



Secret Sequoyah: your chance to peek inside with our tour

By Kathryn Hughes

A true gem of a neighborhood is perched above the I-580 freeway in the lower East Bay hills above the site of the former Oak Knoll Naval Base. Not so well-known to most Oaklanders, this area is full of fascinating history, early 20th-century architect-designed houses, and a mix of local amenities. Bay views, regional parks, the Oakland Zoo, and the Sequoyah Country Club are among the area's many attractions.

Originally called "Fairway Estates," the neighborhood today is known as Sequoyah Heights. "Oak Knoll" captures one of the early natural features, a cluster of oak trees on a slight rise visible from the hills above.

On Sunday, July 19, from noon to 4 p.m., OHA is conducting a special neighborhood

tour of Sequoyah Heights, highlighting this often-overlooked historic area on the cusp of major changes. This event will include a self-guided walking tour with several open houses, a tour of the Sequoyah Country Club and its grounds, and a reception at the Country Club at the end of the tour.

Sequoyah Heights can be traced to a 1913 meeting of local industrialists at the San Francisco St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, intent on organizing a new golf club in the Oakland Hills. The result of their combined assets and interests was the Sequoyah Country Club, completed in 1915. It wasn't long before the area began to attract builders and residents, spurred by the growing use of the automobile in the 1920s, which made hillside living accessible and attractive.



OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

ILLUSTRATION from brochure about Country Club Park, circa 1928.

Prominent architects such as W.W. Dixon designed homes and the iconic two country club buildings that today punctuate the

See **SEQUOYAH** on page 7

A tale of two country clubs: Oak Knoll and Sequoyah

By Claire Castell

On Sunday, July 19, OHA presents our Neighborhood Tour of Sequoyah Heights, to include the Sequoyah Country Club and seven homes built in the years after the country clubs opened possibilities to elegant country living just yards away from golf courses. In fact, our neighborhood was originally called "Fairway Estates." We are calling the tour "Secret Sequoyah" because so many people are unaware this beautiful neighborhood exists in Oakland.

This is a short history of two Oakland country clubs, built barely a mile from each other. One remains beautiful and vibrant while the other one is in ruins. These clubs helped drive the development of new homes in what had once been the wilderness of San Leandro Hills.

Sequoyah Country Club: On October 3, 1913, 23 captains of industry met at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco to organize a new golf club in the southern Oakland Hills. They named it Sequoyah, using the tradition-

al Indian spelling, after the famous Cherokee who developed a system of writing for the Cherokee language in the early 1800s.

Increased production of automobiles at the turn of the century made hillside living

accessible, where horse-drawn buggies struggled and trolleys and trains didn't venture. People could drive their cars into the hills, and enjoy the best of Oakland hills life.

The minutes of that first meeting show many prominent citizens elected to the first board of directors, including P. J. Clay and Fred R. Sherman, co-owners of Sherman/Clay Company, and Col. W. S. Rheem, president of Standard Oil. Dennis Searles, whose business empire was built on his father's discovery of Borax in the Upper Mojave Desert, was elected as the first president. Other board members included Harvey B. Lindsey, Arthur D. King, Hugh Goodfellow, Barton T. Bean, W.P. Johnson, and Charles H. Bentley.

The original clubhouse was completed in 1915, starting with 350 members. The architect is cited as E.G. Garden. A 1928 remodel is mostly what we see today. The original men's bar was known as the S. P. Depot, as most members would take the Southern



BUENA LANE PHOTOGRAPHY



SEQUOYAH COUNTRY CLUB today, top, and an early logo at left.

See **COUNTRY CLUBS** on page 2



Country clubs

Continued from page 1

Pacific train to Dutton Avenue and then meet a bus to take them to Sequoyah. At the time, women were not allowed inside the gates to the club. Several years later, the men consented to allow women to drive through the gate to pick someone up or drop them off, but they were not permitted to leave their cars.

In the '20s and '30s, additional rooms were added to the clubhouse and women were finally allowed in. The '30s have been described as the heyday of society at Sequoyah. Women's golf had become major part of the club's activity. *Oakland Tribune* articles from the '30s show many active women golfers competing from Sequoyah.

Sequoyah's membership before the war was around 400. There was no initiation fee and monthly dues ran between \$10 and \$18. The Oakland Open, one of the premier tournaments on the Pacific coast, was held at Sequoyah from 1938 to 1944, and featured prominently in the early professional careers of golfers Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Byron Nelson, Jimmy Demaret and others.

During World War II, membership dropped to 90. The Sequoyah Country Club struggled financially. The Sequoyah website says "During these lean times the help was reduced to one married couple who took over the duties of the club. They served as cook, bartender, dishwasher, housekeeper and night watchman in return for their living quarters and \$175 per month. For an unknown period of time one member paid the monthly bills out of his own pocket. Several slot machines were installed which brought in additional

revenue." After the war, soldiers and sailors came home to start families. The economy rebounded and the country club survived. Today it is a beautiful reminder of the grace and elegance of the early Oakland Hills development but with a modern eye toward today's culture and economics.

Oak Knoll Country Club: Golfing was a booming craze in the 1920s. Perhaps inspired by the early success of its neighboring country club as well as the housing boom of the 1920s, a new country club was announced in the *Oakland Tribune* in 1926. The architect was W. J. McCormack. The *Tribune* reports:

"... *The Spacious Club House on a rising knoll, shaded by oak and eucalyptus, the spacious, artistic club house, embodying every modern improvement and convenience, is being erected. Typically Spanish in its plan and architectural details, Oak Knoll Country Club will be a natural rallying spot for the outdoor, sport loving people of Oakland.*

"*The club house itself will be the largest and finest in the Eastbay. Over a half million dollars will be spent in buildings, swimming pool and links alone. Its many features will embrace a traditional Spanish garden, or patio; a great lounge; over five hundred locker rooms; outdoor swimming pool; tennis courts; playground . . . special showers and a magnificent plunge will be installed. Hot showers, cold showers, needle showers all manner and variety will be available at the Oak Knoll Country Club.*

"... *The [club], planned within such amazing scope, by its fundamental ideals, will naturally attract to its membership those discriminating people who, by their inherent broadness and democracy, almost guarantee*



TODAY'S OAK KNOLL: graffiti interior and overgrown exterior.

the making of Oak Knoll Country Club a famous social center for Oakland.

"*Membership Limitation: Membership in Oak Knoll will be limited to 500 regular members. Its scope and size and appointments were built to take care of far in excess of that number, so as to assure no crowding and discomfort at any time, or at any function.*

"*A Perfect 18 Hole Course at Oak Knoll [designed by] the noted golf architect, Willie Lock, has laid out what will doubtlessly be the finest 18 hole golf course in this western country. The course, as Lock designed it and by its very location naturally falls into the category of the perfect course.*"



1915 LOGO

See **COUNTRY CLUBS** on page 3

BOTH: NAOMI SCHIFF

SCC

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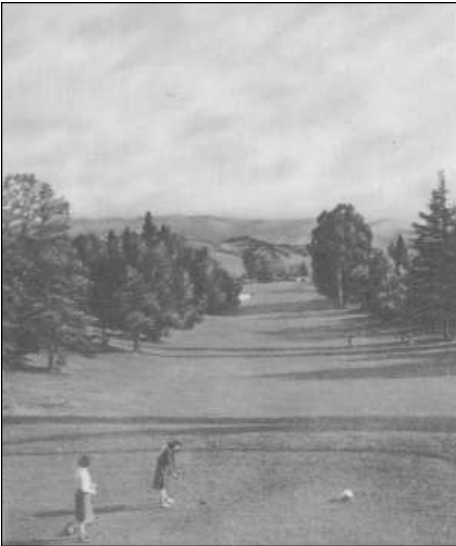
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Country clubs

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OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM



WOMEN FINALLY GET to play the links at Sequoyah in this postcard view.

Oakland Tribune articles show golf competitions and tournaments with Oak Knoll golfers between 1927 and 1935. Despite its grand design, the Oak Knoll Country Club went bankrupt during the Depression and was unused until World War II.

The U.S. Navy purchased the land in 1942 and built a hospital to support the Navy Base at Alameda and the mounting returning casualties in the Pacific. The Oak Knoll Country Club house was turned into the Officer's Club. At its height during the war, the hospital treated 8,000 daily inpatients. In post-war years, its clinics and 250 beds cared for 120,000 active and retired military personnel and dependents in Northern California. The hospital closed in 1996 as part of the 1993 closures of military bases. The hospital was imploded on April 8, 2011, but the Officer's Club was preserved for future restoration.

In 2005, Lehman Brothers and SunCal bought the site to develop 960 homes. They promised to refurbish the Officer's Club as a community center. The project fell apart when Lehman Brothers went bankrupt in the 2008 recession. SunCal abandoned the property, but efforts of local community groups persuaded the developers to clean up and secure the site.

In 2014, SunCal bought Oak Knoll for the second time. The current plans have whittled

down the number of homes to 900, with hiking paths and the restoration of a creek. However, SunCal currently believes the Officer's Club is too damaged and expensive to restore. Instead, SunCal wants to create a memorial park with some architectural components on another part of the land.

However, the Officer's Club has been deemed historically significant by the Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) to take extra scrutiny in these cases.

OHA presented a powerful letter to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the Oakland Planning Commission in April and won support for thoroughly exploring possibilities for preservation of the Officer's Club during the required environmental review. While this is a huge step, the building's preservation is not guaranteed.

SunCal executives have met with OHA, and are looking for an acceptable re-use of the property that would overcome the finan-

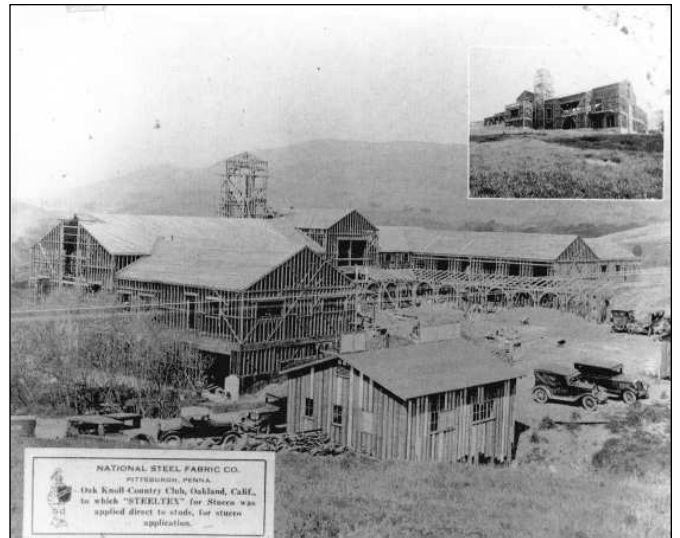
THE TWO COUNTRY clubs under construction. At right is a vintage advertisement for Oak Knoll, circa 1926, and below is Sequoyah.

cial hurdle of restoration, estimated at \$10 million. Some ideas discussed include:

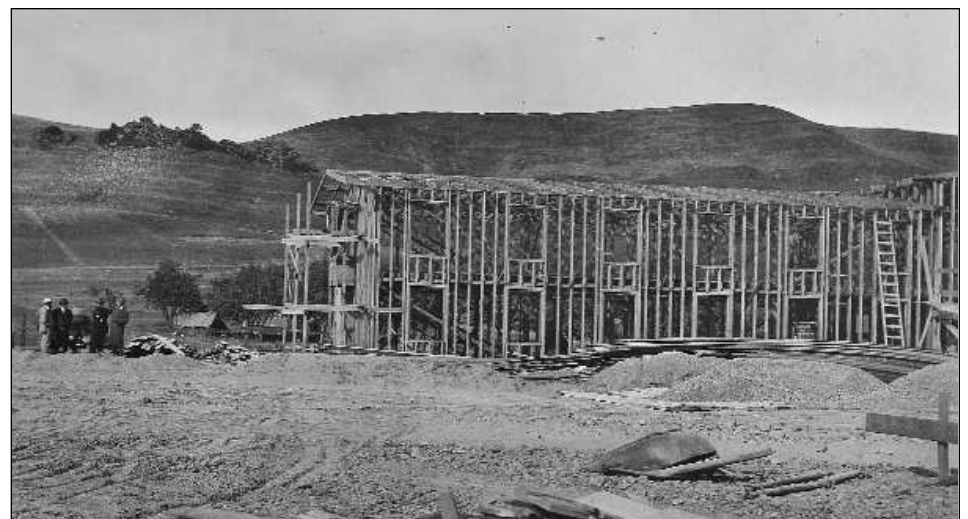
- Destination restaurant and boutique hotel, with party/wedding/small conference event venue option
- Destination spa with athletic space
- A winery
- Basement area as mini-storage space
- Retail for the neighborhood and wider area
- Any combination of the above, and/or any one use that could be the initial "partial" use of a phased plan.

OHA continues to work with the neighborhood homeowners and with SunCal to drive the preservation of the 1927 historical reminder of both golf history and World War II naval history.

Your thoughts are welcome—contact us at info@oaklandheritage.org or at 763-9218. ■



NEWS CLIPPING, OAKLAND CULTURAL HERITAGE SURVEY



SCC



Civic duty: building Oakland schools

By Dorothy Lazard

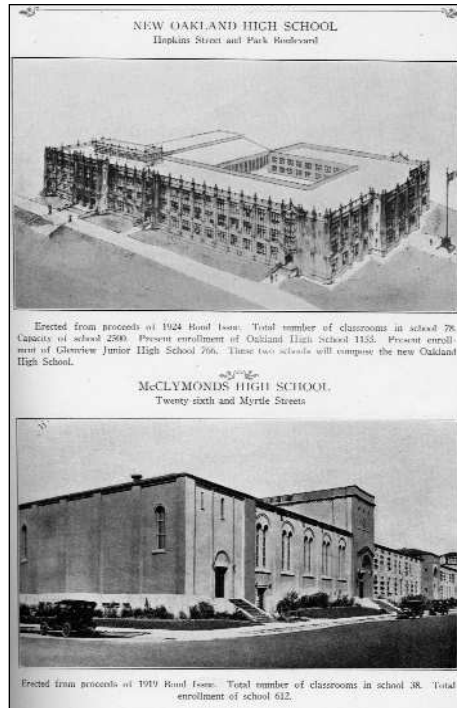
This year marks the centennial of Oakland Technical High School at its current location. Known for its stately architecture, the school has been a distinguished, much-admired Oakland landmark since it opened in January 1915. Tech, as it's commonly known, was designed by noted California architect John J. Donovan, who also built Oakland's Municipal Auditorium, Clawson and Emerson elementary schools, and the Temescal branch library. He came to Oakland to supervise the construction of our current City Hall.

When the school was formally dedicated that February, there was lots of fanfare. Mayor Frank K. Mott, Stanford University chancellor David Starr King, and California Superintendent of Public Instruction Edward Hyatt delivered speeches. In his remarks, Mayor Mott said: "Every one of us is intensely interested and deeply concerned in the upbuilding and the welfare of our public school system." Tech's new principal Philip M. Fisher opened the school and welcomed throngs of visitors to see the new facility.

Built during the "City Beautiful" era—for which Mayor Mott was such an avid supporter—Tech is Oakland's only school from that period that has survived at least externally intact. Donovan used the school as the focus of his discussion of creating industrial school spaces in his widely respected textbook, *School Architecture: Principles and Practices*, published in 1921. He saw the growing need to build schools that prepared students for the world of work by providing classrooms, studios and workshops that helped them develop vocational skills.

Oakland has had an interesting history of building schools. Accommodating a growing population of children in safe and commodious structures has always been the school district's chief goal and major challenge. Besides funding, several diverse factors—such as seismic considerations, public opinion and location—come into play when designing local schools.

During the November elections of 1909, Oaklanders and their suburban neighbors voted to annex the communities south of the San Antonio district—the communities of Fruitvale, Fitchburg, Melrose, Lockwood,



OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

OAKLAND HIGH and **McClymonds** when they were young.

and Elmhurst. In one electoral decision, Oakland school superintendent James McClymonds was suddenly responsible for 42 schools, 20 more than he had administered the day before the election. Imagine the coordination involved in transferring responsibility for so many schools with different building codes, teaching staffs, and budgets. Voter-approved bond issues were the district's saving grace.

The school bond measures of 1919 and 1924 paid for many new schools. The 1919 bond garnered \$4.9 million which paid for McClymonds, Roosevelt and University high schools, four new junior high schools, four new elementary schools and several additions to pre-existing schools. According to the September 20, 1928, issue of Superintendent's Bulletin, the 1924 measure raised \$9.6 million and paid for a total of 51 school buildings over a course of five years.

By the mid-1920s, the Oakland Public Schools had established building standards to address the needs to house Oakland's growing population of school-age children, to make consistent design elements in school buildings, and to use funds efficiently. Every

Thanks to our volunteers

Lectures and Building Tour Leaders:

Andrew Alden, Annalee Allen, Chris Andrews, Diane Curry, John Christian, Michael Coleman, Alan Dreyfuss, Chris Duncan, Jeanne Dunn, Stacy Farr, Karen Fiene, Gelfand Partners, Joyce Gordon, Alan Hess, Kim Kodani Hill, Inge Horton, Geoffrey Pete, Carolyn Pickell, Gerald Schmaovian, JoAnn Sherwood, Reenie Raschke, Jim Smallman, Steve Teel, Barry Wagner, Peter Waller

Volunteers:

Gary Anderson, Michael Boone, Charles Bucher, Claire Castell, Harry Chomsky, William & Sue Coburn, Tom Debley, Alison Finlay, Christina Herd, Shalene Hersh, Wally Holmen, Heather Katz, Mike Keating, John Klein, Daniel Levy, Amelia Marshall, Joann Pavlinec, Martha Peck, Steve Rynerson, Charles Smith, Sam Smith, Joyce Stanek, James Vann

prospective architect had to fill out a questionnaire which was submitted to the Superintendent of Schools, then approved or rejected by the Superintendent's Council. The questionnaire, available in the school district's "Book of Standards for the Erection of School Buildings," asked questions such as: how far does the building stand from the street? How many classrooms? Is there abundant play space? What materials are used for the retaining walls? Are the stairways fireproof? What type of roof is provided? What is the height of the stair risers? Is the ceiling fireproof? Are coat rooms provided in each classroom? What kinds of windows are provided? What kitchen equipment is provided?

Seeing these questions, one can understand why so many of our school buildings of this era looked pretty much the same. Each level of school had their own specific building standards. For example, elementary schools had to have kindergarten suites and assembly rooms. Junior high schools had rooms for home economics, metal and wood shop classes, and "commercial suites" where students learned typing. Senior high schools had music suites, art suites, a visual education and dramatic suite where students perform on stage or project motion pictures, a library, and gymnasiums.

See **SCHOOLS** on page 6

Mid-century Monster update

By Naomi Schiff

The mid-century sculpture and climbing structure at Lake Merritt, featured in Kathleen DiGiovanni's article in the last *OHA News*, has been embraced by local artist Susan Casentini and her husband, Kyle Milligan of the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club, along with many supporters. At first threatened with demolition by a City of Oakland worried that it presented a hazard, the Monster generated outcry in the form of publicity, enthusiasm, petitions, and donations. Now, the Public Works Department has remediated the lead paint hazard, and plans are in the works for a repair to put the beloved Monster back in service. In response to publicity efforts, the family of the late artist Bob Winston weighed in, donors are stepping up, and people are participating in a fanpage on the web. (Take a look at Sly and the Family Stone posing atop the structure on the cover of their 1968 record album, *Dance to the Music*, at <http://bit.ly/1jfOrkS>) and keep up with Monstrous happenings at: www.facebook.com/LakeMerrittMonsterFanClub.

HENRY J. KAISER AUDITORIUM: A lively 55 speakers appeared at a May Community and Economic Development Committee to address two proposals for reusing Oakland's landmark 1912 public facility. The city's intent is to enter an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement with the chosen group. City staff recommended a proposal by the Orton Company to reawaken the auditorium and to repurpose the arena. Their plan is not highly specific but did contemplate new uses for the arena end of the building. The Community Development Partners proposal was for a reuse of the building for arts organizations, along with the construction of a new 17-story hotel in the area between the auditorium and the museum. The meeting was continued to June 9, as the speakers used up all the committee's time. At the next meeting, the councilmembers will continue the discussion and recommend a decision to the full council.

OUSD ADMIN HEADQUARTERS & DEWEY ACADEMY: After a restarted "community engagement" process, Superintendent Antwan Jackson has presented three

massing studies to the school board, which gave a go-ahead to the staff to continue planning a major reconstruction of the area at 1025 Second Ave. Unfortunately, the most-favored plan of the three entails demolishing the Paul Robeson and the Ethel Moore buildings. However, there will be opportunities to advocate for an alternative which retains some or all of the historic structures.

The next step will be an EIR and scoping document. OHA will send an alert when comment and input dates are revealed. The latest plans de-emphasize a

residential component, and allow for a reduced size of the workforce expected at the administrative headquarters—about 350 employees. Earlier plans had been for 500.

MONTCLAIR WOMEN'S CLUB: A change of ownership at the 1926 Montclair Women's Club has generated concern, with submission of a proposal for a preschool at the site. Issues raised have included its historic rating, tree removal, and plans for alterations to the building, designed by architects Williams & Wastell. See page 10 for more.

LANE PARTNERS: EMPORIUM/CAPWELL BUILDING REUSE: After a great deal of discussion with developers Lane Partners, Gensler Architects, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, and planning staff, plans are moving forward for the remodeling and re-use of the former Sears store, originally Capwell's/Emporium, on Broadway. The new owners plan to reopen windows that were sealed up after the 1989 earthquake, in a quick but brutal 1990 retrofit and shearwalling endeavor that employed a huge amount of shotcrete. The exterior walls will be covered with a "rainscreen," a modern high-quality ceramic tile system that stands out a few inches from the original

See **MONSTER & MORE** on page 6



MONTCLAIR WOMEN'S CLUB

KATHLEEN DIGIOVANNI

NAOMI SCHIFF



OUSD'S FORLORN Ethel Moore Building, just off 2nd Avenue. Moore, a prominent Oakland native, was a Vassar College graduate, a suffragist and founder of the Alameda County Tuberculosis Society, and advocated for playgrounds and summer camps in Oakland. She was a Mills College trustee, and a hall on campus also carries her name.



Schools

Continued from page 4

The Second World War brought tens of thousands of people into Oakland which put pressure on the school district to accommodate the increased number of students. Building additions and portable buildings were added to school grounds. The baby boom which followed WWII added even more pressure. As always there was a demand from parents, teachers, and administrators to improve the physical plant. In 1956, a four-year \$40 million bond measure paid for 21 new elementary school buildings (including Lincoln, John Marshall, Jefferson, Lazear, Longfellow, and Woodland), five new junior high schools, two new high schools (Skyline and Castlemont), and major additions to 11 elementary schools, three junior high schools, and three high schools.

Seeking “sound appraisal and judgment of the public schools by the citizens of this community,” the Oakland School Board established the Citizen’s Advisory Committee on Oakland School Needs in 1963. The committee was charged with supplying the board with information on the financial needs of the schools; school building needs; and equal education opportunities. The com-

mittee’s 1964 report projected school building needs up through 1973-74. It found that a new bond measure was necessary, given student population projections through 1973 that showed an increase of nearly 13,000 students. The committee called for a \$68 million bond to pay for new schools and building additions, an update of school building standards, the purchase of more land to build on, and more multi-story school buildings. In the intervening years, the school district relied on “temporary” portable buildings. In February 1965, the *Oakland Tribune* reported that Oakland was utilizing 700 portable classrooms, which, at the time, were being moved from school to school as needed.

The 1970s saw a strong move toward student safety in school buildings. Perhaps the 1971 quake was a reminder to school officials that many schools were a half-century old and not seismically sound by current standards. Deemed too architecturally important to tear down, Tech was closed in 1977 for rehabilitation and its students were transferred to the old Merritt College campus on Grove Street. The seismic retrofitting and complete interior redesign work took longer than expected and cost \$10 million. Tech students didn’t move back into a newly-remodeled school until 1983. A small group of Tech students petitioned state and local officials to designate their high school a historic landmark in order to secure its future as a star on the Oakland landscape. After an enthusiastic student lobbying campaign, the school was declared Oakland’s 99th historic landmark on July 23, 1985. ■

Biff’s, redux! Hope persists

By Naomi Schiff

Preservation advocates, including four OHA boardmembers, met June 11 with Hanover Development representatives. Hanover is planning a sizable mixed-use retail and residential project at 27th and Broadway, site of a car dealership and the former Biff’s 24-hour coffee shop, a locally-famous 1962 Google building by Armet and Davis. Longtime Biff’s advocate Joyce Roy brought along Biff Naylor, after whom his father had named the restaurant. Hanover has not thus far considered reusing the building, but discussion circled around possible alternatives and a way to incorporate the round building into a basically rectangular concept. ■

Monster & More

Continued from page 5



CORNER OF THE FORMER

Emporium/Capwell/Sears building at Thomas Berkeley Way and Broadway, with the 1990s skin removed, shows that some of the original facade survives in between the shotcrete areas. Lane Partners’ revised plans for reuse include retaining original materials intact, hidden behind the new exterior surface.

walls. In using this material, some surviving areas of the historic cladding, while not visible, will remain intact underneath. The original imposing cornice will remain. Some of the historic shop windows will be removed and reused on the interior of the building. Most of the interior historic features of the building have been removed and will not be replicated. The developers plan to reopen access to the 19th St. BART station, and will create an atrium in the interior, using the ground floor for retail and the upper floors for commercial office or workspace tenants. Chris Buckley, a stalwart OHA contributor but formerly a longtime City of Oakland planner, headed an OHA effort to influence the design to better reflect the original building, its massing, detailing and materials. The outcome is considerably improved from the initial drawings, and the project should get underway in the coming months. ■

BOTH: OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM



AESTHETICS in Oakland school architecture: Allendale, top, and Castlemont.



Oak Knoll's hospital history

By Erika Mailman

Many Oaklanders still remember the Oak Knoll Naval Medical Center, a once-bustling wartime hospital. It opened in 1942 on 195 acres which previously held a country club and golf course. The first buildings were rough redwood barracks, but incoming patients required a modern building by 1964.

Incredibly, the hospital treated 6,000 patients per day during the rush of World War II. The staff of 3,000 made this one of the largest medical facilities in the world. It continued to treat soldiers during the Korean and Vietnam War conflicts and offered personnel for a hospital ship during Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Oak Knoll's specialty was amputee rehabilitation and orthopedics, and often soldiers were shipped there directly from the front lines. An orthopedic resident recalled that in 1966, his two main impressions of the casualty ward were noise—men shouting at each other since their eardrums had been burst by whatever blast had injured them—and smell, as the patients' open wounds reeked of pseudomonas, a bacterium for which there were no antibiotics at the time. Patients were pressed into service since there were no custodians—people in wheelchairs pushed brooms, and bedridden patients “cut stockinette on the bias to use in dressing,” according to a booklet in the Oakland History Room titled “Celebrating 53 years of Oak Knoll History.” No one was allowed to

watch TV until the work was finished.

Operations expanded to treat Marines as well as Navy men. Oak Knoll was recognized as a leader in teaching and research. As recently as the 1989



SERGEANT VINCE RIOS is awarded his second bronze star and third Purple Heart at Oak Knoll, 1969.



NAOMI SCHIFF

No, it's not your drink: the bar really is moving

By Naomi Schiff

An anxious crowd watched on January 10, unaccustomedly early on a Saturday morning, as this venerable dive turned the corner from Claremont Avenue onto Telegraph Avenue. The Kingfish reopened in May to relieved sports aficionados and barflies, on its new site just north of the Temescal Library. Its original site is slated for a new residential building.

Loma Prieta earthquake and the 1991 firestorm, Oak Knoll helped those affected. Two Oak Knoll EMTs were the first medical team to arrive on the scene of the collapsed Cypress structure. But in 1993, Base Realignment and Closure legislation was passed, and in 1995 the last class graduated. The 11-story hospital was torn down in 2011.

The innovative hospital staff produced some historic firsts. “The first plastic shin was developed at the Navy Center in 1943. Previously shins were fabricated extensively and laboriously in wood. Today they are made of cotton stockinette and plastic polyester resin,” reports the Oak Knoll history booklet. Another landmark was the “first successful transplantation of a patient’s two toes to the stumps of the thumb and opposable digit” in 1981.

Trader Vic Bergeron, of Trader Vic restaurant fame, lost a leg and testicle to tuberculosis at age 4. He counseled amputees at Oak Knoll to provide inspiration.

Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard was hospitalized at Oak Knoll as a naval officer.

Germinating theories that healing required mental blocks to be removed, he helped himself to the available pool of test subjects—his fellow patients—to test out those ideas. ■

Sequoyah

Continued from page 1

neighborhood. The Oak Knoll Country Club clubhouse was converted to an Officer’s Club in the 1940s, when the Navy purchased the land for a Naval Hospital, now demolished.

Suncal Corporation is planning to construct 900 new homes on the site of what used to be the naval hospital. OHA is discussing possible re-uses for the Oak Knoll Officers Club, in hopes of saving it from demolition.

Join us for this new expedition into our diverse, evolving and endlessly surprising neighborhoods. We hope to see you there.

WHEN: Sunday, July 19, noon to 4 p.m.

WHERE: Sequoyah Hills with Country Club Reception 4-6 p.m.

COST: \$30 members/\$40 non-members. ■



Celebrating 35 years of walking tours in Oakland!

By Alison Finlay

From the old waterfront of the Original Town to Oakland's barrio, the Fruitvale, we roam Oakland this summer savoring city sights and stories. Learn about Henry J. Kaiser's growth as an industrialist, the charitable organizations in Victorian Temescal, or visit Brooklyn, an early suburb. Walk with us as we learn about the venerable Golden Gate neighborhood along San Pablo, and appreciate sidewalk stamps near Piedmont. Oakland's history comes alive as we walk and hear the stories of those who have lived here before us. We hope you leave with a deeper appreciation of our diverse and evolving city!

Our tours are based in part on the research of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, a project of the City of Oakland Strategic Planning Division, and the resources of the Oakland History Room, Oakland Main Library.

No reservations are required: please meet promptly at least 15 min prior to the listed start times. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended, as some walks are hilly; particularly on the afternoon tours, bring water.

Donation day of tour: \$10 OHA members, \$15 general; children 12 and under, free. Members may purchase a 5-tour pass for \$40. Sign up for membership or renewal the day of the tour and receive a \$10 credit toward that day's tour.

The Secret Sequoyah tour has special pricing; see below.

NEW TOURS FOR 2015

We're proud to roll out 10 brand-new, never-seen-before tours in our roster this year. Drum roll, please!

Saturday, July 11, 10 am–12:00 pm

JACK LONDON SQUARE—PAST TO PRESENT

• In front of 59 Broadway, near Water Street. Enhance your knowledge of the history of Oakland beginning in 1852 when Horace Carpentier stole the waterfront and founded the city. Discover



THIRTEENTH AVENUE in the Brooklyn neighborhood.



NAOMI SCHIFF

INSTALLATION OF PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE at Lake Merritt Channel.

plaques and features that ring the square you may have missed before. A level walk of about one mile. —Diane Heinze

Saturday, July 18, 10 am–12:30 pm

BROADWAY TERRACE MYSTERIES

• 6767 Broadway Terrace east of the freeway, in front of the old Montclair Mart. Topics for discussion will include Temescal Creek, Hamilton's Market and the evolution of the commercial area, the construction of Broadway Terrace, revision of Glenwood Glade and construction of the Warren Freeway, the Sacramento Northern, Temescal

Park, and ending at the site of Campi House as the walk proceeds west toward Sheridan Road, west of the freeway.—Stuart Swiedler

Sunday, July 19, Noon–4 pm, Reception follows.

SECRET SEQUOYAH NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR

• Register at the Sequoyah Country Club at 4550 Heafey Road, or for advance registration: 763-9218 or <http://tinyurl.com/nac52bv>. \$25 for members/\$35 for non-members advance, \$30 for members/\$40 for non-members at the door.

Discover the Sequoyah Hills neighborhood with a self-guided tour of seven open homes built in the 1920s and '30s. (See more about this tour on page one.) After the neighborhood tour, a reception hosted by the Sequoyah Country Club follows, 4–6 pm. During the reception, enjoy tours of the historic club and the fairways.

Sunday, August 2, 10 am–12:30 pm

HELPLESS AND DESTITUTE IN TEMESCAL

• In front of Studio One, 365 45th Street. At the turn of the twentieth century, this

See **NEW TOURS** on page 9

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

New tours

Continued from page 8

recently annexed area of Oakland was still a sparsely populated suburb far from the hustle and bustle of downtown. The healthful climate and open land drew a number of charitable organizations—including today's Studio One—to establish homes in this idyllic area. As we wind through the streets we will also take note of how the area urbanized in the 1910s and '20s as a transportation hub and how a handful of local developers gave the neighborhood its unique character. A mostly level walk.—Sean Morales

Saturday, August 8, 10 am–1pm
**OLD WEST WATERFRONT—
 LOWER BROADWAY**

• Parker Electric Co., 221 Washington at 3rd Street.

Grove Street School, the Ghirardelli house, Oakland Gas Light & Heat Co., Hall of Records, Bay City Iron Works, Oenophile Store, Central Free Kindergarten, Bret Harte Boardwalk, Muller Brothers Pickle Factory, Grove Street Pier, marshland Chinatown, Thunderbird Lodge, Landmark Number One . . . where are they now? Lurking between the freeways, container terminals, condo towers, Jack London Square, and the mainline tracks are surprising fragments of oldest Oakland, the southwest corner of the Original Town. A long, level walk.—Betty Marvin

Sunday, August 9, 10 am–12:30 pm
**HENRY J. KAISER'S
 OAKLAND LEGACY**

• In front of the Westlake Building (formerly

the American Bank Building), 350 Frank Ogawa Plaza (City Center BART). Stroll the Oakland path of Henry J. Kaiser's career from road builder with a one-room office in the American Bank Building to America's "most spectacular entrepreneur" with a global empire headquartered in Kaiser Center and businesses or projects on every continent including Antarctica. During World War II he produced more ships faster than anyone in history. His lasting legacy remains Kaiser Permanente, a major force in shaping American healthcare to the present day. Tour does not loop, but ends at Kaiser Center (19th Street BART). — Tom Debley

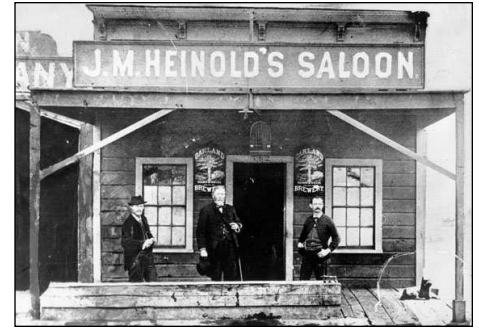
Saturday, August 15, 10 am–12:30 pm
**GHOST SPACES OF THE GOLDEN
 GATE: NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY
 OF VACANT LOTS AND EMPTY
 STOREFRONTS**

• Golden Gate Library, 5606 San Pablo Avenue.

Meander through time and space as we explore under-utilized neighborhood spaces near and along San Pablo Avenue: parking lots, median strips, empty lots and defunct storefronts. Neighborhood experts will share stories revealing the history of dormant spaces as well as the lineage of transformed sites. We'll discuss possibilities of repurposing vacant spaces. A level walk. —Brock Winstead, Anisha Gade, Sue Mark

Sunday, August 16, 10 am–Noon
SIDEWALK ARCHEOLOGY

• Piedmont Plaza, near benches in the parking lot at 41st Street & Piedmont Avenue. A flat, easy walk that revisits the past of



THIS SALOON still stands; see it on the Jack London Square tour.

Piedmont Avenue environs. Learn how to date a neighborhood by its sidewalks and follow the history of a couple of contracting companies and utilities. After this tour you'll never take a sidewalk for granted again. A level walk.—Ruby Long

Sunday, August 23, 1 pm–3:30 pm
DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN

• Vantage Point Park, foot of 13th Avenue at E. 12th Street.

Oakland's American origins date from the 1840s when redwoods logged in the Oakland hills were shipped from the foot of 13th Avenue. This tour begins at the 1856 shoreline and explores commercial and government buildings, homes and churches in this historic part of Oakland. A long but level walk.—Kathleen DiGiovanni

Sunday, August 30, 10 am–12:30 pm
PASEO DE FRUITVALE

• Fruitvale BART, near the bike racks. Explore Fruitvale's Latino culture and identity. How did Fruitvale become Oakland's "barrio"? Where does the Latin American mural tradition come from? What historical and identity narratives do Fruitvale murals express? Visit a western wear shop to highlight Latino ranching culture. Learn how St. Elizabeth's Church has been a center for liberation theology and the farmworkers' movement. Hear community speakers bring Latino immigration history to life. Trace Fruitvale's Mexican American cuisine back to the Columbian Exchange of plant and animal species starting in 1492. Stay for lunch in one of Fruitvale's many restaurants! A level walk. —Alex Saragoza, Holly Alonso, Maria Sanchez, Pamela Magnuson Peddle, Betty Marvin

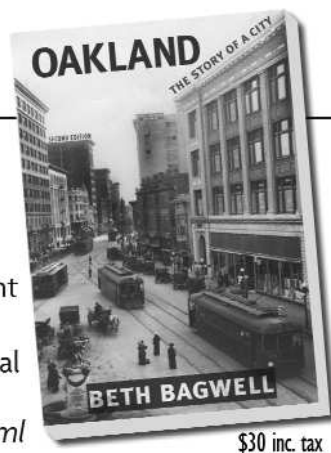
See **NEW TOURS** on page 10

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Montclair Women's Club—calling all scrapbooks

By Kathleen DiGiovanni

As noted on page 5 of this issue, the Montclair Women's Club building has changed hands and may be reborn as a preschool. The clubhouse, notable for the CALCO tile fireplace in its dining room, was home to the Montclair Women's Club from 1926 to 1996.

The Montclair Women's Club was a significant force in the hill district for at least 80 years. It got its start in 1923 as the Women's Auxiliary of the Montclair Improvement Club. By 1925 it had affiliated itself with the California State Federation of Women's Clubs and was making plans to build its own clubhouse.

Over the decades the club supported a number of neighborhood improvement causes including schools, churches, the library, and during World War II, the Red Cross. Articles in the *Montclarion* during the 1940s describe fundraising events like the 1941 "Sewer Party" and the 1947 "Hobo Dinner." At one time the club's membership topped 200 with a waiting list that was years' long but by 2000 its aging membership had dwindled to about 50. After selling their clubhouse in 1996, members continued their monthly meetings at the Lakeside Park Garden Center.

For years the club's membership kept scrapbooks documenting their work.

Where have they gone? The Oakland History Room would love to provide a permanent home to any scrapbooks, rosters, programs, photographs, or other memorabilia from the Montclair Women's Club.

We see them as an important addition to our women's club archive that already includes the records of the Rockridge Women's Club, the Park Boulevard Women's Club, and the Ebell Society.

If you can provide us with a lead on this archive, contact the Oakland History Room by phoning 238-3222 or emailing ohr@oaklandlibrary.org. ■

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New tours

Continued from page 9

Your attendance and membership keeps OHA strong. Thank you! Don't forget to check our website for the full listing of tours; there are six other tours repeating due to their popularity. Our website also includes full bios of the knowledgeable, fun tour leaders. www.oaklandheritage.org ■

Volunteers needed!

As our walking tour season starts up, OHA requests your assistance at tour registration, accompanying the walks, and for our special Sequoyah neighborhood-tour. For details, call 763-9218 or email info@oaklandheritage.org. THANK YOU! ■

Welcome to our new members!

OHA is pleased to welcome these newest members to our roster:

Andrew Alden, J. Barry Bitzer,
Rebecca Chambers, Diane Crowley &
Terry Mulera, Stacey Farr,
Karin Fetherston, Karen Fiene,
Christopher Hadley, Kimi Kodani Hill,
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Pat Williams



Frank Lloyd Wright event a success

By Alison Finlay, President

Thank you to everyone who came to our fundraiser on May 17 at the Buehler House, a Frank Lloyd Wright masterwork set on grounds perfected by landscape designer Henry Matsutani over 30 years. A big thank you to Gerald Schmajovian and Jo Anne Sherwood for hosting us and tirelessly guiding groups through their lovely home all afternoon. Thank you to Joann Pavlinec for arranging all, her husband Michael Boone for assembling the musical talent, and all our board members who pitched in. It was a delightful afternoon!

Soon you'll be receiving the brochure with the schedule of tours for this 35th season of OHA walking tours. There are lots of tours this summer, and all the new ones are listed in this issue of *OHA News*. The full list of tours and profiles of our tour leaders will be on our website soon. Also in the walking tour brochure is a notice of a special neighborhood tour in a little-known part of Oakland, Sequoyah Hills. On July 19, we'll explore the residential area "Between Two Country Clubs" (see Claire Castell's article in this issue of *OHA News*), visiting seven open homes. A reception hosted by the Sequoyah Country Club follows, with guided tours of



BREATHTAKING landscape design at the Buehler House. Visitors cross the Matsutani Garden bridge, above. A board walkway beckons at right.

the historic club and views of the greens where famous golfers such as Sam Snead and Walter Hagen teed off. We hope to see you there!

We have upcoming changes in the office. We're changing our database software to a system that will allow members to check on their status and update their membership online. Christina Herd is resigning as associate director because she has chosen to become a teacher. Although we're sorry to lose her, she has vowed to continue as a member and as an ambassador for OHA.

This year is OHA's 35th year. We can be proud of the impact our group has had on our city throughout the years. Many people have



BOTH: CHARLES SMITH

dedicated smarts, savvy, energy and effort to a constructive vision of restoring and reusing Oakland's most historic buildings. Economically, ecologically and aesthetically, it's the right thing to do. We appreciate all the letters written to council members, and showing up to speak at city meetings, and the support you show by continuing your OHA membership and coming to events. Thank you! ■

CONTRIBUTORS:

Claire Castell, Christopher Buckley, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Alison Finlay, Kathryn Hughes, Dorothy Lazard, Erika Mailman, Naomi Schiff, Charles Smith

PRODUCTION: Erika Mailman

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- \$45 Cornerstone** (individual): newsletter, advance notice and discounted pricing on programs, events and tours.
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- \$110 Pediment** (organization/corporate): same as above for four (for corporate or organization, transferable).
- \$250-\$499 Doric** same as above plus two tickets to a walking tour
- \$500-\$999 Ionic**: same as above plus four tickets to a walking tour.
- \$1,000-\$2,500 Corinthian**: all access pass for two (transferable).

Some limited income memberships are available. Call for information

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Fighting off amphibious invasions at the lake

By Kathleen DiGiovanni

Let's say you were taking a stroll in Lakeside Park on December 7, 1952, on the 11th anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day. Would you have been surprised to see an amphibious landing on the beach by the bandstand?

That's exactly what you would have seen. It was National Guard Blood Day, organized by the Oakland Junior Chamber of Commerce and co-sponsored by the California National Guard and the Oakland Red Cross.

Though the event's goals were to solicit blood donations for Korean War casualties and to encourage National Guard enlistment, the day's undisputed highlight was the mock battle staged on Lake Merritt's shores.

At 12:45 in the afternoon, amphibious "ducks" filled with enemy combatants were lowered into the water near the 12th Street dam. From there they crossed the lake and made their landing near the bandstand where they engaged in battle with defending forces. Helicopters "strafed" the aggressors' boats during the elaborately choreographed attack. At battle's end the enemy was driven back into boats with their own wounded. The defender's casualties were carried in stretchers to a field hospital behind the lines where some would receive simulated transfusions of donated blood. More than 200 Guardsmen from several units participated in the battle.

Setting an example for the civilian community were the 140 members of the 144th Medical Group who were first in line to

donate blood. The most prominent donor of the day, reported the *Oakland Tribune*, was Robert Kennemore, a Korean War veteran from Oakland and Medal of Honor winner, who lost both legs when he fell on live grenades to save the lives of his comrades. He made what the *Tribune* described as "an eloquent plea for blood," reminding the crowd that transfusions had helped to save his life.

The *Tribune* reported the next day that thousands of Oaklanders attended. Events of the day included the awarding of Purple Hearts to two California servicemen, an overhead show by a dozen F-51 fighter planes, displays of armaments, and performances by the Kiltie Pipe Band from the Sixth Army Headquarters at the Presidio and the Navy band and drill team from the Electronics School at Treasure Island.

The Oakland Jaycees won first place in state and national Junior Chamber competitions in the "national security" category for organizing National Guard Blood Day. The event was so popular that they repeated it on August 2, 1953. The Oakland History Room



NATIONAL GUARD Blood Day spurs blood donations, 1953.

has the Jaycees' scrapbook from that second "battle" in its Oakland Jaycee collection, the source for the photo you see here.

The second iteration of Blood Day proved just as popular, helping relieve the summertime slump in blood donation. This time the battle was staged three times during the afternoon, each narrated live via loudspeaker by KLX announcer John Chapel. Donors received complimentary tickets to see the Oakland Oaks play the San Francisco Seals. The static display of military equipment, this time featuring anti-tank mine equipment, howitzers, machine guns, and bazookas, proved popular again. You could even stay and have a fried chicken lunch. ■