President’s Message

UR PAST YEAR of 2002 began with members amending the bylaws of the Association at our annual meeting. The bylaws are now more democratic in a responsible way. The petition and nominations can be used more frequently for direct action. If the Association is ever dissolved, the Menlo Park Library will now get the very valuable assets.

Much of the Board’s time this year has dealt with supporting historical activities and deciding how much financial aid we should give these efforts. The first action was the six handsome ceramic tile panels concerned with local history. The panels were created by local craftsmen and are easily seen at the end of Alma Street, three in Menlo Park and three in Palo Alto. The April dedication had a sizable crowd of local organizations present.

If the ceramic tiles encouraged healthy debate, the Water Tower plaque did not. Its dedication in December was attended by railroad and historical Association members. The East deck plaque is very well done and people will read it, especially commuters.

Our last membership meeting featured a very enthusiastic presentation by Elena Reese, a Stanford archeologist and Association member. She really got us excited about local history! An example of this was the description of the excavation of the Jane and Leland Stanford house in Palo Alto. The original house was built in the 1860s. Stanford was the second owner. The present excavation has been going on for six or seven years. She evoked many memories of past times for many members at the meeting.

The next subject to be considered by the Board is the possible establishment of a scholarship. It was clear at the beginning that we needed some expert advice. We asked the college Information specialist of Menlo-Atherton high School to come to a Board meeting and provide us with her insights on scholarships. Her enthusiasm gave us a good beginning.

—Roger Seccombe

MERRILL HISTORY ROOM (at library) office hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday & Wednesday except holidays. http://www.ci.menlo-park.ca/history.htm
News of Menlo Park

"IF THE OLD TIMERS who are slumbering with the blest (sic) and who lived in Menlo Park forty years ago could only come back and view the scenes of their former activities and see the beautiful landscape, dotted with shacks they would feel like returning again to their slumbers in the grave. In their day Menlo and Atherton (then Sair [sic] Oaks) consisted of large holdings with beautiful homes and palatial dwellings. Men of vision, like the Selbys, Athertons, Doyles, Casserlys, Donohoes and the Mezes came in the sixties, buying large tracts of land. Large Oaks dotted the landscape; virgin soil produced bumper crops. The climate was superior to all others. These men saw the advantages of

land placed on the real estate market and portions held by the heirs of the millionaires. During the past few years nearly all of those exclusive tracts have been placed on the market with scarcely any restrictions so that small buildings have been erected, dotting the entire area of Menlo Park and Atherton, and destroying its appearance and attractiveness. Of course no one will dispute the fact that the proletarian has equal rights with the millionaire in enjoying the beautiful attractions of this favored locality, in breathing the pure air, in building a home and delighting in the fragrance of the flowers that nowhere else grow half so fair. These rights were ordained from the beginning by an all-wise Providence to all the inhabitants be they rich or poor...

Menlo Park's climate has no equal. Some time ago the government collected some valuable statistics and published them in a voluminous report that was broadcast last year.

"According to these statistics covering a long period of years that portion of the peninsula known as Menlo Park is the world's locality. They peered into the future and saw what was in store for Menlo Park. They knew how valuable the land would be and so made big investments. Their fine homes attracted the attention of the world.

"No tourist's [sic] visit would be complete without seeing the beautiful homes of Menlo Park. As years went on the old timers passed on and out of these sylvan scenes leaving their homes to their children. In time the big estates were divided; some of the

Membership News

THE MENLO PARK Historical Association would like to welcome 10 new members who just joined us. We are grateful for their becoming members and look forward to what we hope will be a long and happy sharing of our love of Menlo Park. We welcome aboard Mr. John Barbour of Gloucester, Mass., Mr. Peter Anderson of Morgan Hill, Mr. John Conway, Mr. Lester Cutting, Ms. Patricia Hjelm, Mr. Jim Stocker, Mr. Warren Whitehead and Ms. Julie Zarcone of Menlo Park, and Mr. and Mrs. Steve Miller of Atherton.

At this time we would also like to remind our loyal past members who may have forgotten to send in their memberships that we truly value their membership and their input. If any have mislaid the membership envelopes, please give us a call at 858-5368. Your membership is our lifeblood.
most favored spot, being freer from rainy days, fog, cloudy days, extremes of temperature, high winds and storms of all kinds than any spot on earth.

"Here are the comparative figures: Average, Menlo Park, 43 rainy days; cloudy days, 132; clear days, 233. Los Angeles, 41 rainy days; 172 cloudy days; 193 clear days. San Diego, 48 rainy days; 146 cloudy days; 219 clear days.

"Menlo Park's perfect climate—Average foggy days per year 4; average daily temperature per year 60 degrees; highest average temperature per year 70 month of August; lowest temperature per year 51 month of January.

"Menlo Park's climate from data gathered by the government agents and later made parts of the records of the Smithsonian institute (sic) in Washington shows that Menlo Park is in the center of what is considered a perfect climate belt. There are three such

hits according to information gathered by the government, one in the Canary Islands, another in Africa, and that part of the peninsula, known as Menlo Park."

For all the "proletariats" who have been privileged to choose to live in Menlo Park's "perfect climate," we know the abundance of beauty and bounty offered by our unique climate. We may not have the mansions that formerly characterized our city, but we

have many local benefactors who have appreciated the gifts of our soil and climate, like Michael Lynch, who in 1892 established

his own Menlo Park nursery along Oak Grove Avenue, from whence he used his own stock exclusively in landscaping Holy Cross Cemetery, St. Patrick's Seminary and parts of the Stanford campus. Our natural parklike natural landscape attracted in modern times the likes of the Lanes and Sunset Magazine, and people who appreci-
Happenings in the Association

EVENTS ON THE AGENDA for this year will include the Annual Ice Cream Social, traditionally hosted by the Kavanaugh family. Unsurprisingly, this event is always one of our best attended and offers all members a chance to mix socially with people who love Menlo Park, and the setting is hard to beat, our oak-canopied grounds outside the Library, usually on a pleasant Sunday, June afternoon.

The Annual Meeting referred to in the President’s Message will once again be in November with a traditional entertaining and in-structive speaker. A short, but important business meeting precedes the speaker and the finale, as always, will be a table of holiday treats as a special reward for all in attendance. Please mark your calendars for our meeting in November.

What will not occur this year is the Annual Chinese New Year’s Day dinner. It has been deferred to 2004.

As mentioned in the President’s Message, one item under consideration is a possible scholarship. Study will continue about its merits.

San Mateo County Historical Association Exhibits

THE SAN MATEO HISTORICAL Association is planning two exhibits in the old San Mateo County Court House in Redwood City, one being “The Italians in San Mateo County” and the other, “The Irish in San Mateo County.” Tentative plans are for these exhibits to be ready in about a year from now.

The Irish are planning a pre-St. Patrick’s Day news conference on March 10, with Irish dancers in the rotunda area, to alert the public of these plans and ask for help. Family histories, artifacts and stories of our Irish contributors are being requested of the public. Those who would like to help this exhibit may call Mike McQueen, chairman of Irish committee, at 650-591-3194.

A Little Humor

TWO SAFECrackers got through the alarms and into the business office at the back of a large store. One of them took off his shoes and socks and started to turn the dials on the safe with his toes.

“Quit fooling around and use your hands on that thing, Jack,” said the other.

“This won’t take much longer,” said Jack, “And we’ll drive those fingerprint experts crazy.”

AN INTREPID HUNTER was so intent on bagging some game along a riverbank in Thailand that he didn’t notice when his false teeth fell out of his mouth.

Ever since, the poor hunter has been looking for his bridge in the river Kwai.

TWO DOCTORS were comparing notes on their careers. “Did you ever make a serious mistake, Charlie?”

“Yes,” said Charlie! “I once cured a multimillionaire in three visits.”

Maxine

I keep hitting ‘escape,’ but I’m still here.
In Memoriam

IN THE MINUTES of the February Board Meeting, the Board observed a moment of silence in memory of two Association members, Barbara Eshleman Gilmer and Catherine Barbieri. Unfortunately, no obituaries were included for this issue. The GATEPOST welcomes and requests obituaries and memories of our deceased members.

We did, however, receive obituaries for two Menlo Park giants in their fields, Dr. Sergius Bryner, an outstanding cardiologist, and Ian F. Triska, J.U.D., J.S.D., Ph.D., Professor of Political Science and International Relations.

Both were deeply affected by World War II: both were renowned in their fields; both were longtime Menlo Park residents; and both had wonderful marriages and families. They were both role models from "The Greatest Generation."

Although Dr. Bryner was born in Vladivostok, he came as a child to Menlo Park, went to St. Joseph’s School, Bellarmine and Stanford University “Less than a year after graduating from Stanford Medical School, (Dr. Bryner) was saving lives on the front lines of North Africa and the European Theater during WWII,” writes Shawn Webby of the S. J. Mercury.

During the war he met, fell in love with and married a nurse, Ann, in France in 1944, a marriage that spanned seven decades.

After the war Dr. Bryner joined the Palo Alto Medical Clinic as an internist “and began studying cardiology in the 1950s with the passion and dedication of a new student.” He was soon asked to prepare oral examinations for cardiology candidates.

He became “Chief of Cardiology from 1960 until his retirement in 1980 ...During his ‘retirement,’ he was Chief of Electrocardiology for the Stanford Medical Center. He also served as an attending cardiologist for the Stanford Medical School teaching program, as well as a candidate examiner for applicants.” (Webby) Until the end of his life, the mention of his name would bring smiles to all who knew him. A Menlo Park hero has left an indelible legacy with us.

Dr. Triska, a native of Prague, had a different route to the United States. During the Nazi occupation in Czechoslovakia, he was deported to a forced labor camp in Eisenach, Germany, until liberation by Patton’s Third Army in 1945.

"Returning to Prague, he barely completed his J.U.D. before the communist coup d’etat in 1948. A student leader on the enemies list, he was sentenced to hard labor while awaiting trial. During this time, he escaped to American-occupied Germany, and was granted a Sterling Fellowship at Yale Law School as a displaced person,” writes his son, John Triska. He earned his L.L.M. and J.S.D. at Yale and his Ph.D. at Harvard and began a long and distinguished career.

"Professor Triska authored over 60 articles, fourteen books and two monograph series. ...He was writing his memoirs at the time of his death.”

His sons captured their father as a “citizen of the world ...devoted to T.G. Masaryk’s ideals of freedom, justice, human rights and democracy. He directly witnessed many of the events that shaped Czechoslovakia through the century, including the Warsaw Pact invasion that ended the Prague Spring in 1968. He was proud to be twice President of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, and to assist in the restructuring of Czech legal institutions after the Velvet Revolution.

Two issues ago we recognized Professor Triska’s reception of the Medal of Merit, First Degree, from the Office of Czech President Vaclav Havel for “Meritorious Services to the Czech Republic,” presented at the Masaryk Memorial dedication in Washington, D.C., last September.

Menlo Park mourns the loss of Dr. Bryner and Professor Triska, whose contributions have literally touched millions and will continue to do so.