



The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

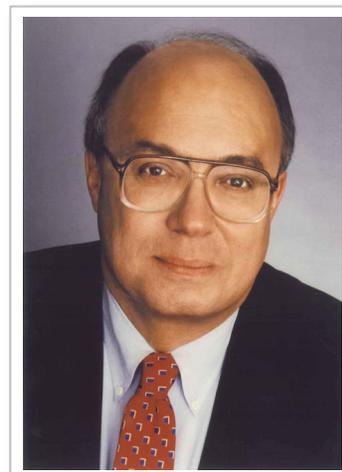
Since 1913

December 2017 Volume 40, No 3

Palo Alto as Early Influence on Lives of Public Service



**REPRESENTATIVE
ZOE LOFGREN**



**SUPERVISOR
JOE SIMITIAN**

WE KNOW ONE PERSON CAN INFLUENCE THE ENTIRE COURSE OF SOMEONE'S LIFE. BUT WHAT ABOUT AN ENTIRE COMMUNITY? CAN A PARTICULAR CITY INFLUENCE THE FORMATION OF LIFE VALUES, CHOICES, AND DIRECTION? Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren arrived here as a young child who then attended Palo Alto public schools from kindergarten through graduation from Gunn High School. Supervisor Joe Simitian moved to Palo Alto as a teenager and graduated from Palo Alto High School.

As highly-respected elected officials, both have championed a range of issues that affect our lives both in local matters and through state and national policy. Representative Lofgren has been recognized by her constituents with numerous awards for her work on

immigration, health care, technology, and women's issues. Supervisor Simitian has received awards from a wide range of organizations including the California School Boards Association and National Organization for Women (NOW) and has garnered a "100%" environmental rating from the Sierra Club.

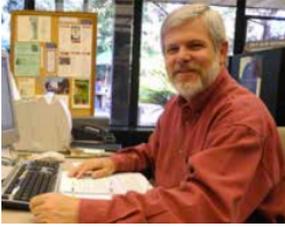
Join Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren and Supervisor Joe Simitian in conversation with Councilmember and former Mayor Karen Holman to explore how their lives in extraordinary public service have been guided by early influences in this, their home town.



KAREN HOLMAN
City council member
and former Mayor
will moderate the
conversation.

Sunday, December 3, 2017, 2:00–4:00 pm
Lucie Stern Community Center ~ 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

The Alpine Inn, by any other name, through the years



FROM THE DESK OF
Steve Staiger
City Historian

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ralph Britton, *President*

Rich Green, *Vice President*

Robert Strohecker, *Secretary*

Chris Botsford, *Treasurer*

Steve Staiger, *Historian*

Dennis Garcia

Brian George

Betty Gerard

Georgie Gleim

Alan Loveless

Heather Pang

Raye Ringholz

Darla Decor

Jerry Tinney

Molly Tinney

Melissa Verber

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 Cubberley Community Center, K-7, Phone (650) 329-2353.

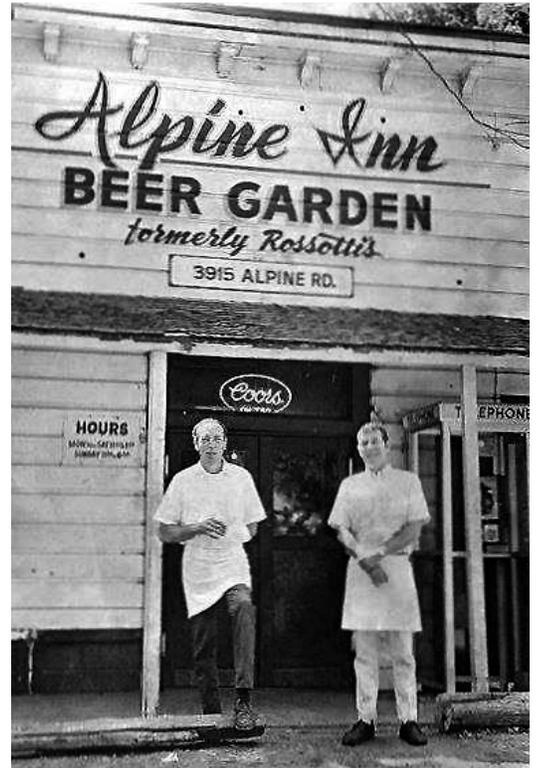
Board meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 4 pm. General meetings are held the first Sunday of each month (October–December, February–May) at the Lucie Stern Community Center at 2 pm. Meetings include speakers. The final general meeting of the year is held in June and includes a dinner and a program. The public is welcome at all meetings.

The Alpine Inn is one of the earliest businesses on the Peninsula. More than 165 years after it first opened for business, the Alpine Inn continues to attract customers to the roadhouse beer garden on the banks of Los Trancos Creek, at the intersection of Alpine and Arastradero Roads. Some customers still arrive on horseback, while others choose automobiles, motorcycles, bicycles, or arrive by foot.

Its location is one reason for its long, successful history of serving cold liquid refreshments to thirsty Peninsula residents. It has always been beyond the control of local liquor restrictions. Palo Alto was a “dry” town in its early days, and Mayfield became “dry” when it incorporated in 1903. Stanford President David Starr Jordan tried unsuccessfully to shut the roadhouse down in 1907, calling it “a disgrace to San Mateo County”. Even during World War I, Camp Fremont’s dry zone surrounding the camp did not extend to the roadhouse, so soldiers joined Stanford students and other locals in enjoying the liquid refreshments served.

Ownership or proprietorship of the Alpine Inn has changed numerous times since Felix Buelna began operating the hangout in the 1850s. William Stanton, F. Rodriguez Crovello (aka “Black Chapete”), Charles Schenkel, Walter Jelich and Enrico Rossotti all had an interest in the business before John Alexander and Don Hortner took over in 1956. Alexander’s widow, Molly, ran the business until her recent death.

Over the years its customers have known it as Buelna’s Roadhouse, Stanton’s Saloon, Black Chapete’s, the Wunder Inn and Schenkel’s Picnic Park. Whatever name you call it, the Alpine Inn Beer Garden, Rossotti’s or just Zott’s, it remains a favorite spot on the Peninsula worthy of a visit.



John Alexander (l) and Don Hortner (r), who took over Rossotti’s roadhouse in 1956 and renamed it the Alpine Inn Beer Garden, stand outside their restaurant in 1973.

History Jaunts for December

View “**Lasting Impressions of Pedro de Lemos: The Centennial Exhibition**” at **The Stanford Art Gallery**, 419 Lasuen Mall on Stanford campus through December 3. (See article on the facing page.) The gallery is free and open to the public, Tue.- Sun., 12 pm – 6 pm.

Stanford’s **Cantor Art Center** is currently showcasing the “**playful and perceptive**” works of **Nina Katchadourian**. The “**Curiouser**” exhibit includes video, photography, sculpture and sound installations. The artist reveals the creative potential that “**lurks within the mundane**” and encourages us “**to reinvigorate our own sense of curiosity.**” Further details at museum.stanford.edu. Closed Wednesdays.

The **Palo Alto Art Center**, 1313 Newell Road in Palo Alto, continues the exhibit “**PLAY!**” through December 29. Researchers have noted that “**consistent playtime fosters empathy, makes us smarter and more adaptable.**” Several artists illustrate various ways to engage in play in this interactive exhibit. Closed Mondays.

Welcome New Member!
Mike Weiland



The Heritage Program for
December 2017 will feature
“Redwood City Celebrates
150 Years”

Weds. 8 pm, Thurs. 10 am &
Sats. 1 pm on Channel 30.

DVDs of previous programs may be
borrowed from the PAHA’s Guy Miller
Archives at Cubberley, Room K-7.
Hours: Tues. 4-8 pm, Thurs. 1-5 pm



In Memoriam
Roberta Yee
lifetime member

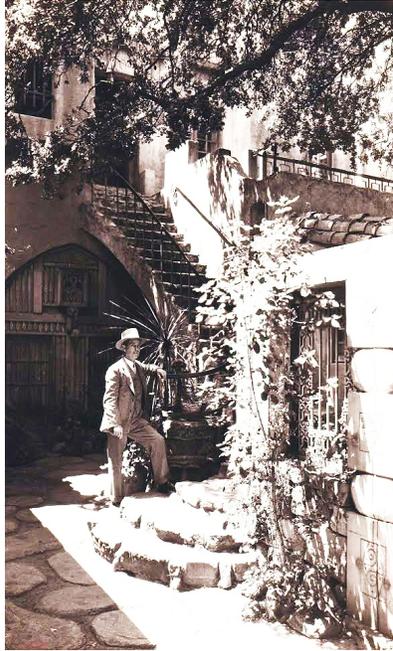
Pedro de Lemos — A Palo Alto Treasure

Pedro de Lemos (1882-1954) is all over the local media, with an ongoing exhibit at the Thomas Welton Stanford Art Gallery (see *Jaunts on page 2*) and in a recent article in the *Palo Alto Weekly*. This renowned artist, scholar, educator, curator, museum director, preservationist, and printmaker was an influential interpreter of the Arts and Crafts Movement and an iconic architect: his buildings dot the Bay Area landscape, including ones on the Stanford campus, in Oakland, Menlo Park, Carmel, and Palo Alto. He exercised a profound influence on Birge Clark. As a consummate appreciator of art in its every manifestation, he wrote, “Art is not for the talented, nor is it a luxury for humanity. Art can be applied to everything connected with life’s needs and civilization’s comforts.” *Tall Tree* hops on the Pedro de Lemos bandwagon to focus on his foresight as a proto-environmentalist and on a few of his signature Palo Alto architectural landmarks.

In the 1920s, Palo Alto was thriving. De Lemos noted with dismay how business expansion threatened Palo Alto’s natural beauty, especially as commercial construction displaced trees. He was concerned that the precious Decker Oak (corner of University Avenue and Waverley) was earmarked for the axe. In 1922, he wrote to the *Daily Palo Alto Times* to save the tree, “...Destroy the trees in Palo Alto and it will not have the appeal to people of culture...” He mourned that the oak would be “chopped down to make way for unsentimental business that sees no asset in Nature...” He failed to save the Decker Oak, but he and his wife purchased a parcel of land on Ramona Street to save other oaks. There he began a project that formed the basis of Ramona Street’s Palo Alto Historic Buildings Inventory.

De Lemos designed the buildings at 520-526 Ramona and across the street at 533-539 Ramona in his characteristic “eclectic Spanish colonial revival style,” characterized by an interior courtyard, outside stairways, colorful handmade tiles, decorative paving, wrought iron balconies, and other ornamental details.

In the late 1920s, de Lemos purchased 3 acres of land from Alfred Seale to build his dream house and family home, Hacienda de Lemos, at 100-110 Waverley Oaks. Here he highlighted his love of traditional Spanish, Mexican, and North African motifs with the interior courtyard, tiled roof, hand-hewn beams, carved doors. A bit of a scavenger, de Lemos used items collected

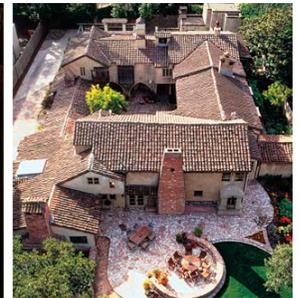


Pedro de Lemos standing in the courtyard of 520-526 Ramona Street in the 1930s, which he built around an old oak tree he wanted preserve. Courtesy CAW Architects.

from his travels through Mexico and the Mediterranean; the Byzantine-style loggia pillars he salvaged from the 1906 earthquake’s wreckage at Stanford. Critics have commented that Hacienda de Lemos is an outstanding work of art as well as a magical place created by an extraordinary master architect, designer, and artist. It has a well-deserved place on the National Historic Register.

Other de Lemos masterpieces can be found nestled in Old Palo Alto. Treat yourself to a self-guided walking tour: 460 Churchill is a charming de Lemos bungalow, which he built in 1925 to house his studio. In 1930, he designed the cluster of picturesque Medieval Revival houses at 1550-1560-1566-1579 Cowper St. De Lemos chose these contiguous sites because of the oak trees for which he was a staunch advocate.

– Peggy McKee



Ornamental collections, including salvaged Stanford columns from the 1906 earthquake, were features of de Lemos’ primary residence at Waverley Oaks, pictured right. Courtesy CAW Architects.



1570 Cowper Street, one of a cluster of stucco Medieval Revival buildings designed by Pedro de Lemos for his family and use as income properties at this location. Courtesy PAST Heritage.

PAHA: Over 100 Years of Preserving Palo Alto History

PAHA has a serious operating deficit projected for this coming fiscal year, threatening the future of the organization. We depend upon memberships to cover costs related to our mission to promote an awareness of the history of Palo Alto, collect and record materials of historic interest and value, and disseminate historic information through programs, publications, and exhibits. Devoted volunteers provide almost all the effort needed to do this at no cost, but there are general expenses such as printing, postage, insurance, and office expenses. Currently, these expenses exceed our revenue from memberships by about 50% of our non-archive operating budget.

We feel fortunate to have the Palo Alto Library fund the management of the archives, including the Historian's salary, space at Cubberley Community Center, storage for historic documents, some internet service, and digitizing activities.

We sold enough copies of *Palo Alto: A Centennial History* to establish a reserve, but book sales are minimal and that reserve is gone. Accordingly, the board has identified certain expenses that can be eliminated without serious effect. We will stop advertising our meetings in local newspapers, eliminate an unneeded telephone line, and encourage our membership to receive the *Tall Tree* by email. All this helps, but it's not enough to plug the deficit.

We decided raising our basic membership fee would put a burden on some of our members on modest fixed incomes. Because there has been a decrease in membership, we need your help in recruiting new members. A larger membership helps with increased membership income, and helps promote an understanding of how our community's history has defined it. At this moment we need cash, so we ask you to make a generous contribution and ask friends and family to become members so we can continue to provide for the things essential to our mission.

– Ralph Britton, PAHA President

PAHA is over 100 years old and is struggling to stay afloat.

Please consider a membership for yourself or as a gift this holiday season.

Or you can make a tax deductible donation for 2017!

Memberships and donations may be handled at:

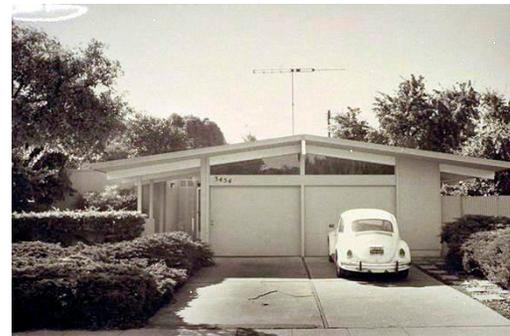
pahistory.org/membership

or by mail at PO Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302

Recent monthly PAHA programs have featured talks on topics relevant to local history, including:



Remembering Japanese Internment during World War II



Exploring the vast legacy of Joseph Eichler's homes



Rediscovering the WW I history of Camp Fremont

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



Luana Staiger, Peggy McKee, Jon Gifford, Melissa Verber, *Editorial*
Györgyi Kapala, Jon Gifford, *Design*
Omega Printing, *Printing*

Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller Archives unless otherwise noted.

The 2018 Calendars are here! Pick yours up December 3rd



The 2018 PAHA Calendars will be available for pick up and for sale at the December 3rd PAHA meeting at Lucie Stern Community Center. Calendars are free to all members who are current with their dues. They can also be picked up at PAHA Archives, Tuesday 4-8 pm or Thursdays 1-5 pm, or received by mail by sending a check for \$5.00 for shipping/handling to P.O. Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302.

These calendars make **great holiday gifts!** Available at Bell's Books, Books Inc., and the Palo Alto Art Center, from \$15 each.