



# The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

March 2024 Volume 47, N° 4

The Palo Alto Historical Association presents

## Remarkable Histories: Women Who Changed Palo Alto

Sunday, March 10, 2024 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Palo Alto Art Center ~ 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto



*María Louisa Soto*



*Rose Tong Jew*



*Anna Zschokke*



*Ellen Fletcher*



*Esther Clark*

Our March program will celebrate National Women's History Month, which acknowledges the vital role of women in American History. Palo Alto women have made innumerable contributions both to our community and to the world. Join us as several speakers share the history of some of Palo Alto's extraordinary women, including some well known names and also some you might not know. We hope you will join us to listen to these inspiring stories of women who have shaped our city.

Women's History Month had its origins as a national celebration in 1981 when Congress authorized and requested the President to proclaim the week beginning March 7, 1982 as "Women's History Week." In 1987, after being petitioned by the National Women's History Project, Congress designated the month of March 1987 as "Women's History Month." Since 1995, presidents have proclaimed the month of March as "Women's History Month."

Free and Open to the Public ~ Refreshments Served

# Rink

by PAHA board member, Bo Crane

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Rink Babka, left, with his 1960 Olympic Teammates (AP photo)

Rink Babka was one of Paly High's most versatile and accomplished athletes, having a career that culminated in 1960 with a world record and an Olympic silver medal in the discus.

Richard Aldrich "Rink" Babka was born September 23, 1936, in Cheyenne, WY. His father was from Bohemia (now Czech Republic), and his mother was born in Nebraska to parents also from Bohemia. His nickname "Rink" may have been misheard for "Rick," possibly due to a Bohemian accent.

The family lived on Marion Avenue in Palo Alto. His sister, Bev, entered Paly in 1948 and graduated in 1950; Rink began Paly in the fall of 1951, graduating in 1954. In the fall of 1953, Rink started as a senior in his first year on the varsity football team and was selected as honorable mention for all-league. The 1954 basketball team won the league title outright. Rink, known for his rebounding, made all-league as a center. In the spring, he won the State meet in discus.

That fall, Rink attended Menlo College, playing football and basketball. In the spring, he became the NorCal J.C. State Champion in discus and is listed in Menlo College's Track Hall of Fame.

Rink earned a scholarship to USC in track and field, entering the university as a sophomore in 1955. In 1956, Al Oerter, born four days before Rink in 1936, began his sophomore year at the University of Kansas. During their college careers, Rink and Al would repeatedly clash in discus competitions. In the June 1956 U.S.

Olympic trials for discus, Rink failed to make the top three chosen for the team, and that year, Oerter won the gold at the Olympics held in Melbourne.

Rink tied Oerter for 1st place in the 1958 NCAA tournament and is in the USC track Hall of Fame. The 1960 U.S. Olympic trials were held at Stanford University in July. Rink and Al Oerter made the Olympic team, with Rink having the best throw. On August 12, 1960, at a pre-Olympic night meet, Rink tied the world record.

Rink had the best distance of the six, qualifying for the 1960 Summer Olympic final in Rome. He led going into the fifth of six rounds, but Al Oerter topped him, winning gold as Rink took silver. Oerter would also win gold in the 1964 and 1968 Olympics, with Rink not entered.

Rink's jointly held world record was broken in August 1961. Four days later, in Los Angeles, Rink married Danielle King.



Rink Babka holding a championship discus (photo courtesy of USC)

Rink retired from competition in 1969. He opened his own wholesale liquor dealership and Coors Beverage distributorship in Stockton, where he had a horse and cattle ranch. Rink served as president of his different business entities, with Danielle as secretary-treasurer. (They divorced in 1982.) He also was a Western business development agent for the Czech Republic. His parents and sister are interred at Alta Mesa Memorial Park in Palo Alto. Rink passed away on January 14, 2022, at the age of 85.

*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, Phone (650) 329-2353.*

*PAHA Board meetings are held at 5pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Guy Miller Archives.*

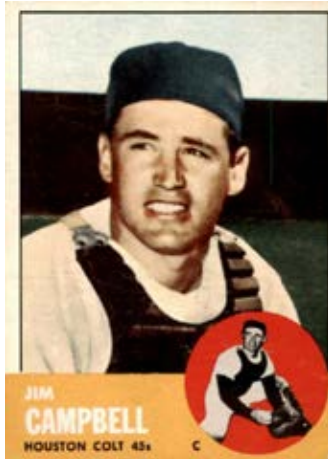
*Public programs are held at 2pm on the first Sunday of each month (October-December and February-May) at various locations in Palo Alto. Programs include speakers. The final program of the year is held in June and includes a dinner and a program. The public is welcome at all programs.*

# Catching On: The Story of Jim Campbell

by PAHA board member, Bo Crane

The first Palo Alto high schooler to play major league baseball was Jim Campbell, a member of the Palo Alto High School class of 1955. Even more noteworthy than his career is his Palo Alto lineage.

James Robert “Jim” Campbell was born June 24, 1937 in what is now the Hoover Pavilion, then called the Palo Alto Hospital (opened in 1931). His grandmother, Tillie, was the daughter of Guadalupe Robles Espinosa. Guadalupe was the daughter of Secundino Robles, Jim’s great-great-grandfather, who was once co-owner (with his brother, Teodoro) of the Rancho Rincon de Arroyo de San Francisquito.



1963 Colts trading card

Guadalupe’s photos are featured in *The History of Palo Alto – The Early Years* by Pamela Gullard. Guadalupe had 19 children, and her mother, Secundino’s wife, had 29 children! Not all children born to either parent survived to or beyond childhood. Gradually, the Robles estate was reduced from the original 100 acres to 3 ½ acres called the Espinosa Ranch. This ranch was where the current Oak Motel is now located on the corner of Dinah’s Court and El Camino Real. Adjacent to this strip of land is Adobe Creek, which the family used for water, swimming, and even bathing. On the other side was Dinah’s Shack, founded in 1926, now Alexander’s The Sea restaurant, backed by Dinah’s Garden Hotel and Poolside Restaurant. Just under a mile away is Secundino Robles Park on Park Boulevard.

Jim once told me how his grandfather would annually allow a gypsy caravan traveling north on El Camino to camp on the ranch. His grandmother would take Jim

and his younger brother by hand to watch the festivities. Meanwhile, he and his brother became pals with the Dinah’s Shack crew, often playing baseball with them. The Espinosa Ranch was sold in 1948.

For his senior year at Paly in 1955, Jim was switched from shortstop to centerfield and batted .352. When the high school season ended, he went into the minor leagues. He was hitting .350 in 1962 when he was called up mid-season by Houston’s new major league Colts .45s team. His first game was on July 17, and he had just turned 25.

Campbell played in 27 of Houston’s remaining 73 games in 1962, batting .221 with three homers. The World Series that year matched the Giants against the Yankees, featuring Willie Mays and Mickey Mantle, both 31 years old.



Jim Campbell, 2020

Campbell began the 1963 season as Houston’s starting catcher but was soon replaced due to poor hitting. Filling in as catcher for the second game of a doubleheader at home against Cincinnati on July 4, he hit a grand slam! However, after a game on July 23, 1963, when he pinch-hit a single, Jim was released back to the minors. His career ended following the 1965

season, totaling 11 years and 857 games in the minors for two half-seasons and 82 games in the majors for two half-seasons. During his career, he was fortunate to have played against the most famous National Leaguers of the era.

Jim and his wife, Georgia, raised a family and eventually retired to Los Altos.



## TELL US A STORY!

We are always interested in your stories and recollections of Palo Alto and the surrounding communities. Please consider writing your story down and submitting it for possible publication in a future Tall Tree newsletter! It is PAHA’s mission to collect, preserve, and present Palo Alto’s history, and we’d love to hear from you! Submit your article and/or story to [pahatalltree@gmail.com](mailto:pahatalltree@gmail.com).

The Morse family at their home, 523 Cowper Steet. Circa 1900. Photo courtesy of Jon Kinyon



# Spring Jaunts

As March approaches, we're poised on the cusp of a delightful shift from winter's chill and moist weather to the gentle embrace of spring. Bid farewell to frosty mornings and occasional downpours, as longer days and warmer temperatures beckon us outdoors. Soon we'll be exploring blooming gardens, embarking on forest hikes, and enjoying tranquil picnics in the park. So, dust off your walking shoes and prepare to enjoy the changing season, immersing yourself in the magic of spring's renewal, where every blooming flower and birdsong tells a story of nature's vibrant transformation.

POST's February newsletter announces, "It's Whale Watching Time," with suggestions of where and when and how to see the hump backs, minke, and blue whales on their epic migration, January through March. POST's website is replete with maps, tips, what to wear, and what to bring to fully experience and enjoy an extraordinary jaunt.



Image courtesy of POST

Visit the website: <https://openspacetrust.org/blog/whale-watching/>



Image courtesy of Palo Alto Art Center

**The Palo Alto Art Center**, located at 1313 Newell Rd., Palo Alto, presents a "thoughtful and thought-provoking" multimedia exhibit, "Feast or Famine," now through April 6. The exhibition showcases "the power of food to connect us to identity, culture, and each other. Curator Marianne McGrath reflected on the prevalence of food in art over the ages and how she missed gathering with friends over a meal during the pandemic. 24 artists participated in the exhibit in "an impressive array of media, including photography, painting, sculpture, printmaking, and video art." The Palo Alto Art Center is free and open to the public, Tues - Fri, 9:30 am - 6 pm; Sat, 10 am - 5 pm; Sun, 1 - 5 pm.

For more information, call 650-329-2366 or visit the website:

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Community-Services/Arts-Sciences/Palo-Alto-Art-Center>

**REPAIR CAFE** Palo Alto's Museum of American Heritage (MOAH) periodically sponsors a **Repair Café**, where when "you can bring your broken things and work with repair volunteers" to put them back in working order instead of tossing them out or buying new. Breathe new life into your used and somewhat broken bikes, tools, computers, appliances, furniture, and toys. MOAH supports satellite Repair Cafés in neighboring towns. Mark your calendars for Sun, Mar 17, 11 am - 3 pm at Hacker Dojo, 855 Maude Ave, Mt View; Sat, Apr. 20, 11 am - 3 pm, at Sunnyvale Public Library, 665 W Olive Ave, Sunnyvale.

For more information, visit <https://www.repaircafe-paloalto.org> or call MOAH 650-321-1004.

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## Welcome New PAHA Member

Charles Junkerman

## Upcoming Program Dates

- May 5
- June TBA

Unless otherwise noted, programs are held in person on the first Sunday of the months we present programs. Check our website at [www.pahistory.org](http://www.pahistory.org) for program information.

## Previous PAHA Programs

If you missed the Dec. 3rd program, *Palo Alto and the World 100 years ago: Scenes and Events of 1924*, you can find it and other recent PAHA program videos on Vimeo by following this link: <https://vimeo.com/909856291>

## The Heritage Program

You can also watch the most recent PAHA program on local TV. Visit <https://midpenmedia.org/local-tv/> and enter the word "Heritage" in the search box to find the broadcast schedule for PAHA programs.



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Bo Crane, Peggy McKee, Luana Staiger, Melissa Verber, Editors  
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