staff the Murphy Smith Bungalow and perform other history tasks. The Murphy Smith Bungalow is open to the public on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 1-4 pm. This requires a large cadre of dedicated docent volunteers. Currently, we need one or more people to staff the second Sunday of each month. Potential docent volunteers should contact Diane Keplinger at dianekep2009@gmail.com.

Our January newsletter features our special world premier movie on Friday night, February 8, 2019. Besides being a great event, it is also a fundraiser for the Historical Society. Tickets are $15 and all proceeds will benefit The Laguna Beach Historical Society.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to Mark Chamberlain, artist, activist, and promoter of our unique and wonderful city. He wanted to document changes to the canyon to create a broader awareness of regional and global environment issues. He is largely responsible for public pressure and funding to help preserve the Laguna Beach Wilderness Park. He helped create "The Tell" and other activities to help achieve this goal. He passed away less than a year ago on April 23, 2018. We salute him and will miss his great accomplishments!
Your financial support is vital and appreciated!

Thank you to our members for your past donations!
We encourage you to renew your membership and consider upgrading to the next level of membership. See your mailing label for your most recent donation.

If you are not a member, we would appreciate your support!

We are determined to preserve and protect the history of Laguna Beach, and we strive to share interesting historical information at our programs, at our bungalow, and on our website at lagunabeachhistory.org. We also support our local schools with historical presentations and a scholarships for a deserving seniors.

The Murphy Smith Bungalow is the home of the Laguna Beach historical society where we house historical displays, but we have a goal of expanding our space for archiving our city’s historical documents. Your contributions will help us reach the goal of a permanent archive for researchers, residents, and guests of Laguna Beach.

Preserve your memories, keep them well.
What you forget, you can never retell.
-Louisa May Alcott

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January 2019
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Ralph’s Community Contribution Program

• The Historical Society is now enrolled in the Ralph’s/Food 4 Less/Foods Co. Community Contribution Program.
• To register, simply go online to www.ralphs.com.
• Make sure to have your rewards card handy, choose The Laguna Beach Historical Society as your organization.
• If you do not have a Rewards Card, they are available at the customer service desk at any store.
• If you are new to ralphs.com online, please click on the top right: no account and register.
• You will receive an e-mail when you register your new account.
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A Special Note to our Loyal Members:
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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