

The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

April 2015 Volume 38, No 7

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC * REFRESHMENTS SERVED

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, May 10, 2:00-4:00 PM
Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Speakers: former patients of Dr. Clark and others who remember her including her nephews Malcolm and Dean Clark

DR. ESTHER CLARK PALO ALTO'S BELOVED PEDIATRICIAN



Dr. Esther Clark, courtesy of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation

IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY—**MOTHER'S DAY, 2015**—to honor Dr. Esther Clark. Although not a mother herself, Dr. Clark was a beloved pediatrician who helped thousands of Palo Alto mothers to raise healthy children. Dr. Clark grew up in College Terrace along with her brothers, Birge and David, all of whom attended Palo Alto High School and Stanford University. A high school science class sparked Esther Clark's interest in medicine, and she never looked back: she began her medical career as the Peninsula's first female pediatrician in 1926; she joined Dr. Russell Lee and Dr. "Fritz" Roth to found the Palo Alto Clinic (housed in the Roth Building in the Homer Historical Corridor); in 1953, she founded the Children's Health Council to serve children with special needs. In 1965, Dr. Clark donated to the City of Palo Alto 21 acres of her property in the Old Trace and Old Adobe Roads area. That land is now the Esther Clark Nature

Preserve. Dr. Clark's nephews, Malcolm Clark and Dean Clark, will facilitate this celebration.



Esther Clark Nature Preserve, courtesy Ron Hori

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, May 10

"Dr. Esther Clark, Palo Alto's Beloved Pediatrician" Speakers: former patients and her nephews, Malcom and Dean Clark

PAHA'S MEETING DATES 2015

June 10: SAVE THE DATE

PAHA's Annual Dinner

El Palo Alto Room

Mitchell Park Library

Dinner by Chef Chu's

Price & program TBA

Financing the Archives

**FROM THE
PRESIDENT
Ralph Britton**

We can start with the history—after all we are PAHA. On July 22, 1957, all thirteen (yes, there were 13 then) members of the Palo Alto City Council unanimously passed a resolution authorizing the City to contract with the PAHA to “perform the function of Palo Alto Historian.” The resolution was signed by Mayor Noel E. Porter. The contract called for a payment of \$75 per month. PAHA has had responsibility for maintaining the archives ever since. This is, of course, a key part of the mission of the association today.

Now, our payroll and benefits come to more than \$28,000 for a part-time historian and assistant. The Palo Alto Library covers those costs and provides space for the archives. In addition, volunteers have always greatly contributed to operating the archives. For many years, the archives were in a corner of the Main Library, but with the remodeling of the Library, they moved to the Cubberley Complex in what had been classroom K-7. We thus have a larger space and a much better environment for doing historical research.

In addition to the physical archives, PAHA has been digitizing historic photographs and making them available on the web. We now have more than 7,200 photographs available anytime someone wishes to view them. They can be accessed at <http://archives.pahistory.org/>. Currently this project is financed directly by our membership. In addition there are costs for storing archival material off-site. We will be negotiating a new contract for City’s next fiscal year and hope to get these costs included as part of the Library budget.

For some years the cost of operating the archives wasn’t too much of an issue because we had a good volume of book sales to generate income. That was essentially a windfall and sales are now quite small. Consequently we need additional support from our members, at least until we are able to get additional financing from the City.

The archives are financed separately from the other functions of PAHA, such as the monthly meetings, for which we neither seek nor receive City financing.

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Take a Spring Walking Tour with PAST (Palo Alto Stanford Heritage)

Saturday, May 9 — Professorville

Led by Gail Woolley. Meet at 1005 Bryant (corner of Addison and Bryant).

Saturday, May 16 — College Terrace

Led by Carolyn George. Meet at 1181 College (corner of College and Harvard)

Sunday, June 14 — Professorville

Led by Kris Zavoli. Meet at 1005 Bryant (corner of Addison and Bryant).

Saturday, June 20 — Crescent Park

Led by Margaret Feuer. Meet at the Squire House, 900 University, (University and Seneca).

All walks begin at 10:00 AM.

For a preview of historic architectural styles and what some early Palo Alto architects and builders created, see, <http://www.pastheritage.org>.

Space Aliens and the Local Scene

The 93rd annual May Fete Children's Parade will be on Saturday, May 2. The theme for this year is "No space to alienate," the idea



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

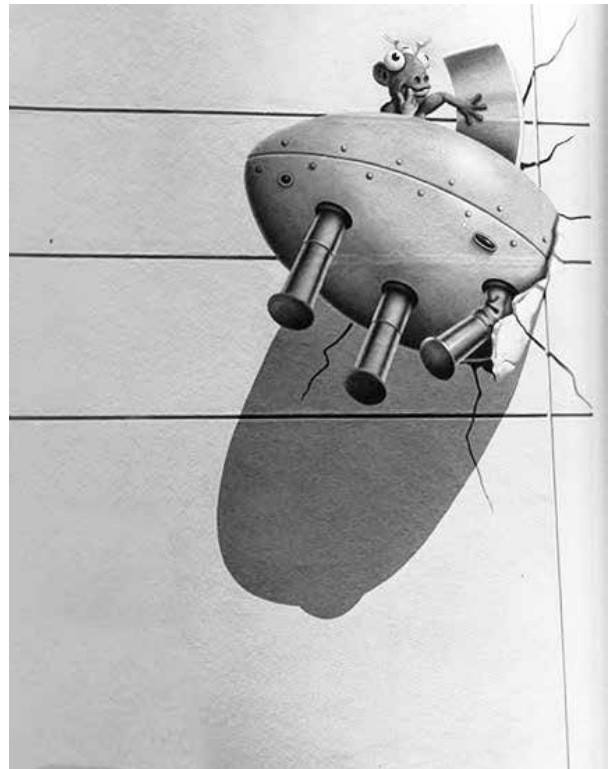
that children should accept people for who they are. The flyer announcing the parade has several images of space aliens and emphasizes the acronym UFO for "be Unique, be Free, be yOu".

In looking for a theme for this month's column (I am always looking for ideas and would welcome

any suggestions), I was reminded that space aliens have been a part of the local scene for several decades (and perhaps longer). While we are not in the same league as Roswell, New Mexico and Nevada's Area 51, numerous aliens have been spotted in Palo Alto since the 1970s. I am, of course, referring to the art of Greg Brown. Many of his portraits of local residents feature aliens and their UFOs. There is the confused alien who has crashed his space ship into the side of a bank building; the alien peeking from a garbage can on the back of a trash man; or the alien in a stroller being pushed by Spiro Agnew. These portraits are treasured by residents and visitors, and suggest that aliens are not always to be seen as the villains of 1950s horror movies.

There is another local spot with a potential link to aliens. Frenchman's Tower, on Old Page Mill Road, has been around since the 1870s. Built by Peter Coutts during his residence in California, the brick tower's purpose remains a mystery. In my talks to third grade classrooms, I challenge the students to solve the mystery. Ideas proposed by the students have included using the tower as a place to store his gold, a haven to hide from his enemies, or as a place to "hang out." So far, no student has been able to prove his theory.

I have extended this challenge to adults as well, and several men have researched the question and offered their own ideas. One man sent a detailed email report on his analysis of the tower. He examined a number of factors including its height and its place in the environment, and concluded that its function was as a beacon to attract aliens. Unfortunately he offered no proof as to how this beacon might work, or whether it has already accomplished its task. The tone of his report appeared to be quite serious, unlike the aliens of Greg Brown.



*Above, Alien mural by Greg Brown, downtown Palo Alto.
Below: Frenchman's Tower on Old Page Mill Road, Palo Alto.*

History Jaunts

Stanford Historical Society House Tour: “Hidden Gems of Upper Lomita,” Sunday April 26, 2015 1-4 PM. The tour features a number of residential properties, some of which were later converted to academic use. Architects represented on this year’s tour include Charles Hodges, Louis Christian Mullgardt, John Branner and Milton Pflueger. The outdoor walking tour includes a treasure hunt for children 6–12. Location and parking information at <http://historicalsociety.stanford.edu/hhouses.shtml> or phone 650.725.3332.

San Mateo County Historical Association, “Old Woodside Store Day”: Sunday, May 3, Noon–4 PM, at the historic Store, corner of Tripp and Kings Mountain Roads, Woodside. The docent group, the Woodside Storekeepers, invites visitors to experience life in the 1880s. This special family day will focus on the history of the Store and the redwood logging activities in the area. Bluegrass music will be provided by 27strings. The Woodside Store is a San Mateo County Park.

“A Garden Party Fashion Show”: Saturday, May 16 at 1 PM, presented by the volunteer Auxiliary. The show will feature more than 100 years of fashion and gossip involving some of the notable local figures who attended Peninsula garden parties. The clothing is from the “Millie Collection,” an education collection of vintage costumes maintained by the volunteers. Free with the price of admission to the Museum (\$6 adults; \$4 seniors and students). The Museum is located at 2200 Broadway, Redwood City. For more information, see www.historysmc.org or call 650.299.0104.

Fire on the Mountain by: Randal Myler and Dan Wheatman: runs through April 26 at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View Tickets: \$19–\$74; <http://theatreworks.org> or 650.463.1960 The music is presented by legendary old-time music expert, Molly Andrews, and the Bay Area’s Tony Marcus.

Loren Schoenberg, jazz musician, critic, and artistic director for the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, joins in a conversation on jazz and modern art. The program preludes Wednesday night’s Stanford Live concert by the SFJAZZ Collective. At the Anderson Collection, 314 Lomita Drive, Stanford. Wednesday, April 22, Noon–1 PM. Admission is free.

Heritage Program on Channel 30

The Heritage Program for May 2015 will be “Gamble Garden: Landscape of Optimism.” 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

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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. 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.