



Once again, PIP Awards go to exciting projects

By Valerie Garry

In May, folks gathered at the Chapel of the Chimes for OHA's 2009 Partners in Preservations Awards program. Here are the projects and people that were honored.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT: Anthony Holdsworth. For more than 20 years, Anthony Holdsworth has been capturing our cityscape in paint. His artwork expresses the vitality, the light and the energy of the city. Sometimes he conveys the poignancy of empty streets.

Born in England, Holdsworth was introduced to oil painting by the New England painter Loring Coleman. He embarked on a painting career while working as Head of Outdoor Restoration for the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy, after the flood of 1966. He was educated at San Francisco Art Institute, Bournemouth College of Art in England, and Stanford University.

Holdsworth's work has been exhibited in major galleries in Oakland, San Francisco, Sacramento and Los Angeles. He has participated in two exhibitions at the Oakland Museum of California and was included in the California Cityscapes exhibition at the San Diego Museum. His work is also in corporate and private collections worldwide.

Of his work, Holdsworth says, "I generally work on location in the city. The urban landscape is an accurate and disquieting testament to our common condition. I encounter it first-hand in the hope of conveying its original intensity. Though sometimes devoid of people, these cityscapes emerge from my interaction with passersby and inhabitants at each site."

In addition to painting, Holdsworth writes a blog, "Dispatches from the Street," which documents the historic locations where he paints and educates his readers about history and his approach to his work.

His talents are a gift to the city. Holdsworth offers painting classes in Oakland as well as painting tours of Italy and Mexico. Check out www.anthonholdsworth.com for details.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT: Lynette Lee. Lynette Lee has spent most her professional career with EBALDC: the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation. Under her leadership, EBALDC has grown from a small storefront operation into one of the most successful nonprofit affordable housing developers in the Bay Area.

She will be retiring later this year. She came to EBALDC in 1976, first as a board member representing a community youth organization, then six months later as the volunteer coordinator, before assuming her long-term role of executive director.

During her tenure, EBALDC completed 1,406 affordable rental apartments, 164 affordable and co-housing homes, and over 240,000 square feet of retail, office, and community facility space. Among the EBALDC projects that Lee oversaw were several historic complexes, including the rehabilitation and retrofitting of Madison Park Apartments at 100 Ninth St., San Pablo Hotel Senior Housing at 1955 San Pablo Ave, and Swan's Market and Co-housing in Old Oakland.

In 2004, EBALDC was selected to acquire and oversee Preservation Park, the downtown office park for nonprofits located in 16 restored Victorians. EBALDC's headquarters, the Asian Resource Center, is located in



Anthony Holdsworth



EBALDC

ANTHONY HOLDSWORTH paints the Elihu Harris Building under construction, above, while Lynette Lee, longtime executive director at the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, is at left. Both were Lifetime Achievement winners of Oakland Heritage Alliance's Partners in Preservation Awards.

the renovated historic Hebern Electric Co. Building at 310 Eighth St. The landmark building, located in Chinatown, is a multi-service headquarters and home to various nonprofit agencies and a number of retail businesses.

PUBLIC AND CIVIC RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION: Studio One Arts Center. PGA design, landscape architects, and Shah-Kawasaki, architects. Studio One Art Center was built in 1894 as an orphanage for the Ladies Relief Society. The orphanage burned almost completely to the

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ground in April 1906. The Society immediately rebuilt it, simplifying the original design by eliminating several roof dormers, the porte cochere, and the towers that had flanked the grant entrance.

The orphanage stayed open until World War II, when the U.S. Army leased it. Following the war, it went up for sale. In 1947, the north Oakland community bought it, and a year later deeded it to the city. The deed required that the building be used as a public recreation center. In 1949, Studio One reopened as a recreation center providing arts and crafts, agency offices, theater arts, ping pong, a dance hall and a lounge for senior citizens.

In 2004, Measure DD funds were made available to rehabilitate the facility. While the historic structure was the focus of extensive seismic and facility upgrades, the project also afforded an opportunity to rehab the site as a whole.

Studio One is bilaterally symmetrical with two wings that form a U-shape around a central courtyard. The original rear entrance has been used as the main entry since the building became an art center.

Prior to rehabilitation, the landscape was disjointed between 45th Street and the courtyard, and there were few visual cues as to the location of the building entry. There was no clear pedestrian access, although auto traffic was allowed through a central drive. The landscape was, in a word, uninviting.

Rehabilitation has created a new use compatible with an arts center. Now the space reaches out to the neighborhood. The



A NEWLY-WELCOMING FACADE at Studio One Arts Center.

landscape has been rehabilitated and reinvigorated in ways that visually, physically and psychologically link the building with the street and community. It also provides a tranquil spot for neighbors to relax, read or run around.

PGA Design used an innovative design based on concentric undulating landforms that emanate from the front center of the courtyard. The landforms enhance interactive art space and provide a natural viewing area for performances.

The front landscape and courtyard offer a successful adaptive re-use of this valuable historic resource. The building has been reconnected with the revitalized central courtyard by the addition of several pairs of glass doors as well as a balcony over the entrance. The strong relationship between the interior spaces and the courtyard allows for the greatest possible use of the courtyard as an integrated part of the facility.

RESIDENTIAL RESTORATION, ADAPTIVE USE & REHABILITATION Restoration: 360 Alcatraz Ave. Cliff Cline and Julie Hardgrove purchased their 1908 Craftsman bungalow in 1991. Cliff has had a lifelong interest in Craftsman architecture and credits his wife, Julie Hardgrove, for finding the house. She told him, “It’s a real dump; you’re going to love it.”

As Jane Powell, who prepared the PIP nomination, noted: “Cliff taught Julie everything she knows about restoration work and construction (with the exception of what she learned from her childhood Lincoln Log set). She can now hang drywall, build a brick wall, and knows the difference between finish nails and Lee Press-on nails.”

Over the years, the house had been subject to many remodels and trends. It needed a full restoration, from removing gold-veined mirrored tiles and shag carpeting, and stripping rooms full of painted fir trim, to taking out hollow-core doors and refinishing the solid fir doors found up in the attic. Cline and Hardgrove remodeled the kitchen, bathroom and back porch. They updated and modernized the mechanicals while maintaining the historic integrity of their house.

The entry hall’s four-foot-wide front door had been stripped of all trim and charm. The plate rail and corbels had been removed to make way for the veneer paneling that covered the fir wainscoting. A 10-foot bookcase with leaded glass windows had been torn out, along with a bench seat.

Cline discovered that the bookshelves and a piece of the bench seat were being used as flooring in the attic. Starting with these original elements, he recreated the bookcase with doors, including leaded glass and copper hardware. He built a new bench by

Russell Abraham, courtesy of Shah Kawasaki Architects

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matching finish shadow marks found on the exposed original wainscoting. He finished all the wood using the original process of stain and shellac.

Window sashes were made using wood from salvaged fir doors which he stripped and milled. Cline also designed and made the entry light fixture, right down to stitching the leather straps.

RESTORATION: 446 Hudson St. When Bernard Smits & Theresa Nelson purchased their 1912 shingled bungalow, Bernard Smits and his wife, Theresa Nelson, planned to remodel it. But as it turned out, the first thing on their property to get an “extreme makeover” was the garage.

The original garage, built in the 1920s, had plank siding with “barn doors” in front, one window, no foundation and a dirt floor. It suffered from dry rot and termite damage. The roof was leaking on Smits’s tools as well as on the pale yellow 1964 Jaguar XKE he had been restoring, part by part, since their marriage began 22 years ago.

The garage had been built over the property lines on both sides (in the corner of the lot) and needed to be moved back onto their property. Zoning code prohibited a demolition and rebuild in the same location, so they had to preserve as much as they could and build the new structure around the original.

First they repaired the water-damaged roof, and then supported it on a specially-built wood frame. They then dug and poured a new perimeter foundation with rebar. They built new walls, and relocated and restored the original window. They then cut the roof loose, removed the existing walls, moved the roof using scissor jacks onto the new walls and removed the roof support frame. They shingled the outside over more sheetrock, upgraded wiring and installed new lighting. They hand-cut the reclaimed pavers for the driveway and painted the walls.

Smits started the project in November 2007 and thought it would take six months. It took a full year. Along the way, friends and family helped. The project was featured in the San Francisco Chronicle on Feb. 25 in an article titled: “Garage Project? It Takes a Village.”

RENOVATION: 869 42nd St. Beth Brown and Eli Rowe submitted three nominations



BEAUTIFUL ROMANESQUE DETAILS gleam once again on the restored facade at 1631 Telegraph Ave.

for this year’s PIP, each representing different challenges. We wish we could have highlighted their work on all three for they represent remarkable investments of time, energy, creativity and determination: the best example of sweat equity we’ve seen in some time. At the PIP event, we focused on one of them, 869 42nd St.

There could be no better example of blight than this house when they purchased it. It was filthy and falling apart at the seams, especially in the back where the foundation had been undermined and was rotten. Asbestos tiles covered the original shingles underneath. Brown and Rowe removed the tiles, retained most of the cedar shin-

gles underneath, added a water-table and added salvage redwood siding where needed.

Incredible amounts of toxic waste and debris littered the property and filled the house. Disposing of it required multiple trips in a 41-yard U-Haul.

Brown and Rowe designed a new kitchen using salvaged materials. The kitchen had been dark, had no work space and was disconnected from the backyard. They tried to incorporate principles of energy efficiency by using salvage materials.

They insulated, rewired, installed energy efficient appliances, and re-plumbed the house. They installed double-paned windows, doors and skylights. The kitchen and bathroom were rebuilt using salvage materials including bamboo and tile floors.

They built a large deck off the back of the house using salvage redwood. They installed double paned patio doors. They rebuilt the garage to match the house and now use the space as an office/bike shed. They removed the ugly metal security gate at the front, making the front porch a friendly focal point for neighborly contact. What a concept!

Adaptive Use/Rehabilitation: 4924 Webster St. Originally a barn, this remodeled house is located in Temescal. When Bethany Opalach and Edward Buchanan first saw the 100-year-old building, it contained a fire-

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THE KITCHEN at 4924 Webster St., originally a barn.



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place, one upstairs bathroom and a large pantry with a sink. The range and refrigerator sat alone in another empty room. The sorry structure had significant termite damage, buckling floors and leaky windows. It needed to be brought up to code and the owners wanted to redesign the interior spaces without changing the building envelope or losing the remaining historic features.

The barn had been built on a mortarless stone foundation with thick plank floors and balloon framed walls. The second floor joists are heavy timber. Old square nails were used throughout. The original rustic siding shows patched areas where windows used to be.

Opalach and Buchanan reused salvaged materials as much as possible. They reused foundation stones in the landscape walls, and used chimney bricks in the walkways and porches. In order to preserve the stone fireplace when the house had to be lifted and moved three feet from the property line, they left the fireplace in place and designed the room around it. Near the roof ridge, the original hoist beam still protrudes from the front gable, although the block and tackle is gone.

They kept the original entry door, reinstalled two electric chandeliers, and made the vintage range the focal point of the kitchen.

They also integrated many green building techniques while preserving the historic appearance of the house. For example, they incorporated passive solar design by using the ground floor slab for thermal mass, pas-

sive cooling by using venting skylights in the attic, as well as hydronic radiant heating and blown-in cellulose (recycled newspaper), which keep the house temperature between 68 and 72 degrees year round.

The owners say, "In a neighborhood that is still recovering from the construction of the freeway, we hope that preserving and rehabilitating a historic structure using green-building methods can have a positive impact."

STEWARDSHIP

East Bay Regional Park District: Stewardship of a Cultural and Natural Resource.

The East Bay Regional Park District spans nearly 100,000 acres in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Its mission is to provide recreational opportunities, ensure the natural beauty and cultural history of the land, and protect wildlife habitat. There are 65 parks, over 1,100 miles of trails, campgrounds, visitor centers, historic sites, lakes, and shorelines.

This year the District is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Back in the 1920s, during the toughest of economic times, a group of far-sighted civic leaders sought to preserve land in the Oakland and Berkeley hills. Their goal was to create a park district as part of the community, one that retained a balance of recreation opportunities and wilderness features, ideas unheard of at the time.

In the late 1920s, thousands of acres of surplus watershed land became available for development, and it was this land that formed the basis of the district. In 1934, in the depths of the Great Depression, mem-

bers of a grass-roots land preservation movement placed a measure on the ballot—It passed by a resounding 71%, creating the first regional park agency in the nation, the East Bay Regional Park District.

Elbert Vail was hired as the District's first general manager. With six new park employees hired and with funding in place, work on the new



Komorous-Towey Architects

RESTORED PARAPETS and pilasters at 66 Franklin St.

parks began using Civilian Conservation Corps crews, Works Progress Administration crews, and private contractors. A CCC camp at Tilden provided housing for the crews, and in an amazingly short two-year period, Tilden and Temescal were ready for public use. The first acquisition of EBMUD land for Redwood Park occurred in 1939, and the District's fourth park opened the following year.

When the WPA, CCC workers, and park employees joined the war effort, the four new parks were left under leaving "caretaker" operation for the next three years. However, District parks provided recreational facilities for the military and residents working in local war-related industries. The Army leased the Tilden camp for use as a training facility. The Army Defense Command also leased 500 acres at the south end of Tilden where an early warning Regional Radar Center was constructed, with housing and support facilities for 500 soldiers to monitor aircraft and ship movement along the central California Coast. The East Bay Regional Park is the largest regional park district in the nation.

EDUCATION

Reading History: Temescal Branch Library Celebrates 90 Years. Sally Bean, Temescal Branch Manager. The Temescal Branch Library opened in north Oakland in 1918. It is the only surviving Carnegie-endowed library in California designed in a Tudor Revival style. It is an Oakland landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In honor of its 90th birthday, branch manager Sally Bean, staff and volunteers organized a celebration with a series of displays and activities.

The focal point was a history exhibit researched and designed by volunteers



RED CARPET ACTION at the Fox Theater grand opening gala.



Martha Bergmann and Jeff Norman. Using an innovative, free-standing portable display system, the exhibit incorporated archival photos, maps, narrative highlights and quotations to trace the library's history. Many of the materials from the exhibit were from the Oakland History Room and Shared Ground archives, through which Martha and Jeff searched and sifted. To date, hundreds of people have viewed the exhibit and the exhibit will now travel to other libraries and municipal sites, including City Hall.

Waterfront History Map: Sandra Threlfall, Executive Director, Waterfront Action. The online Waterfront History Map, begun in July 2008, is an educational resource about the history of the Oakland and Alameda waterfront. It captures, preserves, and publishes historic content about the waterfront from two key sources: The Oakland Museum of California's 1996-97 exhibit: *A Walk Along the Water, Oakland's Dynamic Waterfront*, which was curated by Deborah Cooper, and the interpretive historical markers developed and installed by the city of Oakland to enhance the Bay Trail.

The Waterfront Map required digitalizing content from both these sources, organizing it



JIM HEILBRONNER, LEFT, AND PHIL TAGAMI of the Fox Oakland restoration project, outside Chapel of the Chimes at the PIP awards ceremony.

into a map-oriented visual presentation, enhancing it with links to related historical resources available on the Internet, adding relevant updates and current photographs, and of course technical implementation.

Many local authors contributed material. The online map enhances the value of the original materials by providing an interactive format for the reader and by adding links to additional online materials and updates to give great depth on particular topics.

It is a valuable educational resource for those wishing to explore and better understand the Oakland/Alameda waterfront, found at www.waterfrontaction.org/history.

COMMERCIAL RESTORATION 1631 Telegraph Ave., RPR Architects.

Built in 1893, this 1631 Telegraph Ave. building is a good example of Romanesque architecture. As one of the older buildings in downtown Oakland, it has seen over a century of development and has undergone some pretty bad remodeling.

Over the years, the façade suffered many abuses. In the 1950s, someone thought it best to cover the original transom lights with plywood paneling. A few years later, when it became the "House of Wigs," a new storefront was added with a monotone paint scheme which resulted in further loss of historic details, especially the original Solomon-ic (spiral) Columns. The original terra cotta roof tiles had been replaced with asphalt tiles.

In 2006, RPR Architects was contracted by the city's Community and Economic Development Agency to restore the original façade. Brian Kendall, CEDA project manager, oversaw the process to ensure that the building's historic integrity was maintained. RPR served as the architectural lead and designers for the project, while Tek Kwang Construction painstakingly restored and reconstructed the façade. The project finished in 2007.

66 Franklin St., Komorous-Towey Architects. The former Haslett Warehouse was constructed in 1926 for the Lawrence Company, occupying a full city block. In 1959, a third of the building's east end facing Webster Street was demolished to make way for a trans-estuary tube over to Alameda. The Port of Oakland then remodeled the remaining portion of the old warehouse into a modern office and restaurant complex.

The original façade was covered with a metal skin with horizontal strip windows, completely obscuring the original façade. When the project began, Komorous-Towey Architects had no idea what the condition and extent of the original façade was. Fortunately the Port had the original building plans and KTA was able to push for a faithful restoration. The curtain wall was removed and a sympathetic façade, based on the original, was built in place of the demolished one.

KTA restored the remaining structure to reveal its original parapets, pilasters and alternating bays. New windows match the original design and feature multiple pans with metal sashes.

One challenge was to seismically strengthen the walls while not interfering with the building's original fenestration and rhythmic bays. The shear walls are screened from sight by window shades between the windows and new walls. Concrete was patched and repaired, or replaced to match the original. New windows and awnings were added at the ground level.

The original building showed how much care was once given to the architectural design of industrial buildings. This restoration is an excellent example of how treasures can hide behind unsympathetic facades. It acts as a link to the waterfront's past and because of its size serves as an architectural anchor to that end of Jack London Square.

CIVIC AND PUBLIC RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION

Historic East 18th Street Pier Reconstruction. Designed by prominent Oakland architect Walter Reed, the historic concrete boat landing at East 18th Street was part of improvements to Lake Merritt implemented by Mayor Frank K. Mott in 1908. Reed also designed the Municipal Boathouse and the Pergola. The pier is one of three architectural features that mark the inlets of the principal creeks into Lake Merritt. The other two features are the Pergola at the Trestle Glen arm of the lake, and a small seating area at the Glen Echo arm.

As the pier approached 100 years old, its structural elements had deteriorated significantly and key architectural elements had vanished. The stairway that descended to the

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water's edge had collapsed into the lake. The structural slab and support beams were spalling, and reinforcing steel corroded away. Decorative light fixtures had been removed decades earlier. Like the fate of the stairway, the remainder of the pier was in danger of complete collapse.

Complete reconstruction of the pier structure was necessary. Most of the decorative railings were saved and carefully restored. Using circa 1915 images from *Sunset Magazine* provided by Jim Ratliff, the elaborate decorative light fixtures were duplicated and re-cast. A decorative seven-foot-high wall facing Lakeshore Avenue was replaced. Following the Secretary of the Interior Guidelines for Historic Structures, and under the guidance of preservation architect Alan Dreyfuss, the pier has now been restored to its former elegance.

The East 18th Street boat landing is significant as part of the development of public amenities around Lake Merritt that transformed it into the jewel of downtown. It provides a vital connection to a seminal period in Oakland's history. It is also an important element in Lakeside Park, and is both a city and National Historical Landmark. The pier once again serves as a popular gathering place for those who enjoy Lake Merritt and is ready to thrive for another hundred years.

Oakland Fox Theater Restoration and Reuse. The Fox Oakland Theater opened in 1928. The San Francisco architectural firm of Weeks & Day designed the 76,100 sq. ft. theater. Oakland architect and builder Maury Diggs, who constructed the

entire facility, is frequently credited with having designed the two commercial wings. The theater's architecture—a mixture of Indian, Moorish and medieval styles—has been described, somewhat irreverently, as “one part Arab and three parts Hollywood hokum.”

The Fox Oakland restoration project was a dream for many people in Oakland from the time of its closing in the 1970s. In 1996, the city purchased the theater from Erma DeLucchi's family, who had bought it in 1978 to save it from demolition. In 1999, the city installed a new roof.

For many years, OHA advocated for the building. Eventually a committee of its members spun off to form an independent nonprofit called Friends of the Oakland Fox, headed by Pat Dedekian, with the objective of promoting the rehabilitation and reuse of the Fox Oakland Theater as a live performance venue.

The Redevelopment Agency, with a team led by Jeff Chew, funded restoration of the blade sign and marquee, even though after a feasibility study the theater had not yet found a path to a viable reuse.

Under the leadership, financial assistance and project management of Phil Tagami of CCG, working with Mayor Jerry Brown, City Council, and the Redevelopment Agency, the project began construction.

Mayor Brown, Mayor Dellums and City Council members, along with a great many delighted workers, planners, city

staff, supporters and participants, attended its opening in early 2009, a key component of a hoped-for Uptown renaissance.

The project required enormous effort from all the construction trades involved in its completion, entailing many specialized craftspeople and innovative responses to engineering and preservation challenges.

The project entailed restoring theater spaces and service areas; accommodating for reuse; updating all systems; observing ADA requirements; making accommodations for traveling productions; installing food and drink service areas; replacing terrazzo plaza areas; restoring and making new additions to office wings; converting these wings to school facilities . . . all the while adhering to tax credit program standards for National Register properties.

Currently the school space is occupied by Oakland School for the Arts, and the theater is managed and booked by Another Planet Entertainment.

Congratulations to all our winners! ■

OHA seeks volunteers

OHA is looking for summer volunteers to help with our walking tours and house tour. If you are interested, please contact our office at 763-9218 or email us at info@oaklandheritage.org.

Welcome to our new members!

OHA is pleased to welcome these newest members to our roster:
Richard Orlando, Esther Umezawa,
Gray Brechin, Todd Kerr,
Mark Christiansen, Diane Peers &
Steve Longwell

OHA is grateful for the generous support of its members.

Roy & Melinda Samuelson, Barbara Newcombe, John Sutter, Arthur Levy, Edward & Mary Phillips, Victor Smallberg, Alison Finlay, Deborah Hill, Russell Gates, James & Sandra Holst, Albert S. Dutra, Jr., Ann Steppan, Vicky K. Friedman, Suzanne Masuret, Marc Tamo, Judy & Fred Porta, Marcia & Jim Larsson, L. Thomas Frye, Naomi Schiff, Cynthia Mulholland, Matthew & Jane Gabel, Mrs. Eldien Kistner, Judith & Samuel Broude, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. White, Bruce & Candis Kerns, Romer Stevenson, Howard & Dorothy Stein, Joseph & Sandra Costa, Mary MacDonald, Victoria Wake, Bill & Suzanne Hellendale, William Yamaguchi & Mary Kanemoto, Richard Colvig, Amelia Marshall, Suzanne Ziegler, Mary Catherine Dino, Carol Sheerin & Joel Toste, Charles Chapman, Carol Strickman, Joseph B. Young, Annalee Allen, Philip Laing, Laurie McHatton Burke, Christopher Buckley, Emmi Govers, Huston Household, Barbara Sutherland, John Nelson, Suzanne Baker-Shoup, J. Elaine Macey, Alison Finlay, Dea Bacchetti, Michael F. Crowe

Landmarks Board meeting summaries

Following are summaries of the meetings of the city of Oakland's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board.

■ **Jan. 12, 2009:** Board saw presentation on Digital Scanning Technology used in planning rehabilitation of the historic **Key System Building** at 1100 Broadway by Steven Wolmark, SKS Investments, and Alan Dreyfuss, AIA, of Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates. The presentation demonstrated video visualization and walkthrough.

Board extensively discussed aspects of the **Central Business District zoning update** and provided comments for the proposed National Register designation of the Women's Athletic Club (**Bellevue Club**).

■ **March 9, 2009:** Board discussed planned modifications to the **Joaquin Miller homestead**, including restoring the stairs to the Abbey, a bridge and bench; painting the decorative sunburst over the entry; relocating the existing memorial plaque; installing new walkways and eight interpretive signs; and planting low-maintenance native vegetation.

The board heard about and made extensive comments on the proposed **green building standards**, which will include provisions affecting historic buildings. The discussion centered around how best to promote green building while encouraging the preservation of historic buildings, understanding the embodied energy and materials in the historic buildings, and ensuring that green building requirements do not provide incentives for demolition. The board held further discussions of the **CBD zoning update**, including consideration of potential view corridors. While view corridors are allowed for and discussed in Oakland's general plan, none have ever been designated.

■ **April 13, 2009:** No quorum, so meeting was held as a committee meeting. There was continued discussion of the proposed **green building ordinance**.

Board discussed revised demolition findings—an aspect of the **CBD zoning update**—with a view to clarifying and tightening the requirements for demolition of a historic resource or contributor in historic areas.

Report was made on alterations at the **Oakland Museum**, which a subcommittee is reviewing.

■ **May 11, 2009:** The board continued to discuss the proposed **green building ordinance**, and the **CBD zoning update**.

■ **New appointments:** Three new members are joining the board, all OHA members. **Anna Naruta** is an archaeologist currently working in a database project at the Presidio in San Francisco. Members may remember her key role in uncovering the history of the 19th-century uptown Chinatown, now the site of the Forest City Development at 20th and San Pablo. **Valerie Garry**, former OHA president with an extensive background in historic preservation, will leave the OHA board to take up the LPAB position. **Daniel Schulman** has a web marketing business located in the heart of the downtown National Register District. LPAB watchers enthusiastically welcome the new members, and the improved ability of the LPAB to sustain a quorum. ■



HOW WILL OAKLAND'S downtown National Register District be protected?

Christopher Buckley

Friend of preservation, Peggy Stinnett dies

By Naomi Schiff

Peggy Stinnett, longtime OHA member, friend of preservation, and prominent journalist, has died. Her journalism career started in 1942, and she continued to write until very recently! With a fearless willingness to address any issue, she was outspoken and sometimes startled her readers. For example, writing in 2006 about the Oak to Ninth project, which had been covered fairly positively by her own paper, the *Oakland Tribune*, she wrote: "This deal could become one of the city's most devastating financial blunders since the days of Horace Carpentier."

And people paid attention. In 2005, as OHA went to bat for Oakland Tech, she wrote:

"Oakland public schools are eligible for \$12.9 million in state school modernization funds for renovating Technical High School, 60 percent of the estimated cost of a major project to spruce up the historic building. But State Administrator Randolph Ward hasn't applied for the money—not yet.

"After I wrote about the wooden windows being replaced by aluminum at the historic high school, a landmark on upper Broadway, I learned about the availability of state funds for which Oakland is eligible but has not submitted an application. Roxanna Saravia, project manager for the Office of Public Schools Construction, said Oakland schools have established eligibility for modernizing the building. If they apply for the costs of renewing Technical High—not just the windows but the whole project, estimated at \$26.5 million—the state will pay 60 percent of the cost.

"But so far, no application."

With a sense of history informing many of her articles and columns, Peggy and her husband, longtime *Tribune* photographer Robert Stinnett, have for decades been key gadflies, reporters, informants, contributors to civic discourse, and loyal supporters of their beloved Oakland.

We will miss Peggy, and we send our warmest condolences to Robert. ■



Report from the Preservation Action Committee

Libraries and parks feel crunch

By Naomi Schiff

Here are some of the projects OHA's Preservation Action Committee has been monitoring recently.

Central Business District Rezoning: Oakland's downtown zoning update is moving on, with a hearing at the CEDA committee on June 23. OHA will advocate more protection for historic resources, the establishment of key view corridors, and withholding final approval of the zoning update until proposed revised demolition regulations also move forward to the Council. OHA members should contact their city councilmember to express concern for historic buildings, and

potential bullet as several councilmembers expressed support for keeping it open. The mayoral budget proposal initially suggested "pairing" and reducing service at six branch libraries, including three Carnegie libraries renovated in recent years, but public outcry appears to be making headway in convincing the Council that all branches should remain open equally. Community members insist that all branches remain open five days a week.

Parks & Recreation budget cuts: With the dire budget situation both in the state and in the city, park services in Oakland are severely threatened. While it looks as though the

staff may once again be drastically cut, hard times often lead to increased local park usage, as people cancel vacations. Citizens are mobilizing to try to take up some of the slack as park volunteers, but it will require a

very widespread effort to keep weeds and trash from becoming more prevalent. There is no way to compensate fully for the loss of experienced and equipped staff.

Lake Merritt BART Area Study: Chinatown is within the area now being reviewed under a specific area study for the Lake Merritt BART station environs, including two large areas of historic properties. Public meetings are being held, and a consultant hired by the city is collecting information. While it is still unclear what the ultimate goal of the study will be, it was initially called a Specific Plan, which would guide zoning regulations. OHA is looking for people to participate in the meetings; please contact our office. In addition to preservation, discussions will include how much high-rise development should occur in the area, what types of housing are contemplated, traffic effects,

parks, other civic amenities, and retail and commercial development.

Old Rectory to be saved? Tentative plans appear to show a possible reuse of the old brick rectory adjoining the site of the now-demolished Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales (1893) that stood near the intersection of San Pablo and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Once the social service center operating on the property was relocated, the Diocese of Oakland made the site available for development.

Zoning updates all over: Will they affect your home or workplace? OHA is participating in three technical advisory committees: one for the Broadway/Auto Row planning study, one for the citywide residential zoning update, and one for the citywide commercial zoning update. If you are interested in any of these, view the links on the city's website, or contact the OHA office and we will put you in touch with members who are monitoring these meetings and planning efforts.

St. Joseph's plans revised: A housing development by Bridge Housing at St. Joseph's on International Boulevard near Fruitvale will preserve the original historic building, the related historic laundry building, and a long brick enclosing wall. In pursuing historic tax credits, the designs for Phase II, new construction toward 12th Street from the old building, have now been reconfigured, and are headed to the planning commission for approval. The Park Service requested that the new buildings step down to allow clearer views of the old structure, as seen from the BART tracks and 12th Street. In the meantime, economic conditions changed the Phase II from for-sale to leased affordable units, so that the unit size also was changed. Current plans also now preserve a small historic utility building that will be used as a community facility. The plans preserve landmark palm trees and a huge star pine on the site. ■

John Klein



SHOULD OAKLAND ESTABLISH VIEW CORRIDORS? City Hall and the Tribune Tower are visible from the 18th Street Pier.

attend scheduled meetings, which will include a hearing at the full council. Key issues include increased protections for Areas of Primary Importance and Areas of Secondary Importance in the downtown area, and ensuring that there are not large incentives for demolition of historic buildings in favor of higher-rise construction. Working with longtime OHA member and former city of Oakland planner Chris Buckley, OHA found that we have ample potential high-rise sites to accommodate a large number of future projects without endangering historic resources.

OHA will show that Oakland could set aside as much high-rise-zoned area as exists in San Francisco without touching our API and ASI resources.

Libraries facing budget cuts: The Oakland History Room appears to have dodged a

Calling all Althenheimers!

Althenheim Association president Michael Willis writes: "Aug. 15 is the 100th anniversary of the Althenheim's 'new' building after the first one burned. We are trying to find original members of the Althenheim Association to invite them to the fest." If you have been a member, or know of someone who has been involved in the association, have useful anecdotes or materials, or know someone who should be in touch, please contact mwillis@mwaarchitects.com.



Oakland History Room an invaluable resource that may see changes

By Erika Mailman

The idea of an Oakland History Room was sort of charming to me. It felt like going to the museum of tungsten or the world's third largest ball of string.

So says novelist Glen David Gold in his essay "The History That Might Have Been." Lured to the History Room as a lunch hour timekiller while on jury duty nearby, Gold found the seeds for what would become his bestselling novel *Carter Beats the Devil*.

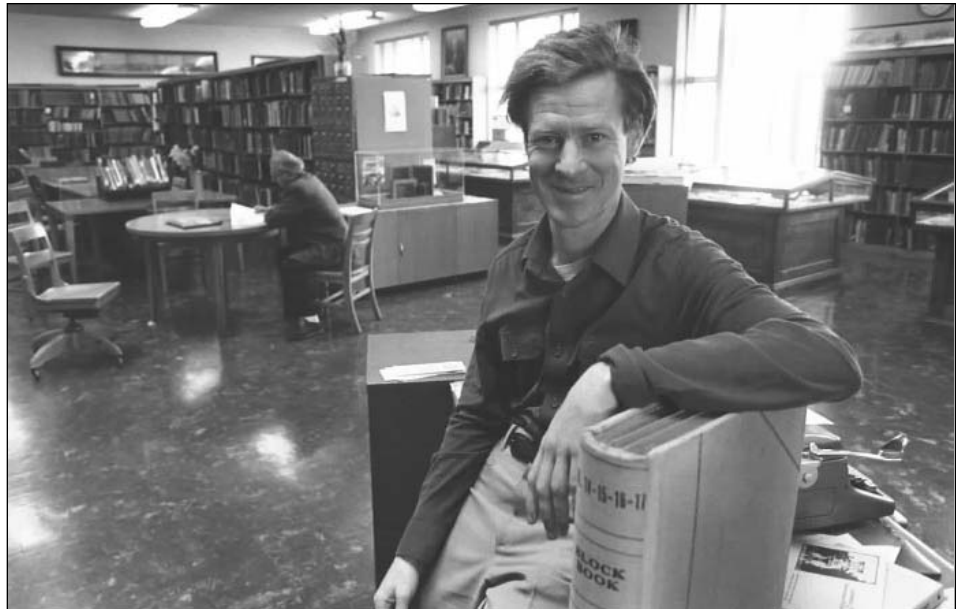
The rich offerings of the room, located on the third floor of the main library, have allowed people to research their own homes, examine photographs of the city dating back hundreds of years, write graduate theses and newspaper articles, and maybe even just drift off a little into the pleasant haze of long ago. City employees use the room to research Environmental Impact Reports, without which civic growth would not be possible.

"Without the resources provided by [History Room librarian Steve] Lavoie and staff, I certainly wouldn't have finished my graduating manuscript," says Patsy Eagan, who earned an MFA from the University of Pittsburgh last year with an essay collection about Oakland. "Steve Lavoie helped me find out a bit about streetcars, as my great-grandfather was a conductor on the Key System."

Bob Commanday, who was the *San Francisco Chronicle's* music and dance critic for 30 years, is currently using the History Room to research a book on the area's cultural history. He points out that knowing a city's history is "necessary and important" to developing pride in it. He says the OHR has a "particularly fine collection of materials, very significant resources. It's well-curated, the librarians are a fine help, and it's a treasure."

My own gratitude to the OHR is mammoth. Without perusing its shelves one day, I would never have seen the nonfiction book that led to my first novel, *Woman of Ill Fame*. And it has made possible my 10 years of writing history columns for the *Montclairion*, and the release of my two nonfiction books on Oakland history.

In March when history lovers saw the city's preliminary budget, they worried the room might not be so welcoming. The room



BILL STURM gets cosy with a block book in the History Room, circa 1980s.

might only be open by appointment, rather than its current schedule mirroring the open hours of the main library as a whole.

Carolyn Storm of the East Bay Genealogical Society says, "We use [the History Room] quite often to answer inquiries from persons out of town doing research on former Oakland residents and our members use the OHR quite often for their own research. To have to make an appointment to visit the room and perhaps not get someone on duty that is familiar with its contents would almost be a waste of time!"

The Friends of the Oakland History Room quickly formed to protest the proposed closure, and even though the current, revised budget leaves the room untouched, the members are still wary. "I can't imagine such a resource getting scrapped from the library budget!" says Eagan.

Especially galling to those who love the History Room is the fact that a significant donation earmarked for it never made its way there. The Ebell Society donated \$50,000 to the room in 2001, through the Oakland Public Library Foundation. The gift was made when the Ebell Society disbanded and was timed to honor longtime librarian Bill Sturm's retirement. The Foundation dissolved in 2005, and the money was lost in the swirl.

"As part of the dissolution process, remaining assets of the OPLF were distributed to The Friends of the Oakland Public Library. The assets ultimately transferred to FOPL were far less than the sum of special donations such as that for the Oakland History Room. The dissolution process removed any restrictions on the remaining assets. As a practical matter, it would be impossible to identify if any of the remaining funds were originally donated by the Ebell Society," says Kathleen Hirooka, the library's community relations coordinator.

Local artist, author and community organizer Jeff Norman says, "Oakland has no city history museum. The Oakland History Room is it. It's not only a repository for a diverse range of collections that have been donated by individuals, families, and organizations over the decades, but it's where many important local government records eventually wind up . . . The Oakland History Room is a misnomer. It should be called the Oakland History Center. To begin with, it's more than one room. More importantly, the term 'room' doesn't begin to describe the array of resources it organizes and makes available to the public."

If you've never personally experienced the History Room, the Friends are hoping to

See **HISTORY ROOM** on page 11



The Parkway Revisited: Updates on the Salvation of an Institution

By Peter Prato

As I write this, it's been 59 days since the Parkway Speakeasy Theater closed its doors to the public. I know this because the internal website we, the members of www.iliketheparkway.com, created to stay organized has a counter to remind us how long we've been without the institution that brought us together. It also reminds us how long we've been committed to resuscitating the pulse of that institution.

There will be changes, some of which will be very painful for some: most notably, the Fischers, who ran the theater, and Will Viharo, who created a legendary line-up of films upon which the theater's cult personality was built. We owe them a great deal of thanks.

Currently, there are investors in talks with the landlords. The landlords have been supportive of our work and are amenable to a theater reopening in the space. I have spoken to Republic Theatres

investors, and they want our leadership to help create a council to represent the community. Our group remains committed to three things: strengthening our community, reopening the theater in the spirit of the Parkway, and improving Oakland. We have not yet officially endorsed these investors.

We founded our organization on the same principle by which the theater was run—community. My role as a community organizer has been to bring people together. With the help of a group of extremely dedicated people, I can say that we gained the support of Pat Kernighan, District 2 Councilmember; Oaklandish; the Lake Merritt Business Association; and local community groups such as The Lake People. I can say that we're working together to show outdoor movies and throw barbecues. And I can say the names of people I didn't previously know and call them friends.

An article on *Oaklander Online* points out that the restructured theater "could be a model in sustainability." It definitely requires renovations. Here we have an opportunity to lessen our impact on the environment by allowing the building to function more efficiently, using cleaner energy such as solar cells on the roof. Other local businesses can benefit, whether they are producing the food that is cooked in the kitchen, or providing the furniture and appliances used in the theater. The new and improved Parkway can represent the community all the way down to its bones.

The Parkway has closed its doors several times. When it reopens them the next time, it won't be just for the community, it will be because of the community. ■

Peter Prato is an Oakland resident and founding member of www.iliketheparkway.com.

It's summer: that means walking tour season!

As if having a full roster of walking tours every Saturday and Sunday from July 11 through the end of August (and then picking up again for two weekends in September) wasn't *enough*, OHA has added no less than six brand-new tours this year. This is our 29th year of annual tours.

The new tours are: the Fox Oakland Theater and Uptown Art Deco, the Bungalows of Fairview Park, Rezoning: Fac-

ing Oakland's Future, Walking the Key System's C Line, Stroll a Transformed Shoreline, and Oakland's Historic Town Squares.

Each of these tours requires hours of research and planning by the volunteer leaders; it's a labor of love for them.

OHA credits the resources of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey and the Oakland History Room for providing materials for these tour guides to study.

Of course, old favorites such as the tours of Borax Smith's estate, Mountain View Cemetery and Oakland's Chinatown—and the rugged hike in Leona Heights—are back by popular demand. Some of the walks are easy and level; others are more strenuous.

Check your mail for a brochure coming soon that outlines the details and dates for each of the 20 different tours. Some tours will require advance registration and are limited to a certain number of par-

ticipants, so make sure to read your mailer as soon as it arrives.

Members pay \$10 for the tours, or may purchase a five-tour pass for \$40. If you renew your membership on the day of the tour (or show up as a brand-new member), that tour is free. Non-members pay \$15. More info is at oaklandheritage.org. ■

Erika Mailman



EXPLORE MIDDLE HARBOR SHORELINE PARK at the *Rail Meets Water: Then and Now* tour, Saturday, Aug. 22, led by Celia McCarthy.

Save the date!

This fall, frolic in Fernwood!

Tucked in the hills in a verdant little spot is Oakland's charming Fernwood neighborhood. Mark your calendar for Sunday, Oct. 4, 2009.

From 1 to 5:30 p.m., join us as we tour a collection of unique, quirky, and elegant homes in a woodsy setting, hidden away in plain view. A wealth of historical and architectural information and a festive outdoor reception are included in your ticket. To volunteer, call 763-9218.



Think green when approaching restoration

By Dea Bacchetti, *President*

Congratulations to all 2009 Partners in Preservation Award winners this year! We had a great turnout at our awards ceremony on May 14 and a wonderfully diverse group of projects, people and organizations to honor. Thank you to all the PIP winners for your efforts to keep Oakland a vibrant and diverse city while honoring our history. Special thanks to the Chapel of the Chimes for donating event space and to our PIP committee for creating this exciting event.

The terms “green” and “sustainable” have been the rage lately. Historic preservation is one of the original green, sustainable activities. Fixing up old houses and bringing long-abandoned buildings back into service is an excellent way to reduce our carbon footprint. Retaining building materials reduces construction and demolition debris, produces less hazardous material debris and decreases the need for new building materials (including the energy required to produce and transport new materials).

Don’t forget that often these older buildings have materials and ornaments that are not affordable in today’s economic climate, are not readily available, or are not as durable, such as old growth wood.

According to the National Trust, historic preservation can also be a tool for economic development and job creation. They estimate historic preservation is 20 to 40 percent more labor intensive than new construction thus creating more jobs while it continually generates more than a dollar return on each dollar invested. So there you have it: preservation not only is green and sustainable, but it is also good for our economy!

In OHA’s ongoing efforts to conserve our resources, we would like to offer for the first time the opportunity to receive our newsletter and other communications via email in lieu of a printed copy. We have been exploring this possibility for a while. By choosing this option, not only will you save some trees, but you will also help us to save on increasing printing and postage costs to ensure that we can continue to offer our programs and services. Please contact Chela Zitani, Administrative Director, either via email at info@oaklandheritage.org or by phone at 763-9218, if you would like to opt out of printed material.

Last but not least, we would like to express heartfelt thanks to Wycliffe DeLong and the DeLong Sweet Foundation for your generous donation last month and your continued support of our organization. ■

History Room

Continued from page 9

make the space more inviting. One of their five goals from the Mission Statement drafted by Lavoie is, “to expand capacity for public access to the materials in the Oakland History Room, forming strategic collaborations as a means to broaden the scope of services to the community, utilizing appropriate technology to deliver those services.”

That technology is already happening, as part of the photographic collection is now digitized and available on the library’s website. The Friends want to make history meaningful and accessible, through the agent of the History Room. History isn’t just about horse-drawn carriages and beaver hats, it’s about how people coped with their world. Those are lessons we can still learn from.

I’ll close with the words of former OHR librarian Bill Sturm, “The Oakland History Room is Oakland’s memory. It is the repository of the city’s history, the life and times of its people, and the past and present of its neighborhoods. The great panorama of Oakland’s social, cultural, economic, and political life is fully documented in the Room’s rich collection. Nowhere else may one find so much about the city’s past. The room is Oakland’s memory—and also its legacy.” ■

CONTRIBUTORS: Dea Bacchetti, Kevin F. Dwyer, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Valerie Garry, Peter Prato, Naomi Schiff, Chela Zitani
PRODUCTION: Erika Mailman

OHA News welcomes contributions: research projects large or small, historic photos and reports on preservation issues or events. Send to news@oaklandheritage.org.

MISSION STATEMENT: OHA is a nonprofit membership organization which advocates the protection, preservation and revitalization of Oakland’s architectural, historic, cultural and natural resources through publications, education, and direct action.

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- Dea Bacchetti, *President*
- Doug Dove, *Vice President and Treasurer*
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- Michael Crowe, Kevin Dwyer, Alison Finlay, Katherine Hughes, Naomi Schiff



OHA membership keeps you informed, helps make our city more livable, and puts you in touch with our many events. It makes a wonderful gift, too!

- \$45 Cornerstone** (individual): newsletter, advance notice and discounted pricing on programs, events and tours.
- \$65 Pilaster** (household): same as above, for two.
- \$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

- I'd like to contribute _____ to the OHA Leadership Fund, and help assure the future of historic preservation in Oakland.

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, Zip _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____

Email _____

Send your check to:
Oakland Heritage Alliance,
446 17th St., Suite 301
Oakland, CA 94612
or go to
www.oaklandheritage.org.
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Oakland New Century Club

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

The broom-wielding young ladies pictured here were featured in the First Annual Greeting of the Oakland New Century Club. One of many Oakland clubs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that harnessed women's energy to do good works, this club focused its effort on the poor of Oakland Point.

The Oakland New Century Club had its genesis in the West Oakland Free Kindergarten, begun in 1886 by Elizabeth Betts, an idealistic young woman who had trained under kindergarten pioneer Kate Douglas Wiggin at the California Kindergarten Training School in San Francisco. Betts saw need in the remotest part of West Oakland and rented rooms for her kindergarten in a building, reputedly a former saloon, at Peralta and Pacific Streets, about a block from the Southern Pacific yards. At first, Betts supported her kindergarten through small donations received from other local women who admired her work. In 1888, those donors, led by Mrs. H.H. Rice, organized the West Oakland Free Kindergarten Association for the purpose of managing the school and raising money for its support. The association soon recruited Elizabeth Dewey Watt to its membership. The wife of a prominent San Francisco banker, Watt quickly assumed leadership with tireless energy and great generosity.

In response to the social turmoil created by the depression of 1893 and taking Jane Addams's Chicago Hull House as a model, Watt led the philanthropic ladies of the Free Kindergarten Association to add social settlement work to the kindergarten's effort. They

began a sewing school, Mothers' Meeting, and Boys' Club, drawing the families of the little scholars to the newly-organized West Oakland Settlement. It emphasized Americanization, recreation, and vocational education: the "Broom Brigade"

shown here was being trained for domestic service in the Settlement's housekeeping classes for girls. The Settlement also hosted a "Salvage Bureau," an early thrift shop in which the discards of the well-to-do were sold at low price to the residents of the Point. As Settlement efforts grew in scope, larger quarters were rented about a block away at Peralta and Atlantic Streets; the kindergarten moved there, too.

In 1900, the ladies who managed the kindergarten and the West Oakland Settlement incorporated as the Oakland New Century Club to enable them to purchase their rented site, which they did in 1905. Other free kindergartens and settlements were conducted in Oakland during these decades but what set this club apart was its commitment to non-sectarianism and racial integration.

As time went on, the club recognized the need to provide recreational opportunities in Oakland Point and added a lending library and reading room, and carpentry and gymnastics classes. In 1911, the club built a gym



THE BROOM BRIGADE of the Oakland New Century Club.

and began pressing the city's new Parks Commission for an adjacent playground.

In January 1923, the club sold its land and buildings to the city for one dollar, giving rise to the city-run New Century Recreation Center. Two months later, the club realized its long-held goal of a playground when the Recreation Department finally built one for the children of Oakland Point.

The club continued to operate out of the Settlement site after turning the property over to the city, its interest turning to other social benevolence including a day nursery and a well-baby clinic. After continuing its philanthropic work for more than five decades, the club disbanded in 1954. The New Century Recreation Center that it gave birth to lived only five years longer, closing in 1959 when the site was slated for demolition to make way for the West Oakland post office complex. Today, the former site of so much good work lies under a parking lot for postal delivery trailers. ■