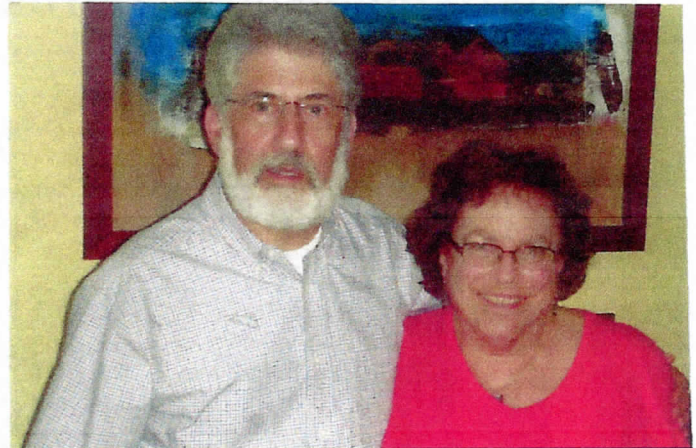


MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Lew Mermelstein and Jane Marcus - Moved Here in 2011



TGN: Lew, tell us about your early years.

Lew: I was raised in Pittsburgh, Pa., and I was graduated from the University of Akron, majoring in electrical engineering specializing in large motors and power systems. I was in the Peace Corps from 1970 to 1973 in Ethiopia doing electrification in the rural areas. When I returned to Pittsburgh, I met Jane in Philadelphia and we were married in 1974. I worked for General Electric as a Field Engineer at many locations around Philadelphia including Three-Mile Island nuclear power plant during its early construction. Years later, during the partial meltdown, the part I had worked on performed properly. Sue Marshall's husband, at that time, was commander of the Marine Corps unit across the river from TMI. Sue said "We lived on base and were sheltered because the military was ordered to remain to aid and assist as needed." We moved to Palo Alto in 1977. I worked at Stanford Hospital supervising calibration of biomedical electronic equipment for 18 months. After that I worked at NASA Ames maintaining wind tunnels for 28 years. I retired and we moved here to Menlo Commons in 2011.

TGN: Jane, what is your background?

Jane: I was born and raised on Long Island, N.Y. I was graduated from Chatham College in Pittsburgh, majoring in English, French and Education. I taught school in Philadelphia and obtained a Masters degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

TGN: Tell us about your travel experiences, and what came next.

Jane: Early in our marriage we traveled to Iran where we taught the dependent children of Americans who were part of a large contract the Shah had with the US military. We had hoped to have an intercultural experience in the city of Isfahan where we'd learn about Persian culture, learn Farsi, and get to know the Iranian people. Isfahan is a beautiful city that had been the height of Persian culture in the 15th Century and of which is said "Isfahan is half the world." Instead we were housed in a modern complex located in barren hills outside the city with mostly other Americans. During the Christmas holiday break of the first year we traveled to Ethiopia where Lew showed me where he had worked while in the Peace Corps - something I very much appreciated. We were not happy in our work and resigned after completing the first year of what was to have been a two-year contract. We left Iran just before the revolution that toppled the Shah's government. We returned to the US through Southeast Asia and Hawaii to Palo Alto. I took a job as an office assistant to the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center and then began a graduate program in Administration and Policy Analysis at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. My dissertation, completed in 1985 with a minor in Communication, studied the adoption of computer technology by faculty and staff beginning in the late 1970's with special attention to "early adopters". If you've read Malcom Gladwell's book "The Tipping Point" you will be familiar with the theoretical framework of my research. I continued to hold a managerial position at Stanford's central computing organization until I retired in 2008.

TGN: What about your family?

Jane: We have two children. Our son Marc lives in New York City and is a Physician Assistant. He is engaged to be married next spring. Our daughter Molly also lives in Manhattan and is an actress. We just visited her in Colorado, where she performed in summer stock. My mother, who lives in Miami, is 90 years old, in terrific shape physically and mentally. I have a sister in New York, and Lew has a sister in Pittsburgh.

TGN: Lew, what have you enjoyed doing since your retirement?

Lew: I am working on writing a book - creative nonfiction novel based on strange but true events that occurred when I was in the Peace Corps. I also enjoy fixing things. Our time is split between here and Fort Bragg in Mendocino County, where we have a great place at the end of a gravel road surrounded by redwoods, just a 1-1/4 mile from the ocean. It is quiet and secluded.

TGN: How about you, Jane?

Jane: I had a stroke in 2013, which has affected my independence. I lost my left field of vision and therefore can't drive. However, I have stayed intellectually engaged particularly in dealing with mental health issues through our synagogue, Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills. At Beth Am I am co-facilitator of a support group for families who help their loved ones cope with mental illness. I am a retired member of the National Board of the Women of Reform Judaism and am past chair of the resolutions committee that writes policy for WRJ. The other policy area that has been a focus for many years is drug policy reform. I was fortunate to have had the late Joe McNamara, Ph.D., former San Jose Police Chief and Hoover Institute Fellow, as my mentor. I blog about drug policy and other social action issues at the Huffington Post. I try to balance my time at the computer screen with handicrafts and have gotten back to knitting - something I stopped doing after the stroke. I've started a little business called Mendocino Neck Wear and I make scarves and something I'm describing as "knitted necklaces, all of which are adorned with beads."

TGN: How did you find Menlo Commons?

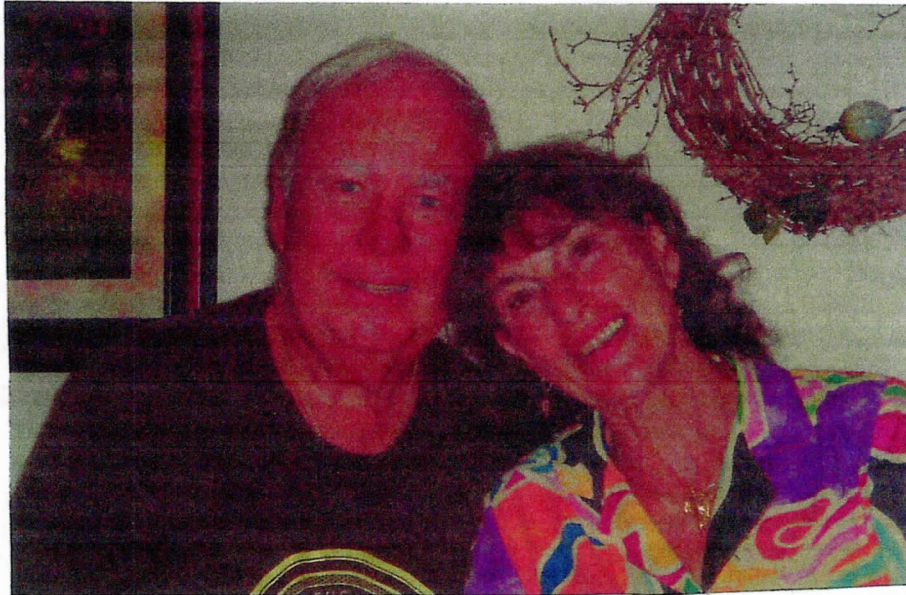
Lew: We had lived in our Palo Alto home since 1977, but decided it was time to "downsize". Our realtor found Menlo Commons for us. We first looked at a unit on the first floor in E building, but it was sold before we had a chance to make an offer. We just happened to be visiting here with our realtor when Elaine Smith's unit in D building became available. We liked it very much and were thrilled that we were able to purchase it.

Jane: I have been particularly happy with the flower box decision and conversion. I have been growing herbs in the flower boxes. The gardeners who planted the geraniums were very friendly and taught me the Spanish names of the mint and rosemary in my boxes. They were careful to leave my herbs safely nestled between the new plantings. We also like the convenience of Menlo Commons and the proximity to the airports since we often travel to visit our children and other family members back East. We also appreciate the excellent local medical services, which are lacking near our Fort Bragg house. We spend more than half of our time in Mendocino.

TGN: Thanks for your time, Lew and Jane, and sharing with us about yourselves.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Leonard Johnson & Barbara Parks: We Love to Hike



TGN: Barb and Leonard, tell us about your backgrounds.

Barb: I am a native Californian and have lived in and out of Palo Alto since 1961. I attended Jordan Jr. High School and Palo Alto High School. I was married and have two children. My children and grandchildren also attended Jordan and Paly. (My mother still lives in Palo Alto, she is now age 92.) After my children were grown, I went to college and obtained a doctorate in psychology. I still like to study and Leonard and I have just finished a course in American Foreign Policy at Stanford.

Leonard: I was raised in the northwest corner of Montana, near Glacier Park, just 50 miles from the Canadian border. I joined the Air Force right out of high school and served for 20 years. I was overseas for the most part in Viet Nam, then Germany, France, Norway, and England. During this time I was married and had two children - a daughter who lives in Virginia and a son in Delaware. After retiring from the Air Force, I was employed on the East coast in telecommunications. I have a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Maryland, and a masters degree from Cambridge University and the London School of Economics, where I was sponsored by USC. I also have a masters degree in Information Resource Management.

TGN: When did you two meet?

Leonard: I was living and working in Virginia. Barb was living in Oregon. We met in 2003 while hiking across Ireland. I retired in 2005 and moved to Portland, Oregon, where Barb was living. We moved back to the Bay Area in 2011 in order to be more active with our grandchildren.

Barb: We have a vacation home on the Big Island of Hawaii and spend a majority of our winters there. We both like to hike and have been on many "walks" all over the world, including England, Ireland, Scotland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, South Africa, Hong Kong, Costa Rica, Mexico and Iceland. We hardly unpack a suitcase before we are off on another trip. We also have done a lot of hiking around Menlo

Park and this area. I think we are well located here - with my grandchildren nearby in the Palo Alto area.

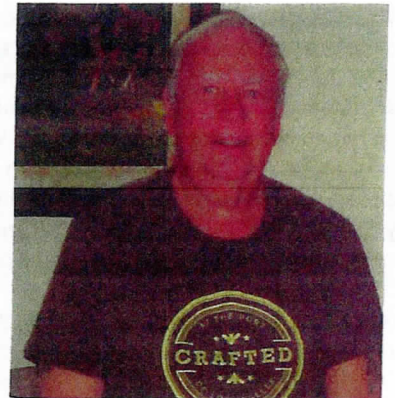
TGN: Tell us more about your career, Barb.

Barb: I did "crisis" work in the emergency room in Portland, Oregon, for many years. I retired in 2011. Now we're playing. Leonard took up golf this year, and he is taking golf lessons and plays with my youngest grandson. He also enjoys fishing, and we both love reading.

TGN: Where are you off to on your next trip?

Barb: We are headed back to Scotland this year. We toured the Irish countryside last year and enjoyed a couple of whiskey distilleries in Ireland, so next we will see how the Scottish distilleries match up (in Scotland it's whisky - no "e"). We are looking forward to exploring and walking the countryside. This will be our third trip there. It's fun to do the planning. .

TGN: Well thanks for your time and sharing your interesting adventures with us.



Encased in a red binder, all back issues of **The Good Neighbor** are now available for you to read in the Menlo Commons Room. **The Good Neighbor** is written and published monthly for residents of Menlo Commons by Jim Palmer. E-303. jdpalmerjr@aol.com.