Sunday, November 5, 2017, 2:00–4:00 pm
Lucie Stern Community Center ~ 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Celebrating 150 YEARS OF

Fifty years ago, Redwood City went all out to celebrate its centennial. This 10-month extravaganza kicked off with a high-noon chorus of fire engine sirens, air raid horns, and a noon whistle. Festivities continued throughout the year and included a parade, Admission Day barbecues, anniversary-themed Christmas decorations, dinners held at three venues around town, and a salute to industries of the future, featuring some names now familiar from “the past.”

Janet McGovern, our November speaker, pictured right, is a member of the committee that met last year to plan the celebration of Redwood City’s next major anniversary, its sesquicentennial. The actual date of the 150th anniversary of incorporation was in May, but events began in January, 2017 and will continue in December with the premiere of a film about the city’s history. A veteran newspaper reporter and the author of four local history books, including two on Redwood City, Janet will present an overview of the city’s history and describe what has gone on to mark a singular date in the history of San Mateo County’s first incorporated city.

Free and Open to the Public ★ refreshments served

JANET MCGOVERN
On becoming a Historian: San Rafael Mission and Me

We are fascinated with anniversaries, centennials, bicentennials, sesquicentennials, and Palo Alto’s upcoming quasquicentennial! Redwood City celebrates its sesquicentennial this year, which we honor in our November program. “Quasquicentennial”—125—is a new word for many of us. Palo Alto will celebrate its quasquicentennial anniversary in 2019, to honor the 125 years since its founding in 1894.

I would like to highlight the bicentennial anniversary of a place that is special to me. Mission San Rafael in Marin County was established in 1817. Of the 21 California missions, it has its own unusual history as the only one that evolved into a mission after serving a different purpose. It began as a hospital site in sunny Marin for the many sick Indians suffering from Mission Dolores’ cold and foggy climate. Later the Marin site was elevated to full mission status.

Mission San Rafael was the last mission established under Spanish rule. Mission San Francisco Solano, in Sonoma, was the final California mission, established when California was part of newly independent Mexico. Following secularization in the 1830s, the Mexican government seized the mission lands, and the properties fell into disrepair.

When California began the planning for its centennial in 1948, many of the California missions were in decrepit condition. While a good number were restored as part of the California Centennial Celebration, almost nothing remained of Mission San Rafael. A local historical group raised significant funding from the Hearst family, as well as others, and built a replica on the former site in downtown San Rafael.

When I was a child growing up in Marin, this replica of Mission San Rafael was the mission that helped fuel my interest in California history. For that reason, I celebrate its bicentennial this fall.

Walk Professorville with Trained Docents

The Professorville Historic District in Palo Alto describes an area of early faculty houses near the Stanford campus. In 1887, Leland Stanford sponsored Timothy Hopkins’ purchase of 740 acres of land to be plotted and developed as a university town. After the university opened in 1891, a number of early Stanford professors, wanting to own their property rather than lease campus sites, bought lots and built houses in a variety of architectural styles. Dutch Colonial predominates, alongside Colonial Revival and American Craftsman. Chicago architect Frank MacMurray designed the house at 450 Kingsley Ave. for physics Professor Fernando Sanford, complete with a Queen Anne corner tower and a Palladian window facing the street. The landmark “Sunbonnet House” at 1061 Bryant St., recognized by its cantilevered porch roof, was designed in 1899 by Bernard Maybeck for Emma Kellogg. A. B. Clark, art professor at Stanford (and father of Birge Clark), designed the stately house at 433 Melville Ave. for psychology professor Charles Henry Gilbert. The famous “HP Garage” is located in Professorville at 367 Addison Ave. The Grateful Dead had digs in Professorville as well! Don’t miss this opportunity to explore and experience Professorville with PAST on Sunday, October 29 at 10 am (see listing in this month’s Jaunts). — Peggy McKee

Leah McGarrigle has resigned from the PAHA Board after taking a position with the Packard Children’s Hospital. With her experience as a professional oral historian, she brought both knowledge and enthusiasm to our efforts in expanding our oral history program during her time on the board. We are appreciative of her service to the Association.
Adventurers Bravely Navigate San Francisquito Creek

The following remembrance by PAHA board member and long-time Palo Alto resident Jerry Tinney recalls the story of his father’s adventure down the San Francisquito Creek with two friends in February 1940.

Creek Adventure by Jerry Tinney

My memory of the event is fairly limited, as I was only seven years old. There wasn’t any discussion about this adventure until my mother loaded me into the Pontiac on Sunday morning February 4, 1940 and headed for San Francisquito Creek to locate the three adventuresome sailors.

We met up with the trio near the railroad bridge, next to the Palo Alto Tree and followed them by car along Palo Alto Avenue with a group of Huck Finn wannabees.

Probably for me, the highlight of the day was when my mother and I went out to the old Palo Alto Yacht Harbor and met with the Harbor Master, Mark Nessbit, and he took us out in the bay on his power boat to meet the weary trio at the mouth of San Francisquito Creek where it empties into the bay. He cast them a line and towed them back to the harbor to the cheers of their many supporters.

This adventure added another dimension to my dad’s many talents I wasn’t aware of. I knew him as an idyllic father, fine athlete and coach, musician, actor, photographer, and public figure… never as a Tom Sawyer.

Later in my life, we used to swim in the creek at the same spot in the picture. When the rain had subsided and the water level dropped, it left a perfect swimming hole for some local kids to have a fun day.

“Bent on a scientific mission, to wit, examination of the banks of the [San Francisquito] creek, they dipped the little craft (a flat-bottomed affair) into the swirling tide opposite the Stanford Golf Course and cast off.” Ray Tinney and Norris James are pictured above as they navigated the “hazardous and trying” rapids below the Big Tree (pictured far right). With the help of advice, the boat “road through swimmingly.” — as reported in the Palo Alto Times, February 17, 1940.
The Tall Tree, Newsletter of the Palo Alto Historical Association

Welcome New Members!
Susan McPartian
Sandra Peters

Join Us for our
December 2017 Meeting
Former mayor Karen Holman
will present
Palo Alto Vignettes
a perennial favorite!

Sunday, December 3, 2-4 pm
@ Lucie Stern Community Center

The Heritage Program for
November 2017 will feature
“Local Historical Associations
Bring Their Perspectives to PAHA”
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 at Cubberley,
Room K-7.

Hours: Tues. 4-8 pm, Thurs. 1-5 pm

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—while supporting our archiving, research and publishing efforts.

Individual $40 ~ Family $60 ~ Sustaining $75 ~ Business/Sponsor $150 ~ Life $500

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.

The Palo Alto Historical Association
P.O. Box 193
Palo Alto, CA 94302

History Jaunts for November

Once you have learned about the 150 year history of Redwood City at the November 5 general meeting, you may want to explore its past more thoroughly. Redwood City’s Historical Resources Advisory Committee has made this possible with its online publication of “The Path of History,” an illustrated brochure of suggested self-guided walking tours, complete with maps and thumbnail summaries of the sites along the way such as the San Mateo County Courthouse and the New Sequoia/Fox Theater. The “Path of History” download is available at redwoodcityhistory.org.

PAST Heritage Autumn Walks
Don’t miss the remaining Palo Alto Heritage walks of the season! On Saturday, October 28, Margaret Feuer will lead a PAST Heritage walk through downtown Palo Alto. To enjoy this free, docent-led walk, meet Margaret at 10 am sharp at City Hall Plaza, 250 Hamilton Ave. On Sunday, October 29 at 10 am PAST docents Kris Zavoli and Anne Gregor will lead a walk through Professorville. Meet at 1005 Bryant, the corner of Bryant and Addison in front of the Angell House. Read more about Professorville’s architecture on page 2!

The Repair Café is a free meeting place where you and a team of volunteer experts work together to fix such things as vacuums, bicycles, toys, and a myriad of electrical appliances. Repair Café encourages environmental responsibility in 1300 locations worldwide. Bring your local broken items Sunday, November 3, 11 am – 3 pm, to the Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. For more information, call (650) 321-1004 or visit repaircafe-paloalto.org.

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Redwood Creek, first used in 1851 as a channel for the lumber industry and center for shipbuilding, once flowed all the way to downtown Redwood City.

Lathrop House in downtown Redwood City is one of the Peninsula’s oldest mansions. It is an architectural treasure built in 1863 by the original landholders—the Arguello and Mezes families—and currently serves as home to the Redwood City Heritage Association. 627 Hamilton Avenue, Redwood City. Open House hours: 2nd Wednesday, 3rd Saturday every month, 11 am–3 pm. For more information, visit lathrophouse.org. For more historic photos of historic Redwood City courtesy of the Redwood City Heritage Association, check out the city’s “historic microsite” at redwoodcityhistory.org.

Lathrop House, home of the Redwood City Heritage Association in the downtown center.

Follow PAHA on social media!
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The Tall Tree, November 2017

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