



The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Newsletter of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION January 2016 Volume 39, No 4

Since 1913

Sunday, January 31 2:00-4:00 PM
Lucie Stern Community Center
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

A FLIGHT THROUGH 80 YEARS OF PALO ALTO AIRPORT HISTORY



ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2016, PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, RALPH BRITTON, will regale us with tales of the people and events that comprise the history of the Palo Alto Airport—from its first iteration at Stanford in the 1920s to the present. As President of the Palo Alto Airport Association and long-time Palo Altan, Ralph



Ralph Britton, Palo Alto Airport Assn. President

is perfectly positioned to chronicle the story of the City and its airport. Not only is he a product of Walter Hays, Channing, Jordan, Paly, and Stanford, but his fascination for airplanes dates to his junior high school days when his cousin took him up in a Beechcraft bi-plane. He earned a pilot's license in 1957 and soon purchased his own plane (shown below) together with his buddies. He currently flies a Cessna, whose home base is, of course, the Palo Alto Airport.



Ralph's first plane, a Commonwealth late 1940s model, owned with fellow flight enthusiasts from Hewlett-Packard.

Ralph commented that his involvement with the Palo Alto Airport developed because he was "concerned about its future under Santa Clara County mismanagement." His research into the Airport's history has unearthed a plethora of anecdotes: Did you know that Amelia Earhart flew from our airport? That Jimmy Stewart trained here prior to becoming a B-17 pilot and group leader during World War II? That John Steinbeck took flying lessons here in 1940? That some astronauts trained here? That it was considered in 2001 the busiest single runway airport in the country? The checkered career of the Palo Alto Airport included being temporarily closed to the public during the war, surviving natural disasters such as floods, threatened lawsuits from environmentalists, and rivalry for control of the facility.

The Palo Alto Airport celebrated its 80 year history with Palo Alto Airport Day in September, 2015. For more information, visit the links www.paloaltoairport.aero/airport-day.html and www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGRTJGnrrlo.

PAHA's Public Meetings

GENERAL PROGRAM MEETINGS

are held monthly

2:00-4:00 PM

October - May

at the

Lucie Stern Community Center

1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

PAHA'S PUBLIC MEETINGS 2016

Sunday, January 31st

"Airports of Palo Alto"

Ralph Britton, Palo Alto Airport

Association President &

PAHA President

PAHA'S MEETING DATES 2016

March 6, 2016

April 3, 2016

May 15, 2016

June 8, 2016



Amelia Earhart visiting Palo Alto Airport, ca. 1930.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC * REFRESHMENTS SERVED

History Jaunts

Environmental Volunteers promotes the understanding of and responsibility for the environment through hands-on science education, training volunteers to teach natural science in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Housed in the EcoCenter, a public nature center and education resource in the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve, the recently restored and renovated Birge Clark-designed “paddlewheel boat” building is at 2560 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto. Open to the public Friday, 11-1:30, Saturday and Sunday, 10-3. For more information on EV’s science and nature education, call (650) 493-8000 or visit www.evols.org.

NUMU (The New Museum of Los Gatos) currently features two exhibits of local interest: “It Takes a Village: A Trip Back in Time - Santa’s Village, Frontierland and Lost World” and “The Art of Woodie Guthrie: the Power of Songwriting.” The museum also features a gallery of local artists and art workshops for children. Admission free for members and children under 18; general admission is \$9; \$6 for military, seniors, and students. The New Museum of Los Gatos is located at 106 Main St., Los Gatos; it is open Fri. - Sun. 11-5; Wed. 1-5; Th. 11-8. For more information call (408) 354-2646 or visit www.numulosgatos.org.

POST, the Peninsula Open Space Trust, protects and cares for open space, farms, and parkland in and around Silicon Valley. POST offers a wide variety of self-directed hikes in the Bay Area and also sponsors the **Wallace Stegner Lecture Series**. On Tuesday, January 19 at 7:00 pm at the Menlo Atherton Center for the Performing Arts, Alice Waters will speak to a sold-out audience on “Why Eating Good Food Makes for Good Ecology.” Alice Waters is the chef and founder of Chez Panisse in Berkeley. For information on any available tickets, call (650) 854-7696. General information can be found at www.openspacetrust.org.

The Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History offers classes, lectures, field trips, and events on a variety of natural history topics for community members throughout the year. It is located at 1305 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz 95062 and is open Tuesday – Friday, 11-4, Saturday-Sunday, 10-5. The permanent exhibits showcase “The Ohlone People,” “The Geology of Santa Cruz,” and “Monterey Bay Marine Life.” For more information, call (831) 420-6115 or visit www.santacruzmuseum.org.

Welcome new members!

Raye and Joseph Ringholz
George Wingfield Kline

Heritage Program on Channel 30

PAHA’s January 2016 program will feature a repeat of PAHA’s “Palo Alto’s Treasure Trove: Photos from the Guy Miller Archives”

The schedule is

Wednesdays at 8 PM,
Thursdays at 10:30 AM, and
Saturdays at 1 PM

on Ch 30.

DVDs of previous programs may be borrowed from the PAHA Archives, which are located at Cubberley, Room K-7.

Hours: Tuesdays, 4-8 PM,
Thursdays, 1-5 PM

In Memoriam

Fielding Tapp, 1927-2015

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



Peggy McKee, *Editor*
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Omega Printing, *Printing*

*Photographs courtesy of PAHA Guy Miller
Archives unless otherwise noted.*

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 make our work possible: we maintain the archives, assist researchers, and disseminate historical information through our publications and public programs. Your generosity will be appreciated for generations to come. Join today!

Individual \$40 Family \$60
Sustaining \$75 Business/Sponsor \$150 Life \$500

Make check payable to PAHA and mail to: PAHA Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302. Or join online at pahistory.org. Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee. (Current members should have received renewal notices by post.)

