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## **Giving Back at Menlo Charity Horse Show**

**Nan Chapman**



This is a story of how one woman successfully fought for, and saved the equestrian tradition of her town. Thirty-nine years ago, on the San Francisco Peninsula, large estates were being subdivided, and swimming pools, tennis courts and McMansions were encroaching on former barns and pasture land. At that time, members of the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton, Ca. decided that, even though their club had been founded as an equestrian facility, there was no longer any need for the 60 horse barn and adjacent polo field on their grounds, and that a 9 hole golf course would be much a much better reflection of the members' interests.



*Betsy Glikbarg*

Enter Betsy Glikbarg, a back yard horse owner. While she had never competed in a horse show, Betsy decided to stage a family horse show which would demonstrate that there still was a viable interest in equestrian activities. She then encouraged 5 of her good friends to join a committee to "save the horse" by putting on a horse show. The non-rated event was staged on a Saturday afternoon and was well attended by about 50 family and friends of the competitors. In ensuing years, the show grew from a 1/2 day competition, to a 2 day "C" rated event, then progressed to a 3 day event, later to a 5 day "A" competition, and finally, to the current 6 day format with an "AA" ranking.



Today, the 5 member committee has grown to one of over 150 volunteers. The show, which features 500 of the west coast's top Hunters and Jumpers, has most recently been recognized by the National Show Hunter Hall of Fame as one of the Horse Shows of the Year for 2008, and Menlo has also been named one of the Best Horse Shows in North



America for the last two consecutive years by the subscribers of PhelpsSports.com.

The event staged on the once slated-for-demolition polo field, attracts hundreds of spectators each day to see what is now called the Menlo Charity Horse Show. The action takes place in two grass rings on the polo field and one sand arena, all of which are packed with classes for each of the 6 days of the show. Should spectators want to take a break from the action they can visit Vendor Row, home to over 40 equestrian oriented merchants, or watch award presentations with trophies from the likes of Neiman Marcus, Tiffany and Hermes, to name just a few. Highlights of the show are the \$40,000 Menlo Grand Prix and the Friday night Gala Dinner Dance and Auction.



*Claire Biancalana Pres of Vista & Betsy Glikbarg Chairman MCHS*



*Bebe Kokab Director of Marketing for Tiffany & Co*

What about interest in equestrian activities at the Menlo Circus Club today? The polo field is used for its intended purpose, with matches being played twice a week during the season. In 2008 the Menlo Circus Club Equestrian Center featuring the state of the art 65 stall barn was christened. There is a Saddlebred trainer, a Hunter/Jumper Trainer and an active lesson program, and Betsy Glikbarg is still shepherding all 150 members of the committee in their efforts to produce a better and better show each year. Whoever said, "Interest in equestrian sports is dead on the San Francisco Peninsula," was wrong. Betsy was right and proved it.

In 2008, a record \$500,000 was raised for the Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This would not have been possible without the over 85 sponsors, and generous members of the community who support this event. It is because of this level of commitment over the past 39 years, that Vista Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired has been the recipient of millions of dollars raised by the Menlo Charity Horse Show.



*Tim Warren~Wells Fargo & Renee Winchell~Regional Marketing Manager of Squire, Sanders, left and Cydney Brown ~ Neiman Marcus PR Manager, right*



*Nicole Neal - Spa Director at Four Seasons ~ Silicon Valley*



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*For sponsorship information, or to make a donation, please contact [betsy@menlohorseshow.com](mailto:betsy@menlohorseshow.com).*

*The 2009 Menlo Charity Horse Show will take place August 4th through the 9th. For further information, please visit [menlohorseshow.com](http://menlohorseshow.com).*

Photos by: Chris Schmauch [Chris@goodeyephotography.com](mailto:Chris@goodeyephotography.com), Gail Morey and Alden Corrigan.  
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