

# The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

February 2015 Volume 38, No 5

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC \* REFRESHMENTS SERVED

### GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, March 1, 2:00-4:00 PM  
Lucie Stern Community Center  
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

*Facilitated by Steve Staiger, Palo Alto Historian & Archivist*

### PAHA's Public Meetings

#### GENERAL PROGRAM MEETINGS

are held monthly

2:00-4:00 PM

October - May

at the

Lucie Stern Community Center

1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

#### PAHA'S PUBLIC MEETINGS 2015

Sunday, March 1

"Panama Pacific International Exposition"

*Facilitated by: Steve Staiger*

#### PAHA'S MEETING DATES 2015

April 12 Program: Gamble Garden

May 10: Shared program with PAST

June 10: SAVE THE DATE

PAHA's Annual Dinner

El Palo Alto Room

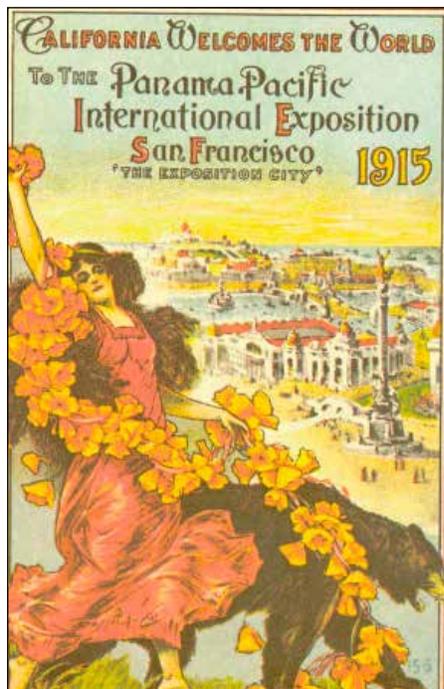
Mitchell Park Library

Dinner by Chef Chu's

Price & program TBA

*Unless otherwise noted, images reproduced in the Tall Tree are from the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION archives.*

## The Panama Pacific International Exposition



*Publicity poster for the exposition (Courtesy of California Historical Society)*

2015 MARKS THE CENTENNIAL YEAR OF THE PANAMA PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION, a world's fair held in San Francisco between February and December, 1915. The "Expo" celebrated the opening of the Panama Canal and showcased San Francisco's recovery and reconstruction after the 1906 earthquake. It covered more than 600 acres and featured more than 1500 sculptures by artists from all over the world, 65 acres of amusement concessions, and an aviation field. Of this vast array, only the Palace of Fine Arts remains. PAHA's own Steve Staiger will lead and facilitate the discussion on "PPIE."

An exhibit and accompanying events will be held at the California Historical Society, 678 Mission St., San Francisco, February 22-December 6, 2015. The exhibit is entitled "City Rising: San Francisco and the

1915 World's Fair." Sunday, February 22, CHS is offering free admission to the galleries in celebration of the opening.

Panelists on March 10 and 17 will discuss the complicated politics around women with regard to the exposition. For example, it's worth noting that woman suffragists made it a focus point, and it was from the Exposition that Sara Bard Field left in a car, at a time when cars and roads were rare, to gather signatures across the country for women's voting rights, which she took to Washington D.C. For more information, contact < [http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/exhibitions/events\\_calendar.html](http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/exhibitions/events_calendar.html) >

# We Need Your Help

**FROM THE  
PRESIDENT  
Ralph Britton**

At this month's PAHA board meeting we discussed some of the organization's needs. PAHA makes extensive use of volunteers augmenting a small part-time paid staff largely concerned with managing the archives. Maintaining the archives is a core function of the organization and preserves crucial links to Palo Alto's history. The archives are available for public access, and staff and volunteers assist visitors with research. In addition there are educational outreach programs in Palo Alto Schools focused on local history and a special project at the high school level where students work to enhance the local history curriculum for the third grade. As well, PAHA's monthly programs provide a window into local events of historic interest. Your organization does a lot that we can be proud of, but there are areas where we should strengthen our efforts. We need your help to improve and expand our connection with the community. Here are three areas of current concern:

1) Website design and maintenance. If you have some experience in this area or are prepared to take some time and "learn while doing" please consider helping to improve our internet presence so that it better reflects what PAHA offers.

2) Membership communications. We need to establish an effective system and protocol for electronic communication with our membership and others which is convenient, easy to use and allows user choice as to desired content.

3) Membership development and outreach. There are many in our community who have never heard of PAHA but who would be interested in learning more about their community's history and becoming members if they knew more about PAHA. Help us to make better use of community resources and develop effective tools for expanding our membership.

Contact PAHA at [paha@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:paha@cityofpaloalto.org) or (650) 326-3355 for more information and to volunteer.

## Gloria Brown's Legacy

With her wide community contacts, Gloria Brown acquired many "Treasures" for the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) and the Palo Alto History Museum (PAHM). Among these many artifacts are a school desk from the Harker School, Miss Sara Harker's formal dress, school calendars, year books, etc. The Harker School was formerly located on Harker Avenue in Palo Alto, and Gloria attended it.



*Gloria Brown's home on Fulton Avenue in Palo Alto (Google Maps)*

Gloria was a fine photographer and contributed many color photographs of local events and structures to the *Centennial History Book of Palo Alto*; she served on the committee that created the book and donated many photographs from her collection. She helped with proofreading the drafts and overseeing the book's various revisions. As Marketing Chair she sold most of the 7,250 copies. Her warehouse ledger records sales to ten Palo Alto bookstores and twelve local businesses. Now Palo Alto has only two book stores (Bells Books downtown and Books, Inc. in Town and Country)

As Gloria's family cleared her house, they located more Palo Alto items and called on Steve Staiger and Beth Bunnenberg to choose artifacts for PAHA's

Archives. We appreciate the family's effort to follow her wishes and donate these mementoes of Gloria and Palo Alto. The Unexpected Treasures Estate Sale located many other Palo Alto items and donated them to PAHA and PAHM.

If you have Palo Alto related memorabilia, artifacts, ephemera, information about Palo Alto organizations, schools, sports, etc., that you do not want, call Steve Staiger at the Archives (650) 329-2353 or email him [steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org). — *by Beth Bunnenberg*

### **PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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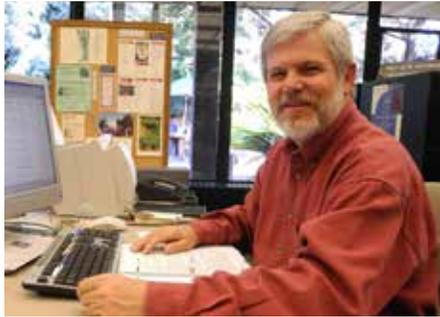
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# Palo Alto and Alcohol (or the Lack of It)

From the beginning, alcohol (or the lack of it) played a role in Palo Alto history. Like many 19th century American towns, Mayfield benefited economically from the sale of alcohol to residents, visitors, and nearby ranch hands and lumbermen who came to town to quench their thirst and empty their pocketbooks. When the Stanfords were building their new university, Mayfield sported two breweries and more than a dozen saloons. The sale of alcohol and the various saloons contributed to local prosperity.



**FROM THE DESK OF  
THE HISTORIAN  
Steve Staiger**

to Timothy Hopkins (who later transferred this provision to Stanford University). To my knowledge, no property owners lost their property in this manner.

Palo Alto was only a semi-dry town. While one could not walk up town to a liquor store or saloon to buy a drink, it was not illegal to consume alcohol at home, even though it could not be sold or manufactured in town. In addition to his concern over the safety of students on campus, Leland Stanford was also a politician, fully aware of the growing influence of the temperance movement in this country. Controlling access to alcohol was politically beneficial to Senator Stanford, even though he was not a temperance man himself. Not only did he enjoy his alcoholic beverages, he was a large grower of wine grapes. In his northern Sacramento Valley vineyards, he made vast quantities of rather poor wine.

Prohibition changed the rules and ceded local control over alcohol to federal authorities. San Mateo County with its long coastline was very 'wet' during Prohibition, supplying Bay Area residents who were in need of a drink with the finest Canadian beverages. Presumably Palo Altans could access this market without difficulty.

Even when Prohibition ended, access to alcohol in Palo Alto was still restricted by a California state law prohibiting the sale of hard liquor within 1.5 miles of colleges such as Stanford and the various University of California campuses. Laws allowed local restaurants and stores to sell beer, but continued to ban wines and harder stuff. These limitations led to the development of Whiskey Gulch on University Avenue near Highway 101 and the abundance of restaurants on El Camino Real in south Palo Alto.

It was not until the 1970s that the geographic-based restrictions on alcohol were re-examined. Frank Crist is credited with convincing a judge that these alcohol controls were outdated; he pointed out that alcohol was being served at the Stanford Faculty Club. Alcohol licenses for restaurants in downtown Palo Alto (and elsewhere) were granted, and the growth of fine restaurants in Palo Alto soared. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjv2sHSK0NE>

Leland and Jane Stanford wanted to 'sell' their new university to prospective students (and their parents) as a safe personal and moral environment. Thus, Stanford sought to ban the presence of alcohol from both Mayfield and Menlo Park. Neither community agreed. The success of the new university was uncertain!

Not to be deterred, Stanford turned to Timothy Hopkins to develop a new college town. Originally called University Park, the new town of Palo Alto had deed restrictions prohibiting the sale or manufacture of alcohol on the lots sold by Hopkins. If a property owner was found guilty of violating either restriction, his property would revert



*Whiskey Gulch, 1950s, (courtesy Michael Levin)*



*Stanford Faculty Club, (courtesy Access Stanford)*

# History Jaunts

**Palo Alto Art Center's current exhibit on view through April 12, "Hear This,"** presents works of five contemporary artists who employ the power of sound in artworks that explore perception, the passage of time, and nostalgia. Art works move in the same plane with music and dance in the mind's eye. PAAC is located at 1313 Newell Rd, call or email for hours: 650.329.2366 or [www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter).

**San Mateo County History Museum's art exhibit, on view in the first floor rotunda until May, features paintings relevant to Bay Area history by Fleur Spolidor.** One reminds us that stones and style of San Carlos train station resemble some Stanford buildings. Others show steam train to auto to airplane to the new concept of baby bullet trains. Also there will be a skit on March 7 at 1:00, "Two Notable Women, Two Notable Mansions" about the lives of Harriet Pullman Carolan (Carolands Chateau) and Sarah Winchester (Mystery House). Free with admission, \$6 adults, \$4 seniors and students.) The museum is at 2200 Broadway in the 105-year-old courthouse in Redwood City. More information at the museum by phone or web: 650.299.0104 or [www.historysmc.org](http://www.historysmc.org).

**Museum of American Heritage exhibit, A to Z,** will be on display until March 15. By accessing their collection of about 5,000 historic electrical and mechanical inventions, MOAH shows a variety of unrelated artifacts in alphabetical order from A (abacus) to Z (zapper). See antique medical devices, typewriters, extraordinary cooking devices, and more that represents the breadth of the museum collection. Free admission, open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays 11 to 4:00 PM. 321 Homer Ave. Palo Alto 650.321.1004. Also check with MOAH about their Repair Café where you can bring broken items, learn how to diagnose and find solutions, or just watch volunteers as they do their repair magic. Their motto is: Repair it, re-use it—clothing, bikes, computers, small appliances, lamps, mechanical items, small furniture, jewelry... Whatever you can carry.

**Palo Alto Libraries.** There were opening events at both the new libraries in Palo Alto, Rinconada and Mitchell Park. If you missed those events, be sure to check out the impressive sites, one on Newell Rd., one on Middlefield south of East Meadow.

Welcome to New Members  
Marilyn Sutorius  
New Life Membership

## Heritage Program on Channel 30

The Heritage Program for March 2015 will be "Palo Alto Jazz Quintessence." It will be broadcast on local cable Channel 30:

Wednesdays: 8 PM  
Thursdays: 10:30 AM  
Saturdays: 1 PM

DVDs of previous programs can be borrowed at the Archives which are temporarily located at Cubberley, Room K-7. Hours: Tuesdays, 4–8 PM  
Thursdays, 1–5 PM

In Memoriam  
Kim Webster  
Life Member  
1921–2015

## Become a Member of PAHA

We invite you to become a member of the Association and join those who care about Palo Alto and enjoy learning about its history. Your dues make our work possible: we maintain the archives, assist researchers, and disseminate historical information through our publications and public programs. Your generosity will be appreciated for generations to come. Join today!

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 [pahistory.org](http://pahistory.org). Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee. (Note: current members will receive renewal notices in November.)



The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
Our mission is to collect, preserve and make available to the public information about the history of Palo Alto.

Jeanne McDonnell, Peggy McKee,  
Mary Beth Cebedo Lefebvre, Editors  
Harriette Shakes, Design  
Omega Printing, Printing



PAHA Archives are located at Cubberley, Room K-7. Hours: Tuesdays, 4–8 PM; Thursdays, 1–5 PM. Contact Steve Staiger at 650-329-2353 or email [steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org).