



Since 1913

The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

May 2021 Volume 44, No 7

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents via Zoom Webinar

Celebrating 100 Years with the Garden Club of Palo Alto



Garden Club of Palo Alto members help spruce up the planting area at the north entrance to Palo Alto, 1987

Sunday, May 2 2:00 to 3:00 pm

Webinar link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86239081411>



Join us via Zoom for PAHA's presentation featuring the Garden Club of Palo Alto, and hear about its many contributions to the city over the past 100 years.

Most people will agree that Palo Alto is one of the loveliest cities around! Driving, walking or riding a bike through its leafy streets, past its verdant gardens and well-landscaped public spaces encourages people to fall under the spell of its beauty.

Among its populace, there is a passion for plants and greenery of all kinds. It is therefore not hard to understand why the Garden Club

of Palo Alto has thrived for 100 years in this special place.

Please join PAHA along with our speaker Ellie Thomas, President of the Garden Club of Palo Alto, on May 2nd to hear about the many contributions made over the years by this extraordinary group of women and how the vision they developed is still relevant in today's modern and fast-paced society.

For more information about our programs and for Zoom instructions, please visit our website at www.pahistory.org

**2020 PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Georgie Gleim, *President*
Rich Green, *Vice President*
Molly Tinney, *Correspondence Secretary*
Bo Crane, *Recording Secretary*
Robert Strohecker, *Treasurer*
Darla Secor, *Historian*
Steve Staiger, *Historian*
Colleen Braff
Amanda Brown
Jeff Day
Anita Delaney
Dennis Garcia
Brian George
Betty Gerard
Catherine Hamrick-Down
Lisa Krieger
Leslie Mills
Heather Pang
Jerry Tinney
Melissa Verber

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. Although PAHA continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the current restrictions, the Archive is only open for prearranged appointments. To contact the Archive or to make an appointment to visit, email steve.staiger@cityofpaloalto.org or call (650) 329-2353.

Until further notice, PAHA board meetings are held via Zoom Meeting at 4pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except August). Public programs are held via Zoom Webinar at 2pm on the first Sunday of each month (October-December, February-May). Program information and webinar links are available in the Tall Tree newsletters and on our website, www.pahistory.org. The public is welcome to join all programs.

Gorilla at the Archives

By PAHA Board Member Jeff Day

After 49 years, Antonio's Nut House on California Avenue permanently closed its doors last August. One of the bar's long time "regulars" was a caged mechanical gorilla that served peanuts to customers! While the rest of the contents of Antonio's were destined to be auctioned off after the closing, I knew the gorilla needed a home in Palo Alto.

I asked one of the business owner's if I could have the gorilla for PAHA and the future Palo Alto Museum on Homer Avenue. She told me her dad, Tony Montooth (legendary Antonio's owner who died in 2017), would have liked that idea.

An auction house eventually came in and removed items from the bar, but they also grabbed the gorilla by mistake! I had to go to their warehouse in Oakland and retrieve the gorilla and its tape recorded voice of Tony Montooth. Traffic was backed up as we traveled over the Bay Bridge in my truck with the gorilla in the truck bed. The gorilla



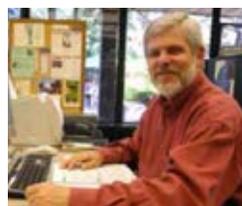
The gorilla's temporary home in the PAHA Archives

did make a visit to Fred's Place one evening just for fun, but the next day I brought it to the city's historic Guy Miller Archives at Cubberley where it was welcomed with open arms!

The gorilla is now temporarily atop the file cabinets in the Archives where it poses with a paper lei around its neck, and a "Please don't feed the animals" sign at its feet. Soon after it arrived, a young boy was invited into the Archive with his father to see the gorilla. At first the child looked a bit concerned, but his face lit

up with a smile at the sight of a big gorilla standing atop of the file cabinets!

When COVID restrictions are relaxed, and we can welcome more visitors to the Archives, we hope many of you will come by and see the gorilla and check out the other visual and historic material in the room. The Archives are located at the Cubberley Community Center, Room K-7, 4000 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.



**FROM THE DESK OF
Steve Staiger,
City Historian**

As a teenager, Crystal had been an alternate on the United States Olympic swimming team for the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. She came to Palo Alto in 1944 when her husband, Walt Gamage, was hired as the sports editor of the Palo Alto Times.

Crystal then soon began a long active role in Palo Alto's community and business life. Besides raising three daughters, she was an active member of numerous social and business organizations. Her involvement included the Friends of the Palo Alto Library in the late 1940s, Executive Director of

PAHA recently learned of the death of Crystal Gamage, a long-time Palo Alto resident and former president of PAHA who passed away on February 18, 2021 at the age of 101.

Downtown Palo Alto Inc., campaign leader for United Way, and serving on the boards of La Comida, Channing House, and MOAH (Museum of American Heritage). She also held the vice president and president's positions for both AAUW and the League of Women Voters.



Crystal Gamage, 1989

She was on the PAHA board in the 1980s and 90s, where she was on the panel that interviewed and hired me as the city's historian in 1984 to replace retiring historian Ruth Wilson. She was the PAHA president in 1996.

I always enjoyed talking with Crystal. At the age of 100, her memory was as sharp as anyone half her age. She could recall details and names of events 30 or 60 years ago as if they were yesterday. She will be missed.

Recollections of My Years Working at the Palo Alto Times

by PAHA Past-President, Ralph Britton

Growing up in Palo Alto, my first job as a teenager was as a newspaper carrier for The Palo Alto Times, starting in 1947. Common all over the country, local youth were regularly hired to deliver papers, but due to laws restricting child labor, the Times defined us as “independent merchants.” I delivered the afternoon paper six days a week by bike. Each month I would go house-to-house to collect money. Customers were billed at a specified monthly charge, and the paperboy’s profit was the difference between that and the fixed per-paper charge they billed us.

Because there was still a shortage of delivery trucks in 1947, the paper bought Ford Model As, took the seats out, and used them to deliver the bundles of papers to the homes of the delivery boys. The ancient horn’s ARRUGAH sound notified the boys that the bundle was there. If I needed to get an early start for some reason, I could pick up my papers as they came off the press at the Times office.



Palo Alto Times building, corner of Hamilton Avenue and Ramona Street, 1949

The Palo Alto Times building, then located at the corner of Hamilton Ave. and Ramona St., contained all the equipment needed for producing the

paper, including a 16-page web press. Over time, the building became overcrowded and the press obsolete. Due to its limited capacity, they often had to print the paper in two press runs and the delivery boys had to insert the two sections together before delivery. To remedy the situation, the Times built a much larger building at the corner of Lytton Ave. and Ramona St., designed by Birge Clark. It had room for a new press with 24-page capacity and could run at more than 20,000 papers per hour.

The Times also hired me as a mailer. The pay was 65 cents per hour, but I soon got a raise to 75 cents. If there was an extra press run, I would occasionally serve as fly boy, pulling the papers off the conveyor from the pressroom.

About the time I graduated from high school in the early 1950s, the paper offered me a job as a relief driver, delivering bundled papers to the carrier boys. This job paid \$2.00 per hour, which was quite good at the time. The relief drivers also managed the district when the manager was on vacation. Charles Tyler was a competent organizer and a skilled personnel manager, who oversaw the Circulation Department. I still consider him the best boss I ever had. Since I spent a fair amount of time at the Times’ office, I came to know many of the people there and became familiar with the operation.

The paper was owned by Peninsula Newspapers Incorporated (PNI), which also owned the Redwood City

Tribune and the Burlingame Advance. Dallas Wood and George Morell came to Palo Alto from Merced, CA and invested in the paper in 1919.



Elinor Cogswell, 1958

Eugene Bishop was the publisher of the Times, Elinor Cogswell was the editor and J. E. Paulson ran the editorial department. Elinor Cogswell also wrote a column titled EVC at Bat and Dallas Wood wrote a column titled The Prowler. Both Cogswell and Wood were Stanford graduates. Wood was the editor until Cogswell took over in 1938. Wood

used to stop by occasionally to reminisce and even play his guitar. Al Bodi took over as editor when Cogswell retired as editor, but she continued to write for the paper. Two of the reporters I remember were Walt Gamage as sports editor, and Ward (Dode) Winslow as a city reporter.

Gene Tupper was the paper’s photographer and had a darkroom in the basement. He used the typical 4”x 5” Speed Graphic press camera with the newly developed electronic flash. Gene was truly an artist, with the ability to produce fine pictures often under demanding conditions. A Paly graduate, he was always willing to share his pictures with the Palo Alto High School Campanile and Madroño publications.

The Times’ archive, known as The Morgue, was managed by Guy Miller. A copy of the day’s paper was preserved as a bound volume for each year. The archive still exists and is part of PAHA’s collection known as the Guy Miller Archives.

In a way, I feel the Times was a victim of the generosity of the owners. They set up one of the first Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) in California whereby the employees could, through payroll deductions, buy stock in the company. Eventually the employees had control of the company. However, soon thereafter, the Chicago Tribune made an offer for the stock at an attractive price that a majority of shareholder-employees agreed to, ending local ownership.



Palo Alto Times production room, 1941

The Chicago Tribune eventually merged the Palo Alto Times with the Redwood City Tribune in 1979 and operated it as the Peninsula Times Tribune until it closed in 1993 due to falling readership. A venerable community resource and a fine newspaper had sadly come to an end.

Jaunting for Real!

Although there is cause for optimism these days, those who want to jaunt in real time in a real place will still need to check websites or telephone numbers of the suggested jaunts before they go. Appointments may be required, operating hours may have changed, and pandemic protocols may remain in place.

The **Cantor Arts Center and the Anderson Collection** on the Stanford campus opens to the public at 25% capacity on April 21. Free, but timed tickets are required. The Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts is located at 328 Lomita Drive at Museum Way, Stanford. The Anderson Collection is at 314 Lomita Drive, Stanford. <https://museum.stanford.edu/museums-home>



Image courtesy of arts.stanford.edu

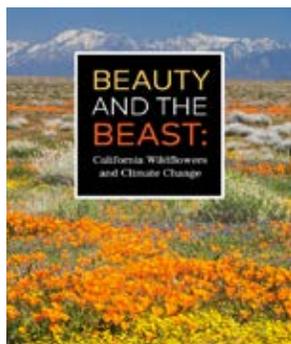


Image courtesy of LosAltosHistory.org

The **Los Altos History Museum** presents *Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change* from March 6 – July 11. Award-winning photographers Rob Badger and Nita Winter spent over 20 years capturing images of California’s vanishing wildflowers. Their book is available at the Museum shop. The exhibition marks the reopening of the museum’s indoor gallery at its new reduced hours, Sat and Sun, noon-4pm. The Los Altos History Museum is located at 51 S. San Antonio Rd., Los Altos. Check before you go regarding appointments and pandemic protocols by telephone, (650) 948-9427, or visit the website <https://www.losaltoshistory.org>.

At San José’s **History Park**, visitors can take a step back in time. Maintained by History San José at Kelly Park, the historical and cultural campus features 19 partner organizations, each of which tells the story of its own role in the city’s development. The 14-acre site, with its paved streets, running trolleys, and a café, offers a wealth of activities and experiences. Located at 1650 Senter Road, the park is free and open to the public Mon-Fri, 12-5pm, Sat-Sun, 11 am-5pm. Some special events charge a fee. For up-to-date information on History Park and pandemic protocols, call (408) 287-2290 or visit the website <https://www.historysanjose.org/wp/>



Image courtesy of History San José at Kelly Park

Upcoming Zoom Webinar Program
June 6, 2:00-3:00, to be announced
Check our website at www.pahistory.org for program information

Previous PAHA Programs
If you missed the April 11th program, *Mama Garcia’s and “Roadhouse Valley,”* you can find this and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo by following this link: <https://vimeo.com/522705423>

The Heritage Program
This month’s heritage program features *Mama Garcia’s and “Roadhouse Valley.”* This program airs on Channel 28 or 30 at various times and is simultaneously streamed on the Midpen Media Center website, midpenmedia.org/heritage. Check website for schedule.

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



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

Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.

GLEIM THE JEWELER
EST. 1931
gleimjewelers.com

ALHOUSE DEATON Celebrating 60+ years of success!
Commercial Real Estate Property Management
230 California Avenue, Suite 212
Palo Alto, CA 94306
(650) 494-4467 www.alhousedeaton.com