

OHA finds a new home

By Allyson Quibell

Although the Oakland Heritage Alliance's office will miss its beautiful view of Lake Merritt and the charm of the Camron-Stanford House, its new location, 446 17th St. at Broadway, is a more accessible location and, for those who appreciate urban vistas, offers an excellent view of the Cathedral Building and the Rotunda.

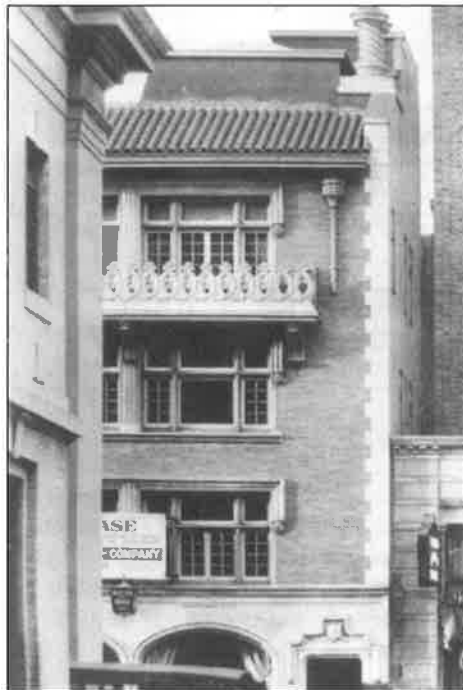
After 18 happy years by the lake, OHA moved to its new space in February. It was, says president Naomi Schiff, "the right time for the organization to move downtown and closer to Broadway . . . I'm optimistic that it's a good move for us."

Esther Hill, OHA's director, adds that, "While I miss the staff of the Camron-Stanford House—Liz Way and Jack Stone—and the sense of history that comes with working in a Victorian, I'm finding that the new office space offers some wonderful opportunities. The building is just around the corner from BART and bus stops. We're closer to City Hall, the city planning offices, and a number of our board members."

The third floor office is bright and airy with a large conference table that will accommodate committee meetings and mailing parties. And, notes Esther, "Since we have more cabinet space, we'll be able to keep OHA products here instead of in a storage unit, and our files will be better organized for those doing research."

The building's owners are the three principals of PGAdesign, Landscape Architects: Chris Pattillo, a long-time OHA member, and her partners, Cathy Garrett and Christopher Kent. "Doing landscape historic preservation projects is an important part of our professional practice," says Chris. "One of our goals in owning this building is to create a hub of preservation and design activity in downtown Oakland . . . Having OHA as a tenant in the building is an important component of that goal."

Like many downtown, this building has an interesting architectural history.



Courtesy of Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey



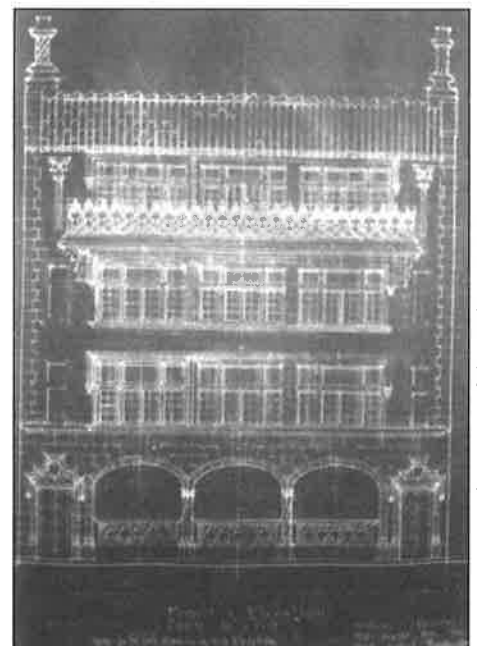
Alan Templeton

OHA'S NEW OFFICE in its previous incarnation (circa 1925), left, and as it appears today, right. The building was designed in 1917; the original blueprints are below.

Designed by William Knowles for the Hutchinson Company in 1917, the original plans show an ornate Mediterranean/Gothic-style building.

But, as was common practice from the 1930s until the '60s, many buildings, including this one, were given "makeovers" by property owners eager to lure customers to their newly-modernized businesses. The façade you see today was created in 1946 when First Federal Savings & Loan paid \$50,000 (no small sum in those days) to have the brick and terra cotta facing removed and replaced with granite. The work was done by Christensen & Lyons, and represents one of the earliest examples of Modernist architecture in the downtown area.

The man behind the makeover was one of Oakland's leading architects, William
see OFFICE on page 2



Courtesy of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey



For a better Oakland, let's build a stronger OHA

By Naomi Schiff, President

We're beginning 2004 with change and excitement at Oakland Heritage Alliance. As you can see in this issue of the *News*, we are ensconced in a wonderful new office, where Esther Hill has worked miracles in unpacking and organizing. Many thanks to the members who rallied around and helped with the move!

We welcome new board members: Sally Kemmerer, Kirk Peterson, Cynthia Shartzter, and Valerie Garry. In a true measure of longterm dedication, many former board members are still active, volunteering and taking on vital tasks.

Now as we head into spring, we're hoping to move forward on several fronts.

- We are planning to jumpstart our publishing program, with help from a very generous grant from the DeLong-Sweet Foundation (see article on p.3).

- The Programs Committee is working on some unusual events. We'll need lots of help and we hope you will attend the upcoming Women's History Month lecture and walking tour, the Preservation Week programs, and our Summer Walking Tours. Volunteering is a great way to meet some wonderful fellow members, and to find out what is happening in Oakland!

- An impressive record of negotiating and advocacy efforts is continuing: we are eager to see the Cox Cadillac project begin, incorporating an historic showroom, and are delighted to have submitted a landmark application for the Ninth Avenue Terminal. The Ebright Boathouse is being partially preserved and will be incorporated into the new Cal Crew complex.

- We are hoping to organize and pursue a full-fledged plaque program, so that

everyone will recognize the landmarks of Oakland and learn why they are special.

- Last, but not least, we hope to help the city pass and implement a Mills Act program, to enable more owners to obtain tax credits for historic preservation work on their properties. Such an incentive would help underline our often-repeated position that economic development and historic preservation do go hand in hand.

What do we need to accomplish all these things? We need you! We need your time, your ideas, your enthusiasm and your financial support.

Above all, we need you to recruit your friends and neighbors to join OHA. Pass this newsletter on and encourage others to join now and take part in the success of OHA and in the civic life of a great city.

See you on 17th Street!

Office

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Schirmer (1891–1957). Known for many flashy period revival houses in the Lakeshore district, Schirmer also designed historic Sweet's Ballroom on Broadway. He was responsible for the design of many parochial schools and churches and was one of a group of architects who designed the Alameda County Courthouse.

All are welcome to stop by to see OHA's new home. Business hours are 8 a.m.–2 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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LANDMARKS BOARD ACTIVITY SUMMARIES

by Jordan Harrison

NOV. '03: Director's Report: Board subcommittees prepared comment letters on two draft Environmental Impact Reports for the Uptown Mixed Use Project and Jack London Square Redevelopment. Anna Naruta commented on the Uptown EIR, stating that the proposed mitigation of having an archeological monitor present is inadequate given the likelihood of finding historical archeological deposits associated with early Chinatown settlements.

Actions Taken: Preliminary Evaluation Sheet for Landmark Eligibility of the Ninth Avenue Terminal was adopted. Public commentators on the Terminal building included Leal Charonnat, who stated that the Friends of the Ninth Avenue Terminal plan to document the history of the building. Barbara Szudy, Port of Oakland Project Manager for the Oak to Ninth District Project, explained issues involved in the project, including Tidelands Trust restrictions, remediation activities, the seaport plan, and the Estuary Plan for open space. The Board also adopted the Preliminary Evaluation Sheet for Landmark Eligibility for the following prop-

erties: 1426 Alice Street (Alice Arts Center), 1520 Lakeside Drive (Municipal Boathouse), and 150 Frank Ogawa Plaza (Broadway Building).

DEC. '03: Open Forum: Four people spoke about the need to save the 1925 Holy Redeemer Center, for which the City has received a demolition permit application due to structural concerns. No project is proposed for the site.

Special Presentation: Resolution of Appreciation presented to Ms. Ellen Wyrick Parkinson for her role in the Landmark Designation of the Oak Center Historic District.

Actions Taken: Board moved to proceed with the Landmark application for the Ninth Avenue Terminal building after the project applicant (Signature Properties) and the Port of Oakland withdrew objections. OHA will be the co-applicant on the nomination. Board moved to adopt resolution initiating the Landmark designation of 653 Eleventh St., the Victorian Legal Center.

Board Reports: The International Style Buildings in Oakland subcommittee (Bliss, See **LANDMARKS** on page 5



Generosity—and a sweet connection—fuel OHA efforts

■ OHA receives grant to support its programs

By Erika Mailman

With help from a generous grant from the DeLong-Sweet Foundation, OHA plans to jumpstart its publication program and leverage the additional funding needed. OHA, publisher of Beth Bagwell's *Oakland, The Story of a City*, has long been eager to update the written history of Oakland. Monumental events such as the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and the 1991 firestorm—and many social, political, and cultural developments—have occurred since 1982, when the book first came out.

Wycliffe DeLong is to thank for arranging the \$15,000 grant. Last spring, he moved to Oakland from Los Angeles (although his family has longtime roots in the Bay Area, he was born in Chicago and came to Oakland by way of several other cities) and bought a house. After receiving a flyer from the Piedmont Adult School, he enrolled in a class on historic East Bay architecture.

A fellow student in that class was Oakland Heritage Alliance member Jim Ratliff, who told DeLong about the then-upcoming Preservation Awards ceremony at the historic Sweet's Ballroom in downtown Oakland.

DeLong's interest was naturally piqued, since his aunt and uncle Bill & Wycliffe Sweet (yes, he comes from a long line of Wycliffes, both male and female) were former owners of Sweet's Ballroom!

"I went to the meeting and I was just blown away by everyone I met there. They were so committed and so interested in the community," says DeLong. He spoke with OHA director Esther Hill about his connection to the DeLong-Sweet Foundation, and how it seeks out local community-minded organizations to help fund.

Hill was quick to pick up the ball and tell DeLong that OHA has long wanted to update the Bagwell book. She gave him past copies of *OHA News*, which he distributed to his fellow board members to demonstrate OHA's mission and flavor.

"It was incredibly serendipitous that I would hear from him at the same time

that we're holding an annual meeting at Sweet's with this connection with his family. And it was already on my To Do list to research funding for this project," says Hill.

Two weeks later, the foundation board met and reviewed various grant options. During a secret ballot, each potential organization was ranked one to four, with four denoting a high level of interest.

"OHA got more votes than anybody," DeLong says. "I requested the \$15,000 and it was like, 'Got it! Done!'"

Other organizations funded by the foundation this year were Children's

Fairyland, the Lindsay Wildlife Museum and the Lighthouse for the Blind in San Rafael.

DeLong is enthusiastic about helping organizations like OHA strengthen communities.

"I see the potential (in Oakland), and it's just going to get better and better," he says.

One would think someone who has been so instrumental in collaborating with OHA would be able to rest on his laurels a bit.

Not so: DeLong laughingly says, "I still need to become a member!"

Your gift may be able to help, too

Even if you don't belong to a foundation, you can still work an influence to help OHA. Two of our longtime members, Diane Levy and Matthew Gabel, take advantage of their employer's gift matching programs.

Gabel has worked for Bank of America for 11 years and has had his OHA contributions matched, dollar for dollar, that entire time. "Given all the budget cuts in public funding, it's great that they've stepped in," says Gabel.

He reported that the process takes about 3–4 minutes. It involves going online, clicking on the matching option, and printing out a confirmation sheet to send to OHA. "They've made it pretty simple," he says.

Knowing that his contribution has twice the heft inspires him to give more generously.

"I try to dig a little deeper knowing it's doubled," he says.

Levy works at Charles Schwab, which provides a partial gift match (50 cents for each dollar). She has worked there for five years and like Gabel uses a "very easy" online form to sign up.

She says that the gift match program is "very important to the company. They even mention it during your orientation." She's attracted to supporting OHA because of the variety of projects it undertakes. "I think it has so many worthwhile spokes of the wheel, the many things they do," she says.

It might be worth checking into whether your company offers gift match, even if it's just to match your membership fee.

"From what I've heard, many corporate entities around the Bay Area do this," says Gabel.

You can also make a donation to OHA via the United Way; we're listed as one of the organization's nonprofits.

AD SALESPERSON OPPORTUNITY

Help OHA build a really interesting advertising section! Sell ad space (to specialty consultants, architects, home furnishings purveyors, realtors, contractors, caterers, florists . . .) in this newsletter, and earn while supporting OHA. Call 763-9218 for details, or email oha@oaklandheritage.org.



When Oakland's rams took an unauthorized ramble

by Erika Mailman

If you think art theft is a shadowy international game, you're right. But it's also happening here in our city!

Last year, OHA's then administrative director Kathy Ferreira received a cryptic phone call from member Maureen Clark. Ferreira says Clark told her, "Someone would be interested to know that there's an antique store in Rockridge selling stolen city antiquities." Apparently, Clark's friend, who works in the salvage business, tipped her off that façade details from an Oakland structure torn down in 1988 were being funneled to local antique stores. "She never told me who her deep throat was," says Ferreira. "To this day he remains nameless."

The façade elements in question are terra cotta rams' heads, and scrolls, from the 1928 Twentieth Century Market, originally located at 14th Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. The building was designed by well-known Oakland architect Maury Diggs. It had an interesting resumé, having been used as a market, firehouse, ice rink, and home for the Oakland Museum's conservation department. Due to deterioration, it was demolished to make way for a parking lot (sadly, today it's still a vacant lot). As part of the mitigations for tearing down the historic building, the city agreed to later use the architectural elements on a new building, and the rams were put into storage to await that eventuality. But at the time, neither Ferreira nor her caller knew that

Clark had thought the rams had been stolen from the city's municipal warehouse on Ford Street, by Fruitvale. Since the Oakland Museum's warehouse for its celebrated White Elephant Sale is nearby, the two thought the warehouses might be linked (ultimately a red herring). So Ferreira launched into investigatory mode: she tried to locate the warehouse in the phonebook, did online research on the White Elephant Sale, and called the museum, the president of the sale board, and, most importantly, a city employee to get more information.

Eventually, the city employee called back, remembering the 20th Century Market as a possible source for the stolen goods. The employee also remembered



Alan Templeton

ONE OF THE RAMS still safely in storage, top. At right is the now-demolished Twentieth Century Market, with the ram figures visible at the top of the columns. The scroll above the window is also an element that has been seen in antique stores around town.



Courtesy, Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey

another city employee, Alex Greenwood, who had been assigned, as the employee put it, as "Keeper of the Rams."

Ferreira called up Greenwood and told him the news. "He was stunned," said Ferreira. "There was dead silence on the line." Since Greenwood lived near the store alleged to be selling the rams, he stopped by on his way home from work. He identified the rams, called the cops, and Ferreira passed the detective baton to the OPD.

At the city's warehouse, over \$100,000 worth of the Market materials were missing. "It must have taken truckloads and forklifts to steal this stuff," said Ferreira. The archi-

tectural elements were large and incredibly heavy. In fact, the thieves had dropped some of the pieces while trying to take them, and left the shattered remnants—which apparently were never discovered or reported by the warehouse watchstaff.

Police were able to recover about a dozen of the stolen rams' heads from various local antique and salvage stores — but they found less than half of what was missing.

The rams' heads were moved to the Ford Street warehouse only months before their disappearance; perhaps the move from the

See **RAMBLE** on page 5



Ramble

Continued from page 4

former warehouse brought attention to the valuable pieces. Greenwood no longer lives in the area and was therefore unavailable for comment.

Ferreira credits Clark for instigating the movement that led to some of the rams' recoupment. "Most people are so apathetic they don't want to rock the boat or gossip. She wasn't like that," she says. "She was the unsung vigilante hero." Ferreira also knows that without Clark's intervention, the loss may never even have been discovered.

At a local antique store where seven pieces were recovered by police, the manager is rueful. "I learned a lesson not to buy off the street unless I'm 100 percent sure that I know where the product is coming from," he said. The store lost \$3,000 in the dirty deal. The manager turned the police on to the "ring" (several men) who sold him the Market pieces. He said one man was put in jail for a few days and then released. He himself has decided not to pursue legal action because he simply wants to put it behind him.

Yet, others may fall into the same trap. "I still see them at the flea market operating," says the manager.

"I read mysteries myself all the time," says Clark. "The truth is, I want people like that to be stopped."

For more information on the 20th Century Market, see the Winter 1987/88 and Summer 1988 issues of *OHA News*.

OHA rings in the holidays



All photos this page: Joyce Roy

OHA MEMBERS CELEBRATE the holidays at a party held at member Jane Powell's Craftsman home. At top, Powell (gesturing) talks with guests over a table of holiday treats. Above left, members relax throughout the spacious home. Above right, guests arrive and depart under a garland of walking cats.

Landmarks

Continued from page 2

Hooks, Dreyfuss) continues to discuss strategies for honoring, celebrating and encouraging the preservation of post-World War II buildings. Anyone interested in helping should contact Board secretary Joann Pavlinec at 238-6344

JAN. '04: *Director's Report:* The Holy Redeemer demolition permit had been put on hold in order to allow time to explore the historic status of the property. A Notice of Intent to Landmark the Center was submitted by OHA. Alvaro Carrasco, plant manager for Holy Redeemer Center 1992-2003,

explained that the Preliminary Seismic Evaluation done in 2001 does not indicate that the building should come down and a quarter of a million dollars was spent in 2001 retrofitting the building.

Actions Taken: Board moved to adopt resolution and forward to planning commission the landmark designation of 1454 8th St. (mansion) and 1450 8th St. (store) in Oak Point. Evaluation sheets for landmark eligibility for the Lincoln Theater Block, 1600-1616 7th St. and 1632-1642 7th St., as an S-7 district were adopted.

To receive LPAB agendas and complete minutes, contact Celia Rivero at crivero@Oaklandnet.com or 238-2912.

LAMPS AVAILABLE TO GOOD HOME

Now that we are brightly lit, OHA has three modest table lamps available to good homes. Call 763-9218 to claim one or all three.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR FALL HOUSE TOUR

The House Tour Committee is gearing up for a great tour of Crocker Highlands. We'll need researchers, writers, docents, ticket takers, and many other skilled hands. Call 763-9218 to contact the committee.



Preservation Action Committee news

Compiled by Joyce Roy

Here are some of the current issues members of OHA's Preservation Action Committee have been discussing:

Holy Redeemer: The demolition permit for the Holy Redeemer Retreat & Conference Center is on hold while the city conducts a study of the situation. It is a green urban oasis located in East Oakland at 8945 Golf Links Road. The central feature is a small hill crowned by a complex of Mediterranean style structures, built in 1926 as a seminary. From the central courtyard, there is a view down across the fields where the Arroyo Viejo Creek, now covered, once flowed. These buildings until recently housed Holy Redeemer Center, which hosted retreats, meetings, and events for Catholics, other churches, nonprofits and community groups. A residence for the Redemptorist Fathers features a handsome modern chapel, built in 1968. Holy Redeemer Center is unlike many landmarks in that it is in good repair. Its current use is quite similar to its original purpose, and it is consequently accessible to many people. For more info or to get involved, contact Kirk Peterson at 547-0275 or art2arch@pacbell.net.

Cleveland Cascade: The neighbors of the Cleveland Cascade are pushing for its revival. The Cascade is a series of graceful stairs located at the west end of Cleveland Street, between Lakeshore and Merritt avenues. Oakland architect Howard Gilkey designed this elegant piece of landscape architecture in 1923. Originally, water flowed and lights enhanced it at night. Although it has fallen into disrepair, it is still popular with joggers and stair climbers. The Green Team of Police Beat 15 is determined to bring it back to its original state as closely as funds permit. The Cascade is on the Measure DD list of Lake Merritt System Wide Improvements. Actual funding may depend upon community advocacy. The Green Team is looking for volunteers to do cleanup, draw up a landscaping plan and find plants that will survive on the steep slopes. Contact Barbara Newcombe, bnewcombe@jgc.org or 763-4406.

Ninth Avenue Terminal: At the Dec. 8, 2003 meeting, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board voted to proceed with landmark designation for the Ninth Avenue Terminal, Oakland Inner Harbor. The terminal is the last of three municipal marine terminals funded by the 1925 harbor bond. Both the Port of Oakland, owner, and Oakland Harbor Partners, LLC, a.k.a., Signature Properties, withdrew their previous opposition. Using the resources of the Port Archives and the Oakland History Room, OHA and Friends of the Ninth Avenue Terminal submitted a joint landmark application in early February. It will come to the landmarks board on March 8.

Cox Cadillac site: The property has a new developer, Robert Bond & Co. of Chicago. Approximately 110 condominium units are proposed, along with a 40,000-square-foot Whole Foods Market that will use the former auto showroom space for the front of the store. An opening in the rear wall will closely match the openings in the front and lead to newly added space. Most of the showroom's architectural features will be restored. The developer has already begun demolition and toxic remediation. As mitigation for the loss of the 1889-90 Piedmont Cable Car Barn behind the showroom, the barn's elegant queen's trusses will be saved. The present plan is to erect them as a gateway to Oak Center in West Oakland.

The new plan seems more attractive and more respectful of the neighborhood than earlier plans. The architect for new construction is Richard Christiani of Christiani Johnson Architects, San Francisco. His design for the housing resembles a hilltop cluster of buildings and is inspired by early 20th-century commercial architecture. Rosemary Muller of Muller & Caulfield, Oakland, is in charge of the adaptive reuse and restoration portions of the project. The Planning Commission's Design Committee gave the project kudos. It will go before the entire commission on March 3.

Mountain View Cemetery: As we go to press, Mountain View Cemetery is due to submit a formal settlement contract to the



THE CLEVELAND CASCADE as it descends to Lake Merritt, above, and the ascending view from the bottom, below.



court in a suit brought by the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL) and the California Preservation Foundation (CPF). The City of

See **ACTION** on page 9

All photos this page: Alan Templeton



Let us put a bug in your ear about 'Bee Season'

Here's the place to get the latest gossip on Oakland's historic front. History Hearsay is compiled by an anonymous, vigilant preservationist.

Richard Pettler, Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association board member, and his wife, painter Wanda Westberg, had to make room for Juliette Binoche and Richard Gere as their house was used for some interior scenes in the upcoming movie *Bee Season*. The film crew was also seen shooting at Lake Merritt recently.

As is usual with East Bay film projects, most of the actors stay at the Oakland landmark Claremont hotel, which was just put up for auction by KSL Recreation Corporation, an investment partnership of Kohlberg, Kravis & Roberts. In fact, all the KSL properties are

being auctioned off, which include the Grand Wailea Resort on Maui and the Arizona Biltmore, designed by Albert Chase McArthur and his consulting architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. KSL paid approximately \$80 million for the Claremont in 1998. Hey, do you remember when the City of Oakland wanted to sell the Lake Chabot Golf Course to KSL for \$22 million? So do we.

The Cox Cadillac building lives on—sort of. Did anyone see the weird sign about architectural details being available? It appears that the 90-foot steel trusses could be had for the taking. Well, someone wants them; look for them to reappear in Oakland!



And since we are on the subject: As much as we like Whole Foods, which has plans of locating at the Cox Cadillac site, we still can't envision where all the cars are going to park at 27th & Harrison, especially after seeing how busy their Berkeley store is. Will shoppers use the Segway "human transporters?"

Of note: one of the grand old mansions located on Sea View Avenue in Piedmont is on the market. Designed by Charles Peter Weeks, who co-designed the Baker & Hamilton building in San Francisco's SOMA area, this residence was built for Oakland bank president Edson Francis Adams, whose family once owned the Adams Point neighborhood. You can view this house online at www.grubco.com. At \$5,600,000, there are no Sunday open houses.

Calendar

The OHA calendar lists events, activities and meetings related to history and preservation that may be of interest to our members. To submit items, call 763-9218 or e-mail info@oaklandheritage.org. All phone numbers in 510 area code unless indicated.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 28–May 1: California Preservation Foundation's 29th Annual Conference, called "Building Bridges," will be held at The Presidio, San Francisco. Deadline for early registration is March 22 and for regular registration, April 19. Highlights include: plenary session keynote speech by East Bay publisher and writer Malcom Margolin; opening reception at Presidio Officers' Club; CPF annual meeting; gala dinner dance; special workshops and programs; educational sessions; and tours. Visit www.californiapreservation.org or call 415-495-0349 for more information.

April 30–May 16: Judith Offer and Joyce Whitelaw present a new musical entitled *Casino!* In it, a group of local citizens, including two preservationists, save the Oakland Fox Theater from redevelopment as a casino. Offer, a long-time resident and OHA member, loosely modeled a number of the characters after locals. Glenview Performing Arts Center, 1318 Glenfield Ave. at Park Boulevard. For more info, call 531-0511.

♦ **Thursday, March 25:** OHA presents "Women's Work: How Women's Clubs Helped Build Oakland" in honor of Women's History Month. 7–9 p.m., 124 Montecito Ave. 763-9218.

♦ **Saturday, March 27:** "Women's Work" walking tour. Meets 10 a.m. at YWCA, 1515 Webster St. 763-9218.

♦ **First week of May: National Historic Preservation Week, "New Frontiers in Preservation."** OHA focuses on preservation projects that feature creative reuse of historic resources. Throughout the week an historic preservation exhibit will be on display. Please attend the following events:

May 1: Friends of the Oakland Fox hosts a gala fundraising event for the restoration of the Fox Theater in the historic Rotunda Building on Frank H. Ogawa Plaza. The event features dinner and dancing.

May 4: The Oakland City Council will honor National Historic Preservation Week.

♦ **Thursday, May 6:** OHA hosts a mixer for City of Oakland staff and officials, local real estate developers, architects, contractors, and preservationists. The focus of this event will be the economic benefits of preservation, with a guest speaker. This early-evening event will feature hors d'oeuvres and wine. 763-9218.

July 27–30: Antique Doorknob Collectors of America 24th annual conference, Sheraton

Gateway Hotel, Burlingame. Contact Vicky Berol for information: sfgofer@yahoo.com.

TOURS AND EXHIBITS

Camron-Stanford House, an 1876 Italianate house museum on Lake Merritt offers tours 11 a.m.–4 p.m. on Wednesdays and 1–5 p.m. on Sundays. \$4/\$2 (free first Sunday). 1418 Lakeside Drive, 444-1876.

Cohen-Bray House, an 1884 Stick Eastlake with original interiors, 1440 29th Ave. Tours at 2 p.m. on the fourth Sunday or by appointment. \$5. 532-0704.

Mountain View Cemetery offers free docent tours at 10 a.m. on second Saturdays. 5000 Piedmont Ave. 658-2588.

Oakland Tours: Discover Oakland's changing skyline, landmarks, churches and high-rises on a free guided walking tour. Call the tours hotline at 238-3234, or visit www.oaklandnet.com and click on the sightseeing/tours link.

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

Friends of the Oakland Fox, second Thursdays, 6–7:30 p.m. 869-3519.

Oakland City Council and Planning Commission Agendas: www.oaklandnet.com.

Oakland Heritage Alliance, Board of Directors, first Mondays 7–10 p.m., 446 17th St. at Broadway. 763-9218.



OHA celebrates Women's History

■ Events planned to honor Women's work and how women's clubs helped build Oakland

In celebration of 2004 National Women's History Month, Oakland Heritage Alliance presents "Women's Work: How Women's Clubs Helped Build Oakland" on Thursday, March 25, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the historic Casa Romana (formerly the Oakland Club), 124 Montecito Ave. Donation: \$15 for lecture and tour. For information and reservations, call the office at 763-9218.

This illustrated presentation explores the crucial role of 19th- and early 20th-century Oakland women's groups in shaping our architectural and philanthropic landscape. Local women's history scholar Marta Gutman will discuss women's organizations in West Oakland from 1870 to 1910. *Oakland Tribune* columnist Annalee Allen will describe the activities and architectural landmarks of such key groups as the Oakland Women's City Club (now Alice Arts Center), the Women's Athletic Club, and the Ebell Society. Environmental protection specialist Elaine Koerner will survey the early clubwomen's movement on a national level, in what was then called "municipal housekeeping."

Casa Romana, where the lecture takes place, was constructed in 1923 by local architect A.W. Smith for the Oakland Club. During its early years, the club



Alan Templeton

CASA ROMANA was built in 1923 to house the Oakland Club, a philanthropic women's organization. It was termed "Casa Romana" in the 1970s.

established "vacation schools" at city parks, supported Fabiola Hospital, and helped maintain the local animal shelter; its members met there until the 1960s. In the late 1970s, its new occupant, a Romanian social and cultural organization, was known as Casa Romana si Capela. Eventually, St. Paul's School acquired the building and now uses it for school activities.

In addition to the lecture, OHA has planned a walking tour two days later.

On Saturday, March 27, Annalee Allen

will lead a walking tour of some of the architectural landmarks associated with the women's clubs of Oakland. Meet at the YWCA, 1515 Franklin St., at 10 a.m. A \$5 donation is requested, and reservations are advised: 763-9218.

National Women's History Month is celebrated yearly. It originated in 1978, when the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration in honor of March 8, International Women's Day.

Nominate your fears and your favorites

Here's your chance to contribute your knowledge of Oakland! We welcome your involvement in two mainstays of OHA's annual schedule, the Most Endangered List and the Partners in Preservation Awards.

♦ The Preservation Action Committee is assembling its "most endangered" list. Do you know of a historically or culturally valuable site which is in danger of demo-

lition or unwise renovation? Please send suggestions to info@oaklandheritage.org.

♦ Now is the time to nominate your picks for the Partners in Preservation awards. At our autumn awards ceremony, we honor people, projects, owners, and developers of successful preservation efforts. The awards committee wants your ideas! Send suggestions to info@oaklandheritage.org.

OUR WISH LIST

Now that we have moved to our new office, we find that there are a few items we would love to have donated, to make things more cosy:

- ♦ A small, dorm-sized fridge
- ♦ A coffeemaker
- ♦ Eight matching office chairs

Contact us at 763-9218 or info@oaklandheritage.org if you can help fulfill these wishes!



Action

Continued from page 6

Oakland had approved an 80,000-square-foot mausoleum, columbarium and chapel addition in the cemetery's central entry circle without requiring study of the impacts on historic resources. PANIL and CPF are in negotiation with the cemetery on doing an environmental impact report (EIR) on a master plan for the historic portion of the cemetery, which would include the project. For further information, call Valerie Winemiller at 653-4552, or go to www.panil.org.

Forest City Uptown Project: This mixed-use project, which would begin with 600 housing units, could bring 24-hour life to Uptown. The Uptown area includes an entertainment district anchored by the Paramount and Fox theaters. But some have questioned whether the needs of future neighborhood residents might conflict with reinvigorated nightlife, particularly at the Fox Theater. Historic structures that are endangered are 1880s Italianate storefronts at 1958–60, 1966–68, 1972, and 1998 San Pablo Ave., and the Great Western Power Building (Navlet's) on 20th Street. Inclusion and adaptive reuse of historic structures could help to link the project to its context. Some question the idea of locating a 25,000-square-foot "public" park in the midst of housing on 20th Street instead of along Telegraph where it could enhance the entertainment district.

To give the public an opportunity to address the project design, OHA will co-sponsor a design "charrette" at which participants can work with large-scale site plans and explore possibilities. The date will be a Saturday in March. For info, contact Joyce Roy at 655-7508 or joyceroy@earthlink.net.



Anna Naruta

ITALIANATE STOREFRONTS at San Pablo Avenue and 20th Street, with Hotel Royal in the background.

Hotel Royal: The County's approval in December of the EIR and preferred project for the Thomas L. Berkley Square Project at Thomas L. Berkley Way (20th Street) and San Pablo Avenue permits the demolition of both the Hotel Royal and the Oakland Post Building. However, developer Alan Dones states that he prefers the environmentally superior project which would reuse the Hotel Royal for housing, if economically feasible. To explore that, he has been consulting with an affordable housing developer. The primary goal of the project is to provide a new building for the Alameda County Social Services Administration Headquarters and the North County Self-Sufficiency Center. For more info, contact Joyce Roy at 655-7508 or joyceroy@earthlink.net.

Jack London Square Project: The Final EIR for the Jack London Square Redevelopment has just been released. It proposes to add enough structures to create an outdoor shopping mall. In the original proposal, a glass case was going to be constructed around Heinold's First and Last Chance Saloon. After OHA and others voiced strong objections, the latest plans show the saloon standing alone, although still overshadowed by a large building. The other rather scarce historical remnants that tie the site to Jack London's name are to be given some new relationship and historic context. One intriguing proposal is to unwrap the historic building at 66 Franklin St., restore and add to it. For more info, visit www.jacklondondistrict.org, or contact Gary Knecht: 893-9829 or knechtgary@aol.com.

OBITUARIES

■ **Jeannette Sherwin** died Jan. 18, 2004. She was well known as a City Hall watchdog and community activist. She fought tirelessly to hold politicians accountable for their actions and to improve Oakland. Her website, oaklandnews.com, is still posting news

and columns even without its brave editor.

■ On Dec. 16, 2003, **Elizabeth Hansen** passed away. She was an avid volunteer for OHA, Sierra Club, San Francisco MOMA, PANIL, and Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood School Association, and she will be missed.

LOVE OAKLAND and have a bit of spare time?

Please consider volunteering with OHA! We need help this spring with our house tour, in our office, and on our programs committee, Preservation Action committee, and fundraising committee. Call director Esther Hill at 763-9218.



Five Oakland grammar schools slated for closure

■ **Judith Offer, Michael Crowe and Cynthia Shartzter investigate**

by *Judith Offer*

Three OHA members recently toured five Oakland schools slated for closure by state administrator Randolph Ward, to see what impact closings might have on neighborhoods and to determine whether historic or culturally important properties are at risk. It is not known what alternatives the administrator may be considering for reuse, sale, lease, or closure of the buildings.

Toler Heights School, 9736 Lawlor St.: Toler Heights, named for its neighborhood, is the smallest of the five. A charming Mediterranean stucco structure designed by Sullivan and Sullivan in 1927, it is high in the southern hills of Oakland on a gore lot. It is a T-plan structure with earthquake-resistant design features. Toler Heights was included in the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey in 1997 and given a high rating: "The building is in excellent condition; its integrity is good. Its preliminary rating of Dc3 reflects its interest as a small neighborhood school building, built before the Field Act and reconstructed in the 1930s."

Luther Burbank School, 3550 64th Ave.: In the neighborhood just south of Mills College, this school was constructed in 1950 and has the large, well-lit classrooms typical of that era. It is a one-story stucco structure, in a neighborhood of generally well-kept homes interspersed with the occasional boarded-up or decaying structure.

An active committee of teachers, parents, students and other citizens has been working for three years to improve the schoolyards, creating "outdoor classrooms" in environmental science. They feel that the school would be ideal for a science/environmental magnet program. The Trust for Public Land had planned a \$600,000 fundraising effort to remove blacktop and install trees, grass and yard furniture on one side of the school and vegetable and herb gardens and an

amphitheatre on the other. The support group has already put in some trees and benches, planted several areas, and arranged for Dan Fontes, an Oakland artist, to install a mural about Luther Burbank at the south entry. The mural has been up for six months.

John Swett School: John Swett School sits in a well-kept neighborhood of small 1930s and '40s homes of the typical, porchy variety, some stucco, some wood-sided. A one-story, wood building dating to 1950, it fits its neighborhood. A new post office is nearby on High Street, and a solidly middle-class shopping area is five blocks away on MacArthur Boulevard. Swett School, which houses 225 students in grades K–8, consists of three sections. The older section, with extremely wide corridors, has two banks of classrooms and an auditorium. To the north, an outside corridor leads to a second section of temporary structures with the same board-and-batten pattern exterior. However, these buildings have not been used for about three years. A health and environmental concern about mold caused classes to move to smaller "temporary" buildings on the far side of the playground.

Marcus Foster School, 2850 West St.: Named for a late OUSD superintendent, this school is located on West Street, between 28th and 29th. The two-story building displays two children's murals at the entry, enlivening its dour façade. Windows and aluminum predominate on the building, which was constructed in 1974. It appears to need a coat of paint. Foster School shares its block with a number of two- and three-story multifamily residences. These buildings are generally weary-looking 1910–1930s structures



Alan Templeton

IT'S NOT JUST THE SCHOOLS: Persistent rumors have suggested that OUSD's Paul Robeson Administration Building on 2nd Avenue could be sold for high-density housing development. It stands near the channel connecting Lake Merritt to the estuary.

which have been subjected to awkward repairs. Cars crowd the streets and yards. The neighborhood is consistently down-trodden, with bare front yards, graffiti, and broken windows.

Longfellow School, 3877 Lusk St.: Longfellow is a 1958 one-story structure on an entire block about four blocks southwest of the MacArthur BART. On a completely flat piece of property, it is solidly built and was state-of-the-art when constructed. The surrounding streets are clean and cared for. Six years ago, a group of volunteers from Temple Sinai, about 10 blocks away, started a tutoring and library program. They developed a bright, well-stocked library with regular hours and tutored hundreds of children. They also provided school supplies, sports equipment and games, and helped after school and with music and art. Across the street, a city day care and preschool program closed abruptly last year. Longfellow has been plagued by problems from the empty building: an accumulation of trash, homeless people living in unused entries, and drug dealing. Much parent and principal time has been expended to respond to problems involving this building. The closure also accelerated the Longfellow vacancy rate by forcing parents to find other day care options and to enroll siblings in other schools, nearer to their new care sites.



Many thanks to our volunteers!

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These members renewed at a higher level, or joined us for the first time at a significant level. Thank you!

\$200 OR ABOVE

Kevin Flynn ♦ Jana Drobinsky ♦ Eldien Kistner

\$100 OR ABOVE

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Thanks to members who responded to our appeal in November 2003. We received a total of \$2,825 and are grateful for the generous donations.

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Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible, under IRS regulations.

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

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Montclair building stood for nearly a quarter-century

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

On April 26, 1961, the *Montclarion* reported, "One of Montclair's most distinctive and charming commercial buildings was gobbled up this week by a mechanical shovel and its remains hauled away to oblivion." That was the end of the Montclair Realty Building that had stood at 6540 Moraga Ave. since 1937.

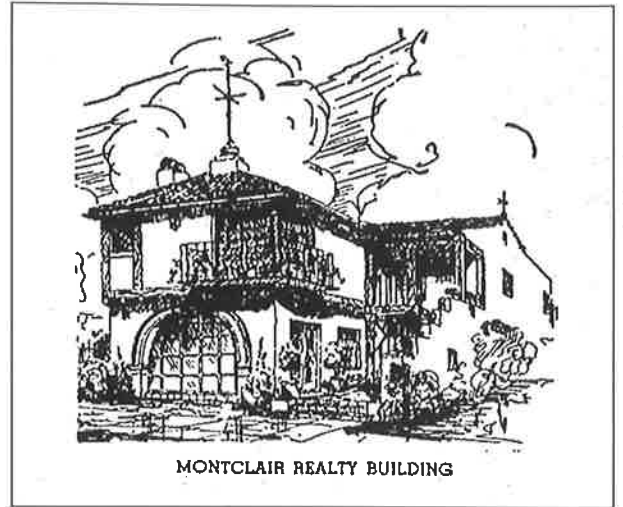
The only building on the block when it was new, the Montclair Realty Building was designed by F. Harvey Slocombe for local realtor Paul Pause. Pause, a Chicago native, founded Montclair Realty in 1924. Active in commercial and residential real estate in the Oakland hills, Pause headed the Montclair Improvement Association, sat on the Oakland Real Estate Board, and was an active member of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and the Commonwealth Club. At the time of his death in 1950, he had been appointed to the Mayor's Charter Amendment Committee.

Building permits list a two-story, seven-room dwelling, store and garage. A 1937 *Oakland Tribune* article describes the building as "designed by Slocombe in true Spanish style, complete with patio, tile roof, and wrought iron ornament." The Mountain Boulevard entrance to the building featured a "little garden of beauty" by local landscape designer Howard Gilkey. The ground floor storefront housed the Montclair Realty

Company, while the second floor apartment provided Pause and his bride with their first home. It was featured as the "Pent House Model Home" and was made available for public viewing when the building opened in July 1937. The *Montclarion* newspaper, another of Paul Pause's business ventures, was born in the building's garage around 1940. Fred Graesser, who bought the *Montclarion* from Pause in 1944, said that Pause had "wanted a distinctive building for his office because he always had hopes that Montclair might develop a harmonious architecture which would rival Carmel." His view was consistent with Montclair's original developers, the Realty Syndicate, who also envisioned a unified Mediterranean style for the village's business district.

Pause and architect Slocombe enjoyed a long professional relationship. Slocombe designed the Pause home on Ascot Drive as well as another commercial building for Pause in 1946, the Montclair Terrace Building at LaSalle Avenue and Mountain Boulevard, currently home of the Washington Mutual bank.

In 1961, Mrs. Beatrice Pause traded the



A LINE DRAWING of the Montclair Realty Building.

property to the Standard Oil Company for part of the parcel that the Montclair Safeway store now occupies. In April the building was razed to accommodate the gas station's expansion. At the time, Mrs. Pause was quoted as having said that she feared that she would regret the loss of the building, but she had come to believe that an expanded gas station and a new supermarket signified progress for Montclair Village. Twenty years before Oakland's first organized historic preservation efforts, this lovely neighborhood landmark went without a whisper of protest.

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