

# LOS GATOS

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Los Gatos

# Living

*Ira and  
Barbara Spector-*

Life in Los Gatos  
is SPEC-taculor



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Cover photo by Dave Lepori, Lepori Photography



## *Ira and Barbara Spector*

### Life in Los Gatos is SPEC-taculor

*By Genevieve Laucher, Photos by Dave Lepori*

It's easy to tell that Barbara and Ira Spector love Los Gatos. They first moved here in 1973 and rented a house on Tait Avenue, and then bought their house on Edelen in 1978 where they still live today. Their house, along with the town, has changed a lot over the years, but the Spectors have always been very involved in the community.

Their fond, shared memories of Los Gatos began with their first date. Ira and Barbara met in 1969, soon after they graduated from college. They were both living in the same apartment complex in Mountain View, and met on a Friday night outside of a party. They hit it off immediately, and decided to go out to The Cats instead of the party.

When they moved to Los Gatos, Ira, whose background is in electrical engineering, was working for an aerospace company and starting a separate company. Barbara had a full-time position with Santa Clara County and taught at Cabrillo College in the evenings to save up for law school. The first in her family to attend college, Barbara worked hard for her education. She studied law at Santa Clara University, while Ira went on to start three companies! The first made equipment for the fast food industry, and the second manufactured devices to test for paranormal activity, which was very popular at the time. Ira

wrote an article for *Popular Electronics* and sold the equipment through the magazine. His third company developed computer test equipment for the personal computer industry, which was just starting to form in the late seventies. He wrote another story for *Popular Electronics* about it, and the company was acquired by a major test and measurement company in 1981. In true Silicon Valley spirit, Ira's companies started small in their rental unit on Tait in the back room, and grew so fast that they moved into the incubators in San Jose, where they kept scaling up and eventually grew into a campus in Fremont. Ira continued to work with his third company until 1983, when he retired and has helped Barbara ever since.

Barbara started practicing law in 1978, and continues through today. She obtained her mediation degree at Harvard Law School, and works as a civil trial attorney and mediator. From 1980 through 1988, Barbara served on the Los Gatos Planning Commission, and was elected to the Town Council in 1994. She is still on the Town Council for the twelfth year, and serving her third year-long term as mayor! On top of all this, Barbara owned her own law firms from 1998 until 2007, when she joined a large law firm to give her the backup she needed when she first became mayor in 2008.



Although it can be challenging to balance competing interests and make many tough decisions as the mayor, Barbara always aims to do so in a way that preserves the beauty, nature, and history of Los Gatos. The fact that this is a total community with homes, restaurants, retail, and all different businesses and you can still walk everywhere sets Los Gatos apart from other communities. The town is so beautiful and inspiring to Barbara that she has no problem giving back and putting in long hours.

For Ira, who grew up in fast-paced New York City, Los Gatos feels calm, relaxing and optimistic, and it inspires him to take the many ideas he has and turn them into companies and products. He is now interested in environmentally sustainable products, such as electric bikes and cars and recycling systems. He also has made presentations about the history of Silicon Valley for the Lion's Club and Kiwanis, as he has been inventing things here since before it was even called Silicon Valley! As Barbara puts it, the physical world makes total sense to Ira, and he can create, fix and maintain just about anything.

Although Barbara and Ira are busy, they stay physically active and travel extensively. In March, they went on a grand adventure to Dubai and Cape Town, South Africa. On Barbara's birthday, March 21, they went to the top of the tallest building in the world, the 3000 foot tall Burj Khalifa in Dubai. Getting into the elevator, Barbara was a little nervous and didn't quite know what to expect. As she stood in the elevator wondering what the ride would be like, the doors suddenly opened and they were already at the top! The elevator is so fast and sophisticated that she couldn't even feel it moving! Dubai and Cape Town are two very different places, but the Spectors enjoyed both and had a great experience.





Animals are also a big part of the Spectors' lives. They've had cats and dogs ever since they got married, and currently have a dog named Pal Joey after the movie. Together with the Humane Society in 2008, Barbara called Los Gatos "Los Perros" for a day to advocate for making the community more dog-friendly. They are also very involved with a program called Mutual Rescue through Humane Society Silicon Valley. Ira recently created a multimedia presentation called Mutual Rescue to support the program. "Mutual Rescue" means that you rescue the animal, but the love of the animal rescues you, especially for seniors and those who have lost a loved one or pet.

With all that they've accomplished, it means a lot that the Spectors continue to give back and contribute so much to Los Gatos. We are lucky to have such a passionate, creative, inspiring couple here in town!

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