THOSE WHO CAN, TEACH

Menlo Park students use the artificial intelligence in “Betty’s Brain” to learn by teaching. SECTION 2
ATHERTON – Destined to be one of the finest homes in Atherton. This magnificent 6-BR, 6-BR new home is crafted with extraordinary attention to detail. Wide rounded cornices and richly stained wood moldings typify the developer’s attention to detail. Towering ceilings and windows provide stunning light and volume, along with the finest millwork to behold unfurls to create warmth and ambiance.

Elizabeth Daschbach $6,295,000

and carpet. Ready for the new owners!

Victor Platonoff  $1,495,000

LOS ALTOS – No look further! This charming updated Ranch style home has all the modern comforts you are looking for & much more! Private back yard park like setting & serene cul-de-sac location. New paint and carpet. Ready for the new owners!

Victor Platinoff

LOS ALTOS HILLS – 3 BR/ 3.5 BA home situated on a cul-de-sac. Hardwood floors & crown molding. Kitchen w/ granite counter tops, top of the line appliances & Butler’s Pantry.

Susie Forstmann

MENLO PARK – 8 BR/ 8 BA Executive home w/ Architectural details. Cathedral ceilings & Gourmet Kitchen w/ inviting family room. Las Lomitas School District.

Kristin Cashin

CUPERTINO

This wonderful SR/6 BA Ranch style home boasting a formal entry, bright & airy LR, turned kitchen w/ granite counter top, ample cabinetry & built in LR. Sep. DR & spacious BR's w/ walk in closets & Granite Kitchen.

Tom Kerns

$2,475,000

EMERALD HILLS

Remodeled 4 BR/ 4 BA home features a large updated kitchen that features custom cabinetry & top-grade appliances. Ample retreat with elegant back deck that overlooks an indoor pool.

Doyle Randall

$2,150,000

HALF MOON BAY

Situated on the 1st Fairway of the TIBR Golf Links located close to the Ritz Carlton & Walking Trails. Easy commute to Metric Valley or San Francisco. Picturesque view mansions were believed to be 1 belvedere with room for a fire to sit outside.

Judy Close

$1,630,000

LOLOS ATOS – Right now! This charming updated Ranch style home has all the modern comforts you are looking for & much more! Private back yard park like setting & serene cul-de-sac location. New paint and carpet. Ready for the new owners!

Victoria Platinoff

LOLOS HILLS

Rarely available ground floor unit with large landscaped patio. 2 BR/ 2 BA, new carpet and paint, fireplace in living room and close to downtown. A must see!

Victoria Platinoff

$599,000

MENLO PARK – This contemporary 3 BR/ 2 BA, 2 car garage home located in a cul-de-sac, hardwood floors, crown molding. Kitchen w/ granite counter tops, top of the line appliances & Butler’s Pantry.

Kristin Cashin

$2,099,000

MENLO PARK – 2 BR/ 2.5 BA desirable end unit townhouse with magnificent views.

Kristin Cashin

$1,875,000

MOUNTAIN VIEW

Location. Location. Location. Community Mid Peninsula area close to everything. This highly desirable upper end unit 2BR/2BA condo in "The Waters." Complex offers scenic views of the lake and mature trees from the living room, dining area and balcony.

Jan Starkewich

$460,000

PALO ALTO

Located in the Greymont Village neighborhood. SR/3 BA home sits on a beautifully landscaped lot. Details include beveled tiles, wood burning fireplace and large 2-car garage. This home is ideally situated just minutes from all of the downtown amenities.

Grosm Laugh

$2,450,000

SANTA CARLOS

SR/3.5 BA This fabulous updated Ranch home features a remodeled kitchen w/ custom cabinets. Mstr BR w/ a remodeled BA & Walk-in Closet. Fresh Paint & New Carpet. Great views from every room.

Lilly Cho

$589,000

Saratoga - All of the best elements of a gentile life style are realized in this wonderful SR/2 BA townhouse. Chef’s kitchen, dramatic ceilings, private courtyard & 2 car garage. Close to town, shopping & freeway access.

Victoria Platinoff

$598,888
**Open for business**

Rosewood Sand Hill hotel spa receptionist Janet Tarr, right, welcomes attendees after the ribbon-cutting ceremony April 2 for the new hotel complex on Sand Hill Road at Interstate 280. See story on Page 7.

**Atherton**

- Grand jury rebukes Atherton events rules. Page 17
- Council members split on approach to budget. Page 5
- City looks to accelerate planning efforts in 'light industrial' area of Menlo Park. Page 7

**Menlo Park**

- Council members split on approach to budget. Page 5
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**Portola Valley**

- Town holds cleanup event Saturday. Page 24
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**Regional**

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**Community**

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**People**

- Mardell Ward, former Almanac ad director, dies. Page 11

**On the cover**

Kevin Conrad, a fifth-grader at Encinal School in Atherton, looks up from his computer. He and his classmates are teaching science concepts to an artificial intelligence program called Betty’s Brain as part of a Stanford University education study. Students enhance their own grasp of the material by educating virtual students called “teachable agents.” Photo by Michelle Le. Story begins on the cover of Section 2.

**Images of Woodside Presents**

A Mother’s Day Event

Treat the special mother in your life to the gift of beauty

Do you want to treat the special mother in your life to a wonderful day of pampering that she deserves? Simply purchase her a gift certificate for any of our salon services and you will both receive a gift of Kenra travel size product.

In addition to the free gift you will be entered in a drawing for our grand prize basket that includes a gift certificate for services and products.

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Hurry... Mother’s Day is May 10

**Allied Arts Guild**

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**Coming Events**

- **Fashion Show & Luncheon**, Art to Wear - Friday, April 17
- **Belle Intima**, Bridal Fair Charity Event - Saturday, April 18 - 1pm to 5pm
- **Flavors of the Gardens**, Arts and Food Festival - May 9 - 10am to 5pm
- **Mother’s Day Brunch**, The Red Curvant Café - Sunday, May 10

For more info visit: www.alliedartsguild.org or call 650-325-2450
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April 8, 2009 ■ The Almanac ■ 3
Effective immediately, Roberts is offering a 10% discount on the purchase of 6, or more, bottles of regularly priced wines. Red tag sale prices excluded.

Argentina produces wines of considerable depth of flavor and complexity. Malbec wines have a characteristically lush berry flavor with hints of pepper. While the Syrahs form Argentina tend toward dark fruit flavors, the country’s Cabernet Sauvignons marry cassis flavors with small notes of bell pepper. As one might imagine, Argentinian wines go beautifully with meats such as roasts, steaks, braised lamb shanks, and dense stews.

One of the great wine success stories of the new millennium is the meteoric rise of the Malbecs of Argentina. Malbec is a French varietal used in Bordeaux as a blending grape, and is the primary constituent in the famous “black wines” of Cahor. But, in Argentina, Malbec has emerged as the top dog of red grape types. Usually providing hearty, rich, flavorful wines, Argentine Malbecs define the consumer with some of the finest wines values available. Try one today.

2008 Alamos Malbec, Mendoza
The “value” standard for Argentine Malbec! Reg. $17.49
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2008 Cicchitti Malbec, Gran Reserve
Great example! Reg. $11.99
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2006 Alamos Malbec, Mendoza
A dark, firm, mineral-laden red. Reg. $9.99
Sale  $7.99

2006 Catena Malbec, Mendoza
Both bright and fresh, yet rich and lush. Reg. $22.99
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City finances: How deep will cuts go?

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

The high drama that’s been unfolding in the Menlo Park council chambers in recent weeks might not provide fodder for playwrights and novelists, but it should be compelling viewing for council watchers. At its roots: budget discussions.

Always laborious, the budgeting process looks to be more contentious than usual this year, with council members split on how to approach the city’s finances in the midst of a recession.

Menlo Park is facing a projected deficit of $2 million to $2.2 million in the upcoming fiscal year (which begins July 1), and there’s a range of opinions on what the city should do to try to narrow the gap between revenue and expenditures — and to try to climb out of what city officials say is a structural, long-term deficit.

The options at the City Council’s disposal: increasing the tax on utilities; drawing on the city’s $24 million in general operating reserves; delaying infrastructure projects (such as street resurfacing); and reducing expenditures on employees.

Three of the five City Council members have tentatively nixed the idea of putting off projects, and no one is eager to drain the city’s reserve. But the council now must decide whether the city can survive the recession with a temporary tax hike, or whether it’s in need of a more dramatic restructuring.

City Manager Glen Rojas has not yet made his recommendation for the 2009-10 budget, but council members are already at odds over how to approach the budgeting process.

After Councilman John Boyle dissented and Councilman Andy Cohen abstained in a March 24 vote on what projects the city should undertake in the next fiscal year, Mayor Heyward Robinson addressed the issue head-on.

“Go ahead and tell me right now if you’re not going to vote for this budget,” he said to councilmen Cohen and Boyle. “We could save a lot of time, I’ll work things out with my colleagues to my left, and we’ll get through this sooner.” (Councilman Rich Cline and Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson sit to Mr. Robinson’s left on the dais.)

Mr. Cohen, who has essentially removed himself from public budget discussions thus far, said there was a “very good chance” he wouldn’t vote for the budget. When Mr. Robinson said Mr. Cohen hadn’t offered any input, Mr. Cohen shot back that the mayor hadn’t been listening.

Asked in an interview whether he was willing to work with Mayor Robinson in crafting the budget, Mr. Cohen said, “Not on his terms.” He is more likely to join Mr. Boyle in voting against the eventual budget proposal, he said.

In an interview, Mr. Robinson said he’s willing to work with “anybody that has constructive ideas, and wants to participate.”

Mr. Boyle seems to be the only council member who is optimistic the council will hash out a budget proposal he would vote for.

How bad will it get?

Mr. Rojas has cautioned against cutting city staff, saying that staff cuts lead to fewer services for residents, and that the city shouldn’t make rash decisions when it’s sitting on a $24 million reserve.

But Mr. Cohen says the city manager is

Portola Valley poised to ignore Cal Fire deadline

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

It appears that the Town Council of Portola Valley will miss its deadline for accepting a wildfire hazard map prepared by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The council had until April 14 to accept a map that showed a “very high” risk of wildfire in the northwest corner of town, including the Woodside Highlands neighborhood.

The agenda for the Wednesday, April 8, meeting, which starts at 8 p.m. in the Historic Schoolhouse, does not mention action related to the Cal Fire map. The council’s next regularly scheduled meeting would be on April 22.

An independently commissioned map shows severe wildfire dangers throughout town, and council members have noted this map as a reference point in discussing amending the building code for better fire-resistance. This map is similar to one prepared by the Woodside Fire Protection District, which serves Portola Valley. The fire district’s analysis includes terrain, prevailing winds and the types and moisture content of vegetation, officials have said.

There are no penalties if Portola Valley does not accept Cal Fire’s map. If it is accepted, real estate transactions for homes in “very high” risk areas would have to include a statement about wildfire risk.

Highlands area homeowners turned out on Feb. 25 to argue to the council that a “very high” risk label would negatively impact homeowners incance. Insurers have said in interviews that they make their own maps and do not consider Cal Fire maps in determining rates.

New offer doesn’t please charter school

By Dave Boyce
Almanac staff writer

The board of the Sequoia Union High School District voted 4-1 on April 1 to approve a revised and “final offer” to Everest (charter) Public High School of a temporary home in several portable buildings on a residential street in East Palo Alto.

The new offer has several changes from the original proposal: Everest would have exclusive use of the buildings, instead of having to share them with an adult school. In addition to the four portable buildings in the original offer, Everest would get three more portable buildings for use as a classroom, a multipurpose room, and offices.

Access to a nearby gym is promised, as is shared use — proportional to the school’s 104 students — of physical education, arts and kitchen facilities at Menlo-Atherton High School in Atherton.

Everest, which rejected the original offer, is still not happy with the new proposal, said Diane Tavenner, the chief petitioner for Everest.

The basic complaint is that the school would be located in East Palo Alto, far from the location Everest requested in Redwood City. Also, students would have to travel four miles one way to M-A for electives and physical education. The proposed facilities in East Palo Alto are not “reasonably comparable” to what students have at schools such as M-A, she said.

Car strikes pedestrian in Atherton

A car struck a pedestrian at the intersection of El Camino Real and Stockbridge Avenue in Atherton around 12:40 p.m. Monday, Atherton police said.

The victim was taken by ambulance to Stanford Hospital.
JOIN OUR TEAM
Make us a partner in your estate plan

7-year-old Joseph loves to play ball, but suffers from juvenile arthritis. Only a year ago, he was so sore and lethargic that he could barely walk. Today, under the care of pediatric rheumatologists at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital, Joseph is back to playing second base on his little league team.

By including Packard Children’s in your estate plan today, you help children like Joseph receive specialized care not found at most hospitals. Your gift can create tax savings for your estate or help fulfill your financial goals — all while improving the health of children.

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City looks to accelerate planning in MP’s ‘light industrial’ area

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

W hen it comes to planning for development in the city’s so-called “light industrial” area, Menlo Park has decided it can’t afford to wait any longer.

The city will begin working with three major property owners clustered near the intersection of Willow Road and Bayfront Expressway to develop a coordinated plan for a 130-acre area, per a 4-1 vote of the City Council at its March 31 meeting.

The property owners have said they want to get moving on developing vacant land and re-tooling their facilities to accommodate businesses in emerging fields, such as clean technology and life sciences. And the city is eager to accommodate companies that might produce sales tax revenue for Menlo Park, and provide jobs for residents in the nearby Belle Haven neighborhood.

The effort might preclude the city from accepting funds from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to design a transit hub. With plans to run commuter trains across the Dumbarton Bridge under-funded and on the back burner for now, council members said a new approach was required.

“It’s clear that Dumbarton Rail, as a (functioning rail line), isn’t going to happen any time soon, and I think we need to be prepared to act accordingly,” said Mayor Heyward Robinson. Negotiations with MTC to fund the city’s study have also stalled, though council members remained hopeful that the city would still have access to MTC money.

A transit station could be incorporated into the new coordinated development plan for the area, council members said.

Coordinated approach

The study approved by the council might include an evaluation of zoning amendments to allow for increased development. The possible deployment of redevelopment funds by the city.

The owners involved — General Motors, AMB Properties, and the Tarlton family — have agreed to share the $800,000 bill for the study, which would take at least two years.

While saying they weren’t interested in undertaking an exhaustive community-based planning effort, similar to the downtown/El Camino visioning/planning process, council members said they might like to add more of a community outreach aspect to the plan when they finalize the details at a later meeting.

Under the existing general plan and zoning ordi-
nance, the three properties are allowed about 3.1 million square feet of development among them, with about 2.1 million of that already filled.

The coordinated approach to planning would allow the city to study possible impacts on traffic and the surrounding environment all at once, instead of in a piecemeal fashion, according to Community Development Director Arlinda Heineck.

Councilman John Boyle dissented in the vote, saying he would have voted to approve the study had he been assured that MTC would not withdraw funding for the transit study. In thinking they would be able to proceed with both studies, council members were trying to have their cake and eat it too, he said.

Housing

The city would also evaluate the need for new housing through the process. The state has asked Menlo Park to plan for the addition of 1,800 housing units through its housing element, a requirement that essentially has no teeth. MTC had said the city would need to add around 1,500 units near the transit station, but seemed to back off that requirement in a letter sent hours before the March 31 council meeting.

AMB has said it might be amenable to accommodating a transit station and housing development on its property, in exchange for zoning concessions from the city. But council members seemed conflicted about the idea of filling up valuable space in the city’s revenue-generating “breadbasket” with housing.

Two of the city’s housing commissioners, Elizabeth Lasensky and Patricia Boyle, spoke at the meeting to urge the council to consider the need for housing in the planning process.

Rosewood Sand Hill hotel hotel complex opens for business

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

O fficials from Menlo Park, Rosewood Hotels and Resorts, and the Stanford Management Co. gathered to celebrate the opening of the Rosewood Sand Hill hotel, spa and restaurant on Thursday, April 2.

About 150 people were on hand to watch as Michael Casey, managing director of Rosewood Sand Hill, and Menlo Park Mayor Heyward Robinson cut ribbons and delivered speeches.

Mr. Robinson praised city staff, as well as current and former council members, for shepherding plans for the facilities through the city’s planning process. The City Council approved those plans in June 2006, with Councilman Andy Cohen casting the lone dissenting vote.

Mr. Robinson said the hotel would provide much-needed housing for local residents, would offer a space for local residents to hold large events, and would be a boon to the city’s tax revenue.

The hotel has a 2,800-square-foot ballroom that can hold between 150 and 250 guests, according to hotel officials.

Though the country is mired in a recession, Rosewood CEO John Scott said he sees a silver lining for the “ultra-luxury” hotel. It will have less competition, because he doesn’t envision many new hotels opening soon, he said in an interview.

He said he believes the Peninsula’s economy is still on relatively solid ground, and that business people will still elect to stay there on trips. And with people tightening their budgets, nearby residents might eschew a trip to a far-away resort in favor of a weekend stay in Menlo Park, he said.

The hotel, spa and restaurant actually opened for business Wednesday, April 1.
Charter school not happy with new offer

**EVEREST**
continued from page 5

**Board vote**

The vote was an echo of a September 2008 vote of 4-1 when the Sequoia district board denied Everest a charter. In both decisions, Trustee Olivia Martinez dissented. Everest received a charter from the state Board of Education in March and plans to open in September. The Sequoia district has opposed Everest all along, but is required by law to offer facilities.

Everest has until May 1 to act on the latest — and what the school district called the “final” — offer. Everest’s governing board “will probably send a letter asking the Sequoia board to reconsider,” said Ms. Tavenner in an interview. “If that doesn’t work out, we’ll have to decide as a board if we’re going to file suit.”

“I could be wrong,” he added. “I hope I’m wrong. I expect to be,” said Mr. Rojas. “I’m not sure if I have enough respect for anybody to tell you I agree with that,” Mr. Cline said. “It’s not appropriate to make these types of heavy-handed decisions based on how you feel, what the news is telling you, what’s happening in different cities. I think we need to create a system that has flexibility, so we can make adjustments as we go,” he continued, saying the city wouldn’t want to slash staff in anticipation of a long recession, only to find itself short-handed when the economy turns around.

**Council split on budget**

Mr. Cline is getting ahead of himself, according to Councilman Rich Cline.

“Andy believes we’re going to have a precipitous decline over the next five years. I have a lot of respect for Andy, but I don’t have enough respect for anybody to tell you I agree with that,” Mr. Cline said. “It’s not appropriate to make these types of heavy-handed decisions based on how you feel.”

Everest’s governing board would “probably send a letter asking the Sequoia board to reconsider,” said Ms. Tavenner in an interview. “If that doesn’t work out, we’ll have to decide as a board if we’re going to file suit.”

“I could be wrong,” he added. “I hope I’m wrong. I hope that the Everest leadership sees this offer as we do. This is a quality offer in terms of their (facilities) request.”

The offer of the portable buildings on Green Street in East Palo Alto is for the first two years of Everest’s existence. The district proposes to move Everest to another East Palo Alto site for its third and fourth years of operation, then to a new, 1,500-student school in East Palo Alto that would also house the other two charter high schools that currently serve East Palo Alto students.

Everest would be modeled on Summit Prep, a charter school in its sixth year that has many more applicants than available seats each year.

The offer is in good faith, according to Sequoia district Trustee Lorraine Rumley. “I know we’ve always taken our charter school responsibilities, as far as facilities, seriously.”

Trustee Gordon Levin added: “I hope that our friends in the Everest/Summit community would really take the time to review and contemplate the proposal.”

**Everest’s request**

“Certainly we’ve not satisfied that they (Sequoia district board members) have done their best to try to locate the school where we requested, which is Redwood City,” Ms. Tavenner said.

Everest had asked for seven classrooms in an unused building on the campus of Sequoia High School, saying that it expected most of its students to come from families who would attend the Sequoia High and M-A.

In its revised offer, the district rejected this location for several reasons, including claims that it would compromise Sequoia High’s small class sizes for students learning English and force relocation of special education classes to other campuses. And the Everest community, as at Summit Prep, would settle in Redwood City rather than East Palo Alto, thus increasing “the racial, language and socioeconomic isolation of students in the neighborhoods and schools west of U.S. 101,” the offer said.

Sequoia district trustee Martinez wasn’t buying it.

“The Sequoia district has opposed Everest all along, and is required by law to offer facilities. This is a quality offer in terms of their facilities,” Mr. Cline said.

Mr. Cline is getting ahead of himself, according to Councilman Rich Cline.

“Andy believes we’re going to have a precipitous decline over the next five years. I have a lot of respect for Andy, but I don’t have enough respect for anybody to tell you I agree with that,” Mr. Cline said. “It’s not appropriate to make these types of heavy-handed decisions based on how you feel. The news is telling you, what’s happening in different cities. I think we need to create a system that has flexibility, so we can make adjustments as we go,” he continued, saying the city wouldn’t want to slash staff in anticipation of a long recession, only to find itself short-handed when the economy turns around.

**Tax or cut?**

While a majority of council members approve of Mr. Rojas’ approach to the budget, a majority are also reluctant to support a big tax hike — a solution Mr. Cline labels the “resident as mule” option.

Mr. Cohen said he wouldn’t support increasing the tax, while Mr. Cline has said he favors a solution that splits the burden of the deficit between residents and city staff.

Cohen says city council members have repeatedly said that “everything’s on the table,” and have urged Mr. Rojas to consider creative ideas for reducing expenses. He’s not inclined to support raising taxes, he agreed that the city might not have to “work too hard” to balance the budget. By focusing more on business development, scaling back projects, and cutting corners here and there, the city could possibly see its revenue stream match expenditures in one to two years — without taxation, without major staff restructuring, and without a significant decrease in the services provided to residents, he said.

Mr. Cohen doesn’t agree with that assessment. The city’s staff should stop kidding itself about the economy, he said, and the council should start facing up to the city’s budget issues, rather than doing what’s politically expedient.

“I am not happy with the way staff is operating, and I’m not happy with the way the council is treating their recommendations,” he said. “(Council members) are playing political games with child care, sidewalks, what have you, to get their little piece of what they think their constituents are demanding. I cannot accept that this is good government.”

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See EVEREST, page 17

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**ABBASI PROGRAM IN ISLAMIC STUDIES**

**CHARTING CHANGE, CHALLENGING POWER: WOMEN LEADERS IN MUSLIM CONTEXTS**

**BARONESS KISHWER FALKNER**
The House of Lords, Great Britain

**DR. SHAHIDA JAFFREY**
Founder and Vice Chancellor of Sardar Bahadur Khan Women’s University, Pakistan

**PROF. JULIA CLANCY-SMITH**
Department of History, University of Arizona

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 7:30 PM**
**ANNENBERG AUDITORIUM**
**STANFORD UNIVERSITY**

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**MENLO PARK BUDGET**

Want to learn more about the state of Menlo Park’s finances, and City Manager Glen Rojas’ approach to the budget process? The city has created a page on its Web site to keep residents informed. Go to tinyurl.com/MPBudget.
With Menlo Park struggling to get out from under a budget deficit of $2 million or more, new regulations related to storm water pollution could impose a $300,000 hit on the city’s operating expenses, if adopted by the regional agency in charge of water issues.

Calling the order an unfunded mandate, city staff also said they were concerned it is technically and legally unsound.

The city takes in $310,000 annually in fees for the prevention of storm water pollution, and spends about $500,000. Under the new regulations, the city would be forced to spend about $800,000 on pollution prevention in the first year, according to city staff.

The additional spending would likely be funded through the city’s general operating purse, according to Finance Director Carol Augustine.

If adopted by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board at its May 13 meeting, the new regulations would go into effect immediately, city staff said.

Downtown workshop set for April 16

Residents will be able to get involved in the planning process for downtown Menlo Park when the city holds the first of three workshops as part of that process.

The workshop is set to run from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday, April 16, in the meeting room of the Menlo Presbyterian Church, behind the ACE Hardware store at 700 Santa Cruz Ave. The entrance to the meeting space fronts on the parking lot behind the hardware store, which can be accessed from Oak Grove Avenue.

The workshop marks the beginning of the consultant-led process of hammering out a detailed parcel-by-parcel plan for El Camino Real and downtown Menlo Park. It follows on a “visioning” effort, during which residents formed general guidelines for downtown development.

The two other workshops are scheduled for June 18 and Sept. 17.

Saving water on landscaping

Amateur gardeners can hone their skills through two free landscaping classes in upcoming months.

The classes, sponsored by the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency, emphasize water-efficient landscaping.

A class on April 25 will focus on the use of native plants, and a class on May 2 will deal with methods for attracting birds and butterflies to a garden.

The classes will be held at the Burgess Recreation Center in Menlo Park. To register, call 349-3000, or e-mail landscaping@bawsc.a.org.

Is the city’s budget in for a big hit?

By Sean Howell

With Menlo Park struggling to get out from under a budget deficit of $2 million or more, new regulations related to storm water pollution could impose a $300,000 hit on the city’s operating expenses, if adopted by the regional agency in charge of water issues.

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Real Estate Market Condition Reports for...

Atherton
Menlo Park
Portola Valley
or Woodside

Visit www.PeninsulaSpecialist.com and select the report of your choice.
Weekend workshop on Sudden Oak Death

With Sudden Oak Death (SOD) afflicting forests and neighborhood trees in Portola Valley and Woodside, a three-day training session on recognizing the disease is set to start at 7 p.m. Friday, April 17, at the Portola Valley Town Center.

The program trains residents in recognizing SOD and collecting and preparing samples for later analysis at a diagnostic lab at the University of California, Berkeley. The Web site tinyurl.com/SuddenOD describes the event. Residents should bring GPS devices if they have them.

Over the months that follow, a community meeting will be scheduled to discuss with residents the lab results and next steps.

SOD can be spread to uninfected trees by wind, rainwater, carriers such as rhododendrons, camellias and bay laurel trees; and contaminated objects such as tools, tires and shoes. While there is no cure, its spread can be inhibited. More information is available at the Web site www.suddenoakdeath.org.

For local information, Portola Valley residents can contact Leslie Lambert at 851-1700, ext. 212, or lmambert@portolavalley.net. Woodside residents can contact Kevin Bryant at 851-6790 or kryant@woodsidetown.org.

Information is also available from Fire Marshal Denise Enea of the Woodside Fire Protection District at 851-6206 or denea@woodsidefire.org.

The dark wound in the crotch of this oak in Portola Valley is a symptom of Sudden Oak Death disease. The treatment for the incurable disease turned the moss brown. The rhododendron (with the pink flowers) is a carrier of the disease.

Court throws out Menlo Park’s letter to rail agency

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

I n a ruling that Menlo Park Councilman Rich Cline called “kind of a stomach punch,” a California Superior Court judge has denied a motion to allow a comment letter from the city to be added to the record in a lawsuit against the agency overseeing the high-speed rail project.

Council members have said the High-Speed Rail Authority’s failure to respond to the letter, commenting on the alternatives the rail authority should consider to running high-speed trains along the Caltrain corridor, was part of the reason they joined the suit. The rail authority says it never received it.

Under law, the agency is required to respond to every letter it receives as part of the environmental review process. But in the March 27 ruling, Judge Michael Kenny said the city did not adequately prove that it had in fact sent the letter, and that it didn’t do enough to make sure the letter had been received. Furthermore, after the release of the final environmental document but before it was certified, there was a 40-day window in which Menlo Park could have re-sent its letter, the judge said.

The city did not do so, because it was not aware of the rail authority finally responding to Menlo Park’s letter. The agency issued its response on March 27, having requested and received a copy of the letter from the city’s attorneys.

But given that the lack of response from the rail authority was one of the factors in council members’ decision to sue, Councilman John Boyle asked whether the city should reconsider that decision. At each of the council’s last three meetings, Mr. Boyle has asked whether the city should consider dropping the lawsuit, in light of the fact that the rail authority finally responded to Menlo Park’s letter. The agency issued its response Feb. 19, having requested and received a copy of the letter from the city’s attorneys.

In August, Mr. Cline and Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson voted in closed session to join the lawsuit, with Mr. Boyle opposed. Mayor Heyward Robinson was absent, and Councilman Andy Cohen is recused from rail issues.

Mr. Cline and Ms. Ferguson, who make up a
Fire causes major damage to two-story home in MP

A two-story Menlo Park home sustained major damage in a two-alarm fire Wednesday afternoon, April 1, Menlo Park Fire Protection District Deputy Chief Tim Campbell said.

The blaze was reported at 4:13 p.m. at the home at 1015 Deanna Drive. Fire crews determined the fire started on an outside patio and spread to the house, seriously damaging the second floor, Mr. Campbell said.

The first floor of the home sustained minor damage before the blaze was brought under control at about 4:30 p.m.

“Only a few fire units were engaged in the blaze,” Mr. Campbell said.

He said no residents were home when the fire broke out and there was no report of injuries. Crews managed to rescue a small bird from the house, he said.

The cause of the fire is under investigation. — Bay City News Service

SUIT

continued from previous page 10

Council subcommittee tasked with dealing with high-speed rail issues, have not yet recommended that the council reconsider its decision to sue. Both said they were open to having the discussion, though Mr. Cline said it would take some money to get him to consider it.

“I’m not even close to talking about getting out of this lawsuit,” he said.

Ms. Ferguson said the city shouldn’t rush into a reconsideration, because when it comes to the city attorney, time is money.

Mayor Robinson said he did not want to reconsider the issue.

Former Almanac ad director dies at 84

Mardell R. Ward, who served as advertising director of The Almanac from 1971 to 1989, died March 23 in Palo Alto. She was 84.

Ms. Ward, a former editor of the Menlo Park Recorder, took over advertising for The Almanac just six years after the paper was founded by Betty Fry and the late Hedy Boisevain. Her local contacts were invaluable to the newspaper as it expanded into Menlo Park in the 1980s.

A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, Ms. Ward had a career in journalism and advertising that included working at Sunset Magazine, the Menlo Park Recorder, Wank, Williams & Neylan advertising agency, and the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce.

“She was a very classy lady,” said Mort Levine, publisher of The Almanac from 1980 to 1993. “She gave The Almanac a certain tone. She was very interested in building up the business district of Menlo Park.”

Ms. Ward was born on Nov. 11, 1924, in Santa Barbara and grew up in Ventura. She enjoyed gardening, reading, traveling and talking daily to her wide circle of friends and family, say family members.

She was a longtime resident of the Barron Park neighborhood in Palo Alto and often wrote for the Barron Park Association’s newsletter. She is survived by her three children, Valerie Burns Kepko of Sacramento, Craig Burns of Woodside, and Douglas Burns of Palo Alto; and one grandson.

Menlo Park men arrested after high-speed chase

Both are apprehended in the 1100 block of Willow Road.

Officers on April 2 arrested two Menlo Park men suspected of armed robbery after pursuing them in a high-speed chase through residential neighborhoods in East Palo Alto and Menlo Park, according to police.

Both men were apprehended in the 1100 block of Willow Road.

A patrol officer reported seeing a masked man run out of a business and into a waiting vehicle at about 11:55 a.m., joining another man allegedly standing on lookout, according to the East Palo Alto Police Department.

The two men drove off and ignored an attempt by police to pull them over, initiating a pursuit through school zones and residential streets that at times reached 70 mph, according to police.

Police reported that the pursuit continued on foot when Richard Bravo, 21, and Manuel Olivares, 23, abandoned their vehicle on Saratoga Avenue.

Though the suspects did not successfully take any money and police were not able to locate a weapon, Mr. Olivares and Mr. Bravo were arrested and booked into the San Mateo County Jail.

— Bay City News Service
Bob J. Store Manager  
I’m worried about the economy…I’m looking for a new home, but if I lose my job how will I pay my monthly mortgage?

Sandra L. State Worker  
I’m worried I won’t get the best deal…but if I buy a foreclosure I won’t know what I’m getting and that could cost me big time!

Dave W. Nurse  
The economy is so unpredictable. What if I buy a house and then get laid off?

Diane K. Veterinarian  
These are crazy times. Companies are going out of business right and left. I’m worried that my home builder won’t be there for me.

Kelley D. High School Principal  
Actually, I’m not worried about ANYTHING! Because I just bought a Taylor Morrison Home!

What are you worried about?

Homebuyers, if you lose your job, we’ve got you covered.

- Your mortgage will be paid for up to six months if you lose your job.* Our mortgage protection program will give you the confidence of knowing your mortgage payment will be made, and you won’t have to fear the loss of your home.

- We’ve partnered with one of the country’s most reliable insurers to offer you a safety net. Protect yourself for two years from the day you close escrow.

- Your actual monthly payment up to $2,500 will be fully covered in the event of an involuntary job loss.

- You will be eligible to receive up to six payments during the term of your coverage.

- Your home-buying experience will be worry-free with Taylor Morrison – a reputable builder whose parent company has been around for 125 years worldwide.

Visit us at www.NoWorriesProgram.com

*The Mortgage Protection Plan offered by Rainy Day Foundation is backed by an “A-Excellent” rated carrier and is subject to the terms thereof, including but not limited to eligibility, education and counseling services, vesting period and other limitations. Only purchase agreements specifically written to include this program are eligible as allowed by lender guidelines and when purchaser utilizes Taylor Morrison Home Funding. Contact a Taylor Morrison Sales Representative or a Taylor Morrison Home Funding Originator for complete details. Mortgage Protection Plan and quoted prices are subject to change without notice. Square footages are approximate.

Morgan Lane  
1,470 to 1,951 sq. ft.  
From $1.31 million  
Menlo Park  
650-324-3282

Verona Ridge  
2,941 to 3,312 sq. ft.  
From $1.67 million  
San Mateo  
650-638-9100

870 Santa Cruz Ave.  
Menlo Park  
M–Sat: 10–6  
650-326-9661
POST acquires two properties

The Peninsula Open Space Trust announced April 2 that it has completed purchases of two properties near New Almaden in San Jose, including one formerly co-owned by Dianne Johnson Schilling of Portola Valley.

The properties are:

■ Seventy-four acres of undeveloped land next to Rancho Canada del Oro Open Space Preserve.
■ The second is 118 acres adjacent to the first purchase and next to Almaden Quicksilver County Park.

POST bought the properties in February and March for $250,000 and $400,000, respectively, said Nina Nowak, director of communications for the Palo Alto-based POST.

“Together, they link the 8,000 acres of already protected open space within the adjacent preserve and county park,” she said in a press release.

“These properties have great potential to create a key trail and wildlife connection between the two large neighboring parks,” said POST President Audrey Rust of Atherton.

Ms. Novak provided these other details:

Dianne Johnson Schilling of Portola Valley and her brother Richard Johnson of Reno sold the 74-acre parcel to POST. The land had been in their family for five generations, since their great-great-grandmother, Alleta Menke, purchased it in the late 1800s.

“From my home in Portola Valley I can see Windy Hill. That’s what first got me interested in POST,” said Ms. Schilling, referring to the Skyline Ridge landmark POST protected in 1979 and later transferred to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

Local hearing on Lehman losses


The hearing is set to run from 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday, April 16, in the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Chambers on the ground floor at 400 County Center (401 Marshall St.) in Redwood City.

Local agencies that have lost money in the bankruptcy will have the opportunity to testify about the effects on local services and programs, said Bill Chiang, legislative aide to San Mateo County Supervisor Adrienne J. Tissier.
Woodside property owners set to vote in all-mail school parcel tax election

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Property owners in the Woodside Elementary School District should receive ballots in the mail this week to vote on Measure C, which would renew a district parcel tax that is set to expire July 1.

The annual tax, $242 per parcel, must be approved by two-thirds of the voters; it would expire in 2017. “This is not a new tax,” said parent Jessica Lonergan, chairperson of the Measure C campaign. “It just maintains the status quo.”

Ballots for the all-mail election must be received by the county elections office by Tuesday, May 5, or may be dropped off at the school district office at 3195 Woodside Road, or at Woodside Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, by 5 p.m. that day.

The tax would raise about $242,000 annually for Woodside Elementary School. Those currently exempt will be automatically exempted from the renewed tax.

Owners of two or more contiguous parcels will be taxed for only one. Revenue from the tax will be placed in a special account, according to the county's impartial analysis. An independent citizens' committee will be formed to monitor spending of the funds, and an annual report will account for revenue raised, and how it was spent, the analysis says.

Ballot arguments in support of Measure C were submitted by a number of Woodside residents, including two council members, community volunteers and business people. Among the points made is that parcel tax funds are controlled locally, and “cannot be taken by the state,” nor will they be used for administrative salaries.

Prior to asking for the renewal, the argument says, the district “engaged in an extensive evaluation of the entire school budget. Budget cuts have been made. There are no frills in the budget.”

Ballot arguments opposing the parcel tax renewal were signed by members of the Libertarian Party of San Mateo County. The arguments cite the ailing economy, and maintain that the government should be struggling to find ways to reduce the cost of living at this time.

“It is shameful, and unfair, for schools to seek higher property taxes, kicking the less fortunate when they’re down,” the opposition argument says.

For the complete ballot arguments, go to shapethefuture.org.

Six MP agents rank in top 1 percent

Six Menlo Park real estate agents were among the top 1 percent of all Coldwell Banker agents in Northern California, the company has announced. Realtors Tom LeMieux, Hugh Cornish, Keri Nicholas, Hanna Shacham, Steve Bellumori and Elaine White were in that top rank among the company’s 3,600 agents in Northern California.

Mr. LeMieux was ranked as No. 4 in Northern California; Mr. Cornish, No. 9; Ms. Nicholas, No. 10; Ms. Shacham, No. 14; Mr. Bellumori, No. 23; and Ms. White, No. 26.

Coldwell Banker has two Menlo Park offices. One is at 800 El Camino Real, Suite 300, where there are 60 agents and Wendy McPherson is managing broker. The other is at 930 Santa Cruz Ave., where there are 40 agents and David Hobson is manager.
Auction to raise funds for Woodside High

By Barbara Wood
Special to The Almanac

Hoping to raise enough money to help principal David Reilly reduce class sizes in core classes, as well as make up for some of the cuts in state education funding, the Woodside High School Foundation is hosting its annual “Spring Into Auction” event, to be held at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton this year, as well as launching its first online auction.

Anyone can visit the foundation’s Web site, whsfoundation.org, to take part in the bidding. Those who want a chance to dance to the music of Big Bizzarro’s Auctions will provide professional auctioneering talent for the live auction.

A special feature of the auction, both online and at the April 25 event, is the Fund-A-Need and Match programs in which donors can give money directly to their favorite activities, including the Academic Resource Center, Mental Health Counseling, the PTSA Season of Sharing, MESA/AVID, Phoenix Nova-Net, the Principal’s Fund, Robotics, Get it Right-Get it Tight, Freshman Transition/SOS/KLEAR program, Athletic Boosters, Music Boosters and Drama Boosters.

Auction chair Leslie Ballinger says the goal is to raise $190,000 for Woodside High programs. Tickets remain at last year’s price of $100 per person and are available online at WHSFoundation.org or by calling 650-367-9750, ext. 8687.

Barbara Wood is on the board of the Woodside High School Foundation.

I get very nervous when I get pulled over. What is the best thing to do?

As soon as you see the lights or hear the siren behind you, make it known to the officer that you have an intention of pulling over by turning on your right-turn signal.

As soon as it is safe, move to the right side of the road and pull over in an area large enough to accommodate both vehicles. It is perfectly fine to pull into a parking lot or onto a side street if you are on a busy road.

On the freeway, it is often much more safe to pull off at the next exit.

After you stop, if it is at night, turn on your inside dome light. Roll down your window, and place your hands on your steering wheel.

Tell any passengers in your vehicle to remain quiet and leave their hands displayed openly. Always tell the officer if you have to reach anywhere to get your wallet or registration, and follow his or her directions.

Colorectal Cancer

- A change in bowel habits
- Constant tiredness
- Blood in stool
- Unexplained weight loss
- Diarrhea, constipation, vomiting
- Unexplained anemia
- Narrower than normal stools
- Feeling that the bowel does not empty completely
- Abdominal discomfort

That’s a common thought, especially for anyone who looks and feels healthy. But did you know the second leading cause of cancer death in men and women 50 and older is colorectal cancer? And did you know you could have the early stages of this deadly cancer and not know it?

A simple procedure called a colonoscopy could easily save your life with early detection. We apologize if this message is upsetting, but we believe it’s far better to face reality than to die from a disease that can be detected early and successfully treated.

We urge you to see your doctor and discuss a colonoscopy soon. And please check the list to the right for any of these symptoms. You may be young, but you’re not too young to die.

If you are uninsured, we can help. For more information please call Strides for Life at 650-348-5800.

Sequoia Hospital
A member of CHW
www.SequoiaHospital.org

Strides for Life
Colon Cancer Foundation
www.stridesforlife.org

ASK THE DEPUTY

Deputy Stephanie Josephson, who patrols locally for the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office, answers your questions about law enforcement. Submit questions to editor@AlmanacNews.com; or call 854-2626 and leave a message on ext. 213; or mail questions to: Ask the Deputy, The Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Q.
I get very nervous when I get pulled over. What is the best thing to do?

A.
As soon as you see the lights or hear the siren behind you, make it known to the officer that you have an intention of pulling over by turning on your right-turn signal.

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BIRTHS

Emerald Hills
- Amy and Scott Hublou, a daughter, March 24, at Sequoia Hospital.

Menlo Park
- Jennifer and Douglas Hirzel, a son, March 25, at Sequoia Hospital.
Remodeling Green Practical

If you’ve always wanted to build the unique, green home you’ve always wanted. This class covers the facts and how-tos for creating the

For homeowners interested in reducing their carbon footprint, this class is for you! Happy homes! For homeowners interested in reducing their carbon footprint, this class is for you!

Ecologically sound homes are healthy and happy homes! For homeowners interested in reducing their carbon footprint, this class is for you!

Questions to ask yourself about energy efficiency, solar options, and indoor air quality

#4 Monthly Workshop Series by Harrell Remodeling

Practical Green Remodeling

Ecologically sound homes are healthy and happy homes! For homeowners interested in reducing their carbon footprint, this class covers the facts and how-tos for creating the unique, green home you’ve always wanted.

- What is a green remodel?
- Learn about sustainable features and materials
- Questions to ask yourself about energy efficiency, solar options, and indoor air quality

Saturday, April 18
9:00am to 11:00am
Reclalm, Menlo Park

Saturday, April 25
9:00am to 11:00am
Harrell Design Center, Mtn. View

“Every night when I go to bed I say, Thank you, Mr. McRoskey!”

~ Doris, San Carlos

Rosemarie E. Hess

Former Stanford medical researcher

Rosemarie E. Hess, a resident of Portola Valley since 1973, died March 22 at the age of 73.

Born in Schwerte, Germany, Ms. Hess completed her education in biochemistry in Berlin in 1954 at Lette-Verein, subsequently working at a medical institute in Cologne, Germany, and Frauenklinik in Zurich, Switzerland.

In 1962, Ms. Hess moved to California to work in medical research at Stanford University.

She was married to Robert Hess in 1964. The couple enjoyed collecting art and antiques. They traveled extensively, including trips to Antarctica, Africa, and the Galapagos Islands.

Ms. Hess was deeply interested in neonatal research, say family members, funding unrestricted research grants for more than 35 years. She was a Stanford Associate, an honorary organization of those who have demonstrated significant volunteer service to the university.

Surviving Ms. Hess are her husband of 45 years, Robert Hess of Portola Valley; daughters Gabriela Hess of McCall, Idaho, and Verena Hess of Seattle, Washington; sister Margrit Look of Germany; brother Hartmut Eysell of Germany; and a grandson.

Memorial donations may be made to the Christopher David Hess Endowed Fund for Neonatology Research at the Stanford School of Medicine, Medical School Office Building, room x131, 251 Campus Drive, Stanford, California, 94305-510.

Frank Latimer Henry
Retired Airborne Ranger captain

A memorial service will be held at noon Saturday, April 18, at St. Bede’s Episcopal Church in Menlo Park for Frank Latimer Henry, retired decorated Airborne Ranger

in the 1st Special Forces Group in Vietnam, real estate developer, and 42-year Menlo Park resident. Mr. Henry died peacefully March 25, surrounded by his family, after a 10-month battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 69.

The son of an oil wildcatter, Mr. Henry was born in Seattle, but spent his childhood in many places, from Pasadena to Butte, Montana, to Calgary, Alberta, Canada, before graduating from Los Angeles High School in 1957.

He graduated from Stanford University in 1961, where he completed the ROTC program and majored in economics, with Phi Beta Kappa honors.

After graduation, he began six years of service in the Army Special Forces (Airborne). He trained at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and received Ranger training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He also received language instruction at the Army Language Institute in Monterey.

From 1964 to 1967, Capt. Henry and his airborne A-detachment took part in active combat throughout Vietnam. He also worked with the Royal Thai Special Forces to create bases of operation and helped lead joint training exercises at the British Jungle Warfare School in Malaysia.

On the island of Okinawa, where the 1st Special Forces Group was headquartered, Capt. Henry used his experience as a jump master to serve as a HALO (High Altitude Low Opening) instructor, leading jumps from 25,000 feet.

In 1967, Mr. Henry returned to the Bay Area, while still participating in the Airborne Reserve, and began his 40-year career in real estate development, settling in Menlo Park with his family.

He was an avid student of history and had a remarkable ability to recall dates and events from all periods, ancient to modern, say family members. He also liked to write poetry, especially for his wife, Bonnie.

He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Bonnie Henry, and their blended family of six children: Jon Henry, Jennifer Niven Miller, Nancy Niven Padlo, Theo Henry-Hamilton, Lisa Niven Kelly, and John Niven; and 10 grandchildren.

Donations in Mr. Henry’s memory may be made to the Palo Alto Elks Veterans Committee, on which he served for many years, 745 Distel Drive, Suite 121, Los Altos, CA 94022.

Annmarie Sisson

Former Oak Knoll paralegual

Annmarie Sisson of Menlo Park, who worked as a paralegual at Oak Knoll Elementary School in Menlo Park for eight years, died March 26. She was 51.

Ms. Sisson was born in Redwood City and attended Menlo Park schools. She graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School in 1975 and from UC Santa Cruz in 1979, majoring in English literature.

Ms. Sisson loved writing poems, art and music. She was continu-
**POLICE CALLS**

This information is from the Atherton and Menlo-Park police departments and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent until convicted.

**ATHERTON**

**Theft report:** Custom jewelry valued at $50,000 stolen, 200 block of Camino Al Lago, March 30.

**Robbery report:** Male victim jumped by two bike-riding males without weapons and wearing hooded sweatshirts, Midfielder Road and Palmer Lane, 8 p.m. on April 1.

**MENLO PARK**

**Grand theft report:** Baby clothing valued at $350 stolen, Laundersandft. located at 995 El Camino Real, March 19.

**Residential burglary report:** Antique silverware, electric toothbrush and vacuum cleaner stolen, 300 block of Bay Road, April 2.

**Auto burglary reports:**
- Window smashed and purse stolen, 600 block of Stand Hill Circle, March 28.

**WOODSIDE**

**Fraud report:** Two unauthorized credit card accounts opened in victim's name; a charge of $902 made, 100 block of Old La Honda Road, March 27.

**Battery report:** Juvenile at house party sustained injuries to left eye including hole in retina after assault by adult, Canada and Romero roads, March 30.

**PORTOLA VALLEY**

**Theft report:** Purse valued at $395 stolen from unlocked vehicle, 100 block of Cor- dova Court, March 27.

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**EVEREST**

continued from page 8

she said. "I'd like to see some way to work something out. ... Diversity is not really germane to our decision tonight."

District officials dismissed as not cost-effective a recent counterproposal from Ms. Tavenner that the school district and the town should settle out of court. That, in a nutshell, is the conclusion of a San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury report issued Monday, April 6, that examines Atherton's controversial special events ordinance.

In 2006, the Atherton City Coun- cil passed a broad ordinance regu- lating events in the town, from weddings and fundraisers to youth sports practices, partly in response to Lindenwood neighborhood complaints about Pop Warner football practices held at M-A. In trying to regulate private, non-school-related events on public school campuses, the town overreached, according to the grand jury.

“The Town of Atherton should not impose restrictions on school groups using facilities at Menlo- Atherton High School,” the report states. “Difficulty arises with the question of whether such events should be settled directly between the impacted parties whenever possible.”

Atherton Mayor Jerry Carlson said he was “a little disappointed” that the grand jury chose to focus on the topic. “I was led to believe that closure is near between town and district,” he said. But “serious allegations are still under review even if there are no serious allegations remains,” Mr. Carlson said. He declined to comment further, saying he’ll wait until the City Council has a chance to meet with its new city attorney on the issue.

The full Grand Jury report is available online by going to www.SanMateoCourt.org and clicking on Grand Jury.

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**MEMORIALS**

continued from previous page

ously creative, at home with her children, at school, and during her travels, say family mem-

bers.

She enjoyed family travel, especially to Graeagle and the Feather River in the Northern Sierra.

She is survived by her children, Laura and Jonathan of Menlo Park and Stephen of Palo Alto; her mother, Rosemary Sisson of Atherton; and brother Richard Sisson of Redwood City.

A memorial service was held April 2 at Menlo Park Presbyte- rian Church.

Memorials in Ms. Sisson’s name may be made to the Sclerosis Foundation at www.scleroderma.org.

Max Rondoni

Retired financial consultant

Max Rondoni of Menlo Park died March 11 of a massive heart attack at the age of 78. Services were held March 18 at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, where Mr. Rondoni taught Sunday school for 17 years.

“His especially enjoyed teaching young children and toddlers for their simple faith,” says his daughter, Susan Grant.

Mr. Rondoni was born in San Francisco and served in the Korean War. He attended Stanford University and worked as a financial consultant in Menlo Park.

Through the Highland Chris- tian Church in Burlingame, he was involved in mission work, especially in Ukraine and Latin America, for almost 20 years, say family members.

Mr. Rondoni was a member of the Italian-American Social Club in Menlo Park. He enjoyed playing piano and often entertained at local nursing homes.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Lois Rondini of Menlo Park; children Susan Grant, Pamela Ascario, Marlowe Ron- dini, and Marguerite Steele.

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**FOR THE RECORD**

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**PAID OBITUARY**

**MARDELL R. WARD**

Mardell was born in Santa Barbara on November 11, 1924 to Irene and Eugene Richards and surrounded by her loved ones, peacefully passed away in Palo Alto on March 23, 2009. She is survived by her loving children, daughter Valerie Burns Kepek (husband John and son Clinton) of Sacramento and sons, Craig Burns of Woodside and Douglas Burns of Palo Alto. She grew up in Ventura and proudly graduated from University of California, Berkeley. Mardell enjoyed a long and rewarding career in advertising and journalism in Menlo Park and Woodside. She enthusiastically worked at Sunset Magazine, Menlo Atherton Recorder, the Country Almanac, Wank, Williams and Neylan and the Chamber of Commerce. Mardell loved gardening, reading, traveling and talking daily to her wide circle of friends and family. Mardell’s intellectual and intriguing conversations will be missed. Her family wants to thank her long time care giver and friend, Julia Hernandez and the compassionate staff at Stanford Hospital.

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**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT and NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the City of Menlo Park, California is scheduled to review the following item:

**Architectural Control and Environmental Review/City of Menlo Park/600 Alomar Ave:** Proposal to demolish the existing 17,400-square-foot gymnasium and gymnastics building and construct a new 22,500-square-foot gymnastics facility (plus a 1,400-square-foot locker room expansion) at the location of the existing gymnasium and gymnastics building on the new 25,700-square-foot gymnasium in an area between the existing Recreation Center and Alomar Street, and associated site improvements located at the Civic Center Complex in the P-P (Public Facilities) zoning district.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and Initial Study (IS) prepared for the project identifies potentially significant environmental effects that can be mitigated to a less than significant level in the following categories: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Hydrology and Water Quality, Geology, Soils and Seismicity, and Noise. The DEIR identifies potentially significant environmental effects that are significant and unavoidable in the following category: Transportation, Circulation, and Parking. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires this notice to disclose whether any listed toxic sites are present at the location. The project location does not contain a toxic site pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

Copies of the Draft EIR will be on file for review at the City Library and available for distribution at the Community Development Depart- ment, Civic Center, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025, as of Thursday, April 9, 2009. The review period for the Draft EIR has been set from Thursday, April 9, 2009 through Tuesday, May 26, 2009. Written comments should be submitted to the City of Menlo Park no later than 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 26, 2009.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on Monday, May 4, 2009, 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge this item in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park during the public review period for the DEIR or at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Documents related to these items may be inspected by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Community Development Department, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call Nathan Scribner, Assistant Engineer, if there are any questions or comments on this item. He may be reached at 650-330-6751 or by email at nvscribner@menlopark.org. Up-to-date information on this project can be found on the project webpage: http://www.menlopark.org/departments/ pwx/cip/gym/index.html

Si usted necesita más información sobre este proyecto, por favor llame al 650-330-6702, y pregunta por un asistente que hable espa- ol.

DATED: April 2, 2009
Deanna Chow, Senior Planner PUBLISHED: April 8, 2009

If there are any questions, please call the Planning Division at (650) 330-6702.
Resident of the Woodside Elementary School District will receive a ballot in the mail this week, and we urge them to fill it out and vote yes to continue the parcel tax that supports their local school. The ballots for Measure C are due back by May 5; a two-thirds majority is needed for the tax to pass.

This important measure is not a tax increase — a yes vote will simply continue the current annual parcel tax now in place that is used to support the equivalent of three teachers at the school, but will expire at the end of June. The tax is assessed on single parcels of real estate, so a small lot and a 100-acre lot are assessed the same, as long they are in one parcel. Even adjoining properties under the same ownership are taxed as one parcel.

Woodside voters have always been supportive of their high-achieving elementary school, which received the prestigious National Blue Ribbon School Award in 1995 and was named a California Distinguished School in 1987, 1993 and 1997. Over the years, the school’s teachers, administrators and parents have continued to come up with a formula that inspires students to perform at the highest level, which is reflected in consistently high rankings in the statewide tests.

To retain that high achievement takes money, some of which comes from the parcel tax, or Measure C on the mail-in ballot. Unlike the $12 million bond measure passed in 2005, the parcel tax may be used only in the classrooms and not for buildings. The renewed parcel tax will remain in place until 2017 and will cost each property owner $242, which will be adjusted in subsequent years to reflect the Consumer Price Index, although it cannot increase more than 4 percent in any one year. Seniors 65 and over are exempt from the tax if they file for an application with the school district; those who filed in prior years will remain exempt.

There is no question that Woodside Elementary School is doing a superb job with the funds voters have entrusted to the district over the years via the parcel tax. Although the approximately $240,000 raised by the tax is only 3.5 percent of the district’s budget, it supports critically important items such as smaller class sizes, retaining teachers, and improving instruction in math, science, reading and writing.

Many other communities have shown their support for local schools by approving parcel taxes, including Menlo Park, Portola Valley, Los Altos, Hillsborough and Mountain View.

We urge Woodside residents to vote yes and promptly mail back their ballots. There is no better investment for a community than supporting local schools.
District likely to lose on charter school site fight

By Paul Goeld

On April 1, trustees of the Sequoia Union High School District approved a final offer of facilities for Everest Public High School and in doing so acted in opposition to the best interests of all the students and families they are elected to serve. The board’s offer for a cluster of portable buildings in East Palo Alto was prepared by district staff and knowingly included inaccurate and misleading information. The report conceals the fact that the district spent $3.9 million to purchase a Redwood City site intended for a charter school—a site that should have been considered for Everest. The board continues to rely on data about Summit Prep that district staff knows is false in a transparent attempt to perpetuate an unfounded perception—one they created—that the school is elitist. Finally, the board claims that if Everest does not locate in East Palo Alto, it will increase the racial isolation of schools east of U.S. Highway 101, communities where the district itself has not operated a school for over 30 years. The result is a clearly illegal offer that fails to meet the basic requirements of state law to provide a “reasonably equivalent” facility. Everest offered a counter proposal for a three-year solution in a needy part of Redwood City that would require no human resources from the district at half the cost of the district’s one-year solution. Although board members implored Everest to reconsider this final offer, neither staff nor trustees had the courtesy to consider Everest’s proposal.

Unfortunately for our community, the board hasn’t learned from past mistakes. In 2002, the district lost a similar Proposition 39 lawsuit to the Aurora Charter School, which resulted in the district financing Aurora’s facilities for the school’s entire existence. The trustees shouldn’t be surprised when the courts reject this equally insufficient offer. For the past 10 months, the Sequoia superintendent and trustees have argued that Everest’s educational program is unsound and designed to solve a problem that doesn’t exist. At their April 1 meeting, they argued that Everest must be located in East Palo Alto because it is such a high-quality program. “It’s a gift,” said one smiling trustee.

The state Board of Education unanimously overruled the district on the charter petition and all evidence points to a similar outcome in the courts with a Proposition 39 lawsuit. The expense of litigation and resolution will undoubtedly be more costly than reaching a reasonable agreement with Everest today. I suggest the trustees wake up—the day is coming when the courts reject this equally insufficient offer.

The best interest of our community is served if all students are engaged in schools that succeed in preparing them for prosperous futures. Rather than spending precious tax dollars trying to defeat perceived competition, the trustees should be investing in schools like Everest that are innovative, cost-effective models with a high degree of parent satisfaction and student success. Paul Goeld lives in Woodside, where he has served two terms on the Town Council and two terms as mayor.

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GUEST OPINION

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April 2009

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Gary Fujimoto, M.D., PAMF Travel Medicine

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