

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Betty Smith - Enjoying Menlo Commons Since 2000!

TGN: Betty, tell us about your background.

Betty: I was born in New York. However, since my father was an officer in the Navy, my family moved to wherever he was stationed. Between ages 6 and 8 I lived in Shanghai and Manila. I attended American schools there. After that I was in New England for three years, and then we moved to the West Coast - San Diego, Bremerton, Washington, and Oakland. I attended Stanford University for two years, in 1938-1939. (I loved it, but in those days the campus rules were that women had to wear silk stockings, skirts and sweaters. I went through a lot of silk stockings!) My father was stationed in Honolulu just before World War II, and it was there that I met and married my first husband. We returned to Oakland where we raised our two sons. My husband was a naval officer and became a commander in the supply corp. He retired in the early 1950's and joined Addressograph where he launched the first plastic credit card, which he designed. Soon the computer industry came along and he became a computer consultant. We moved to Palo Alto in the 1960's. Suddenly I became a widow when he died of a sudden and unexpected heart attack in 1976 at age 59.

TGN: What did you do then?

Betty: I was his Girl Friday in his office, but I decided after he died that I would become a licensed real estate broker in Palo Alto. I did not want to sit behind a desk from nine to five. I acquired my real estate license and then my broker's license. In 1986 an old friend came up to see me and proposed. We married and had a ball together! I retired from my job, and we took lots of trips together and played lots of golf. We moved to Avila Beach, on the ocean near San Luis Obispo where we had a neat time together. Then we moved to Menlo Commons in 2000. My husband died two years later. So I have lived here alone in my same unit since then.

TGN: What do you think about Menlo Commons?

Betty: I like it here. I have several friends whom I spend time with. I swam laps in the pool for many years until my arthritis stopped me. I served three terms on the Board of Directors, acting as treasurer. Now I am on the finance committee. I think that it is good to have checks and balances in our system such as committees can provide.

TGN: What else keeps you busy?

Betty: I am an active member of St. Bede's Episcopal Church, and also attend lecture programs at the Hoover Institute at Stanford. I find that very stimulating. I do lots of reading with my Kindle. I also read the



Wall Street Journal, cover to cover. I like to keep up to date with my investments. I have had a rewarding life, and I am thankful for the good health I have (except for my arthritis which hampers my activities). Keeping my mind open has been my objective. I spend time with my several nieces and nephews and their families. They have had family gatherings for me on my recent birthdays.

TGN: Tell us about the traveling you have done.

Betty: I have traveled many places, usually with the group from Stanford. I have enjoyed Indonesia, the Caribbean and the Panama Canal, Israel, the Greek islands and the Aegean Sea, the British Isles and England. I had two cruises on the Sea Cloud. I have taken my grandniece on a trip to New Zealand. I loved the river trips on the Danube and also on the Volga River from Moscow, Russia. At the time was there, Moscow evidenced its poor economy. There was no one in the stores and on the streets. We also visited St. Petersburg in Russia when the Heritage Museum was empty and dusty. We went to Berlin after the wall had fallen (I got a piece of that wall). I think the problems of the world today are largely economically based.

TGN: Thanks, Betty, for sharing with us.

Meeting New Neighbors at Menlo Commons October Party

Hans Ringertz (B-105)



Richard Wrenn (B-201)



TGN: Where did you live before coming to Menlo Commons?

Richard: I move here from Oak Creek Apartments in December 2013. My wife died five years ago. Before then we did a lot of traveling including Eastern Europe and the Greek Islands.

TGN: I look forward to seeing you at our future parties.

Nancy Fan (C-207)



TGN: How long have you lived at Menlo Commons, Nancy?

Nancy: I have been here three months. My family consists of three sons and eight grandchildren. I came here because one of my children and his family live in Portola Valley.

TGN: Nice to meet you. Enjoy this welcoming party.

Brigitte Esmailzadeh (A-205)



TGN: Welcome, Brigitte. Where are you from?

Brigitte: I lived three years in San Jose, 10 years in Hawaii, and 10 years in Los Angeles before coming here last February. I'm originally from Frankfurt, Germany. I have a son in Menlo Park, two grandchildren, and a son in Oakland who is a martial arts instructor. I like the swimming pool here where I can exercise.

TGN: Tell us about yourself, Hans.

Hans: I came to the U.S. from Sweden in 2004. I am a professor in pediatric radiology. I spend one-half of my time here and the other half in Stockholm where my wife Britt-Marie stays. I moved to Menlo Commons in November 2013. I like it here. It is very pleasant, and I love the environment.

Sue Morse (D-304)



TGN: When did you arrive at Menlo Commons, Sue?

Sue: I came here in August this year. I retired in 2004 from IBM after 32 years working as a programmer, then in sales, and then in customer executive education. The reason I came here was my daughter and three young grandchildren ages 2-4-6 live nearby. I am on-call as a babysitter. I also have a place in Danville. I like to knit, sew, and play mahjong. My daughter and her husband are doctors at Stanford in neurology and psychiatry.

Margaret Baxter (C-307)

TGN: Are you from Ireland?

Margaret: Yes. I came to the U.S. in 1954. My husband died in 1979. I have five children, and I lived in Ladera before moving here this October. I still have a brother living in Ireland. My son lives just a couple blocks away. He convinced me to move here. I also have a daughter in San Francisco. Another lives in the Phillipines. I have one daughter in Boston and a son who resides in Livermore.

TGN: Well, welcome to Menlo Commons, Margaret.