



Since 1971



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P.O. Box 1002, MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA, 94026-1002

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FORTY YEARS YOUNG AND STILL GOING

Preserving and Promoting Local History

Yes, the MPHA is celebrating its fortieth birthday this year. What began as an oral history project in conjunction with the Friends of the Library resulted in our Historical Association.

In the early 1970's, Larry Johnston (one-time manager of Bank of America) was appointed official historian of Menlo Park for the purpose of recording Menlo history. With the help of Dr. Joseph Weeden (a local dentist), they set out to interview "old timers" about Menlo Park in the early 1900s. As Mr. Johnston said, "We want to get as many of these oral interviews as we can before the few old timers leave us."



Mr. Johnston suggested the organization of a Menlo Park Historical Society and asked the Friends to give some thought to serving as a steering group for such an organization.

On March 25, 1971 By-Laws were approved and Articles of Incorporation were signed by the Board of Directors.

Some of the early Board members along with Mr. Johnston and Dr. Weeden were H. Kelly Ogle, Fred Merrill, Jean Bone, John Kiefer, and Maggi Scaroni.

And here we are today, keeping vigil over the history of our City.

Committees

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Newsletter

Tim Goode

(650) 325-3001

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(640) 327-7556

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MPHA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For the third year, MPHA had a table at the City's Block Party. It was a good way to again introduce ourselves to the community and share with passersby history of our City.

Thanks again to the Kavanaughs for making the Ice Cream Social a great success and a wonderful way to start off the summer. Everyone went home with a smile.

I would like to share with you the Board's ongoing discussion regarding a "home" for MPHA. Other cities in the area have an historical museum, and that is what we want. The Board would welcome your thoughts. Please give us a call if you have any suggestions or comments.

Finally, since it is our 40th year, we are planning an end-of-the year celebration at our annual meeting. More information to follow

MEET YOUR BOARD

James E. (Jym) Clendenin



In 1975, soon after completing his Ph.D (physics) at Columbia University in the City of New York, Jym moved to Menlo Park with his wife and daughter to participate in a particle physics experiment at SLAC. After a few years he found himself on the SLAC staff as a physicist and soon thereafter became a Menlo Park homeowner. At SLAC he specialized in research in accelerator technology. Perhaps his proudest achievement was (with others) to develop a photocathode capable of generating intense beams of highly polarized electrons, which enabled SLAC in the late 1980s to compete favorably with CERN (the large European accelerator complex) in the ultimately successful search for and determination of the properties of the Z particle (a neutral boson that along with the W bosons mediates the weak interaction). Jym has been an avid runner for the past 30 years and a regular backpacker for at least 20. After retirement in 2008, he additionally took up bicycling. Other

interests include wine tasting, cooking (and eating), reading, bridge, symphony, current events and (naturally) politics. A couple years ago, when he began to submit articles for the ultra-local blog, InMenlo.com, Jym realized he had an interest in the history of his community, which led him to the Menlo Park Historical Association in a never-ending quest for information. In June 2010, he joined the MPHA Board with visions first of pushing/pulling the Board into the digital age and second of participating in the Board's vision of Menlo Park eventually having a historical museum of its own.

SPECIAL BOYS' DAY

John Arnold, MPHA member, looking through his trove of memorabilia, found the following. He thinks that this event took place around 1945 and probably reported in either the Menlo Park Recorder or the Palo Alto Times. Now was there a Girls' Day in Menlo Park in 1945??? My have times changed. For you "old timers" these names should bring back memories.

BOYS' DAY IN MENLO PARK

Youngsters to 'govern' city in annual Lions Club program

The eagerness of youth will replace the experience of age Monday in Menlo Park when the boys of elementary school age take over the administration of the city in the ninth Boys' Day program.

Feeling that the boys become better citizens when they are faced with the duties, problems, and details of everyday life, the Menlo Park Lions' Club has sponsored an annual Boys' Day for the past eight years, a day set aside to enable the young men of the community to get an insight into the problems of running business and government. All merchants and governmental agencies have cooperated wholeheartedly in this educational project.

Ronald Arms has been elected by his Central School classmates to be this year's mayor for the day, and, under the supervision of Mayor Charles P. Burgess, will carry out the duties of the executive office.

J. O. Yount, chief of police, will shift the burdens of his position to the youthful shoulders of John Crawford while Owen O'Donnel will see that any fires which occur are snuffed out quickly and efficiently with the help of Fire Chief Thomas Cuff.

Other officials selected by their fellow students at Central School, St. Joseph's School, and the Ravenswood School—all parts of the Menlo Park Fire District, the area covered by the Lions' Club—are:

Joe Kelly, councilman; John Arnold, councilman; Robert Ol-

sen, councilman; Bruno Edinzer, councilman; Jack Cramer, city treasurer; Fred Durant, city attorney; Neil Dickinson, city clerk; Larry Arnold, fire commissioner; Robert Ackerman, city judge; Thomas Del Sarte, building inspector; Robert Poll, fire commissioner; Floyd Bumbaca, tax collector; Ronnie Russel, city engineer; Gordon Page, fire commissioner; David Matney, supt. of Menlo Park Schools; David Leahy, supt. of Ravenswood Schools; Fred Blaisdell, trustee; David Dioli, trustee; and Charles Schob, trustee.

In addition to the government assignments many boys will be sponsored by local businessmen, working in the stores and offices during the day, and attending the evening dinner in company with their "employer"

The dinner program at Bertrand's on Middlefield road will include a full program of entertainment, highlighted by a speech by Father Thomas F. Reagen, director of the Hanna Home for Boys, Menlo Park.

At 10 a. m. a group of the temporary officials will meet with Police Chief Yount and will be conducted by him on a tour of the San Mateo county government facilities in Redwood City, followed by a similar tour of the Menlo Park City Hall and police department.

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Mateo country government facilities in Redwood City, followed by a similar tour of the Menlo Park City Hall and police department.

Thank you, John, for calling MPHA’s attention to a special time in Menlo Park. Events such as this are what make our fair city a wonderful place to be.

The following article was first written in the InMenlo.com website on April 3, 2011. Linda Gulker graciously has given permission to reprint the article for The GatePost. InMenlo.com is a great website giving up-to-date information on the comings and goings of Menlo Park. MPHA thanks Linda for giving us the opportunity to share this article with our members

Guild Theatre: Bringing movies to Menlo for 85 years

By Linda Hubbard Gulker



Talk about a mainstay. The Guild Theater opened in 1926 before “talkies.” Known as the Menlo Theatre for its first two decades, it has endured, surviving the proliferation of multiplexes.

King of the Turf featuring Mary Carr and Kenneth Harlan was the feature presentation when the Menlo opened its doors on May 7, 1926, according to a report in the *Palo Alto Times*. An article written by William Henry in 1987 for the *Country Almanac* provides more details of the time: “In Menlo Park’s early days, especially during the Depression, people

often had little money to spend on entertainment, older residents say. The Menlo Theatre, therefore, was always thinking up new ploys to lure moviegoers.

“A regular attraction of the last 1920s, for instance, was ‘Country Store,’ in which the theatre gave away dishes to women who attended.”



While the Menlo faced competition from Palo Alto’s Stanford and Varsity theaters, it wasn’t until the late ’40s that Menlo Park itself became a two-theater town. The Menlo’s owner, Al Lauice, built and opened the Park Theatre a couple of blocks away. (For a few decades, towards the end of the 20th century, the city had three movie theaters: the Guild, the Park, and a new Menlo Theatre on Santa Cruz Avenue where the Left Bank restaurant is now.)

As long-time residents know, the Guild and Park actually complimented one another, with the Guild featuring, as it does now, more foreign and art house/independent films and the Park presenting more mass-market entertainment. With the Park closed since 2002, locals shuddered at the thought of losing the Guild, too, when it closed in February because of water damage. It reopened three weeks later. A proclamation by then-mayor Nicholas Jellins on its 75th anniversary on May 7, 2001 alludes to the 3,900 consecutive

weeks of film, and current Guild manager Rachael Wordhouse-Dykema confirmed that the streak continued until the recent closure.



Rachael started working at the Guild when she was 15 and said she’s always been interested in the theater’s history and is an admirer of its interior. “Different pieces have come from different theaters,” she says. “For example, the seats are from the Act 1 and 2 in Berkeley, installed after those theaters closed down.”

She’s been told that the two most distinctive interior adornments — the gold wings and swirls — are also from elsewhere. The photo published with the 1987 *Country Almanac* story does show a different looking auditorium.

Now operated by Landmark, the Guild is one of the few remaining single-screen theaters on the Peninsula — if not the only one showing current films. “It’s really a great place to watch a movie,” says Rachael. “It’s wide and short, making for hardly a bad seat in the house. No one is super far from the screen and no one is too close.”

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Jym Clendenin contributed to this post, tracking down supporting documents at the Menlo Park Historical Association. Photos by Chris Gulker and Rachael Wordhouse-Dykema

(An interesting fact reported by Jym: In the early 1940’s, because El Camino Real was widened to accommodate four lanes of traffic and since the Guild was too large to move, 30 feet of the once spacious lobby had to be demolished.)



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