



The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

May 2017 Volume 40, No 7

Since
1913

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, May 7, 2017, 2:00–4:00 pm
Lucie Stern Ballroom,
Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

We return to our
newly renovated
original location!

The PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION presents

PAST Heritage Celebrates 30 Years

PALO ALTO STANFORD HERITAGE WAS
FOUNDED IN 1987 TO CO-SPONSOR THE 1988
CALIFORNIA PRESERVATION FOUNDATION
ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN PALO ALTO.

According to an early newsletter, "The success of the conference encouraged PAST's organizers to form a strong architectural preservationist organization. Its activities, including docent-led walking tours, are designed to encourage citizens to appreciate and preserve the best of the area's historic structures and neighborhoods." Thirty years later we are still guided by this mission.



PAST's 30th celebration will be part of our annual Centennial Plaque presentations and Preservation Awards, held each May since 1996. We will share stories of our 30 successful years as a participant with the many other individuals and organizations that contributed to the local preservation movement.

The 2017 program will be on May 7, 2017 in the Lucie Stern Ballroom.



369 Churchill, built in 1917, is one of the one hundred year-old homes receiving a PAST Heritage Centennial Plaque this year.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC * **REFRESHMENTS SERVED**

PAHA's Public Meetings

GENERAL PROGRAM MEETINGS
are held monthly
2:00–4:00 PM
October – May

You are cordially
invited to

June Dinner with
speaker Karen Holman,
former Mayor

Wednesday, June 7, 2017
El Camino Room
Mitchell Park Community Center

* **Reservation required** *

Please register
with the enclosed form
by June 2.

There will be a brief business meeting
during the evenings events.



BRIAN GEORGE, host
PAST Heritage President
PAHA Board Member



Ralph Britton
PAHA President

**PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Ralph Britton, *President*
- Rich Green, *Vice President*
- Robert Strohecker, *Secretary*
- Chris Botsford, *Treasurer*
- Steve Staiger, *Historian*
- Patricia Briggs
- Dennis Garcia
- Brian George
- Betty Gerard
- Georgie Gleim
- Douglas Graham
- Rachel Kellerman
- Alan Loveless
- Leah McGarrigle
- Raye Ringholz
- Jerry Tinney

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, organization founded in 1913. Its main objectives are:*
- *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 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.

PAHA & PAST: Partners in Preservation

Residential housing in Palo Alto changes hands on an average of once every five years. While not all of these changes represent people coming to our community for the first time, the evidence is clear that many of them are new to Palo Alto. Citizens come to and bond with a community because they see something of value in the place where they want to live. What has been created and sustained in the past helps to define the character of a city. Newcomers look to the current state of affairs; yet, to understand the way things really are, they have to know something about the past. Two organizations that provide this kind of insight are the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) and Palo Alto Stanford Heritage (PAST).

PAHA preserves and catalogs historical records, largely on paper, but increasingly in digital format. To be useful, these records have to be accessible: a further responsibility is to make the records easily available and to actively encourage their use. We at PAHA do both because we believe that our

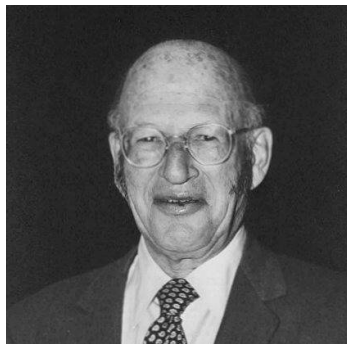
community is stronger if residents appreciate the people and their accomplishments that have built today's Palo Alto.

In addition to the documented history that PAHA maintains, there is considerable tangible physical evidence of the development of the town that became the city. PAST is dedicated to preserving the historic places of Palo Alto. Partly because of PAST's efforts, it is possible to walk through historic neighborhoods and appreciate how residents have lived over the entire life of the city. Various buildings and structures that have served the community over the years need to be preserved. The Lucie Stern Community Center is an example of such a building. And now it is undergoing such a preservation. While there is often pressure to tear down the old and replace with new, many of Palo Alto's historic residences and structures have their own unique elegance and charm. They make the city a place where long-time residents want to stay and newcomers hope to settle.

Joseph Eichler: Creator of Legacy

In honor of May, Historic Preservation Month, we honor a Creator of Legacy who impacted the physical and social fabric of Palo Alto.

Joseph Eichler (1900-1974) is celebrated as one of the pre-eminent builders of Modernist (mid 20th century modern) homes in America. Working with architectural firms such as A. Quincy Jones, Anshen and Allen, and Claude Oakland, he designed and built affordable modern homes in numerous subdivisions in post-World War II California.



Joseph Eichler in 1972. Courtesy Carolyn Caddes/PAHA.

His companies constructed more than 10,000 homes, primarily in the Bay Area. His developments included neighborhoods in Marin, the East Bay, and especially on the Peninsula. Two of his early Palo Alto neighborhoods, Greenmeadow and Green Gables, were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

During World War II, Eichler lived in a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home in Hillsborough. Following the war, Eichler became a residential builder; he hired young architects to design houses in Wright's modernist style. His

"Eichlers" were characterized by open floor plans with flat or low rooflines; they included patios or atriums promoting the indoor-outdoor lifestyle that became identified with California.

The state's post World War II population growth fostered a tremendous demand for housing, especially on the Peninsula. Palo Alto more than doubled in size between 1945 and 1960. Joseph Eichler's companies provided a partial solution by building more than 2700 homes here.

Joseph Eichler was more than just a builder of modern homes.

His subdivisions were intentionally designed to be neighborhoods. They included parks and community centers with recreational facilities incorporated into the overall design. Eichler's social and political views also influenced his business decisions: he refused to support industry-wide policies of racial discrimination.

The Edgewood Plaza Shopping Center was the only commercial complex built by Eichler. He also built two high-rise apartment buildings in San Francisco.

—by Steve Staiger, *City Historian*

PAHA's Student Essay Contest: Fifty Years Ago Today

by Luana Staiger

Future issues of Tall Tree may include articles from the Guy Miller Archives that provide context or perspective on topics of local or historical interest. This first one is from a series of mid-1960s articles that highlighted a PAHA-sponsored essay contest in Palo Alto's private and public elementary schools. The contest was open to students in grades 2 – 6, with a winner to be selected from each grade.



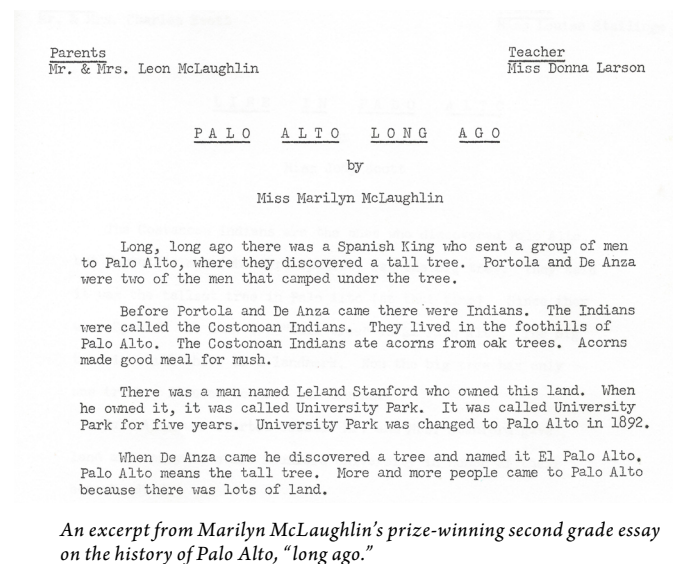
Mrs. Borgsteadt's third grade class, 1965 Elizabeth Van Auken Elementary School, around the time of the essay contests, currently the site of Ohlone Elementary.

Fifty-five students participated in the first contest in 1964. The committee of six judges included local school officials as well as two PAHA directors, Mrs. Dean Parkinson and Miss Elinor Cogswell. The 2nd grade winner, Marilyn McLaughlin, wrote on "Palo Alto Long Ago." She commented, "I wish I had been here when the Indians were living in Palo Alto, but I am glad we don't eat acorns from oak trees." The 5th grade winner, Sara Shumway from Crescent Park School, and daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Norman Shumway, entitled her essay, "Palo Alto's Past." Bruce Clark, a 6th grader at Garland School, submitted a winning essay, "The Interesting Names of Our Schools." He noted, "The Palo Alto unified school district is a very interesting district. One reason why this district is interesting is because the schools are named in a variety of ways"; he concluded, "We all should be proud of our schools and the method used in naming them!"

The winners received a Certificate of Merit and were recognized at a dinner with their parents at Ricky's Hyatt House; each read aloud his or her essay. As well, each of the teachers was presented with a copy of "Historic Spots in California" for their school libraries.

The second annual contest as reported in PAHA's Newsletter in June, 1965 honored four winners. Topics included "El Palo Alto," "The Tall Tree," and "The Frenchman's Tower."

In 1966, the contest attracted more participants than ever, 206 entries. The Newsletter noted that "the activity merited the attention of other Historical Associations and widened interest by educational leaders." Topics of the winning essays included: "Palo Alto History in the Early Days" by Scott Bradley, a 2nd grader at Green-dell School, and "The Story of Palo Alto" by Gay Loewenstein, a 3rd grader at Barron Park School whose essay noted the growth of Palo Alto, citing a population of 52,000, and many cars. The essay noted, "From this standpoint, you may not think Palo Alto is very nice, but I think it is the best place I have lived in all my life."



PAHA's Archives lack Newsletter editions from the late 1960s; PAHA does not know if the essay contests continued. If you have related materials to donate to the Archives, please do so by contacting Steve Staiger steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org.

You are cordially invited...
to PAHA's Dinner with Karen Holman
Wednesday, June 7, 2017 @ Mitchell Park Community Center
Details and registration on the enclosed sheet. RSVP requested by June 2nd.

History Jaunts



PAST Heritage is pleased to offer its **annual spring walking tours**. All tours are on Saturdays starting at 10:00 a.m. The schedule is as follows: **Crescent Park**, April 29th, meet at 900 University Avenue; **Homer Avenue**, May 13th, meet at 475 Homer Avenue; **Professorville**, May 20th, meet at 1005 Bryant Street; **College Terrace**, May 27th, meet at 1181 College Avenue. For more information, please check pastheritage.org.

The **95th Annual May Fête Parade with the theme “My Hero Is...”** starts Saturday, May 6 at 10:00 am and proceeds down University Avenue, turning right at Waverley and ending at Heritage Park. In recognition of his many visits to Palo Alto elementary schools talking about Palo Alto history as well as his work with students of all levels, **PAHA will be honoring Steve Staiger as History Hero of Palo Alto**. PAHA welcomes children and grandchildren of members and friends to join Steve in the parade. For more information on how to participate, please contact Beth Bunnenberg (bethbunnenberg@gmail.com). For more information on the parade, visit cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/csd/events/parade.asp.



Just 100 years ago—April 1917—the United States declared war on the Central Powers and entered the Great War, later named World War I. In remembrance, Stanford’s Hoover Institution presents **“Weapon on the Wall: American Posters of World War I,”** which explores some of the most powerful tools the country used to persuade the American public to support and sustain the war effort. Drawing from the Hoover Institution’s world-renowned archive of more than 130,000 posters, the exhibition showcases the bold graphics and traces the pictorial treatment of Americans’ dire concerns, including enlistment, fear of the enemy, food conservation, morale on the homefront, women at work, and fundraising for victory. The exhibit, which opened April 5, continues to September 2, 2017. “Weapon on the Wall” is open to the public, free of charge, Tuesday–Saturday from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm in the Herbert Hoover Memorial Exhibit Pavilion (next to Hoover Tower) on the Stanford University campus. Parking on campus is free on Saturdays. For more information, please call 650-725-3563 or visit hoover.org/events/weapon-wall-american-posters-world-war-i.

The Pace Gallery, located at 229 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, is pleased to present **The Yosemite Suite, an exhibition of David Hockney’s iPad drawings** made during visits to Yosemite National Park in 2010 and 2011. The exhibit runs March 30 to June 11 and highlights the artist’s continuing engagement with landscape, particularly that of the American West. The gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11-7 and Sunday, 11-5. For more information, call (650) 561-4076, or visit pacegallery.com/exhibitions/12858/the-yosemite-suite.

In Memoriam

The Palo Alto Historical Association gratefully acknowledges and honors the many contributions of community volunteer and long-time member and Board member, Ruth Lacey, who died on January 8, 2017. In addition to her commitments to the League of Women Voters, Canopy, and the Mid-Peninsula Media Center, she edited the Tall Tree and produced videos for PAHA, including a 2002 documentary about the history of African-Americans in Palo Alto. Palo Alto and the many organizations that Ruth supported continue to miss her enthusiasm and participation.

Heritage Program on Channel 30

The Heritage Program for May 2017 will feature

“Crime in Palo Alto”

The schedule is

Wednesdays at 8 pm,
Thursdays at 10 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

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.