



# The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

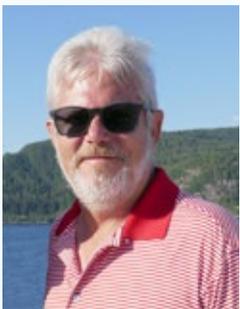
March 2020 Volume 43, No 5

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents

## ALPINE INN: THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF A LOCAL LANDMARK



Sunday, March 8, 2020 2:00 to 4:00 pm  
Palo Alto Art Center - 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto



Steve Staiger  
PAHA Historian

The March 2020 program will feature our Historian, Steve Staiger, recalling the history of the beloved roadhouse in Portola Valley with many names. The Alpine Inn, also known as Rossotti's, Zott's and many other names during its 168 years of providing refreshing beverages, is a local landmark.

From its beginning as a hang-out for local Californios, the roadhouse has served generations of local residents,

Stanford students and staff, and numerous travelers who have arrived by car, motorcycle, bicycle and horseback.

The Alpine Inn reopened this past summer after a change in ownership and renovation, and is continuing its long history as a local watering hole and hangout.

Last Fall, Steve presented this program to the Stanford Historical Society. While the talk was immensely popular, space was limited. Join us for this encore presentation co-sponsored by Menlo Park Historical Association and the Portola Valley Historic Resources Committee.

**Free and Open to the Public ~ Refreshments Served**



**Darla Secor**  
PAHA Historian

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# Letter from the Archives

When I started volunteering at PAHA four years ago, one of the first projects I began to help with was PAHA’s photograph digitization project. The project was initially started in 1999 with help from the Palo Alto City Library, and in 2004 we received a Legacy Fund grant from Cable Co-op to continue our program of digitizing and cataloging the photos.

As I began helping, I discovered how time intensive the process of digitizing can be. We have steady donations of photos to the archives, but being able to identify people and time periods can be a challenge (a reminder to everyone to date and label their photos—your grandchildren and great grandchildren will thank you!).

After we gather a collection of eligible photos, we scan them all individually, reformat them, and write descriptions of each photo so they can be accessed online by subject and keyword searches.

In January, we also took over the cataloging process for our photos, which in the past has been done by the Palo Alto City Library.

It’s hard to calculate or even imagine how many hours of work has gone into

getting our current 14,000 photos online. We have been fortunate to have great volunteers, support from the Library, and we also have a tremendous resource in PAHA board member Brian George, who has been driving our digitizing program these past few years and making sure we keep our goal of processing 100 photos per month.



Recently, we received training at Mitchell Park Library in their Vintage Media Lab and now have access to equipment that can digitize slides. We are excited to be able to add our many carousels of slides to the collection.

Our online photo collection is, in my opinion, PAHA’s most valuable asset. If you haven’t yet searched or browsed our collection at [www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org), check it out. And if you have photos you would like to add to the collection, we welcome your donations!

## Memories of Palo Alto Bowl

by PAHA Board member, Amanda Brown

One of my favorite memories of growing up in Palo Alto was going to Palo Alto Bowl when my mom would attend her league games. While attending, as a pre-teen, I always thought it was kind of funny that she was one of the youngest ones on the team. Many of the ladies in her league were already retired and used league games to socialize with their friends.

Over the summers and random days off from school, I was armed with a limited handful of change for the arcade and a book for when I would immediately lose at the Area 51 game—it was one of the memories I cherish.

While it seems simple and pretty dull to some, it was one of the few times my mom got to do something for herself.

Bowling is Americana at its finest. When



Fiesta Lanes Bowl, mid-1960s

the alley first opened on El Camino, it was under the name Fiesta Lanes Bowl and renamed as Palo Alto Bowl in later years. The alley was always a popular place to spend time, especially during the summers as a teen. It had been a staple of my family’s entertainment for decades being the host of (continued on page 3)

*The Palo Alto Historical Association, a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization, was established in 1948 as successor to an earlier organization founded in 1913. Its main objectives are:*

- *Collect, organize, and preserve materials pertaining to the history and heritage of Palo Alto.*
- *Spread information about Palo Alto’s history by means of programs, displays, and publications.*
- *Recognize and preserve historic sites and structures.*

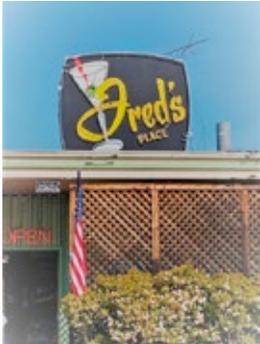
*The Guy Miller Archives of the Palo Alto Historical Association are stored at Cubberley Community Center, K-7, Phone (650) 329-2353.*

*Board meetings are held at 4pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Guy Miller Archives. Public programs are held at 2pm on the first Sunday of each month (October-December, February-May) at various locations in Palo Alto. Programs include speakers. The final program of the year is held in June and includes a dinner and a program. The public is welcome at all programs.*

## *A Toast to Palo Alto: A look at favorite gathering spots over the years*

### **The Making of Fred's Place**

**#4 in a series by PAHA Board member, Jeff Day**



The current Fred's Place

In this series of “gathering spots” in Palo Alto, we can't forget one of the older establishments still around today—Fred's Place. Fred Mayer opened his cocktail lounge at 3924 El Camino Real in the mid-1950s. Today, this address is known as the Siam restaurant next to Happy Donuts.

Located beyond the “one mile rule” Stanford imposed on Palo Alto, Fred's Place served drinks outside of the city limits of Palo Alto local laws. Fred also had a business deal with Dittmer Bubert through which Fred's Place marketed the business as, “Fred's Place: House of Sausage and Fine Spirits,” serving Dittmer's local handmade sausages.

Michele “Mike” Rossi's Liquor Store was near the original El Camino Real location and these two businesses developed a relationship that helped Fred's be what it is today. Mike Rossi later built a building on Old Middlefield Road in Mountain View and moved his liquor store there. He wanted Fred to move his bar next to him, and Fred agreed. Fred's Place relocated to 2534 Old Middlefield Road in Mountain View in 1960 and remains in the same location today.

In 1965, Fred sold the place to Mike Rossi and the business was then soon sold again to Ray Bernier who kept bar for 25 years. In 2001, Pauli Partti and Chang Cho bought Fred's Place as well as some nearby buildings. Pauli also managed Dinah's Shack from 1980 until the building was condemned in 1989 after the Loma Prieta earthquake.

If you go inside Fred's Place today, you will notice a long table called, “The Red Dog Table”, which has brass plaques of “member” names. Some of the original patrons of that table still frequent the bar.

Time has passed and there are some original “Red Dog Table” members that continue to visit.

In the past, Fred's Place was a local hangout, where Fairchild Semiconductor employees could unwind after their day. More recently, it was the place where the founders of PayPal put their minds together to form an internet company which created a safer way to pay for things online without having to enter credit card information! The establishment has evolved and endured with the ever-changing times.



The Red Dog Table in the middle of Fred's Place

Fred's Place offers trivia night on Mondays, karaoke night on Thursdays, all kinds of sports on TV, a small pool table in the back, and every kind of beverage. The décor is full of 49er and other sporting memorabilia, with a seat for everyone. Fred's Place is a real true local treasure that has lasted since the 1950s. Fred's Place is where friends meet!



*THE EDITORS would like to thank Jeff Day for his terrific contributions to the Tall Tree. His articles on the history of some of our local bars and restaurants have been a fun series! If anyone else has ideas for other series or articles you think might be of interest, please contact us at [pahatalltree@gmail.com](mailto:pahatalltree@gmail.com).*



(Continued from page 2) several birthday parties, employment for cousins, and the source of PE credits for those of us at Foothill College. The bowling alley was once a common meeting place where people from various walks of life were able to socialize; veterans, seniors, high school kids, and special needs groups could meet up and find some entertainment in town.

However, the march of progress and development can tend to bulldoze over the past. The bowling alley was prime building space, as is pretty much every acre in Palo Alto now. When the announcement was released that Palo Alto Bowl was indeed closing, many long-time patrons were at a loss to find their once *home away from home* would no longer be there for them.

## History Jaunts for the Spring

Don't miss the exhibit now at **Hoover Tower** through July 31, 2020. In celebration of its centennial, the Hoover Institution features "Hoover@100: Ideas Defining A Century in Hoover Tower." The exhibition showcases documents and artifacts centered on the ideas of peace, freedom, and education. Posters, correspondence, photographs, and manuscripts enrich the visitor's experience, at the same time as honoring the Hoovers' vision. Hoover Tower is located at 434 Galvez Mall on the Stanford University campus and is free and open to the public every day, 10 am – 4 pm. For more information, call (650) 723-1754 or visit [www.hoover.org/events/hoover100-ideas-defining-century](http://www.hoover.org/events/hoover100-ideas-defining-century).



Source: Wikipedia

Palo Alto's own **Museum of American Heritage (MOAH)** continues its lecture series with two upcoming programs. "A Historic Garden from Past to Present" will be held on Thursday, April 9 at 7:00 pm. Betsy Fryberger will describe how the location of MOAH, the Williams property, was originally a private garden and is now a City of Palo Alto public garden. This garden is where Palo Alto Garden Club volunteers work to restore, preserve, and tend to this Palo Alto treasure. On Thursday, May 14 at 7:00 pm, MOAH President Jim Wall will introduce "Cringeworthy and Bizarre Artifacts," featuring interesting oddities from the MOAH collection. MOAH is located at 351 Homer Avenue in Palo Alto. The lectures are free to members, and a \$10 (cash only) donation is requested from non-members. For more information, visit [www.moah.org](http://www.moah.org) or call (650) 321-1004.

Volunteers at the **Palo Alto Art Center** are enthusiastic about the new exhibit "Trees in Contemporary Art," January 25 – April 5, 2020! It seems an opportune moment to celebrate our own "tall tree," El Palo Alto—a 110-foot-tall, 1100-year old coastal redwood. As well, trees are an integral part of our town's history, including the Canopy Project, Trees for Palo Alto, and the 36,000 city trees that presently enrich our community and its landscape. The Art Center will introduce visitors to its own collection of unique and wondrous trees and will also provide a map so you can explore on your own. The Palo Alto Art Center is located at 1313 Newell Road and is free and open to the public, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am - 5 pm, Thursday 10 am - 9 pm, and Sunday 1 pm - 5 pm. For more information call (650) 329-2366.



Source: Palo Alto Online

### Welcome New Members!

DiBrienza Consulting  
Mark Hancock  
Ronald Pellegrini  
Duane Shewaga

### PAHA Upcoming Programs

April 5: Nick Marinaro will speak about the history of the Palo Alto Fire Department

May 3: PAHA/PAST celebration of 1920 Centennial Buildings, presentation of Awards for Historic Preservation/Restoration, and a guest speaker

June 10: PAHA annual dinner, and 50th anniversary of Gryphon Music

**The Heritage Program** for March will feature PAHA's January 26 program "How Palo Alto Impacted My Life: The Game Would Not End" with Dave Newhouse.

Airs on Channels 28 or 30 on various days and times. It is simultaneously streamed on the Media Center website [www.midpenmedia.org](http://www.midpenmedia.org)  
Check website for schedule

DVDs available from the Guy Miller Archives, Cubberley Community Center, K-7  
Tues. 4-8 pm, Thurs. 1-5 pm

### In Memoriam

A special thank you to PAHA member Don Price for his generous donation in memory of his wife, Diethild (Dee) Price, who passed away on December 11, 2019.



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The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



Betty Gerard, Peggy McKee, Luana Staiger, Melissa Verber, *Editorial*  
Jon Kinyon, *Editorial & Design*  
Omega Printing, *Printing*

Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.