

The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

April 2014 Volume 37, No 6

General Meeting • Free and Open to the Public • Refreshments Served

Sunday, April 6 at 2:00 – 4:00 PM
Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Speaker: Wayne Martin, Silicon Valley Consultant

Palo Alto by the Numbers

LOOKING AT PALO ALTO HISTORY USING NUMBERS

PAHA's Public Meetings

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM MEETINGS

are held
2:00–4:00 PM
October – June
at the

Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

2014
April 6

Palo Alto by the Numbers
Speaker: Wayne Martin

May 4

Jung in Palo Alto
Speaker: Dr. Thomas Kirsch

SAVE THE DATE!

June 4: Annual Dinner at Ming's

Speaker: Joe Simitian,
Santa Clara County Supervisor



Wayne Martin
Silicon Valley Consultant
[Photo: Wayne Martin]

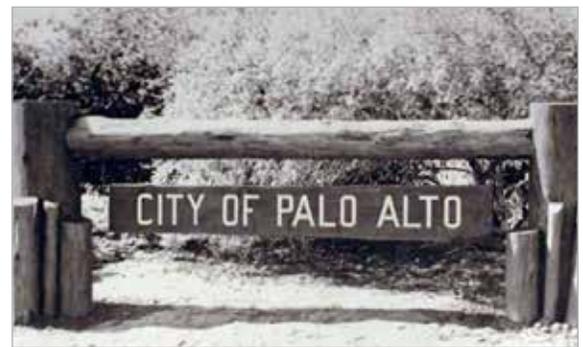
IS IT TRUE THAT NUMBERS NEVER LIE? What can we learn from Palo Alto numbers?

Wayne Martin brings together his technical expertise and love of history to share a picture of Palo Alto based on data and numbers. Wayne was raised in the Lower Chesapeake area of Virginia, halfway between the old colonies of Roanoke and Jamestown. Childhood trips to Jamestown and Williamsburg stirred his interest in history.

He completed undergraduate and graduate work in geology with concentration in geophysics, geochemistry, math, physics and computing. He has worked as a US Army Line Officer and Company Commander, a Process Control Engineer on a steel mill automation project, and as a mainframe systems programmer designing/developing operating and transaction systems.

Around 1980, Wayne left mainframes for the microcomputer world. Since then, he spent about twenty years as a consultant in Silicon Valley developing software and providing test engineering/evaluation services to high-tech clients.

A long-time resident of Palo Alto, Wayne's current activities include researching for a book about the American Civil War from a Southern perspective and advocating for the increased use of technology in all levels of government.✍



City of Palo Alto sign



Set of PAHA archive images shown as postcards.

Photographs, the Most Valuable Element in the Archives

In this column, I return to the subject of photographs on a regular basis. Our collection of photographs is perhaps the single most valuable element in the Archives, not for any possible monetary value, but for the information the images can provide in all sorts of inquiries.

FROM THE DESK OF
THE HISTORIAN
Steve Staiger

Photographs can be Ansel Adams quality images or the snapshots taken of children standing in front of the new family station wagon. They can be black and white Kodak “Brownie” prints, color slide transparencies, or electronic images captured by today’s hand-held devices. They are all valuable for what the photographer wanted to capture, but also for what can be seen by today’s viewers. We can see Palo Altans wearing the fashions of the day and views of buildings unintentionally captured in the background of these images. For this reason we want to capture and preserve any and all images of our community. The only “bad” photographs are those we are unable to identify the who, what, when or where.

We have digitally scanned about 12,000 of our images, some dating from the 1870s. We are finally making significant progress in getting them onto our website where they can be viewed by interested viewers worldwide. There are now more than 4,000 of these images on our website www.pahistory.org.

This success does not mean we can rest. We are always searching for additional images, be they 100 years old or 100 hours old. We are preserving recent digital images as well as the older printed ones. You can help by keeping your eyes open for images. Do you have photographs of that neighborhood block party; a sporting event at Paly; or video (or film) of some local event? Is there a neighbor or friend who is downsizing and is about to toss those old photographs, slides or home movies because they think that nobody wants them? You can help preserve our Palo Alto history by directing these images to their future home in the Guy Miller Archives.

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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When a KSFO Duo Ruled the Road

REMEMBER BACK IN THE 1960S WHEN KSFO’S DON SHERWOOD AND CARTER B. SMITH “ruled the road” on the Bayshore Bypass? As told by Jim Craddick to “Mr. Roadshow” columnist Gary Richards in the *San Jose Mercury*: The morning commute on The “Bayshore Bypass” Highway 101 was fairly slow (it was then a four-lane road with stoplights). Don was the commute hour host for KSFO and had a wide following on 101. Jim wrote: “Since FM radio was nothing much, most commuters listened to KSFO and Sherwood. He and Smith “had a cute trick they pulled at least weekly.”

Around 8 AM, they would instruct everyone to roll down their windows and turn up the volume. “Upon doing this, they would crank out the loudest siren ever heard, and there would be panic among half the drivers (who weren’t in on the joke) AND HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER (thumbs up, etc.)” among drivers who were. Jim wrote: “Since the early Bayshore had no left side shoulder (just a double white line) there was nowhere for those in the inside lane to go. Watching them scramble looking for the source, and attempting to move right, gave our dreary stop-and-go commute some life. Back then it was funny and not a huge problem.”

Other readers wrote in response: “Sherwood would also ask everyone on the Bay Bridge to honk their horns at the same time when he gave them a cue. He had such a large listening audience that it could get pretty noisy... Sherwood was a very humorous and entertaining personality. Everybody listened to him. If you were in heavy traffic when he told a joke, you could look around at the drivers on either side of you and see them laughing. He dubbed himself “The World’s Greatest Disc Jockey”—a title Herb Caen often used in his column.” As Mr. Roadshow wrote: “To be mentioned by Herb Caen was perhaps the ultimate tribute.”

Ah, for the simpler days when it wasn’t against the law to have a sense of humor and exercise it! Does any else but me wonder if Don Sherwood just might be the inventor of the Flash Mob? — *Doug Graham*



Cars along going along 101 as it passes Palo Alto. [PHOTO: BRIAN GEORGE]

A Good Long Conversation with Gertrude Atherton

“The most notable of the California residents was Doña Juana Briones. She was a widow, handsome and vivacious... in a gay and busy city...” *California: An Intimate History*, by Gertrude Atherton, 1914. Another treasure. From Friends of the Palo Alto Library.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
John Hackmann

Just the age we are celebrating now, with PAHA's 100 year celebration. It is wonderful, to hear of this personal history, of the families and the people Gertrude Atherton knew personally, those who formed and hammered out Californians as we know

them, from the days of Mexican governors, the days of Montgomery's arrival on the Portsmouth to raise the Stars and Stripes on July 8, 1846, at the plaza, and putting his lieutenant Bartlett in charge of the city. Luckily, just weeks before Sam Brannan arrived on the Brooklyn, into what he thought was Mexican territory, with a shipload of Mormons. It was his purpose to found a colony on the bay and erect a great tabernacle. Mormons were then seeking independent or autonomous governments, as in Illinois and Missouri, and may have sought Californian or Mexican independence to carry out this greater purpose. Things could have been different.

Fate, or purpose, has taken such strange and sudden turns on many days, even and ever since the time of Father Serra, and what are considered the miracles of his day. Time and again “Regulators” or “Committees of Vigilance” had to rise up to save Californians from their government—or the lack of it. The courageous and crusading newspaper man, James King of Wm., (his name IS “James King of Wm.”) who was shot dead in the streets, for exposing and criticizing elected Supervisors for corruption. A story I never heard.

And another martyr. California was barely saved for the union from the pro-slavery Democrats. In Gertrude's telling, this is because of the most able of Irish politicians, Broderick, our strongly anti-slavery Senator, who made deals to rise up, but then stood up for Californians and freedom in the United States Senate in a way that would have made Frank Capra think “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” had already happened. Broderick was later martyred for this cause, shot dead in perhaps a rigged duel. He was killed by a harsh opponent, a justice of the Supreme Court, who favored the Southern Faction.

If California had gone to the south, or been neutral, or independent, the railroad and America could have been very different. Gertrude was over thirty when Doña Briones died. At the time that she and Doña Briones were alive together in San Francisco and on the Peninsula, it's likely they had met, as Gertrude knew every family of note.

1914, one hundred years ago. PAHA was just formed. In the long list of artists and writers that made up the rushingly-invented literary and intellectual life of the day, one wonders which are from Palo Alto at that time. Gertrude Atherton wrote her way to the best and most notable of all Western woman writers. And we, each of us, can still have a conversation with her.

Farewell to the Old Paly Gym

PAHA and the PA Museum were among the sponsors that joined with the school district to celebrate the old Paly Gym. Designed by Paly graduate Birge Clark, the gym opened to a crowd of 2,500 during the dedication ceremony in January 1929. On March 16, 2014, another large crowd came to say farewell. Construction begins this summer to replace the old gym with a new athletic center.

PAHA director and Paly librarian, Rachel Kellerman, and Palo Alto Museum director, Jane Gee, gathered a team from both groups to plan a special program in the gym and outdoors. Visitors were treated to speakers, slide shows and music and enjoyed a cornucopia of exhibits—record players, prom dresses, letterman sweaters and cars—that spanned the era. Paly alumni visitors were met by high school students, the History Corps, equipped and trained by Brian George and Leah McGarrigle to take oral histories on the spot, and directors from both groups swapped tales of times past with visitors at the shared PAHA and PA Museum booth. Hats off to PAHA and PA Museum folks who helped make this an incredible gathering of people and memories happen! —*H. Shakes*



Gertrude Atherton [PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA]

Heritage Program on Channel 30

PAHA's March 2014 program, “UArt: the Story of University Art,” with speaker Cornelia Pendleton, CFO of UArt, will be broadcast on Channel 30 in

April on:

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 H-5. Hours:

Tuesdays, 4–8 PM

Thursdays, 1–5 PM



PAHA and PA Museum directors Rich Green, Rachel Kellerman, Bardy Wallace, Beth Bunnenberg and Jane Gee, at the Farewell Paly Gym event, March 16, 2014.

[PHOTO: H. SHAKES]

History Jaunts

Painted Chair event, March 29, 6–9 PM at the Woman's Club, 475 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto. 1930s wooden folding chairs from the Woman's Club, all beautifully painted by local artists. 80 will be auctioned. Tickets: \$35: see <http://womansclubofpaloalto.org/painted/>

The San Mateo County History Museum, Jeanne Farr McDonnell will share her experiences researching and writing about Juana Briones, April 5, at 1:00 PM in historic Courtroom A. Free with the price of admission, \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and seniors: <http://www.historysmc.org/main.php?page=docket>

Pencils Down, at the Palo Alto Art Center until April 13, includes works by artist Judith Braun. Braun designed a snowboard for Burton that was used by 2014 Winter Olympics bronze medal winner Kelly Clark. <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/csd/artcenter/exhibitions/current.asp>

Volunteers Needed for the Earth Month Compost Workshop on April 16, 2014, 3:00–5:00 PM. Open to adults and teens over 12. Event will be held at the Children's Library, 1276 Harriet Street, Palo Alto. Email to sign up, emily.lacroix@cityofpaloalto.org

Stanford Historical Society's House and Garden Tour, May 4, 2014, 1:00–4:00 PM, features pre-1930 houses from the San Juan Neighborhood. Architects represented include Arthur B. Clark, Birge Clark, Charles K. Sumner, and John Bakewell Jr. \$30 advance tickets, \$35 after April 18. Additional tour information & directions: <http://historicalsociety.stanford.edu/hhouses.shtml>

Bilingual Exhibit on the Life and Times of Juana Briones runs until June 8, 2014 at the California Historical Society at 678 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94105. For information: www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/exhibitions/



Stanford House Tour [ILLUSTRATION: SUNNY SCOTT]

Welcome to New Members

Daniel Johnson
Monique Lombardelli

In Memoriam

Jean Large-Broker
Tom Wyman
Former PAHA President

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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 July.)



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.



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