

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Ruth Wise: Menlo Commons - "A Good Choice"

TGN: Ruth, tell us about yourself.

Ruth: I was born in Denver, but at age 2 moved to San Francisco where I grew up and went to school. After high school I entered Cal and graduated with a degree in psychology, which I never used professionally. I married shortly after college and moved to San Mateo and then, in 1960, to Menlo Park, where my husband and I raised 3 sons. In 1967, I went back to San Jose State and got a teaching credential. I began teaching in Redwood City in 1970, and shortly thereafter became involved in teaching children with learning disabilities. It was really a new field, with no real curriculum, few materials, so it was challenging. I taught mostly in 8th grade, and grew to love what I was doing. However, juggling job and family was difficult; now most women work but at that time it was not so common. I might add teaching is a wonderful but demanding profession, and I am saddened that teachers do not get the respect - or pay - they deserve. By the time I retired my sons had graduated college and were on their own. I was divorced and with the man who became my second husband. We bought a condo on Sand Hill Circle, and I continued to live there for a few years after he passed away, then rented for a very short time, but very happily moved into Menlo Commons at the end of 2007. All I can say about that is - good choice!

TGN: What activities are you involved in?

Ruth: I have always loved being out in nature. So after I retired I trained and volunteered as a nature docent at Filoli, leading groups, mostly children, on the trails through the nature areas that lie beyond the gardens. It was very rewarding, especially with children who had literally never been away from the city streets. Eventually it became a little too hard, and now I enjoy strolling the beautiful Filoli gardens. I was also involved with the League of Women Voters, and led a study of local charter schools. Through my synagogue, which was part of a consortium of churches and synagogues, I help occasionally to serve meals to homeless people in the area, but I confess I do little volunteering these days. With time on my hands a few years ago I went to the Pacific Art League in Palo Alto and took classes in drawing and watercolor painting. I had loved drawing as a child and I confess I am better at drawing than painting! But my family is kind and display some of my work in their homes, and I have a bit scattered around - even on the halls outside. I also love to be with friends, both new and old. And there is nothing like a good book!

TGN: How about traveling?

Ruth: I have traveled quite a bit in the United States and Canada. I started my overseas travel in western Europe, largely without a group. Later I went to Mexico and Central America a few times, to Machu Picchu in Peru and the Galapagos in Ecuador, to eastern Europe and Russia and Southeast Asia with various groups - one being Road Scholar, but also Overseas Adventure Travel. A cruise from Singapore to Bombay (Mumbai now) ended with my husband and I on our own in India and Nepal. It was great, often amusing and sometimes horrifying, experience. More recently I traveled to Cuba, where we had some interesting adventures, including having an excellent dinner in the home of our driver's parents, after mentioning to our driver that the only good dishes we had found were pizza and ice cream. I have great respect for the Cuban people, who have great patience and resourcefulness, and hope their lives are improving. I also have taken trips with the Cantor Art Center, here in the United States. They are outstanding! I am less enthusiastic about traveling



overseas now, but hope to make a couple more trips to New York, and maybe somewhere with Cantor. And to Colorado, my home state.

TGN: Do you enjoy music and performances?

Ruth: I attend the San Francisco Symphony, and enjoy concerts at Stanford. In recent years my special friend, Howard, introduced me to great jazz, and we go to concerts at Stanford and around the Bay Area. I particularly love going to the Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society at Half Moon Bay, where all sorts of musical groups perform. I also like the Redwood Symphony, which mostly performs at the theater at Canada College. They are amazing. Then there is the Metropolitan Opera in HD. It has made me an opera fan! As for theater, the Berkeley Repertory Theater has some terrific performances, a little difficult to get there but worth it. And then there are the Giants games which I like to attend. And I guiltily watch HGTV - which is about houses.

TGN: Tell us about your family.

Ruth: I have one son who lives in Santa Cruz, one in Davis, and a son and daughter-in-law in Boulder, Colorado. They all live in college towns, but only my son in Santa Cruz is part of the university. My 19-year-old granddaughter lives in Davis, when she is not going to UC Santa Cruz, and my 17-year old grandson lives in Davis. In Boulder I have a 2-1/2 year old granddaughter, an unexpected joy. I am proud of all of them, and we try to be together as often as possible. I also have 6 stepchildren (no, I didn't raise them) and several step grandchildren as well as one step great grandchild. They live all over the United States, but my sons and I keep in close touch with them, and we all had a wonderful reunion recently in Bend, Oregon. My only sister lives in Lafayette and we meet at least once a month.

TGN: Thanks, Ruth, for sharing with us. I would like to take a picture of you and that art work on your wall.

Ruth: My mother made this tapestry.

TGN: I can see where you get your interest in art from. Thanks again, Ruth.

Celebrating Labor Day at Menlo Commons BarBQ



Krystyna Swearingen and Marilyn Palmer enjoy the Labor Day party!



Anne Bergman, ready to go!



Richard and Ellen Holm celebrate too



Debbie Reif serves it up



Gloria Dawson and Jerry Wilkinson have fun



Sharon Frymire and Ina Frymire together



Jim Palmer greets Mark Vahdatpour



Pat Kopas and her friend Lillian