

Frank & Josephine, Letters from WWI

Exhibition Extended to July 1 – Don't Miss It.

The Museum is grateful to Margie Alving for researching the recently accessioned Duveneck archives.

Following the United States' declaration of war on Germany April 6, 1917, the selective service act is implemented in May. All males aged 21 to 30 must register. Frank and Josephine Duveneck and their two children are living in Carmel at the time. Thirty-year-old Frank struggles with his decision to enlist or take his chances with the draft. If he enlists he believes he can find ways to contribute his technical skill without being involved in shooting his fellow men. In July, while in San Francisco on business, he and Josephine share their views regarding his various options.

Josephine writes, *Look up the aviation thing and then you can decide between that & the signal corps & medical. She encourages him to collect his thoughts, A fresh decision is often easier & better than one too much crumpled by handling. And I'm sure it'll be a relief to be committed & have some end in view. He writes, I'm further from a decision than I was two weeks ago.*

Should he join the Signal Corps or Engineer Corps? As a civil engineer



Frank, with a mustache, posing with the 322nd Field Signal Battalion. Museum Collection.

he wonders why he should ... learn something new when I've got something to give that I know...

Finally, he joins the 322nd Field Signal Battalion, whose members are primarily from California. They train at Camp Lewis near Tacoma, WA until their deployment to France in late April 1918. Traveling by train to Camp Merritt, New Jersey, Frank writes that his letters will be censored.

I've just discovered that I can put a letter off for you this afternoon though it is subject to censorship. But even if I may not say where we are or talk about the country through which we are going you can read other and much more important things between the lines. Enough to say we are somewhere in the U.S. and it's a beautiful spring day. The letter was postmarked Pocatello, Idaho.

He arrives at Camp Merritt, New Jersey May 5. Two days later he receives a wire from Josephine announcing the birth of their baby girl, Hope. The battalion ships out on the SS *Wilhelmina* on May 9. Thankfully Frank learns of his daughter's birth before he leaves. He writes several letters to Josephine during the crossing.

It seems so strange to think of my little daughter way out in California & I not able to see her, our own flesh and blood. I'm so thankful she came when she did & that is all over though I guess you're not very comfortable yet. She'd certainly come into the world in a stormy time but I hope she'll never know anything of it.

We are treated very well considering although an ocean voyage at best is pretty lonesome and when you are not along, well you can guess that I'm not the most buoyant frame of mind ... Above all that, thought of my little daughter is one to conjure away the most drab of drab moods. I don't know what I should do if I didn't know whether she had arrived or not.



Envelope mailed by Frank, showing the censor stamps. Museum Collection.

He writes his uncensored thoughts in a small diary that accompanies him to France.

I hate the line that is drawn between the ranks in the army but to take offence at such a petty annoyance is but to lower oneself to the same grade as some of these officers. It takes a big man to command respect and get to be democratic. The worse part of it is that our boys have to be jammed together down in the hold. Why should I have a cabin?

After they land in France on May 24, he writes,

I wish you could see the American troops landing. No one could doubt that our participation in the war was indeed earnest. White & colored foreign born & native born, we're all here."

The 322nd establishes communication lines between Army headquarters

Co-Presidents' Pen

On behalf of the Los Altos History Museum, we want to thank you, our members and volunteers, for helping make our museum a cultural and educational center where ideas from the past and visions of the future can meet. Your support has given us wonderful exhibits, curated by Jane Reed, to engage visitors with new thoughts and ideas through *Eichler Homes*, *I Want the Wide American Earth*, *Pacific Flyways*, and *Over Here: Americans at Home in WWI*. The accompanying programs have enlightened and informed all who attended.



Coming to the Smith House are exciting new exhibits on immigration, architecture, and the orchard. Heather Farquhar, our Deputy Director, is leading the charge with these improvements and she is even planning a Haunted House tour in October!

Looking to the future, we are developing a strategic plan and reviewing our vision, mission, and values statements. In May the Board approved the Mission statement:

The Los Altos History Museum gathers and presents compelling stories and artifacts that bridge the past and the present by fostering the creative energy of staff and volunteers to challenge established narratives and produce engaging educational programs and exhibits for the community.

and the Values statement:

*We uphold the values that represent the best characteristics of the culture of northern Santa Clara Valley both historically and today. **Innovation** We believe in the creative power of people and we strive to surprise and delight with our exhibits and programming. **Diversity** We recognize that California has always had a diverse ethnic and social make-up, and we celebrate that. **Integrity** We hold ourselves to high standards and conduct honest and accurate research.*

Over the next few months, the Board and staff will develop strategies and goals to guide decisions for the future of the Museum.

At our Annual meeting June 6, we bid farewell to Board members Marilyn Henderson and Jane Reed who are ending their terms. Both Marilyn and Jane have given so much, we cannot thank them enough for their time, talent and devotion to the Museum! Stepping in to fill our open positions are Gunilla Follett, Janet Klinke, Larry Lang, and Dwight Matthews. Welcome! We are also thrilled that Board Members Marcia Adams and Carole Flores will continue for second three-year terms.

Please join us for our Members Bar-B-Q on Sunday, July 29! We look forward to seeing you at the Museum!

~ Linda Eckols and Eleanor Watanabe, Co-Presidents

Frank & Josephine (continued)

continued from page 1

and the front lines (telephone and telegraph lines as well as radio signal stations). They support several major engagements in France during the last five months of the war including the final battle of the war, the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Frank writes,

The Americans' opinion of the French telephone system is not very great. In this particular sector we are using their lines but our own instruments. American telegraphers are in great demand and some of the main lines as they are so much quicker than the French. There's not very much to tell about my work. It usually begins about seven o'clock when they test out all the lines. Then all the trouble outside of our office is handed over to men & we send some of the fellows out to clear things up. Then we have a little work installing local lines & bring new lines into the office.

After the Armistice is signed on November 11, 1918, Frank is moved to various "replacement camps." He writes in his diary,

Dec 30 ... now at St Argonne. It's rained most of the time since I've been here & outside it's a perfect mire. The camp is crammed full of casuals on their way home. Most of them sleep in tents & some on the muddy ground. It does seem as if a man who has been discharged from the hospital after he has had influenza or pneumonia might be treated a little better than that. We sound men are quartered in a barrack with stoves.

He settles in Coblenz, Germany to support the Army of Occupation from March to July 1919. Given his service time, he is eligible to be reclassified and return home earlier. He writes,

Yet I can't bring myself to go. Yet I still hesitate. I hate to be classed as physically unfit or make up some story even tho I'd give all to be with you. If I only knew. I'm sorely tempted.

Frank's letters contain very little about the horrors he must have seen. He focuses on positive descriptions of the countryside, their various encampments and his love for Josephine.

When I go out at night to the Y the dipper & the North Star are straight up over my path and I seem always to turn to the West as if my dreams were always in the west lands, the west where the spirit may be free. My candle is burning low. God bless you dearest.

Frank returns home in August 1919 to join Josephine and his children in Palo Alto. They purchase Hidden Villa in 1924, a property that evolves from a family ranch to today's nonprofit farm that promotes environmental education and social justice.

~ Margie Alving



Photo of Josephine carried by Frank while overseas. Museum Collection.

Art in Our Community

The Los Altos History Museum is pursuing all sources and formats for telling the story of our community, including books, journals, letters, artifacts, artwork, photos, videos, organizational records and oral histories. The Museum's oral history program, under the direction of Dr. Elisabeth Ward, is a wonderful example of how we obtain first-hand accounts of our local history.

In the spirit of oral history, we invited a community group consisting of the Los Altos Art Club and the ArtVentures group members to participate in a special project – a compilation of member stories and photos. The idea is to gather the history of the group to be archived at the Museum. We created a template which each artist adapted to tell his or her own experience in words, accompanied by photos to tell the story in pictures.

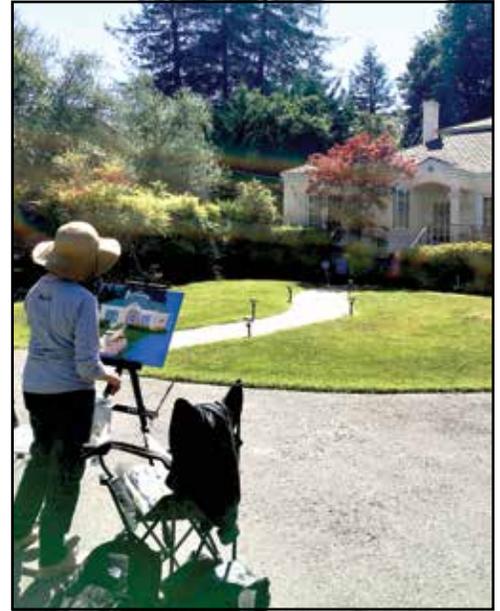
The stories remind us of the richness of our local art community. Art media includes watercolor, acrylics, oils, collage, mosaics, and fabric/stitchery. Styles range from traditional to modern. Subjects include portraits, landscapes, florals, seascapes, animals, gardens, abstract textiles and still lifes.



In the stories gathered, there is a strong sense of appreciation for our community and the opportunities that we enjoy in Los Altos and in Silicon Valley. There is a sense of pride that art and artists are valued in our hi-tech world. Some artists have pursued art all their lives, while others enjoyed art as a child and are now taking it up again after devoting time to careers and families. There is also gratitude that LAAC and ArtVentures welcomes all artists and all forms of art.

A printed copy of the art compilation was presented to the Los Altos History Museum in May, prior to the opening of the exhibition *Paint the Town II: Echoes of Our Past*, July 5. Prizes will be awarded to the artists at a reception July 19.

~ Doreen Cohen



Paula Tuerk painting the Stein House for "Paint the Town II: Echoes of Our Past." Photo credit Susan Klepper.

Apricot STEM Fair

How many times have you heard, "We should have an Apricot Festival in Los Altos?" Once world-famous for delicious apricots, there are many people around town who remember spending their summer days cutting 'cots, and the smell of sulfur wafting over the valley in the summer evenings. The Los Altos History Museum is excited to bring that past into the present with a unique twist on community agricultural festivals. Our festival will invite people to learn about the apricot in a whole new way. Want to extract Apricot DNA? Want to learn about the ecosystem developed in the orchard? Want to see the pollination process through the eyes of a bee? Our Apricot STEM fair will let you do just that, because we will be emphasizing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. That is why we are calling it an Apricot STEM fair! There will also be apricot specialty tasting and cooking demonstrations, not to worry. So break out your recipes and your microscopes, and join us on June 24th! Many, many thanks to our corporate sponsors, 23andMe and the Peter Pavlina Family, LLC, for underwriting this festival. We are so excited to bring a new family-friendly event to the Museum grounds!

~ Elisabeth Ward



Patricia Penton extracting apricot DNA. Photo credit Jane Packard.

History in the News

The Historical Commission broke new ground April 23 by nominating a project for the 2018 Historic Preservation Award. Individuals have traditionally been recognized, but the award can also be offered to "...groups, organizations or projects that exemplify the spirit of historic preservation in the City of Los Altos."

The project selected was the adaptive restoration of the 1911 Craftsman style farmhouse at 10 Yerba Buena Ave. A 1968 subdivision of the property had left the front of the house facing a side yard and a fence, so the current owners received permission from the Historical Commission in 2013 to begin the process of lifting the house, turning it 90 degrees and moving it closer to Yerba Buena, as well as converting the water tower into a second living unit and the barn into a two-car garage. Thus began a four-year journey for Duco and Laurie Pasmooij and their family.

They hired Greg Evard, an architect familiar with historic projects, who assembled a team of planners, engineers, designers, builders and an architectural historian. As noted by Greg in a supporting letter for the award, "Existing character defining features were carefully repaired and restored while appropriate new materials were researched and sourced." This attention to detail resulted in a home



Laurie and Duco Pasmooij with Mayor Jean Mordo.

we can all be proud of and admire. In their supporting letter neighbors Mark Lunsford and Terri Champ voiced their appreciation for the transformation "to a world class historical property."

Having just been completed last Fall, the Commissioners felt the time was right to recognize the considerable effort and the successful outcome. As Commissioner Janis Ahmadjian-Baer pointed out, the Pasmooij family represents the kind of role models who should be recognized. They show what can be done, and a nicely restored historic home is a source of tremendous community pride.

In other news, the Commission reviewed the progress on stabilizing and restoring the Halsey House in Redwood Grove Nature Preserve. Applications for grants to fund the restoration are in progress, and some initial efforts to protect the house have begun. The Redwood Grove property was a wedding gift to Emma Wright from her parents when she married Theodore Halsey in 1915. The house, built in 1923, was used by the City for summer camps and school tours but was closed to the public in 2008.

~ Gary Hedden

Still With Us

So many boxes and so much history. We all remember Bob Grimm and his generous contributions over many years to the Museum, but for the Collections Department the memory is now even more tangible. When Heather Farquhar surveyed the rack of binders, photos, blueprints and eleven banker boxes of files she had one word, "Help." To protect and preserve this well-labeled and organized donation, made in 2016 by Patty Grimm, Bob's daughter, it needed to be safely stored in archival, acrylic-coated Document Cases – twenty nine of them. After many Wednesday afternoons this was completed by Collections Volunteer Sande Stuart.

You want to know how the Museum got started? Bob kept the records, complete and very detailed, including fundraising appeals, plans, designs, contracts, handwritten notes, and accounts for probably every dollar spent – he "saved everything." His records involving the city go back to the late 1970's and include his time on the City Council and as Mayor, and later, campaigns for various local propositions and school board candidates.

The History Museum and our community are fortunate and thankful to have received this important and lasting gift from Bob. It is a wonderful legacy and helps the Museum meet its task and responsibility to be the archival

resource for the City. We hope others will be inspired. The Museum is particularly interested in old photos that show the town and the people who contributed to our history.

~ Gary Hedden



Sande Stuart with the Bob Grimm collection.

Staff

Elisabeth Ida Ward, *Executive Director*

Heather Farquhar, *Deputy Director and Head of Collections*

Diane Holcomb, *Outreach Coordinator*

Deepti Devanagondi, *Bookkeeper*

Luis Ambriz, *Exhibition Coordinator*

Mark Perry, *Facility & Rentals Manager*

Faustino Carrillo, *Gardener*

Ice Cream Social

The theme of the 34th Annual Margaret Thompson Essay Contest was *Spread Your Wings and Fly*, to go with the recently closed exhibition, *Instinct Extinct: The Great Pacific Flyway*. Imagine you are a bird spreading your wings and flying over the community. What do you see? Imagine what you would like to see at your school, park, neighborhood or downtown.



Pinewood 6th Grade teacher Miss Gina Meter with Mackenzie Fobes.

Over 230 students from our local elementary schools responded. The winning students gathered at the Museum for recognition and an ice cream social.

Mackenzie Fobes was a repeat winner. She won last year, and this year she took first place for sixth grade students with an adventure story about a jet-black crow helping her fly over Los Altos. She looked down and saw a wonderful



Winning students from Loyola, Springer, and Pinewood.

town square but it ended when she woke up and realized it was all a dream. Mackenzie, never stop dreaming, dreams can come true.

~ Anne Roberts, Chair, Education Committee

Two New Faces



Diane Holcomb, our Outreach Coordinator, has a background in nonprofit program management from Hidden Villa Farm and Music for Minors, and is a freelance writer working with small businesses and nonprofits. Diane lives in Los Altos as did her mother who worked in J. Gilbert Smith's orchard as a teenager!

Luis Ambriz, our Exhibition Coordinator, is a History graduate student at San Jose State University. As a first-generation Mexican-American and the first in his family to attend college, the preservation of history and education are very important to him. Luis enjoys playing basketball and reading while listening to music.

Director's Corner

They say a person can never have too much education and as someone with a PhD, I tend to believe that. And definitely, a person can never have too much professional development training. One of the wonderful things about taking on a new job is the opportunity to learn new skills. I was extremely honored to have been given a huge professional leg up in that process through "The Leadership Institute," organized by the Center for Excellence in Nonprofits. I'm so grateful to work for an organization whose members and supporters appreciate the importance of professional development for the staff, and to the three donors who covered my tuition.



The training started with two days of wellness awareness, which was not what I was expecting. Over time I came to appreciate that I cannot be effective at my job if I am tired, not feeling well, have low-energy or am unable to release stress. I need to be able to fully focus when I'm at work, so for the first time in my life, I have started a regular exercise routine. Feels pretty good!

Another thing I discovered over the last 9 months of training is that there is a reason a nonprofit like the Museum would have caught the attention of a Hewlett Packard executive like Bob Grimm. Many of the guest speakers and lecturers had been affiliated with HP, so much of the management advice and problem-solving tools rested on the "HP Way." To encourage grass-roots participation in idea-generation and to be dedicated to principals of respect, transparency, and honesty was foundational to the early culture of Silicon Valley. It is a model that the nonprofit sector still actively embraces, even if it is no longer the hot trend in Silicon Valley.

I also learned, through getting to know a dozen other nonprofit executive directors from the area, that there is a network around here with people I can turn to for help and advice. Combined with all the dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers and Board Members at the Museum, and an amazing staff, we are in good shape! There are changes coming as we develop a strategic plan for the Museum in 2020 and beyond, but together we will get there.

~ Dr. Elisabeth I. Ward, Executive Director

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!

Photo Gallery



Los Altos Mayor Jean Mordo with honoree Eleanor Watanabe and her son John at the 2018 Los Altos Community Foundation's Gardner Awards Ceremony.



Farmer Phil Doetsch discussing the Apricot STEM Fair with Jane Packard in March.



Heather Farquhar with Maria Marroquin and Naomi Zamir from the Day Worker Center of Mountain View at the "Traveling Stitches" opening reception in February.



Docents getting on the bus for a visit to the de Young Museum in San Francisco and "Bouquets to Art 2018."



A view inside the Morgan Estate during the tour led by Board member John Ralston in April.



Opening reception of "Over Here" attended by John Reed, Pat Hedden, Jane Reed and Carrie Castro.

Photo Gallery



Faustino Carrillo's birthday, April 19, celebrated with Caroline Landsbergen, Susan Moss and Don Durr.



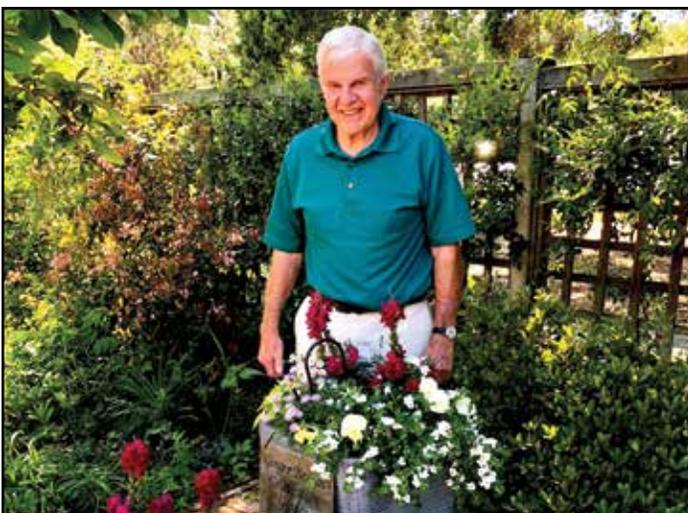
A Third Grade tour in April with welcoming remarks by Lindsay Carpenter.



Incoming Board member Janet Klinkle with her great uncle's fascinating mess kit. He carved dates and locations of his WWI overseas service in the soft aluminum.



Paul Gonella, our esteemed historian for the WWI exhibition "Over Here."



Board member John Beman with Spring flowers at the late Ginger Beman's memorial garden at the Museum.



Montclair second grader Eudora Zheng and her sister learn about color in a STEM activity. Montclair elementary "Upstanders" will be at the Apricot STEM Fair. Photo credit Stacy Lee.



UNDER THE OAKS

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Los Altos, CA

Assn. of the Los Altos Historical Museum, 51 So. San Antonio Road, Los Altos, CA 94022

www.losaltoshistory.org

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.

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Mission Statement

The Los Altos History Museum gathers and presents compelling stories and artifacts that bridge the past and the present by fostering the creative energy of staff and volunteers to challenge established narratives and produce engaging educational programs and exhibits for the community.

Address Correction Requested

On The Calendar

World War I: Lessons Learned? a Father's Day event with a panel discussion, Sunday, June 17, 2-4 pm, History Museum.

The Business of Apricots, J. Gilbert Smith House, opening Thursday, June 21.

Apricot STEM Fair, Sunday, June 24, 10 am-3 pm, History Museum.

Right Here: Americans at Home in World War I, closing, Sunday, July 1.

Paint the Town II, Echoes of Our Past, soft opening, Thursday, July 5.

Artist Awards Ceremony, Thursday, July 19, 4 pm, History Museum.

History Walks at the Downtown Green, every Tuesday, 11 am-noon, July 24-August 28.

Members' Summer BBQ, Sunday, July 29, 5-8 pm. \$35/person.

Movie Night at the Museum. *Lust for Life* with Kirk Douglas, 1956, the life of the Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh. Bring a picnic dinner and join us at 6:30 pm. Watch the movie at 8:30 pm. Wednesday, August 8. Free.

Train Days, Saturday & Sunday, September 15 & 16, 10 am-4 pm, History Museum.



Mary Flynn at her wedding shower. We offer a toast to your love and laughter, and a life happily ever after.

Board Meetings, First Wednesday each month, 4 pm, everyone welcome

Smith House Tours, Every Sunday, 2 pm

More events are in the works – watch for your monthly member email updates!