

Local residents wind up in Louisiana, but for different reasons 7

LOS GATOS WEEKLY TIMES

www.lgwt.com

Vol. 122, No. 40 Wednesday, September 28, 2005

TOWN TURNS DOWN CHURCH'S OFFER OF SKATEPARK PIECES FOR TEMPORARY USE

Council has concerns about jeopardizing existing plan

Town waiting for grant

By JENNIFER MCLAIN

When Monte Sereno parent JoAnne Peth asked the Los Gatos Town Council on Sept. 19 for its support in creating a temporary skatepark, her intuition proved right—the idea was rejected.

“I expected that response, but it never hurts to ask,” Peth said.

Still waiting for a response about whether the town received a grant for nearly \$750,000 from California State Parks that would be applied to a permanent skatepark, Councilman Steve Glickman asked for the council’s direction at the Sept. 19 meeting about possibly developing a temporary skatepark.

The Los Gatos United Methodist Church has wooden skateboarding equipment that it no longer needs, and representatives from the church asked the town if it could use the equipment.

“The question comes forward—would it be wise to accept that equipment?” Glickman asked.

No, it wouldn’t, and for different reasons, responded Mayor Mike Wasserman, Vice Mayor Diane McNutt and Councilmembers Joe Pirzynski and Barbara Spector.

“This is in no way shape or form going to supplant an acceptable, absolute solution,

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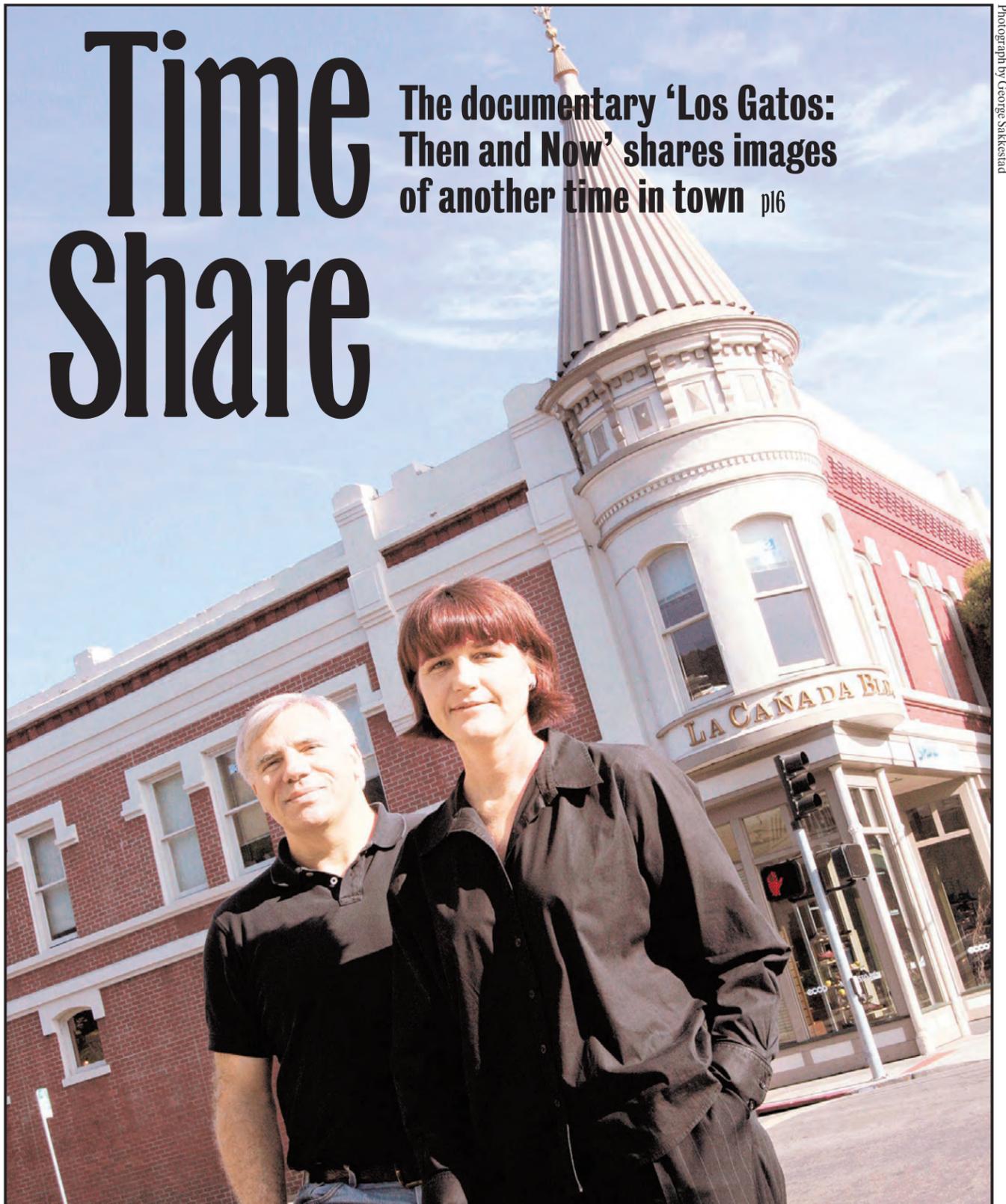
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Community Classifieds

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Photograph by George Sakkestad

Time Share

The documentary ‘Los Gatos: Then and Now’ shares images of another time in town p16

Los Gatos is starring in a film, and the entire town is invited to the premiere this week. The documentary ‘Los Gatos: Then and Now,’ by local filmmakers and Los Gatos residents John Wainwright and Valerie Archer (above), will have its debut screening at the Los Gatos Opera House on Sept. 29.



BRIEFS

Commission to host BBQ for seniors

The second annual senior barbecue will be at noon on Oct. 5. The barbecue, which will be free to Los Gatos seniors, is compliments of the Los Gatos Parks Commission.

Lunch will be served at noon, and will be at the pageant grounds behind the Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department.

For more information, call the senior center at 408.354.1514.

Gift shop in Los Gatos needs volunteers

The Happy Dragon Gift Shop, which sells second-hand clothing and other items, needs volunteer workers.

All proceeds from the store's sales benefit the Eastfield Ming Quong Guild, which provides services to children with depression and other emotional problems, and their families.

Visit Happy Dragon at 245 W. Main St. or call 408.354.4072.

VTA making changes to bus connections

Valley Transportation Authority bus lines 48 and 49 will be changed as of Oct. 10 to better reflect actual running times, and to coordinate with school bell schedules.

Line 48's (Winchester Transit Center to downtown Los Gatos via Winchester) connections with Line 60 will be improved, and Line 49's (Winchester Transit Center to downtown Los Gatos via Los Gatos Boulevard) connections with Lines 27 and 62 will be improved.

For more information, visit www.vta.org/news/service_changes/2005oct_servicechanges.html.

TOWN NEWS



Local Government
Police Report

VOLUME 122, NUMBER 40

LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 28, 2005

Local residents caught up in the storm

Different choices take two Los Gatans to Louisiana

By JENNIFER MCLAIN

When Denise Carter Wells volunteered with the Red Cross to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana, she knew she was leaving her comfort zone.

And when Jerome White left his Lockheed Martin, Californian lifestyle to pursue a more meaningful career, he knew that he was leaving his comfort zone.

While these two headed to the same state only three months apart, there are two very big differences. Carter Wells knew what she was getting into. White didn't.

Move to Louisiana

After living in California all his of life, including in Los Gatos for the past seven years, White was ready for a change. He attended Stanford University, and had been working at Lockheed Martin for the past nine years. While he was making good money as an engineer at Lockheed, he felt that something was missing.

"Life had become boring and routine, and I was looking for somewhat of an adventure," he said last week from his Louisiana home.

So, he made a change in his life. He quit Lockheed Martin in May, left his mother and home in Los Gatos, and headed out to Louisiana to become a high school math teacher.

White stayed with relatives for a couple of months until he found an apartment in New Orleans proper. After one week of living there, he was robbed, so he decided that it would be best if he found an apartment closer to the campus where he taught—Bonnabel High School, located in Kenner in Jefferson Parish.

After moving, again, news forecasters started predicting a hurricane to hit Louisiana. Glued to the television, he, along with some family members and friends, opted to evacuate, and they left their homes to a safer destination in Baton Rouge. Eventually, they headed to Houston with the family of a friend to stay there while the hurricane hit.

During that time, he was not sure what his future held for him. Would he still have a school to teach at? Would he still have an apartment?

After three weeks of being away from his new apartment, he was finally able to return.

His apartment, fortunately, was not harmed. Bonnabel High School, however, White's first teaching assignment, was not as lucky.

"As a teacher with one whole week of experience, I'm not thinking my job security is that great. But I'm still optimistic," White said.

He said that because there are so many schools that have been destroyed, he expects schools to be impacted with students and teachers, and he is unsure what that means for



Photograph courtesy of Denise Carter Wells

A house in Plaquemines Parish, La., is flooded after Hurricane Katrina struck. Los Gatos resident Denise Carter Wells volunteered through the Red Cross and spent two weeks aiding victims of the hurricane.

his teaching future in Louisiana.

On Sept. 20, White went to the school after reading a website posting requesting all school staff report by Sept. 21.

"It was written in a way that let us know our job security depended on us going there," he said.

Bonnabel was not flooded, but it did sustain a lot of damage, White said. As soon as he arrived, he began cleaning. Although there are two buildings that are unusable, and there is extensive water damage throughout the campus, White thinks it will be open again soon, which some administrators predicted as early as Oct. 3.

"In all the buildings, there tended to be mold on a lot of walls. Some classrooms seemed ready to go, but when I looked closer I could see some mold. Honestly, though, it may have been there before," White said, laughing.

White described Jefferson Parish as a lower-middle class county. Driving around, he said that while life may be returning to normalcy, there are still many things that are out of place.

"There is definitely life here. I wasn't sure if I was going to return to a ghost town," he said. In the streets, he has seen ducked-tape refrigerators, torn out carpet, trash piles everywhere, fallen trees, battered store-fronts and cars abandoned in the middle of the roads.

After having only spent three months in Louisiana, White said he leans in favor of California's natural disasters over those in the South.

"That question comes up a lot out here. A lot of people from here say they prefer a hurricane, and I say I'd much rather have an earthquake," he said. Though the last time he experienced a big earthquake was in 1989, and he

was not impacted by it, the anticipation of the hurricanes are much worse, he said.

"There is that whole buildup beforehand, and you are just glued to the TV and wondering and hoping it will go somewhere else, but then feeling a little guilty for thinking that because that means someone else will go through this," he said.

The hurricanes, he said, consume your life. "At least with an earthquake, you figure you're either prepared or you're not prepared, and it's just a luck of the draw," he said.

Plus, hurricane season is not even over. "Just the idea that we are not even through it yet, and now, all of the sudden, there's Hurricane Rita—it's just that extra variable hanging over your head," he said.

As he and teachers will continue to work and try to get the school up and running, White hopes that the nation will continue to invest its time, efforts and attention to the devastation.

"I'm just hoping that this isn't something that captures that nation's attention for a little bit," he said.

Going to help out

Just as White opted to do something he had always wanted to, Carter Wells pursued something she always said she was going to do.

"I have always contributed financially when there was an international or national disaster. After 9-11 I wanted to go and help out, but I was afraid. And after the tsunami I wanted to go, but I was afraid. After that, I swore that if anything happened I was going to help out,"

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TOWN NEWS

Hurricane

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she said. The longtime Los Gatos resident signed up for a Red Cross class in Oakland, and then she was off to Baton Rouge on Sept. 7. There for 13 days, Carter Wells worked as a mental health volunteer in Baton Rouge, Jefferson Parish and New Orleans proper.

"We were doing anything—trying to listen to people, hand out water, hand out food, pass out trash bags, whatever we could do," she said.

Besides observing intense prejudice between the whites and blacks, Carter Wells said she was taken aback by some of the destruction of the hurricane.

"I saw dead cows, dead horses, semi-trucks hanging from trees, boats sitting on the road. The smell was hideous—dead cows, cats and dogs, covered in horrible things," she said.

Carter Wells said that many of the evacuees she came across, the majority are poor, angry and frustrated with their situation.

"It has brought the best and worst out of people," she said. She added, however, that she has never met such a proud, gracious group of people in all her life.

Carter Wells wants to remind people that they can make a difference, whether by volunteering or donating financially.

"Leave the cushiness of Los Gatos behind to help people less fortunate than us. These people have nothing, and we have so much here," she said.

To volunteer or donate to the Red Cross, call 577.1000, or visit www.red-cross.org.

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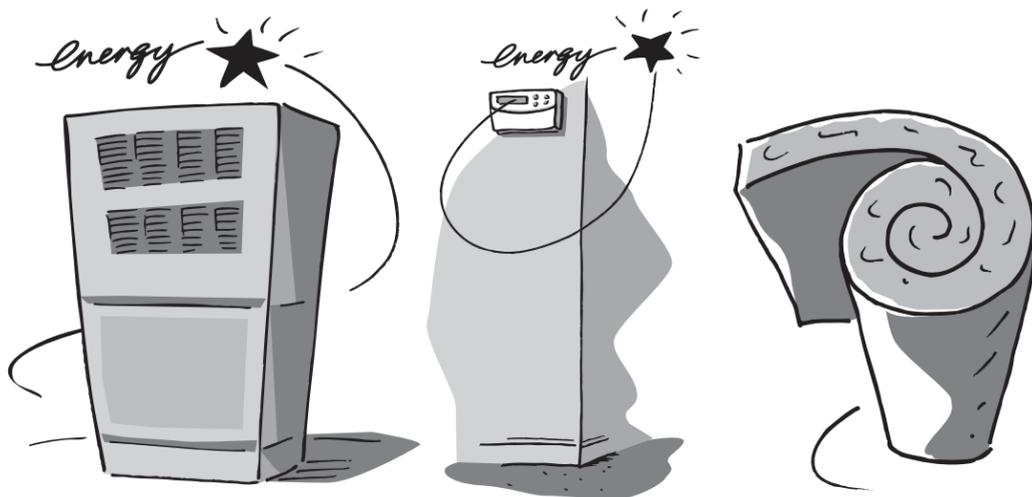
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