A home with roots
How one couple transformed their garden

Also inside:
• Planting a garden that fights climate change
• Deciding whether to move, remodel or build
Get your tickets today

1794 The Alameda, San Jose CA 95126
0: 408.350.4200 | F: 408.286.6589
www.demattei.com | License #B-478455
Make your own power from the sun and save!

At Cobalt Power, we take pride in creating satisfied customers. We have installed over 2,000 high quality solar systems throughout Silicon Valley, and are getting new referrals from our customers every day.

Let us know when we can visit your home and show you how much you can save by going solar.

Contact Cobalt Power Systems for more info:

Cobalt Power Systems, Inc.
2557 Wyandotte Street
Mountain View, CA 94043
cobaltpower.com
T 650-938-9574
CA Contractor's Lic. #820597
Oasis
A Los Altos couple tore out their lawn and replaced it with an eco-friendly oasis.

Page 6

Climate
Create a garden that not only resists the perils of climate change, but also fights against it.

Page 12

Remodel
If you’re unhappy with your home, it’s time to decide whether to remodel, move or build.

Page 16

Have a story idea for one of our magazines? Email Editor Bruce Barton at bruceb@latc.com.
RESPECT
HONESTY
INTEGRITY
EXPERIENCE
Eco-friendly and multinational

How one couple transformed their garden into a drought-tolerant oasis

By Carolyn Snyder
Special to the Town Crier

The drought-tolerant garden at Sally Meadows and Ian Massey’s Los Altos home evokes crooner Jewel Akens’ oldie but goodie: “Let me tell ya ‘bout the birds and the bees, and the flowers and the trees.”

When the couple moved into their home 15 years ago, it had a conventional front yard – notably a large lawn – shaded on one corner by a big oak. And because they like to garden, they planted flowers, shrubs and trees. Meadows even enjoys pulling weeds.

Then along came the drought years.
“There was so much grass in front and we never used it,” Meadows said. “And there was no boundary between the lawn and street, so we had a constant battle with trash blown on the grass and neighborhood dogs.”

Enter landscape designer Kim Raftery of Palo Alto and her arborist husband Kevin. She worked with the couple to transform the front yard into a drought-tolerant, Mediterranean-style garden, and he assumed care of the trees.

When the garden is in full bloom, it resembles an English garden – quite a feat because the plants are native to many parts of the world, including California, Australia, Mexico and Brazil.

According to Raftery, the goal was to replace the lawn with drought-tolerant plants and trees providing year-round color and to create a pleasing walled garden with a path leading to a bench.

Along with the lawn, they removed three trees: two birches that required a large amount of water and a diseased evergreen. They replaced them with a lavender flowering multi-trunk crepe myrtle and a smoke tree (aka Cotinus ‘Grace’). Meadows and Massey received a rebate for their lawn conversion.

Floating wall

The biggest challenge was designing the low wall that separates garden from street and provides a backdrop for plants on both sides. It had to curve around the aforementioned oak tree but not disturb the root structure. That

Continued on Page 8
part of the wall was “floated” on concrete piers instead of a standard concrete footing.

Choosing the stone for the wall was the next challenge. Meadows looked at landscape supply yards for a stone that would complement both the existing Saltillo tile front walkway and the stone veneer on the house facade. The winner was South Bay Quartzite. “We wanted a rustic look, so there is no capstone on the wall,” Meadows said.

A curvilinear stepping-stone path leads from the driveway to the walkway and from the walkway to a bench made from a slab of South Bay Quartzite. Tony Carrillo of Cameron Park did the concrete and masonry work.

Gently sloping soil berms were installed between the wall and the stepping stones to provide better drainage for the manzanita, grevillea and Leucadendron ‘Jester’ (Meadows’ new favorite with its showy red bracts).

On a recent afternoon, the magenta flowers on the Teucrium chamaedrys (a low-growing evergreen) edging the walkway were abuzz with bees whose chorus could be heard for some distance. Butterflies visit, too.

**Weathered whimsy**

The pièce de résistance is a weathering steel sculpture near the redbud tree to the right of the front door. Meadows wanted to find a way to use weathering steel in the garden, and this was the answer. It’s composed of various-sized circles stacked in an S shape—almost like bubbles rising. “We went online and couldn’t find a sculpture we liked, so we designed one and had it made,” Raftery said. “I love the whimsical design and how the color of the rusted (weathering) steel relates to the heuchera plants at its base.”

The sculpture was crafted by Greg Dotson of DVision Metal Works in San Carlos. Behind it, the shade garden next to the house features camellias, a Fatsia japonica with its large palmae leaves and several fern varieties.

At night, low-voltage lighting casts a subtle light on the trees, sculpture, wall and bench.

*Continued on Page 10*
From Concept to Completion...Endless Possibilities

SPECIALIZING IN:
• ADDITIONS
• REMODELS
• INTERIORS

DESIGN AWARDS:
Platinum Award, Entire House
Judges Choice Award, Bathroom
Platinum Award, Kitchen

I K B
DESIGN ◆ BUILD ◆ FURNISH
346 Main Street, Los Altos 94022
650.941.4384
www.ikbinc.com

License # 667735
The six-bedroom, 4.5-bath home is a two-story, albeit one story is belowground. A patio “downstairs” is walled by a 90-foot bank of jasmine. Adding color to the patio are crepe myrtles and carpet roses. A screen of Silver Sheen pittosporum encloses the backyard, which backs up to Los Altos Nursery.

“I’m there so often, the owner says they should put in a little gate,” said Meadows, who’s so passionate about gardening that she has a plant list on her phone.

Hummingbirds love the water feature and Rose of Sharon alongside the raised gazebo-like outdoor eating area.

The home’s design invites the outdoors indoors because of the plethora of windows and doors. The decor reflects the history of its occupants.

Meadows and Massey met at Roche. He’s a biotech consultant and she’s a former marketing analyst at Syntex who serves on the Los Altos Planning Commission and is a retiring board member of the Rotary Club of Los Altos and Mentor Tutor Connection.

Massey was born in Bristol, England, and dubs his office the English room with its scenes of Bristol, St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster. Brass rubbings he did in Westminster are just outside his office.

The living room is the multicultural room, with mementoes from Meadows’ childhood. Her father, a professor, was born in the Philippines and had Fulbright stints in Manila, Sierra Leone and Scotland. The room is vibrant with colorful artifacts.

This brings us back to the “English” garden outside, which is really multinational.

Serving Santa Clara & San Mateo Counties Since 1981

PAZMANY BROS.
LANDSCAPING
650-941-8596
www.PazmanyBros.com

Complete Property Maintenance & Yard Installation
• Landscape Design & Installation
• Irrigation Installation & Repairs
• Yard Demolition
• Curbing & Hardscape Services

All Inquiries Responded Within 48 Hours Licensed, Bonded & Insured Lic. #992858

$9250 Labor Special
Total Price For Labor On Standard Couch or Chair Plus the cost of any fabric you select from our complete line of fabrics. Labor price of $92.50 includes frame, spring and webbing repair. Additional charge for cushion filler, tufting and channeling. Customer supplied fabric charged at standard labor rate of $35 per yard.

FREE ARM COVERS with upholstery of any couch or chair With this coupon only. Regular value $27.50 plus 1/2 yard of fabric. Expires 11/28/18

FREE Pick Up & Delivery Our 52nd year.
1243 W. El Camino Real, Mountain View, CA (At Miramonte behind Baskin-Robbins)
www.SterlingCustomUpholstery.com (650) 961-8700 Sterling Custom Upholstery

Re-upholstery Recycles

Sally Meadows’ living room features mementoes from her childhood.
Secure the right lending. Skip the surprises

Get a solution from a team that knows Los Altos

With TIAA Bank, you can enjoy the ease and convenience of finding a loan that aligns with your needs.

Ken Williamson
Mortgage Loan Officer
Kenneth.Williamson@tiaabank.com
650-445-0161
NMLS ID #280193

Michele Sheehan
Mortgage Loan Officer
Michelle.Sheehan@tiaabank.com
650-906-5941
NMLS ID #292315

Steve Switzer
Mortgage Loan Officer
Steve.Switzer@tiaabank.com
650-397-3122
NMLS ID #582921

Fara Tabrizi
Mortgage Loan Officer
Fara.Tabrizi@tiaabank.com
650-520-5626
NMLS ID #342577

Tim Palacios
Mortgage Loan Officer
Tim.Palacios@tiaabank.com
650-450-2032
NMLS ID #285936

Yolanda Liu
Mortgage Loan Officer
Yolanda.Liu@tiaabank.com
650-270-8688
NMLS ID #482421

Bob Carrie
Home Lending Branch Manager
Bob.Carrie@tiaabank.com
650-222-0522
NMLS ID #583059

Drew Dapkus
Mortgage Loan Officer
Drew.Dapkus@tiaabank.com
408-474-0633
NMLS ID #582906

Bob Cranmer Brown
Mortgage Loan Officer
Bob.CranmerBrown@TIAABank.com
650-948-2020
NMLS ID #292967

Yanping Wang
Mortgage Loan Officer
Yanping.Wang@TIAABank.com
425-894-0004
NMLS ID #106511

Subject to credit and property approval. Other restrictions and limitations may apply.

TIAA Bank® is a division of TIAA, FSB.
©2018, TIAA, FSB. 18ERM5095.08. TIAA, FSB. NMLS ID: 399805
It’s getting warmer

Creating a garden that fights back against climate change

By Tanya Kucak
Special to the Town Crier

Is your landscape a carbon source or a carbon sink, and why does it matter? Which gardening practices will help your landscape stay healthy and make your home and garden more comfortable as warmer summers and more unpredictable weather patterns continue? How can you help birds and pollinators as well?

In the 306 well-organized pages of their book “Climate-Wise Landscaping: Practical Solutions for a Sustainable Future” (New Society Publishers, 2018), landscape architect Sue Reed and botanist/gardener Ginny Stibolt offer answers to such questions.

The book is comprehensive enough to serve as a reference and inspiration for seasoned landscapers yet

Continued on Page 15

Globe gilia, which offers both pollen and nectar, attracts honey bees, green sweat bees and mining bees.
We all have passion. And passion springs from inspiration, which begins with your surroundings. That’s what home is. Family. Friends. A sense of place. An amazing view. It’s what makes a space a home. Because your home is where you truly LIVE.
Exotic Stone and Tile From Around the World

We Import and Stock the Following Fine Products:

Granite • Marble • Limestone • Slab & Tile
Caesarstone • Porcelain Tile • Porcelain Slabs
Any Many Accessories

Palo Alto
650.800.7840
www.carmelimports.com

20% Discount with this ad
Continued from Page 12

accessible enough for beginning gardeners. Although little of the information is surprising if you’ve been paying attention to the latest science on ecological gardening, pollinator preservation, biodiversity or water and energy conservation, it is heartening to find so many practical, state-of-the-art solutions in one place.

Each chapter focuses on a specific area: lawn, trees and shrubs, water, ecosystems, soil, planning and design, herbaceous plants, urban issues, food and materials. Following an introduction laying out the issues, each chapter has several action topics, subdivided into specific actions.

The practical actions Reed and Stibolt describe are intended to meet one or more of the following goals.

• Shrink the carbon footprint of each landscape.
• Adjust landscaping practices so that gardens can flourish despite challenging and unpredictable conditions.
• Support birds, butterflies, pollinators and other wildlife as they adapt to changing conditions.

In the chapter on lawns, the authors note that conventionally managed lawns are a carbon source: “Liberating lawns from artificial fertilizers, pesticides and unsustainable irrigation … is the easiest and most significant earth-friendly and climate-friendly action that homeowners, communities, schools, businesses and municipalities can take … and the underlying soil will be able to sequester more carbon.” The chapter offers further solutions for managing lawns of every scale in a more climate-sensitive way.

Action items

What makes this book stand out is the explanations of each topic and action, plus well-formatted background material. You can leaf through the book to see the action items highlighted in bold, then read the reasons behind each action. Not only that, each group of action items has a “why this matters” section. Short sidebars give details on supplementary topics such as co-evolution (of plants and insects) and types of mulch. Longer sections offer “a primer on …” such broad areas as water chemistry and plants, soil carbon and ecosystems.

Ecological responsibility, and creating an aesthetic that expresses our values, is the overarching theme. “Our gardens and yards are places where, with just a slight shift in attitude and some minor adjustments in our practices, we can be part of the remedy. … Millions of us can take the countless small actions that will be needed to help curb and reverse climate change,” the authors state.

A useful companion to “Climate-Wise Landscaping” is the free 36-page online booklet from Cornell University, “Gardening in a Warming World,” which offers systems thinking as a tool to inform garden-management decisions and advises keeping a garden journal to enhance observations. ☛
In these days of ever-increasing Bay Area real estate prices, homeowners ask me this question on a weekly basis: Should I move, remodel or build a new home?

Finding a new home for a reasonable price in Silicon Valley is extremely difficult, especially if you don’t want a lengthy commute to work. To be near high-paying tech jobs means you will be paying a fortune for a home – even if that home needs to be rebuilt.

If you are weighing your options on whether to move, remodel or build, the following are some points to consider.

• Do I like my neighbors? It’s hard to predict how your new neighbors will be, and having a bad neighbor can really make you miserable.

• Can I find a new home that I will like? Finding a home that has all of the features you want and custom designed for you is nearly impossible. If you can find one

Continued on Page 20
Get ready for holiday gatherings with stylish new shades and save.

$100 REBATES STARTING AT on qualifying purchases*

SEPTEMBER 22–DECEMBER 10, 2018

ASK FOR DETAILS

HunterDouglas

Rebarts Interiors, LLC
253 State St
Los Altos, CA

Tues - Fri: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sat: 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sun and Mon: Closed

650-288-4377
www.rebarts.com

Visit or Call Us Today For A Complimentary Estimate and Design Consultation

*Manufacturer’s market rebate offer valid for qualifying purchases made 9/22/18–12/10/18. From participating dealers in the U.S. only. Rebates will be issued in the form of a prepaid reward card and mailed within 6 weeks of rebate claim approval. Funds do not expire. Subject to applicable law, a $2.00 monthly fee will be assessed against card balance 6 months after card issuance and each month thereafter. See complete terms distributed with reward card. Additional limitations may apply. Ask participating dealer for details and rebate form. ©2018 Hunter Douglas. All rights reserved. Trademarks used herein are the property of Hunter Douglas or their respective owners. 11288AUTC2
Stability & Flexibility

5/5 Adjustable Rate Mortgage

- Enjoy an extended **five-year period** between rate and payment changes for greater rate security than a traditional ARM.
- **Lower** start rate compared to fixed-rate options.
- **Period** and **lifetime caps** limit future interest rates increases.
- **No prepayment penalty.**

EASY ONLINE APPLICATION @
www.starone.org

STAR ONE CREDIT UNION

De Anza Branch | Cupertino
10991 N. De Anza Boulevard
Cupertino, CA 95014

El Camino Branch | Palo Alto
3903 El Camino Real
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Stevens Creek Branch | San Jose
3136 Stevens Creek Boulevard
San Jose, CA 95117

Blossom Hill Branch | San Jose
(Open Saturdays)
1090 Blossom Hill Road
San Jose, CA 95123

Big Basin Branch | Saratoga
(Open Saturdays)
14411 Big Basin Way
Saratoga, CA 95070

Enterprise Branch | Sunnyvale
1080 Enterprise Way, Suite 150
Sunnyvale, CA 94089

(408) 543-5202
Toll free (866) 543-5202

Join Us! Membership is open to individuals who live, work, or attend school in Santa Clara County.
COME HOME TO EXCELLENCE

At TIMELINE, we design and build houses you can’t wait to come home to. Our in-house team of architects, project managers, interior designers and craftsmen work together to create a custom home renovated just for you. We focus on every detail so you can simply live and love the life you’ve built, in the home we’ve built, together.

TIMELINE DESIGN+BUILD

408.357.2572 | tldesign.net

LIC# 599567
Continued from Page 16

that meets all of your needs and you can afford it, then buy it and avoid the challenges of building or remodeling.

• If I buy a not-so-perfect house, can I afford the improvements I will want to make? As a design-build contractor, I am usually called in after the clients have purchased their new home. When they find out how much their rebuild or remodel will cost, they are often shocked and experience serious buyers’ remorse. I always encourage people to consult a design-build expert for accurate advice before they purchase their home.

• Can I afford to build or remodel? Building a new custom home can cost from $350 to $600 or more per square foot, plus another 15-20 percent for design and permitting fees. Remodeling can cost $300 to $500 or more per square foot, plus design and permitting fees. This includes all affected remodeling areas. Often clients figure they are adding 500 square feet and guess at $400 per square foot for a total of $200,000. They will ignore the rest of the 1,500 square feet they are remodeling and be off by a factor of 4.

• Is my personality compatible with the design and construction process? Building a home is a frustrating experience even for the flexible and lighthearted. Many of our clients are in high-tech and product development. It’s their job to “work out all of the bugs” before a product goes to market. They build prototypes, test and then release. When building a house, the process works differently. Those bugs get worked out during the build (even on a very well-designed home).

• How long does it take to get a permit? This is a tough question. There are a lot of regulations that affect building – especially if you want to build a two-story house where neighbor notifications are required. There is the architectural design, where you work with your architect to come up with a floor plan and architecture that you like. Then, you have structural engineers, soils engineers, civil engineers, arborists and landscape architects, all of whom contribute to your plan development. Once they are all done, then you have the government agencies to get through. The bottom line is that permitting can take several months.

• How long does it take to build? Building a custom home takes nine to 18 months on average. If you are building a simple, small home without a basement, you can build pretty quickly.

Moving, remodeling and building all require your time and energy, but all major milestones in life do. Just remember, whatever path you take to reach your dream home, the work you put in is very rewarding and will all be worth it.

Janet Guerriero is director of marketing for Timeline Design+Build, a home remodeling and building firm in the South Bay. For more information, visit tldesign.net.
ONE-TIME CLOSE CONSTRUCTION LOAN

A construction loan designed for your convenience?

Yes. We understand there’s a lot to juggle when building or renovating a home. That’s why we make the financing process easy—every step of the way.

1. Interest-only payments during construction and fully amortizing loan after construction is completed.
2. During the construction Phase, we will disburse the total loan proceeds by making several advances, and you will make monthly payments of interest only on the amount disbursed.
3. 5/1, 7/1, 10/1 and 15/1 ARMs from $250K into the millions
4. Financing new construction, tear down and rebuild or existing home renovation.
5. Rate locks up to 360 days.

TIAA Bank® is a division of TIAA, FSB.

©2018, TIAA, FSB. 18ERM5095.06. TIAA, FSB NMLS ID: 399805
Bring this ad into our showroom to schedule a complimentary 45 minute consultation or home visit.