

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY YEAR NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

Historical Society Joins 50-Year Celebration in Temescal Canyon

After launching their fledgling organizations in 1972, the Pacific Palisades Historical Society, the Pacific Palisades Community Council and the Village Green Committee were all formally incorporated in 1973. That was a seminal year in the town's history, helping to spur decades of grassroots activism that preserved, protected and enhanced the quality of life here.

Fifty years later, on September 30, Community Council leaders organized a Golden Anniversary Jubilee & Community Celebration at Simon Meadow in Temescal Canyon, where Pacific Palisades was founded in 1922. More than 20 local organizations participated in the festivities and 14 individuals received awards, including Historical Society board members Randy Young and Shirley Haggstrom. A third board member, Patrick Healy, joined with 77-year resident Rich Wilken to present an illustrated history of the Palisades early in the program.

The "front page, above the fold" moment came when State Senator Ben Allen detailed a \$1 million grant to the Palisades-Malibu YMCA from special state funding to help upgrade the four-acre YMCA-owned Simon Meadow (named for its benefactors, Bill and Cindy Simon). Improvements will include ADA-compliant restrooms, shade structures and a paved parking lot that will also provide a smooth surface for basketball.

"Whenever I visit Temescal Canyon," HS board member Bill Bruns said, "I like to quietly salute the community activists and organizations who persevered in protecting the canyon from commercial development and defeating the proposed Reseda-to-the-Sea highway that would have destroyed the canyon."



Historical Society board member Patrick Healy holds up a pair of patriotic Optimist Club parade shorts that he won in a raffle at the Community Council's Jubilee. He and Optimist Rich Wilken presented an overview of Pacific Palisades history at the event, which honored "the rebirth of activism and community collaboration that arose here in the early 1970s," Wilken noted.

Photo: Rich Schmitt

A Golden Celebration on Simon Meadow

PACIFIC PALISADES ORGANIZATIONS

1. Woman's Club (Founded in 1925)
2. Will Rogers Ranch Foundation (1926)
3. American Legion (1928)
4. American Legion Auxiliary (1931)
5. Pacific Palisades Civic League (1943)
6. Pacific Palisades Garden Club (1944)
7. Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association (1946)
8. Fourth of July Parade (1948);
Palisades Americanism Parade Since 1967
9. Chamber of Commerce (1949)
10. Pacific Palisades Newcomers (1950)
11. Rotary Club (1952)
12. Palisades Democratic Club (1953)
13. Palisades Republican Club (1953)
14. Pacific Palisades Baseball Association (1954)
15. Optimist Club (1956)
16. Pacific Palisades Residents Association (1958)
17. Pacific Palisades Library Association (1961)
18. Theatre Palisades (1963)
19. Palisades-Malibu YMCA (1968)
20. Temescal Canyon Association (1972)
21. The Historical Society (1973)
22. Community Council (1973)
23. Village Green Committee (1973)
24. AYSO Region 69 (1975)
25. Will Rogers Run Foundation (1978)
26. Design Review Board (1985)
27. Palisades PRIDE (1992)
28. Sons of the American Legion (2004)
29. Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness (2014)
30. Palisades Business Improvement District (2016)
31. Palisades Forestry Committee (2019)
32. Resilient Palisades (2020)



Community Council president Maryam Zar and emcee Sam Lagana, "the voice of Pacific Palisades," at the PPCC's Golden Jubilee in Temescal Canyon on September 30.

Photo: Rich Schmitt



Betsy Collins and Cindy Kirven are co-presidents of the Village Green Committee, which has managed and maintained the treasured pocket-park on Sunset since 1973. The committee relies entirely on community donations.

Photo: Rich Schmitt



Bill and Cindy Simon, who helped fund the creation of Simon Meadow on the YMCA property in Temescal Canyon.

Photo: Rich Schmitt



Left to right, Eric Dugdale, Randy Young and Patrick Healy helped staff the Historical Society table at the Community Council's 50th anniversary celebration in Temescal Canyon. They displayed numerous photos from the PPHS archives and handed out copies of the organization's 2022 "Pacific Palisades: A Centennial Retrospective."

Photo: Rich Schmitt

Shirley Haggstrom, a 3-Star Volunteer

At the PPCC Jubilee celebration in Temescal Canyon, longtime Historical Society board member Shirley Haggstrom received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Temescal Canyon Association, in recognition of her volunteer contributions to that organization. Shirley received a similar certificate from the Community Council, which she led as president for two years.

We asked Shirley to recount how she became one of the most dedicated activists in Pacific Palisades these past 50 years.

"Our family arrived here from Orinda in 1972, when my husband Gus took a position at RAND. As a former teacher in Colorado, I began volunteering at Marquez Elementary, where my son Chris was a student. I also played tennis at the Palisades Recreation Center and ended up helping Kay Drake with junior tennis.

"During the two years that I served as secretary for the Castellammare Mesa Homeowners Organization (1992-1994), I became the Homeowners' representative on the Community Council, when that was the PPCC format. From 1994-1996 I was vice president of the PPCC and president from 1996-1998."



Shirley Haggstrom and Temescal Canyon Association president James Alexakis, an Eagle Scout, lawyer and at age 37, likely the youngest organization leader in Pacific Palisades. Photo: Rich Schmitt

Shirley received the PPCC Community Service Award in 2009.

"In 2003 at the insistence of Barbara Manaugh," Shirley continued, "I joined the Historical Society board and served as secretary for 20 years, as well as president from 2007-2009. Susan Orenstein and I established the PPHS website in 2007.

"I went on TCA hikes and Carol Leacock asked me to join the board, about 2004, and I began writing newsletters and articles, while also helping with the hikes (weekly during the summer, monthly during the winter). I've remained on the board ever since."

Back in 1993, Shirley recalled, "I attended a public meeting concerning Los Lions Canyon and proposed plans for private/commercial projects in the canyon. When Los Lions was declared a state gateway park in January 1994, I joined other TCA and Historical Society members (known as the Glamazons) to restore the canyon over the next seven years.

"Receiving the TCA and PPCC Certificates of Appreciation for volunteer community service makes me feel very humble and proud of the volunteers I have worked with," Shirley said.



The original, makeshift Uplifters clubhouse in Rustic Canyon burned down in 1922 and was replaced in 1923 by a new Spanish-style clubhouse, with a large dining room and an auditorium complete with pipe organ. Photo: Pacific Palisades Historical Society

Centennial Celebration Held For The Rustic Canyon Clubhouse

The now-historic clubhouse in Rustic Canyon Park, designed by architect William J. Dodd, was completed in 1923 by the Uplifters, a jolly band of wealthy Los Angeles businessmen and talented artists and writers. The group had purchased 120 acres in Rustic Canyon in 1920 and built the clubhouse, vacation cottages, and a polo field in their private enclave. Their mission: "To uplift art and promote good fellowship." The early members, who christened their property Uplifters Ranch, included L. Frank Baum, author of the Oz books. Other Hollywood members over the years included Busby Berkeley, Leo Carrillo, Harold Lloyd, Hal Roach, Will Rogers and Darryl Zanuck.

On May 30 this year, neighborhood leaders hosted a centennial celebration in the library at the clubhouse, which now serves as the Rustic Canyon Recreation Center headquarters. Emcee Jon Amiel, a movie director who lives in the canyon, set the stage by reading "published news reports" about dedication day.

"Frederick Warde, beloved Uplifter and dean of the American stage, delivered the commemorative address, and it was sweetly and brilliantly spoken, with all the feeling and manly emotion remembered in this charming fellow.

"Harry Haldeman, the Grand Muscle (Uplifters

president), read a history of the Club; its ten years of honest merriment chasing away all armies of Glooms, touching lightly on its long list of good works, and fixing deep in every hearer the Club's insignia of a big smile and a big heart.

"Placed into the time capsule were: (1) every hymnal (song book) used by the Club; (2) a list of the Uplifter members; (3) a copy of the Club's history written by Haldeman, and (4) other souvenirs of today which means happy tomorrows.

"Then, composed for the day, 'The Builder' (a song with piano accompaniment) by Charles Wakefield Cadman with a poem by Jim Foley was performed for the crowd in attendance."

Amiel noted that, "After Fred Warde lowered the time capsule, he and Haldeman placed the cornerstone, architect William J. Dodd added the mortar and the box was set in stone until this day, 100 years later."

Alas, when the time capsule was opened by Palisades historian Randy Young, all the paper inside was decomposed and the souvenirs had all congealed into a metal piece (see photo, opposite page). But the dedication song was performed by pianist/singer Ben Lusher, and the gathering was adjourned, with hopes that the next 100-year time capsule will be safely sealed from the elements.



After opening the metal time capsule from 1923, local historian Randy Young showed audience members the contents: dust, tiny paper fragments and a clump of congealed rock-like material. When asked earlier to predict what the box might contain, Young joked, “We’re betting it’s some evil virus that will come out and kill us all.” Photo: Rich Schmitt



Park Advisory Board member Veslemoey Zwart held up a large framed photograph of her mentors, the late George Wolfberg (left), who was president of the Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association for 25 years, and historian Randy Young, who grew up across the street from the clubhouse. The photo will be placed on a wall in the building “to remind us what good public servants look like,” Zwart said. Photo: Rich Schmitt



Canyon resident Jon Amiel, a British film and TV director, emceed the centennial celebration for the historic clubhouse at Rustic Canyon Park. He joked, “They hoped my accent would bring some class to this event.” Photo: Rich Schmitt



Thomas Newman, recipient of 14 Oscar nominations for his film scores, grew up in Rustic Canyon. He introduced pianist Ben Lusher, who played and sang “The Builder,” written for the clubhouse’s dedication a century ago. Photo: Rich Schmitt



Rustic Canyon Recreation Center Director Paige Barnes, who sang the National Anthem during the flag-raising out in front of the clubhouse, has been a vital supporter of various improvements and renovations at the park since 2016. Photo: Rich Schmitt

The Historical Society Seeks Your Support

By BILL BRUNS
Newsletter Editor

A shared interest in preserving the community's past led to the formation of the Pacific Palisades Historical Society on May 30, 1972, with 16 founding members who brought different backgrounds and talents to the organization. They began meeting regularly with Katie LaHue, the reference librarian at the branch library, who arranged for speakers and exhibits.

Co-founder June Blum, editor of the Palisadian-Post, later wrote: "Our fledgling group became incorporated in a big hurry in order to take ownership of Founders Oak Island on Haverford Avenue. Local attorney Richard Collins expedited the incorporation so that the Society could own the island, donated by Townley Pierson and the late Leleh Pierson."

The Historical Society was formally incorporated as a nonprofit organization in August 1973 with Ethel Haydon as the first president under the new constitution, succeeded by Katie LaHue.

During its first year the Historical Society concentrated on locating and collecting historical materials, sharing information on local history, and providing educational programs on the historical heritage of Pacific Palisades. Second-year activities expanded into historic preservation (caring for Founders Oak Island) and planning the landmarking of the Long Wharf. Curator Ernest Marquez started organizing the Society's outstanding collection of historic Palisades photographs for exhibitions.

Looking forward to the Bicentennial in 1976, several members published books relating to Palisades history. Betty Lou Young

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and her son Randy published *Rustic Canyon and the Story of the Uplifters* in 1975; Katie LaHue and Helen Luitjens published *Sketchbook of Pacific Palisades* and Ernest Marquez published his *Port Los Angeles—a History of the Long Wharf*.

In the early 1980s, the Historical Society focused on raising money to publish a definitive history of the town in text and photographs, and in 1983 Betty Lou and Randy Young produced a treasure in *Pacific Palisades: Where the Mountains Meet the Sea*. The Youngs published four more books, and Ernie Marquez kept pace.

The Historical Society has also collected, documented and preserved historical objects and records relating to Pacific Palisades and the environs of the original Rancho Boca de Santa Monica. Members archived and catalogued over 3,000 historical photos that are housed at the Santa

Monica Public Library and are available to the public worldwide. As well, the Historical Society facilitated the transfer of the Marquez Family Photography Collection to the Huntington Library in Pasadena, and is assisting in the restoration of the Uplifters Club.

This past year, the PPHS has resumed hosting speakers and PowerPoint presentations at Theatre Palisades, while also organizing historical walking tours.

Membership payments and donations will enable us to continue digitizing our archives, including the Zola and Clifford Clearwater Collection, thousands of photos from the Palisadian-Post archives and every issue of The Palisadian (1928-1960). You can support this mission by sending a check in the enclosed envelope or visiting: www.pacificpalisadeshistory.org

Historical Society Awards 3 Scholarships

By ANTHEA RAYMOND
Historical Society Board Member

On May 31, the Pacific Palisades Historical Society awarded its annual history scholarships to three Palisades Charter High School seniors with impressive academic and extracurricular achievements. They all believe that understanding the past is central to shaping the future. And they all want to study law, seeing it as an important tool of social change.

Winner Naya Ramaswami is now attending the University of Michigan, where she plans to major in political science enroute to law school. The founder of Pali's South Asian Students Union is not the first in her family to attend college; her mother went to University of Pennsylvania after growing up in New Jersey. Naya plans to follow her mother's informed advice and "relax and trust the process" in her new environment. "Although some aspects of moving out of state for college can be difficult and uncomfortable," she says, "it's important to remember this is all part of the process of growing and developing as a person." Naya says she will miss walking with her family through Temescal Canyon and thinking about the rich Native American history there.

Family walks are also something that winner Molly Cohen will remember, though her family especially enjoyed Will Rogers State Park's trails. Molly too is studying pre-law at New York University, where two of her first semester classes are historically based: "Power and Politics in America" and "Jewish Women in Modern Times." While at Pali, Molly interned for Los Angeles City Council member Mike Bonin, and worked for other campaigns and causes, including Heal the Bay and NARAL. She hopes graduate law studies will help her



Historical Society scholarship winners (l-r) Brynn Green, Naya Ramaswami and Molly Cohen with board member Anthea Raymond at the 2023 Senior Awards event in Mercer Hall.

better understand public policy and the political sphere. And, she's very clear that knowing history is essential in all of this: "Seeing where we've come as a country is essential to seeing where we want to go."

The final 2023 winner, Brynn Green, now attends Barnard College, where her first semester course load includes "Introduction to African American Studies," "The Politics of Crime and Policing," and "The Global Politics of Climate Change." Brynn wants to be a civil rights lawyer focusing on criminal justice, inspired by her own family history. Her great aunt lost everything when Tulsa's Black Wall Street was destroyed in 1921. "I need a strong basis in history, particularly American, so I can understand the

impetus for these unfair systems," she says. In the shorter-term, Brynn adds, her mother, who has a master's degree from Harvard University, advises she find a "great winter coat" and appreciate the wonderful opportunity she is enjoying.

The three winners received their \$500 checks at Pali's annual senior awards event. College counselor Karen Ellis played an important role in the selection process, with the PPHS board having the final say.

In 2024 we will implement some changes in the application process through a closer collaboration with Pali's history department. The tentative deadline for application is April 1, 2024. Students will work on their application projects through the winter.



On January 14, 2022, the Historical Society and the Palisades Forestry Committee co-hosted the planting of a Centennial coastal oak tree on Founders Oak Island, the site where Pacific Palisades was founded on Haverford Avenue (across from Aldersgate Lodge and the Pierson Playhouse). Front row, left to right: Harris Smith (Historical Society), Cindy Kirven, David Card, Randy Young (HS), Kelly Comras, Bruce Schwartz, Barbara Kohn (HS), Donna Vaccarino (HS) and Shirley Haggstrom (HS). Back row: Eric Dugdale (HS), Ed Lowe (HS), Gil Dembo and John Padden.

Photo: Rich Schmitt

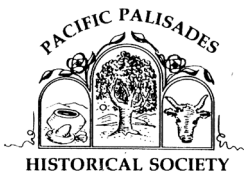
Patrick Healy's New Beat: Palisades History

Since joining the Historical Society board a year ago, Patrick Healy (photo, page 1) has helped illuminate our town's history with a special public presentation.

Patrick, a retired KNBC4 Newsman, gained our admiration when he produced and narrated a 46-minute video history of Pacific Palisades for the town's centennial celebration in 2022. Inspired by the slideshow presentations of HS Curator Randy Young and by his own fondness for "before and after" photos, Patrick created an interactive program he calls Palisades—Now and Then. Drawing on historical photos

from the Society's archives, he paired them with his own snapshots of what's at those significant locations today.

Palisades—Now and Then made its debut in July at the Optimist Club, followed in October at a Woman's Club meeting. Members showed their firm grasp of Palisades history, and especially the role played by their 98-year-old organization. When Patrick posed one question in particular, they didn't have to wait for the photo to shout out the name of the U.S. President-to-be who spoke in their clubhouse: Ronald Reagan in 1973.



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