



Since
1913

The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

June 2016 Volume 39, No 8

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED * DINNER CATERED BY CHEF CHU'S

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL DINNER

Wednesday, June 8

6:00 pm Social Hour, 7:00 pm Dinner catered by Chef Chu's

El Palo Alto Room, Mitchell Park Community Center

AN EVENING WITH ROBERT KELLEY

DON'T MISS THE PAHA ANNUAL DINNER PROGRAM, "AN EVENING WITH ROBERT KELLEY."

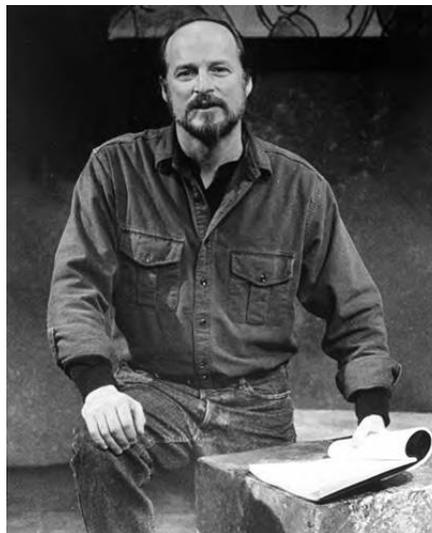
Robert Kelley, the Artistic Director of TheatreWorks, is a local product who attended Jordan, Paly, and Stanford. He demonstrated his love for the theatre by acting in plays at Palo Alto's Children's Theatre from the age of nine. He went on to found TheatreWorks in 1970 and has overseen its growth to become one of America's most important national theaters. His endeavor began with a motivation to reach out to young people, and today TheatreWorks Education Programs reach over 25,000 students each year, offering a variety of programs to camps, classes, school groups, and special matinee performances. Since the 1970s, his commitment has consistently been to excellence, diversity, creativity, and innovation.

TheatreWorks now boasts 8,000 subscribers, and Kelley monitors a budget of over \$8 million. His peers in Silicon Valley's world of theatre have recognized his contributions and dedication with a myriad of awards: the Silicon Valley Arts Council's Legacy Laureate Award, the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Paine Knickerbocker Award for lifetime achievement, nine Theatre Critics Circle Awards, and two Back Stage West Garland Awards for Outstanding Direction.

On Kelley's watch, TheatreWorks has launched more than 100 new plays and musicals, including the world premiere of the Tony-winning *Memphis* in 2010. He directed the world premiere of Jane Austen's *Emma* in 2007 and its "matchless reprise" in 2015-2016. This lively musical became TheatreWorks' beloved and highest grossing production.

From the outset, the company produced wholly original works and in the early days performed wherever it could find space—a garage, a basement, an outdoor park. Even then, its production values were extraordinary, with sets and costumes that far surpassed its limited budget. Now, the group performs at the Lucie Stern Theatre complex and the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts.

Under Kelley's stewardship, TheatreWorks has increased its focus on new material and new authors. Always on the cutting edge, Kelley's company has attracted the highest caliber of performers, including those of color. In 1981, *The Fireworks Rag* was the company's first primarily African-American production. Kelley has consistently given his audiences high value, interesting diversity, and timely relevance in the productions and in their casts. This summer, TheatreWorks will offer the world premiere of the "high stakes political drama," *Confederates*. Don't miss it.



Robert Kelley at work on stage in 1991.

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 ANNUAL DINNER

June 8, 2016

6:00 PM: Social Hour

7:00 PM: Dinner

El Palo Alto Room

Mitchell Park Community Center

3700 Middlefield Road

Palo Alto

Dinner catered by Chef Chu's. Please make reservations before June 3.

\$60 per person.

PAHA'S FIRST AUTUMN MEETING

October 2, 2016

Palo Alto Art Center's 45th Anniversary with Karen Kienzle, Director

Have a great summer!



ROBERT KELLEY, Founder and Artistic Director, TheatreWorks



The Children's Theatre: A Stage for All Ages



PRESIDENT'S LETTER
Ralph Britton



A view of the courtyard and theater at the Lucie Stern Community Center before the construction of the Children's Library in 1940.

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Ralph Britton, *President*
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- Robert Strohecker, *Secretary*
- Chris Botsford, *Treasurer*
- Steve Staiger, *Historian*
- Patricia Briggs
- Larry Christenson
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- Georgie Gleim
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- John Hackmann
- Rachel Kellerman
- Alan Loveless
- Leah McGarrigle
- Jerry Tinney
- Bardy Wallace

PALO ALTO HAS MAINTAINED ITS EXCELLENT CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR ALMOST A CENTURY.

Key among them are Rinconada Park and the Lucie Stern Community Center. Established in 1922 and comprising 19 acres, Rinconada is Palo Alto's second oldest park, complete with tennis courts, swimming pool, and play structures, and is adjacent to the Junior Museum. The Lucie Stern Community Center was designed by Palo Alto's own Birge Clark in his signature Spanish-Mediterranean style.

It included not one but two theaters when it was built in 1935. Over the years, the main theater has been home to a number of dramatic presentations, some of which included prominent Palo Alto citizens as producers and actors. Among

them was Egerton Lakin, a founder of the law firm of Lakin Spears. The Children's Theatre has been a source of joy and inspiration for youth since its inception. One PAHA member, Patty McEwen, acted in the first plays after the Children's Theatre opened under the direction of Hazel Robinson. A PAHA Board member, Pat Briggs, directed the Children's Theatre for many years, including the period when my children were growing up. The main theater grew to host several excellent companies, among them Palo Alto Players, West Bay Opera and TheatreWorks. The long and remarkable history of TheatreWorks is the subject of our annual dinner presentation on June 8 (*described in this issue, reservation enclosed*). It was an amazing stroke of good fortune that Lucie Stern recognized the need for this remarkable facility that has enriched the lives of so many over the years.

Earn Your Junior Historian Badge!

You do not need to be a war hero or saint to earn the "PAHA Junior Historian" badge. Pat Briggs was awarded the first PAHA Junior Historian badge for her efforts in securing the speaker for the June dinner. Jim Lyons also received one for his ongoing efforts to add materials to the archives. As Steve Staiger and Jack Parkhouse note, "You can earn the badge simply by doing something helpful for the Association deemed worthy of the honor." After talking about the need for some way to

honor those who perform good deeds for the Association, Steve and Jack finally got their act together and, *voilà*, the badges. With help from the people at Omega Printing, a number of design options were considered, and after the final was decided on, Omega arranged for production of the badges. Steve and Jack will continue to keep their eye out for others who should be honored, but feel free to let them know if you think of someone who is deserving of recognition.



The Palo Alto Historical Association, a non-profit organization, was established in 1948 as successor to an earlier organization founded in 1913. 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 the Palo Alto Historical Association are stored at Cubberley Community Center, K-7.

Board meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 4 pm. General meetings are held the first Sunday of each month (October–December, February–May) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 2 pm. Meetings include speakers. The final general meeting of the year is held in June and includes a dinner and a program. The public is welcome at all meetings.

*Last chance to RSVP for PAHA's Annual Dinner!
Please return enclosed form no later than June 3rd.*

Palo Alto History Museum Aims for Groundbreaking This Year



Myron Freedman, the Palo Alto History Museum's first full-time Executive Director, offers an update on plans for the Museum, including the exciting news that construction may begin soon.

Freedman quotes architect Daniel Burnham's 1891 remark, "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood." At that time, Burnham was in the process of designing the Chicago World's Fair and transforming Jackson Park into

the White City.

Though more modest, the vision for the Palo Alto History Museum is both ambitious and inspiring. It begins with the renovation of Birge Clark's historic, Spanish-style Roth Building, which housed the original Palo Alto Clinic. Vacant since the relocation of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, the beautiful 1932 structure has been the focus of preservationists' efforts to save it and infuse it with a second life as the community's home for history, anchored by PAHA and its archives.

Freedman and his many supporters see the Museum as a cultural, educational, and historical resource, complete with galleries and interactive experiences that tell Palo Alto's story. Visitors will return often to see changing exhibitions, attend programs, or utilize the Community Meeting Room. Eventually, a small café will offer refreshments to visitors.

The Museum will begin with Palo Alto today—a small city of 67,000—and its outsized impact on the world. Palo Alto's phenomenal story puts it at the intersection for the creative



The Roth Building at 300 Homer Avenue, designed by Birge Clark in 1932, is the planned home for the new Palo Alto History Museum. Courtesy PAHM.

people, organizations, and businesses that have come to define the meaning of innovation. Remarkable people such as William Shockley, Frederick Terman, Anna Zschokke, Jane and Leland Stanford, and Lucie Stern made choices and took actions that transformed the sleepy town, combined it with Mayfield, and linked it with Stanford. They and many others made a Palo Alto address an essential business decision in a start-up-mad world.

Freedman notes, "We have made enormous strides in the last six months to prepare the project for construction." Plans were revised and submitted, reviewed, and approved by the city's Historic Review Board and Architectural Review Board. The next step will be a review by the Building Department for construction permits. Freedman continues, "Our goal is to break ground this year. And of course we continue to raise funds. Since the project's inception hundreds of people have shown support with a donation, and we are nearing the tipping point to put a shovel in the dirt and realize our 'no little plans'."

For more information on the Palo Alto History Museum, you can visit their website: paloaltohistorymuseum.org.



Perspective of the proposed Palo Alto History Museum as viewed from the south. Courtesy Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.

History Jaunts

It's almost too late—but not quite—to experience and enjoy the “**vast carpets of wildflowers**” in **Central and Northern California**. Check out the websites of Briones Regional Park, Edgewood Park, Henry W. Coe State Park, Mount Diablo State Park, Picchetti Ranch Preserve, Pulgas Ridge, Russian Ridge Preserve, Tilden Regional Park. If you are willing to go farther afield, look at the websites of Carrizo Plain National Monument in San Luis Obispo County or Los Padres National Forest to see “chocolate lilies, scarlet Indian paintbrush, pitcher sage and purple shooting stars.” Put on your hiking boots, your sunscreen, and take your sunglasses.

¡**Viva Baja! – Life on the Edge** at the Monterey Bay Aquarium features six galleries showcasing the sea and land creatures of Baja California. “Two years in the making, this 7,000-square-foot exhibit frames a vast, tropical panorama” and fragile ecosystem. Visitors can stare “at the mesmerizing shimmer of shiny fish flashing through the azure depths” and “traipse through the...galleries teeming with...specimens from the scaly to the slithery.” The Monterey Bay Aquarium is located at 886 Cannery Row, Monterey. For more information, visit the website www.montereybayaquarium.org.

“**A Universe of Maps**” features an extraordinary selection of more than 150 rare and antiquarian maps, atlases, globes. It celebrates the gift to the Stanford University Libraries of the newly opened **David Rumsey Map Collection**. “A Universe of Maps” will be on display in Green Library on the Stanford campus, April 25-August 31, 2016. For viewing hours, call (650) 723-0931 or visit library.stanford.edu/libraries_collections/hours_locations.html. NOTE: Visitors without Stanford ID must register with a photo ID at the entrance to Green Library before entering the building.

The Woman’s Club of Palo Alto cordially invites you to a **birthday party to celebrate 100 years in its wonderful Charles E. Hodges clubhouse**—Thursday, June 16 at 475 Homer Avenue at the corner of Cowper Street. Events begin at 3:30 pm with Professorville & Downtown-South Historic Walking Tours (meet at clubhouse entry), followed at 5:00 pm with a clubhouse tour, displays from MOAH, docent talks and refreshments. More details about the club and its history may be found at womansclubofpaloalto.org.

Welcome New Members!

Dennis Gilbertson
Norton Bell

Heritage Program on Channel 30

The Heritage Program for June 2016 will feature the PAST/PAHA doubleheader, including the PAST Centennial Plaque and Preservation Awards.

The schedule is

Wednesdays at 8 pm,
Thursdays at 10:30 am, and
Saturdays at 1 pm
on Channel 30.

DVDs of previous programs may be borrowed from the PAHA’s Guy Miller Archives, which are located at Cubberley, Room K-7.

Hours: Tuesdays, 4-8 pm,
Thursdays, 1-5 pm

In Memoriam

Frank Garcia
1923-2016

The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



Luana Staiger, Peggy McKee,
Jon Gifford, Georgie Gleim, *Editorial*
Györgyi Kapala, Jon Gifford, *Design*
Omega Printing, *Printing*

Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.

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 \$40 Family \$60
Sustaining \$75 Business/Sponsor \$150 Life \$500

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. (Annual renewal notices will be mailed in September.)

