



# The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

Since 1913

November 2017 Volume 41, No 2

**Sunday, November 5, 2017, 2:00–4:00 pm**  
**Lucie Stern Community Center ~ 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto**

## CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF

Fifty years ago, Redwood City went all out to celebrate its centennial. This 10-month extravaganza kicked off with a high-noon chorus of fire engine sirens, air raid horns, and a noon whistle. Festivities continued throughout the year and included a parade, Admission Day barbecues, anniversary-themed Christmas decorations, dinners held at three venues around town, and a salute to industries of the future, featuring some names now familiar from “the past.”

**Janet McGovern**, our November speaker, *pictured right*, is a member of the committee that met last year to plan the celebration of Redwood City’s next major anniversary, its sesquicentennial. The actual date of the 150th anniversary of incorporation was in May, but events began in January, 2017 and will continue in December with the premiere of a film about the city’s history. A veteran newspaper reporter and the author

of four local history books, including two on Redwood City, Janet will present an overview of the city’s history and describe what has gone on to mark a singular date in the history of San Mateo County’s first incorporated city.



**JANET MCGOVERN**

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

# On becoming a Historian: San Rafael Mission and Me



**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.*

*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.*

We are fascinated with anniversaries, centennials, bicentennials, sesquicentennials, and Palo Alto's upcoming quasiquicentennial! Redwood City celebrates its sesquicentennial this year, which we honor in our November program. "Quasiquicentennial"—125—is a new word for many of us. Palo Alto will celebrate its quasiquicentennial anniversary in 2019, to honor the 125 years since its founding in 1894.

I would like to highlight the bicentennial anniversary of a place that is special to me. Mission San Rafael in Marin County was established in 1817. Of the 21 California missions, it has its own unusual history as the only one that evolved into a mission after serving a different purpose. It began as a hospital site in sunny Marin for the many sick Indians suffering from Mission Dolores' cold and foggy climate. Later the Marin site was elevated to full mission status.

Mission San Rafael was the last mission established under Spanish rule. Mission San Francisco Solano, in Sonoma, was the final California mission, established when California was part of newly independent Mexico. Following secularization in the 1830s, the Mexican government seized the



*A replica of the original Mission San Rafael chapel, built in 1949, sits to the right of the current Saint Raphael's church. Courtesy of California Mission Resource Center.*

mission lands, and the properties fell into disrepair. When California began the planning for its centennial in 1948, many of the California missions were in decrepit condition. While a good number were restored as part of the California Centennial Celebration, almost nothing remained of Mission San Rafael. A local historical group raised significant funding from the Hearst family, as well as others, and built a replica on the former site in downtown San Rafael.

When I was a child growing up in Marin, this replica of Mission San Rafael was the mission that helped fuel my interest in California history. For that reason, I celebrate its bicentennial this fall.

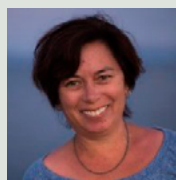
## **Walk Professorville with Trained Docents**

The Professorville Historic District in Palo Alto describes an area of early faculty houses near the Stanford campus. In 1887, Leland Stanford sponsored Timothy Hopkins' purchase of 740 acres of land to be plotted and developed as a university town. After the university opened in 1891, a number of early Stanford professors, wanting to own their property rather than lease campus sites, bought lots and built houses in a variety of architectural styles. Dutch Colonial predominates, alongside Colonial Revival and American Craftsman. Chicago architect Frank MacMurray designed the house at 450 Kingsley Ave. for physics Professor Fernando Sanford, complete with a Queen Anne corner



*Bernard Maybeck's "Sunbonnet House" at 1061 Bryant is featured in October 29th's Professorville PAST walk. Courtesy PAST.*

tower and a Palladian window facing the street. The landmark "Sunbonnet House" at 1061 Bryant St., recognized by its cantilevered porch roof, was designed in 1899 by Bernard Maybeck for Emma Kellogg. A. B. Clark, art professor at Stanford (and father of Birge Clark), designed the stately house at 433 Melville Ave. for psychology professor Charles Henry Gilbert. The famous "HP Garage" is located in Professorville at 367 Addison Ave. The Grateful Dead had digs in Professorville as well! Don't miss this opportunity to explore and experience Professorville with PAST on Sunday, October, 29 at 10 am (see listing in this month's Jaunts). — *Peggy McKee*



**Leah McGarrigle** has resigned from the PAHA Board after taking a position with the Packard Children's Hospital. With her experience as a professional oral historian, she brought both knowledge and enthusiasm to our efforts in expanding our oral history program during her time on the board. We are appreciative of her service to the Association.

# Adventurers Bravely Navigate San Francisquito Creek

The following remembrance by PAHA board member and long-time Palo Alto resident Jerry Tinney recalls the story of his father's adventure down the San Francisquito Creek with two friends in February 1940.

## Creek Adventure by Jerry Tinney

My memory of the event is fairly limited, as I was only seven years old. There wasn't any discussion about this adventure until my mother loaded me into the Pontiac on Sunday morning February 4, 1940 and headed for San Francisquito Creek to locate the three adventuresome sailors.

We met up with the trio near the railroad bridge, next to the Palo Alto Tree and followed them by car along Palo Alto Avenue with a group of Huck Finn wanabees.

Probably for me, the highlight of the day was when my mother and I went out to the old Palo Alto Yacht Harbor and met with the Harbor Master, Mark Nessbit, and he took us out in the bay on his power boat to meet the weary trio at the mouth of San Francisquito Creek where it empties into the bay. He cast them a line and towed them back to the harbor to the cheers of their many supporters.

This adventure added another dimension to my dad's many talents I wasn't aware of. I knew him as an idyllic father, fine athlete and coach, musician, actor, photographer, and public figure... never as a Tom Sawyer.

Later in my life, we used to swim in the creek at the same spot in the picture. When the rain had subsided and the water level dropped, it left a perfect swimming hole for some local kids to have a fun day.



"At Roy Lausten Point, near the Pope St. bridge, the crew disembarked long enough to refresh itself." The crew, listed below, managed to navigate successfully to the San Francisco Bay. Green X's mark the start and finish.

The crew:

- ⚓ **Captain Ray Tinney**, Funeral Director
- ⚓ **First Mate Thelo Perrot**, Deputy City Engineer of Palo Alto
- ⚓ **Chief Engineer Norris James**, newspaper editor and editor for the *Stanford Illustrated Review*



"Bent on a scientific mission, to wit, examination of the banks of the [San Francisquito] creek, they dipped the little craft (a flat-bottomed affair) into the swirling tide opposite the Stanford Golf Course and cast off." Ray Tinney and Norris James are pictured above as they navigated the "hazardous and trying" rapids below the Big Tree (pictured far right). With the help of advice, the boat "road through swimmingly." —as reported in the Palo Alto Times, February 17, 1940.



# History Jaunts for November

Once you have learned about the **150 year history of Redwood City** at the November 5 general meeting, you may want to explore its past more thoroughly. Redwood City's Historical Resources Advisory Committee has made this possible with its online publication of "**The Path of History**," an illustrated brochure of suggested **self-guided walking tours**, complete with maps and thumbnail summaries of the sites along the way such as the San Mateo County Courthouse and the New Sequoia/Fox Theater. The "Path of History" download is available at [redwoodcity.org](http://redwoodcity.org).



Redwood Creek, first used in 1851 as a channel for the lumber industry and center for shipbuilding, once flowed all the way to downtown Redwood City.



Lathrop House, home of the Redwood City Heritage Association in the downtown center.

**Lathrop House** in downtown Redwood City is one of the Peninsula's oldest mansions. It is an architectural treasure built in 1863 by the original landholders—the Arguello and Mezes families—and currently serves as home to the **Redwood City Heritage Association**. 627 Hamilton Avenue, Redwood City. Open House hours: 2nd Wednesday, 3rd Saturday every month, 11 am–3 pm. For more information, visit [lathrophouse.org](http://lathrophouse.org). For more historic photos of historic Redwood City courtesy of the Redwood City Heritage Association, check out the city's "historic microsite" at [redwoodcityhistory.org](http://redwoodcityhistory.org).

**PAST Heritage Autumn Walks** Don't miss the remaining Palo Alto Heritage walks of the season! On **Saturday, October 28**, Margaret Feuer will lead a PAST Heritage walk through **downtown Palo Alto**. To enjoy this free, docent-led walk, meet Margaret at 10 am sharp at City Hall Plaza, 250 Hamilton Ave. On **Sunday, October 29** at 10 am PAST docents Kris Zavoli and Anne Gregor will lead a walk through **Professorville**. Meet at 1005 Bryant, the corner of Bryant and Addison in front of the Angell House. Read more about Professorville's architecture on page 2!






**The Repair Café** is a free meeting place where you and a team of volunteer experts work together to fix such things as vacuums, bicycles, toys, and a myriad of electrical appliances. Repair Café encourages environmental responsibility in 1300 locations worldwide. Bring your local broken items Sunday, November 3, 11 am – 3 pm, to the Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. For more information, call (650) 321-1004 or visit [repaircafe-paloalto.org](http://repaircafe-paloalto.org).

Welcome New Members!  
Susan McPartian  
Sandra Peters

**JOIN US** for our  
**December 2017 Meeting**  
Former mayor **Karen Holman**  
will present  
**Palo Alto Vignettes**  
a perennial favorite!  
**Sunday, December 3, 2-4 pm**  
@ **Lucie Stern Community Center**

The Heritage Program for  
November 2017 will feature  
"Local Historical Associations  
Bring Their Perspectives to PAHA"  
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

    
Follow PAHA on social media!

**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—while supporting our archiving, research and publishing efforts.  
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](http://pahistory.org). Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee.

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.