

# The Tall Tree

OCTOBER 2012  
VOLUME 36, No 1

NEWSLETTER of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING \* FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC \* REFRESHMENTS SERVED

Sunday, October 7 at 2:00 – 4:00 PM  
Lucie Stern Community Center, Palo Alto  
1305 Middlefield Road

*Speakers:*

*Marion Mandell and Leslie Burchyns*

## The First 100 Years of Girl Scouting in the USA—May There Be Many More!



Photos: 1939 Palo Alto Girl Scouts washing car, and 1950s Palo Alto Girl Scouts in a fire circle (Guy Miller PAHA archives)

**MARION MANDELL AND LESLIE BURCHYNS**, long-time Girl Scouts and leaders of Girl Scouts, will present a 1918 video, “The Golden Eaglet,” display Girl Scout artifacts from the past and present, and tell the story of Scouting in Palo Alto and America.

Palo Alto founded the first Girl Scout troop West of the Rockies in 1922, a scant decade after Juliette Low began the movement in Savannah, Georgia, in 1912. Palo Alto presently boasts a Girl Scout membership of approximately 1000 girls, ages 5 to 18, in 80 troops! 40 of the troops meet in the Lou Henry Hoover Girl Scout House designed by Palo Alto’s own Birge Clark; the building holds the record of being the oldest scout meeting house in continuous use in the nation! As loyal and dedicated Girl Scouts, Marion Mandell and Leslie Burchyns comment, “If they accidentally cut a finger, it would bleed green.”



Lou Henry Hoover Scout House  
(courtesy of Girl Scouts of America)

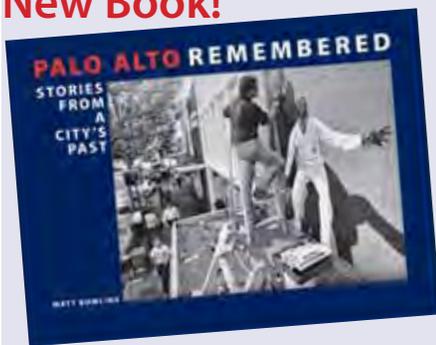
## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Laura Card  
Curtis Givan  
James Lewis  
Christina Pratt  
Pat & Tom Sanders  
*New Life Members*  
Marda Frances Buchholz  
Vicky Ching

## IN MEMORIAM

Richard Lyman

## New Book!



**PALO ALTO REMEMBERED**  
by Matt Bowling —PAHA's new history book, is on sale for \$25 at Bell's Books, Books Inc. and the Village Stationer in Palo Alto and at Kepler's in Menlo Park.

For information, or to order online, see [www.paloaltoremembered.com](http://www.paloaltoremembered.com).

**Note to Readers:** as the editors of the Tall Tree become more "green," we offer you the option of receiving your Tall Tree digitally. If you are interested, please send your request (include your preferred email address) to PAHA Secretary Bardy Wallace, at [bdgw@pacbell.net](mailto:bdgw@pacbell.net).

**Oral Histories:** are an invaluable method to preserve local history. To volunteer, help record, or give an oral history yourself, contact: Carol Mitchell at [carolcmitchell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carolcmitchell@sbcglobal.net).

## An Invitation

FROM THE DESK OF THE THE PRESIDENT  
John Hackmann



**YOU ARE INVITED—TO LUNCH OR COFFEE!** I hope to hear from most of you over this coming year. Here is how I see it: A thousand years from now I predict, people will be talking and reading about PALO ALTO.

Having been asked to volunteer and now to serve you as president, I wish to do this as my duty as best I can.

Let's talk now over lunch, or coffee, or dog walking, or even at the PAHA office at MOAH. It will be good to hear more from you of what PAHA can better do for its members, in addition to our programs, our books and our archives. And for you!

**HISTORY IS US:** Can we be better at hearing your stories? Can we better gather letters and records and photos of your house or family, things to archive for generations ahead, as others did for us. How can we know our local family history better?

**HISTORY IS JOURNALISM:** How may PAHA lead and innovate in maintaining local newspapers to help continue the stream of our documented history? How can we support the culture of journalism, essential to both history and democracy?

**HISTORY IS YOUTH:** How can PAHA reach and teach our youth to love and work with history? What new programs should be in the schools?

**HISTORY CAN WORK FOR US:** How can historical material help you fix up your house, illustrate your lesson plan, provide material for your writing?

**HISTORY IS A SOCIAL ACTIVITY:** How can we help newcomers feel welcomed, as others helped most of us feel welcomed? Who do we need to recognize for making this the place to live that we want? Should we honor cared for houses, historic gardens, our achievements? Study the writers and intellects and ideas that have coursed through this town?

**HISTORY IS NOW IN THE WRITING AND LIVING OF IT:** A thousand years from now, people will read -- and want to read—about Palo Alto, as we read, and have read, about Athens, Carthage, Rome, Florence, Berlin or Paris. This time and place of cultural crossing, technology waking up, immense prosperity, great innovation, and relative peace are remarkable.

Let's do it. Let's do it together. Now.

[hackmannstanfordalumni.org](http://hackmannstanfordalumni.org) or call me at DAD JOHN (650.323.5646)

# The Last of the Prune Pickers

LONG BEFORE THERE WAS A SILICON VALLEY, the Santa Clara Valley was known as the “Valley of Heart’s Delight,” a nickname reflecting the rich agricultural history of Santa Clara County.

Tim Stanley, who grew up in the Valley, has written a book about Santa Clara’s agricultural history, with a special emphasis on the orchards that dominated the economic life of the area prior to



FROM THE  
DESK OF THE  
HISTORIAN  
Steve Staiger

World War II. His *The Last of the Prune Pickers: A Pre-Silicon Valley Story* is an excellent and enjoyable historic account of Santa Clara Valley, from the Ohlone’s management of their lands, through the wheat farmers of the late 19th century, to the last of the commercial orchards. He worked in one of these orchards in the 1960s.

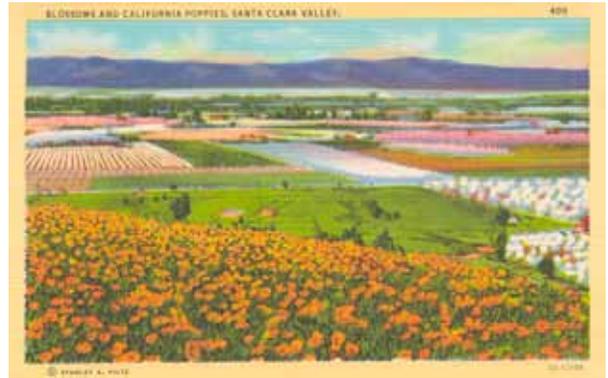
Most of the Valley’s towns were originally founded to provide services to the surrounding farms and ranches. Palo Alto was the exception. Mayfield grew and prospered by having merchants establish shops to sell supplies and

services to the neighboring farmers and ranchers, as well as to the timber interests in the hills to the West.

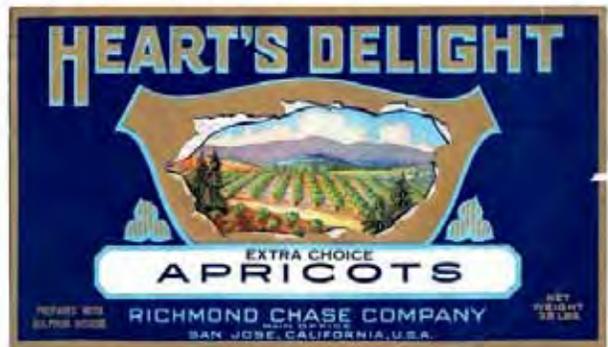
Tim Stanley divided *The Last of the Prune Pickers* into two sections. The first presents a comprehensive survey of the various agricultural phases that characterized the local economies. The Mexican ranchos ran cattle throughout the unfenced valley, trading hides, known as “California dollars,” and tallow to New England merchants for manufactured goods from their ships.

After statehood, dry wheat farming dominated California’s agricultural economy, including that of Santa Clara Valley. California wheat found a ready market in the eastern states, as well as and especially in Europe. After technological improvements in the canning and fruit drying industries, the Valley gradually changed its agricultural emphasis as more and more orchards were planted, especially prunes, cherries and apricots. Work in the orchards was more labor intensive than wheat farming, but the profits were greater.

In the second part of his book, Stanley documents the saga of one prune orchard near Saratoga as the property was sold to a series of Midwesterners who planted the trees, and over the years, harvested the fruit. As a boy and young man, he worked in the orchard for the last farmer before the land was sold off for housing. *The Last of the Prune Pickers* describes a piece of local history that many of us are not familiar with, as well as symbolizing the fate of other orchards throughout the Valley. ✍



“Blossoms and California Poppies,” 1930s vintage postcard of Santa Clara Valley (courtesy of Stanley Piltz)



Poster advertising Santa Clara Valley apricots (courtesy of Susan Gregory).



1893 photo of apricots being loaded at Wright’s Station (courtesy of Santa Clara County Research)

Looking for the book? *The Last of Prune Pickers: A Pre-Silicon Valley Story* is available in paperback from 2Timothy Publishing (2010), ASIN: 098423912X, at <http://www.2timothypublishing.com/> and through [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

## Heritage Program on Channel 30

The October program will rebroadcast Michael Litfin’s program *Celebrating 75 Years of Palo Alto Children’s Theatre* (this year marks their 80th anniversary). The broadcast schedule is Wednesdays at 8 PM, Thursdays at 10:30 AM, and Saturdays at 1 PM. DVDs of PAHA’s public programs can be borrowed at the history desk in the Main Library, Tuesdays 4–8 PM and Thursdays 1–5 PM.

*Our mission is to collect, preserve and make available to the public information about the history of Palo Alto.*

## History Jaunts

**Museum of American Heritage:** will sponsor two courses for students ages 10 and up: "Solid State Electronics and Integrated Circuits," Nov. 3, 10–12:30 PM, \$75 members, \$85 non-members; and "Introduction to 3-D Modeling" for computer games, two sessions Nov. 3 & 10, 1:30 to 4 PM, \$55 members, \$65 non-members. Registration and contact information: 650.321.1004 or [www.moah.org/education](http://www.moah.org/education). MOAH is at 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto.

**San Mateo County History Museum's 8th annual Maritime Day:** Nov. 3, 1–4 PM. Craft activities for children: make signal flags, build toy cargo ships, design treasure chests complements the exhibit, "Charles Parsons' Ships of the World," 24 detailed wooden model ships created by him, who lived in San Carlos. Admission \$5 adults, \$3 students and seniors, children 5 and under free. Museum: 2200 Broadway, Redwood City. For information, 650.299.0104 or [www.historysmc.org](http://www.historysmc.org).

**Palo Alto Stanford Heritage's 25th annual holiday house tour** will be in Crescent Park on Sunday, December 9, from 1–4 PM. For more information, go to [www.pastheritage.org](http://www.pastheritage.org). Tickets are \$25 before November 27 and \$30 thereafter. Please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope with check payable to PAST Heritage, P.O. Box 308, Palo Alto, California 94302.

**Women's Sports at Stanford: 40 Years of Title IX,** October 11, 5:30–7 PM, Kissick Auditorium. An all-star panel discusses the impact of Title IX on women's sports in general, and Stanford sports in particular, since the passage of this legislation 40 years ago. Representatives from four marquee sports—basketball, soccer, swimming and tennis—will discuss how Title IX has helped make that possible, <http://events.stanford.edu/events/336/33661/>.

## Become a Member of PAHA

We invite you to become a member of the Association and join those who care about Palo Alto and enjoy learning about its history. Your dues support the preservation of our archives, assistance to researchers and dissemination of Palo Alto historical information through our publications. Join today!

Individual \$25      Family \$40  
Sustaining \$60      Business/Sponsor \$100      Life \$350

Make check payable to PAHA and mail to: PAHA Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302. Or join online at [pahistory.org](http://pahistory.org). Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee. (Note: current members will receive renewal notices in July.)

## PAHA's Public Meetings

Meetings, free and open to the public, are held on Sundays at the Lucie Stern Community Center 1305 Middlefield Road.

The next meeting is:

OCTOBER 7

*The First 100 Years of Girl Scouting*

Speakers: Marion Mandell & Leslie Burchyns



Save these dates for Fall 2012

Programs TBA:

NOVEMBER 4

DECEMBER 2

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