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 NOVEMBER MEETING
November 6, 2016
The Christmas Bureau of Palo Alto with Pat Einfalt, President of the Board

UPCOMING MEETINGS
December 4, 2016
Vignettes Panel
moderated by Karen Holman
former Mayor of Palo Alto

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GENERAL MEETING
Sunday, November 6, 2:00–4:00 pm
Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

The PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION presents

The Christmas Bureau

PAHA’S NOVEMBER PROGRAM CELEBRATES THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHRISTMAS BUREAU, NOW A VENERABLE PALO ALTO TRADITION AND INSTITUTION.

In 1956, a group of Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) nurses and social workers collected toys, food, and gifts for 138 local families. From that modest beginning, the program and its network of supporters expanded: volunteer leaders solicited referrals from local agencies and carried on the hard work of organizing annual campaigns to raise funds to distribute to families in need.

In 2015, the Christmas Bureau board of fifteen volunteers raised $110,000, which they transformed into monetary gifts benefitting 3800 individuals! 98% of all donations go directly to Palo Alto’s neighbors in need. The Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce recently described the Christmas Bureau as “an outstanding Non-Profit Organization” and honored it with its “Tall Tree Award.” In December, 2014, The Mercury News commented on how the Christmas Bureau provided enormous help to those “who are struggling.” Even more recently, the Mayor and City Council of Palo Alto honored the Christmas Bureau with a proclamation recognizing their 60 years of providing holiday cheer to those in need in the community. The thank you notes received from grateful recipients keep the Board members energized.

Pat Einfalt, president of the Christmas Bureau, will be PAHA’s featured speaker on November 6. She and her husband made their home here in the 1960s, raised their four children and pursued careers that enriched their lives and that of their community. Pat and several of her fellow volunteers will present a slide show and narration, providing an historical look at the origins and development of the Christmas Bureau. To read testimonials from Christmas Bureau recipients, please visit www.christmasbureauofpaloalto.org/testimonials/ and bayareane.ws/2djrGh3.

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We are so grateful for you. Every year you put a smile on my mom’s face because she gets to buy my brother and I presents.”

“Thank you so much for including me in your Christmas gift. I can really use it for food this month.”

“Gentlepeople, brother and I presents.”

Thank you so much for your gift. As a senior, I appreciate all your efforts to make the holidays a little brighter.”

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Pat Einfalt, center, President of the Board of the Christmas Bureau of Palo Alto will speak.
The Korean War was in its second year in 1952, when the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) advocated for an elementary school to serve a new demand in Barron Park.

PAUSD acquired the seven-acre site in 1951 for $27,000. Meanwhile, the war resulted in a national steel shortage; schools were a low priority compared with guns, tanks, and ships for the war. In 1951 PAUSD sent Superintendent Henry M. Gunn to Washington, D.C. to lobby for an allocation of enough steel to build an elementary school on Maybell Avenue. Dr. Gunn lobbied Senators Richard M. Nixon and William F. Knowland, as well as other federal agencies. The steel allocation was approved: a 14-room school, Loma Vista, was built in 1952, for $280,000.

The school was named by students! In May 1952, Louis W. Parente, sixth grade teacher at Barron Park School (then overcrowded by Maybell tract children) asked his class to name the school. As reported in The Palo Alto Times, May 27, 1952, the children responded: “Why not call it Hillview?” Parente explained there were already too many “Hillviews.” That didn’t stop his students. “What’s Spanish for Hillview?” they asked. Parente found that Hillview, roughly translated into Spanish, was Loma Vista, “a view of rolling hills.” The school site on Maybell Avenue offered a picturesque view of the nearby hills. The Board liked it and made it official. The name Loma Vista lasted thirty years, until demographic changes required shrinkage of PAUSD and combining some elementary schools. Loma Vista was renamed in 1982 to honor Juana Briones.

—Doug Graham, PAHA board member and historian of the Barron Park Association will be publishing regularly in this space—watch for it!

Prepare your neighborhood history: Getting started

Recently the Archives was gifted a newly published book by a Palo Alto resident, Ross DeHovitz, Sharon Court at 60—a neighborhood history. The book was researched and written by Ross and includes a history of the street, the houses and the residents of the street on which he resides, Sharon Court, located off Channing Avenue near Eleanor Park. Fortunately for him, he resides on a cul-de-sac and the scope of his work was limited by the small number of houses on his street.

Ross was inspired by a similar publication, Bellview Drive, written by Barbara Harley in 1990. Both authors researched their street’s subdivision history, determining when the houses were built, and who first lived in each house. Their task was a bit easier than some streets, not only for the brevity of the street’s length, but also because both streets were post-WWII developments. The Sharon Court history has benefited from advances in desk-top publishing in the last 25 years, resulting in an attractive publication. The Archives were of great value to both authors. City directories and building permit cards were useful in determining who had lived in their neighborhood and when. But for some answers, county records in San Jose were researched. Obituaries and newspaper clippings also proved to be of value in dealing with some of the more puzzling problems.

I believe both authors enjoyed the process of researching and writing their histories. I encourage others to consider a similar project for your neighborhood, perhaps working as a team.

If you live on a bigger street, perhaps you might consider writing the history of your block.
We would welcome your visit to the Archives to discuss this possibility.
The spirit of giving

Palo Alto and the Committee for Belgian Relief: 1914-1919

The Great War erupted in 1914 as German troops marched through neutral Belgium, hoping to celebrate Christmas in Paris.

The outbreak of hostilities caught American tourists in Europe unawares, but Herbert Hoover—Stanford alumnus then living in London—organized an emergency aid effort to help Americans get home. That operation evolved into the Commission for the Relief of Belgium.

After the Battle of the Marne, the Allies “dug in,” forming a massive line of trenches opposing a German line that stretched from the English Channel to the Alps. Food supplies dwindled in occupied Belgium where famine stalked the land. News of the “starving Belgians” aroused sympathy in the West. Herbert Hoover and his team of volunteers didn’t anticipate that their humanitarian task of feeding the Belgians or supporting them as refugees would last four years. Hoover secured an appointment to lead the CRB. He later wrote that the CRB had not planned that the program would have “to find a billion dollars, to transport five million tons of concentrated food, to administer rationing,” and act as a novel relief organization.

Hoover called for donations and oversaw the shipment of almost 700,000,000 pounds of flour to Belgium. Though neutral until 1917, the United States played a role in Belgian Relief. Americans rallied to Hoover’s cause and Belgium’s plight.

Indeed, the Woman’s Club of Palo Alto quickly responded: their 1914 minutes record that “…this was not the year to think too much of self…” The “ladies of the club” pledged support for Belgian refugees by raising and donating money for the Belgian Relief Fund in 1915 and 1916. The Woman’s Club sponsored the fruit booth at Palo Alto’s Belgian Fair, with proceeds directed to the CRB. At Castilleja, students also raised money for the cause and even “adopted” a Belgian orphan.

—Peggy McKee

Out Now! The 2017 PAHA Calendar

Back by popular demand, the 2017 PAHA Calendar will be available for pick-up at the November and December PAHA meetings. This year features another series of historic Palo Alto images from the Archives. The calendar is free to members and $15 for nonmembers.

Additional calendars are available for purchase at Bell’s Books, Books, Inc., and the PAHA Archives. An excellent gift before the New Year, but act quickly, as supplies are limited!

History Jaunts

“Thanks for all the memories” to Keeble & Shuchat Photography and staff for over 50 years of service to members of the photographic community. The Palo Alto Camera Club offers the community an opportunity to celebrate Keeble & Shuchat on Monday, November 14, 7:30-9:00 pm at the Palo Alto Art Center (Main Auditorium,) 1313 Newell Rd., Palo Alto. Admission is free; doors open at 7:00 pm. For more information, visit the Eventbrite website: http://bit.ly/2dsywOV.

Roble Rewind: A Look Back at Dance and Theater at Stanford On Wednesday, November 9, at 5:30 pm, Stanford’s Department of Theatre and Performing Studies, joined by the Stanford Historical Society, will celebrate the re-opening of Roble Gym. The event will be located at Roble Gym Studio Theater, 285 Santa Theresa St., Stanford. A panel of TAPS luminaries will launch the festivities, followed by a performance by Chocolate Heads Movement Band. For details and specifics about making reservations, visit the website historicalsociety.stanford.edu/events/roble-rewind-look-back-dance-and-theater-stanford.

“The Butterfly Effect: Art in 1970s California” is showing at the Palo Alto Art Center (1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto) through December 30, 2016. The title of this dynamic exhibition comes from mathematician Edward Norman Lorenz’s metaphor which suggests that something as tiny as the flutter of a butterfly’s wing could have enormous and unintended consequences. The exhibition celebrates the “rich and noisy decade” of the 1970s and examines “the empowerment of individuals, the transformation of community, divergent spiritual practices, the importance of optimism…and keeping a sense of possibility active.” Admission is free. For more information on hours and exhibition details, visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/csd/artcenter/exhibitions/current.asp.

“All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50” Don’t miss this exhibit, October 8, 2016 – February 12, 2017, at the Oakland Museum of California (1000 Oak St., Oakland, CA 94607). Many of us remember the 1960s and the cultural phenomenon of the Black Panthers, who awakened and energized a nation. This exhibit, reviewed and recommended by the New York Times, offers rare historical artifacts, first person accounts, and new contemporary art that show how the Black Panthers inspired culture, activism, and community empowerment. For information on tickets and hours, visit the site museumca.org/plan-your-visit.