GENERAL MEETING, FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Sunday, January 31 at 2:00 PM at the
Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Boy Scouts Still Thank Lucie Stern

Speaker:
LARRY R. CHRISTENSON
Eagle Scout

PAHA is delighted to welcome LARRY CHRISTENSON, our January 31 speaker, who will regale us with stories about “Lucie Stern and Her Boy Scouts,” 1935 to the present.

Larry has been involved with Boy Scouts since his own days in scouting, when he became an Eagle Scout and a Silver Beaver. He is now an Executive Board member of the Pacific Skyline Council, Vice President of Eagle Scout Relationships, and Chairman of the Council’s Endowment Committee.

The recipient of two Northwestern Mutual Foundation’s Community Service Award Grants, he has provided financial support and led the efforts to restore the Fire Circle and refurbish the Apartment. He has led Troop 57’s Capital Campaign to raise $150,000 to build a new Camp Oljato Handicraft Lodge—the first major new structure since the camp opened in 1941.

As the Boy Scouts celebrate their 100th anniversary, Larry will look back and forward to reflect on the many gifts Lucie Stern gave our local Boy Scouts, including the Scout Hall, the Fire Circle, the Apartment, Camp Oljato, and the Sea Scout Headquarters. These gifts continue to provide fun and adventure for our community youth.

Larry will present a chronology of Lucie Stern’s life and Scout history.

There’s nothing like being there, chatting after the talk and enjoying tea and such, but if you can’t make it, watch Channel 30, Wed. 8 pm, Thurs. noon, Sat. 1 pm on local cable, Channel 30. Programs show on TV a month after the original at Lucie Stern. Tapes of past programs can be borrowed at the Main Library’s History Desk, Tues. 6 to 9 pm and Thurs. 2 to 5 pm.

Photo of Scouts at opening Summer at Camp Oljato in high Sierra. Scout writes home, “Am having a swell time.”—Aug. 7, 1941. (Courtesy Larry Christenson.)
Photographic Experiments Focused on Horses

We love going to the movies, and making movies has been a major industry in California for more than 200 years. Early movie making can be found in Niles, in the East Bay, where Charlie Chaplin and Bronco Billy Anderson shot their silent movies before moving on to Hollywood. But an earlier era in the history of motion pictures may have occurred here in Palo Alto (actually on the future Stanford campus). It is the story of Leland Stanford, Eadweard Muybridge, and the trotting horses.

While California State Historical Landmark #834 (across Campus Drive from Stanford University Driving Range) celebrates the invention of the motion picture at Leland Stanford’s Palo Alto Stock Farm, some historians contend that the actual photographic experiments occurred in Sacramento.

Where may be debated, but not the story. Leland Stanford, attempting to prove that a galloping horse has all four of its hooves off the ground during its stride, hired the well-known photographer Muybridge to help him settle the question. It has been claimed that the experiments were conducted on a bet, but there is no evidence to support this.

Muybridge, with help from the chief engineer of Stanford’s Central Pacific Railroad, developed the technology necessary to coordinate the firing of 24 cameras to take photographs in quick succession of a galloping horse. In 1871 a Muybridge image was published supporting Stanford’s claim.

Muybridge went on to produce other photographic motion studies in the remaining years of his life. Stanford went on to develop one of the finest programs to breed and train trotting race horses, unaware that by the time he died in 1893 the earliest ‘horseless’ carriages were becoming a nuisance, and within a generation would be replacing the horse as a major means of transportation.

In 1882, Leland Stanford published a book, The Horse in Motion as Shown by Instantaneous Photography. The book caused a rift between the two men, as Muybridge felt he was not receiving the proper level of credit for his contribution to the experiments of their success.

Muybridge’s “trotting horses” photographic experiments.

(Courtesy “Genius Gallery,” BBC)
Meccano-Mania Exhibit
Before LEGO, children assembled metal constructions like those at the Museum of American Heritage in an exhibit open until March 8. Models include a giant Ferris wheel, rocket-jet ride, and cable car railway. What we call erector sets in the U.S. are Meccano elsewhere.

Regular exhibit hours are 11 am to 4 pm, Fri, Sat, Sun. For more information or to confirm open hours, call 650-321-1004. Admission to “Meccano-Mania” is free. MOAH is at 351 Homer Avenue.

Buildings Convey History
The Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission has asked Jeanne McDonnell to inform them at their monthly meeting of the status of the Juana Briones House in Palo Alto, one of the oldest buildings still intact in the County, and to suggest ways to preserve that treasure. Meeting Feb. 18 at 6:30 pm, San Jose City Hall, Board of Supervisors Chamber, 70 West Hedding Rd.

Authors’ Forum at Old Mint in San Francisco
The San Francisco Museum and Historical Society will host four authors on Wed, February 3, 4 to 6 pm,

- Frances Dinkelspiel, Towers of Gold: How One Jewish Immigrant Named Isaias Hellman Created California
- Kevin Mullen, Chinatown Squad: Policing the Dragon From the Gold Rush to the 21st Century
- Jeanne Farr McDonnell, Juana Briones of Nineteenth-Century California
- Rand Richards, Mud, Blood, and Gold: San Francisco in 1849.

Also available for purchase will be Charles Fracchia’s When the Water Came Up to Montgomery Street: San Francisco During the Gold Rush. Admission $5, free for SFMHS members. RSVP at 415 537 1105 ext 100, or email rsvp@sfhistory.org. The Mint is at Fifth and Mission Streets.