

OCTOBER 2010
VOLUME 34, NUMBER 1

The Tall Tree

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING, FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Sunday, September 26 at 2:00 PM at the
Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Fine Dining and Burgers EL CAMINO'S HISTORIC "RESTAURANT ROW"



SPEAKER:
DOUG GRAHAM
President, Palo Alto
Historical Association

PAHA PRESIDENT DOUGLAS L. GRAHAM WILL LEAD an audience-participation presentation on the historic "Restaurant Row" lining El Camino Real (ECR) in Palo Alto. The program will cover about 25 of the most popular or interesting restaurants. It will answer many questions you might have, and some that you may never have thought of, such as:

Why did downtown Palo Alto have so few restaurants prior to the late 1970s?

Why has the notable restaurant row of Barron Park declined to almost nothing over the past 30 years?

What were the most popular restaurants on El Camino in:

The 1930s?

The 1950s?

The 1970s?

What was John F. Kennedy's favorite hangout in 1940?

What was the "day job" of L'Ommie's weekend chef?

What locally-famous burger joint was started by Bill Sincere?

Who were the Freliers? The Stickneys?

What replaced the Indian Drive-In?

Audience participation with memories and anecdotes will help bring alive the historic advertisements, drawings and photos that Doug will present. Doug has been the acknowledged Historian of the Barron Park neighborhood since 1980, and has written and presented the history of the Barron Park Restaurant Row several years ago. This talk is an expansion to cover the entire Palo Alto strip and to elicit stories from the audience. Please come and bring your restaurant mementos—photos, menus and your favorite memories.

THE OCTOBER CABLE program Heritage on Channel 30 will be a 2003 PAHA program titled "Dining in Palo Alto" featuring restaurant owners Annie Nunan and Fred Maddalena.

Currently showing is a 1992 PAHA program about "Valley of Hearts Delight" with Rixford Snyder. Broadcast schedule is Wednesdays at 8 PM, Thursdays at Noon, and Saturdays at 1 PM. DVDs of previous programs are available at the Main Library's History Desk, Tuesday, 4-8 PM and Thursday, 1-4 PM.



Advertisement for Rudolfo's restaurant from the Stanford Chapparral, February 1959



The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 P.O. Box 193 • Palo Alto, CA 94302
 650.326.3355 • www.pahistory.org
 Jeanne McDonnell, Peggy McKee,
 Mary Beth Cebedo Lefebvre

Editors
 Harriette Shakes, *Design*
 Omega Printing, *Printing*

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The Palo Alto Historical Association, is a non-profit organization. Its main objectives are:

- Collect, organize, and preserve materials pertaining to the history and heritage of Palo Alto.
- Spread information about Palo Alto's history by means of programs, displays, and publications.
- Recognize and preserve historic sites and structures.

The Guy Miller Archives of PAHA are stored at the Main Library, 1213 Newell Road. See the calendar, p.4, for the schedule of public meetings.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Gina Bravo Joe Kavanaugh
 Nicole Lee Edith Moore
 Conlyn Scoyen Hancock
 Amy Sims, PhD Daniel Wendlandt



BECOME A MEMBER OF PAHA

- Individual \$25
- Family \$40
- Sustaining \$60
- Business/Sponsor \$100
- Life \$350

Make check payable to PAHA and mail to: PAHA Box 193
 Palo Alto, CA 94302

Or join online at www.pahistory.org.

Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee.

PAHA's New Board Members

FOUR DYNAMIC COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE THE LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE PAHA board of directors. Welcome to Larry Christenson, John Hackmann, Joyce McClure and Deborah Wexler. PAHA would also like to thank the outgoing board members—Judy Leahy, Peggy McKee, and Dick Rosenbaum. We are grateful for their contributions to the board, and glad that they will continue to be PAHA supporters.



Larry Christenson is a 30-year resident of Palo Alto's Christmas Tree Lane and works in the financial industry. A retired Commander in the US Naval Reserves, Larry is an Eagle Scout and an active volunteer for the Pacific Skyline Council. He is inspired by Lucie Stern's generosity to Palo Alto Boy Scouts and Larry wishes to continue her dream of supporting local scouting.



John Hackmann is an attorney and professor who moved to the area in 1977 to attend Stanford Law School. John became interested in historic preservation when he worked with other Stanford students to preserve the Cooksey House and other historic buildings on campus. He also helped save the first African-American church (AME ZION) on 819 Ramona Street.



Joyce McClure has taught pre-school, and is a founding director of the Woodlands School in East Palo Alto. Joyce grew up in a post-WWII tract house in the San Fernando Valley which makes her appreciate her historic home in Professorville. She's involved in Palo Alto History Museum's audio visual and exhibits committees, and the Media Center Zoom-In Collaborative—working on short films focusing on community events and Palo Alto Stories.



Deborah Wexler serves on the Palo Alto High School PTSA Executive Board as co-chair for fundraising. Her professional background is in Advertising and Product Marketing. Currently, Deborah is a History graduate student. She got to appreciate the PAHA Archives when she was doing research for a class project. Deborah believes Palo Alto's unique history is worth preserving and passing along to future generations.

Vandalism at El Palo Alto

PALO ALTANS WERE SHOCKED TO LEARN IN AUGUST that its venerable "El Palo Alto" had been defaced by graffiti criminals. This iconic redwood is more than 1000 years old and has been designated as California Historic Landmark #2. It may have been the campsite of the Gaspar de Portola expedition in 1769. Vandals sprayed illegible markings, including the word "gun," in white and green paint on the bark of the lower portion of the tree.

Fortunately, arborist David Dockter concluded that the tree was not permanently damaged, nor was its health jeopardized. Nevertheless, all can agree that such acts of vandalism are unacceptable, and the community must work to raise awareness and consciousness about the value of all trees, but this one in particular. (contributed by Canopy.org)

(Above) Tall Tree/El Palo Alto in 1951; PAHA Guy Miller Archives.

(Below) Graffiti on El Palo Alto, August 2010; Courtesy Palo Alto Online



To Date—Our Palo Alto History Museum

MOST OF YOU ARE AWARE OF THE PROPOSED PALO ALTO HISTORY MUSEUM TO BE HOUSED IN THE ROTH Building of the old Palo Alto Medical Clinic on Homer Avenue. In the past I have used several of these columns to detail our plans and dreams to create a local history museum telling the story of Palo Alto and Stanford. Some of you may be wondering whether the museum is still alive. As the president of the Palo Alto History Museum, I want to tell you about our achievements to date, and about the near term plans to open the museum.



FROM THE
DESK OF THE
HISTORIAN
Steve Staiger

From the time that the City (as the owner of the Roth Building at 300 Homer Avenue) granted us the option to lease the building, we have been working hard to fund the cost of the building renovation and the creation of a suitable museum (cost estimated at more than 5 million dollars). Our fundraising strategy, as developed in consultation with retired Stanford fundraiser Dudley Kenworthy, has been to seek contributions from major donors before going after gifts from the community supporters. Our successes to date include a 2 million dollar pledge from the Peery Family Foundation.

We are still \$1.8 million short of our goal, and are working to attract several more major gifts before the end of the year. We are all aware that this is not the best of times to seek funding. In these hard times, major donors are flooded with requests from supporters of numerous good causes. However, we do have good news to report.

We have engaged an architect and contractor who are working together to design a museum space within the walls of the old clinic building, keeping in mind both cost effectiveness and historic preservation of the building's earlier life. The permit process with the City has begun and we are discussing the proposed plans with city staff.

The Roth Building was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, joining several other Palo Alto structures such as the Norris House, the University Avenue train station and the Post Office on Hamilton Avenue. This achievement was the result of hard work of several museum volunteers. Aside from the honor of such national status, the listing also allows us to qualify for significant tax credit funding to be used in the renovation.

But a museum is more than just an old building. It is collections and programs designed to tell the stories of Palo Alto and Stanford. We continue to collect donations of Palo Alto "stuff," material that will be used to illustrate the various stories that make up our history. Museum volunteers are working to develop programming to support proposed exhibits.

The museum is in discussion with the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce to house their operations in the Roth Building as a rent paying sub-tenant. The Chamber is developing their visitors bureau service to encourage and support out-of-town visitors, and considers the Roth Building to be an ideal location to promote this service. The Chamber's presence in the building would aid the museum both financially and by providing a certain level of staffing for extended hours.

I hope this article updates you with the news of the Palo Alto History Museum. And I hope we can count on your support.



Palo Alto Clinic parking lot on Bryant Street, behind the Roth Building, 1949; PAHA Guy Miller Archives

IN MEMORIAM

EUGENE McDONNELL

1926–2010

Longtime PAHA member and respected Palo Altan, Eugene McDonnell, died on August 17, 2010. Family and friends celebrated his life and many contributions to the evolution of Silicon Valley at the home of his wife of 54 years and PAHA Board member, Jeanne McDonnell. For more on the life of this extraordinary man, visit <http://eugene.remembered-forever.org/>

BILL LANE

1919–2010

PAHA Life Member and citizen extraordinaire, Bill Lane died on July 31, 2010. A graduate of Paly and Stanford, he generously advocated for countless projects to preserve and honor the environment, local history, and the West, as seen in the establishment of the Bill Lane Center for the American West at Stanford. He was one of the first supporters of the Palo Alto History Museum. A celebration of his life is scheduled for October 1, at 12:00 PM at Memorial Church.



Things to Do and Places to Go



This fall, the **Palo Alto Art Center**, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, presents three compelling exhibitions, September 25–December 12, 2010: “In Focus: Collecting Photography,” “Light from the Underground,” and “Paintings from Haiti.” The exhibits

are free and open to the public, with docent tours available. For more information, call 329-2366 or visit their website www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/csd/activities_and_recreation/attractions/art_center/default.asp.



The **Cantor Art Center**, Lomita Drive at Museum Way on the Stanford Campus, offers a wide array of exhibits to suit the taste of art lovers of all ages, and is free. It is presently featuring a vivid exhibition, “Mata Wata: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diasporas.” For more information, call 723-4177 or visit their website http://museum.stanford.edu/visit/plan_a_visit.html.



For the more athletically inclined, the City of Palo Alto Recreation Department offers its 26th annual **Palo Alto Weekly Moonlight Run & Walk** on Friday, September 24, at the Baylands Athletic Center, Embarcadero and Geng Roads. For more information, call 463-4920 or 326-8210 or see their website www.PaloAltoOnline.com.

And...there's always **The Black and White Ball**, scheduled for October 2 at the Lucie Stern Cultural Center. For details, visit the website www.thepalo-altoblackandwhiteball.org/.

PAHA's Public Meetings to Come

Meetings are held at the Lucie Stern Community Center 2 PM

SEPT. 26: *Fine Dining & Burgers*
Speaker: Doug Graham

Nov. 7: *The Architecture of Edward D. Stone*

DEC. 5: *Palo Alto Vignettes*

Save the dates

PAHA MEETINGS 2011:

JAN. 30
MARCH 6
APRIL 3
MAY 1
JUNE 1



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“Fine Dining & Burgers”
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Refreshments will be served.