



the Country Almanac

25 cents

Vol. XIV No. 7 October 17, 1979

the independent newspaper for Woodside, Portola Valley, Sharon Heights, Atherton, Ladera, Stanford Hills, Skyline and west Menlo Park

851-0730



Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus came to Redwood City Friday to pledge nearly \$1 million for the purchase of a new park. Photo by Anatole Burkin.

Saved by the bell... **Edgewood college site will be a park**

Thanks to a last minute grant of almost \$1 million in federal funds, 450 acres of rolling woods and meadow at the western edge of Redwood City will be preserved as a county park—and possibly a golf course—instead of being sold for development in January.

U. S. Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus flew from Washington to announce the grant to purchase the surplus state college site at the southeast corner of Edgewood Road and Interstate 280.

"Open space is vitally important," he said. "If we don't save some, it will be developed. Kids won't have a place to hike."

The Secretary personally allocated \$765,200 from the national contingency funds of the Land and Water Conservation Funds to help acquire the area close to the heavily urbanized areas of San Carlos and Redwood City, a combined population of 80,000. The grant will help further the objectives of President Carter's urban parks program to acquire more open space and park land close to where people live, he said.

The federal grant will be supplemented with a grant of \$200,000 of state land and water conservation funds and matched by \$950,000 in local funds to be divided between San Mateo County and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. Each of these has committed \$475,000 to acquire the property.

The federal land and water conservation fund is derived from the sale of off-shore oil and gas leases, Secretary Andrus reminded the audience of some 50 local officials, leaders and press who gathered at the site. Many

of these have been fighting proposals for oil drilling off the San Mateo County coast.

Secretary Andrus is the second Secretary of the Interior to visit San Mateo County on official business within a decade. The first visit was from former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, who flew by helicopter over the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site on Sweeny Ridge to determine if it should be made a national historic site. It subsequently was.

What is the new park site?

The Edgewood Road state college site is 477 acres of rolling grass and woodlands which connects the heavily populated areas to the east with the large open spaces of the San Francisco watershed. It is the wooded knoll, a landmark, viewed from Route 280 and the first ridgeline viewed from the flatlands of Redwood City. In terms of jurisdictions, 274 acres are within Redwood City and 204 in unincorporated San Mateo County.

In practice, the Edgewood site has been serving as an unofficial park for many years—but a park with no maintenance and no effective policing. Thus, picnickers, hikers and horseback riders often collide with motorcyclists and guard-dog training classes. The abuse of the land, primarily by motorcycles and four-wheel drive vehicles, is measured by the steadily growing scars which climb the knoll and criss-cross the meadow. A walk across the property also shows it is used as a dump for everything from beer cans to bedsprings and junked cars.

Nevertheless, the property retains much of its natural beauty—panoramic views, spacious meadows and

secluded canyons. It is home to many plants and animals, including the endangered San Mateo thornmint and the rare white fritillary.

In the spring, the drab and desiccated serpentine grasslands blossom into the vibrant colors of California's native wildflowers. These serpentine grasslands are sure to be among the most debated aspects of the park as plans for development progress. This is the soil surrounding serpentine outcroppings which is so hostile to most plants that only certain California natives can survive there. It is a habitat that used to blanket much of the local foothills in color each spring, but it has largely disappeared under marching subdivisions.

On the day of Secretary Andrus' visit, officials and conservationists alike were trampling the rare plants—now in their drabest phase—as they clustered around the refreshment table and the microphone.

The same week Secretary Andrus announced the federal grant for the Edgewood Road property, the board of directors of the open space district agreed to negotiate to buy the 290-acre Hassler Health Home property on Edgewood Road across from the college site. Neighbors in San Carlos have agreed to tax themselves \$300,000 to acquire the property. When combined, the two parks will provide Midpeninsula residents with 740 new acres of public open space on the western fringes of the heavily populated bayside.

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Edgewood site

Continued from Page 1

Some background

The about-to-be-acquired surplus college site has a long history of controversy, starting in the 1960's before the state became involved. The eastern half was at one time considered for a national headquarters for Ampex, before the company decided to stay in its existing Redwood City location. Later, with some assistance from former Senator Richard Dolwig, a proposal for high density apartments was pushed, but never got off the ground.

Eventually the state college system bought the property back in the days when population projections suggested the need for a new state college between San Francisco and San Jose. The property was acquired between 1967 and 1971. Then, when the projections failed to materialize, the college system declared the land surplus in 1977.

Since then, there has been a proposal for a solar Energy Research Institute (now at Barstow).

Several speakers referred to the key role in the acquisition played by former Senator Arlen Gregorio. Senator Gregorio carried a bill through the legislature in 1978 which allowed the property to be purchased at the state's appraised value rather than the much higher purchase price.

Future plans

Future plans for the new park are completely open; there is certain to be strong impetus for a golf course.

What is the first step, once final negotiations are complete and the county takes over the property? "We have to protect it until we get a plan," said Doc Mattison, county park and recreation director.

Protecting it and stopping the abuse may take some doing. County and open space district officials promised there would be rangers on the land to stop the motorcycle abuse as soon as the land changes hands.

What will be done? "It's an open book," said Sylvia Lutz, chairman of the county park and recreation commission. She anticipates a full study and development process complete with public hearings and consideration of alternatives. Any final plan will have to be acceptable to the open space district which will hold an open space easement on the property, according to General Manager Herb Grench.

Meanwhile, there is a shaky consensus, that this is the

Many thanks to

At the ceremony marking funding for the Edgewood Road state college site, many individuals were singled out for helping spearhead the cooperative effort of public agencies and their constituents to secure almost \$2 million for the purchase:

—Supervisor Ed Bacciocco in whose district the property lies;

—Robert Trent Jones, Jr., of Woodside, international golf course designer, state park commissioner and long-time friend of Secretary Andrus, who helped secure the funds;

—Former State Senator Arlen Gregorio (now a candidate for county supervisor) who passed a bill to allow the property to be purchased for \$2 million;

—Steve Andrus of Menlo Park, who helped scout the property for his brother, the Secretary of the Interior;

—Lennie Roberts of the Committee for Green Foothills;

—County Park and Recreation Director Doc Mattison;

—State Park and Recreation Director Russ Cahill;

—Herb Grench, general manager of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District;

—Congressman Pete McCloskey, Bill Royer, Phil Burton and Senator Alan Cranston.

State task force

Dr. Sarah Stewart, an eight-year member of the Portola Valley School District Board, has been appointed to a statewide task force on school finance.

As a member of the 1979-80 California School Boards Association task force she will review school finance legislation and work on the school board association's positions on the "goals and needs for financing public education."

The seven-member task force also will analyze pending ballot proposals affecting school finance and disseminate information on their possible impacts. Task force members will examine retirement systems for school employees and monitor action stemming from the Serrano-Priest court decision.

Dr. Stewart has worked for three years with the California Coalition for Fair School Finance and has served as educational representative at American Association of University Women state division meetings. She is the president of the San Mateo County School Boards Association and a member of the state school board association's delegate assembly.

Bank open house

Bank of America is having open house this week at its newly remodeled Sharon Heights branch, 2180 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park.

Manager David F. Bayles is inviting all local residents to the festivities. Refreshments will be served and souvenir gifts presented.

Wednesday, Oct. 17, the branch staff will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of Bank of America by wearing costumes of the 1904 era. There also will be a paper sculpture exhibit in the branch all week which chronicles the 75-year history of Bank of America.

The platform area of the branch has been expanded and teller stations have been increased from seven to ten.

most acceptable place in the county for a new golf course. Supervisor Ed Bacciocco, who has been holding meetings with golf course advocates and conservationists said, "Yes, absolutely" to the proposal. He claims to have obtained agreement between the often-warring factions that a golf course can be built and the endangered thornmint and precious serpentine can be kept "intact and inviolate." He foresees going to bid for private financing, development and operation of the course.

Conservationists, who fought hard to keep a golf course off Filoli and the watershed, often urged that it be put on the Edgewood site. Now they are looking more carefully at the land and finding many things worth preserving.

"A golf course is okay, if they keep it off the serpentine," said Lennie Roberts of the Committee for Green

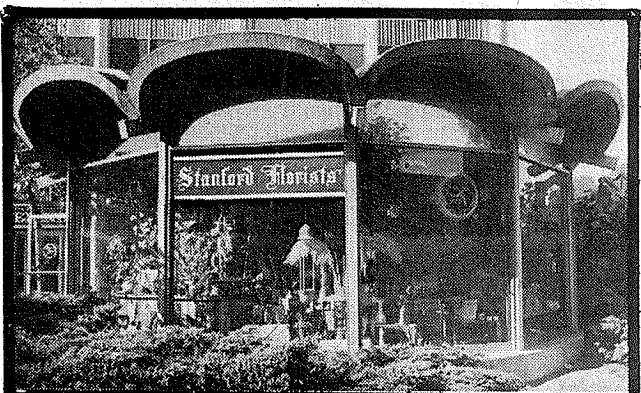
Foothills. She said the serpentine would first have to be mapped carefully so that the golf course would not encroach. This separation is necessary "both for the protection of wildflowers and the difficulty of getting lawn grasses to grow on serpentine," she said.

Robert Trent Jones, Jr., of Woodside, a golf course designer, feels it would be possible to design a golf course on the site that would avoid both hills, serpentine and other valuable areas. Since a golf course takes 120 to 160 acres and the property has 450, he believes there is room to design it around the areas marked off preservation. A state park and recreation commissioner, Mr. Jones is also a long-time friend of Secretary Andrus and was instrumental in the drive to get the federal grant to help acquire the Edgewood site.

by Marion Softky

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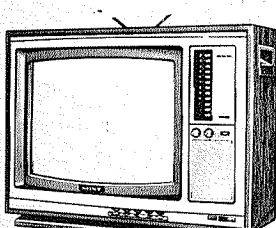
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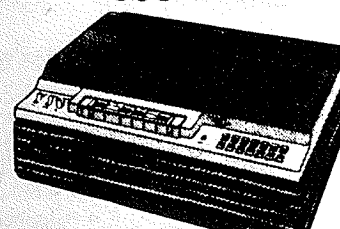
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