

## Get a piece of the rock at the Rockridge House Tour

By Michael Crowe

Our 2010 "A Slice of Rockridge" tour focuses on a quite remarkable area of Rockridge, once part of the vast landholdings of Vicente Peralta known as Rancho San Antonio. Peralta sold off portions of the area in 1850 to John Coffee Hays and the Livermore brothers, Horatio and Charles. Hays named his estate at the eastern end of the area, Fernwood. This holding in the Montclair section was the subject of the house tour last year.

Mrs. Horatio Livermore named her family's holding "Rockridge" because of the large outcroppings of petrified lava and limestone. The family called this formation "Big Rock." Although this land feature was blasted away long ago, a remnant may still be seen near the present-day intersection of Bowling and Glenbrook drives in Claremont Pines. The estates were built on land that still had portions of old-growth redwoods and oak trees. Temescal Creek flowed across the area and added a bucolic feel to an area well outside the city limits of Oakland. The elevation of the land also offered views of the Golden Gate and the city of Oakland, four miles away.

Our house tour looks at a portion of the larger Rockridge area, cut off when Highway 24 and BART were constructed. A few historic houses were demolished and several streets became dead ends. The city of Berkeley forms the western boundary. The northern curving section of Chabot Road forms the north, and College Avenue the south, boundaries of this "slice." Although separated from the rest of Rockridge, it is no less historic. There were several large estate complexes built on it during the last quarter of the 19th century.

One of the large estates existed near the intersection of Chabot Road and Ross Street, in the area termed Pagoda Hill. It was so named by J. Ross Browne to acknowledge his love of the orient and his travels there. He was an ambassador

to China and wrote articles for *Harper's Weekly*. (Sadly, there was no actual pagoda on Pagoda Hill.) The main house no longer stands but was described as an exotic mixture of architectural elements such as a Moscow cupola, Chinese gateway, Moorish dome and French roof. The house at 6446 Harwood is built on the former estate grounds.

Another estate was Roselawn, the home of John Commigers Ainsworth, a retired Mississippi steamboat captain and railroad builder. Roselawn stood along Chabot Road in the vicinity of Ross and Ivanhoe. Its 14.5 acres offered more than a dozen structures, including a two-story residence, a spectacular glazed conservatory, several greenhouses, a billiard hall, several factory buildings, and an office. The gardens featured statuary, a stone grotto, and a shell-shaped summerhouse. Landscaping included palm trees which can still be seen at 5809 Ivanhoe. This is good example of the "misplaced" palm tree. Palm trees in unlikely locations often are the reminders of a lost estate or its gardens. The original gazebo is still extant.

Another example of a lost estate is Brougner's (Brewer) Castle. This large two and half story house had a tower with a machicolated cornice, hence the name.



Joyce Berna

**THIS UNUSUAL CRAFTSMAN HOME** on Chabot Road narrowly escaped the Hills fire. It is a superb example of the work of Bernard Maybeck, notably for use of color on a shingle residence.

Henry Calvin Brougner built the 10-room house in 1905 on Rockwell Street near Harwood. He was president of Tonopah Divide Mine in Nevada and director of the Bank of Italy's Broadway branch in downtown Oakland.

The house was made of cast stone, a new product at the time. The process gave the appearance of stone but was really concrete cast in a mold, being far more economical. Brougner's holdings included the land between Chabot Road and Florio Street. The portion of Ivanhoe Street in this area was named Elsie Street, in honor of his wife, Elsie Belle.

Towards his later years, Brougner began selling off lots to provide income. His brother and an associate built on two of

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## Rockridge

Continued from page 1

these lots. Their distinctive brick houses can still be seen at the intersection of Harwood and Rockwell streets. Henry and Elsie had one daughter, also named Elsie Belle. He died in 1922 leaving a wife 33 years his junior. She later remarried, to a physician from Berkeley. They were tragically killed in 1929 in an automobile accident near Hayward, shortly after their first anniversary. Soon after, the house was demolished and the two houses at 6021 and 6033 Rockwell were built. The palm tree visible behind the house at 6021 Rockwell is probably a remnant of the estate's garden.

While the story of the Brouger estate ended in tragedy, Brookhurst's tale is no less intriguing with shades of romance and love. When the estate was bought in 1931 by the Dominican Order for use as St Albert Priory and College, it was the last remaining intact estate. Its story starts with Raymond Perry, who was from Canada, and Winifred Annette Connor of Michigan. They met in Los Angeles. Perry, despite the lack of a formal education, built up a most prosperous dredging business in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. It was on one of these trips to the Bay Area that Raymond rowed Winifred across Lake Merritt and proposed under a full moon in August 1890. They soon married and initially made their home in Oakland with Winifred's father. In 1905, they assembled several lots in the Rose Lawn Park area, which was the former Roselawn estate of John Commigers Ainsworth.

They built their home, designed by J. Cather Newsom, for the princely sum of \$25,000. The red brick house had a vaguely English feel because of Tudor arches at the entry porch and the porte cochere, a steeply pitched roof with prominent dormers, brick quoins, and soldier course brick arches over the doors and windows. The red brick entry gates still remain at the Chabot Road entrance to St. Albert Priory.

The Perrys were gracious hosts from 1905 to 1920, using the house and its grounds for entertainment that was duti-

fully reported in the *Oakland Tribune*. Mrs. Perry was a trained violinist and had given concerts with her sister, Nell when she lived in Los Angeles. The Perrys had one daughter, Aloha.

This life came to an unhappy end. Winifred and Aloha departed for a world tour in June 1923, to celebrate Aloha's 14th birthday and her graduation from Claremont Grammar School. Mr. Perry, who also had a significant dredging business in New York, would join them there and in London. Winifred and Aloha would go on alone to tour Europe

## An extraordinary character: our own J. Ross Browne

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

This month's "Slice of Rockridge" house tour cuts into Pagoda Hill, the estate of 19th-century lecturer, humorist, travel writer, government agent, diplomat, and muckraker J. Ross Browne.

Born in Beggar's Bush, Ireland, in 1821, Browne was the son of Thomas Egerton Browne, a journalist and a Protestant. The elder Browne's inflammatory writings on the British tithe led in 1833 to his being sentenced to a year in prison and a fine of 100 pounds. Intervention from friends commuted his sentence to voluntary exile from Ireland. Thus J. Ross Browne immigrated to America with his parents and siblings. They settled in Louisville, Kentucky, where the elder Brownes opened a school for girls. J. Ross Browne's own formal education probably didn't extend much beyond the age of 13, though he was an avid reader and lifelong autodidact. *Robinson Crusoe* was reportedly his favorite book, creating in the boy a love of adventure and a taste for travel.

Browne packed a tremendous amount of life into his 54 years. At around the age of 17, he and a friend took a "ramble" for several months, hiring on as flatboat hands and, between boat and foot, travelling through roughly 2,200 miles of the United States, from Louisville to New Orleans and into Texas. While journeying, Browne taught himself shorthand, leading to work in Wash-



**J. ROSS BROWNE's** self-portrait from one of his Southwestern travel books.

ington, D.C., as a stenographer and reporter. Shortly tiring of that work and determined to see the world, he shipped out in 1842 on a New Bedford whaler and later published an account of his adventures in *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, illustrated with his own sketches. Back on dry land, he briefly attended medical school, the inspiration for another book, *Confessions of a Quack*.

In 1844, married and with a family to support, Browne became private secretary to Robert J. Walker, Secretary of the Treasury under President Polk. But in 1849, itchy for travel again and, according to his daughter's memoir, "stirred up by the California excitement," he secured an appointment from Walker to the revenue service. Once he reached California, he found that the prom-

See **J. ROSS BROWNE** on page 3

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and Egypt before departing for India. Alas, tragedy struck. Winifred succumbed to pneumonia in Jaipur, India, in March 1924.

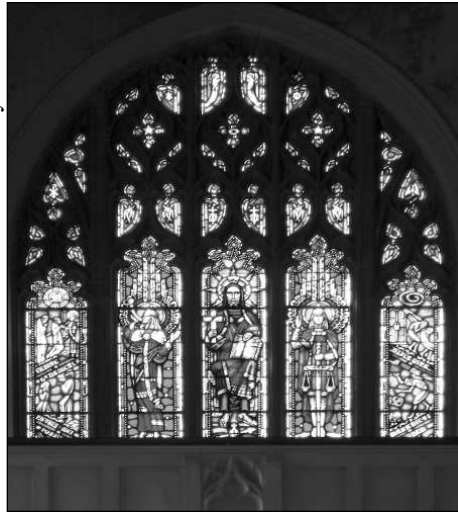
The doors of Brookhurst were closed. Mr. Perry remarried in 1926, moved to New York, and left the estate to Aloha. She lived with her aunt in Oakland until her marriage to Paul Browne in 1929.

As previously mentioned, the Dominicans bought the estate in 1931. They lived in the main house and soon began adding buildings to the grounds to accommodate the growing religious community and college. They restored the neglected grounds and added features to the garden, including bridges over Temescal Creek, which freely flows behind the buildings.

In addition to the construction of Highway 24 and BART, the neighborhood has suffered another tragedy. The Hills Fire of 1991 burned down to Chabot Road. Several homes burned, including two on either side of the house at 7101 Chabot, which is on the house tour. The house at 7133 Chabot Road, designed by Bernard Maybeck, was also saved through the diligence of the Oakland Fire Department.

Although the neighborhood has changed over time, it remains a vibrant area of Oakland. The house tour will highlight

Joyce Benna



**OUR TOUR** presents a rare opportunity to see the St. Albert Priory chapel and cloister. The chapel has stained glass windows by craftswoman Willemina Ogterop.

the numerous historic resources that still remain, giving the neighborhood its distinctive character. The Priory and the tour houses are unique and make up a distinctive addition to Oakland's rich history.

*Michael Crowe wishes to acknowledge material provided by Jennifer Dowling, Kathryn Hughes, Fr. Christopher Renz, OP, and the OHA archives. ■*

## J. Ross Browne

*Continued from page 2*

ised position had been abolished and he was jobless. His shorthand skills proved valuable, though, and in November he secured the job of secretary to the California constitutional convention, later publishing his reports. The \$10,000 he was paid for this work supported further travel to Europe and the Holy Land. He published accounts of his travels as he went along, dispatching them as a correspondent for the *National Intelligencer*. By the early 1850s, Browne was the foremost writer on travels in America, and the most popular, too, until Mark Twain published *The Innocents Abroad*.

Browne returned to government service in Washington in 1852, working as a revenue agent in the western states and territories, and later as a "confidential agent" reporting on Indian affairs and custom house activities on the Pacific Coast.

In 1855, he brought his family here from Washington, D.C., but Pagoda Hill was not their first Oakland home. The Brownes lived on Jackson Street between 4th and 5th streets, on a 12-acre property that stretched down to the estuary. In the late 1860s, Browne became engaged in a lengthy title dispute with the notorious Horace Carpentier. In the end he paid Carpentier \$1,500, borrowing money to do so, to clear the title to his property.

In letters to his wife, Browne made it clear that he knew Carpentier was cheating him but saw no alternative but to buy him off in order to avoid future litigation. At the same time, Browne had begun to accumulate the property in rural Temescal that later became Pagoda Hill.

He took a break from government service between 1860 and 1866, travelling and writing from all over Europe and the southwestern territories of the U.S. By the late 1860s, Browne was employed by the government again, this time surveying our country's mineral resources. In 1868, President Johnson appointed him U.S. Minister to China, an appointment that was rescinded the following year when Johnson was succeeded by President Grant.

*See J. ROSS BROWNE on page 4*

Joyce Benna



**BUILT IN 1916, THIS HOUSE** is a rare local example of the Prairie Style, with unusual features on both the exterior and interior.



## Report from the Preservation Action Committee

# New zoning measures pass unanimously

By Naomi Schiff

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

**City Council kind to zoning measures:** On July 6, two ordinances that will affect historic buildings passed unanimously at the City Council. One institutes green building standards for the city, and uses a point system to rank building projects. The system will award extra points for the retention of historic structures, in recognition that reusing an existing building is in itself a green approach; reused buildings embody all the materials used in their construction, as well as the labor, transportation, and energy used in their original construction. Too, the reuse of existing structures keeps material out of waste facilities and reduces the amount of debris hauling entailed in a project. Separate standards for large commercial and for smaller residential projects should mean that the regulations will not impede small updates and improvements.

The second ordinance establishes new protocols for any proposal to partially or

entirely demolish a historic structure. The tiered structure puts more stringent requirements on buildings with higher ratings in the Oakland Cultural Resources Survey, and lesser requirements on those with more modest rankings.

Working with Landmarks Board, staff, and developer groups, OHA worked to ensure that when a demolition is proposed, the project can be thoroughly evaluated early in the process, avoiding some of the controversy that has arisen in such cases in the past. A prime example of such a controversy was the Courthouse Athletic Club demolition, but examples stretch long into the past, in which demolitions occurred or were only narrowly averted after late realization or reluctant admission by property owners that they might be demolishing buildings of importance.

Despite the existence of our Historic Preservation Element, no clear path was articulated for how to frame the discussion, especially in cases where no EIR was required under state regulation. The new ordinance attempts to assure that qualified, impartial experts will be key participants in



**THE HISTORIC PLAQUE** design we may see more of in the future.

such evaluations, so that decision makers will have reliable information as they weigh in on development decisions. While this will not provide total protection for historic properties, it will go quite a long way in helping to evaluate the importance of existing structures in the context of new development.

**Upcoming worries?** Recent inquiries have raised concerns that the historic Southern Pacific paint shop building, a well-worn and

See **PAC** on page 10

## J. Ross Browne

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He returned to Oakland, sold his Jackson Street property and began building Pagoda Hill in 1870. He reportedly designed it himself. Photographs and contemporary reports show us a rambling Victorian whimsy, a mash-up of architectural styles with an onion dome on one roof and a pagoda on another. Here he lived and wrote, drawing his large family close.

On Dec. 8, 1875, Lucy Browne drove to the ferry landing at the foot of Broadway to retrieve her husband from San Francisco. On the carriage ride home, Browne suddenly became acutely ill. In too much pain to make it all the way to Pagoda Hill, he stopped at the home of a friend and called for a doctor. Within a few hours, he died, most likely of appendicitis. His family buried him two days later at Mountain View Cemetery.

Browne is not as well remembered today as he should be. As an agent of the government, he was upright and uncorrupted. He was enlightened and compassionate in his views about the treatment of Indians and the Chinese. He was also Oakland's first literary figure of any international reputation. His travel writing is still lively and full of insight, a pleasure to read.

Mrs. Browne remained at Pagoda Hill for several years after his death, but by 1887 the house was owned by the George Ainsworth family. It later housed a private school. Pagoda Hill stood vacant its



**PAGODA HILL**, J. Ross Browne's lost residence.

last few years before being demolished for suburban development in the early 1920s, leaving only the names of Ross Street and Ross Circle to remember its early resident. ■



## A thriving, but endangered, Peralta Hacienda needs your help

By Holly Alonso

Peralta Hacienda is about to close its doors unless funds can be found to replace the 95% total drop in this year's foundation funding, including a 2/3 drop in operational funds provided by the city of Oakland. Who will miss out? The 200 East Oakland kids who take part in its afterschool and summer camp programs. The 3,500 kids from all over the Bay Area who come on school field trips to visit the historic house and learn about East Bay history. Not to mention the thousands of adults and families who attend events, tours, the History Café, National Night Out, garden groups and more.

Peralta Hacienda is on the verge of shutdown, after raising hundreds of thousands of dollars every year to serve the community and the wider public since the organization was founded in 1985.

You would never have known about the crisis as neighbors filled—and then spilled out onto the outdoor patio of—Peralta Hacienda's new Center for History and Community on a recent Saturday night. They had gathered to listen to Fruitvale author Carlos Salomon tell about Pio Pico, the last governor of Mexican California, who was Black, Native and Spanish. They came to hear history that usually doesn't make the history books.

You would never have known there was a crisis when 120 parents gathered recently for the final community banquet of the summer program. Their kids aged four to 14 had learned history by playing Ohlone games and starting a fire from a flint and stick.

They had learned about ecology and nutrition by gardening, mentored by the Laotian Mien community gardeners. They had completed ambitious art projects which now enhance the community open space. The parents cheered as staff thanked them for lending them their beautiful children.

In the same program, 24 high school interns from all over Oakland had been taught how to lead tours of the historic house, and how to mentor the younger kids. "I never knew my community history, how important it is," said intern Brian Saelee.

Peralta Hacienda's possible collapse seemed impossible when Phoebe Diamond, fourth grade Oakland teacher said, "I could never have dreamed the quality of educational experience that was in store when we arrived at Peralta Hacienda. The field trip to the Peralta Rancho was the very best ever, in my 15 years of teaching."

Antonio Peralta built the historic house, now on the National Register, after an 1868 earthquake destroyed the Peralta adobes. It's the last vestige of the 45,000-acre cattle ranch that once covered the East Bay, where seven modern cities now stand.

Touchable, cutting-edge multimedia exhibits now fill the house, telling of Oakland's roots as a multicultural settlement on the ragged edge of the Spanish empire. Community members tell their own stories as they lead the tours.

Sabrina Klein, former executive director of the Julia Morgan Center for the Arts and nationally-known consultant, says this program "invites community members to share



Ben Glickstein

**BOYS MAKE ADOBE BRICKS** and learn about adobe architecture at Peralta Hacienda.

their voices, and gives people the skills and the forum to make their stories visible and accessible to others. This place is about democracy in action. It's about history as a living strand of our understanding of ourselves and our community. Peralta Hacienda makes history a living thing."

Another of the house's claim to fame: the Faces of Fruitvale exhibit, a wealth of stories of today's Fruitvale, from the Yemenite grocer and the Laotian Mien gardeners to the Mexican *panadero* and the African American who came to the area during the WWII job rush. These stories arise from the same themes as the house exhibits on the Peraltas and Native peoples.

The organization started 30 years ago as a grassroots project to create more open space in Fruitvale, led by Claudia Albano, whose mother arrived in San Francisco the day of the 1906 earthquake and immediately decamped to the East Bay, where Claudia was born in the 1950s.

The original group of neighbors mustered \$6M to create the park by trudging to Sacra-

See **HACIENDA** on page 6

Melissa Burman



**GIRLS LEARN TO THROW JAVELINS** the Ohlone way at a Peralta Hacienda rancho festival.



# Hacienda

*Continued from page 5*

mento and to the Oakland City Council, starting in 1975. Measure I funded the \$893,000 restoration of the home.

For the past 10 years, under the leadership of Holly Alonso and the Peralta Hacienda board, the master plan has been built out in stages, with an additional \$6M in local, state and federal funds. Local designers and community members created the indoor and outdoor exhibits with prestigious national funding. "One of the best museums I have even seen!" wrote a visitor from San Francisco State University's Museum Studies program.

In the opinion of many historians, Peralta Hacienda Historical Park contains one of Northern California's most significant historic sites. Where blight existed in recent memory, the neighborhood has claimed green space, cleaned a creek, and created works of art in constantly-changing community exhibits. What it needs now is renewed support to deliver these services to its rich, diverse community, and to the general public.

If you'd like to help, call 510-532-9142 or go to [www.peraltahacienda.org](http://www.peraltahacienda.org) and hit the donate button. You can also send a check to Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, P.O. Box 7172 Oakland, CA 94601.

*Holly Alonso is executive director of Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park.* ■

### Welcome to our new members!

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

Hoskin Family, Rory Earnshaw,  
 Karen Marie Schroeder, Carol Dvora,  
 Margaret Brown-Salazar,  
 Margaret Lucas, Catherine Howard,  
 Katharine & Dan Whalen,  
 Ingrid Aguirre-Happoldt,  
 Sarah Miller & Randy Sachai,  
 Karen Donald & Ed Mosely,  
 Fred Hertz & Randolph Langenbach,  
 Rachel Evnine, Foster Goldstrom,  
 Chris Hoofinagle, Daniel Brzoric,  
 Christopher Renz, Steve Brockhage  
 & Elizabeth Holiday, Susan Papps,  
 Jane & Terry Wiedwald, Jeff Hill,  
 Hugh Morrison, Stephanie Casenza



Ben Glickstein

**BINH NGO, AN OAKLAND YOUTH INTERN,** leads a tour of the Peralta House parlor, which boasts an interactive exhibit about *California* landowners during and after the Gold Rush.



Nina Egert

**CELIA LY AND RICHARD ADAMS** learn to be house guides at Peralta Hacienda.

**Our condolences to the family and friends of Harlan Kessel,  
 a longtime member and supporter.**



# Requiem for the Transbay Terminal

By Joyce Roy

Although the Transbay Terminal was located in San Francisco, its primary users lived in the East Bay. As part of the Bay Bridge project, it was the terminus for trains that ran on the lower deck, including the Key System trains. Its opening in 1939 drew huge crowds.

This year on July 30, the Transbay Joint Powers Authority held a commemorative event before beginning demolition to replace the terminal with the new “Grand Central of the West,” which will accommodate Caltrain and High Speed Rail as well as buses. One hundred or so people were expected for the “historical tours” of the facility, but around 1,900 came! So there were huge crowds at both its beginning and end.

The Transbay Terminal is an excellent example of 1930s Moderne architecture, designed by renowned architects Timothy Pflueger, Arthur Brown, Jr. and John J. Donovan. Caltrans determined that the building was eligible for the National Register.

Pflueger (1892-1946) began his career in the Beaux Arts style but became adept in many approaches. His 1925 PacBell Building was Neo-Gothic, but the Jazz Age inspired the Castro Theater in San Francisco and the Paramount Theater in Oakland.

Pflueger probably selected the streamlined vocabulary of Moderne for the efficient flow

of trains and passengers. Because of the loop configuration of its ramps, it accommodated more trains/track/day (88.2) than any other station in the world.

This visionary project assumed growing use. It was designed to accommodate 50 million passengers annually, yet only 25 million used it at its height at the end of World War II. Pictures from the era show there were too many passengers to wait on the platforms so they sat in the large waiting rooms until their train was announced.

The passenger experience was primary. After alighting from trains, passengers streamed down one of many stairs or ramps to a mezzanine concourse 10 feet below. With the low ceilings, the vertical distance from the train platform to the street is only 20 feet. But after moving a short distance through the concourse toward Mission Street, the passenger suddenly found himself in a grand 30-foot high space with tall northern windows framing the San Francisco skyline.

A couple of decades ago, the terminal fell on hard times, and many thought of it as an eyesore. One problem with a slick Moderne design is that if it is not maintained in pristine condition, it will lose its luster. The terminal’s honed, white granite façade shows the city’s grime, whereas buildings of a darker, rougher stone or brick can age better. The interior lost the light, spaciousness and clean

aesthetics of a good Moderne building after a floor for Greyhound was inserted in 1989 into the high entry space, cutting the height of the tall northern windows. Use of the no-longer-needed waiting areas by the homeless and, to put it kindly, indifferent maintenance by the owner Caltrans also contributed to its lowered esteem.

In the early '90s, after the terminal was threatened with proposals to demolish it and sell the site—which is public property, for private development—a group of transit advocates calling themselves Regional Alliance for Transit (RAFT) organized to oppose it. It wasn’t necessarily a matter of saving the terminal building itself but to maintain it as a placeholder for a new regional intermodal hub. This hub would also accommodate rail, including bringing Caltrain to its site near the Financial District.

As a terminal for trains from the East Bay and later for buses, this structure functioned very efficiently for over 70 years. It is, indeed, ironical that a terminal built for rail has to be replaced because it can’t accommodate Caltrain. It was designed for trains that came over the bridge and were 20 feet above the street, but now trains will be below grade. Its site is ideal for a transit hub, so it must move over for a new multi-modal 21st century terminal, a future landmark.

For more information, visit <http://blog.timothy-pflueger.com/> ■



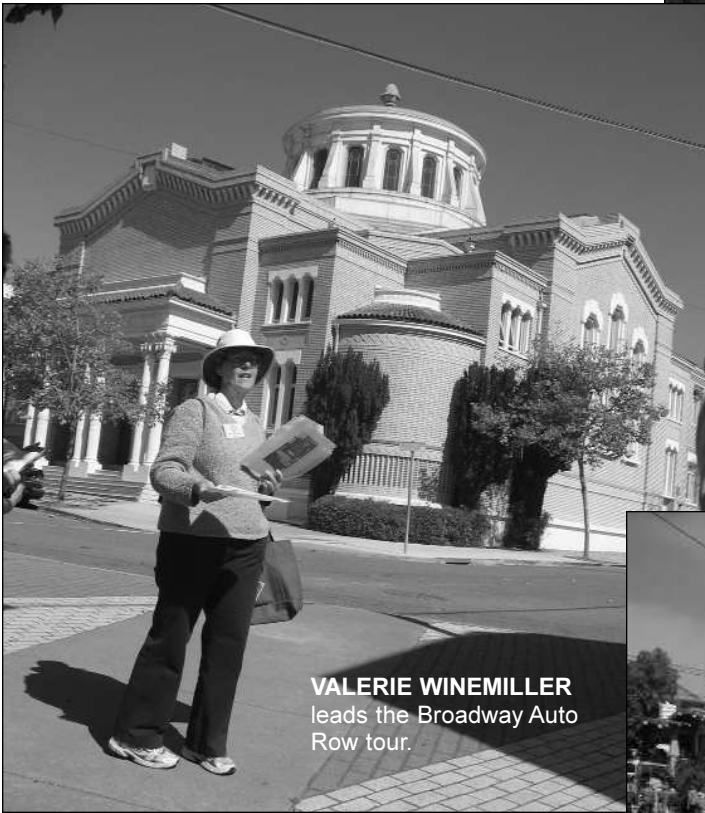
Both images: AC Transit

**CROSSING THE STREET**, left, during the terminal’s heyday, while at right a bird’s eye view of the complex shows its versatility.



# A look back at some of the summer tours

Kevin Dwyer

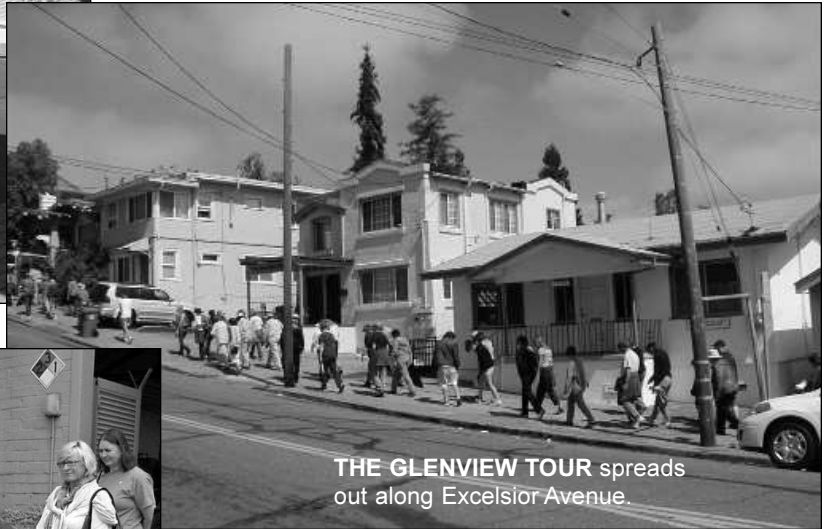


**VALERIE WINEMILLER** leads the Broadway Auto Row tour.



**PATSY EAGAN**, left, and Kathleen DiGiovanni talk to the group on the Glenview tour.

Joe Johnston



**THE GLENVIEW TOUR** spreads out along Excelsior Avenue.

Joe Johnston

Joan Dark



**MOAL COACHWORKS** shows tour participants some amazing cars, here and at right.



Joan Dark





# Twelfth Street finally gets the treatment it deserves

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

They're off and running. The Frickstad Viaduct, whose imminent demise we reported on in the last *OHA News*, is on its way out. May 6 marked the groundbreaking for the 12th Street Reconstruction Project; heavy demolition got started in July.

Temporary roadways are in place now and will be re-worked further before the permanent six-lane road is complete.

From the vantage point of the courthouse steps and with much of the old road already razed, it's striking to see just how big the viaduct was and easy to picture how much land will be returned to park use when the project is completed in 2012.

Gone are the dripping tunnels connecting the auditorium parking lot with the lake, and no more heart-stopping dashes across the mini-freeway, either. Walkers and bike riders will be able to cross 12th Street safely at four signalized crosswalks. The culvert enclosing the channel beneath the 12th Street Bridge will be removed. In its place will be an open bridge, allowing access between the lake and estuary for wildlife and small boats and improving water quality by increasing the flow of water. A path will also be built along the channel, connecting the lake with the Bay Trail. At the south end of the lake a new, four-acre park will take shape.

In contrast to excavations at the Caldecott Tunnel which have been unearthing fossils,

this dig has not uncovered anything remotely Miocene. Project manager Joel Peter reported that most of what's being removed or rearranged is fill that dates from only about 1950 and that his hope of finding Samuel Merritt's gold pocket watch has not come true. Instead, they've hauled away much debris from the homeless who camped under the old bridges.

Tall piles of concrete have grown on the project site. Will they be recycled? Peter says yes. The contractor has a concrete-crushing machine on-site and a lot has already been used for the road base. Dirt from the excavation will be used to fill in the low spots.

What about two signal landmarks? The fate of the old SOUTHERLY NORTHERLY street sign remains unclear, though it is being stored for now. The bust of Abraham Lincoln will



THE CHARMING SIGN at the fork in the road is now in storage.

be re-situated close to its former spot, in a new plaza across from the courthouse.

Take a field trip to the Fallon Street steps of the Alameda County courthouse and watch the demolition as it happens. Arm-chair construction enthusiasts can follow the action on local artist Erik Niemann's blog, [www.oakland12thstreetproject.blogspot.com](http://www.oakland12thstreetproject.blogspot.com). His photographs, many of which are shot from the heights of 1200 Lakeshore Ave., supply a virtual front-row seat to the end of the old arterial. ■

Erik Niemann

## YOU CAN HELP MEASURE DD

Joel Peter



Joel Peter, Measure DD's project manager, needs our help. He seeks a photo of the East 18th Street Pier taken before it was rebuilt, picturing the wall opposite Lakeshore Avenue, which you see here. He wants to know if whether there was ever a plaque or other marker on the street side of this wall. If you can help, he can be reached at [jpeter@oaklandnet.com](mailto:jpeter@oaklandnet.com) or 238-7276. ■

### OHA is grateful for the generous financial support of its members.

Mark Yeager & Tim Blevins, Dea Bacchetti, Doug Dove, Laura Ingram

### Our devoted volunteers make the walking tour season happen each year, an incredible undertaking. Thank you!

Tour leaders and volunteers:

Annalee Allen, Phil Bellman, Andy Carpentier, Bill Coburn, Deborah Cooper, Michael Crowe, Phoebe Cutler, Joan Dark, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Michael Dobrin, Riley Doty, Doug Dove, Kevin Dwyer, Patsy Eagan, Dennis Evanosky, Alison Finlay, Mary Harper, Lisa Hire, Kathryn Hughes, Diane Johnson, Gary Knecht, Phil Linhares, Chris Lutjen, Elaine Macey, Pamela Magnuson-Peddle, Betty Marvin, Helene Miller, Steve Moal, Anna Naruta, Jason Patton, Naomi Schiff, Barbara Smith, Valerie Winemiller, Ellen Wyrick-Parkinson

Donors for reception at Moal Coachworks:

Costco Richmond, Safeway Rockridge, Trader Joe's Rockridge

Walking Tour Season Sponsor: Kaiser Permanente



## Oakland History Room needs a few more friends

By Naomi Schiff

A new group, Friends of the Oakland History Room, has begun to solicit support and donations for the library's historic reference collection. Founding members include many Oakland Heritage Alliance stalwarts and longtime library supporters. Earlier this year, budget cutbacks seemed to threaten the continued viability of this

invaluable research room. An outcry from citizens helped to turn back that threat, but revealed that there was a need for a strong Friends group.

The librarians are drawing up a priority list of needs, and FOHR members are planning outreach efforts, an inaugural event, and a presence on the Internet. FOHR will operate similarly to the vari-

ous library branch Friends groups, with Friends of the Oakland Public Library as fiscal sponsor, and contributions tax-deductible under federal rules. To help get this effort off the ground, make a donation: Annotate your check "Oakland History Room" and send it to: Friends of the Oakland Public Library, 721 Washington St, Oakland, CA 94607. ■

## Lecture series focuses on Rosie the Riveter and Studio One

Join us for two great lectures this fall, part of our extremely popular series providing an evening of entertainment on topics of local history.

Oct. 7: "We Can Do It!" Ric Borjes, historical architect, will talk about the creation of the Rosie the Riveter/Home Front National Historic Park in Richmond, which "honors those who toiled in the arsenal of democracy." He will discuss the resources associated with the site, and why it is significant to the Bay Area and the nation. He has worked in Cultural Resources in the Western regional office of the National Park Service, at the Pre-

sidio, and at the Rosie the Riveter site. Lecture held at 7:30 p.m. at Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave.

Nov. 11: **From Orphanage to Art; Oakland's Studio One Art Center.** Community artist and neighborhood historian Jeff Norman will present a talk and slide show on the history of the Studio One Art Center, a much-beloved program run by the city since 1948. His presentation will cover the history of the 115-year-old building in the Temescal district that is home to Studio One, as well as the philosophy, vision, and leadership within both the city's Recreation Department and the

North Oakland community that gave birth to and then sustained this program. Norman's projects have included *Beyond the Pussycat: Nine Lives of a Neighborhood Landmark*, mounted in 2000 on the former theater site at Telegraph Avenue and 51st Streets; *Station 8 History Walk*, a tile walkway outside the fire station on 51st Street; and several books, including *Temescal Legacies: Narratives of Change from a North Oakland Neighborhood*. Lecture will be held at 7:30 p.m. at Studio One, 365 45th St.

Each lecture is \$10 for OHA members and \$15 non-members. ■

## PAC

Continued from page 4

long-used brick structure with bays for engine painting and cleaning, is being eyed once again by Union Pacific. Several times in the past, advocates convinced owners that this building, the oldest example of its type, should not be demolished. It is visible from BART trains, as you look toward the bay from West Oakland. Rail historians and Oakland history buffs believe it should be spared. It's been in use recently, and it is unclear what U.P. proposes to do in the vicinity.

**It's Fall 2010: Do you know what your zoning is?** The Zoning Update is working its way through the Zoning Update Committee and Planning Commission, heading toward adoption by the City Council. The staff has shown themselves to be willing to make time

to discuss neighborhood concerns and specific recommendations. To learn more, you can visit the city's web page, where maps and reports are posted as they are developed: [www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/CED/A/o/PlanningZoning/s/LUC/index.htm](http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/CED/A/o/PlanningZoning/s/LUC/index.htm)

It's not too late to weigh in with your ideas and questions! Residents know better than anyone what the local conditions are, and what uses and densities may be appropriate.

**Historic plaques:** A few years ago, OHA and the Landmarks Board came up with a

design for historic plaques and installed them on a number of landmarks, including the Pardee Home, City Hall, the African American Museum and Library at Oakland, the Leimert Bridge, and others. Now a Landmarks Board committee is studying ways to identify the city's 140 landmarks so that they will be recognized, and to educate the public about them. Questions include how to pay for the plaques, whether to include individual descriptions on the plaques, and how to maximize efficiency by manufacturing many plaques simultaneously. ■

## Fairyland

Continued from page 12

with an international theme. Weekly and monthly events featured visitors from Ireland, a Hispanic fiesta, Greek gods and goddesses, Hawaiian dancers, and much more.

The birthday parade on Sept. 7, 1975, had as its Honorary Grand Marshals Fairyland's founders, Arthur Navlet and William Penn Mott, Jr.

Here's wishing Fairyland the happiest of birthdays as she turns 60 this year, and many more to come. ■



# Train to be a docent and learn more about your city

Compiled by Erika Mailman

Many of our city's greatest resources just need someone to show them to other people! Consider volunteering your time as a docent or tour guide.

**Peralta Hacienda** (see article on page 5) seeks docents, with an innovative approach to training: through storytelling. Fun, multi-disciplinary training prepares you to become a docent at the Peralta House Museum of History and Community, and introduces you to an inspiring group of Oakland volunteers. Free. Two sessions offered: Sat., Oct 16, 2010, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m., and Sat., Nov 6, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, 2465 34th Ave.

The city's **Oakland Tours Program** also wants volunteers with outgoing personalities and an interest in Oakland history and architecture to lead its walking tours. Its greatest need for volunteer guides is from May to October. Volunteers go through an extensive training that includes participating in each of the eight distinct tours. The program requires volunteers to make a minimum 12-month commitment. To learn more, e-mail Annalee Allen at aallen@oak-

landnet.com or call 238-3234.

The **Camron-Stanford House** on the edge of Lake Merritt wants to train volunteers as well. Its docents undergo an intensive training process, which teaches good communicative and interpretive skills, and provides thorough learning about the house's historical significance and its collections.

Reading lists are provided to add to the information provided during training. Experienced docents assist and give feedback as new docents develop and practice their tours before ultimately conducting a tour on their own. A graduation celebration will be held at the conclusion of the training. Docent training requires the pur-



Ben Glickstein

**COMMUNITY MEMBERS** Juan Gonzalez and Lorraine Grimm learning to be docents at the Peralta House Museum of History and Community.

chase of a \$35 annual membership and a one-time course fee of \$65. Send an email query to cshousedocent@yahoo.com or call Valerie Corvin at 604-0078. ■

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**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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*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.
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- \$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.**

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## Happy Birthday! Fairyland turns sixty

*By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni*

Children's Fairyland lights 60 bright candles in September. The park's birthday celebrations have often been occasions for unveiling new sets or attractions and have always inspired volunteer action and community engagement. Here's a look at just a few of her birthday parties.

Fairyland's third birthday in 1953 was a week-long celebration, kicked off by a children's Mardi Gras parade at the Oaks Ball Park before the September 1 Oakland Oaks-Los Angeles Angels game. The Angels won, 7-5. The parade itself was a huge event: volunteers from the Oakland Fire Department, Laney Trade School carpentry classes, and the Boys Club built floats representing the Fairyland sets.

1954's fourth birthday brought a real, functioning post office to Fairyland, funded and built by Oakland Post Office employees. During its many years of operation, it was the smallest authorized post office in the United States and was a popular spot for children to mail their letters to Santa. Six thousand special first day covers were mailed on its opening day.

By the time Fairyland's fifth birthday came around, the park was welcoming a half-million visitors a year. 1955 was a big year, as several new attractions were unwrapped: the Jolly Trolley; Robinson Crusoe's Island, which was a gift of Trader Vic Bergeron; Chung Ling the Happy Dragon; and the Cuckoo Clock Tower. Three thousand miniature copies of the *Oakland Tribune* were dis-

tributed, "containing pictures, articles, and editorial, anniversary poem by Jack Burroughs and a cartoon by Lou Grant."

Puppets and puppet shows have been an integral part of the Fairyland experience since the park opened its doors, but the first permanent puppet theater wasn't built in the park until 1956, opened for the sixth birthday celebration. The oldest continuously operating puppet theater in the United States, it was funded by the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club, with seating sponsored by the Int'l. Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union, with help from its Ladies Auxilliary, Local #17. The Wonder-Go-Round opened at the 1956 birthday, too, sponsored by the Oakland chapter of Women of the Moose.

"Ten Times Magic" was the theme for Fairyland's tenth birthday in 1960. Its highlight was a huge parade. Fairyland loves parades. Among those passing in front of the reviewing stand were the Oakland Police Department's motorcycle drill team, the Alameda County Sheriff's Posse and Band, the Weldonian's Marching Band, and floats galore, including one from the Oakland Raiders.

Fairyland's lucky 13th birthday featured Godfathers' Day, a special event honoring the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club. By then, the park had welcomed 5 million visitors. The Dragon Slide and Chinese Tea House, gifts of the Joe Shoong Foundation, were dedicated at this birthday.

The Owl and the Pussycat debuted at Fairyland's 19th birthday in 1969. It was a



Oakland History Room

**THE OLD WOMAN'S SHOE** has welcomed children to Fairyland for 60 years.

gift of the Advertising Club of Oakland in memory of Merle Brothers, the club's executive secretary. Mrs. Brothers had also served on that club's Fairyland Public Relations Committee from its start in 1950 to her death in 1967. The Bong Tree—another Fairyland feature with an Edward Lear theme—was also installed in 1969, another gift of the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club.

Among the special events scheduled for Fairyland's 20th were live performances by Fairyland puppet theater alumnus Frank Oz, who had already achieved fame on *Sesame Street*.

The Storybook Stage made its debut during Fairyland's "Magic 25" in 1975. That anniversary was a six-month extravaganza

See **FAIRYLAND** on page 10