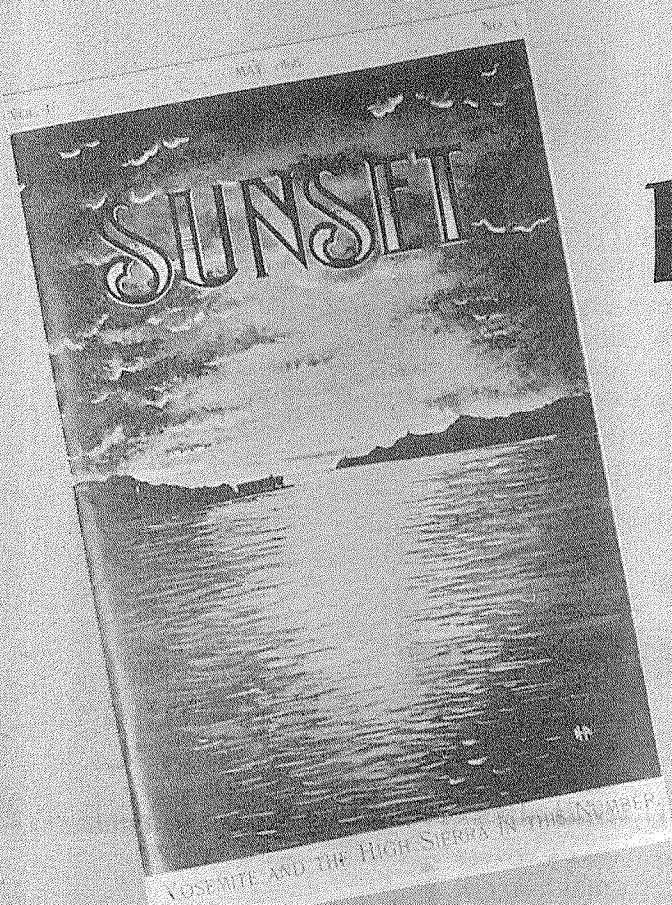


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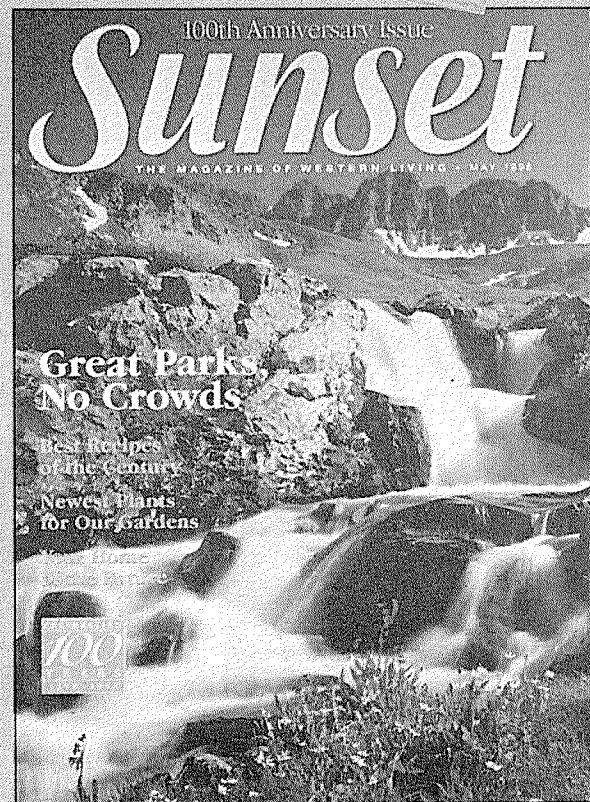
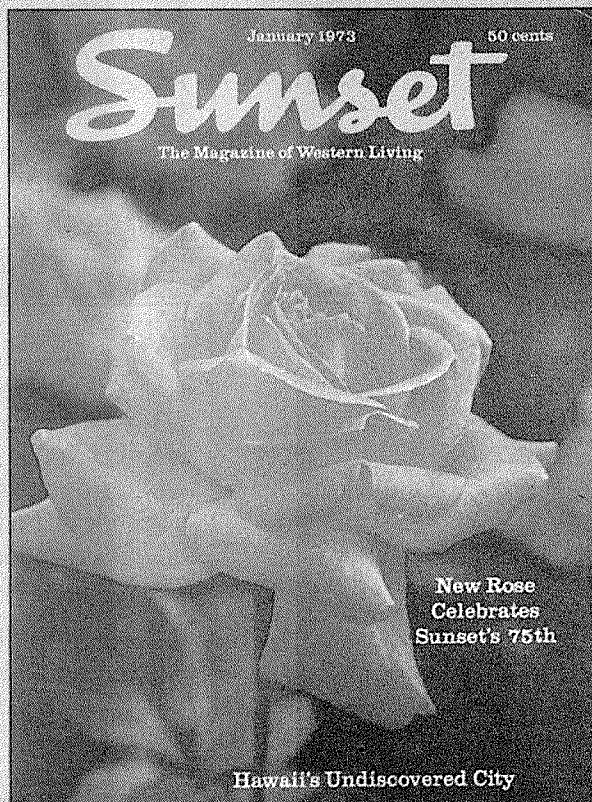
The Almanac

PHONE: 854-2626 ■ VOL. XXXIII, NO. 33 ■ April 22, 1998 ■ 50c



Sunset, past and present

Sunset magazine
celebrates 100 years of
reflecting the West
Page 14



News This Week

OFFICE PROJECTS

Hearings tonight on three new office projects in Menlo Park. Pages 9 and 21.

TRAFFIC

Meeting looks at traffic concerns over huge project near city border. Page 9

SAND HILL

Court to hear arguments on Menlo Park's lawsuit over Sand Hill Road development. Page 11

SECTION 2

Profiles in Business: Real estate superstar Barbara Tyler. Cover, Section 2

Schools

said Superintendent Bruce Thompson. Some longtime residents don't want the community to change; they don't like the "new wealth" in the community and what new homeowners do to their homes, he said.

The overwhelming defeat in town of a proposed road tax last September, he said, reflected an underlying feeling of residents that they don't want the community to change.

Woodside School has had major changes, with enrollment doubling in the past decade. The district's commitment to small classes of 20 students or fewer — a top priority for parents and teachers — creates a need for more classrooms and facilities.

Only about 400 of the district's 2,327 registered voters are school parents, said Mr. Thompson. He suggested the school district reach out to the community and bring people together to solve some of the school's infrastructure problems that won't go away without new buildings and renovation.

Rob Flint Jr., a former school board trustee, past president of the

Woodside School Foundation and treasurer of the Measure A campaign, looks at the bond measure's defeat philosophically. The real challenge was how to get information out about the district's need for the bond measure, he said.

"Although there were a number of forums, people didn't come," he said. The arguments for the bond measure didn't register with enough people, he added.

The cost to property owners — \$55 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation — is significant for some people, he said. The bond measure was an opportunity for people to vote against more taxes.

Some questioned why the election was scheduled a day before the April 15 income tax deadline when people are having to write checks to pay their taxes. Woodside didn't have control over the date. The established election date is the second Tuesday of April in each even-numbered year, according to the election code.

Neighbors

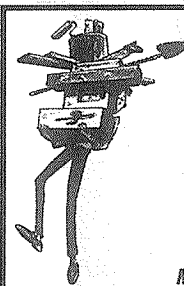
Ernie and Lyn Erickson, neighbors

of the school, objected last month to the proposed plans that would place the classroom wing 40 feet from their property. Discussions with the Ericksons, school board members and Councilman William McSherry were held, but apparently weren't satisfactory to the Ericksons.

The letter that was circulated to friends and neighbors and signed by the Ericksons and 22 other Woodside residents stated that they fully supported quality education for Woodside children, but objected to the proposed plans because of the size and location of the buildings and adverse impact on the school grounds, neighbors' property and the scenic Woodside Road corridor. The letter urged others to vote no on the bond issue.

After the election, Ernie and Lyn Erickson told the Almanac: "We earnestly hope we and other residents of the Woodside community will be able to work together with the school board and building committee to develop a solution that will

(Continued on Page 19)



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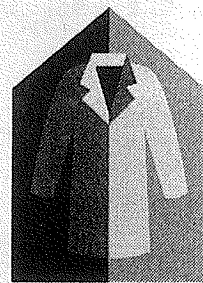
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Stephanie Tran of Hoover School in Palo Alto leaves Sunset headquarters after a tour of the gardens.



Photos by
Carol Ivie



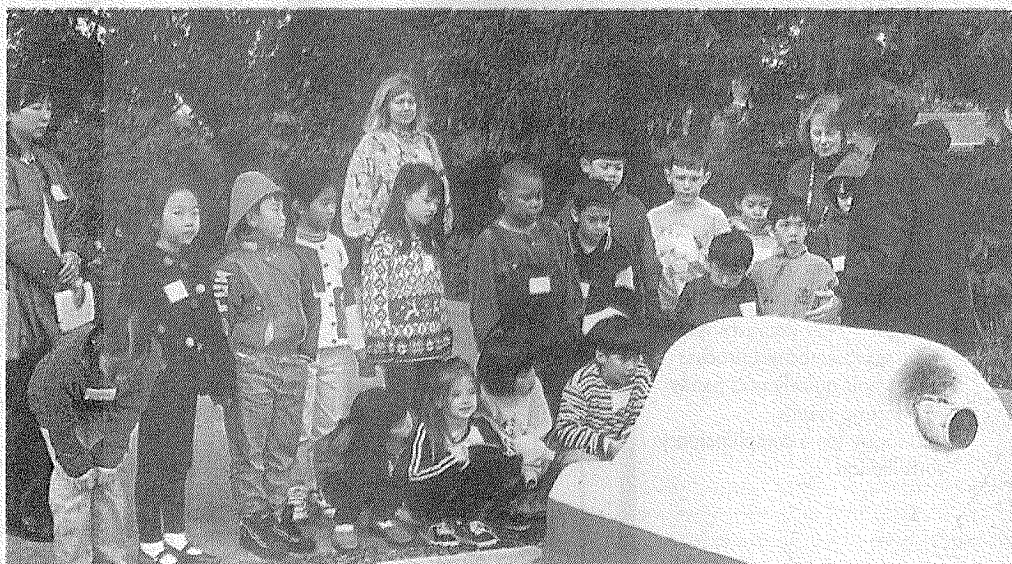
Editor Rosalie Muller Wright and CEO Steve Seabolt are at the helm of Sunset, with

Reflecting the *spirit* of the *West*

Sunset of the '90s changes

with the times, but maintains

Lanes' 'winning formula'



Sunset staff member Yvonne Damele shows second-graders at Hoover School in Palo Alto an adobe oven during a recent tour of Sunset's gardens.

By RENEE DEAL

Is there such a thing as a "western" mindset?

Ask the top managers at Sunset magazine — "The Magazine of Western Living" — that question and they'll follow up their response, "definitely," with a quick list: independent-minded, casual, willing to take risks, interested in self-improvement, and open to new ideas and ways of doing things.

Throw in a few other elements, such as home-ownership and above-average income, and you've got a fairly credible profile of the typical Sunset

magazine reader, according to readership surveys and research done over the years.

Sunset, written specifically for residents of the western-most region of the country, has undergone several ownership changes since its founding 100 years ago. Those now at its helm say the magazine's continuing recognition of the unique spirit of the West has ensured its enduring success, even as it changed hands in 1990 from the local Lane family to corporate giant Time Warner.

When that change occurred, there was the usual hand-wringing — a fear that the

magazine would become faceless and unfocused without the guidance of the Lanes, who owned it since 1928.

If circulation and newsstand statistics can be trusted to tell the story, the fears were unfounded. Paid circulation, at 1.425 million, is higher than ever, and newsstand sales are up — 1997 figures are 33 percent higher than '96, and are the highest in 20 years — boosting readership to an all-time high of 5 million, Sunset reports. The figures become more impressive when considering that the magazine circulates in only 13 states.

Steve Seabolt, CEO since early 1994, says 1997 was Sunset's most profitable year ever. It probably won't be for long, however: 1998 is expected to be significantly more profitable yet, he adds.

Tried and true formula

Sunset leaders say a key to the magazine's success in 1998 is the same as it was in 1988 — and 1958, '48 and '38, for that matter. That is, the cornerstones of focus continue to be those established by the Lanes: gardening, cooking, travel and home-improvement — with information tailored to reflect the

climate, geography and spirit of the West.

"The Lanes absolutely struck upon a winning editorial formula," says Mr. Seabolt.

In addition to the four areas of focus, the Lanes also "struck upon" the idea of zoning the magazine, with five different editions. Zoning allows the magazine to tailor its content to the specific climates and points of interest of each zone's area of coverage.

But staying with the "winning formula" arrived at decades ago doesn't mean Sunset magazine is the same in 1998 as it was in 1988. In keeping up with ever-

Sunset: the first 92 years

In three ownerships, Sunset grew from promoting railroads and real estate to becoming the voice of western living

By MARION SOFTKY

When the promoters at the Southern Pacific Railroad devoted their new magazine to "publicity for the attractions and advantages of the Western Empire," they probably hadn't a notion just how prophetic they were.

One hundred years after the slim, 16-page magazine appeared in May 1898, the West is indeed an empire, with California the seventh largest economy in the world. And Sunset continues as a shaping force in the lifestyles of millions of westerners.

Leland Stanford and his successors on the Southern Pacific could hardly have foreseen how the magazine they founded would lead today's lifestyle revolution toward hot tubs, veggie casseroles, exotic travel, and do-it-yourself decks. Nor could the operators of great railroads of the last century have easily foreseen rockets to Mars, computers in every home, and instant communication around the globe via satellites and the Internet.

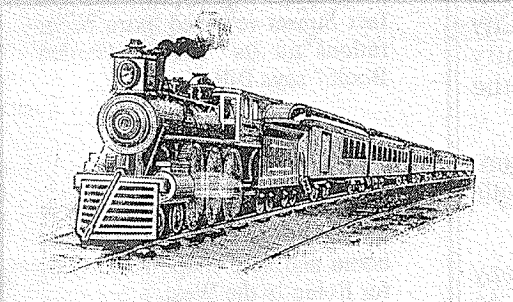
Yet the 1,200 Sunsets issued since Vol. 1, No. 1 track growth in the West from the Gold Rush in the Klondike, through two world wars, the Great Depression and the extraordinary California population boom since World War II, to the eve of the millennium.

Sunset is also one of the oldest continually published magazines in the country, notes Bill Lane of the Lane family who built the present "Magazine of Western Living" through 62 years: from 1928 to 1990.

In a centennial history of Sunset being published by Stanford, Tomas Jaehn writes, "With vision and tenacity, with a fine sense for 'westerling,' and with luck, they developed a magazine that not only chronicled the tastes and lifestyles of the West's more affluent society, but at times even defined those tastes."

The first 30 years

The cover of the first issue of Sunset portrayed the sun setting beyond a pristine and bridgeless Golden Gate. Inside, like many Sunsets over the ensuing century, it featured the beauties of



Yosemite and the High Sierra.

Named after the Southern Pacific's crack train, the Sunset Limited, the new magazine promoted travel and investment in the West, where the railroad owned three cross-country rail lines and more than 20 million acres of land suitable for mining, farming, industry and development.

Page 1 of the first issue invited the world to come to San Francisco (presumably by Southern Pacific) as a jumping off place to tap the enormous wealth of the "wonderful, gold-bearing Klondike."

Sunset never missed an issue. Even when the great fire following the 1906 earthquake destroyed its buildings as the May issue was on the presses, the publishers managed to get out a small, four-page emergency edition, which concluded, "Rapidly the city is becoming a bee-hive of activity, and ere long the imperishable spirit of San Francisco, clothed anew, will invite you within the gates of a new and greater metropolis of the Pacific."

By 1914, Sunset had met the goals of its founders, and it was sold to a group of employees on the eve of World War I, who ran it more as a literary journal.

While they continued promoting the West, now thriving with the spread of the automobile, they also introduced political commentary and works by a growing group of western artists.

Distinguished commentators such as former Stanford President David Starr Jordan, Herbert Hoover, isolationist Senator William Borah, California Senator Hiram Johnson, naturalist Aldo Leopold, and local author Gertrude Atherton sounded off in its pages.

The magazine, now published by Woodhead, Field and Co., also stressed the culture of the West, featuring such well-known writers as Jack London, Mary Austin, Will James, Erle Stanley Gardner, Dashiell Hammett and Zane Gray.

But wisdom and culture were not enough to pay the bills after the railroad withdrew its big bank account, and Sunset was near bankruptcy in 1928. "At this point the floundering journal was rescued by a young middle-westerner named Laurence W. Lane, who bought it lock, stock, and red-ink barrel," said his son, Bill.

From then until they sold Sunset in 1990, Larry and Ruth Lane's sons, Bill and Mel, were part of the Sunset enterprise. Armed with old magazines, posters and memories, they share their personal experiences, from the time their parents bought Sunset for \$65,000 in 1928 until their sons sold it 62 years later to Time Warner for \$225 million.

The Lane era: Depression through war

When he discovered Sunset, Larry Lane was advertising director of Better Homes and Gardens magazine. His wife, Ruth, was a home economist and avid gardener. They lived in Des Moines, Iowa.

"Traveling around the country, he realized the West was very different and needed its own voice," Mel Lane says of his father.

From its first issues, the new Sunset dropped its efforts in politics and culture, and focused primarily on families. It emphasized four areas:

(Continued on next page)



h had its most profitable year ever in 1997.

changing times, Mr. Seabolt, Rosalie Muller Wright, editor-in-chief since 1996, and other top managers are constantly re-evaluating the needs and interests of readers, and making adjustments when called for, Ms. Wright says.

The changes, Mr. Seabolt notes, are "evolutionary . . . not revolutionary." And evolution being what it is — inevitable — the staff tries to stay ahead in the competitive world of magazines by keeping an eye on societal changes and a finger on the pulse of readers.

"We are always trying to anticipate how western lives are changing," Mr. Seabolt says.

A thriving letters-to-the-editor forum, surveys and focus groups help Sunset staff stay informed about what readers want to see in the magazine, says Mary Jo Bowling, communications manager. "We have a really close relationship with our readers."

The effort to meet changing needs has led to more emphasis on more healthful, less time-consuming recipes; articles about low-maintenance gardening and weekend getaways for readers whose busy lives leave little time for travel and gardening; and a new editorial design to reflect the West of the late 1990s.

For example, the November 1997 issue featured time-saving

and health-conscious recipes for Thanksgiving holiday entertaining and feasting, including a "Quick Cook" column with 10 appetizers that can be whipped up in 30 minutes; an article on "smart pots" that water themselves, for the busy and/or distracted container gardener; and, in the Northern California edition, information on quick getaways to enjoy hiking in Sonoma County, horseback riding in Los Gatos, jazz in the East Bay, and low-cost lodging in San Francisco.

The West

At the helm of today's Sunset are true believers in the spirit of the West — both transplanted "converts."

CEO Seabolt was raised in Chicago, lived for two "difficult" years in suburban New York, and headed West for graduate school in Arizona. From there, the westward migration continued: Southern California, then the Bay Area.

He observes that the western way of thinking, of living, is not exclusive to the native-born. Fellow "converts" are "people — like myself — who left family and friends to seek a better life," Mr. Seabolt says. They are people who "looked longingly to the West" for change and, perhaps, adventure.

(Continued on Page 17)

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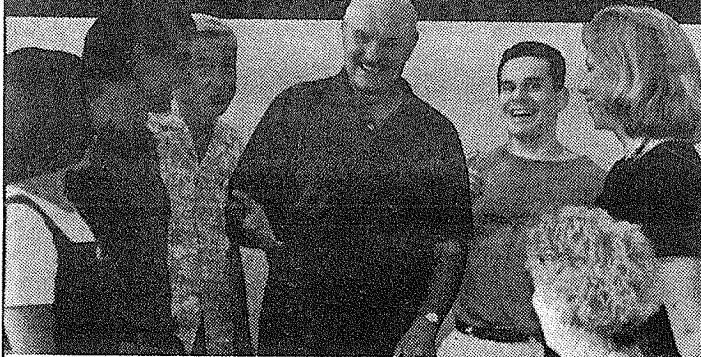
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To be held in the newly remodeled City Council Chambers
 (This meeting was originally set for April 18th)

Topic: "The Future of Recreation Facilities in Menlo Park"

The Menlo Park City Council recently approved a contract with BSA, consulting architects from San Francisco, to undertake an ambitious study to evaluate, analysis and make recommendations concerning the future of our city wide recreational facilities. Come meet our consultant, BSA, and City staff, including our new Director of Community Resources, Ms. Suzanne Ota who will discuss the scope of this study.

Although, the meeting focus will be on recreation, residents are invited to discuss any Menlo Park topic or concern.

If you are unable to join us on April 25th, you may wish to communicate your ideas via e-mail to ckinney@quakeready.com, telephone (650)473-0321 or fax (650)324-2402.

Future 1998 Meetings will be held on the third Saturday of each month:



May 16
 June 20
 July 18
 August 22

September 19
 October 17
 November 21



COVER STORY

Sunset: the first 92 years

(Continued from previous page)

building, gardening, travel and cooking. It was written for people in the West, not just about them, so it didn't even sell subscriptions in the East.

The magazine continued to feature women's interests; Bill notes that his father brought in two women from Better Homes and Gardens, Lou Richardson and Genevieve Callahan, as co-editors. But Sunset wasn't just for women, he emphasizes. "It was for men and women and families, primarily for families who owned their own homes."

Less than a year after the first Lane issue, the country — and Sunset with it — was hit by the Great Depression. It was a difficult time, but Sunset weathered it, and managed to increase circulation. "The first profit was in 1938, Bill says, and the debt was finally eliminated in 1952.

He credits five policies for Sunset's success: Different editions for central, southwest and northwest regions to focus on differing western climates; selling subscriptions through charge accounts with leading department stores; selective advertising that excluded tobacco and liquor, and later some toxic pesticides; writing entirely by staff; and creation of Sunset Books.

During those years, Sunset was very much a family enterprise. The boys sold magazines door-to-door and worked in the San Francisco office on Saturdays. "We did flunky work, but we got to see what was going on," says Mel.

Before the days of Sunset's state-of-the-art test kitchens, Mrs. Lane tested recipes at home, and the boys were often guinea pigs. "I don't know if we did a lot of testing, but we did a lot of tasting," says Mel.

During World War II, while Bill and Mel served in the Navy, Sunset continued publishing. Even though the magazines were skinnier, they held all of Sunset's regular features, geared to the rationing of food and gas, and promoting "Victory Gardens." In fact Sunset received extra paper rations for its "Victory Garden Book," says Bill.

'Laboratory for western living'

Sunset was in the right place at the right time to ride the post-war boom and help shape new styles for living in the West.

After the war, Bill and Mel returned from the Navy and plunged into the magazine, and they began seriously learning the family business. Soon two important things happened: Sunset moved to Menlo Park from San Francisco in 1951; and Bill and Mel took over company operations from their father in 1952.

The Lanes had long wanted to move Sunset from San Francisco to the Peninsula, where suburbs

were exploding — as they were all over California — with the flood of new immigrants wanting to enjoy the tempting western life promoted by the magazine.

After looking at several locations in the Bay Area — "Hillsborough wouldn't have us," says Mel — they settled on Menlo Park. Sunset was one of the first

brought friends and out-of-town visitors to peer into the kitchens and stroll through the gardens. There was a time when 75,000 people a year took the Sunset tour.

Although the Lane brothers often changed roles, Bill concentrated primarily on the magazine, while Mel took care of Sunset Books plus managing operations.



Photo by Laura Hester

Mel Lane, standing, and his brother, Bill, reminisce about the early days of Sunset magazine as they review magazine covers from decades gone by.

tenants in the city's innovative garden office zone, established under Mayor Charles Burgess. "There were no electric signs, no commercial retail and no manufacturing. It was perfect," says Mel.

Residential architect Cliff May designed his first commercial building to resemble an early Spanish ranch house. Set on seven acres adjacent to San Francisquito Creek, the adobe building with the patios and test kitchens was surrounded by spacious gardens designed by Thomas Church. "It became a laboratory for western living and a model for what the magazine promoted," says Bill.

The elegant new headquarters also became a popular tourist destination as Gray Line made it a stop on its tours, and residents

The 1950s were an exciting time, as the magazine faced dual competition from the new medium of television and national magazines expanding into the new territory with regional editions modeled on Sunset. "We reveled in the competition," says Bill.

Sunset Books reinforced the how-to-do-it focus of the magazine by introducing inexpensive paperbacks at supermarkets, hardware stores and nurseries that told people how to build a deck, grow orchids, or cook with woks. "We started a series of paperbacks in the 1950s and put them with big retailers that didn't normally sell books," says Mel. "The books complemented the magazine and gave it greater visibility."

In addition to the "Sunset Western Garden Book" — the bible for



The May 1906 edition of *Sunset*, published just after the devastating April 18 earthquake and fire in San Francisco.

anyone who plants a pea west of the Rockies — *Sunset* Books had 183 active titles in 1990.

Sunset has always been a resource for the community. Over the years the headquarters has provided a popular setting for many gatherings and events.

While never overtly political, *Sunset* under the Lane brothers was a strong force for conservation. In 1969 an article warning readers of the dangers of using DDT eventually led to laws banning the pesticide. "We literally blew the whistle on DDT," says Bill. "We also stopped accepting advertising for it."

When the energy crisis hit, *Sunset* began proclaiming conservation and solar energy. During back-to-back drought years, it promoted ways to use less water in homes and gardens. It has always supported preservation of California's scenic treasures — parks, Lake Tahoe, Yosemite, and beautiful places people like to visit.

While *Sunset* encouraged drought gardening and energy efficiency in its pages, the Lane brothers worked personally on a larger stage for preservation of resources and effective government. "*Sunset* was our platform," Bill says. "Mel and I both had a

wonderful base at *Sunset*. It was a perfect mix of our business and personal interests."

Bill is proud of calling the meeting in *Sunset*'s Menlo Park offices that hammered out differences between the Sierra Club and the Save the Redwoods League to arrive at the final boundaries of Redwood National Park.

Bill Lane has been active on the local, national and international scene. He is still an elder statesman in Portola Valley, where he worked hard for incorporation in 1964, and served on the first Town Council. He has been active promoting national parks, and served as ambassador-at-large to Japan, and later ambassador to Australia.

Mel Lane has been a leader in controlling the growth that threatened to fill San Francisco Bay and line the California coast with sprawl. He was first chairman of the pioneering Bay Conservation and Development Commission, then the California Coastal Commission.

This past April 3, Mel Lane received the annual award from the California League of Conservation Voters, which said of his work: "If you take a look around California, you would be hard pressed to find a place of beauty that Mel hasn't played a part in preserving."

Sunset continued to grow and thrive along with the West it served. By the end of the Lane era, it had long since expanded to Hawaii and Alaska. There were test gardens in the north, south and desert climates, and another regional edition for the mountain states. The Menlo Park campus had grown from one to four buildings.

Bill Lane gave the numbers that tell the story. Between 1929 and 1990, circulation grew from around 100,000 to 1.4 million. The price went from 10 cents a copy to \$1.95, and the size went from some 38 pages to upwards of 200.

Reflecting the spirit of the West

(Continued from Page 15)

"The East is mired in tradition," he says. "The West is more oriented toward what's new."

Editor Rosalie Muller Wright pulled roots out of New Jersey to come to California in 1974, when she launched the magazine "*Womensport*." She had two young children, both of whom "just bloomed" in their new home.

Ms. Wright found the Bay Area a "great place to settle" — an environment in which she could indulge her love of indoor-outdoor living, gardening and fresh foods. "I love to cook outdoors, even in the winter," she says.

Before coming to *Sunset*, she was assistant managing editor of features at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, overseeing 12 sections, including food and

readers are information-hungry and action-oriented. They are "early adapters who love to try things that make life easier." That characteristic is not so common in the East, where people tend to wait "to see if it works first," she adds.

Sunset, 1998

Unlike many magazines, *Sunset* continues to employ a large in-house staff rather than rely on free-lance writers. The *Sunset* headquarters in Menlo Park is a lively laboratory of testing and perfecting. There are demonstration gardens with plants typical of areas ranging from Washington to Southern California, and elaborate test kitchens in which recipes are tested multiple times.

Once a popular tour-bus stop because of its guided garden tours, *Sunset* no longer offers