The Palo Alto Historical Association presents

**ROCK AND ROLL IN PALO ALTO**

**Wednesday, June 5, 2019**  
6:00 – 9:00 pm

El Palo Alto Room  
Mitchell Park Community Center  
3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL DINNER EVENT!  
6:00 pm Social Hour  
6:45 pm Gourmet Chinese Buffet catered by Chef Chu’s  
New this year: A raffle with fun prizes from local Palo Alto businesses  
$75.00 per person, free parking

Please make reservations before May 29 on Eventbrite: https://paha-annual-dinner.eventbrite.com

Grace Slick described her Palo Alto neighborhood as “Leave It to Beaver,” referencing the TV series that began in 1957—the same year she graduated from Castilleja School. At the same time, the Kingston Trio, a local folk music group, got a gig at a local high school graduation dance. Eight years later, in August 1965, the Beatles spent the night in Palo Alto at the Cabaña after their concert at the Cow Palace. That December, the newly named Grateful Dead staged the first acid rock performance a little over two miles away. Many of the Palo Alto homes still exist where these handful of inspired ‘60s and ‘70s (and some ‘90s) rock musicians were raised—either in homes of the ‘40s, in ‘50s subdivision homes, and a few in century-old homes.

Join us for an exciting evening with Bo Crane who will be sharing his look at the fun history of rock and roll in Palo Alto based on his new booklet, “Ticket to Rock Palo Alto.” Bo chronicles the many remarkable musicians who had their start or performed in our community, focusing on their homes and neighborhoods—the backdrop to a counterculture that began musically in this area. “Ticket to Rock” is a ticket to the past and Palo Alto's historic contribution to rock and roll, helping shape Silicon Valley and the world in which we live.

Bo Crane grew up in Palo Alto, graduating from Paly in 1968 and Stanford University in 1972. Bo has been active in local historical associations including Palo Alto Stanford Heritage (PAST), the Menlo Park Historical Association, and is a PAHA member. His books include “The Life and Times of Dennis Martin” of which he spoke to PAHA in October 2015, and “The Streets of Menlo Park” published by the Menlo Park Historical Association.
**Highlights of the Past Year**

As PAHA’s annual dinner program approaches, signifying the last of the PAHA programs until October, we briefly reflect on some highlights of the past year.

**PAHA Guy Miller Archives**

This marks the end of our third year of Palo Alto Library’s funding. The funding has helped with expenses related to PAHA’s management of the city’s archives. The Library has been an excellent partner and its funding has made feasible many things that would otherwise have been impossible.

**Digitization of archival photos**

There are now more than 13,000 images available in our online Photograph Collection. These images are searchable, accessible, and free to the public. This has been an ongoing cooperative project with the Palo Alto Library.

**Finance**

After several years of tight financial reserves, our financial position has improved. Our reserves are expected to grow modestly by the end of our financial year in June. Late in 2018, Bob Strohecker took over the treasurer’s duties from long-serving Chris Botsford. Chris’ dedication has truly been commendable and the Board thanks him for his excellent support! Chris also was instrumental in working with the Board and the library to get the very welcome funding for the archives.

**Programs**

PAHA presented eight interesting and well-attended programs despite the challenge of using multiple venues (due to construction projects impacting access to the Lucie Stern Ballroom). The Palo Alto Art Center auditorium turned out to be a particularly satisfactory site for these programs.

**History of a History Book**

In the fall of 1993, PAHA published its book “Palo Alto: A Centennial History” as part of the City’s year long centennial celebration in 1994.

A group of PAHA members, including myself, spent six long years researching, writing, and re-writing the 300+ page book before it was unveiled at our Sunday meeting that fall.

Boyd Haight, a San Jose Mercury News writer and College Terrace resident, was our first leader in researching and writing this history book. There had been comprehensive histories of Palo Alto published in 1939 and 1952, a pictorial history in 1969, and a history of Palo Alto’s early years in 1989; but there was a great deal of “new” history of Palo Alto post WWII that needed coverage. Paul Gullixson (of the Peninsula Times Tribune and later Palo Alto Weekly) joined the team following Boyd Haight’s death in 1989.

For several years we met in the kitchen of Gain John’s home on Embarcadero Road, reviewing drafts of chapters on early history, religion, and schools. We asked local writers to research and prepare chapters on topics known to them. Jay Thorwaldson wrote the chapter on health, Gary Fazzino on Palo Alto’s politics, and I researched and drafted the chapter on transportation. Ruth Wilson, the retired PAHA historian, researched and advised on many topics. Lois Brennner and Betty Rogaway (the PAHA president) were active members of the committee.

Eventually we had a manuscript that had been reviewed and revised numerous times, with an emphasis on historic accuracy. We sent the manuscript to community members with knowledge and interest in Palo Alto’s history (Continued on page 3)
I first met Albert Wilson at my friend Fred Brown’s cabinet shop on Fife Avenue in Palo Alto. At the time, Albert was living a few doors down the street from the shop and would come over to hang out with Fred. I later built a new fireplace at Albert’s house on Creek Drive in Menlo Park.

Albert Wilson (August 1903 - March 8, 1996) was an American botanist, landscape architect, author, teacher, and lecturer on gardening and landscaping, as well as a radio and TV personality. He wrote several books popularizing gardening including “Distinctive Trees, Shrubs and Vines in Gardens of the SF Peninsula” (1938), “How Does Your Garden Grow” (1949), and “Gardeners all in California” (1953). He also published an autobiography of his early life, “These Were the Children” (1963).

Wilson grew up in San Francisco at an orphanage. He earned his bachelor’s degree in botany in 1934 and his master’s degree in biology, both at Stanford University. His first job in San Francisco was as a Saturday delivery boy for a Powell Street florist carrying greens, flowers and potted plants along the sidewalks and up to the front doors of some of San Francisco’s elegant mansions.

He landed in Palo Alto after encouragement from some older friends. There he found apricots to pick, lawns to cut, windows to wash, and botany to study at the university. He went to work at a local nursery after graduation. It was there he learned and enjoyed designing and sketching gardens for people.

Working on a garden in Palo Alto for John Elwood (manager for KNBC in northern California) led Albert to a microphone and a broadcasting career. Albert had a regular talk show, “Dig it with Albert” on KGO Radio which followed his original show called “How Does Your Garden Grow”.

He was a frequent guest lecturer at garden and civic clubs in the Bay Area as he had a unique ability to make plants entertaining even to a non-gardener.

He designed and built a home in 1929 on Creek Drive in Menlo Park. As a landscape architect, Albert designed the landscape at Allied Arts and Fremont Park in Menlo Park, and countless gardens throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Wilson died at the age of 93 after apparently falling down a steep bank into the San Francisquito Creek across from his Menlo Park home.

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History Jaunts for the Spring & Summer

PAST (Palo Alto Stanford Heritage) offers its last walking tour of the season with a new outing, “Just Beyond Professorville”. Join Bo Crane at 10:00 am on Saturday, June 1 at 1325 Cowper (corner of Melville) to learn about some of the more unusual houses and the families who lived there.

The Museum of American Heritage announces its annual summer concert series with events in June, July, and August. MOAH is located at 351 Homer Ave., in Palo Alto’s “historic corridor.” The performances include The Peralta Consort on June 6, classical guitarist Yuri Liberson on July 11, and Rive Gauche on August 8. The events are free to MOAH members and $10 (cash only) for non-members; wine and light refreshments are served at the events, which begin at 7:00 pm. For more information, call (650) 321-1004 or visit www.moah.org.

Celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad are continuing at various local locations. The Oakland Museum features an exhibit Pushing West: The Photography of Andrew J. Russell (through September 1), 1000 Oak Street, Oakland www.museumca.org. The California Historical Society presents two concurrent exhibits—Westward the Course of Empire and Overland to California (through September 8), 678 Mission Street, San Francisco www.californiahistoricalsociety.org.

PAHA President Ralph Britton is leaving the Board

After leading PAHA for five years, Ralph has decided to move to the San Diego area. His son and family live in San Diego, so it will be an enjoyable relocation. His current plan is to move in August or September. We are sad he cannot continue as President, but happy he will be near family and new friends.

The Board is starting a search for a new President to replace Ralph.