

Since 1913

The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

October 2017 Volume 41, No 1

Sunday, October 1, 2017, 2:00–4:00 pm
Lucie Stern Community Center ~ 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Local Historical Associations Bring Their Perspectives to PAHA

KICK OFF THE 2017-2018 YEAR WITH LOCAL HISTORY!

The first meeting of this program year will be an exciting event highlighting some of the communities surrounding Palo Alto. Representatives from various local historical associations, including Menlo Park Historical Association, Stanford Historical Society and Portola Valley Historical Association will share unique and interesting stories about their histories and what defines their communities. Next month, our program will feature speakers from Redwood City, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary.

We hope you will be able to attend both the October and November meetings to hear more about the distinct histories of our surrounding communities and how important they are to the overall history of this area.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

November 5, 2017
Redwood City's 150th Anniversary

December 3, 2017
Vignettes Panel,
moderated by Karen Holman

Did you know...

- At the time the town of Portola Valley was incorporated, discussions had been ongoing for approximately 15 years before they were finally successful in 1964
- During World War I, Camp Fremont was headquartered in Menlo Park and conducted military and artillery maneuvers on Stanford property
- The Menlo Park train station is the oldest California station in constant operation



Photos upper left to lower right: the Stanford Quad, 1902; Camp Fremont, 1918; the Hermit of Jasper Ridge and friends, early 1900s; Menlo Park Train Station, 1918.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC * REFRESHMENTS SERVED



Ralph Britton
PAHA President

**PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

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- Raye Ringholz
- Darla Secor
- Jerry Tinney
- Molly Tinney
- Melissa Verber

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 to:

- 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.

An Invitation to Document Local History

Some historical happenings begin with a local event whose significance is unclear at the time. At the age of 17, Pliny the Younger witnessed the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, but it wasn't until 25 years later that he honored a request from the historian Tacitus and wrote letters describing and detailing the epic event. Were it not for Tacitus' invitation to Pliny, we would know considerably less about the eruption. Typically, our local events are less dramatic than the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, but this example shows the importance of an on-site and local observer.

You may think information about historical events is routinely preserved, but the reality is quite different. Artifacts can be thrown away, files are often destroyed, and photographs can remain unannotated. Years after an event, it may be difficult to find information about it. PAHA and its sister

organizations offer a critical service in preserving and documenting our local historical record. With the support of the Palo Alto Library, PAHA's Guy Miller Archives provide an online photo repository containing over 13,000 images available for downloading. The photographs are catalogued, indexed, and searchable online.

Stanford, Menlo Park, Mountain View, and Los Altos—as well as other Bay Area cities—have historical associations or societies that help to connect the present to the past by archiving, collecting, and preserving information and artifacts that define their local communities. Many of these organizations have convenient ways for the public to access their archives and respond to online enquiries. Check these organizations' websites for more information.

Celebrations of Life as Historical Record



**FROM THE DESK OF
Steve Staiger, City Historian**

As a local historian, one of my responsibilities is to preserve the obituaries of deceased Palo Altans. Obituaries (or paid death notices) are important documents

to a community. They inform community members about the death of friends or acquaintances, but they also are life summaries of the people who have played a part in our community's history.

Not all the obituaries published in the local newspapers are preserved. Residents from surrounding communities, unless they had a connection to Palo Alto community activities such as a former teacher, business owner or active participant in a Palo Alto organization, are not collected.

Obituaries are an important resource in many of the research inquiries that come to the Archives. If a researcher wants to know more about a former resident, business leader or community activist, the printed obituary can often provide important clues to help solve mysteries.

Our *Tall Tree* editors try to report the deaths of PAHA members. This issue notes the passing of four

members, with a special note regarding former board member Pat Briggs. I want to add some comments about two other recently deceased members.

Olive Borgstedt was a special friend to the Archives. A long-time teacher in the Palo Alto schools, she had a strong interest in the history of our community. Her late husband, John, was a photographer who documented our community through decades of photographs. Over the last few years, Olive donated many of his images to the Archives. Since the Archives moved to Cubberley, she would often visit, and talk about her life in Palo Alto. She enjoyed exploring the files, often commenting about what she discovered.

Margaret Stone was the widow of James Stone who was on the PAHA board when I became the Historian. Jim was the creator of our Palo Alto building permit file (as reported in the old *Palo Alto Times*). This tool is one of the most valuable resources in our Archives. Margaret was a delightful lady, living for many years in their large home on Lincoln Avenue. She always had a warm smile when we met.

To help maintain our archives and ensure we have good records, I would encourage you to forward any notices that you come across on the death of any former Palo Altan.



Photo Cataloging volunteers.

Please contact Brian George at briang8897@aol.com

Welcoming our New Board Members!



Heather Allen Pang was raised in Palo Alto, graduated from Castilleja and Wesleyan University, and earned a PhD in history at UC Davis. She has taught history at Castilleja for the past two decades, notably guiding 8th graders in their study of US history, incorporating innovative technology into their curriculum, and encouraging their

participation in National History Day competitions at the local, state, and national levels. Heather oversees the Castilleja archives. Heather and Alex Pang have two children, Elizabeth and Daniel.



Born and raised in Palo Alto, **Molly Tinney** is proud to be a third generation native. Her great-grandfather moved here in 1910 to establish the first funeral parlor in town. Molly now lives in Redwood City and works as a nurse. She recently ended 30 years of employment at Sequoia Hospital but continues to manage a

small Endoscopy Center. She particularly enjoys the challenge and mystery of working on her family's ancestry, especially as it relates to its roots in Palo Alto and Redwood City.



Darla Secor is a current graduate student at San Jose State University working towards Master's of Archives and Records Administration and is a volunteer at the Guy Miller Archives. She is a somewhat recent transplant to Palo Alto, having moved here four years ago after sojourns in Ohio, Switzerland, and Pittsburgh. Darla and her husband

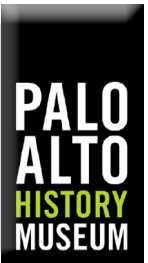
are residents of the Greenmeadow neighborhood, along with their three sons, who are students at Gunn High School, JLS Middle School, and Ohlone Elementary.



Melissa Verber came to Palo Alto from New York in the 1980s to join an educational software company on Park Blvd. and moved into an Eichler on Maybell Ave. More recently, she has worked at the Palo Alto Art Center in their studio art program, at SRI International, and is a volunteer at Filoli. Luckily for PAHA, Melissa has joined

the editorial board of *Tall Tree*. She and her husband have two children, a daughter in Los Angeles and a son entering college this fall.

Palo Alto History Museum updates! We're chipping away at our **immediate goal of \$3.7 million** so we can begin construction on the Museum. • A new way you can help? Host a **history-lovers gathering** and we'll tell your friends about creating our first history Museum. Contact Crystal at crystal.taylor@paloaltohistorymuseum.org for info. • We'll soon launch a new **membership program with national and international museum bennies**. • Check out the Roth Building—live or online! New banners enliven the façade of 300 Homer, and a **virtual tour** is now on our website. • Sign up for our e-newsletter at [PaloAltoHistoryMuseum.org!](http://PaloAltoHistoryMuseum.org)



Remembering Pat Briggs, Godmother to Children's Theatre



Pat Briggs 1936-2017

Beloved PAHA board member Pat Briggs died on June 8, 2017, a sad loss of a vital Palo Alto personality. Pat directed the Palo Alto Children's Theatre (PACT) for 47 years, leading one of few American theatres that staged productions using children both as actors and in support positions. She directed over 500 productions and wrote

over 20 scripts, earning many awards: Woman of the Year for the 21st Assembly District of the State of California (2003); Avenidas Lifetime of Achievement Award (2006); Junior Theatre Festival Lifetime Achievement Award (2009.) After retirement, Pat joined the PAHA board and recorded an oral history

of her early years in Chicago, her BFA from Loyola University, and becoming Director of the Children's Theatre Division of the Des Moines Community Playhouse. In 1961, Pat became the Director of PACT, after which the city benefitted from her passion to help children grow into creative adults. A celebration of Pat's life, held at the Children's Theatre on August 5, 2017, was an overwhelming outpouring of appreciation for her unique approach to supporting young people's interest in theatre. Speaker after speaker highlighted her profound impact on children's lives. After singing the "The Children's Theatre Theme Song," the audience rose to shout, "Thank you Pat!" Copies of the Celebration program and a recording of it are in the PAHA archives. — *Brian George*

History Jaunts for October



"October" by Nikolai Nikolaevich Glebov-Putilovskii (1883–1948) is one of many artifacts from the 1917 Russian Revolution.

A new exhibit at Stanford, **"The Crown under the Hammer: Russia, Romanovs, Revolution,"** opens October 18 and continues through March 4, 2018 at the Hoover Memorial Exhibit Pavilion and the Cantor Arts Center. This dual-site exhibition examines the political, social, and cultural upheavals that transformed Russia in the decades before and after the 1917 Russian Revolution. Admission is free. For more information, visit hoover.org.

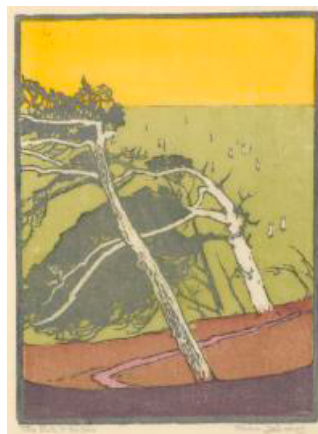
The Stanford Historical Society is sponsoring a lecture by Hoover Research Fellow Bertrand Patenaude on **"The Russian Revolution: Kerensky Comes To Stanford,"** on **Thursday, October 26, 2017, at 5:00 pm**, in the Cantor Arts Center Auditorium, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford. The lecture is free and open to the public. For more information, visit historicalsociety.stanford.edu.

"Eichler Homes: Modernism for the Masses," the popular exhibit at the Los Altos History Museum, closes October 28. This exhibit explores Eichler Homes, and Joseph Eichler's dream of affordable contemporary homes, which he built from 1949 to 1974. Through photos, mid-century modern furnishings, and

memorabilia, the story of an era filled with optimism and prosperity shines a light on the structural building blocks that make Eichler living so appealing. 51 S. San Antonio Road in Los Altos. Open Thursdays – Sundays, noon-4 pm; free admission. For more information, visit losaltoshistory.org.

"Meet Los Altos Hills' Innovators Who Are Changing the World" This event, sponsored by the History Committee of the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce, is taking place on **Sunday, September 24, 2–4 pm, at Gardner Bullis School**, 25890 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hills. It is free and open to the public. The panel discussion, hosted by Dick Henning, will feature Bill Coleman, Becky Morgan, Jim Morgan, and Anne Wojcicki. Space is limited and pre-registration is recommended at losaltoshills.ca.gov.

"Lasting Impressions of Pedro de Lemos: The Centennial Exhibition," October 3 - December 5, 2017, celebrates the centennial of the Stanford Art Gallery and the work of its first director, Pedro Joseph de Lemos, one of that last nationally recognized leaders of the American Arts & Crafts Movement. An **opening reception** will be held at the gallery, 419 Lasuen Mall, on **Thursday, October 3, from 5-7 pm**, and a public talk will be given by curator Dr. Robert W. Edwards **"A Visionary Who Transformed American Art,"** **Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2017 at 5:30 pm** in Oshman Hall, McMurtry Building, 355 Roth Way, Stanford. The exhibition is open Tuesday-Sunday, noon-6 pm, free & open to the public, more details at art.stanford.edu.



"Old Path to the Sea," a 1924 color block print by Patrick de Lemos will be among the works on display at the Stanford Art Gallery.

Welcome New Members!
Catherine Hamrick-Down
Sally Kadifa
Molly Tinney
Jim Uffner
Emily Vance
Melissa Verber

October Heritage Program on Channel 30

"75 Years of Children's Theatre Magic with Michael Litfin"

A re-broadcast of PAHA's January 2007 program that also highlights the "magic" that the late Pat Briggs brought to the PACT.

Weds. 8 pm, Thurs. 10 am,
Sats. 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

Olive Borgsteadt
Pat Briggs
Georgia Schwaar
Margaret Stone

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



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Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.

Join PAHA Today! Learn about and support Palo Alto's history by becoming a member, from \$40 per year. Learn more at pahistory.org