

Calendar of Events

February 11 through May 29, at the Museum of American Heritage: **Mechanically Advantaged: Gears, Levers & Pulleys.** For more information, call (650) 321-1004 or check the MOAH Web site at www.moah.org. Located at 351 Homer Avenue. Open Friday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; free admission.

First Sunday of each month (except for this year when the February meeting will be on January 30)—**Palo Alto Historical Association**, 2 p.m., Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road.

Los Altos History Museum. Open Thursday—Sunday, noon to 4 p.m., 51 South San Antonio Road, Los Altos, (650) 948-0427. Free.

May 2005 Preservation Month: **Restore America: Communities at a Crossroad.** Look for more information in the next issue.

Sunday, May 1, **Stanford Historical Society Spring Home and Garden Tour**, The Stanford Historical Society will celebrate the publication of *Historical Houses III: the San Juan Neighborhood, Stanford University* with a tour of homes and gardens featured in the book. Information on tickets and registration will be available in March on the Stanford Historical Society Web site: <http://histsoc.stanford.edu>. The House Tour Committee is also seeking docents and volunteers; contact Susan Sweeney, 650-324-1653, or susan.sweeney@stanford.edu

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 for contact information.

PAST Web site: www.pastheritage.org

PAST Hotline: (650) 299-8878

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Emily Renzel, Gail Woolley



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.

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Winter 2005

Homer Avenue: Palo Alto's History Hub



The Homer Avenue corridor is a treasure trove of historically significant buildings.

The 1916 Palo Alto Woman's Club, the century old St. Thomas Aquinas Church, the Williams House, and many buildings dating back to the 1920's and earlier give a sense of Palo Alto as it used to be. Several new developments are about to strengthen this historic hub.



In recent years the historic Williams House was transformed into the Museum of American Heritage, where there are both permanent and rotating exhibits of American life in the past. The Museum has had special exhibits on the history and evolution of bicycles, radios, toys, home appliances, and many other interesting parts of Americana.

Very soon, just across the street on the old Palo Alto Clinic site, our new Heritage Park will be officially opened. This two-acre park will provide welcome open space and areas to play for families south of downtown.

And, adjacent to the park, efforts are underway to establish Palo Alto's own History Museum in the Birge Clark designed Roth Building at the corner of Homer and Bryant. The History Museum Board is about to launch a major fundraising campaign to make this Museum a reality. They have about two years to raise the \$5.5 million needed to restore the Roth Building and transform it into a first class museum about Palo Alto and Stanford. In addition to the proposed capital fund, the Board already has a commitment for a million dollar endowment. Currently Palo Alto is

one of only two cities in Santa Clara County that do not have their own local history museum. We look forward to seeing this vision become a reality.

Emily Renzel



The Caroline Chronicles

Hooray for a wonderful community event! Our Holiday house tour was spectacular this year with grand old houses and a new neighborhood to explore. Congratulations to all, organizers, homeowners and worker bees, who made this tour joyously memorable. We would not be able to produce an event on this scale without you. The five commanding houses provided us with a privileged view into days gone by. As always, it was fun to stroll and visit with lots of you. Special thanks to **Grace Hinton** who made it all happen.

Heritage Park on Homer Avenue, next to our future **History Museum**, is looking very much like an early park in Palo Alto might have, without the play structures and amenities, which have yet to appear. It's nice to see it green and pastoral without the dirt and construction debris.

Looking ahead, we are gearing up for **Preservation Month** in May. The National Trust has expanded the idea of Preservation Week and this hopefully will allow us to not only enjoy our own events but be able to participate more fully in those hosted by neighboring communities. We will keep you informed thru the PAST hotline and our webpage as May approaches.

We are researching century old homes and would love for you to join us at the historic files in the library, either to research your own home or to help with those currently approaching the century mark.

One event on the calendar is the **Stanford Historical Society's Spring Home and Garden Tour**, which promises to show us more of the residential campus. It will also be an opportunity to purchase books about the campus. The Tour takes place May 1st from one to four in the afternoon.

Here's hoping 2005 is a year in which we lose none of our precious heritage and see some of our sites restored.

Happy New Year,
Caroline Willis
 President, PAST Heritage

Wanted: Owners of 1905 houses.

Was *your* house built in 1905? We're busily researching to discover all 1905 homes so you and they can be honored during Preservation Month in May, but we may not know of your house. Please contact us if your home was built in 1905 (or earlier, if we missed it).

Do you have a talent for research? Love to solve mysteries? Use your talents to help research Palo Alto's centennial homes. Call Marilyn Bauriedel, 493-1364, or Frankie Campos, 327-7197, to get started. We'd love to have you on board.

Our list of 1905 houses is growing and to start the list we have:

- 209 Cowper Street
- 1078 Forest Avenue (Rosedale Manor)



Rosedale Manor, built in 1905 at 1078 Forest Avenue.



Built in 1905 at 209 Cowper Street.

Toni Wisman &
 David Schwartz
 Janet Witharm
 James Work
 Caroline Zlotnick

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Suggestions Welcome!

What neighborhoods would you like to visit on a future Holiday House Tour? What about your home? We are open for new ideas. Please e-mail Caroline Willis at pastheritage@mac.com or leave a message on our hotline, 299-8878.



WELCOME NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

PAST Heritage has more than 300 members for the 2004-2005 year. Our membership and our effectiveness continues to grow.

We appreciate every one of you and welcome your participation in our many special projects. Volunteers are always needed. We hope you'll plan to participate in Preservation Month activities this May.

Emily Renzel

Membership Chair

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Aino Vieira da Rosa
Barbara & Scott Wallace
Cindy & John Wallbrink
Len & Hilda Weisberg
Marian Wells
Jesse & Esther Wilson

Juana Briones ~ Keep Her Doors to History Open!

The Juana Briones Heritage Foundation, has launched a campaign to acquire Juana's historic adobe house and restore it as a living history center. Now is your chance to step forward and lend a hand, as the Foundation gathers signatures of support. The names of individuals will eventually be posted on the web site at www.brioneshouse.org and included in grant applications. By completing and returning the enclosed yellow endorsement card you demonstrate the depth of interest in this historic house and the remarkable life of Juana Briones.

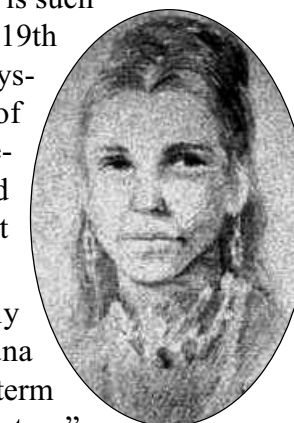
Momentum is already building for saving this unique resource, as letters and emails have arrived from California history professors, from Latino leaders as far away as Washington, D.C., as well as a curator of the Smithsonian Museum. Many of the messages echo a common theme—the place of women in history. Molly Murphy MacGregor, who served on a Congressional Commission to study women's historic sites in the United States and who is president and co-founder of The National Women's History Project writes:

Our findings were distressful. Women's landmarks and women's historic sites are disappearing at an alarming rate. California, with the greatest population in the country, has among the fewest sites. But now we have the opportunity to save the home of Juana Briones and set her life and work in the context of California history. Establishing her home as an historic site honors all the California women who wove and held the fabric of our state together. Juana Briones' story, her difficult life and hard work, is a testament to the spirit of California women as builders and dreamers.



Children on a school trip to the Juana Briones House.

History Professor Al Camarillo of Stanford University, a member of the Juana Briones Heritage Foundation Board, says about the importance of saving Juana's house. "...Juana Briones is such an important part of California's 19th century past. The only remaining physical reminders of her legacies of humanitarianism, integrity, resourcefulness and enterprise are embedded in the walls of a historic structure that now faces destruction."



Once the house is permanently saved from demolition, the Juana Briones Heritage Foundation's long-term vision includes "opening a door to history", by restoring the home's historic architectural form and restoring the grounds with native plants, a vegetable garden and fruit trees. The teaching power of the house is immeasurable because it lends itself to changing exhibits about the architectural roots of early earthen buildings, archaeology, native California plants, and other relevant topics that show themes of continuity and change in California history as various groups interacted.

After the property is restored, the Foundation's next step is to "help our past inform our future", with the creation of a children's program that moves beyond the pages of history books, to pass on the story of this enterprising woman. Another component of the program would be a scholar-in-residence for women's studies. That scholar would not just be at work in a university, but be committed to bringing history out into public space through discussions, sharing of family and oral histories, and activities.

In addition to gathering signatures of support, the Foundation is building a team of individuals with professional experience in real estate law, mediation, preservation, community leadership, and grant writing to raise funds and negotiate a sales agreement with the owners. The Foundation feels confident that when the owners (who have never occupied the property) understand the importance of this house to women's history, negotiations can move forward.

If Juana Briones' house could talk, it would have many stories to tell. By returning the yellow card you raise your voice to help ensure Juana's house does get a voice in bringing history alive. Interested in joining this effort? Please contact the Foundation at their web site—www.brioneshouse.org.

Architectural Details on San Juan Hill

Fabulous houses, cooperative weather, and the unique Stanford setting brought out a large and enthusiastic crowd for PAST's 17th annual Holiday House Tour. Several representatives of the original families, subsequent owners, and their descendants attended for a glimpse into the past. One of the aims with this annual event is to show how modern families can live comfortably in old houses, combining sensitive remodeling with sensible preservation—each of these houses showed that spirit admirably.

We distributed over 700 tickets for this very successful event! PAST used part of the proceeds toward our promised gift of \$5000.00 to the Stanford Historical Society to further their research into the history of the many historic houses on campus. The check was presented and graciously accepted at January's Stanford Historical Society meeting.

It was wonderful to collaborate with the Society on this event, and we hope to have another opportunity to do so in the future. We are grateful to all the docents from both PAST and the SHS who volunteered their time. Special thanks to Marian Adams of the Society's Historic Houses Committee for her enthusiasm about the houses and commitment to the project.

Grace Hinton

