

APRIL 2008
VOLUME 31
NUMBER 6

The Tall Tree

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, April 6 at 2:00 p.m.

Free & open to the public

Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

The Palo Alto Film Festival



Brian George, PAHA videographer and Palo Alto Film Festival founder.

PALO ALTO HAD ITS OWN "SUNDANCE" many years ago when the yearly Palo Alto Film Festival was alive and well. The festival was a project of the Palo Alto Filmmakers' Guild, a group of amateur film buffs that made 8mm films. Brian and Carolyn George founded the Guild in the early 1970s and started the festival a few years later. The first program was a 2-hour presentation in the Auditorium of the Cultural Center (now

the Art Center). It was a success, so, over the next 14 years, the festival grew to become a respected Northern California event for independent filmmakers

The venues changed from the Cultural Center to the Children's Theatre to the Varsity Theater. The Varsity turned out to be the perfect place since it was locally owned and programmed by creative people. With the enthusiastic support of the City of Palo Alto and CAPA, an art-support group, and a strong committee, the yearly festival attracted many important independent filmmakers from Northern California.

The festival represented a time when film was still a popular medium for people to express their ideas and share them in a movie theater. After 14 years, the Palo Alto Festival came to a close when the Varsity Theater was sold. Video was replacing film and the unknown future turned out to be streaming video on internet sites including YouTube!

Brian George will share film and video clips to highlight the history of the festival. A PAHA Board member, Brian produces the monthly Heritage program for cable. He has a BSEE from UC Berkeley and spent most of his career at Beckman Coulter, Palo Alto, as a Quality/Reliability Manager.



Through a lens, a Film Festival poster.



The movie theater on University Avenue that preceded Borders Books

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PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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650.326.3355 • www.pahistory.org

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The board meets first Wednesdays (except August) at Lucie Stern Community Center at 4:00.

**WELCOME TO OUR
NEW MEMBERS**

Dean and Lorraine Johnson

Camping Exhibit

This exhibit runs through August 17, about how camping changed from survival to recreation—the lore, science, art of cooking, transportation, navigation, shelter and 1907 origin of the Scout movement by General Robert Baden-Powell in England

Admission free, open 11 am to 4 pm, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Avenue, 650-321-1004.



Correction... The editors apologize for neglecting to change the October 2008 Vol. to 31. We instead incorrectly added to the previous issue number. October should be Vol. 31, No. 1, with subsequent issues numbered in that sequence. We publish 8 issues yearly. June is No. 8, the last issue of a Volume.

The Car that Changed Lives

THIS YEAR THE WORLD IS OBSERVING THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF the introduction of Henry Ford's Model T. Ford began in 1908 producing the car that put America on wheels. The assembly line came a few years later, allowing Ford to put out a car every 3 minutes and to drop the price to less than \$500. By 1915, the 500,000 automobiles Ford produced each year accounted for more than 50% of American automotive production, and the Model T had changed the way Americans lived.

**FROM THE
DESK OF THE
HISTORIAN
STEVE STAIGER**

When Palo Alto was developed by Timothy Hopkins, the rectangular grid of streets was laid out to accommodate individual oak trees. In those early days, horses, buggies, and drivers maneuvered around trees that grew in the middle of streets or alongside the avenues. Horses instinctively went around, but suddenly car collisions with trees became common. A dentist from Oakland won his suit against the town of Palo Alto for damage to his automobile when it collided with a tree. Most trees in the middle of streets were subsequently removed, and even trees at the side were threatened. There was a movement in the early teens to

cut down all street trees. Fortunately, many were saved by having a coat of white paint applied to make them more visible.

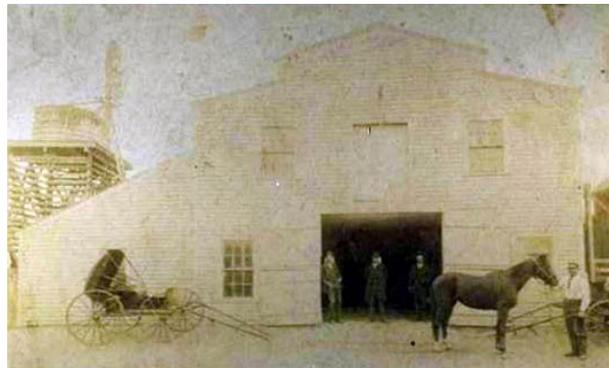
As automobiles became more common possessions instead of rich men's toys, people lived differently because they could travel farther than with a horse and buggy. With speeds of 20 to 30 miles per hour, or more, the range of social interaction increased. Farm families more readily traveled to towns for business and pleasure, and weekend trips to the coast or into the hills became more frequent.

County interurban and street car systems lost customers and in Palo Alto, they went out of business when University Avenue was

paved and El Camino Real widened (then Highway 101). Horses and wagons remained a viable means of transporting goods for another 20 years, but many businesses in town were forced to change. Young mechanically minded men opened garages, gas stations and other automobile-related businesses.



Vintage automobile in the 1941 Dedication Day parade, University Avenue, Palo Alto.



Jaspar Paulsen closed his livery stable on Forest Avenue in the early 1920's, but then sold and traded horses.



1903 Cookery—Choice Recipes

OVER THE YEARS AS THEY SORT TENS OF THOUSANDS OF BOOKS, Friends of the Palo Alto Library volunteers watch for those about local history to give to PAHA historian Steve Staiger for the City's history archives. One such treasure surfaced recently when a sharp-eyed sorter spotted a modest, well-used book with a black cardboard cover titled *Cookery—Choice Recipes Collected by The Palo Alto Woman's Club*, published in 1903.

Publication costs were apparently offset by some 15 local businesses who bought ads. Palo Alto-based Furguson Co. asserted that they, "Are the recognized headquarters for Antwerp, Flemish and Weathered Oak Buffet Side-boards, Extension Tables..." The ad for what later became Sticky Wilson's at 151 University is simply titled "Candy Making." Earle & Co. represented itself as "The Oldest and Most Reliable Grocery House in Town."

Town notables who contributed recipes included Mrs. George Parkinson, Julia R. Gilbert, Mrs. C. D. Marx, Mrs. J. J. Morris and Mrs. J. C. L. Fish. We do not know who the owner of this little book was, but it shows clear signs of use, with well-thumbed and sometimes spattered pages and several handwritten recipes on the blank pages, one titled "Sour Milk Ginger Snaps (Mrs. Marx)."

Mrs. C. H. Gilbert's recipe for scrambled oysters begins, "One quart of oysters." Now that's a bunch of oysters! Mrs. Blackburn offers a recipe for pickled sheep's tongues beginning, "Boil until tender six sheep's tongues. Plunge into cold water and skin" and closes saying serve with "gravy to which has been added one-third cup of sherry or claret."

The seven beverage recipes are non-alcoholic with the notable exception of Mrs. F. H. Taylor's blackberry cordial recipe that calls for eight quarts of blackberries and ends "add one pint of good brandy for every three pints of juice." Apparently, in those days—just as today—there was simply brandy and 'good brandy.'

This 109-page book plus its ads is a gem—a rare glimpse of culinary treats as prepared and served by Palo Alto women 105 years ago. Perhaps today's Woman's Club should sponsor a banquet featuring a number of these century-old recipes. What a fund-raiser that would be!

by Tom Wyman



What's cooking on your bookshelves? Friends of the Palo Alto Library (www.friendspaloaltolib.org/) maintains a reading room at the Palo Alto Downtown Library and a Book Sales room at the Cubberley Community Center. As noted in Tom Wyman's article on 1903 Cookery, 'Friends' is an amazing resource for books of all kinds—old and new. Treasures abound for book lovers, so do check out their website and visit them!

e-Bay Anyone?

A longtime supporter of the PAHA Archives has offered to donate a large and valuable collection of historic newspapers to be sold to benefit PAHA. He feels that eBay is the best vehicle for selling these newspapers. We need someone with relevant experience to handle the transactions. The donor will train people to describe and prepare the materials for sale. PAHA will offer up to 25% of the sales to the seller with terms and conditions to be agreed upon. If you are qualified and enjoy the challenge of eBay selling, please call the Palo Alto Historical Association at 650-326-3355. *from Beth Bunnenberg*



Gamble Garden's Spring Tour

Gamble Garden's Spring Tour and activity-filled days will feature five beautiful nearby gardens, Friday and Saturday, April 25 and 26. Gamble Garden is at 1431 Waverley. More information at <http://www.gamble-garden.org> or call 650-329-1356

MEMBERSHIP

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER, PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING the Palo Alto Historical Association. Your tax-deductible donation helps pay for our history and other programs, this newsletter, and support for our archives. We mail renewal notices in July, if you are already a member. Annual dues are: Individual \$25, Family \$40, Sustaining \$60, Business/Sponsor \$100, Life Member \$350. Members receive this newsletter in the mail.

There are two ways to join, online or by mail: Go to our web site www.pahistory.org. Click on MEMBERSHIP. On the Membership page, click on Network for Good, which processes our online donations. On their site, press the "Donate Now" button. Then, please put the word "membership" in the designation field so that we know to start a membership for you. Be sure to provide us with your name and address. If this is a gift, please also e-mail us at PAHistoricalAssn@aol.com with the name, address, and any e-mail address of the recipient of your gift.

Or mail a check payable to Palo Alto Historical Association to Membership, P. O. Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302-0193. Let us know if you require a receipt to comply with new IRS regulations on tax-deductible donations.

See It On TV

DOUG GRAHAM HAS RESEARCHED HIS BARRON PARK COMMUNITY meticulously, telling us, for example, at the March public program, that the neighborhood's own Pericles was the animation model for the donkey in the Shrek film. Another intriguing item: In 1973 the Bol Barn burned down because both the fire truck and the tow truck got stuck in the mud that was common before the installation of the big stream diversion project. You can learn more in April by watching the Heritage program on local cable, Channel 30. The broadcast schedule is Wednesdays at 8 pm, Thursdays at noon, and Saturdays at 1 pm. Check the Media Center schedule for other times.

Stanford Open House Tours



THE FOUR HOUSES OF EARLY STANFORD faculty members, constructed between 1904 and 1925, that will be open are within easy walking distance of one another. Appropriate footwear is necessary for uneven paths. Parking and shuttle service are available in front of the Stanford Faculty Club at Tresidder Union parking lot; shuttles also go between houses.

To attend, mail a check (payable to Stanford Historical Society) to Stanford Historical

Society, c/o Sweeney, P.O. Box 19290, Stanford, CA 94309. Purchases by April 18 are \$20 each, \$25 thereafter. All will be distributed on tour day at 607 Cabrillo Avenue. More information at <http://histsoc.stanford.edu/>, or call 650-725-3332 or 650-324-1653, or e-mail cglasser@stanford.edu or susan.sweeney@stanford.edu.

PAHA Meetings

May 4 HISTORY OF MAYFIELD
Gail Woolley will tell us of another of Palo Alto's neighborhoods. The present California Avenue was Mayfield's business district, and the town was once called the Queen of Santa Clara County.

June 3: ANNUAL DINNER
MEETING at Sheraton
Michael S. Malone, author of *Bill and Dave: How Hewlett and Packard Built the World's Greatest Company*.

Invitation will accompany May newsletter.

IN MEMORIAM

OUR VALUED MEMBER

Richard Hogan



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NEXT MEETING:

April 6 at 2:00 p.m.

followed by a social hour

and refreshments