America is the land of immigrants. Wave after wave of us. My ancestors came from Europe and one of them, Samuel Parker, made it to Oregon in 1845, by wagon train!

*I Want the Wide American Earth* explores the immigration from Asia, and at the opening reception I had the opportunity to meet many guests who shared some of their very personal histories.

Jeanette Arakawa was enrolled in a creative writing class at Stanford and for an assignment, she wrote about her experience living at the Rohwer internment camp in Arkansas. The instructor, a 30-something Wallace Stegner Fellow asked, “Did this really happen?” He was unaware that Japanese Americans had been incarcerated during WWII and told her you need to tell this story. Her book, *The Little Exile*, came from that surprising beginning. Told through the eyes of a young girl, it tells of growing up in San Francisco in the 1930s, her challenging experiences at the camp and it is by turn sweet, sad, disturbing and always worth reading.

Minoru Terada has an internment camp story as well. He was seven when his family was sent to Heart Mountain, Wyoming. One of his memories is of a teacher who gave him a farewell note when they left camp, “Study hard and have a good life.” He still has the note. His grandfather had three or four businesses in San Jose that he lost and when the family returned after the war, it was a real scramble to get started again. They weren’t the only ones struggling, and to help, his grandfather opened an annex by the Buddhist Temple to provide sleeping quarters.

Soo-Ling Chan’s grandfather arrived in San Diego in 1888 as a merchant. He also recruited and translated for Chinese laborers for the railroad. Her father started a gift shop in La Jolla in 1947, and he opened a restaurant where J. Edgar Hoover dined. Soo-Ling recalls that they were the only Chinese family in La Jolla at the time. She now makes jewelry and that led to her friendship with Belinda Chung, who features the jewelry at her gift shop, BK Collections.

Marilyn Henderson, Minoru and two family friends.

Soo-Ling and Belinda.

June Monach and Mauri Okamoto-Kearney met at Stanford over 40 years ago. June’s grandparents arrived here in the early 1900s, were incarcerated at Manzanar camp during the war and returned to Palo Alto to work for a professor’s family at Stanford. June’s uncle, Dr. Kazuyuki Takahashi was a medical student at Stanford at the time, and wrote to his professors about the Manzanar experience, telling them of his hope and bewilderment. The letters are archived at the Hoover Institute. Mauri is a sansei, a person born in the US or Canada whose grandparents were immigrants from Japan. She was born in Hawaii, while it was still a US territory. Her grandparents, one of whom was a picture bride, were from Hiroshima, settled in Japanese communities in Honolulu and worked as housekeepers, cooks and on the sugar cane plantations. Her parents were teenagers when Pearl Harbor was attacked but did not share stories with her. Growing up, she did not experience discrimination, so

Jeanette with her book.

*continued on page 2*
As we move into Fall and the holiday season, we would like to express our deep gratitude to Jane Reed and her team for *Eichler Homes: Modernism for the Masses* which closed in October. This very popular exhibition brought visitors from far and wide, some who appreciated the Eichler style and others with fond memories of owning an Eichler or growing up in one. Leigh Goldstein wrote:

“I grew up in a 5 BR Eichler in the Oakland Hills... I was 6 when my folks bought it... On cold winter mornings we were warmed by radiant floor heating as my brother and I played with our Hot Wheels... We used the big fireplace a lot – dad was in charge of that. Mom made pancakes on the built-in griddle... I logged many hours playing basketball in the backyard, and we practiced kicking football field goals by booting the ball from the street onto the roof – much to my dad’s consternation. Great memories!”

Recently, Museum members were asked to share their opinions regarding a variety of issues. I hope you took the survey. The 117 responses are still being analyzed, but here are a few results:

- About one third prefer receiving information via email and another third prefer printed newsletters, post cards and flyers.
- The most interesting exhibits from the past five years were *Silicon Valley: Lure and Legends, Shaped by Water,* and *Eichler Homes: Modernism for the Masses*.
- Educational enrichment classes of most interest: Tours of other museums and cultural sites, art classes and gardening classes.
- Your opinions are important to us as we move forward with our Strategic Plan and our vision for the Museum in 10, 20 or 30 years.

Thank you for supporting the Museum with your time and your commitment to excellence! Please plan to visit *I Want the Wide American Earth,* which celebrates how Asian Pacific Americans have shaped and been shaped by the course of the nation’s history, on display through January 7, 2018.

~ Linda Eckols and Eleanor Watanabe, Co-Presidents

We Hear Your Stories (continued)

coming to California and Stanford and learning of the incarceration camps was an eye-opener. She now makes the annual pilgrimage to Manzanar to explore and better understand her heritage. Connie Young Yu is the historian for the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project and met June and Mauri for the first time at the opening reception. Connie played a key role in setting up the programming for this exhibition. She also has a long history in California; her maternal great-grandfather came to America in 1866 and worked on the Transcontinental Railroad.

Marlene Iwamoto has yet another internment camp story. Her uncle was one of many who feared the implications in the two loyalty questions posed to those being relocated. One was essentially “would you be willing to serve” and the other, “do you foreswear obedience to the Japanese emperor.” Concerned about leaving parents without any family help, and having never sworn any such obedience, many simply said no to both questions and became known as “no-nos.” As a consequence, Marlene’s uncle was sent to Tule Lake, a particularly remote location. Her grandfather wanted the family to stay together, so he requested that the rest of the family, already at Topaz camp in Utah, go to Tule Lake as well. His request was granted, and the family members spent the rest of the war crowded into a one-room living space.

Dick and Irene Sasaki are third generation Japanese Americans whose grandparents immigrated here in the early 1900s. Carole Flores taught their sons at Santa Rita and Anne Roberts is a good friend and neighbor of over 30 years. This exhibition is of special interest to them as it provides interesting stories of other Asian immigrant groups.

We have many wonderful people in this area and I know we missed some good stories; please send them in, we are always eager to hear more.

~ Gary Hedden

Los Altos History Museum
“Under the Oaks”
Gary Hedden, Editor
Judi Eichler, Graphic Design
A publication of interest to citizens of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and neighboring communities, produced by the Association of the Los Altos Historical Museum.
A special thanks to the newsletter mailing team!
Shaped by Water, Five Years Later and Still Making Waves

One of our Museum’s more engaging and popular exhibitions was *Shaped by Water, Past–Present and Future*, curated by local artist Linda Gass in a year-long labor of love with a team of volunteers, many from GreenTown Los Altos. It closed in 2012, although versions of it traveled to museums in Los Gatos and San Jose. It has been an award-winning exhibition.

- Watershed Advocate of the Year, 2012
- Silicon Valley Water Conservation Award, 2013
- Guardians of the Watershed Award, Third Annual Tuolumne River Film Festival, 2017

There’s a reason for the awards and continuing recognition. The show was informative, fun, and had an artistic flair. There was plastic debris turned into art, *Barreled by Plastic* (plastic bottles made into the shape of a wave, complete with a surfboard), and the gallon bottles in the courtyard lined up to show our daily water use.

We especially remember moving two tons of river rock from our yard to the Museum’s courtyard to create a labyrinth and give people a place to reflect on “how you have been shaped by water.”

Little did we suspect in 2012 that we would be in for four years of drought. That forced us to take the exhibition’s message to heart, “reduce, reuse, and recycle,” and more than ever we truly appreciate that water is a precious resource.

~ Barbara and Kevin O’Reilly, Volunteers, Shaped by Water Exhibition

Joe Eichler—More Than Homes

The Eichler Exhibition has closed, but Joe’s legacy is worth revisiting.

John Ralston has an entry on Joe in his book *This Date in San Francisco*, written in 2011.

*In 1958, the president of the San Francisco Associated Home Builders, Richard Doyle, declared that his group would continue to discriminate against minorities because they “lowered property values.” Eichler reacted in an open letter, stating, “I … am utterly opposed to any kind of discrimination whatsoever, and we think statements like the ones above add years to the day that I am sure will arrive in this country when racial discrimination will be unheard of.” He went on to state that unless the association denounced discrimination, he would be forced to resign. Doyle had no comment and Eichler resigned.*

The Museum collected stories from visitors to the exhibition in a book and on post-it notes, over 100 entries in all. Jane Reed was particularly moved by one of them, written by Donna Aronson.

*In 1963 I managed a group of Eichler apartments off Alma Street on Greenmeadow Way. A black family came to see and rent one that was available. A family from Texas, who were residents called and told me, “If they move in, we’re moving out.” I called Joe Eichler’s office. Joe called back with only one comment, “Tell that family to move out if they object to the black family.”

P.S. The family moved in, the Texans stayed and some years later Roy Clay became mayor of Palo Alto.*

Roy Clay Sr. grew up near Ferguson, Mo., moved here in 1962, was a Silicon Valley technology pioneer and a key figure in the development of Hewlett-Packard’s computer division and in the 1970s served on the Palo Alto City Council, two years as vice mayor.

~ Gary Hedden
As Autumn Comes

I am walking West.
Misted rays of late sun
shimmer through mounded fog.
A wind travels East.
Summer unravels
with the spiraling leaves.
I walk in the wind,
imagine that it holds me,
the way it holds the drafting hawk,
a silhouette against
the growing darkness,
there is no better moment.
~ Marian Slattery

A poem read at Don McDonald’s memorial celebration by Marian, one of the group who met with Don for many years to share their poetry.

Spotlight on the Oral History Project

Carol and Ralph Kuiper were honored in 2014 as recipients of the Los Altos Community Foundation’s Community Service Award. It was a pleasure to interview them, and record their stories for the Los Altos History Museum’s Oral History Project.

Carol and Ralph arrived in Los Altos in 1973. Carol taught high school English, was on the Los Altos School District board from 1976 to 1984, received the PTA Service Award in 1985 and the Los Altos/Los Altos Hills Service Award in 1986. She has also been active in Girl Scouting, with the League of Women Voters, the California Retired Teachers Association, and recently as coordinator of her neighborhood’s Block Action Team (BAT).

Ralph retired from his work at Lockheed Martin in 1998, helped found and run the Peninsula Chapter of the World Affairs Council, an informative speaker series that meets monthly for free lectures and discussions. A board member of The Los Altos Stage Company (formerly the Bus Barn Theatre), he and Carol enjoy going to their performances with friends. Another passion is sports; Ralph was coach, referee and then Commissioner with the AYSO (American Youth Soccer Organization), designed and supervised the construction of the full-sized public soccer field at Santa Rita School, and coached YMCA youth basketball for a few seasons.
~ Judy William

Coming Next

The Los Altos History Museum has a tradition of creating our own exhibitions: Eichler Homes, Lure and Legends, Shaped by Water. It’s a fun, creative process, but it takes time. Our next “in-house” exhibition, a youthful look at the dynamic life of a pioneering ranchera and entrepreneur, Juana Briones, is planned for October 2018.

Until then we have booked traveling exhibitions such as I Want the Wide American Earth, augmented by an impressive array of local artifacts, text, images and programs, collected in only four months. The exhibition team, led by Jane Reed, is truly second to none.

In January, we turn to our local environment and embrace art and ecology in a heartfelt examination of the beauty of migratory birds and the loss of wetland habitats with Instinct Extinct: The Great Pacific Flyway. Three modern artists created the exhibition to explore the experience of being with migratory birds and other species within a human-made architectural space.

In April, Over Here: Americans at Home in World War I, looks at the impact of that far away conflict on the lives of communities across the US. Curated by the National Archives in Washington D.C., it looks at a pivotal moment in history and a period when Los Altos was coming into its own with the train coming to town and things beginning to boom.

Finally, a slate of special topics is in the works for the J. Gilbert Smith House. We have so much planned and we very much look forward to sharing all of it with you in 2018!
~ Dr. Elisabeth I. Ward, Executive Director

Carol and Ralph in their backyard, August, 2017.

Do you enjoy listening to people’s stories and learning local history? We need interviewers! It’s fun and we will train you. Give us a call.
The Guardian

Los Altos has many pieces of public art, and each has its own story, its own history. At the intersection of State and 4th Street, I spot the gleaming bronze statue from the corner of my eye, camouflaged with trees and bushes. Wanting to learn more, I look at the plaque with the name, The Guardian, but what is she guarding? The mysterious pose with arms resting on her knee, gazing wistfully into the distance makes the sculpture inexplicably captivating. To learn the story, I contacted the creator, Ms. Karen Cauvin Eustis.


I continue to be astonished. Ms. Eustis tells me that she was on a beach in Waveland, Mississippi, with dragonflies flying about, and she saw them as faerie creatures. This led to The Guardian, a guardian of the gulf beaches near her home in New Orleans. The meaning came to Ms. Eustis during an emotional visual meditation session, where she experienced a mystical quality, guiding her to “deeper levels of knowing and understanding.”

Perhaps the most striking story of the Guardian’s spirit is that the day of her installment in Waveland, Hurricane Katrina hit, and Waveland was ground zero. The name no longer seemed fitting with so much destruction and chaos, but she came to symbolize the heart of the people, who would endure and fight back after the tragedy. She became the symbol of hope, showing the warm-hearted actions of people working together after tragedy strikes.

In Los Altos, she reminds us that small acts of kindness can show the warmth and spirit of people and can bond a community, in times of peace as well as tragedy.

~ Aileen Yang

Aileen Yang is a senior at Homestead High School and a Commissioner on the Los Altos Public Arts Commission.

Director’s Corner

On October 10th, I went to lunch at the home of Bob and Marion Grimm on Parma Way. Although they are sadly no longer with us, we felt their presence as their daughter Patty and grandson Matthew welcomed us to the family home. I was there with board members Linda Eckols, Brandon Smith, John Beman, and Julie Rose to discuss with some of the Grimms’ closest friends their Legacy Gift to the Museum.

It was quite an experience for me, and I felt a bit like an intruder, since I never had the pleasure of meeting either of them. I was grateful to be seated at a table with Nan and Chuck Geschke; Nan was my point-person during the interviewing process for this job. The others at my table were former HP execs, including Al Bagley. I definitely was in awe! Thankfully, they were all very nice, and teased me gently when I misunderstood, “Bob had all sorts of things in his shed for fixing vacuums.” Vacuum tube technology was before my time!

Walking into Bob and Marion’s open and welcoming home, and looking out onto the grounds and the swimming pool, gave me a sense of the sort of warm, down-to-earth people they were. And there are so many reminders at the Museum of what they did; we can still hear Bob’s voice every time a child hits the train diorama button saying, “All Aboard.”

We decided the best way to build upon the Legacy Gift will be to acknowledge the annual gift and challenge museum supporters and friends of the Grimms to match it. We’ve tentatively named these supporters “The Weathervane Society,” although some liked the “All Aboard Donor Club.” For any of you, our wonderful members, who would like to get on-board with this endeavor, please let me know!

The idea is to build up a long-term investment fund to maintain the museum the way Bob and Marion would have wanted and to plan for the future.

~ Dr. Elisabeth I. Ward, Executive Director

Staff

Elisabeth Ida Ward, Executive Director
Heather Farquhar, Deputy Director and Head of Collections
Deepti Devanagondi, Bookkeeper
Mary Flynn, Outreach Coordinator
Mark Perry, Facility & Rentals Manager
Faustino Carrillo, Gardener
Deepti Devanagondi joined the Museum in September as our bookkeeper. She was born and raised in southern India, studied accounting and came to the United States in 1993 with her husband, an engineer and entrepreneur. They live in Saratoga and have two daughters. Deepti received an MBA in Finance from Cal State Hayward, now Cal State East Bay. She enjoys gardening, painting and baking. With any luck, she will bake us a cake!

The devastating wild fires in Sonoma and Napa put the wedding plans of Celena Yu and Alan Hsia in desperate peril. They were all set with the Ramekens Culinary School in Sonoma but the fires put that venue off limits. Their friends in the Bay Area quickly went to work with call after call, eventually finding the History Museum. We said yes! Celena and Alan, congratulations!  

Photo courtesy Alan Hsia.

Cathy Zander with the watercolor she donated to the Museum in honor of Don McDonald. Don asked her to paint a picture of this house on Cherry Avenue, and said you better hurry, the new owners are going to tear it down. The house is now gone, but at least we have the painting.

40 Years from 40 Feet. A picture of the Smith House taken from a drone at 40 feet up, or perhaps a bit more. The Museum started here 40 years ago, on Dec. 1, 1977.  

Photo credit Julian Bibl.

Heather Farquhar and Marilyn Henderson recruiting volunteers last August. We can always use more good volunteers.

October is the month to prune in the historic apricot orchard, and Phil Doetsch and Eliseo Perez are hard at it. Eliseo came here from Mexico in 1961 and has been pruning this very orchard for 35 years. The next chores are tilling in organic compost and irrigating.
Photo Gallery

Train Days, fun for everyone.

Dick Blanding with his young helper, Orlando, who already knows a lot about trains!

A happy participant at the October MoonFest, held downtown this year.

The Taiko drummers from San Jose put on an exciting show at the opening reception for I Want the Wide American Earth.

Celebrating Thanksgiving in their recently restored 1911 farmhouse on Yerba Buena Avenue; this is the home that got lifted, turned and moved, along with its tankhouse and barn. Thank you for saving our history, Laurie and Duco Pasmooij.

Armond King speaking at Don McDonald’s memorial service. He showed us a 1940s phone book - a good source of material for Don’s research.
Museum and Store Hours

Thursday to Sunday, Noon–4 pm
We are closed New Year’s Day, Easter, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

General Inquiries
(650) 948-9427 x14 or hello@losaltoshistory.org

Collections/Research
(650) 948-9427 x11 research@losaltoshistory.org

Event Rentals
(650) 948-9427 x12 mperry@losaltoshistory.org

Mission Statement

History inspires imagination, stimulates thought and transforms society. The Los Altos History Museum preserves and shares our local history to enrich our community and to shape a more informed future.

Address Correction Requested

On The Calendar


Hope and Opportunity: Sacrifices made by first generation immigrants on behalf of future generations, Chef Lawrence Chu, January 9, 2018, 6 pm, Chef Chu’s Restaurant, $85, proceeds benefit LAHM Community Enrichment Program.

Volunteer Recruitment Open House, January 18, 2018, 4-7 pm.


31st Annual Crab Feed & Auction, Saturday, February 3, St. William Parish Hall, 6-10 pm.

Traveling Stitches, quilts made at the Mountain View Day Workers Center on display at the Smith House, opens February 15, reception February 18.

Essay Contest, Grades 2-6. March, check the website for details.

School Tours, Grades 3-4, weekdays, 9 am-noon, April & May. Teachers and homeschoolers, contact the Museum as soon as possible to sign up.

Board Meetings, First Wednesday each month, 4 pm, everyone welcome
Smith House Tours, Every Sunday, 2 pm

John Beman at Train Days, All Aboard!
In October, we honored and celebrated the life of John’s wonderful and graceful wife, Ginger Beman. We miss her.