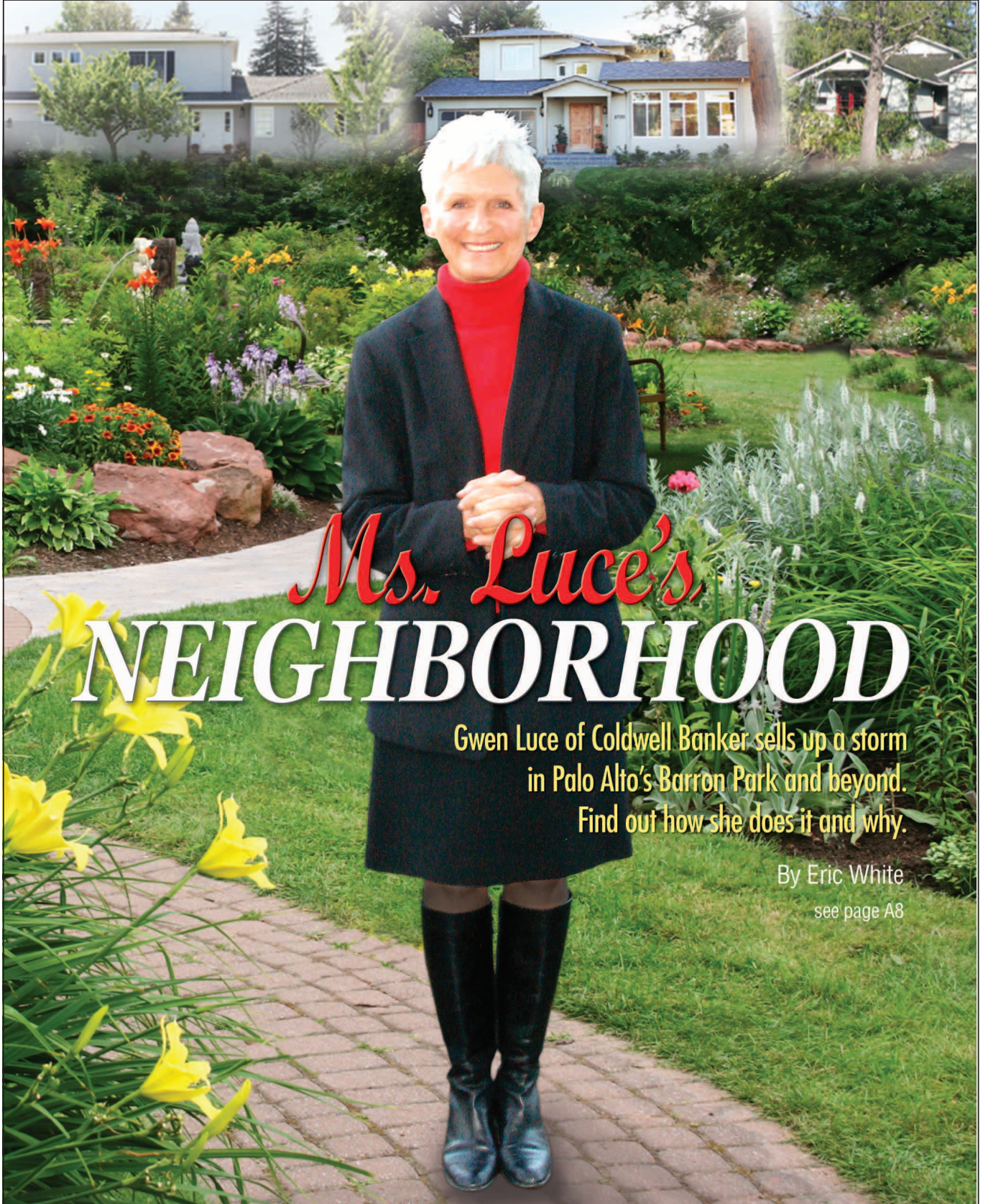


ON THE MARKET

DAILY NEWS GROUP REAL ESTATE GUIDE



Ms. Luce's **NEIGHBORHOOD**

Gwen Luce of Coldwell Banker sells up a storm
in Palo Alto's Barron Park and beyond.
Find out how she does it and why.

By Eric White
see page A8

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Purchase some new digs in Palo Alto's Barron Park neighborhood and you will likely feel right at home, right away. It's not just the serene, tree-lined streets or the friendly neighbors or the old-fashioned houses that give rise to such feelings — although there's no denying they play a role. What greatly eases a homeowner's transition into Barron Park is the welcoming packet provided by the neighborhood association.

We're not talking about a couple of thrown-together pamphlets telling you when trash pick-up day happens. This packet — thicker than most of today's hardback novels — offers you everything you could ever want to know about the neighborhood, the city and your home. Home security advice? Check. Efficient home energy use? Check. Emergency preparedness? Check. Preparing for a pandemic flu outbreak? Yes, that's in there, too.

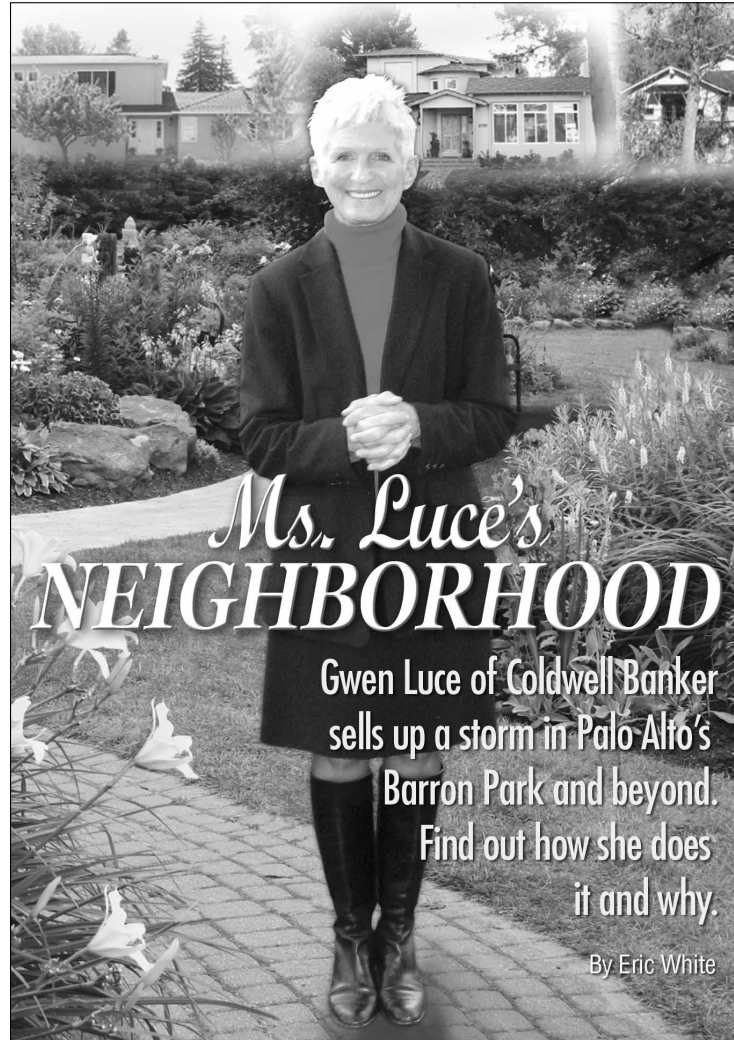
Thank longtime Barron Park resident and Coldwell Banker real estate agent Gwen Luce for the existence of such a helpful and useful packet. She's the head of the neighborhood welcoming committee and both the organizer and financier of the booklet. Such selfless, considerate acts like these define Luce. Making people feel welcome in their new home is what she does for a living and what she does well.

"Gwen is an extraordinary woman," said Wendy McPherson, managing broker of Coldwell Banker's Menlo Park/El Camino branch. "She'll bend over backwards to make sure everything is done correctly and efficiently. She gives new meaning to the word 'focus.'"

And new meaning to the word community.

"I love giving back in my neighborhood," said Luce. "I do a lot of non-real estate related work to help people."

Luce, 65, has been a resident of Barron Park for 14 years, but she's been selling houses in the neighborhood since the mid-'80s. It's not the only place she does business — her listings commonly crop up throughout the Peninsula — but it is her forte. It makes sense when you think about it. She's familiar with every inch of



the neighborhood. She knows the people, the climate, and most importantly the houses.

"I do a quarter of all the listings in Barron Park, both on and off the market," said Luce, whose sales numbers put her in the

top 1 percent of all Coldwell Banker agents in the country. "My goal is to help people. If that helps me pay my bills, that's fine."

Luce's neighborhood success has helped earn her the nickname "queen of

Barron Park." Such a title may have never come about, if not for her unique sales strategies that attract countless clients to her. For example, Luce may be the listing agent for several properties at a time, but she only puts one listing on the market at a time. She then devotes most of her time and energy to that individual listing until it sells. According to Luce, this drastically reduces the amount of time it stays on the market.

"I try to solve (house-related) problems far ahead of time, before it's on the market. ... I treat each listing like a term paper," said Luce.

And why shouldn't she? Prior to starting her esteemed real estate career, Luce was a teacher. McPherson said that Luce's time as an educator has helped her succeed in her current line of work.

"Teachers and nurses both make great real estate agents," said McPherson. "They are caregivers, they're thoughtful, and they want to impart their knowledge on you."

Aside from specializing in Barron Park real estate sales, Luce also specializes in helping seniors buy and sell houses. Hours of additional classes and seminars earned her the title of "seniors' real estate specialist," and helping the elderly is something that brings Luce a great deal of professional and personal fulfillment.

"I have gray hair and I identify with older people, so I enjoy helping them," said Luce. "I also understand a lot of issues seniors face, such as assisted living."

Regardless of whom she's representing, Luce prides herself on putting maximum effort into each transaction.

"Gwen is such a tireless worker," said McPherson. "She takes two vacations a year, one in the winter and one in the late summer. She has her assistants FedEx her (local newspapers) because she doesn't want to miss anything."

Perhaps the only other thing Luce values as much as her occupation are her three children, all of who she says she's very close to. The quartet commonly dines together, hikes together and take trips together when they're schedules permit it.

"We're a very close family," said Luce.