

LOS GATOS WEEKLY TIMES

www.community-newspapers.com

183

Vol. 127, No. 21

Tuesday, May 25, 2010

TOWN BUDGET ALLOWS FOR LIBRARY, SPORTS COMPLEX AND STREET REPAIRS

But due to economic pressures, some cuts will be necessary

By JUDY PETERSON

The proposed \$34.2 million budget for the town of Los Gatos next year is a bit of a mixed bag: There are many things included that will make residents happy, but due to continued economic pressures, the picture is not entirely rosy.

For instance, \$300,000 is being set aside to develop a master plan for the new Creekside Sports Complex at 930 University Ave. And the library will remain open seven days a week, but plans call for its hours to be cut from 54 to 50. That move alone is expected to save the town \$90,000 in the 2010-11 fiscal year, which starts on July 1.

At the same time, library director Peggy Conaway plans to retire, and her position will be eliminated. Instead, two librarians will be promoted to management positions. It's also proposed that \$40,000 be set aside as a two-year contingency if the town needs to hire additional librarians to assist with the transition from the old library to the new one.

"Both the county librarian as well as the city of San Jose librarian have expressed a willingness," town manager Greg Larson said.

Because a \$1.8 million budget gap had to be closed in order to balance the budget, Larson proposed other long-term financial strategies aimed at getting the town through the

Council, page 10

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

News.....	5	Society.....	23
History.....	12	Around Town.....	25
Opinion.....	16	Schools.....	29
Steppin' Out.....	21	Calendar.....	31
Art Scene.....	22	Sports.....	35

Community Classifieds

An affordable alternative to high-priced classifieds



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

Members of We and Our Neighbors Society are seen in this 1896 photograph. Anne Jane Cilker, top row, sixth from right, was the grandmother of current member Marion Cilker, far left in photograph below.

Right Neighborly



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

The 30 current active members of the club continue to meet on the third Saturday of month at the clubhouse, located in San Jose.

We and Our Neighbors clubhouse in Cambrian Park marks 100 years

page 18



June Gwartney, left, board member and rental chairwoman, and Karen Lund, incoming recording secretary, stand outside the We and Our Neighbors clubhouse, which is celebrating its 100th birthday this year.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

Neighborhood Association

Club was formed in an effort to avoid 'unsocial and hermitlike ways'

By MARY GOTTSCHALK

The We And Our Neighbors clubhouse at the corner of Union Avenue and Los Gatos-Almaden Road is something many people know of but know nothing about.

The 30 active members of the Neighbors were hoping to change

that by celebrating their Craftsman bungalow clubhouse's 100th birthday and their club's 118th year on May 15.

The clubhouse is both a San Jose Historic Landmark and on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, but first-time visitors invari-

ably say that while they've seen it for years as they drive past, they never knew what it was.

"I hear that from everyone," says June Gwartney, a Los Gatos resident who has been a member for close to a decade.

"It's a well-kept secret. I don't

know how they made it financially all those years."

We And Our Neighbors is a women's club that started with an afternoon tea in June of 1892 hosted by Mrs. John Cilker at her home for the fellow wives of farmers living in the Union School District.

By the end of that afternoon, the 13 women present decided to form the We And Our Neighbors Society to meet on the third Saturday of each month, with the November and May meetings set aside "for so-

Neighborhood, page 19

Neighborhood

Continued from page 18

cial intercourse exclusively.”

The minutes of all of their meetings from June 1892 on have been preserved and offer a fascinating glimpse into the life and culture of that time when women were referred to by their husband's names rather than their own.

In their constitution and by-laws adopted a year later as membership was approaching 50, they wrote, “Whereas the people of this neighborhood have fallen into unsocial and hermitlike ways; and whereas we believe that an increase of social gatherings among us will result in an increase of happiness to ourselves and our families; and whereas we further believe such increase of social intercourse can best be arranged by the joint action of members of a society, rather than by individuals, we hereby associate ourselves together and adopt the following, this 17th day of June 1893.”

Initially members met at each other's homes. While their primary focus was supporting the Union School District, they also started a magazine lending library so they could keep up with current events and fashions.

In 1899 specific rules regarding the magazines were adopted. Members could not keep a magazine longer than five days before passing it on to another member. If this rule was disregarded, the rules stated “unless the criminal in the case can give a satisfactory reason for her neglect of duty, her name will be crossed off the circuit list and she must get her magazine from the Librarian.”

When all members were finished reading them, the magazines were bound and sent to hospitals for others to enjoy.

In 1894 the group collected flowers for the Mid-Winter Exposition of the Board of Trade in San Francisco.

During the Spanish-American war, members sent books to troops in the Philippines and collected eggs, dried fruit, bandages and reading material for veterans in hospitals.

After the 1906 earthquake, they sent two wagon loads of blankets and clothing to victims.

It wasn't long after the earthquake that two members made it possible to build a clubhouse.

Sophia LaMontagne sold the necessary land on Union to the group for “one gold dollar,” and Mrs. C. Schofield donated \$2,650 for the construction of the clubhouse still standing there.

Marion Cilker of Los Gatos, granddaughter of the woman who



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

Sophia La Montague sold the club the land for the clubhouse for one gold dollar, with the provision the land would return to her family if the club dissolved.

hosted that first tea, is now 92 and has been involved with the club as long as she can remember.

“As a very small child my mother took us all to all the affairs. Then, as soon as we could, we had to perform,” she recalls.

“There is a nice stage there, and the grandchildren had to recite poetry or something to add to the program. If somebody played the piano, we'd all sing a community song. That's what everybody did in those days.”

The upright McPhail piano manufactured in Boston in the 1920s that Cilker remembers from her childhood remains in place and in use.

Charlotte Taylor, who commutes from her Oakland home for the monthly meetings, is a fourth-generation member.

“My great-grandmother was one of the founding members, and my grandmother was a member and president, and my mother was a member and president,” says Taylor, who can boast of being a member before birth since her mother attended meetings while she was pregnant with her.

“I remember in the 1950s every November and every June, we would have a big potluck family dinner with grandparents and parents and kids. Everyone bought a dish to share and a cake and we'd sit at these long tables,” Taylor says.

After the meals were finished, Taylor says they all played bingo, with P.E. teacher Ruby House calling out the numbers.

“We brought white elephant gifts for prizes,” she says.

Technically, Taylor didn't become an official member until 1992.

“When the club turned 100 my mother decided it was time for me to join, and she paid my membership dues for that first year,” Taylor says.

Over the years the clubhouse has served many functions.

One of the first important functions in the new clubhouse was the Union School District's eighth-grade graduation in June 1910.

The clubhouse was also a branch of the San Jose Library in the 1950s.

Carolyn Newt, who lives in Los Gatos and is a president of the club,



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

Maria Schofield built the clubhouse in 1910 for \$2,650. She was president for the first 25 years, from 1892 to 1917. The club became part of the Federated Women's Clubs International.

remembers sitting on the front steps with whichever book she had just checked out while her mother, Beatrice Mead, was participating in club activities inside.

“Basically the club allocated a portion of the dining room to the library,” Newt says. “It wasn't a very big spot, maybe 15 by 15 feet.”

“When I was growing up, all the housing tracts were being developed, and then they built the Cambrian Library.

“I'm 60, and I went to a new school every year until I got into the fourth grade. That whole side of town was just booming in terms of housing and kids.”

Mead, who still lives in the Cambrian area, says she and her husband moved to San Jose from Illinois in February of 1948 so her husband could attend school and in search of better weather.

Although she was frequently invited to join the club, Mead said she didn't do so until around 1968 because she was raising five children. As her children got a bit older and her husband Thompson Mead started helping with Scouts,

she found time to join.

Over the years the clubhouse has been the scene of many important family gatherings.

“We had my husband's retirement party there, our 50th wedding anniversary party, our granddaughter's engagement party and my husband's memorial service last July. We lacked three months before our 67th wedding anniversary,” Mead says.

“It's been a nice warm spot in our family.”

The clubhouse recently underwent a complete renovation and still retains its original character. Wood wainscoting lines the walls, ceilings are coved and the fireplace still has its original stonework, although it was taken down for cleaning and the fireplace was converted to gas.

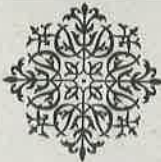
Light switches are push-button, and the ceiling and light fixtures are modern versions of the Craftsman style.

The renovation was made possible when San Jose purchased part of

Neighborhood, page 20

GRAND OPENING SALE!

Exquisite Hand Made Rugs at Unbeatable Prices!



SERAPI

Antique & Decorative Rugs
Quality, style, Value

408-354-8989

155 N. SANTA CRUZ AVE
LOS GATOS, CA 95030



30% OFF
Of Services
FREE PICKUP & DELIVERY

HOURS:
Tue-Sat 10am-6pm
Sun 12-5pm

- EXPERT HAND CLEANING
- RESTORATION
- APPRAISALS
- WE BUY OR TRADE

Hundreds of rugs to
choose from:
New, Antique, Traditional,
Transitional and Modern

www.Serapiruggallery.com



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

The We and Our Neighbors Clubhouse is where the club meets. It is also available to rent.

Neighborhood

Continued from page 19

the property frontage for \$118,000 to widen the street in front.

The pergola in front supporting wisteria vines and a wheelchair ramp in the rear were both Eagle Scout projects.

The clubhouse is still used by several Scout troops, a tradition that dates back many, many years.

The cost of maintaining the property has risen over the past century.

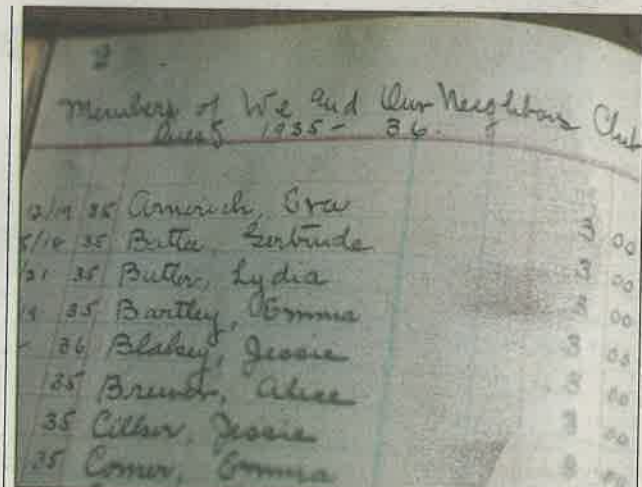
In 1941 the March PG&E bill was \$1.50 and property taxes were \$12.01.

Today Gwartney says the PG&E bill is around \$77 a month, and the property taxes are close to \$1,400, in part because the organization is considered a commercial business because it rents out the hall.

It is rented out for receptions, showers, meetings and other events at \$300 to \$500, depending on the day of the week.

A few pieces of Mission furniture remain, including the desk once used by club presidents, which now sits in the single restroom. There's a wicker tea cart in the foyer and some of the old, original wooden folding chairs.

While the concept of a woman's club dating back more than a century may seem quaint and antiquated, the members say it's been an important part of the history of the area.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

This ledger (above) dating to 1935 shows yearly dues of \$3 for members of We and Our Neighbors.

"It's the only women's clubhouse that's been around here and active for this long. It's never been closed," Cilker says.

"It's been home for the local Scouts, a library and during the wars, women made quilts and held sewing bees. We try to keep finding service needs so it not only serves as a social meeting place for neighbors to keep in touch, but for any kind of social need. We always try to help somebody in the county."

Newt says she understands why some women don't want to spend a Saturday afternoon at a meeting. However, she says, "I feel strongly it needs to continue on. It's been a central part of the community for a long time, and our goal is to bring it

back into that same role.

"We've been successful with the Union School District holding parcel tax meetings here and we're holding some candidate forums."

Taylor agrees with the need to maintain the club.

"People are very busy and don't have time for a little ladies club. We'd like to become a community center again. We'd like to have more programs open to the community, maybe host historical programs or host school field trips.

"The main thing is to share this building for its beauty and its history. It is a place where people can come and gather and it has been for 100 years."

For more information visit www.weandourneighbors.org.

SAVE 70%



COMPARED TO A CONCRETE POOL

12' X 12'

INGROUND DOUGHBOY

- ▶ CONCRETE DECKING
- ▶ PREMIUM EQUIPMENT
- ▶ NON-ABRASIVE TO SKIN
- ▶ 30 YEAR WARRANTY
- ▶ EARTHQUAKE FRIENDLY
- ▶ 2 WEEK INSTALLATION
- ▶ **COST \$12,999***

* Approximate costs (Actual cost depends on options)

12' X 12'

INGROUND CONCRETE

- ▶ CONCRETE DECKING
- ▶ PREMIUM EQUIPMENT
- ▶ ABRASIVE TO SKIN
- ▶ LIMITED WARRANTY
- ▶ CAN CRACK
- ▶ 3 MONTH INSTALLATION
- ▶ **COST \$40,000***

**ABOVE GROUND
24' X 52"
POOL PACKAGE
\$1,999.00**

**MANY SIZES
AND MODELS
IN STOCK**

**FREE
ESTIMATES**

**THE POOLYARD
& SPA OUTLET**

(408) 817-9900

428 Bascom Avenue, San Jose, CA 95128 • www.poolyard.com

Please visit our Display Yard. 7 pools on display!

OPEN 7 DAYS

