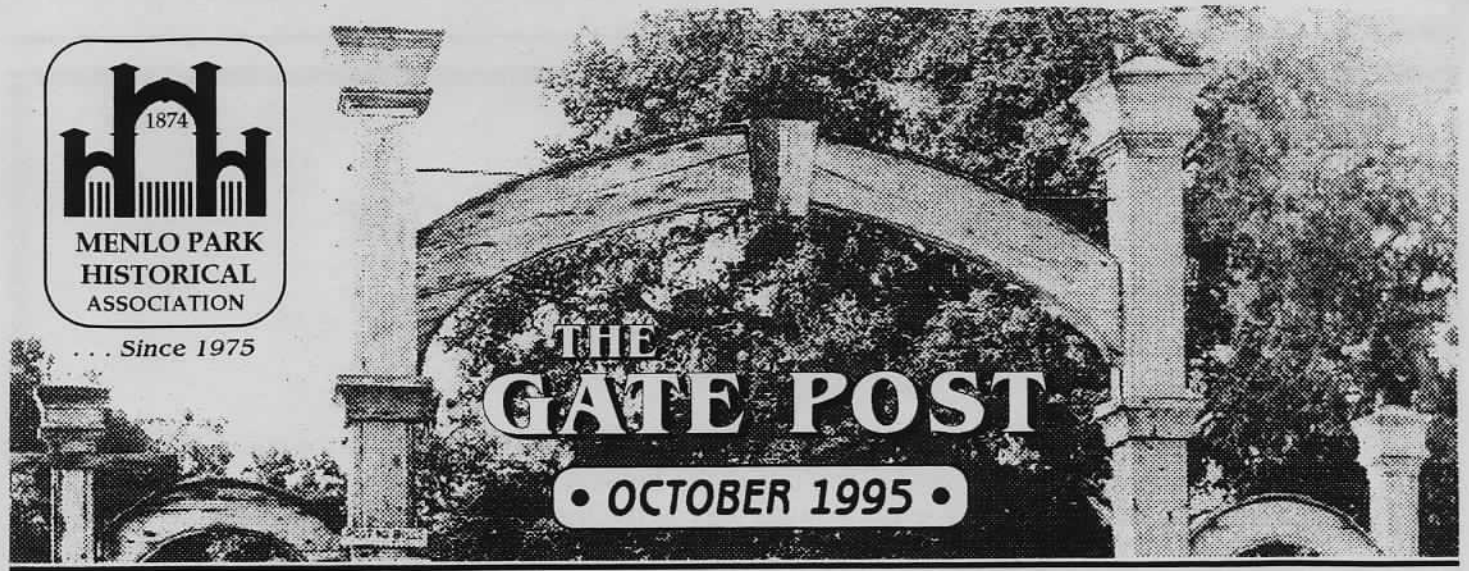
MENLO PARK HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
. . . Since 1975



THE GATE POST

• OCTOBER 1995 •

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854-4296

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Jeanne Thivierge

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Alice Johnson
323-1077

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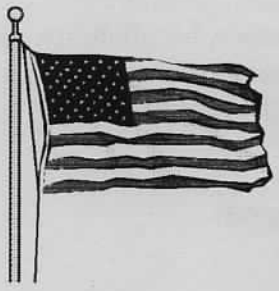
Jeanne Bone
323-5269

Ed Austin
321-6486

Fremont Park — A Shining Star

by Frank Helfrich

WITH THE ADDITION of a new flag pole (Little League took the old one) and a few other final touches, Fremont Park's face lift seems to be complete. The city of Menlo Park can be proud of a job well done, with credit going to Ferdinand Luscher, the engineer/inspector and his crew, who saw that all details were correctly completed and done on time.



Now it is time to celebrate. On Sunday, September 24th, from 1 to 3 P.M., the mayor and city council of Menlo Park have invited you to celebrate the reopening of the Park.

The Park and Recreation Commission will be scooping ice cream with lots of do-it-yourself toppings, right there in the beautiful park. There will be a short rededication ceremony at 1 P.M., followed by music until 3 P.M. This will be another historic occasion for Menlo Park and one that shouldn't be missed. Y'all come now.

Membership

Total number of members: 244

WELCOME

New Members

Mr. & Mrs. Louis G. Brökling

Mrs. W.D. Fablinger

Elizabeth J. Herrin

Mrs. Hugh G. McLinden

Technology Wins — History Loses!

We regret to report that Tom Richardson has had to resign from his office of M.P.H.A. board member due to his embarking on a new job with Technology Solutions, a company on Cowper Street in Palo Alto, soon to move to San Jose, which, unfortunately for Tom, will mean a slightly longer commute to work.

Of course, he is still a member of the Association in good standing and we hope, in time, he will be able to attend our programs and perhaps give us a hand occasionally on certain projects. Tom was in charge of

Continued on page 3

BOARD MEETING *3 October, 2 PM at History Room*

MERRILL HISTORY ROOM (at library) office hours: 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. every Tuesday & Wednesday *except holidays*

Remembered with Love

Anton Orazem, Sr.

1910–1995

ANOTHER DEDICATED MEMBER LEFT US suddenly on 19 July, at the age of 85. Tony, as everyone called him, was one of the bulwarks of the Association, always volunteering for a job that he invariably did very well. One example was his way with coffee. When the program hostesses asked Tony to take care of the coffee, they knew it would be made properly, on time and delicious. Eleanor, his wife, usually handled the rest of the refreshments details equally efficiently. Tony also helped the men with many mechanical jobs and could be relied on every time to do a perfect job.

Not so long ago he wrote an excellent history of St. Anthony's parish, on Middlefield Road. He and Eleanor were regular members of the church and volunteers in the Padua Dining Room.

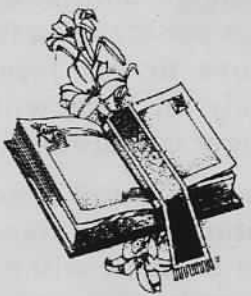
Tony leaves his devoted helpmate, Eleanor, a daughter, five sons and seven grandchildren. The family preferred private services.

Everyone who knew Tony will miss his many kindnesses, his affability and the sweetness of his nature. He leaves behind a loving, closely-knit family and a wealth of friends who wish him *bon voyage* on his way to his eternal reward.

Irene I. Whitcomb

1897–1995

IRENE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN WELL KNOWN by our M.P.H.A. membership because she was completely dedicated to her work at the Whitcomb Convalescent Hospital and Rest Home, a home she founded years ago and maintained until her retirement. She was noted for her warm, personal care of her guests and they, her staff and her friends remember her with great respect and affection.



She also was one of the founders of the California State Nursing Home Association and cofounder of the American Association of Retired Persons for San Mateo County. She was very much involved with the social and political affairs of San Mateo County.

At her request, there were no funeral or memorial services. She had touched the lives of many through her work and through her social activities. They, in turn, made her feel loved and needed. As a memorial, her family suggested that she would approve of her friends doing something meaningful for someone in need... a lasting heritage of a "true and a grand lady."

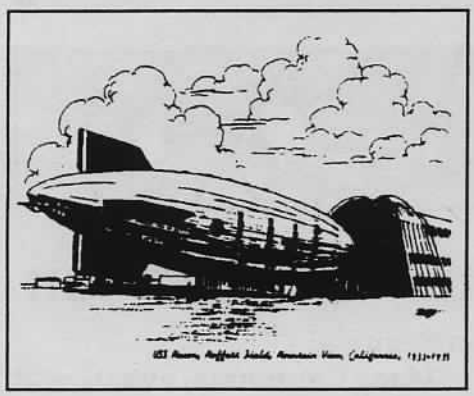
Moffett Tour

ON 19 AUGUST 1995, an eager group of aviation enthusiasts gathered for a tour of the museum at Moffett Field... a landmark all of us have wondered at but seldom visited. This had been made possible through the kindness of Ben DeBolt, former president of the Moffett Field Historical Society, who had been guest speaker at our last annual meeting, in December.

The group was impressed with the size of the museum and the extent of its contents. The knowledgeable docents were generous with their descriptions and explanations of the hundreds of documents and other items on display.

Another awe-inspiring sight was the interior of the immense dirigible hangar... the one large enough for fog to form in and rain to fall... infrequently.

Thanks go to Rose Lesslie, assistant museum director and her



team of docents, for a most informative experience, for their courtesy and expertise and for the brochures and pamphlets to help us remember a delightful tour. And the person responsible for handling the numerous details to ensure having a trouble-free tour, was our efficient president, Maureen Dickey. ▣

Continued from page 1

publicity for the Association and did a great job getting segments about MPHA on Cable Co-op Channel 6 and the M-A radio station, KCEA-FM (89.1) broadcasts.

With his considerable ability and experience we're sure he will be successful in his new line of work and look forward to having him back with us in the near future. Good luck, Tom! ▣

Addendum from the Archives

I HAVE BEEN READING a dandy little book: *File... Don't Pile!* by Pat Dorff, 1986, $9.95, paperback... "a proven filing system for personal and professional use." It has much more information in it besides just filing; e.g., Chapter Two, "Can You See My Closet and Still Love Me?" or Chapter Three, "Okay, Let's Minimize the Mess," or Chapter Ten, "From Chaos to Control." It is easy reading, illustrated with amusing cartoons and, I think it can be very helpful to even a slightly disorganized person.

At the end of Chapter One is a summary to help you decide whether to save a certain piece of paper (I have a photocopy thumbtacked above my word processor, and it <u>does</u> help).

Here it is:

Summary

Ten Questions to Determine Whether or Not to Save a Piece of Paper

1. Do I *want* it?
2. Do I *need* it?
3. Will it *add something new?*
4. Is it *significant for my purposes?*
5. Do I *foresee a use* for it?
6. Is it *timely?*
7. Is it *quality?*
8. Is it *accurate and reliable?*
9. Is the *author an authority* on the subject?
10. Is it *easy to understand?*

Bonus: 11. Can I *obtain it elsewhere?* ▣

Volunteer Opportunities

by Frank Helfrich

SATURDAY, September 2nd was Senior Program Day at the Menlo Park Library, with representatives from Friends of the Menlo Park Library, Menlo Park Historical Association, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Volunteer Center of San Mateo County, and Community Impact, all taking a turn to tell about their volunteer opportunities.

Each organization welcomes volunteers for a variety of projects. While you may have had contact with the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, and of course, M.P.H.A., you may not recognize that Community Impact is also an organization located right here in Menlo Park.

The program was videotaped, so if you are seeking a volunteer job and want to know more about any of the above organizations, contact Roberta Roth at the Menlo Park Library or Frank Helfrich at M.P.H.A. ▣

Courthouse Countdown

MOST OF OUR READERS ALREADY KNOW that the San Mateo Historical Association has acquired the San Mateo County courthouse, in Redwood City, as its future home. Before being able to move in, much work needs to be done structurally to make it safe and ready for occupancy.

To make all this possible requires money and, of course, money is obtained by means of fund-raising events. The first of these will be held on Sunday, 3 December 1995, from 3 to 7 P.M., at the old courthouse, on Broadway Avenue. There will be a tour of this 1905 building, with its beautiful stained glass dome; and also libations, generous food and lively entertainment... all tax deductible.

If anyone would like to attend this gala event and at the same time help finance this most worthwhile undertaking, send your name, and those of friends you think would be interested,to:

The Museum
1700 West Hillsdale Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94402
c/o Janet Boyer

Guests: $60 per person (one dollar per year of the SMCHA's existence)

Patron/Patroness: $500 (includes two reservations)

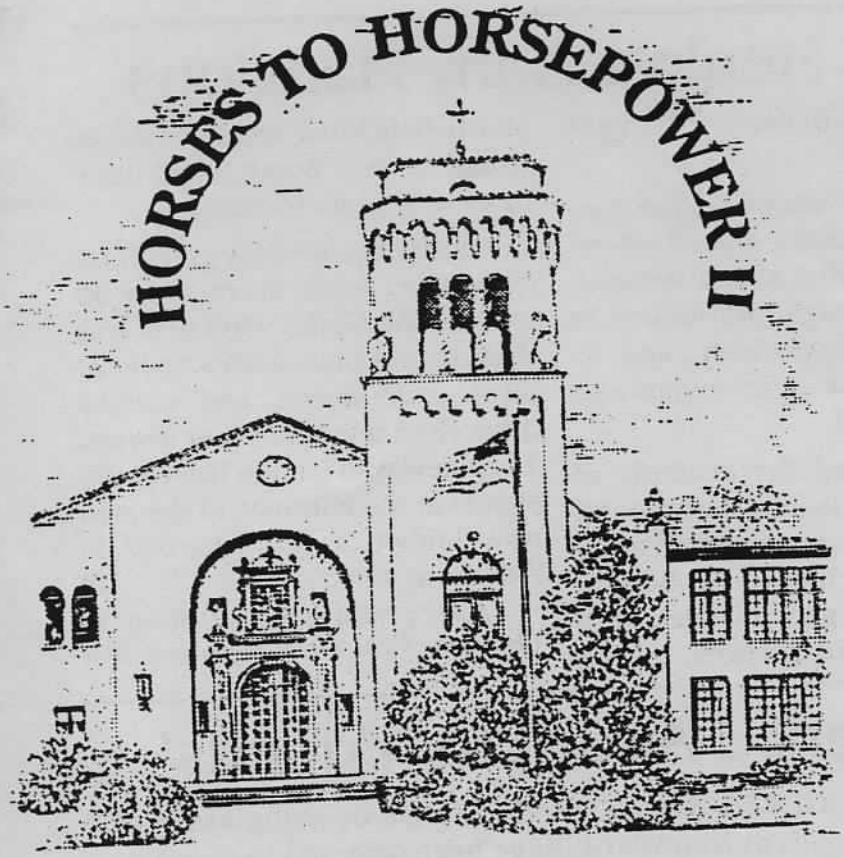
Sponsor: $1,000 (includes four reservations)

All guests will receive a custom designed etched brass courthouse ornament. ▣

Sequoia Centennial Celebration

SEQUOIA UNION HIGH School first opened its doors on September 16, 1895. It was the first high school between San Francisco and Santa Clara, and until the 1950s, it was the only school in the S.U.H.S. District. There are hundreds of Sequoia grads who still live in this community, so we want to help spread Centennial information to everyone interested in Sequoia.

Many Centennial events will be over before you receive this issue of *The Gate Post* (and we hope that you were able to attend all of them). There is one, however, which will be held on Sunday, October 1, open to the public from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., called "Horses to Horsepower." A flier with more information is on page 5. ▣



Sunday
October 1, 1995

Sequoia High School Campus

Redwood City

El Camino Real at
Broadway & Brewster gate

Open to the public 9-4

• All Vehicles Welcome • Arts & Crafts • Entertainment

• Food Fair • Vendors • Awards • Dash Plaques • Kids Corner

• *Automotive vendors & auto related Arts & Crafts spaces...available*

Loretta (415) 368-8212

Marian (415) 366-1889

• ***Car Entry...$15.00***

• ***Current Sequoia Student Car Entry...$5.00***

Arrive 7:30 - 9 am – Gates close promptly @ 9:30

Pre-registered cars will receive a surprise gift.

Proceeds to benefit SEQUOIA ALUMNI / CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 100 Years

Checks payable to: **SHSAA (Carshow)** Mail to: **c/o Marian Wydo, 129 Oakdale, Redwood City, CA 94062**

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Address _____ **City** _____ **State** _____

Year _____ **Make** _____ **Model** _____

Vendor Space: 1 space (10 x 10) $50 _____ **2 spaces (10 x 20) $90** _____

Vendor Description _____

I hereby release Sequoia High School District, Alumni & Centennial Association, officials and employees fom any and all liability and personal or public damage resulting from any participation in the event known as "Horses to Horsepower". I also give my permission to use photos of my car to be used for publication (i.e. event program or TV production). I am an adult or my parent will sign.

Signature _____

NO CONFIRMATION LETTERS – Absolutely NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES or PETS on campus

Linden Towers: One of Menlo's Many Mansions

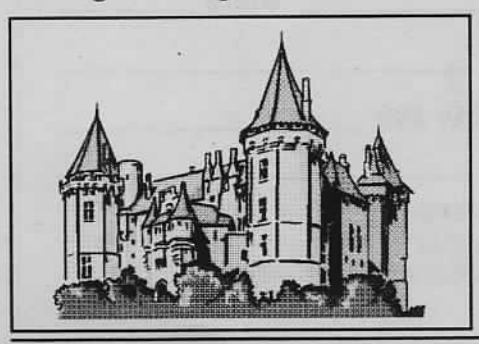
THE EARLY HISTORY and growth of Menlo Park is directly related to the mansions of the wealthy and famous and powerful who, as those of us living here today, found the area beautiful and the climate delightful.

Estates were large, and many of the homes were surrounded by magnificent gardens and lawns. Often the elegant furnishings were imported from Europe or the Orient.

Histories of the mansions and of the families who lived in them are fascinating glimpses into the past.

Gertrude Atherton's published remarks about "style in the country" undoubtedly were directed toward such ostentation as the home built by James C. Flood, the Bonanza King, in 1878. He called it "Linden Towers;" the rest of the town called it the "Wedding Cake." [SEE PHOTO ON PAGE 7]

Flood, who had lived in poverty as a child, had a driving ambition to become rich. At the age of 45, his income was reported to be $250,000 a month. Yet, his early attempts to gain riches had been unsuccessful, and following the panic of 1855, he decided that selling liquor was a business least affected by depressions. Flood and William S. O'Brien opened a saloon in San Francisco, near the Mining Exchange, where stocks of the Comstock mines were bought and sold.



Like many another good bartender, he listened well. Brokers' tips and snatches of conversation gave him enough information to play the market wisely, and he soon became a mine owner and broker himself.

He followed the example of other wealthy men of the time and built a City mansion and a Peninsula country home. He bought acreage, level ground thick with oak trees and shrubs, along Middlefield Road, and started construction on a home which took three long years to complete.

Linden Towers was grand and elaborate, with more than 40 rooms. The Gothic structure was three stories high, with a tower of three more stories, and various other chimneys and lesser towers. The gateway to Linden Towers still stands at the entrance to the area now known as Lindenwood in Atherton.

—from "a Tradition of New Horizons" by Charmayne Kreuz, City of Menlo Park, 1974

President's Award to 'Friends'

EARL DOUGLASS AND THE "FRIENDS of Douglass Hall," led by President Ken Ward, have been selected to receive an award because of their phenomenal dedication to the preservation of Douglass Hall on the campus of the Menlo School and College. The educational institution was prepared to demolish Douglass Hall, named in honor of former owner Leon F. Douglass, a pioneering inventor of phonograph and motion picture technology. Upon learning of the College's plans for the building, Earl Douglass, grandson of Leon Douglass, took it upon himself to try to save the historic building.

Douglass Hall

Earl Douglass tirelessly documented the structure and repeatedly questioned the College's decision to raze the building. He appeared before City Council and insured that all of the relevant information was put into public record. He got the community excited about saving Douglass Hall, and inspired creation of a citizen group, Friends of Douglass Hall. Together, they encouraged the College to explore the State Historical Building Code preservation alternatives, and pressed the Town of Atherton to fairly study restoration options. An EIR was required but it failed to adequately deal with use of the code, and was successfully challenged by the "Friends" in court. Initially, the College insisted it would never restore Douglass Hall, but Trustees are now actively pursuing rehabilitation proposals and dialogue with the "Friends."

—from California Preservation Foundation Newsletter, *Summer 1995*