SFExaminer

Freed Woman Is Home at Last

ming her first Christmas tree | panied by Mary Ann's father, Harbert today began trim-

last week for "trespassing." in Red China, where she had first time since being retearfully happy embrace of been held from mid-1968 to leased from a detention area her family yesterday for the She returned here to the

medical examinations. where she had undergone from Valley Forge, Pa., reporters as she arrived and miss the day," she told keep track of the days, but Christmas in China. I tried to sometimes I would forget "They don't celebrate

ed she has lost too much sound, but her mother insistbeen pronounced medically birthday tomorrow - has years — she celebrates her much younger than her 26 The frail girl, looking

in three long, excruciatingly Gene, a civil engineer with boring years. the U.S. Geodetic Survey, By Don West

Examiner News Staff ly Harbert, who met her The two were PALO ALTO — Mary Ann daughter at San Francisco trespassing and and older sister, Sue, 29.

Chinese government until a prompted her release. China and the United States thaw in relations between but they did not tell me until proved, I had more hope," | certain or her physical condi-She had been held by the year's internment.

Sailing

Communist custody. from Hong Kong to Manila with a friend, Gerald McLaughlin, 41, she fell into While on a 1968 sailing trip

a Pan Am airline ticket to go home. on to Australia and finally China Sea to Manila. She had sailing trip through the South boat built in Hong Kong and she flew out to join him on a McLaughlin had had the

rounded by these three Chinese junks, fishing boats, and they started waving a "We found ourselves sur-

they released me," she said. She was kept in a rural make contact with the local people or any foreigners. area, but not allowed to

lunch, walk around a bit, eat dinner and go to bed," she to get up in the morning, eat breakfast, take a nap, eat recalled. "My average day would be

Propaganda

a propaganda magazine were placed any restrictions on tion about the world outside her staple reading items. The only reading material educational furnished had little informa- washing." China. A photo magazine and

gun and so we cooperated talk to her during her early this month that she and a cat was never something the simply beautiful. When they threw us a towing three-and-a-half year incar- might be released, because in their apartments. the only people allowed to Interpreters were about

weeks ago that her sailing living conditions were so Ann was not told until two cially in the early days when companion had died after a poor. The two were charged with

tions.

educational efforts as "brain-"all the time" with her, but she would not define Chinese Politics were discussed

what she could talk about U.S. government spokesmen after her return here. Neither the Chinese nor

There were several hints

ceration.

",'I asked about him often, | came better and the food imshe said. "After living conditions be-

stay a long time," she said.
When President Nixon's nounced, her captors asked opment in international relaher opinion of this new develplanned trip to China was an-"I did prepare myself to

Job. the future than a search for a

folks with an old family joke: she said with a giggle to her celebration in three years, "All I want is a kitten." As for her first Christmas

took him from post to post and a cat was never allowed travelled as Harbert's job Her family had always

daughter at San Francisco trespassing and an investigated she would be released, but clothes or anything," said international Airport accoming ton begun. They were sepathered were times she grew Mary Ann, who was notified rated immediately and Mary extremely discouraged, espe- Dec. 11 she would be home in She never gave up hope wanted, if I needed any time for Christmas. "they started asking what

tals six months in Chinese hospibecause she wanted to be in Valley Forge, she insisted, tion. She had spent the last She went first to a hospital Hospitals ARMY

"nothing to do," said the University of Utah graduate. threatened by her captors, her existence under guard While her life was never Her plans are no further in