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The Tall Tree

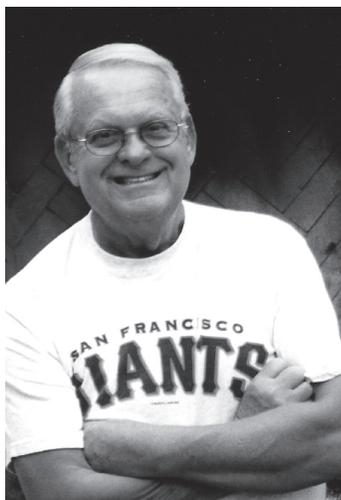
PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, October 1 at 2:00 p.m.
Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Free & open to the public
Cookies & coffee

The 1950s: The Growth of Palo Alto and Its Schools After World War II



SPEAKER:
Bob French, Ph.D.
Retired Teacher and Principal
Palo Alto Unified Schools

GIs returning from World War II had a tremendous impact on Palo Alto. Those who settled here in the late '40s and early '50s transformed the town of Palo Alto into a city. This year the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA) programs will explore the transformations that occurred during this period.

To begin our year, Dr. Bob French, retired Palo Alto School district teacher and administrator, will present an interactive portrayal of some events of the Palo Alto schools and community during the World War II years through the mid-1950s. Bob will be assisted by Beth Bunnenburg and other longtime members of the community.

This kickoff will set the stage for our focus on the tremendous period of expansion and new families and the need for more school sites and facilities. A former PAHA board member, Bob continues to work on history projects with students and schools, and is well qualified to report on the many changes which took place.



Teacher Bob French's 1968-69 Student Body Card, Jordan Junior High School

The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Susan Bright Winn, *Editor*
Harriette Shakes, *Design*
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The Palo Alto Historical Association, a 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 the Main Library, 1213 Newell Road.

Board meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month (except for August) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 4 p.m.

General meetings are held the first Sunday of each month (Oct.–Dec., Feb.–May) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 2 p.m. The final general meeting of the year is held in June and includes a dinner and a program. The public is welcome at all meetings.

PAHA HERITAGE PROGRAMS
≡ CHANNEL 30 ≡

SCHEDULE

Wednesdays 8:00 p.m.
Thursdays Noon
Saturdays 1:00 p.m.

Videos of past PAHA meetings can be checked out from the Main Library's History Desk during historian's hours:

Tuesday evenings
Thursday afternoons

**ON A
PERSONAL
NOTE**

**Susan
Bright Winn**

PRESCHOOL FAMILY, A PALO ALTO INSTITUTION, CELEBRATES ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY.

When I first moved to Palo Alto in 1965, a friend told me about Preschool Family, run by the Palo Alto Adult School as an evening class for parents who would also attend classes with their preschoolers during the day. I had never heard of a preschool program that involved the parents in this way, where early childhood education for the parents was as much a part of the program as was the class for the children.

Sunday, September 6, 2006, Preschool Family celebrated its sixtieth anniversary at its own campus at 4120 Middlefield Road, with many former students, teachers and parents present. School Board President Mandy Moore declared that Preschool Family served not only as an extended family for participants, but also as training for community volunteers. Others present included parent (now County Superintendent) Liz Kniss, parent (and former mayor) Betsy Bechtel, and teachers Beth Bunnenberg, Virginia Debs and Joan Mather. Mayor Judy Kleinberg noted that she had moved to Palo Alto just after her children outgrew preschool age and she therefore had missed the Preschool Family experience, much to her disappointment.

The late Betty Rogaway was affiliated with Palo Alto schools for years (see photo with Bob French, p. 4), and she served as director of Preschool Family. Upon retirement from the school district, Betty turned her attention to the Palo Alto Historical Association where she served as president of the board of directors for several years, during which time she contacted former Preschool Family teacher Beth Bunnenberg and parent Judy Leahy as well as myself to become involved with PAHA.

PAUSD serves as a model for schools everywhere, and 60 years of preschool education is a special feather in its cap. Preschool Family is indeed a fine old Palo Alto institution.

**FROM THE
DESK OF
Steve Staiger
Historian**

IN THE PAST I HAVE USED THIS COLUMN TO REQUEST DONATIONS of Palo Alto-related images to the Guy Miller Archives. The results have been impressive. Over the years hundreds of images have been donated to the collection. Now 1,500 of our photographs can be viewed on the Association's website, www.pahistory.org.

We have also collected several films or home movies relating to Palo Alto over the years. PAHA board member Brian George has had a long interest in film. In addition to recording and editing our monthly meetings for showing on Channel 30, Brian has taken 16mm films in our collection and transferred them to a digital format. We will be seeing the results of his work at future meetings.

Brian and I have now begun a project to seek out old home movies and capture them digitally for the archives. We know that there must be old movies tucked away in closets or chests that would be of interest to PAHA and its members. If you have home movies of May Fete parades, Little League games, or other films which reflect the daily life of an earlier Palo Alto, we want them. If you no longer need them, we will be happy to receive your donated film, or we may borrow them to make copies for the archives. As an added bonus, we may be able to provide you with a digital copy (a DVD) to share with family members. Talk to Brian or me if you are interested in helping with this interesting project.

IN MEMORIAM, JOHN BRACKEN

PALO ALTO EDUCATOR

Last April, past president of PAHA John Bracken died at the age of 90. The Historical Association offers condolences to John's family, and thanks that he served the Palo Alto community so well.

John lived a life of dedication to his family and to his community. John was born on March 23, 1916 in Filer, Idaho, at age two moved to Duluth, Minnesota, and thence to Clayton Missouri, where his father served as superintendent of schools for 33 years. John attended the University of Chicago (B.A. Economics, 1937; M.A. International Relations 1946). Subsequently he studied education at Stanford University.

In the summer of 1941, John enlisted as private in infantry, and retired as Major. After brief forays into government services and journalism, John decided on education as a career, with his first position at Cranbrook School, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He taught high school social studies for two years in Elko, Nevada and three years in San Francisco (Commerce and Galileo High) before settling in Palo Alto. John served one year at Addison Elementary School, two at Wilbur Junior High School and a year as administrative intern for Superintendent Henry M. Gunn before assignments as principal at Barron Park Elementary School. Subsequent assignments, for a total of 17 years, were at Garland and Fairmeadow Elementary Schools. John retired from the PAUSD in 1975.

John's philanthropic and volunteer contributions only increased following his retirement. John was a longstanding member and past president of the PAHA, and past president of the Palo Alto Rotary Club. In 1994 John authored the book *Neighbors Abroad of PA: A History 1962-1994* which describes Neighbor's Abroad work with sister cities in Mexico, France, Sweden, the Netherlands and the Philippines. John also devoted much of his time to music in local schools, serving nine years as chair of PA Youth Recitals. John thrived on helping children with their life skills, academics and their music. He, along with his wife Marion, devoted much of their lives to the rights, care and quality of life for the developmentally disabled at Agnews Developmental Center in San Jose.

John had an intense love of literature, music, history, travel and sports. He loved to play the piano and trombone, and was a member of the Peninsula Symphonic Band for many years. He was an avid Stanford sports fan. John will always be remembered for the gentleman he was, his dry wit and humor, his deep memory of historical events, his love and compassion for his family and all of those around him, as well as his local and international philanthropic gestures and donations. John was active, physically, mentally and with the community, just weeks prior to his death. One of his last moments included a 90th birthday celebration, held for him at the Rotary Club.

John is survived by his sister, Peg Bracken of Portland, Oregon, daughter Heather Bracken of Citrus Heights, California, and sons Brendan and John Wesley Bracken of San Jose.

pahistory.org

The number of Palo Alto photographs on our website (*pahistory.org*) continues to increase, now nearing 1,500! The project of preparing our photograph collection for the web progresses through the digitizing the photos, creation of the CDs, cataloguing the material and placing the images online. We are always thankful to Cable Coop for their grant which helped with financing and our volunteers. Take a look at the fruits of their labor, and watch the computerized collection grow.



John McQuesten Bracken
March 23, 1916 – April 13, 2006

Membership Renewals

A reminder to those who have yet to renew their memberships and thanks to those who have already renewed. The return numbers are healthy, but of course we are aiming for a hundred percent!



Seeking a New Tall Tree Coordinator

We are seeking to fill the position of Tall Tree Coordinator. The mechanisms for producing The Tall Tree are all in place. What we need is someone to oversee the process and make sure that everything gets done in a timely manner.

The Tall Tree is published eight times a year (October, November, December, February, March, April, May and June). Harriette Shakes does the graphics, and Omega Printing does the production, both here in Palo Alto.

Here Bob French is shown dressed as early Palo Alto settler John Parkinson, standing with Betty Rogaway as Anna Zschokke, founder of Palo Alto Schools, during the 1994 Centennial celebration in a old time classroom setting.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A PAHA MEMBER?

Here's how... Pick up a brochure at any library or one of our general meetings. Or, send your name, address, phone number and email address to

PAHA, P.O. Box 193
Palo Alto, CA 94302

with a check for your choice of membership: Individual: \$25; Family: \$40; Sustaining: \$60; Business: \$100; Life: \$350.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Frances Dias
Betty Seike
George Kelly



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