

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*April 28-May 2—California Preservation Foundation Conference*, San Francisco Presidio. For more information, contact the California Preservation Foundation at (415) 495-0349.

*May 2—Palo Alto Historical Association*. Hear Bob French and some former Duveneck School students where he was principal talk about their early history lessons. Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, 2 p.m.

*Now through May 23—When Radio Was King*. Museum of American Heritage. The associated lecture series (MOAH members free, others \$5) concludes with the following:

May 5—**Radio Recollections** by Palo Alto Vice Mayor Jim Burch on his experiences in the radio industry after WWII.

May 11—**Radio Was King, But the Jesters Reigned** by Gerald Nachman, author of *Raised on Radio*.

For more information, call (650) 321-1004 or check the MOAH Web site at <http://www.moah.org>. Open Friday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; free admission.

*May 7—Homer Avenue tour*. Noon. See cover for details.

*May 8—Preservation Awards and Centennial Plaque Presentation*. 4-6 p.m. See cover for details.

*June 21-25—2004 Math and Science Summer Camp*. Co-sponsored by MOAH and The Media Center for students 10 years of age and up. Registration must be completed by April 30. For summer camp details, call (650) 321-1004 or visit [www.moah.org](http://www.moah.org).

*Ongoing—Walking Tours of Downtown, Professorville, College Terrace, or Homer Avenue*. \$20 per docent group of up to 10 people. To arrange a tour, call (650) 328-5670. or visit [www.pastheritage.org](http://www.pastheritage.org) for contact information.

*June 9 Palo Alto Historical Association Annual Dinner*. Ryland Kelly speaker.



## PAST News

Palo Alto Stanford Heritage  
P.O. Box 308  
Palo Alto, CA 94302

PAST Heritage is a nonprofit organization advocating the preservation of the historic architecture, neighborhoods, and character of the greater Palo Alto Stanford area.

PAST Web site: [www.pastheritage.org](http://www.pastheritage.org)  
PAST Hotline: (650) 299-8878  
Editor: Carolyn George  
Contributors: David Bubenik, Karen Holman, Dianne MacDaniels, Angelica Volterra  
Art/Photos: Carolyn George, Palo Alto History Museum Project, Palo Alto Historical Association



# PAST News

Vol. 17, No. 4

P.O. Box 308 • Palo Alto, California 94302 • (650) 299-8878

Spring 2004

# PRESERVATION WEEK MAY 2-8, 2004

**Homer Avenue Tour**—Join outgoing PAST President and Homer Avenue resident David Bubenik for an updated tour of our historic Homer Avenue area on Friday, May 7. Learn about this unique part of Palo Alto, its significance to our local scene, and also its profound impact on world history and culture. The one-hour circle tour begins at noon at the historic Palo Alto Woman's Club building, Homer Avenue at Cowper Street.

## Preservation Awards and Plaques

Join us Saturday, May 8,  
between 4 and 6 p.m.

for presentation of our annual  
preservation awards and plaques  
to our newest centennial homes.

We will gather in the garden of  
Abe and Marian Sofaer,  
1200 Bryant.  
Light refreshments will be served.

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**PRESIDENT'S CORNER—**

This is my final President's Corner column. Having had the job and title for a very rewarding three years, it is time to make way for new ideas and a different approach. Change invigorates.

I note with no small relief that, at the end of my tenure, PAST is not only still in existence but moving briskly ahead. The rightful credit belongs to many others. I am a ruthless delegator, believing that apportioning the workload strengthens an organization by cultivating participation, cooperation, and, above all, a sense of shared ownership and individual achievement. Besides, there is no way I could do even a noteworthy part of each task by myself.

In my time PAST has hosted three very successful Holiday House Tours, ably organized by (in chronological-alphabetic order) **Marilyn Bauriedel**, **Natalie Wells**, **Pria Graves**, **Emily Renzel**, and **Gail Woolley**. All of the Board and many of our general members pitched in to make each event a memorable reality. Warmest thanks to all.

In between, **Caroline Willis** and her crew have created outstanding celebrations of Preservation Week, honoring our surviving centenarian houses with commemorative brass plaques, showcasing our heritage with enlightening tours, and recognizing prominent achievements to preserve it. Be sure to attend her third production, the first week of May 2004.

Thanks and kudos go to **Carolyn George** for her tireless efforts resulting in our excellent quarterly newsletter. The same to PAST Publicity Chair **JudyAnn Edwards** for ensuring our continuing visibility in the larger community and advancing its historical awareness. And to **Pria Graves**, my presidential predecessor, who has since kept our Web site a going concern.

The courtyard of the historic Roth Building is a much more inviting and enlightening place thanks to **Dianne McDaniels**, who created and maintains PAST's educational display there. It has raised the awareness of many passersby to this signature Birge Clark building with its remarkable murals, and very likely it has forestalled casual vandalism to what otherwise seems another abandoned building awaiting demolition in a heavy construction zone. Hopefully it will rise again as the Palo Alto History Museum.

Responding to popular demand, PAST last year reinstated its guided Professorville tours. **Gail Woolley** spearheaded the revival, and **Aino Vieira da Rosa** ably undertook the nuts and bolts. Let's show appreciation to them and our volunteer docents.

Above all, I gratefully acknowledge the vital and cheerful support of PAST's senior officers. To treasurer **Elizabeth Moder-Stern**, who heroically overhauled our accounting system, and to her energetic successor, **Grace Hinton**, who completed the mission—many, many thanks on PAST's behalf. Secretaries **Marilyn Bauriedel**, **Laura Ferrell**, and **Aino Vieira da Rosa** kept the indispensable accurate records of our proceedings.

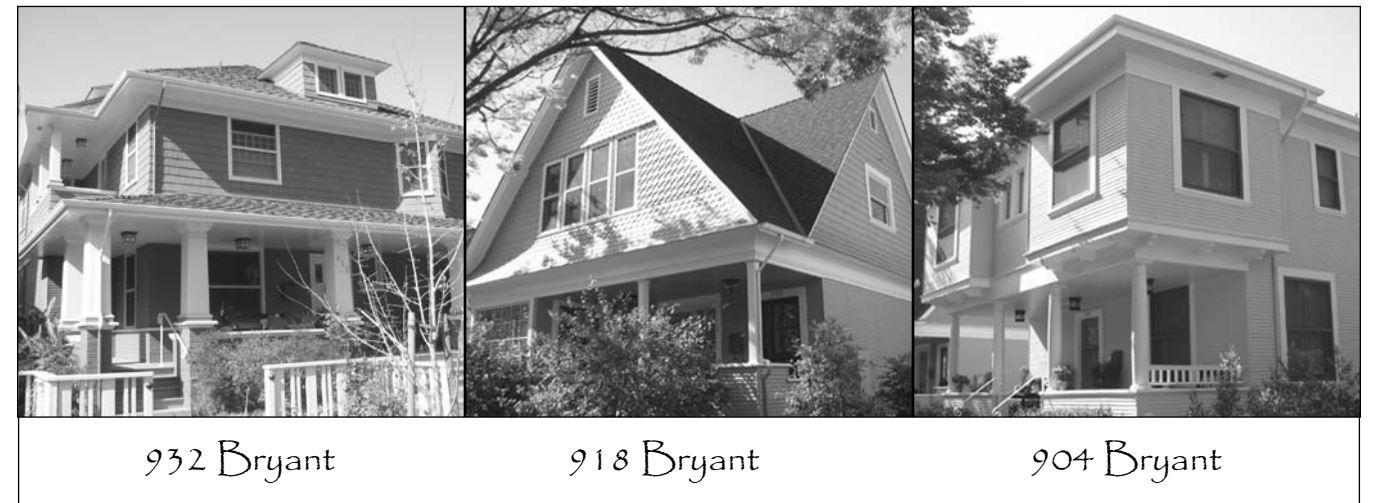
And very special appreciation goes to **Natalie Wells**, who as vice president showed me how to be president for my first two years, and no less to her indefatigable successor, **Marilyn Bauriedel**.



Best of all, I have two more years with this wonderful group. **Onward to Edgewood!**

**PAST'S PAST—** From the January 1997 issue:

On December 3, 1996, PAST Heritage awarded its first community grant to Friends of the Library. "The grant will be used to purchase materials in the categories of architecture, interior design, buildings (hands-on preservation), city, town and country planning, local history and topical materials for children." See the Palo Alto History Museum article on page 6 to learn about our latest grant.



932 Bryant

918 Bryant

904 Bryant

Three in a row!



591 Stanford Avenue



1795 Park

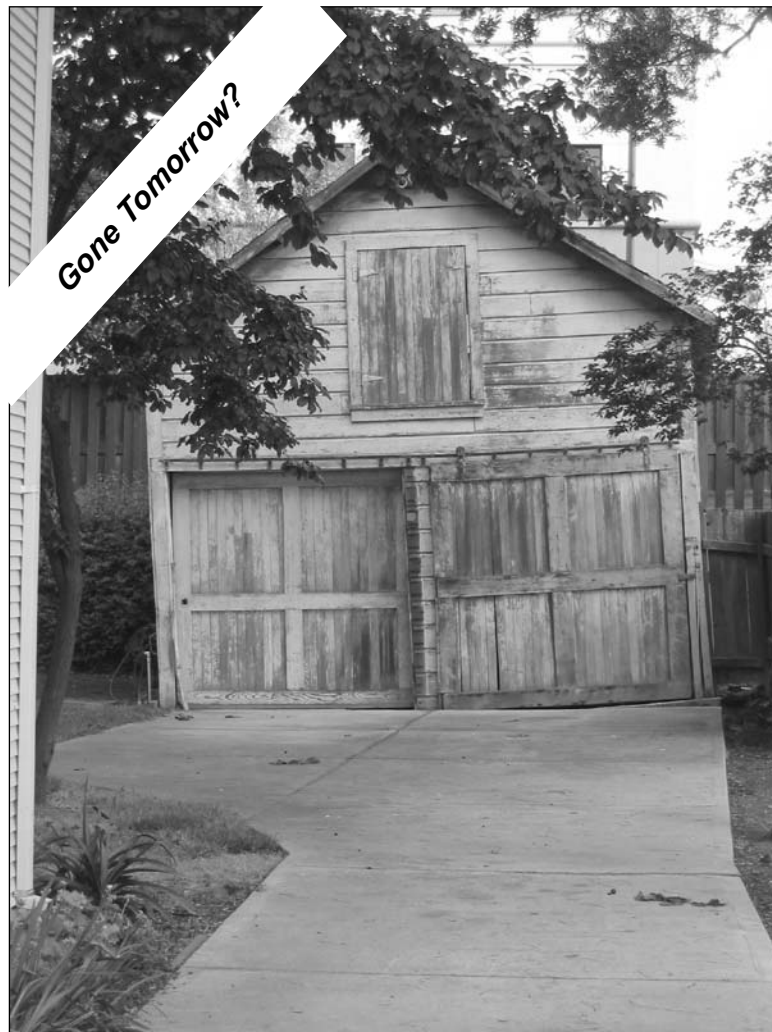


2130 Yale

**1904 Homes**

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 551 Addison Avenue  | 401-403 Florence Street |
| 695 Arastradero Road—<br>Chapel, (Alta Mesa<br>Memorial Park) | 421 Guinda Street       |
| 635 Bryant Street   | 567 Hale Street         |
| 904 Bryant Street   | 323 High Street         |
| 918 Bryant Street   | 390 Leland Avenue       |
| 932 Bryant Street   | 500 Melville Avenue     |
| 1130 Bryan Street   | 778 Melville Avenue     |
| 1200 Bryant Street  | 1757 Park Boulevard     |
| 518 Byron Street  | 1795 Park Boulevard     |
| 627 Channing Avenue   | 942 Ramona Street       |
| 263 Churchill Avenue  | 948 Ramona Street       |
| 1032 College Avenue   | 591 Stanford Avenue     |
| 275 Cowper Street   | 564 University Avenue   |
| 1021 Cowper Street  | 900 University Avenue   |
| 1335 Cowper Street  | 121 Waverley Street     |
| 540 Emerson Street  | 175 Webster Street      |
| 1027 Emerson Street   | 601 Webster Street      |
| 1035 Emerson Street   | 619-623 Webster Street  |
|   | 334 Whitman Court       |
|   | 2130 Yale Street        |





*51 Encina Barn  
One of two remaining barns in Palo Alto.  
This outbuilding was part of the Greer estate.*

This circa-1900 wood barn is one of the last remnants of the Greer family and dangerously close to being demolished. Located on land owned by the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, it is part of a property that also includes the last remaining house (a designated historic property) of the once-vast Greer estate. The nearly intact barn allows a glimpse of the early days in Palo Alto and comes complete with its original fenestration, hayloft door above the front, two sliding barn doors, and a metal track featuring simple hardware with an embossed star pattern.

On March 17, Palo Alto's Historic Resources Board met to discuss an application by the Palo Alto Medical Foundation to replace the barn with a new, larger two-car garage. The Historic Resources Board voted to "...strongly recommend that the barn be retained and rehabilitated..." PAST Heritage plans to strongly support this recommendation in hopes that "Gone Tomorrow?" doesn't in fact become "Gone Tomorrow!!!"

*Dianne MacDaniels*

**PAST Heritage Board of Directors**

*Dave Bubenik, President  
Marilyn Bauriedel, Vice President  
Aino Vieira da Rosa, Secretary  
Grace Hinton, Treasurer*

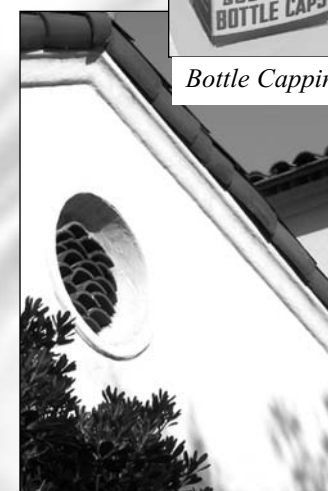
*Frankie Campos  
Aino Vieira da Rosa  
JudyAnn Edwards  
Laura Ferrell  
Carolyn George*

*Dianne MacDaniels  
Steve Staiger  
Emily Renzel  
Caroline Willis  
Gail Woolley*

**Oh, Happy Day!—PALO ALTO HISTORY MUSEUM PROJECT UPDATE**



*Bottle Capping device.*



*Side view of Roth Building.*



*Miss Sara Harker's dress worn at many commencement celebrations.*



*Karen Holman*



*Tuxedo belonging to J.B. Wideman, founder of Wideman's Store.*

The campaign to establish the Palo Alto History Museum marked an important victory in March as the city approved a lease option for the historic Roth Building to serve as home for the museum.

Members of the Palo Alto History Museum committee, advisory committee and major donors came together March 25 to celebrate the Palo Alto City Council's March 1 approval of the lease option. Peggy McKee and Steve Staiger were introduced as the new presidents. After remarks by Gary Fazzino, Vic Ojakian, architect Michael Garavaglia, and Karen Holman, guests viewed a small sampling of artifacts and photographs that will be included in future museum exhibits.

The community project has a \$6.5 million fundraising goal with \$1 million already committed by the donor-advised charitable fund of a well-known Palo Alto resident, excellent prospects of another amount on the order of \$1 million, and commitment of another approximately \$300,000. PAST is doing its part by putting our money on the table and PAST President David Bubenik explained how PAST is helping.

Last fall, we made a direct donation of \$5,000 to help the effort get started. But, that is only the beginning. Here is the PAST Challenge:

We pledged another \$10,000, with \$5,000 as a challenge grant to encourage others to join the Museum movement. All KQED viewers know how this works. PAST will match dollar for dollar all cash donations which reference this offer, up to a total of \$5,000, effectively doubling your donation. Do be aware that this offer applies only to actual cash donations.

The idea is to help build a continuing momentum, so don't stop when this challenge is achieved. Although PAST can double only the first five thousand dollars, the Museum will welcome all donations of any amount.

And finally, PAST challenges everyone to set up challenge grants of their own. Let's make the most of our dollars to take advantage of this one-time opportunity to establish the Palo Alto History Museum in the Roth Building.

Many thanks to supporters, attendees, speakers, event planners and MOAH for hosting the event. Donations and pledges are tax deductible and can be sent to Palo Alto History Museum project, P.O. Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302.



# Edgewood Plaza, Green Gables, and Edgewood: A Unique, Nationally Significant Eichler Neighborhood—Threatened

A distinguished speaker, a beautiful spring afternoon, and a unique Palo Alto neighborhood. On March 27, Alan Hess, noted architect, historian, author, and architecture critic for the *San Jose Mercury News*, led Palo Alto residents and neighbors on a “Celebrate Our Eichler Neighborhood Tour” that featured Edgewood Shopping Center (once again threatened with demolition) and the surrounding Green Gables and Edgewood Eichler subdivisions.

In discussing the historical significance of this neighborhood, Alan placed it squarely in the center of the great suburban movement of the post World War II period, the great migration of Americans from inner cities to the suburbs. This migration happened around the country, but “California led the nation. It set the models, it set the forms that other states—other cities—copied,” Alan noted.

This was a time when architects and developers were working out planning and design solutions for a new type of city with a very different landscape: the suburban city. In Edgewood Plaza and the surrounding neighborhoods, visionary developer Joe Eichler, together with some of the best architects of the day, created a community that successfully integrates commercial, residential, service, and office functions into a cohesive and coherent whole, a design for a “vital neighborhood” that has worked well for 50 years.

Alan repeatedly emphasized that the neighborhood, including the shopping center and the surrounding residential subdivisions, is of national significance and noted that its significance derives in part from the fact that it is “a whole unified community, a whole unified landscape. There is very little that is this well-designed this early in terms of suburban development in the United States, and suburban development is the biggest urban story of the second half of the twentieth century. This is where intelligent architects and an enlightened developer

said, ‘We will create a new type of city, a new type of living in the suburbs’.... There is nothing quite like this complex anywhere else in the country. It is significant.”

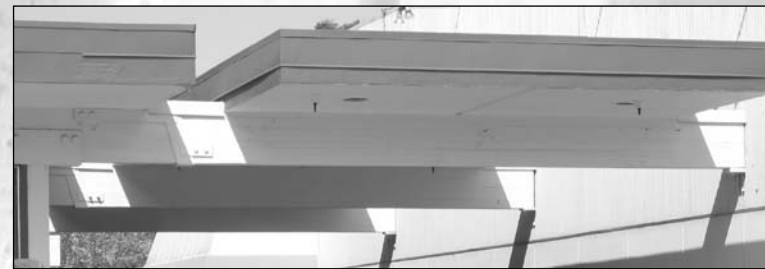
Designed by A. Quincy Jones, a major California architect, Edgewood Plaza is the only shopping center built by Eichler. It also housed the offices of Joseph Eichler during the productive peak of Eichler’s home-building period. “Edgewood is a superb example of modern design in a shopping center. The plan, the relationship of the car spaces to the pedestrian spaces, the proportions—(in) all of those things, there is a higher quality than almost any place else that I can think of in the country,” Alan said.

Alan also noted that Green Gables, the 1950 subdivision with homes designed by the firm of internationally renowned architects Anshen and Allen, has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, a “great honor” and a “cutting edge (idea) in historic preservation today.”

And yet Edgewood Shopping Center is again threatened with demolition.

In October 2002, the PAST Board of Directors made history when it voted unanimously to advocate, for the first time, for the preservation of an example of modern architecture, Edgewood Plaza Shopping Center. As David Bubenik reported in our newsletter, “Edgewood is a surviving example of the optimism and quest for realizable utopia that once galvanized American visionaries. Joe Eichler’s vision for Edgewood was to unify commercial and domestic functions into a coherent, mutually supportive whole, a mid-20th century concept for an integrated living neighborhood. At Edgewood, preservation looks beyond saving the assembled wood, bricks, and mortar that achieve the architect’s concept and seeks to conserve the larger vision.”

*Angelica Volterra*



**As Alan Hess noted, “Every time an important building is torn down, you lose a sense of who you are as a city, a community.” Eichler’s visionary creation has worked well for 50 years. It can work as well for another 50, or maybe 100!**

