

CENTENNIAL NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2022



Randy Young screened classic photos capturing the history of Pacific Palisades at the Centennial celebration on May 7.

Photo: Rich Schmitt/Palisadian-Post

PPHS Centennial Celebration Committee To Receive 'Pride of the Palisades' Award

A special five-member committee representing the Historical Society will receive a Pride of the Palisades award on December 8, when the Community Council holds its annual Citizen of the Year dinner at the historic dining hall in Temescal Canyon.

Led by PPHS Director at Large Donna Vaccarino, the committee organized the town's official Centennial celebration on May 7 at Simon Meadow in Temescal Gateway Park. The other committee members included President Barbara Kohn (who created a colorful and popular commemorative blanket), Treasurer Harris Smith, Bill Bruns (who produced a vintage 60-page Centennial publication) and Randy Young, who supplied the magazine's historical photos and narrated a special pictorial screening inside the huge white tent.

The committee also joined with the Palisades Forestry Committee to hold a tree-planting ceremony on Founders Oak Island on January 14 (the town's official birthdate), and a second tree-planting at Simon Meadow on May 9, in collaboration with the Palisades-Malibu YMCA.

"The Historical Society is thrilled beyond words to be chosen for the Pride award," Barbara Kohn told Community Council president Maryam Zar. "Our committee basically did all the planning and work for the Centennial event (with other board members helping out on the day of the event). We worked individually and as a team for many months to pull off this important community celebration."

Said Vaccarino, "I'm pleased that the entire committee will be honored. Indeed, we were all full of pride for Pacific Palisades that day!"

INSIDE: Live Programming to Return on January 17: "The History of Potrero Canyon"

Highlights from the Centennial Celebration

By BILL BRUNS
Newsletter Editor

Under blue skies in perfect weather, Pacific Palisades celebrated its centennial anniversary on May 7 inside a giant white tent at Simon Meadow in Temescal Gateway Park.

Although the town was founded on January 17, 1922, the event was delayed four months by Covid pandemic concerns and a desire to enjoy spring warmth. Close to 400 people gathered in the tent to enjoy an illuminating program hosted by the Historical Society and organized by multi-tasking board member Donna Vaccarino.

More than 20 Palisades High School student ambassadors, dressed in purple shirts, helped steer guests and handed out programs titled “Celebrating 100 Years: From the Mountains to the Sea.”

Welcoming the audience, Vaccarino noted that “Although we are honoring our town’s history today, we must be mindful that for hundreds of generations, indigenous people lived here before us – families with children,



Donna Vaccarino, lead organizer of the Centennial Celebration.

Photos: Rich Schmitt

mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles, young maidens and braves. They hunted, gathered food, fished, traded, built canoes, made baskets and created delicate stone implements. They used the resources of the land to feed, nurture and heal, and they called this land their home.”

In that vein, she introduced Alan Salazar, who gave a Chumash/Tataviam/Togva blessing. Later, Methodist Pastor Wayne Walters gave



Barbara Kohn was treasurer of the 20-year No Oil campaign.

the invocation and enjoyed noting that his wife’s great-grandfather, Dr. Oren Waite, had been the first assigned pastor for the fledgling Methodist Church in Temescal in 1923.

Historical Society President Barbara Kohn saluted “the many community members and certain elected officials who persevered for decades to protect Temescal Canyon [and the Santa Monica Mountains] as open space, and more recently our thanks to Bill and Cindy Simon and the YMCA for their continued stewardship.”

Before introducing Randy Young and his PowerPoint photos highlighting the town’s history, retired Palisadian-Post editor Bill Bruns noted that important activists were in the audience, including Joan Graves, who defended the historic Business Block building on Sunset by organizing the “Don’t Mall the Palisades” campaign in 1982, and Jack Allen, who doggedly fought the proposed Reseda-to-the-Sea highway for decades. “If not for the activists who fought on behalf of our community, where we’re sitting



Emcee Eugene Levy, an Emmy-winning actor.

Photos: Rich Schmitt



Cindy Simon, a Palisades YMCA board member.

today might have become a Marriott resort hotel, or a four-lane highway coming down through Temescal Canyon and cutting the town in half,” Bruns said.

Another speaker was longtime Palisadian Joe Edmiston, executive director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, who has led a 40-year campaign to save and acquire open land in the Santa Monica mountains. He also oversaw the conversion of Temescal Canyon into a state gateway park. “My responsibility is to make sure that future generations are able to enjoy it,” he said.

Ernest Marquez, 98, and Sharon Kilbride, who are descendants of the Marquez and Reyes families, received special recognition. Kilbride spoke about the books that Marquez has written and published about their families, who were the first settlers in what today is Pacific Palisades.

“In two years, we will have Ernie’s centennial celebration,” said Kilbride, who noted that over the past 184 years that the Marquez and Reyes families have lived here, they have been under three different country flags: Spain, Mexico and the U.S.

Other speakers included Eugene Levy, the town’s honorary mayor, who served as emcee; American



Treasured historian Ernest Marquez, now 98, and his Palisades cousin, Sharon Kilbride, a past Citizen of the Year.



Joan Graves, former Community Council president and Citizen of the Year.

Photos: Rich Schmitt

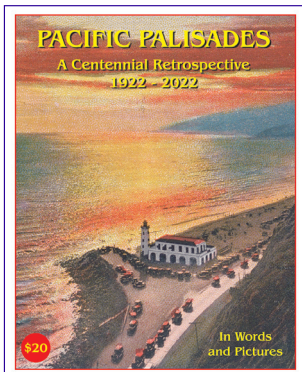
Legion Commander Jim Cragg, whose Post 283 was founded in 1928; YMCA supporter Cindy Simon; and lifelong Palisadian Sam Lagana, who recalled his teenage years here. “The Rec Center, the original Bay Theatre, the mountains and the beach, the stores and restaurants were a key part of the fabric of my life,” he said. “They brought me joy and comfort. I can still taste the tacos at Hacienda Galvan, the Wing Ding burger at the House of Lee and Mort’s Marquez sandwich.”

Entertainment was provided by the

La FAZ quartet, which played a Shaker song composed in 1848 (“Simple Gifts”), and Theatre Palisades Youth, under the direction of Lara Ganz, who took the stage and performed. As they sang and danced, audience members appreciated the colorful costumes and the talented performers.

After the celebration, many of the attendees walked to the historic Aldersgate building on Haverford (now owned by Seven Arrows Elementary School) to enjoy an open house hosted by Seven Arrows and the Woman’s Club.

Centennial Celebration Magazine



Copies Available Through The PPCC Website: www.pacpalicc.org - \$20

Pacific Palisades: 1922 ~ 2022 Celebrating 100 Years



Commemorative Blanket

100% multicolored woven cotton 60” x 80” Made in North Carolina, USA

Highlighting Palisades Landmarked and Popular Sites: Castle Rock, The Long Wharf, Palisades Lighthouse, Eames House, Thelma Todd Café and more!

Order online: www.pacificpalisadeshistory.org/ OR: Visit Collections Antiques & Books 15326 Antioch Street, Pacific Palisades

\$100 each plus shipping

Designed & Sponsored by Pacific Palisades Historical Society

January 17: 'History of Potrero Canyon' Talk



A Southern Pacific train approaches on the historic Long Wharf (built in 1893), carrying sightseers who wanted to watch the ships loading and unloading their cargo, while also dining at a restaurant on the pier's outer end. Note Potrero Canyon as it existed long ago, before it was "filled up" in the 1990s to create a city park that will soon be opened to the public.

Photo: Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection.

After a long Covid-induced hiatus, the Historical Society will once again offer live programming at Theatre Palisades on Tuesday, January 17, at 7 p.m. with a presentation featuring the history of Potrero Canyon. This free program is open to the public and rekindles the Lorraine Oshins Lecture Series.

Drawing on photos from the Historical Society collection, curator Randy Young will recount the long and tortured saga of Potrero and its ultimate transformation into George Wolfberg Park.

The City will have a public grand opening & dedication ceremony on December 3, after which everyone can explore the hiking/bike trails down through Potrero from the Recreation Center to Pacific Coast Highway.

In an email to friends of the late George Wolfberg, an inspiring community leader and past Citizen of the Year, his wife Diane talked about the vital role he played

in the park's creation.

"George worked with many others for over 30 years (first as a City staff member, and then after retirement as a volunteer community leader) to initiate and steward the creation of the park. [It] includes grading and a wonderful riparian creek landscaping and biodiverse nature preserve using native California coastal and drought-tolerant plants. A bridge providing a safe crossing to the beach will not be completed for a few more years.

"Community and elected leaders graciously petitioned to have this park named after George following his passing in early 2020," Diane continued. "We hope you will go one day to explore the park by foot or bicycle. Perhaps you will be inspired by what a group of dedicated and patient volunteers can accomplish! George's legacy is to encourage us all to be engaged and help build stronger, more resilient communities."

Methodists Produce a Centennial Video

As is clear to even casual visitors who see that boulder in Temescal Gateway Park with the tribute to Methodist minister Charles H. Scott, the origins of Pacific Palisades are inextricably linked with the Methodist Church and its early chautauquas. So it is that in 2022, the community and the local congregation have both been celebrating their centennials.

To mark this occasion, church member Patrick Healy produced a 42-minute video history, *The Church That Started a Town*, featuring scores of vintage photographs from the Clearwater Collection that the Historical Society organized and catalogued. For recordings of contemporaneous music and hymns of the period, Patrick turned to the Library of Congress. By wonderful serendipity, the wife of the current pastor at Palisades Methodist is the great-granddaughter of Dr. Oren B. Waite, who arrived in

the Palisades in 1923 and served in crucial roles with Rev. Scott and the Pacific Palisades Association. Chris Walters and her sister generously shared their family archives.

Insights are provided by Randy Young, the PPHS archivist who produced five books on various aspects of Palisades history with his late mother, Betty Lou. Randy also provided interviews he recorded for the Historical Society back in the 1990s with original Palisades settlers who have since passed on.

A special guest star in the video is the massive 19th-century church bell that once rang during the chautauquas in Temescal Canyon, and still rings to this day—though you'll have to watch the video to find out where. The Methodist video will soon be posted to the Historical Society website (pacificpalisadeshistory.org) for everyone to access.

NBC4 News Veteran Joins the PPHS Board

After viewing Patrick Healy's ambitious and impressive historical video, Pacific Palisades Historical Society (PPHS) members quickly invited him to join our board. He accepted our offer and provided some interesting personal background.

The recently retired NBC4 Newsman first reported on Pacific Palisades in 1984, when he covered the battle over the controversial (and ultimately rejected) proposal to drill for oil on a site in the bowl below Via de las Olas. It was one of his first assignments at Channel 4 after earlier stints at three other TV stations.

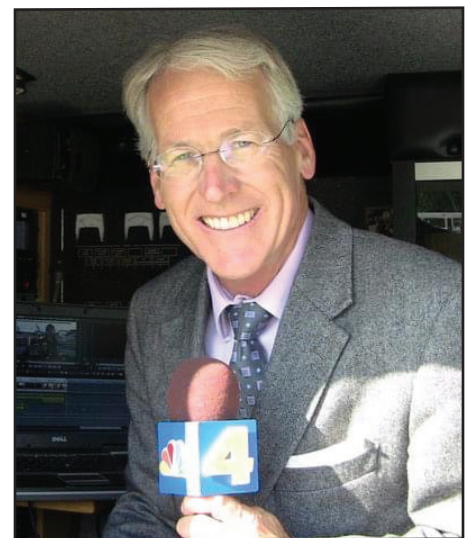
Remarkably, for someone who had grown up in Los Angeles (his father was the late sportscaster Jim Healy) and attended UCLA, Patrick previously knew only as much of the Palisades as could be seen driving down Sunset to the beach. But when he covered the No Oil campaign here

and met its Palisadian leaders, Patrick realized this is where he wanted to make his home and raise a family.

Shortly after moving in, Patrick bought a copy of the then newly published *Pacific Palisades: Where the Mountains Meet the Sea*, by Betty Lou and Randy Young. The now dog-eared edition remains prominent on his bookshelf.

When their two daughters had a positive experience at the Methodist Preschool, Patrick and wife DeAnn became active in the church and were enthralled with its seminal role in Palisades history. In the intervening years, DeAnn has led Girl Scout troops at Marquez Charter Elementary, and has volunteered with the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness.

After he retired early this year, Patrick suddenly had the time to research, gather elements and put together a labor of love: a video chronicling the 100-year saga of



Patrick Healy

the Palisades and its founding Methodist Church. Much as his early TV news reporting had led him to the Palisades, his experience putting together *The Church That Started a Town* resulted in his deepening involvement with PPHS.

Three PaliHi Seniors Receive History Scholarships



Alyssa Dean



Keanu Natan



Mia Kulinsky

For decades the Palisades Historical Society has awarded an annual scholarship to a Palisades High senior influenced by the study of history.

This year, the PPHS decided to make a one-time award of three scholarships of \$500 each, to honor the town's centennial and its own fiftieth anniversary.

This one-time action will be complemented by a review of the scholarship and its goals in early 2023.

Alyssa Dean, Keanu Natan and Mia Kulinsky received their awards from Historical Society Vice President Anthea Raymond at PaliHi's annual awards ceremony in June.

Alyssa grew up in Windsor Hills and attended Paul Revere. During COVID, a book club she started grew online to over 25 members. She also ran cross-country like her sister until the pandemic. Alyssa is now attending Santa Monica College, aiming to transfer to a public nursing school like UCLA or one of the California State universities.

History remains a strong interest, specifically medical history. "I'm really interested in maternity, especially in communities of color," she says. "So understanding the historic relationship they have had with the medical establishment is important."

Scholarship winner Keanu Natan also attended Paul Revere, as well as Palisades Elementary. His parents are Iranian Jews who emigrated to the United States.

In addition to history – his favorite class was AP European History – Keanu took a lot of science at Pali and is now studying pre-medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. His classes include chemistry and calculus, as well as a seminar with celebrated historian Srilata Gangulee on the Indian Independence movement in the 1940s.

"Every decision I make I think about history," Keanu says, referencing his own family's experience.

Mia Kulinsky also has immigrant parents who fled what is now Ukraine. She attends UCLA, intending to major

in neuroscience.

While still at Pali, Mia worked with UCLA professor Amir Alexander on his book about European history.

She wants "to continue to study history and to make a difference in the world by learning about our past." Mia also looks forward to improving her Russian, something she knew as a little girl but lost when she grew up.

Over the years, the Historical Society board worked closely with Pali's Office of College Advising, which picked the scholarship winner. This year the board was presented with three finalists and was asked to select one. After reading impressive answers to three short essay questions on the application, board members elected to honor each student.

Support the Historical Society

Enclosed is a remit envelope to renew or begin an annual membership or to make a special Centennial donation to the PPHS. Our website has a pay button for even more convenience. Please include your email address so you can receive our e-newsletters and program notices, especially as we emerge from the pandemic. All contributions enable the PPHS to continue community outreach by presenting free programs, providing historic photos, and archiving and researching our town's history. We appreciate your support! View our website at www.pacificpalisadeshistory.org or visit us at board@pacificpalisadeshistory.org.

Finally, a New Entrance Sign in Los Liones Canyon

Shirley Haggstrom, an Historical Society board member for many years, sent a “Good News” report to Castellammare Mesa Home Owners on October 1, noting that there’s finally a new Topanga State Park entrance sign in Los Liones Canyon. Here’s an updated version of what she wrote:

On January 10, 1994, the California State Park and Recreation Commission voted 7-2 to retain Los Liones Canyon as public parkland and not allow it to be sold to a private developer. The motion mandated that “the parcel remain in public domain and be used only for public purposes.”

Temescal Canyon Association (TCA) was the lead local organization working with CA State Parks to accomplish the restoration of neglected Los Liones Canyon to parkland. Support came from many organizations, clubs and individuals (including the Historical Society). The entrance sign was built by State Parks with rocks from Pacific Palisades canyons and the rocks at the base of the sign bear the hidden signatures of those who fought for this park. Volunteers, including TCA and the Glamazons, were in attendance for the sign ceremony.

Over the years, the sign began to fade. TCA began discussing and requesting sign replacement with State Parks as early as September 2019. Some of us began calling the sign, “the Ghost sign” as it faded away during the three years of replacement requests by TCA.

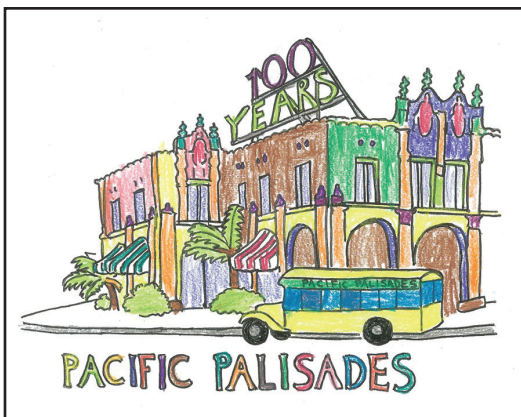


The Temescal Canyon Association worked for three years to get the old “Ghost sign” replaced in Los Liones Canyon.

Photo: Castellammare Mesa Home Owners

We persevered, and in late September the new sign was installed.

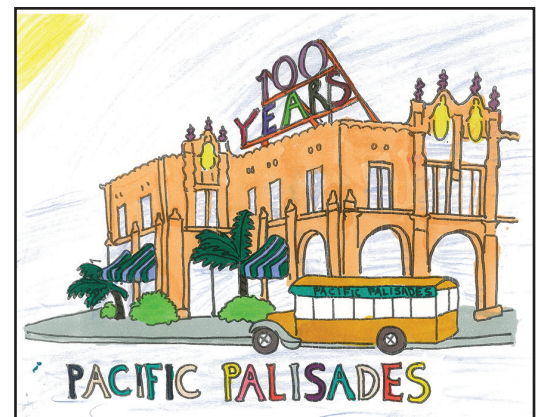
Just as the restoration of Los Liones is the story of inclusion, I want to thank everyone who worked towards sign replacement and wish those whose use of the Los Liones Canyon Park makes it one of the most popular state parks, “Happy hiking.”



Centennial Art Contest Is a Winner

Nearly 200 students, from kindergarten to high school, participated in the Centennial Art Contest, sponsored by the American Legion Post 283 Auxiliary in cooperation with the Historical Society.

Auxiliary President Sue Pascoe asked local artist Katie O’Neill to draw a picture of the historic Building Block building that elementary students could color in. Entries were submitted at Estate Coffee for safekeeping and judged by Palisades Art Association members Annette Alexakis



and Martha Meade.

“The quality of the entries was so outstanding that our Auxiliary voted to give \$100 for first place in all five grades, \$50 for second, \$25 for third and \$10 for honorable mention,” Pascoe said. (Above, two first-grade winners.)

Middle school and high school students submitted original art projects related to the history of Pacific Palisades. Each winner (Nicole Nguyen at Paul Revere and Makayla Bagasao at PaliHi) received \$300.

Memorial Held for Susan Orenstein

Friends and family gathered at the Los Liones Amphitheater on October 23 to celebrate the life of Susan Orenstein, who passed away on September 26.

Susan, 79, was a Paseo Miramar resident since 1968 and past president of the Pacific Palisades Historical Society (1992-94). She also served for many years as recording secretary for the Temescal Canyon Association and the Miramar HOA board.

“Susan had a strong interest in Los Liones State Park and the Liberty Canyon animal crossing,” said former TCA president Gil Dembo. “Her latest project was helping to plant a milkweed garden to increase Monarch butterflies and help their migration.”

Longtime Historical Society board secretary Shirley Haggstrom noted that “Susan had great computer skills and could easily handle our membership files and MailChimp. She was also instrumental in setting up our website in 2007.”

Speaking at the memorial, Haggstrom said, “Susan and I were friends and secretaries for many years—Susan for TCA and me for PPHS. We worked together doing newsletters, finding speakers for our annual meetings, and writing letters for both organizations.”

Haggstrom, who lives above Los Liones in Castellammare, added, “Susan and I talked about the birds and butterflies

we saw in our yards. She planted milkweed for the monarch butterflies, and I just lucked out that the mourning cloak butterflies chose my yard.”



Susan Orenstein

Lynne Brower, a friend for over 40 years, recalled that when she told Susan she was about to go bird watching at Descanso Gardens, Susan said “I love birds! I’ve been birding since I was a kid!” And that evening she called Lynne to tell her that she had ordered a copy of *Peterson’s Field Guide*, Western Birds edition, sent to her house.

Born in Michigan, Susan graduated from the University of Michigan and was a stewardess at TWA before marrying Martin Orenstein in 1967. They moved to Pacific Palisades when Martin began his residency as a radiologist at the Wadsworth VA Hospital. He was a radiologist until he died in 1983, at age 41.

Susan and Martin had two children: Gregg (in 1972) and Mark (in 1974). She volunteered at Brentwood Science Magnet, where her sons attended school. She also

taught stained-glass construction at Westside Art School and for UCLA Extension.

In addition to her sons, Susan is survived by Mark’s wife Ann Gottesman; Gregg’s fiancé Junnette Tibor; her brother, Roger Coates and her sister, Carol Jesmore.



P.O. BOX 1299
PACIFIC PALISADES, CA 90272