

Changing cultures for house museums

By Kathleen DiGiovanni

With a culture moving quickly away from valuing the past, house museums are facing new problems. How can these structures attract new visitors? How can they offer historical interpretation that is inviting and meaningful, when the past is abandoned in favor of TiVo, interactive cell-phones and gameboys?

Oakland has five historic house museums that are open to the public: the Pardee Home Museum, the Cohen-Bray House, the Camron-Stanford House, the Dunsmuir Historic Estate, and the Peralta Hacienda. Two others, Moss Cottage in Mosswood Park and the DeFremery house in DeFremery Park, do not function as historic house museums but are used as a storage facility and recreation center, respectively.

Dunsmuir, Peralta Hacienda, and the Camron-Stanford House are owned by the city of Oakland and leased by private foundations for a nominal sum. They raise their own annual budgets but are able to benefit from city funding for capital improvements and other projects.

In contrast, the Pardee Home and the Cohen-Bray House are owned and operated by private foundations, are entirely responsible for their own needs, and are facing critical situations in 2007.

Pardee Home Museum: Presiding over the corner of 11th and Castro on the edge of downtown Oakland is the Pardee Home. Built in 1868-69 for Dr. Enoch



www.pardeehome.org

TWO HOMES THAT HAVEN'T CHANGED: The Pardee Home, left, circa 1911, was home to two Oakland mayors and one California governor. Below is the library of the Cohen-Bray House. Both have retained all their original furnishings and operate today as house museums.

Pardee, a prominent eye doctor, this was home to two Oakland mayors, Enoch and his son, Dr. George Pardee. George went on to become California governor from 1903 to 1907. Occupied continuously by members of the Pardee family until 1981, it has been preserved as it was at the time of the death of Helen Pardee, the last surviving daughter of George and his wife, Helen. She left her family's home and its contents to the nonprofit foundation that she created in her will, intending the house to be enjoyed by the citizens of Oakland as a public museum.

The house itself, designed by Hoagland and Newsom, is an unusually fine example of Italianate architecture and is a designated Oakland and California landmark. It is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The interior is filled with mementos and collections documenting the lives of one of California's most significant political families.

Miss Pardee endowed the Pardee Home Foundation with \$700,000 (about 10% of her estate) to support its operations and upkeep. Since that time, the foundation has raised an additional \$1 million. The largest single source of outside funding for the home has been the roughly \$800,000 in



Courtesy, Douglas Keister

grants received over the years from the Gerstacker Foundation, which donates funds from Dow Chemical. The Pardees have a familial connection: Enoch's first wife Mary Pardee was the aunt of one of the founders of Dow Chemical.

Other grants have come from such varied sources as the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services and Signature Properties, developer of the condominium complex

See **HOUSE MUSEUMS** on page 2

Don't miss our 2007 Partners in Preservation Awards! OHA honors those whose work demonstrates a commitment to excellence in historic preservation. In so doing, we hope to inspire others. The May 10 event starts at 7:30 at the Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., with a wine reception following. Suggested donation: \$10. For info, call 763-9218.



House Museums

Continued from page 1

next door to the museum. Still, with operating expenses coming in at \$100,000 per year, excluding major capital improvements, the foundation has trouble making ends meet.

Executive Director David Nicolai reports that earning income has been a persistent problem for the home. Potential sources include tour admissions, the gift shop, membership dues, and special events. The very things that make the house so attractive to visitors, though, limit its viability as a special events venue. The interior furnishings and finishes are fragile and can support only the lightest of use. Therefore, events are largely limited to the garden and coach house, though during the most recent holiday season, the home hosted a concert and scheduled formal teas in the dining room.

The Pardee Home was recently awarded a \$3,000 grant from the San Francisco office of the National Trust to partially fund a planning study to determine the best future use for the home. Complicating long-term planning, though, is that under the terms of Helen Pardee's will, the foundation was given only a limited term of life. Twenty-five years after her death (which was last year), or upon the death or resignation of the last of the original life trustees (two remain living), whichever comes last, the property is to be offered to the Oakland Museum for use as a historic site.

Other intriguing possibilities exist for the house, including ownership or operation by UC Berkeley, the city of Oakland or even by the California State Parks—the Stanford Home in Sacramento was recently opened as a state historic park after a 14-year, \$22

million restoration. The only other California governor's home to be operated as a state historic park is the old Governor's Mansion, also in Sacramento. George Pardee was the first governor to make that house his home.

Cohen-Bray House: Like the Pardee home, the Cohen-Bray House in the Fruitvale district is the repository of over 100 years of the history of a single Oakland family. Built and furnished in 1884

as a wedding gift for Emma Bray and Alfred Henry Cohen by their parents, the house has been occupied by members of that family ever since.

The house itself, a fine example of East-lake-Stick architecture, is an Oakland landmark and is also on the register of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Its remarkable interior is a living tableau of domestic life in the late 19th-century.

The house's formal front rooms look exactly as they did in 1884, decorated in the Anglo-Japanese style fashionable when the house was built. The front entry features woodwork milled from a single giant Mendocino County redwood log. Interior furnishings and finishes are original down to the wallpaper and carpeting. The back of the house was damaged in the 1906 earthquake and rebuilt in the Craftsman style emblematic of that decade.

Although Cohen family members still live there, the house is now owned and operated by the Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland. This nonprofit foundation was created in 1993 by the descendants of Alfred and Emma Bray Cohen to preserve

the property and make it available as a venue for the study of American material culture in the late Victorian period.

In 1980, Emelita Cohen, Emma and Alfred's last surviving child, granted Oakland Heritage Alliance a "scenic open space and architectural façade easement" on the house. This means that OHA is charged with making certain that the parcel remains intact and that the house and grounds stay the same as

DUNSMUIR HOUSE, the Peralta Hacienda and the Camron-Stanford House, clockwise from right, join the Pardee Home and the Cohen-Bray House as being Oakland's five-pronged offering of house museums.



when OHA obtained the easement. Under the terms of the easement, no remodeling, expansion, added buildings, or division of the property are permitted. According to VPCO board member Karin Sidwell, this kind of easement is legally more powerful than local landmark designation or National Register status because it is granted by the property owner and exists in perpetuity.

This easement does not apply to the home's interior, although according to Sidwell interior easements do exist. Legally, nothing would stop the VPCO board from dismantling, selling, or otherwise disposing of the house's contents. The board, however, is committed to its preservation. Its mis-

See HOUSE MUSEUMS on page 7

In this issue

Preservation Action	3
Walking tour photos	4
Schilling Gardens	5
Around the Town	6
Landmarks Board notes	7
Mayoral history	9
Finding the rock?	12



Report from the Preservation Action Committee

Oak to Ninth lawsuits continue; Mills Act passes

By Naomi Schiff

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

Oak to Ninth: In the long-running saga of a 63-acre publicly-owned waterfront site, new episodes are being written. In August a "Better Oak to Ninth Referendum Committee" circulated a referendum petition (endorsed by the OHA board of directors) to appeal the development agreement. It requested that the deal between the city and Oakland Harbor Partners (which plans to build 3,100 units) be put to the voters. Legal wrangling followed, and the approximately 25,000 signatures remain uncounted in City Attorney John Russo's office. He rejected the petition on technical grounds, at the urging of the developer's lawyers. The referendum group filed a lawsuit. A number of OHA members had to take time off from work and trek to Marin County to answer questions after receiving subpoenas from the developer's attorneys. (At least our coffee purchases contributed to the Marin economy!)

At the same time, OHA's hardworking pro bono attorney Arthur Levy, of Levy, Rahm, Olson, LLC, is pursuing OHA's lawsuit on environmental grounds, questioning findings of infeasibility that doom the Ninth Avenue Terminal, among other issues. In addition, the Coalition of Advocates for Lake Merritt, James Vann, and Joyce Roy filed a separate CEQA lawsuit, also questioning the city's approval and administrative procedures.

Despite the infeasibility findings, the city issued a Request for Proposals for the older half of the Ninth Avenue Terminal, as required in the approvals. Local developer Stuart Rickard of Placeworks LLC, with partners Tom McCoy and Moe Wright of Chabot Properties, LLC, responded. They propose reusing the entire 1930 portion of the terminal "to create a Vintner's Hall, which combines a one-of-a-kind wine-making center, a waterfront restaurant, and a water-oriented recreation facility." The city is now reviewing the proposal, which reuses the building and would provide public uses on the platform alongside it, as well as inside.



THIS 1913 VIEW SHOWS what will become the Whole Foods at Harrison Street and Bay Place on the left, and the long-gone Piedmont Baths on the right. The photo is among many contributed to the Online Archive of California in a new scanning project undertaken by the Oakland Public Library History Room.

Mills Act at last! City Council has finally approved a Mills Act pilot program. Owners of historic buildings will be able to preserve and rehabilitate historic properties in exchange for reduced property taxes. The pilot project will identify 25 properties each year for two years. After great efforts by a dedicated city staff and lengthy OHA advocacy, Oakland can now use this state program as an incentive to foster preservation. For info, contact city planner and Landmarks Board secretary Joann Pavlinec: jpavlinec@oaklandnet.com.

Historic Temescal: Community discussion in North Oakland's Temescal neighborhood has generated several meetings in an effort to balance historic preservation, neighborhood quality of life, and developer plans to build multi-story residential units along the Telegraph and Shattuck corridors. City staff is proposing new zoning requirements. This predominantly one and two-story neighborhood is seeing many proposals and approvals for taller buildings. Endangered buildings of historic value include several Victorian houses and retail buildings, and the ramshackle but familiar Kingfish on Claremont. It's a classic conundrum about the relationships

between old and new structures, residential development on vacant parcels, and how increasing density affects urban residents.

16th Street Station: Community members anticipate an imminent request for proposals from the developer BUILD. Current plans call for restoring the train station with a community-based entity to operate it. The historic station stands in the midst of a new housing development, parts of which are under construction. A group of preservationists, transportation buffs, neighbors, union members, housing activists, and community development advocates are organizing to work with the developers and take the project to successful completion.

The City Council in autumn committed to funding the purchase of the land under the baggage wing, the north end of the station. Studies have shown that the once-threatened baggage wing is a significant contributor to the financial feasibility of the project.

Cox Cadillac/Whole Foods project: The Whole Foods project is underway, and the brick structure has been revealed at the remaining parts of the old building at Harrison and Bay. Careful scrutiny shows an old Optimo cigar ad painted on the building. ■



People in the middle of the street staring, heads craning: what's going on?



OHA's WALKING TOURS!

The 2006 summer season was the best yet, with unprecedented numbers of attendees eager to learn more about their city!

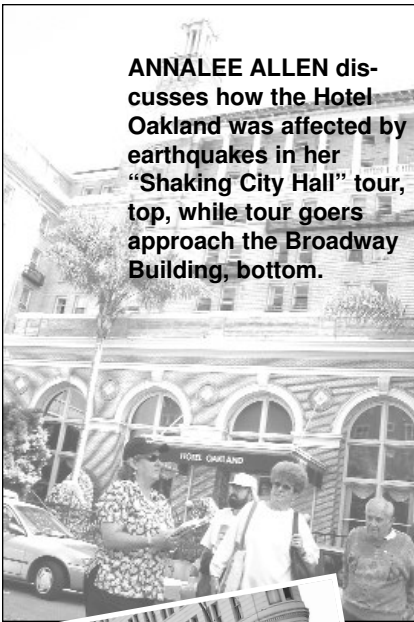


ALLIANCE NEWS

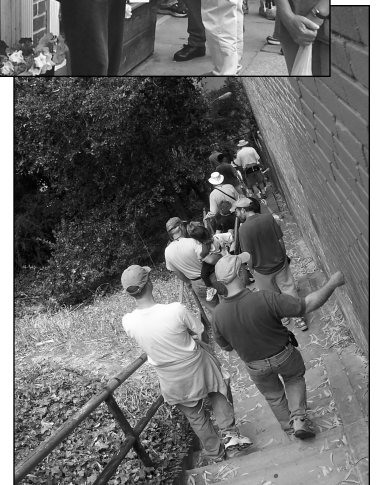
DEAN YABUKI (at left, with finger raised) leads a tour at Grand Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard.

[more tour pictures on page 8](#)

ANNALEE ALLEN discusses how the Hotel Oakland was affected by earthquakes in her "Shaking City Hall" tour, top, while tour goes approach the Broadway Building, bottom.



KATHLEEN DIGIOVANNI, above, and Betty Marvin, top right with arm extended, team-lead a group through Glenview, including the steps descending from Park Boulevard to Greenwood Avenue, bottom right.





Schilling Garden's history should be preserved

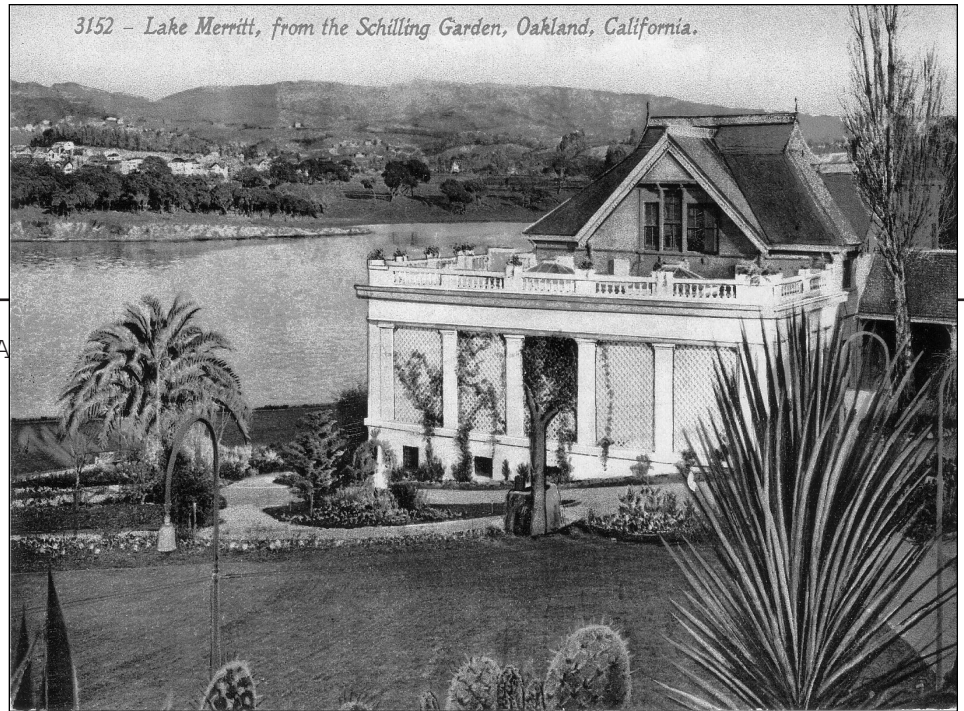
By Annalee Allen

Vine-covered entry gates to this garden hide-away stand on 19th Street, with Snow Park on one side and the Regillus Building on the other. Towering trees, just inside the enclosed area, attest to the garden's longevity, and the entwined initials A.S. on the gates make reference to the garden's original owner, German immigrant August Schilling (1854-1934), founder of the well-known spice and coffee company.

According to the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey files, Schilling arrived in San Francisco in 1870 at the age of 16 and went to work for the Folger Coffee Co. He later went out on his own, forming A. Schilling & Company. His fledging company grew rapidly in pre-earthquake San Francisco.

Schilling purchased a stately lakeside residence belonging to a Jonas Sedy and then acquired the neighboring estate next door. A great lover of flowers and exotic plants, Schilling opted to remove the neighboring residence in order to create a showplace garden next door to his own home. This occurred in the period before creation of Lakeside Drive, so at that point, Schilling's garden parcel extended to the lake's shoreline. Postcard views show a rock grotto, wisteria trellises, pathways, a boat house and a dock on the manicured property.

Typical of that era, the Schilling family opened the gates to their estate on a regular basis so Oaklanders could stroll the grounds and enjoy the lake views. Other estate properties in Oakland open to the public during this time included the homes of Col. Jack Hays in Montclair, the deFremery estate in West Oakland, the F.M. Borax Smith proper-



Courtesy, Ed Clausen

A VINTAGE POSTCARD of the Schilling Garden at the edge of the lake.

ty near Park Boulevard, and the Mosswood home and garden on Broadway.

In 1914, Schilling sold his lakeside residence and moved to an estate on the Peninsula. A later owner demolished the mansion but kept the garden. An eight-story luxury apartment building—The Regillus—was constructed, with windows that looked over the garden and the lake.

Next to be built in 1925 were the elegant Lake Drive Apartments, designed by well-known architect Maury Diggs (also responsible for the Fox Theater). These units, too, looked out on the garden, which continued to

be immaculately maintained by building residents, including members of the well-known Bechtel family.

A remnant of the Schilling estate (besides the garden) still remains: the carriage house/garage building for the Lake Drive Apartments. Further information may come to light once the environment review process for proposed development on the site gets underway. Those interested in keeping track of the Schilling Garden site should email Joann Pavlinec, Landmarks Board Secretary, at JPavlinec@oaklandnet.com. ■

New Oakland books!

Earthquake Exodus, 1906
by Richard Schwartz

Selections from the Oakland Tribune Archives
by Annalee Allen

Oakland's Neighborhoods
by Erika Mailman

Theatres of Oakland
by Jack Tillmany and Jennifer Dowling



News on the Fox, ferries and landmarks on the market

Here's the place to get the latest gossip on Oakland's historic front. *Around the Town* is compiled by our crack newswoman Hildy Johnson.

■ **Gosh, what a crazy winter!** It was Mark Twain who said, "The coldest winter I ever spent was a winter in Oakland." At least, that's the initial version that ended up in his wastebasket as it didn't pass ketchup or mustard. Due to the cold, I personally have not taken off my sweater for several months and have begun to smell like a sheep, causing some people to ask if I live on a farm. No, I BAAAH.

Who came up with "climate change" in lieu of "global warming" anyway? And why wasn't I given the telegram? The polar bears may be drowning and the polar caps may be melting, but all I know is that each winter seems to get colder than the last.

■ **Foxy beehive:** Speaking of telegraphs, have you seen the Fox Theatre on Telegraph recently? Wow, it's transubstantiating right before my eyes. Go take a look for yourself, you won't believe it. Its beehive architecture is all abuzz with activity. Mr. Phil Tagami, with help from all you frost-bitten folk voting American Idol style at the National Trust website, has made it all possible. Thank you!

■ **It's fun to stay at Julia's:** Two Oakland landmarks are in transition. It was just recently announced that the YMCA building, designed by Julia Morgan in 1915, at the corner of Telegraph and 21st Street has just been purchased. Although no announcements have been made, it will probably be converted to housing. Fingers are crossed that the new owner won't muck things up. Postcards of the YMCA can be seen at www.oaklandheritage.org/club_3.htm.

■ **Live/work on the gore?** The other landmark is the Cathedral Building at the gore of Broadway and Telegraph. Currently for sale, it was designed by Benjamin G. McDougall

in 1913 and originally known as the Federal Realty building. Taking full advantage of its limited footprint, this triangular building with its gothic spires would make a choice live/work structure with each floor an

individual unit. Postcards of the Cathedral Building can be seen at www.oaklandheritage.org/federal%20realty.htm

■ **Re: déjà vu, déjà vu:** The Claremont Hotel is being sold. Again. Didn't I write about this before? Didn't I write about this before? Anyway, this time it's for \$3.13 billion and the buyer is Morgan Stanley Real Estate. I guess that means that the hotel isn't having any more labor problems. There's nothing worse than when your stylist AND manicurist both go on strike.

■ **Obsolete ferries:** Here's something exciting: two ferries, the *San Leandro* and the *Fresno*, were recently spotted docked up by Port Costa, in Contra Costa County. In complete disrepair and with one of the ships unrecognizable, these ferries used to ply the bay moving cars and passengers between San Francisco and Oakland. Built in 1923 and 1927, respectively, they became obsolete with the opening of the Bay Bridge. It's unclear what will happen to them, but probably they'll be scrap and salvage. Postcards of the ferries the *Melrose*, the *Oakland* and the *Alameda* can be seen on our website at www.oaklandheritage.org/trans.htm.

■ **Speaking of bridges:** Is it just me, or is our new bridge not getting any respect? All I hear is how much it costs, the incompetence of Caltrans, bloated bureaucrats busting their budgets, FBI investigations of the welding rivets and other problems that are too picayune to mention. But no one talks about



the *big* picture, which is THE BRIDGE, and I'm not saxophonizing Sonny Rollins. We are going to have soaring towers of steel spanning the salient saltiness for the next 100+ years and I don't hear anyone getting excited. Who do you have to goose to get some attention around here? Shouldn't there be daily updates in the papers, on the talking picture box and the wireless?

■ **Windfall:** What a difference an election makes. Last fall, the Port of Oakland received \$0 in federal funding for security. Now that all the police dogs in Ohio have been outfitted with bullet-proof vests, the Department of Homeland Security has tossed out \$11 million to be fought over by the Bay Area ports. What, they ran out of pooches in Ohio? Port officials also hope to receive up to \$600 million in funding generated by Proposition 1B, a \$20 billion statewide infrastructure bond measure approved by voters in November. Now that's what I call bringing home the sans-transfat bacon.

■ **Poor Chicago:** The George Harvey House, the Pilgrim Baptist Church, and the Dexter Building. What do they have in common? All were designed by Louis Sullivan, considered by some to be the greatest American architect who ever lived. This view was held by Frank Lloyd Wright, who, hard to believe, thought someone greater than himself. All three of Sullivan's buildings burned last year in Chicago, reducing his works to a meager few. Sullivan, unlike his protégé Wright, specialized in commercial structures, including the world's first skyscraper. Unfortunately for posterity, commercial buildings are often the first to be altered or destroyed due to their land value, their use of space and the reigning fashion whim of the times. In contrast to Sullivan's paltry surviving works, Wright's portfolio of residential buildings is numerous. ■

Calendar

EVENTS

May 10: Partners in Preservation Awards Ceremony. See box on page one.

June 14: Rehab it Right! Jane Powell discusses the houses of audience members in this unusual evening, drawing from her many books

and using submitted photographs to suggest inspiring restoration options. To participate: e-mail a few photos of your interior and/or kitchen project to nj2oakland@yahoo.com. (Emails given first priority; pictures will also be accepted at the door but can be evaluated only as time permits.) 7:30 p.m., Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., \$8 members (\$10 nonmembers, \$5 low-income).

EXHIBITS

What Becomes of a Broken Soul: Letters from the New Plantation Prison. Mixed media letters by Milton Bowens, looking at poverty, materialism, class, racism, imprisonment and free labor. Through April 28 at the African-American Museum and Library at Oakland, 659 14th St. Open Tues-Sat, noon to 5:30. 637-0200.



Landmarks Board summaries

By Naomi Schiff

■ **July 10, 2006:** Under open forum, Maceo May and Michael Bowman, residents of 200 Lakeside, spoke about the potential threat to the **Schilling Garden** on 19th Street, rated A in the historic survey and in existence since the late 19th century. They requested assistance in finding a way to preserve the garden.

Joyce Roy of OHA spoke about possibilities for preserving the **Produce Market** area and expressed support of landmarking the **Altenheim** and **Studio One**. The board recommended approval of a project at **367-377 2nd St., 370-380 Embarcadero**, requesting that the project come before the board for design review based on its relationship to the Produce Market Historic District.

Board discussed and commented on a proposed building on a vacant lot at **820 Washington**, in the Old Oakland district. Board requested review of building materials. Board members Muller and Peterson volunteered for a subcommittee to review how the new 63-unit project could fit in with its neighbors and not detract from them.

The **Altenheim's** request for landmark designation was supported unanimously by the board, and forwarded to the Planning Commission. A request to support its nomination to the National Register was also approved unanimously. The **Studio One** request for landmark designation was also supported unanimously. The board heard an open forum presentation on the status of the **Victory Sirens**. There is interest in restoring this city-owned property.

■ **Sept. 11, 2006:** The board discussed a staff report on citywide **amendments to Oakland Planning Code and Zoning** maps. The proposal only includes A and B rated properties: C rated buildings would not go through design review, which would be inconsistent with Policy 3.5. Potentially Designated Historic Properties seem to be left out. The board questioned how staff can make sure that the public is aware of the status of properties and whether Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey information could be loaded onto the city's computer system. Board asked staff to work to make the language consistent between new codes and the

Historic Preservation Element. Members discussed a new construction project at **510-514 7th St.**, a vacant lot in Victorian Row. Discussion ensued, of how the new building would relate to the old adjoining ones. Board members Peterson and Tavernier volunteered for a subcommittee to study the proposal.

Election of officers: Board member Parish will be the new chair and Peterson Vice Chair, unanimously approved. Delphine Prevost introduced as new Board member. Board member Muller reported on plans to modify the **Oakland Museum** entries and exterior walkways. Some positive modifications have been made. Secretary reported on planning commission approval of **721-741 Broadway**, pending design review approval.

■ **Oct. 16, 2006:** Discussion of **367-377 Second St.**, a proposed demolition in the waterfront warehouse district, to build a nine-story building with 96 residential units and ground floor commercial space. LPAB had previously decided that the C1+-rated Jack London Arcade was not a Potentially Designated Historic Property. Comments included review of relationship of building design to the adjacent historic district.

The board watched a presentation about proposed modifications to entry and walkways at **Oakland Museum**, and the potential roofing-over of one courtyard to create more indoor exhibit space. The proposal includes installing permanent outdoor roofed areas and adding an ADA access ramp on Oak Street. Board members engaged in lively dialogue with the architect.

PGA Design and Friends of the **Cleveland Cascade** showed ideas, drawings, and plans for the cascade's restoration, asking the board to comment on paving schemes, alterations of a former water feature at the top above the cascade, and details of the stairways and railings. The board hosted discussion of the historic status of a church at **332 Alcatraz**, a building which has been much altered since its original survey rating a number of years ago.

■ **Nov. 13, 2006:** Presentation by Bridge Housing Corp. about **St. Joseph's Professional Center**, 2647 International Blvd., for Section 106 review. Bridge Housing plans to adaptively reuse the main building and laun-

dry building, and demolish several smaller outbuildings. Plans are to construct new housing and some commercial space around the large site. The main building would also be used for housing. A second discussion about the **Oakland Museum** modifications reflected further changes to the design. ■

House Museums

Continued from page 2

sion is clearly articulated.

As with the Pardee Home, the interiors are too fragile to allow frequent use as an events venue. The foundation generates income by means of memberships and other small donations, fourth Sunday tours, and occasional tours by school groups. It also holds a holiday tea and a Twelfth Night dinner, when the house is decked out in Victorian Christmas finery. The VPCO board hopes to be able to earn income by teaching interested students how to repair and restore antique interiors, using the house itself as a laboratory, and has already conducted a test class. It also hopes that with a restored garden the yard could be rented for summer events.

With no paid staff, the Cohen-Bray House manages on an annual operating budget of only about \$20,000 a year. Its infrastructure needs, however, are mighty. The existing brick foundation needs to be seismically stabilized; the house is also in desperate need of a new roof. The old roof is leaking, jeopardizing the original plaster in the attic. The attic served as a schoolroom for the Cohen children in the 19th century and the walls still have the children's original graffiti. If the plaster had to be replaced due to water damage, the historic quality of the walls would be destroyed.

Significant work also needs to be done on the house's chimneys, porches, and windows. The overall project—foundation, roof, and all—is estimated to cost \$2.5 million. About \$50,000 has been raised so far, but emergency roof repairs have cut into that fund. Last year, VPCO won the Wooden Windows "Ugly Windows" contest, which will fund the repair of the five most deteriorated second floor windows.

See HOUSE MUSEUMS on page 11



BELIEVE IT OR NOT, this circle of people represents the circumference of one of the original redwood trees (and not even the largest!), top. At right, Dennis Evanosky talks to the group in the lushness of the second-growth redwoods.



Redwoods walking tour

This tour, co-led by Richard Schwartz and Dennis Evanosky, was so wildly popular that OHA added on three more dates.

Many thanks to our volunteers

By *Chela Zitani*

House Tour Docents/Volunteers:

Carolyn Kemp, Diane Levy, Patti Busk, Dan Jepson, Peggy Martin, Judy Casey, Haig Agigian, Lisa Spearman, Jim Wellenbach, Jeanne Porter, Joan & Roy Holman, Tom Armour, Sandy Rauch, Ellen Seltzer, Becky Waring, Barbara & Sam Skelly, Marc Kagan, Diane Winters, Bob Murphy, Evelyn Moorman, Lynn Stirewalt, Geraldine McTigue, George Mallman, Diane Jacobson, Judy Jacobs, Mark Luellen, Gloria Pieretti, Mary & Herb Graw, Gail Sullivan, Sharon Miller, Dell Halverson, Ann Emerick, Liza Calef, Laura Craise, Sandy Tillin, Ann Del Simone, Darlene Ceremello, Helene Miller, Aida Peterson, Shirly Mannelle, Barbara O'Hara, David Nicolai, Carol Sheerin, Joel Toste, Sarah-Jane Parker Arnett, Melanie Archer, Marv Burrows, Carolyn Douthat, George Strauss, Margaret Pinter, Steve Rosemiller, Arthur Thistlewood, Emile Guel, Ann Killebrew, Robert & Dottie Howell

House Tour OHA Board Members:

Charles Crowder, Naomi Schiff, Valerie Garry, Alison Finlay, Michael Crowe, Steve Vigeant, Joyce Roy
House Tour Donors: Berkeley Signs, Donsumor, Acme Bread, Berkeley Minicar, Copy Plus, Nathan & Co., Montclair Florist, Bank of the West (Donna Hurst), Bloomies (Michela Maiden), Seulberger's Florist, Urban Indigo, Wooden Window, Temescal Café, Steve Costa (art donation), Acorn Kitchen & Bath
House Tour Guidebook: Seventeenth Street Studios, Sarah Hahn, Caitlin Harvey, Betty Marvin, Ray Ranieri, Jennifer Dowling, Pamela Magnusson-Peddle, Gail Lombardi, Gaye Lenahan, Beth Armstrong, Cecile Litherland, Annalee Allen
House Tour Homeowners: Debra Hill, Deborah Quay, Lynne Elizabeth, Stafford Buckley, Gwen Williams, Jennifer Cooper, Beth Maher, Paul Hunt and Melissa Clinton, Doug Dove, Alice Erb, Steve Costa
Walking Tour Volunteers: Kay Kohler, Daryl Halverson, Deb Cooper,

Pamela Magnuson-Peddle, Yorkman Lowe, Sara Jacobsen, Mary Harper, Bob Howell, Ann Killebrew, Judy Jacobs, Diane Levy
Walking Tour OHA Board Members: Alison Finlay, Steve Vigeant, Michael Crowe, Renie Bartolini
Lecture Series Volunteers: Liza Calef, Sandy Tillin
Lecture Series OHA Board Members: Alison Finlay, Naomi Schiff, Michael Crowe, Steve Vigeant, Valerie Garry

... and donors

OHA is grateful for the generous support of its members.

Donations made between 7/1/06 and 10/20/06:

- Patricia Boese, \$25
- Sandra & Bill Threlfall, \$250
- Alison Finlay, \$1,000
- Kay Kohler, \$300
- Mark Lempert (Berkeley Minicar), \$300



How our new mayor fits into Oakland's mayoral history

By David Nicolai

When Ronald V. Dellums was inaugurated on Jan. 8, 2007, as mayor of Oakland, he became the 47th individual to hold that office since 1854, two years after the city incorporated. That year, Horace Carpentier became not only the city's first mayor, but also the youngest mayor ever elected in Oakland (he was 29 years old). One might ask how Dellums "stacks up" to the previous mayors; that is, in what respects does the mayor represent a continuum in the city's leadership, and in what respects does he represent a departure? How do his childhood, education, and previous career match up with those of the other 46 mayors, and how do the aspirations and expectations he brings to his new office compare with those of his predecessors?

Dellums, born in Oakland on Nov. 24, 1935, is only the third Oakland native to become mayor. The other two were William J. McCracken, mayor from 1933 to 1941, and Joseph Smith, who served from 1947 to 1949. Oakland now ties San Francisco for being the birthplace of the most Oakland mayors; the three mayors born in San Francisco were actually among our best-known—George Pardee, Frank Mott, and Jerry Brown. Pardee and Mott worked closely together, of course, in 1906 to get their hometown back on its feet following the disastrous earthquake. Pardee as California governor and Mott as Oakland mayor.

Dellums, like many other African-Americans in Oakland, traces his roots back to Texas—both his father and his famous uncle C. L. Dellums, leader of the Sleeping Car Porters, were born there. No prior Oakland mayor claims roots in Texas, but one recent, well-known Bay Area mayor, Willie Brown of San Francisco, does; he was born in the small town of Mineola, Texas, in 1934. Many other African-Americans in Oakland claim roots in the adjacent state of Louisiana, and our first African-American mayor, Lionel Wilson, who served from 1977 to 1991, was born in New Orleans in 1915, three years before his family moved to Oakland.

Dellums, who grew up at 1014-16 Wood St. in West Oakland, attended St. Patrick's

School on Peralta Street, Westlake Junior High on Harrison Street, and Oakland Technical High School on Broadway. In his autobiography, Dellums related that he was able to use his uncle's north Oakland address to be assigned to Westlake and Tech, rather than Prescott and McClymonds, the schools attended by most of his neighbors in West Oakland. He is the first Oakland mayor to have attended any of these schools. He is the first product of the Catholic schools in Oakland since Joseph Smith, who attended St. Francis de Sales in Oakland and St. Mary's High School in Berkeley. Oakland Tech turns out to be the fourth public high school in Oakland to produce a mayor (George Pardee, William McCracken, and John Slavich graduated from Oakland High; John Reading from Fremont, and Lionel Wilson from McClymonds).

Dellums holds two college degrees, a B.A. from San Francisco State University (1960) and an M.S.W. from UC Berkeley (1962). He is the second graduate of the California State University system to become mayor (Elihu Harris graduated from Cal State Hayward, as it was then called). Dellums can be included among the large group of previous mayors with degrees from UC Berkeley (nine undergraduate degrees and two law degrees), but only Dellums earned an M.S.W. from that renowned university (Harris earned an M.A.).

Before earning his degrees, Dellums spent two years in the Marines, in part to secure funding for college. After earning his graduate degree in social work, he worked actively in that field for around eight years. Although a number of past Oakland mayors have been veterans, and some could claim wartime service, Dellums is the first Marines veteran to become mayor, and he is also the first former social worker to do so.

Undoubtedly, the one aspect of his past which most sets him aside from all other Oakland mayors is the 28 years he spent, from 1971 to 1999, representing California's Ninth District in the United States House of Representatives. Only one other Oakland mayor has ever served in the U.S. Congress: John Glascock, a Democrat and native of Mississippi who served one term in the



THE CHILDHOOD HOME of Ron Dellums, on Wood Street in West Oakland.

House (1884-1886) before serving one term as Oakland mayor (1889-1891). Whereas Glascock clearly had as little impact in Washington as he did here in Oakland, our current mayor became a figure of national and even international repute during his many years in the House, largely as a hero to liberals and leftists, and an arch-enemy to conservative thinkers and leaders. Dellums became an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War immediately after his arrival in Washington, and in later years he became equally well-known on the national stage for his fundamental challenges to the domestic priorities and international initiatives of successive presidential administrations. Dellums achieved particular fame for being unquestionably the most anti-Pentagon Chairman of the Armed Services Committee to ever serve in that powerful position, as well as the first openly Socialist candidate to win election to the House in many years, as a member of the Democratic Socialists of America.

Is Dellums the oldest man to become mayor? Yes, indeed; Dellums, who was 70 when elected and 71 when he took office, is the oldest, but just barely. Henry Durant was a Congregational minister who founded the

See **DELLUMS** on page 10



Dellums

Continued from page 9

College of California in Oakland in 1855. When that institution later became the University of California, he served briefly as its first president, from 1870 to 1872. He then turned to politics and served as president of the Oakland city council before becoming mayor in March 1873, about three months before his 71st birthday (he died in office in January 1875). Other senior citizens who served as mayor include Anson Barstow, who was 69 when he became the first mayor elected during the 20th century in 1901; Herbert Beach, a farmer's son from Virginia, who was 68 when elected in 1945; Illinois native W.R. Thomas, a Civil War veteran and former chief of police in Oakland who was 67 when elected mayor in 1897; and Eli Playter, a native of Canada who grew up on an upstate New York farm and became a prosperous hardware merchant in San Francisco before becoming mayor in 1885 at the age of 66.

If Dellums serves two full four-year terms, he will not be the oldest mayor to leave office. That honor belongs to John L. Davie, who served two different times as mayor, from 1895 to 1897 and from 1915 to 1931 (nine separate terms, in total!). Before first being elected mayor in 1895 at the age of 44, the larger-than-life Davie had worked as a mule driver, ranch hand, opera singer, actor, inventor, butcher, a small rancher in Oakland (around 33rd and West streets), a “hay, coal, and feed” merchant on Washington Street, and owner of a bookstore next-door. He was 65 when he returned to office in 1915, and 80 when he retired in 1931. Following retirement he would “hold court” in the lobby of the Hotel Oakland, where he lived, and walk to Lake Merritt for frequent rowing trips. He also authored the only autobiography by a former Oakland mayor, a hokum-filled volume entitled *His Honor, the Buckaroo* (Dellums's *Lying Down with the Lions: A Public Life from the Streets of Oakland to the Halls of Power*, co-authored by H. Lee Halterman and published in 2000, is the only autobiography written by a future Oakland mayor.) Davie was also the longest-serving mayor, with 18 years in office, followed by Lionel Wilson, who served for 13 years before leaving office in 1991 at 75.

Was the 2006 mayoral election the closest in Oakland history? Perhaps—this question is almost impossible to answer definitively, due to the shifting formats of city elections and the fact that the results of the historic mayoral races have never been compiled in one place. Dellums was declared the winner of the hard-fought 2006 election on June 16, after ten days of

recounting ballots, with 42,108 votes, or 50.19% of all votes, just enough to avoid a November run-off with the runner-up Ignacio de la Fuente, who received 27,666 votes.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when multiple well-organized parties put up candidates and run-off elections were unheard of, candidates often won with much less than 50% of the vote. For example, in 1893, the Citizens' Municipal League candidate, George Pardee, received 2,776 votes; the Populist Party candidate John L. Davie received 2,328; the Democrat received 2,191; and the Republican 946, so Pardee was elected with just 33% of the votes! Likewise, the legendary Frank Mott, who served five terms in office from 1905 to 1915, won his first race as a “fusion” candidate, backed by the Democratic, Republican, and Municipal League parties, with 5,459 votes to 3,199 votes for the now Independent candidate John Davie, with the Union Labor candidate third with 1,800 votes and the Socialist Party nominee Jack London (yes, that Jack London!) fourth with 981 (a big improvement over the 247 votes London received when he ran for mayor in 1901). Thus, Mott won with 47% of the vote.

Since 1949, when the mayor was once again elected by popular vote for the first time since 1927, most of the mayors have won elections easily, with well over 50% of the vote, even in crowded, non-partisan primary votes. The best example is former mayor Jerry Brown, who first won election in 1998, with 58.7% of the votes in an 11-candidate primary. The most important



THE HOME OF C. L. DELLUMS, the important mentor and uncle of Ron Dellums, on Brockhurst Avenue in West Oakland.

exception came in 1990, when Lionel Wilson, who had handily won three previous mayoral races, came in only a distant third in the primary, behind two other African-American candidates, Elihu Harris and Wilson Riles, Jr. (Harris easily defeated Riles in the general election.) Both Wilson, who received 42,961 votes when he first became mayor in 1977, and Dellums, who received 42,108 votes last year, did not quite equal the vote total of the first significant black candidate for mayor in Oakland—Black Panther Bobby Seale, who received 43,749 votes in 1973, far behind the 77,634 votes received by the incumbent mayor John Reading. The biggest vote-getter among African-American candidates remains Elihu Harris, who won 54,259 votes in the 1990 general.

David Nicolai is the director of the Pardee Home Museum and curated an exhibit on Oakland mayors for the city's sesquicentennial. ■

A FAR LESS POPULAR MAYOR...

The fourth annual **Horace Carpentier Dinner** will be held 6-9:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 8 at the Jack London Aquatic Center. The keynote speaker will be Henry Gardner, former Oakland city manager and current director of the Association of Bay Area Governments. This is a benefit for the Jack London Aquatic Center and Waterfront Action, Inc., celebrating the Oakland-Alameda Estuary. Visit www.waterfrontaction.org for information on tickets and details.



Strength in change

By Naomi Schiff, *Outgoing President*

As we whirled through a busy winter and holiday season, this newsletter has borne the brunt of delays, so we beg your forgiveness! We wish everyone an excellent year, and are eager to share some of OHA's news.

We welcome Chela Zitani, a capable, friendly, and creative new voice in the OHA office. She is making huge improvements, and if you haven't heard from her yet, you soon will, while she updates our membership database. Please bear with us as we modernize, and if we get something wrong, do let us know. We'd also like to introduce our wonderful new bookkeeper, Jim Hild.

Three cheers to our newly-elected officers: Valerie Garry, President; Dea Bacchetti, Vice President; Steve Vigeant, Secretary; and Alison Finlay, Treasurer. We are delighted to welcome Kathryn Hughes and Joan Dark onto the board. Charles Crowder has retired and will be missed for his stalwart service, great ideas and good-humored assistance.

Second Thursdays at Chapel of the Chimes is proving to be a wonderful series: varied, with good turnout and the chance to spend a few hours in a wonderful Julia Morgan landmark.



Erika Mailman

OAK CHELA ZITANI, OHA's new director, works to update the database.

Last fall, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and American Express teamed up to hand out grants to historic landmarks. The Cleveland Cascade and the Fox Oakland Theater won funds towards restoration projects, thanks in part to the many Oaklanders (and lots of OHA members) who expressed their support by voting at a special website.

Serving as president of OHA has been an exciting roller coaster ride: a rewarding one, and an inspiration. So many Oaklanders love their city and want to see it grow and change while retaining a strong sense of itself!

I am continuing to pitch in with some pet projects, including reissuing *Story of a City*,

House Museums

Continued from page 7

Right now the Cohen-Bray House and VPCO are in particular need of someone who can run a capital campaign to raise more of the money needed to make these critical repairs.

Overall thoughts: Given a perfect world, however, with millions of dollars available to restore these homes, would they still languish? The children's words scrawled on the attic wall in the 1800s, preserved perfectly... for who to see? The governor's parlor completely intact...to what end?

Not only are these historic homes fighting the ravages of time, they are also fighting to offer something of value to a world that seems somewhat uninterested. These are sticky questions and not easily answered. ■

and working with the preservation action committee.

Please help OHA continue as a strong advocate for preservation and a powerful educational force in the community, by contributing financially and volunteering at its activities. Thank you to everyone, and I hope to see you soon. ■

CONTRIBUTORS: Annalee Allen, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Kevin Flynn, David Nicolai, Allyson Quibell, Joyce Roy, 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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Valerie Garry, *President*
- Dea Bacchetti, *Vice President*
- Steve Vigeant, *Secretary*
- Alison Finlay, *Treasurer*
- Michael Crowe Joan Dark
- Katherine Hughes Joyce Roy
- Naomi Schiff

JOIN OHA, OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

- \$20 Keystone** (*limited income/senior/student*): quarterly newsletter, advance notice and discounted pricing on programs, events and tours
- \$40 Cornerstone** (*individual*): quarterly newsletter, advance notice and discounted pricing on programs, events and tours plus 50% off two house tour tickets
- \$60 Pilaster** (*household*): same as above plus 50% off four house tour tickets.
- \$100 Pediment** (*organization/corporate*): same as above plus 50% off four house tour tickets (for corporate or organization, transferable).
- \$250-\$499 Doric**: same as above plus two tickets to a walking tour, two tickets to a house tour.
- \$500-\$999 Ionic**: same as above plus two additional tickets (total of 4) to walking tour, two additional tickets (total of 4) tickets to a house tour.
- \$1,000-\$2,500 Corinthian**: all access pass for two (transferable).
- I'd like to contribute _____ to the OHA Anniversary Fund, and help assure the future of historic preservation in Oakland.**

Name

Address

City, Zip

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____

Email

Send to: Oakland Heritage Alliance, 446 17th St., Suite 301, Oakland, CA 94612 or go to www.oaklandheritage.org. For info: 510-763-9218.



Is the rock still on the ridge?

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

The distinguished company pictured here is gathered around the great stone that provided the name for Oakland's Rockridge district. Documents in the Oakland History Room suggest that they were members of the Deutscher Club of Oakland, who reportedly gathered "under the trees by the old Cactus Rock on Acacia Avenue" for their 27th annual picnic. The party drew together about five-dozen of the most prominent Germans residing in the Oakland area. Their picnic combined fellowship and Alpen mountain high jinks with a probable real estate pitch from the Laymance Brothers or their agent Fred E. Reed, for as the revelers that day had been transported to the site via the Laymance's "big touring car."

In a 1984 article in the *Piedmont-Oakland Bulletin*, Ray Raineri looked at the early years of the Rockridge district, focusing on the real estate development program of Laymance Realty Company in 1912 and the years just after. He wrote that the area (Rock Ridge, as it was termed then) took its name from that very rock. The Oakland History Room includes in its collection the Laymance Real Estate Company's Rock Ridge scrapbooks, preserving detailed information about their development and promotion of this choice piece of property. Rock Ridge Terrace, site of the Deutscher Club's picnic

and the eponymous stone, was the name the Laymances gave to that portion of their holdings situated at the highest elevation and commanding the highest prices.

But what became of the landmark rock? What was its actual location? At the time this photo was taken, the current streetscape had not been built and the closest named street was Acacia Avenue. Was the stone blown to bits and carted away in order to smooth the landscape for home construction as Raineri wrote in his 1984 article or is it still there, tucked into a residential lot at Glenbrook and Bowling, as Erika Mailman's book *Oakland Hills* indicates? A recent open house in the Claremont Pines neighborhood suggests the latter.

Last September, a 1935 Claremont Pines home was placed on the market on behalf of the Nature Conservancy, which had received the house and land from the estate of the

original owners. Marketing materials for the property included Mailman's book and proudly pointed out that the rock featured on pages 32 and 33 could be found just outside in the garden. Could this be it? Stepping out into the garden, I saw an imposing stone, partially buried with earth and obscured by plantings but looking remarkably like the photo of "Cactus Rock." It was not a stretch of the imagination to picture it standing tall on the hill surrounded by holiday-making German-Americans on a bright long-ago day.



DEUTSCHER CLUB MEMBERS (probably) gather around the rock.



Oakland Heritage Alliance
446 17th St., Suite 301
Oakland, CA 94612

Address Correction Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S POSTAGE
PAID
Oakland, California
Permit No. 31