

**KEPLER'S BOOKSTORE** not out of the woods yet,  
but determined to keep doors open. Page 5

# The Almanac

FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

**After a long winter,**  
spring produce draws  
shoppers to Menlo  
Park's Farmers Market.  
**COVER, SECTION 2**

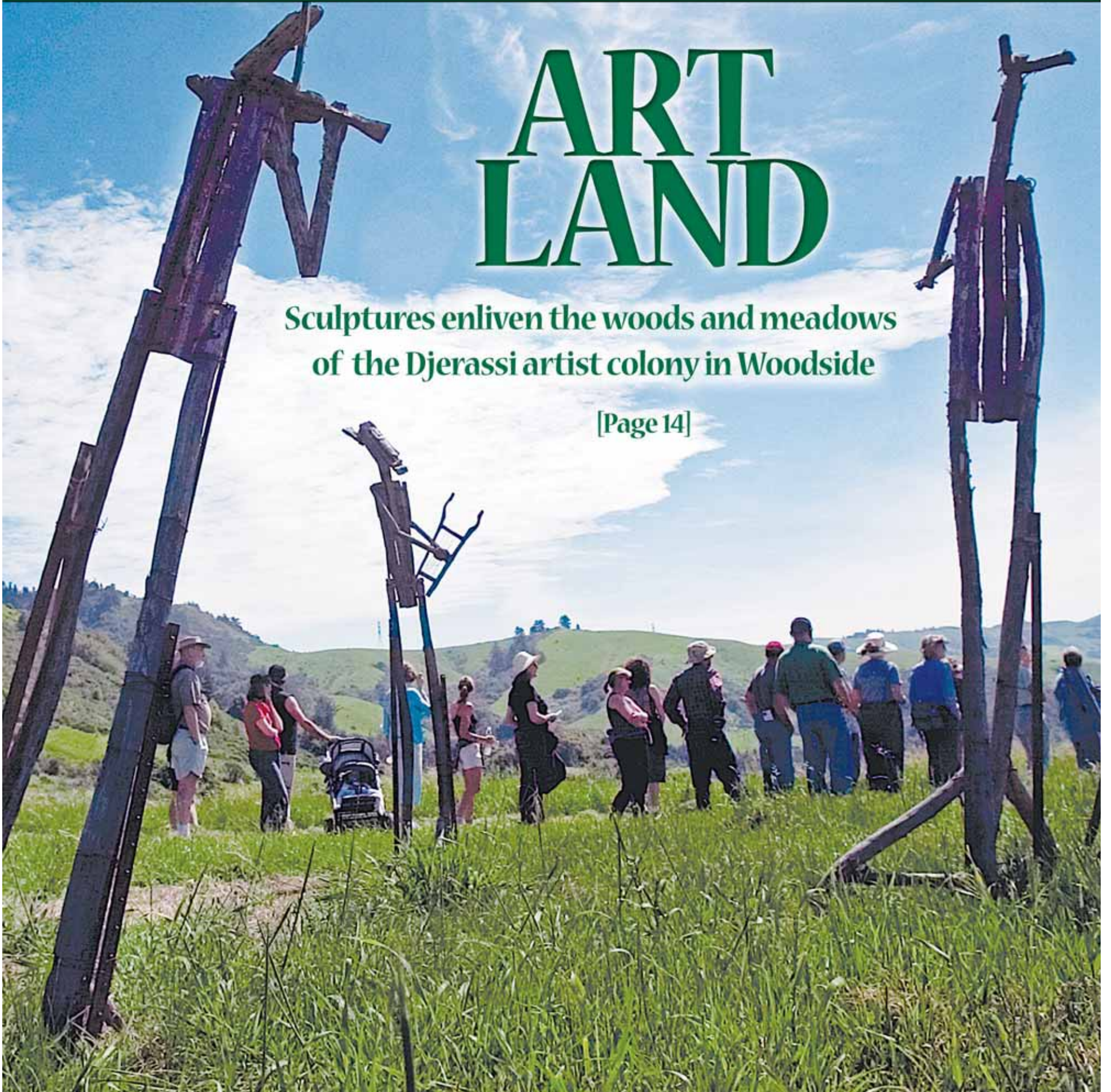
JUNE 7, 2006

www.AlmanacNews.com | VOL. 41 NO. 40

## ART LAND

**Sculptures enliven the woods and meadows  
of the Djerassi artist colony in Woodside**

[Page 14]



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# Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

## FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

### Building up

Construction of a two-story office building at 888 Santa Cruz Avenue in Menlo Park is under way. The 5,310-square-foot lot, adjacent to the former Dal Baffo restaurant, is one of two sites on Santa Cruz Avenue with building in progress. A one-story, 4,950-square-foot building is being altered at 771-773 Santa Cruz Ave. to accommodate two new shops.

### Menlo Park

■ Hastily formed child care advisory committee meets for first time. **Page 9**

### Portola Valley

■ Los Trancos to get sewers this year — weather permitting. **Page 13**  
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### Schools

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 ■ Menlo Park school foundation event raises record \$645,000. **Page 22**

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 ■ Local young sailors to compete in Koch Cup regatta. **Page 18**

### People

■ Menlo Park inventor James Ferguson considers the ups and downs of his career. **Page 7**

### Food & Drink

■ Fresh from the farm: After the winter rains, spring produce draws shoppers to Menlo Park's Farmers Market. **Cover, Section 2**

### On the cover

Hikers on a recent Djerassi artist colony tour of outdoor art in the Woodside hills appear to be serenaded by "Orpheus Coyote and Other Pieces," a work by sculptor William King. Tours are offered through October. Photo by Kainaz Amaria. See story, **Page 14**.

### CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

The Almanac offices are at **3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025**.

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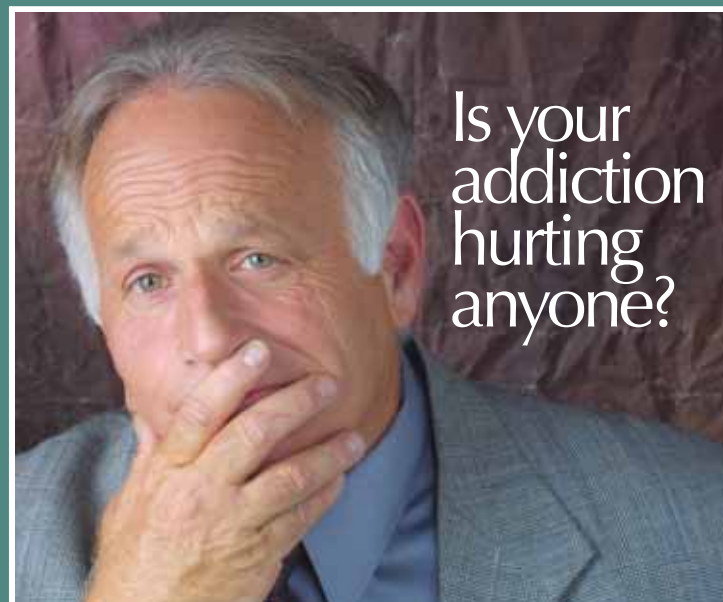
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*The Power Of Italian*

Italian cuisine has become so much a part of the American food experience that sometimes it's difficult to distinguish a difference. Italian foods are the foundation for hundreds of menu items. Latin and Cajun flavors are often brought into Italian-based dishes. How about fire-roasted-vegetable pasta served with chipotle-tomato sauce or a Louisiana-style sauce served over penne pasta? Some chefs take a famous Italian dish and create a new version, like replacing the chicken or veal in Marsala sauce with grilled pork chops. Others take an Italian food item and build a unique offering. Artichokes, for example, have found their way into dozens of spinach-artichoke dips, while Italian cheeses are blended into dressings and sauces.

Recent tests have shown that those red "love apples" are especially beneficial for the heart. They can be added to the growing list of vegetables and fruits that are great for us. We are well known for the freshest and finest in produce and fruit, as well as great meats, poultry, seafood, and just about all you need for that very special meal, even wines and liquors. Our staff is also well known for their outstanding personal service. Tight on time? Treat yourself to one of our gourmet prepared meals!

*P.S.: Some restaurants celebrate Italy by creating menus designed to "tour" a specific region.*

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- 2003 Firriato "Harmonium" Nero D'Avola, Sicily - \$43.99**  
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*(The above wines assort for a 10% case discount.)*



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### The not-so-friendly skies

It seems that there are some Atherton households taking full advantage of their telephones' speed dialing capabilities. Councilman Jerry Carlson, reporting to the City Council about a recent San Francisco Airport Noise Roundtable meeting, said of the more than 900 complaints about noisy jets received during the month of April, 39 percent of them came from Atherton.

Specifically, the more than 350 calls all came from three Atherton residents.

### Bear-ish on Stanford trail issue

Residents from the Ladera and Stanford Weekend Acres communities spent about an hour lambasting Stanford on May 23 over its proposal to pay for a new trail along Alpine Road as mitigation for campus expansion plans in Santa Clara County.

Residents called Stanford's proposal "smelly," "bait-and-switch," and an example of the university "weaseling out of its obligations."

After listening to all this, San Mateo County Supervisor Jerry Hill, who along with Supervisor Rich Gordon will be making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on the trail proposal, said: "I just wanted to say that, as a Cal grad, I found so many of your comments so refreshing."

### Tummy rumbles

Do a favor for your waistline and Second Harvest's bottom line: Skip lunch. On June 8, Second Harvest Food Bank officials are asking people to skip lunch and donate the money they would've spent to help hungry families in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The folks at Second Harvest are hoping that what people lose in calories, they will gain in empathy by seeing what it's like to spend an afternoon with a growling stomach.

"Even a donation of \$10.00 will provide 20 meals to people in need in our community," said Beth DeWolf, Second Harvest's spokeswoman.

To help, go to [ISkippedLunch.com](http://ISkippedLunch.com).

# Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Two cheers for Summit Prep

■ School board grants charter to high school, with reservations.

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The family of high schools in the Sequoia Union High School District may soon be larger by one. A unanimous vote by the Sequoia district's governing board on May 31 approved a two-year charter for Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City.

But there's a catch: The Sequoia district is likely to employ its oversight prerogatives and make at least two significant changes to Summit's routine, both of which are addressed in a memorandum of understanding that is still being negotiated and must be agreed to for the charter to take effect.

Sequoia district Superintendent Pat Gemma

told the Almanac he will recommend that the district board end Summit's program of admission preferences for freshmen whose parents contributed at least 30 hours of volunteer time — called founding families.

Mr. Gemma said that, according to a list provided by Summit Executive Director Diane Tavenner, about 70 percent of the founding families live in Woodside, Portola Valley, Menlo Park and Atherton.

In the freshman classes for 2007 and 2008, more than 50 of the 100 places were reserved each year for founding family children — numbers that "shocked" him, Mr. Gemma said. Ending the program would end questions about whether the school is "elitist," he said.

The board is likely to end the founding family preferences, board President Gordon Lewin said. "A lottery is a lottery," he told the Almanac, referring to the practice charter schools use for choosing freshmen when applicants

outnumber available seats.

Mr. Gemma said he will also ask the board to require Summit to show evidence of enrolling freshmen with low academic achievement — defined as far-below-basic and below-basic.

He said he is open to ideas on how to achieve this goal. If a lottery is necessary to seat a freshman class, for example, Summit might create a separate lottery for applicants with low test scores, he said.

Mr. Lewin said all five board members consider the enrolling of low-achieving students an important component of Summit's charter.

Ms. Tavenner was not available for comments on these points by press time.

### A two-year test

Summit's petition asked for a five-year charter and provided the evidence to justify it,

See **CHARTER**, page 8



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

**Jim King**, left, considers a book in the teaching and education section while Chris Kay looks for a Chinese language book at Kepler's bookstore last week.

## Kepler's not yet 'out of the woods'

Menlo Park bookstore still facing hardships, but determined to keep its doors open

By Rory Brown

Almanac Staff Writer

When Kepler's Books and Magazines in Menlo Park abruptly closed last August, the community took action — investors pledged more than \$500,000; volunteers donated thousands of hours; and the store reopened October 7.

It seemed like a fairy tale ending when owner Clark Kepler swung the store's doors back open, but the store's woes are far from over.

About eight months after the store reopened, Kepler's is still facing the hardships that forced Mr. Kepler to close the store last

year — lagging first-quarter sales and increased competition from franchise and online bookstores.

And as the store struggles to emerge as a successful business, other independent vendors are fading away.

Cody's Books is closing its famed Berkeley store after 43 years of business, and a Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books, based in San Francisco's Opera Plaza for 24 years, is up for sale.

With the recent announcement that Starbucks may be selling books as soon as Christmas, the independent bookselling community is beset with uncertainty.

But Kepler's has a new business

model, the store is sticking to it, and other booksellers are watching with interest.

The store has a five-member board of directors, a "patron's circle" of investors, a membership program and a committed group of volunteers. The investors own 70 percent of the company, and Mr. Kepler is the largest shareholder, with 30 percent of the company's shares.

"This industry really has a big question mark hanging over its head right now," Mr. Kepler said. "But we're looking, on a macro level, at a vision of the future, and figuring out what people want. We're not out of the woods, but we're not at a dire state. We're better off today than we were last year."

Mr. Kepler said he spent a large

portion of a recent trip to a booksellers' convention in Washington, D.C., talking to other booksellers about the business model behind Kepler's.

"People are looking to us, and seeing what we're doing," he said. "If the model we've created is successful, others may give it a try."

The resurrection and reshaping of the store has already won the interest of one person — a local film maker shooting a documentary for KQED about Kepler's, Cody's Books and the state of independent booksellers.

### Fighting convenience

It's still not clear how successful the new Kepler's business model is, as sales drooped early this year

See **KEPLER'S**, page 8



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- For Boys – July 12 & 19

## \* SIBLING PREPARATION

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- Saturday, June 24

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# A man of ideas is honored

A Menlo Park inventor considers the ups and downs of his career

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

In a list of the 10 oldest professions, inventors should surely have a place. They've been among us for centuries, coming up with ideas and turning them into objects, some of them welcome — the tea pot, shoes, eyeglasses — while others, such as the default ring of a cell phone, not so much.

Inventors thrive in Silicon Valley, including in Menlo Park, where James L. Ferguson, the holder of some 130 U.S. patents and 500 foreign patents, recently received the 2006 Lemelson-MIT Prize in honor of his career as an inventor.

Mr. Ferguson is best known for his invention of the liquid crystal display, that ubiquitous flat screen now found on many devices, including cell phones, iPods, laptop computers and flat-panel TVs, not to mention digital watches.

"You always have a lot of ideas," Mr. Ferguson told the Almanac in a recent interview from his pleasant backyard. "One of the things I do is try to get rid of the ideas that don't go anywhere."

Indeed, his use of a liquid crystal display on a digital watch in 1970 passed that test: It went somewhere. In 2003, 1.7 billion LCDs were made, said Mr. Ferguson, yielding \$40 billion in revenues for manufacturers and \$200 billion for retailers.

This invention may make a great deal of money for some people, but Mr. Ferguson has not and will not be among them. His patent rights expired in 1990, before the technology took off. On that day, he said, he wore a black armband to protest the 20-year term of patent rights, a term that is common throughout the developed world.

What royalties he did receive "provided an education for my children and a good living," he said.

Mr. Ferguson, now 72, lives in Menlo Park with his wife Dora. The couple have four grown children, all of whom have science backgrounds.

## A rural start

The son of a farmer/postmaster and a teacher, Mr. Ferguson was the youngest of four children and grew up in

central Missouri in the 1930s and 1940s. For many years, their home had neither running water nor electricity, he said.

He attended a one-room school and the family lived off the fruits of their land. In a foreshadowing of things to come, he did find time to experiment with rockets and chemicals, some of which he acquired at high school and some through his part-time job in a pharmacy, he said.

He won a partial scholarship to the University of Missouri, graduated with a bachelor's degree in physics, and went to work for Westinghouse. Army service interrupted his career, but he profited by learning some "real rocket science" in training on Nike Ajax anti-aircraft missiles.

Returning to Westinghouse in 1956, he was invited to join the exclusive Westinghouse Research Laboratories in Pittsburgh, where he spent 10 years.

At Westinghouse, he was the first to use liquid crystals to measure temperature change. Two resulting products — a

*'You always have a lot of ideas. One of the things I do is try to get rid of the ideas that don't go anywhere.'*

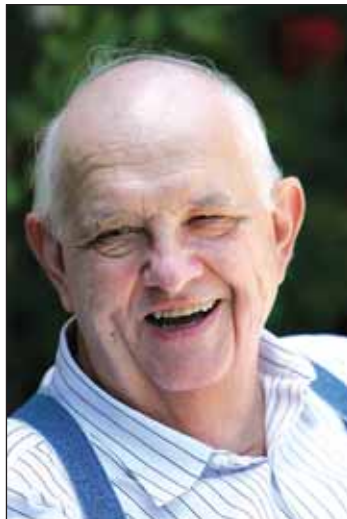
JAMES FERGASON

forehead thermometer and a "mood" ring that changes color depending on skin temperature — represent the range of uses of some of his ideas.

Mr. Ferguson started five companies over his career, including Menlo Park-based Ferguson Patent Properties LLC. Inventions to his credit include a high-technology welding helmet and smart windows that can become opaque with the flip of a switch.

## An inventor's trials

Inventors have long been important to the United States. Article 1 of the Constitution grants Congress the authority to "promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

**Menlo Park inventor** James L. Ferguson is the 2006 winner of the Lemelson-MIT Prize, in part for his invention of the liquid crystal display used in cell phones and flat-screen TVs.

their respective writings and discoveries."

Such rights led to rapid technological advances in the United States, outpacing other countries in the 18th and 19th centuries, said Mr. Ferguson. But rights limitations, as applied to inventors, are a thorn in his side.

"I understand very well the reasons for (limited rights) being the case," he said. "It's a compromise. You don't want to hold back progress. Those useful arts become part of everybody's toolbox." But, he added, "it takes a long time for some patents to reach maturity."

Liquid crystal displays, for example, now generate billions of dollars in revenues and the technology has yet to peak, and Mr. Ferguson has no residual rights.

"That's why I look at these guys with copyrights with some jealousy," he said. In 1790, a copyright lasted 14 years with one 14-year extension. Congress has since extended the term several times; in 1998, the term became the life of the author plus 70 years.

But even if patent rights lasted longer, turning an invention into money is no slam dunk. A head for business is critical, said Mr. Ferguson, adding: "If you make the best thing on earth, it's no matter how good it is if you only sell one."

One way to sell more than one is by licensing an invention to a corporation. Mr. Ferguson said he has been approached several times, sometimes with less than honorable intentions.

See **INVENTOR**, page 8

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



### When is the best time to buy?

**Q:** Considering the rate that property is going up, is this the right time to buy a home? If it is, how can I speed up the process once I find the right house? — A.P.

**A:** The number one question I hear from buyers is, "when is the best time to buy?"

If you truly desire a home of your own consider buying NOW! Interest rates are still very low and there are some very nice properties on the market. Considering future growth projections, home prices should continue to increase. So, good home buys are being made today by those ready, willing, and able to take advantage of the unique circumstances and growth potential

offered in today's real estate market.

The best way to speed up the process is to consult your Realtor. An experienced agent or broker can help with the important first step, which is getting you pre-qualified. This helps the agent figure out exactly the type and price range of home you require. Having a pre-approved buyer also gives your agent an enormous negotiating advantage when presenting an offer.

A seller is more likely to accept an offer if they are confident there won't be any delays or problems with the financing. Being pre-qualified also allows your agent to pinpoint the best homes that meet your specific requirements.

For answers to any questions you may have on real estate, you may e-mail me at [gdarke@apr.com](mailto:gdarke@apr.com) or call 462-1111, Alain Pinel Realtors. I also offer a free market analysis of your property.

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# Summit Prep

## CHARTER

continued from page 5

said Ms. Tavenner. Asked about the two-year charter, she replied: "Well obviously ... I'm excited that the charter was approved and we'll be able to continue doing what we're doing. I'm hopeful that it will be a good relationship with the district."

"I thought (a two-year charter) was appropriate," said Mr. Lewin, noting that a new school never gets a six-year accreditation the first time around.

The board's decision followed a critical district staff report. Its findings, several of which are disputed by Summit, include charges that the school may not be living up to the spirit of charter school law by not enrolling enough students with low academic potential.

### Strengths, weaknesses

Summit's published 2005 state academic performance rating — 864 on a scale of 200 to 1,000

— exceeded the ratings of all high schools in the Sequoia district. That includes Menlo-Atherton and Woodside, which scored 728 and 720 respectively.

In its staff report, the Sequoia district cites 2005 test data showing no Summit sophomore or junior listed as far-below-basic in English language arts, and only 3 percent of students fell into the below-basic category. Seventy percent of Summit sophomores and juniors were in the top two categories: proficient and advanced.

But Ms. Tavenner noted that Sequoia did not cite Summit's math test data, in which 58 percent of sophomores scored in the basic category or below, with 11 percent classified as far-below-basic.

Algebra 1 test scores published by the state for Sequoia district sophomores in 2004-05 show about 85 percent categorized as basic or below, including 7 percent as far-below-basic.

The comparison is apples and oranges, said Mr. Gemma, since



**Summit Preparatory Charter** High School's Diane Tavenner, left, is trying to work out details with the Sequoia high school district for her school's charter. District board President Gordon Lewin, middle, and Superintendent Pat Gemma, right, say they want at least two changes made to Summit enrollment policies.



Summit scores are for the geometry test, which is based on an understanding of algebra.

### Charter school costs

By granting Summit a charter, the Sequoia district takes on the responsibility of paying \$6,200 per student — the so-called revenue limit — to fund the school's annual operating costs.

A full enrollment of 400 students in grades 9-12 would mean a charge of about \$2.5 million to

the district, a figure that would rise if the state increases the revenue limit.

The state paid Summit's revenue limits for the past three years because the school's first charter came from a Tuolumne County district that is poorer in property tax revenues than Sequoia and receives state subsidies. A recent state law requires schools to seek charters close to home.

Sequoia may pay substantially

less than the revenue limit for each of the 37 current Summit students who live outside the district.

Mr. Lewin said the district's position is that Summit will have to seek funding from students' home districts, with Sequoia paying half the difference between what Summit obtains and the revenue limit.

Ms. Tavenner said the school's attorney is studying the proposal to ensure that it "meets with the law and is appropriate." ■

# Not out of the woods

## KEPLER'S

continued from page 5

due to a lack of big-selling titles and a lot of rain, Mr. Kepler said.

Plus, ongoing competition from online and franchise stores continues to take its toll on the bookselling community.

"Our customers are satisfied, but people are buying an extra book a year on the Internet, or an extra book a year at Costco or Target," said Anne Banta, the store's chief marketing officer. "We have to fight convenience."

Sales were up in April, and have increased steadily through May, but Ms. Banta is taking major steps to give people more reasons to come to the store.

Kepler's will feature local authors this summer, and will periodically offer live music. Plus, the store is forming partnerships with other groups, such as the Silicon Valley Commonwealth Club and the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, to host big-name

author events.

Ms. Banta said she sent out requests for 157 authors to come to the store for readings or book signings this fall — a list that includes former president Jimmy Carter, cooking show host Rachel Ray, children's author Lemony Snickett and football superstar Terrell Owens.

"We're going for the biggest and best authors we can get," Ms. Banta said.

She added that responses to her requests should come before July 1.

Kepler's lost about two-thirds of its scheduled winter author events when the store closed in August, she said.

### Aiming high

Even though Kepler's is still regaining the footing it lost with the August closure, and Mr. Kepler and Ms. Banta are still figuring out how to make the store more successful, their expectations remain high.

About 2,000 people have signed

up for the Kepler's membership program since the store reopened in October, but Ms. Banta said she's shooting for 4,000 by this fall.

That number includes current members who will have to renew their commitment, she said.

She added that some of the success of the membership program will hinge on a September 9 event, when Kepler's will host a day of events, including a tent of local authors, storytelling for children, and a full-blown dinner for more than 200 people with an author at each table.

The store is also looking to create an online bookselling system that's more advanced and easier to use than those used by other booksellers.

Only 1 percent of the store's revenue came from online sales before the store closed, but Mr. Kepler said that allowing customers to buy books through the Web site is a technique the store "almost has to do."

"This is still a fragile setting," he said. "We have to be ready for what's developing, and looking at what customers want." ■

"Hindsight is always 100 percent better than foresight," he noted. "That's one of the things you're always fighting. 'Oh, that's so simple,' (they say). Well, it wasn't so simple when we started."

Inventors, he said, get a bad rap with labels such as "patent troll" — implying that inventors sit on ideas and pounce when someone tries to use them.

The recipe for a successful prod-

uct includes research, repeated trials, and working knowledge, he said. "The thing that people don't seem to understand is that invention is not free. There's more to it than just the idea."

"I think the inventor has a real role to play, and you keep hearing that the inventor is anti-business and that sort of thing, and nothing could be further from the truth." ■



Photo by Lynne Larson

## Catapult to victory

Latin scholars, from left, Phil Arcuni, Robbie Eaton and Sarah Charley, students at Menlo-Atherton High School, show off a catapult they constructed for a recent Junior Classical League Convention in Orinda. Some 1,200 Latin students from throughout California competed in athletic, academic and artistic events, ranging from Gregorian chants to gladiatorial games. M-A's Latin Bears won third place in the small schools division.

## INVENTOR

continued from page 7

Some corporations are "scrupulously honest," while others apply muscle, as in: "I'm bigger than you and I can litigate you into the ground," he said.

He has twice successfully defended patents in court and has had to deal with claims that his ideas were obvious, he said.

# Hastily formed child care advisory committee meets

■ Members caution against moving too quickly if city changes child care provider.

By Renee Batti  
Almanac News Editor

## ■ MENLO PARK

If the city of Menlo Park privatizes its Burgess child care programs, it would be “nuts” to transfer operation of the programs to a private contractor before May 2007.

That’s the consensus of a citizen task force formed to advise the City Council on the matter, a conclusion reached when the task force met for the first time on May 31.

At the insistence of the council majority, the city is fast-tracking the process that could lead to privatizing its preschool and after-school programs, except for those in Belle Haven, leaving open the possibility that a new, private operator could be in place by next January.

“That’s nuts,” said task force member Jennifer Lombardi, whose children are not enrolled in the city’s programs.

“If their first priority is the child, they’re not going to (change operators in) January,” she said during last week’s meeting — a sentiment shared by others on the city-appointed panel called the Child Care RFP Review Committee.

Such a quick transfer, they agreed, would be too unsettling for the children, and too disruptive to a program designed to provide a stable and sound educational environment for the 18-month to 11-year-old participants.

The task force was formed to help city staff put together an effective “request for proposals” — or RFP — to send out to child care providers interested in taking over the city’s programs now being operated out of the new, \$3.4 million Menlo Children’s Center. The city is expected to submit a proposal of its own to show it can compete with private bidders.

The task force is also supposed to help review the providers submitting proposals, with members sitting in on the interviews, said Assistant City Manager Audrey Seymour.

At its first meeting last week, the task force reviewed Ms. Seymour’s draft RFP.

Although the council has not decided to privatize the child

care programs, at least two members of the council majority — councilwomen Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc — have indicated they’d like to see the programs privately operated.

City staff had originally estimated that the process required to study the issue and, possibly, turn over the programs to a private provider would be lengthy, making it likely that no decision would be made until after the November election. But the council majority in May pushed a timeline that could mean negotiations with a private contractor could begin in September, and privatization of the services could occur by January.

*‘If their first priority is the child, they’re not going to (change operators in) January.’*

JENNIFER LOMBARDI, MEMBER  
CHILD CARE RFP  
REVIEW COMMITTEE

The seats of the council’s majority members — Nicholas Jellins, Ms. Winkler and Ms. Duboc — are up for election in November.

Council members Kelly Ferguson and Andy Cohen tried unsuccessfully to persuade their colleagues to slow down and wait for the results of a study the council commissioned to assess how efficiently the city’s programs are run.

### On the fast track

The emphasis on speeding up the process of sending out RFPs and reviewing potential child care services operators — a fast-track process strongly pushed by council members Winkler and Duboc and endorsed by Mayor Jellins — appears to be having consequences.

One is that Ms. Seymour was unable to find all nine members to sit on the task force in time for its first meeting last week. By Tuesday morn-

ing, only seven members had been named. Later in the day, an eighth member had been appointed, but the final member was yet to be named by the Almanac’s press time.

Another problem was that Ms. Seymour was unable to complete the RFP draft that was to be reviewed on May 31 until the day before, giving task force members little time to review the 10-page document.

“Being prepared for this meeting was a challenge for me” because of the Memorial Day weekend and other responsibilities she needed to tend to, Ms. Seymour said.

The fast-track process also may mean that a number of task force members will miss the critical August meetings at which firms submitting proposals will be discussed, then interviewed. Several task force members said they will be out of town that month — traditionally a time when many people go on vacation.

### Members

Members of the task force, as of late last week, are:

■ Kristen Anderson, Redwood City’s child care coordinator, chosen by city staff.

■ John Boyle, a Menlo Park Budget Advisory Committee member, chosen by random drawing from among BAC members volunteering for the task force.

■ Sally Cadigan, former Child Care Coordinating Council resource and referral director, chosen by city staff.

■ Richard Cline, Parks and Recreation Commission member, chosen by his commission colleagues.

■ Mike Gardner, parent of a Menlo Children’s Center (MCC) preschool student, chosen by random drawing from among MCC parents volunteering for the task force.

■ Kirsten Keith, parent of a Burgess school-age student, chosen by random drawing from among program parents volunteering for the task force.

■ Scott Leslie, supervisor of the city of Pacifica’s Child Care Services, chosen by city staff.

■ Jennifer Lombardi, parent of a preschool child and a school-age child who are in programs other than Menlo Park’s, chosen by city staff. ■

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# First-quarter home sales slower, but it's still a seller's market

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

There's more evidence that the housing market is cooling off.

According to a survey by Prudential California Realty, single-family homes are staying on the market longer, and the number of homes sold is down from last year, based on a comparison of activity in the first quarters of 2006 and 2005.

That's not to say that bargain hunters and first-time homebuyers are going to find any great deals. Prices in most cities are still going up, although in some cases, not by very much.

Atherton, for example, saw only a 1 percent increase in median price — \$3.05 million — based on the sale of 11 homes in the first three months of 2006. That's half as many homes as were sold in 2005, and the houses spent an average of 51 days on the market before selling, five more than during the same period last year.

In Woodside, homes took an average of 75 days to sell, 17 days longer than in 2005. However, the median price of \$2.15 million was up 6 percent over last year, and the number of sales (18) was down only 10 percent from 2005.

In Portola Valley, the only thing that was up was the number of days houses spent on the market — 49 days this year,

City	Units Sold Q1/06	Units Sold Q1/05	% Change	Avg. DOM Q1/06	Avg. DOM Q1/05	Change 06/05 (days)	Median Price Q1/06	Median Price Q1/05	% Change
Atherton	11	22	-50	51	46	+5	\$3.05 million	\$3.03 million	+1
Menlo Park	74	101	-27	35	24	+11	\$1.4 million	\$1.24 million	+13
Portola Valley	12	19	-37	49	46	+3	\$1.8 million	\$2.1 million	-14
Woodside	18	20	-10	75	58	+17	\$2.15 million	\$2.02 million	+6

DOM = Days on market  
Data sourced from Multiple Listing Services. All percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

**Local home sales** from the first quarter of 2006 are markedly slower than in the first quarter of 2005, according to a Prudential California Realty survey.

compared with 46 days last year.

The median price of \$1.8 million represents a 14 percent drop from last year, based on data from the 12 homes that were sold. During the first quarter of 2005, 19 homes sold with a median price of \$2.1 million.

Menlo Park showed the biggest gain in median price — \$1.4 million, a 13 percent increase from the 2005 median of \$1.24 million. Seventy-four homes sold during the first quarter of 2006, down from 101 homes sold in 2005's first quarter. The average number of days on the market was 35 this year, compared with 24 days last year.

Nevertheless, the housing market in San Mateo County remains firmly in the seller's favor, according to John Finnegan, the broker/owner of the four Prudential California Realty offices in the county.

However, he said, the softening of the market is encouraging for buyers.

"The market is rebalancing and as it stands, there are increasing opportunities for buyers," Mr. Finnegan said in a press release. "Last year the real estate market was moving too fast and we are now seeing signs of a slower and healthier market."

While the sale of single-family homes is slowing, the condominium market in San Mateo County appears to be thriving. The number of condos sold in the first quarter of 2006 was up 12 percent over the same time period last year, and the median price rose 7 percent to \$512,000.

However, even condos are taking longer to sell, spending an average of 38 days on the market this year, as opposed to 19 days on the market last year.

# Sun Micro to regroup in Menlo Park, Santa Clara

Consolidation is under way at Santa Clara-based Sun Microsystems. The computer server manufacturer announced May 31 that it close its leased facilities in Sunnyvale and cut 4,000 to 5,000 jobs — 11 to 13 percent — from its worldwide workforce of 37,500.

The layoffs are expected to reduce costs by \$480 million to \$590 million.

The move is the latest in a series of news-making steps for Sun, which has lost money for the past three years, according to national media reports. In early May, the company announced it was selling its East Bay complex in Newark and relocating about 2,300 employees to offices on the west side of the Bay, including in Menlo Park.

In April, Sun founder and Portola Valley resident Scott McNealy handed off the reins of chief executive officer to company president Jonathan Schwartz. Mr. McNealy kept his seat as chairman of the board of directors.

utive officer to company president Jonathan Schwartz. Mr. McNealy kept his seat as chairman of the board of directors.

The company is reinventing itself from a position of strength, said Mr. Schwartz in a statement. Sun's revenues are up compared with the third quarter last year, the company has \$4.4 billion in cash, and it has strong relationships with "virtually every Fortune 1000 company," he said.

"We've worked hard to reinvent the entirety of Sun's product line, from software to systems, storage and services," he said. "It's on that rebuilt foundation that we are reinventing our business model on a far simpler base and focusing our energies on the automation, energy efficiency and network innovation at the heart of our technology leadership."

# New finance officer named

The new chief financial officer for the San Mateo County Office of Education is Theresa Parsons, a career administrator who, since January, has held the finance position as an interim appointment.

County Superintendent of Schools Jean Holbrook named Ms. Parsons on May 17, according to a statement.

Ms. Parsons, 54, came to the county Office of Education in 2003 as a business services

administrator following education-related positions in San Joaquin County — as a budget director, a budget analyst, a business manager and an accounting specialist, the statement said.

In her new role, she will monitor, assist, advise and act as a liaison to the state on financial matters for the 23 school districts, 15 charter schools and the community college district in the county.

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Courtesy PHS officer Bill Brissenden

**June Rodgers**, wearing a red cap, gives her dog Raider a warm welcome after Peninsula Humane Society officer Julie Nasevicius rescued him from the mud at Bayfront Park, with help from Menlo Park firefighters and their airboat.

## PHS officer, fire airboat crew rescue dog stuck in the mud

After taking a walk at Bayfront Park in Menlo Park, June Rodgers' dog Raider pulled a runner.

As they were leaving around 11:30 a.m. on Friday, June 2, the elderly dog bolted from the car, apparently deciding to take a swim in the slough, and quickly disappeared from sight, said Menlo Park police Sgt. Sharon Kaufman.

Since Raider, 12, is a bit hard of hearing and is losing his eye-

sight as well, Peninsula Humane Society officer Julie Nasevicius was called in to help find and rescue the dog from the thick, sticky low-tide mud, said PHS vice president Scott Delucchi.

"She belly-crawled for about half a mile, and used a net to pull herself along, to give herself some more traction in the mud," he said.

It took a grueling two hours to reach Raider, who thankfully

stayed put and didn't panic or become aggressive, he said. A rescue team from the Menlo Park Fire Protection District arrived by airboat to ferry Ms. Nasevicius and Raider, who were both exhausted from the ordeal, back to dry land.

Sgt. Kaufman said that Raider was unharmed, and happily reunited with Ms. Rodgers.

"Julie's fine, but she was covered in mud from head to toe," Mr. Delucchi said.

"It was a pretty dramatic rescue," but "our officers do things that are more dangerous than that all the time," he said.

## Friday night event is one for the cats

Buddy, can you spare a dime to help out a cool cat who's down on his luck?

The Pavilion at Holbrook-Palmer Park in Atherton is the setting for a Friday, June 9, benefit for the Nine Lives Foundation, a nonprofit veterinary hospital and no-kill shelter for cats in Redwood City.

"A Hot Summer Night for Cool Cats" features a silent auction and raffle, wine and hors d'oeuvres, and live entertainment from 6 to 10 p.m. Tickets are \$45, or \$20 for young adults. For information, call 368-1365 or go to [ninelivesfoundation.org](http://ninelivesfoundation.org).

### Back to the '50s

Members of Woodside's History Committee are looking for items from the 1950s, especially Woodside in the '50s, to use in a July exhibit about the town's 1956 incorporation.

What's wanted? Anything that indicates what life was like in the town 50 years ago — clothing, records, household items, newspapers and photographs. Items will be returned after the exhibit closes, committee members promise.

The exhibit will be in the town's museum, the century-old Mathisen farmhouse at Town Center. For information on how to contribute to the exhibit, call the museum at 851-1294 or Town Hall at 851-6790.

### Bus passes for youth on sale

For kids who want summer

### NOTEBOOK

freedom without busting a budget, the SamTrans summer youth pass may do the trick.

For \$35 dollars, kids under 18 can ride SamTrans buses all summer long. The deeply discounted "S'UP" entitles its holders to unlimited rides from June 1 to August 31. That's 60 percent cheaper than three monthly youth passes at \$29 each.

And it includes a free ring to attach the pass to a purse, belt or backpack.

Passes will be on sale until July 15 at all Safeway stores in the county, nearly 100 SamTrans pass sales offices, and at SamTrans headquarters, 1250 San Carlos Ave. in San Carlos.

For an order form, or to find the location of a pass sales outlet, call SamTrans at 1-800-660-4287; or go to [samtrans.com](http://samtrans.com).

### Stanford center offers free diabetes workshops

People 18 years and older with Type 2 diabetes can sign up for a six-week diabetes workshop offered as part of a Stanford University study.

Two diabetes self-management workshops are set to begin on June 9, from 9:30 to noon, in Redwood City; and June 17, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Palo Alto.

Offered by the Stanford Patient Education Research Center, the workshops will focus on managing symptoms of diabetes, avoiding or delaying complications, exercise and healthful eating.

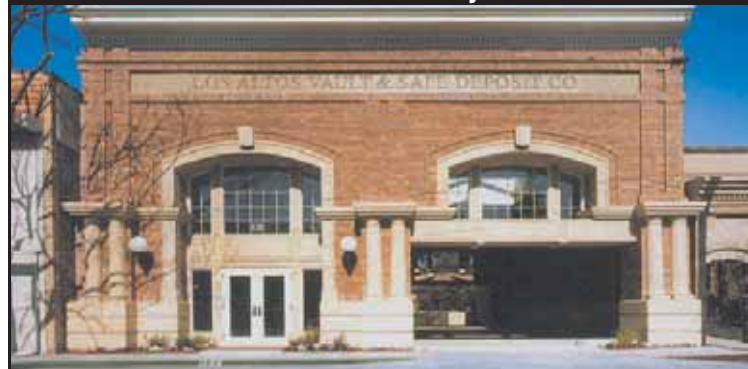
For more information or to register, call the Stanford center at 1-800-366-2624.

### Happy trails

Partygoers at the Mounted Patrol's family-oriented 2005 New Year's Eve party helped raise \$891 in donations, which was recently presented to the Woodside Trails Committee. The party, which drew 100 local equestrians, neighbors and their children, provided a learning opportunity about the Trails Committee's work to improve the town's system of equestrian and pedestrian trails.

The Mounted Patrol of San Mateo County Foundation engages in charitable works that benefit horsemanship, youth, the disabled and emergency services. It was formed in 2002 by a unanimous vote of the members of the Mounted Patrol.

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# Los Trancos to get sewers this year — weather permitting

By Marion Softky

Almanac Staff Writer

There's good news and bad news for residents of Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde, squeezed in the hills south of Portola Valley.

The bad news is that, starting in August, heavy machinery will invade their narrow winding

roads to bring sewers to the lower part of the old summer home community, where lots are small and septic tanks failing.

The good news is that 62 homes should connect to sewers before the end of the year — if the weather gods smile.

The board of the West Bay Sanitary District on May 17 awarded the contract to the low

bidder, JMB Construction Company of South San Francisco.

There are two bids, depending on which route the district runs the line at the lower end of the project. The cost would be \$2.02 million if Portola Valley gives permission to run a gravity line from Los Trancos Road, across some town open space, to the foot of Carmel Way.

If the town doesn't give that permission, the cost would jump to \$2.03 million to bring

the line out Los Trancos Road; in that case sewage would be pumped up Carmel Way to the main line.

So far the district hasn't heard from the county or the town, said General Manager Tim Clayton.

Arrival of sewers will culminate almost a decade of efforts by residents to bring modern sewers to the community. Last year the state approved a bond issue that will allow participants to pay for the sewers through assessments

on their properties.

So far 62 property owners have paid into the assessment district and will be connected, Mr. Clayton said. A total of 136 parcels in the lower part of Los Trancos Woods, below Lake Road, can connect if they want to.

Mr. Clayton expects construction to begin in about two months. "I hope we can get it done in 90 to 120 days, if the weather is good to us," he said. ■

## No development plan in works for Runnymede sculpture farm

Something that looks a lot like a four-parcel subdivision of the Runnymede Sculpture Farm is on the June 7 Woodside Planning Commission agenda.

However, Woodside officials say there are no plans afoot to develop the 107-acre property or build new homes there.

The Rosekrans family owns the picturesque property, which includes the magnificent Spreckels barn and a collection of eye-catching sculptures, just west of Interstate 280 near the Farm Hill Boulevard exit. The sculpture farm is open occasionally for private tours, fundraising events, and recently, the town of

Woodside's Earth & Art Day.

The proposed lot-line adjustment aims to create four legal parcels out of two conforming and two nonconforming lots, said Woodside Planning Director Hope Sullivan. Two of the existing lots are much smaller than the five-acre minimum called for in the zoning ordinance.

If approved, the lots will range in size from 17.8 acres to 28.9 acres. The rejiggering of boundary lines is intended for estate-planning purposes, she said.

Adolph Rosekrans was unavailable for comment by the Almanac's press deadline.

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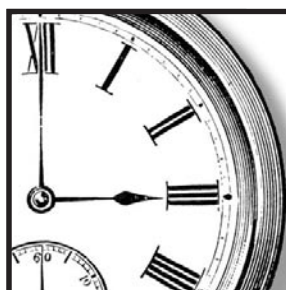


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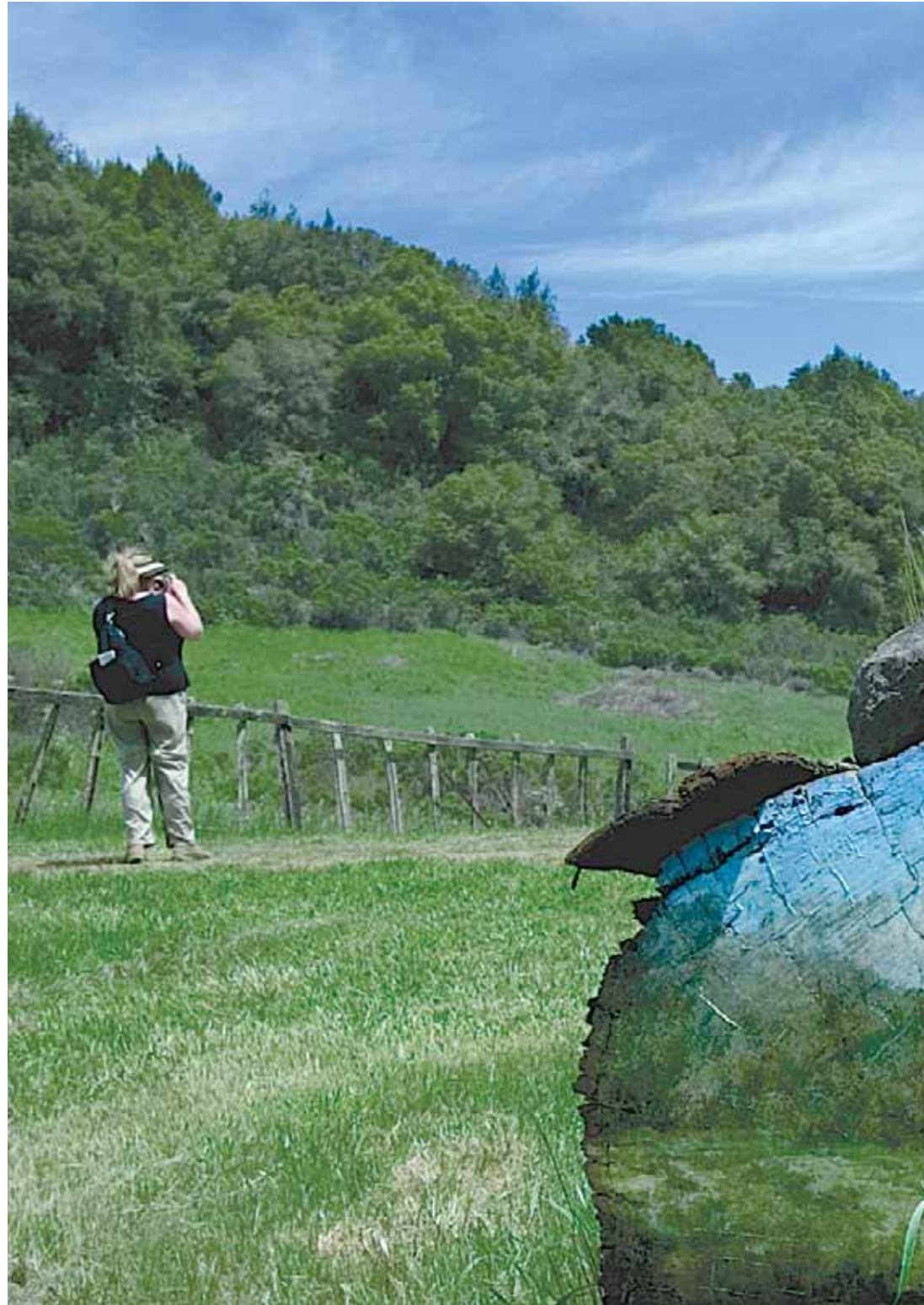


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▲ “Vanishing Ship,” above, by John Roloff, tips from the ground near Harrington Creek.



# ON the TRAIL of ART

**Djerassi resident artists work with nature to create outdoor sculpture in the Woodside hills, and hikers are invited to have a look**

**I**t was a picture-perfect day in May when a group of about a dozen art and nature lovers trekked into the hills of the Djerassi artist colony in Woodside. The sun offered solace to winter-weary hikers, and wisps of feathery white cloud were painted on an intense blue sky.

The hikers had set out on a free “Walk in the Wild” sculpture tour, and were on the trail of about 20 pieces

of outdoor artworks created over the years by participants in the Djerassi Resident Artists Program.

Guides Lauren DiCioccio and Debbie Steffin provided a running narrative of the history and context of the artwork encountered along the way, answering questions and inviting hikers to approach the artwork from different viewpoints — both literally and figuratively.

The artwork found in the woods and clearings of the spacious grounds represents a range of styles and themes, from the whimsical “Orpheus Coyote and Other Pieces” by William King — a grouping of elongated figures in a meadow, riffing on musical instruments — to “Untitled Landscape” by Alison Moritsugu, a painting in

See **ON THE TRAIL OF ART**, page 16



**COVER STORY** ☆ **Photos by KAINAZ AMARIA** ☆ **Story by RENEE BATTI**



Clockwise from above, a wood nymph from a series of "Faeries" by Derek Jackson gazes from a tree trunk; guide Debbie Steffin, left, keeps hikers informed — and often amused — on the tour; "Dialog" by Roland Mayer is a striking presence in a vast clearing; "Untitled Landscape" by Alison Moritsugu is painted on the end of a log, echoing the vista before it.



“From Palo Cagao to Palo Alto,” at right, by Cuban artist Liset Castillo imposes an image of a house in a dilapidated area of Havana upon the local landscape. ▶

Below and bottom left, hikers trek the trails and hills of the Djerassi artist colony; bottom, right, a segment of “El Nino” by Walter Robinson is an example of the outdoor art’s inevitable return to the land: The weathered look of the sculpted bay tree branch — and the fungi that have attached themselves — make the sculpture appear natural rather than man-made. ▼



**ON THE TRAIL OF ART**

*continued from page 14*

the style of Flemish Realism that depicts, on the end of a large log, the landscape in front of it.

There is a series of “Faeries” by Derek Jackson, images of wood nymphs and other mysterious creatures strategically placed to surprise the trail’s travelers. And there’s “Dialog” by Roland Mayer — two towering, open-weave structures made of redwood branches.

A number of the artists are content to have their work return to the land as time and the elements have their way,

the guides explained. The log that now so strikingly offers an echo of the landscape will decay and crumble, and the faeries’ penetrating gazes will ultimately lose their force. Art does, after all, imitate life.

The Djerassi program offers sculpture tours from spring until mid-autumn to give the public a chance to view the 40-plus artworks on the private grounds. The artist colony is located on a 580-acre former cattle ranch off Bear Gulch Road. The program allows a handful of selected artists to live on the grounds for a month, free of charge, to pursue their art. ■

**INFORMATION**

- ▶ **The Djerassi Resident Artists Program** offers sculpture tours through October: a series of 3-mile Director’s Tours at \$40 per person, and a series of 2-mile free tours. Both include some strenuous hiking. The Director’s Tours include a stop for lunch; participants should bring a bag lunch. All tours require reservations. They begin promptly at 10 a.m.
- ▶ **Director’s Tours** are set for June 25, July 15, September 10 and October 28.
- ▶ **Free tours** are set for June 15, July 2, July 13, August 20, August 31, September 24, October 5 and October 29.
- ▶ **To make reservations** or to learn more, contact Allison Furry at 650-747-1250.

## Election night results online

On election night after 8 p.m., the Almanac will post stories on local election results online. Go to [AlmanacNews.com](http://AlmanacNews.com) or [PaloAltoOnline.com](http://PaloAltoOnline.com). (The Almanac's print edition went to press Monday night.)

The online results will focus on these propositions and contests covered in the Almanac's Voter Guide in the May 24 issue and the cover story in the May 31 issue:

■ Measure U, the \$91 million school facility bond measure in the Menlo Park City School District.

■ Proposition 82, a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would provide free preschool for all 4-year-olds, paid for with a 1.7 percent tax on annual incomes in excess of \$400,000 for individuals and \$800,000 for couples.

■ A three-way race to pick a Democratic candidate to succeed state Sen. Jackie Speier in the 8th Senate district, which includes Portola Valley and Woodside.

■ The primary race to pick a Democratic candidate to face Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger

in November. The leading candidates are Steve Westly of Atherton and Phil Angelides.

■ County Supervisor Rich Gordon running for his third and final term (due to term limits) on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. He has two challengers.

For more information, go to the League of Women Voters' Web site, [smartvoter.org](http://smartvoter.org).

For complete results election night, go to the San Mateo County election Web site, [shapethefuture.org](http://shapethefuture.org).

## Menlo Park teachers receive 3 percent raise for 2005-06

By Marjorie Mader  
Almanac Staff Writer

Teachers and other employees in the Menlo Park City School District took home larger paychecks last month after contract negotiations ended on a positive note with at least a 3 percent increase for all employees.

The 3 percent increase to the teachers' salary schedule could go higher, according to a provision built into the contract, if

the district receives more property tax revenue for 2005-06 than projected.

Classified employees — school secretaries, aides, maintenance workers and other non-teaching personnel — received a 3.2 percent salary increase.

The district also will increase its contribution to employee health and welfare benefits by \$35.74 per month per full-time employee, retroactive to the December payroll.

The total cost of the salary and benefit increases is \$550,000 for all employees, said Diane White, the district's chief business official.

Negotiations that started last December with employee groups were ratified by trustees in April after bargaining teams worked long and hard to reach agreement.

The bargaining teams will go back to the table soon because the entire teachers' contract is up for negotiations for the 2006-07 year.

Trustee Carol Orton applauded the negotiating teams for doing "a great job of communicating and listening" and reaching agreement. ■

## New assistant administrator for town of Portola Valley

Steven Willis, most recently the acting deputy director of integrated waste management for the city of San Jose, is the new assistant town administrator for the town of Portola Valley.

He starts work Monday, June 19, said Town Administrator Angela Howard.

Mr. Willis, 54, will be paid \$107,364 a year, and comes to

Portola Valley with 20 years experience in the public sector, the last 15 at the city of San Jose, Ms. Howard said. "He has a wide variety of experience and he's done a lot of different things," she said.

She cited Mr. Willis' previous work with budgets and financial matters, his extensive experience with managing staff, and

his oversight of consumer-oriented public projects.

"I think it's going to be a good fit," she said.

Barbara Powell, the previous assistant town administrator, resigned in February to take an administrative position in Saratoga after four years with Portola Valley.

Ms. Howard said she chose Mr. Willis after a process that narrowed a field of 30 to 40 applicants down to eight for the first round of interviews and four for the second round.

## Woodside School eighth-graders stage 'Hello, Dolly' this week

The graduating class at Woodside Elementary School keeps alive an almost 50-year tradition by staging the annual eight-grade operetta this week.

Everyone in the class will perform in "Hello, Dolly," Wednesday through Saturday, June 7-10, on stage in the school's George Sellman Auditorium. They're reviving the popular Broadway musical that's based on Thornton Wilder's "The

Matchmaker," with music and lyrics by Jerry Herman.

The show opens at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday with a dress rehearsal, open to the public. Performances are at 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday and at 6 p.m. Saturday.

Tickets — \$10 for adults and \$8 for children — may be purchased in the school office, but the performances are likely to sell out quickly.

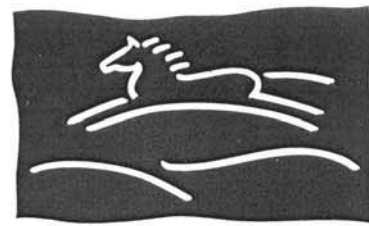
Elena Mori, who directed the

last year's operetta, "Bye, Bye Birdie," returns to direct "Hello, Dolly." Musical director is Ruthie Smith, musical director for the "Celebration of Theatre" that opened the performing arts center at Woodside High School.

Parents doubling as co-producers are Alex Gifford and Leslie Ballinger. Karen Arimoto-Peterson is the faculty adviser for her students' show.

For information, call the school office at 851-1571, ext. 291.

The school is at 3195 Woodside Road, Woodside.



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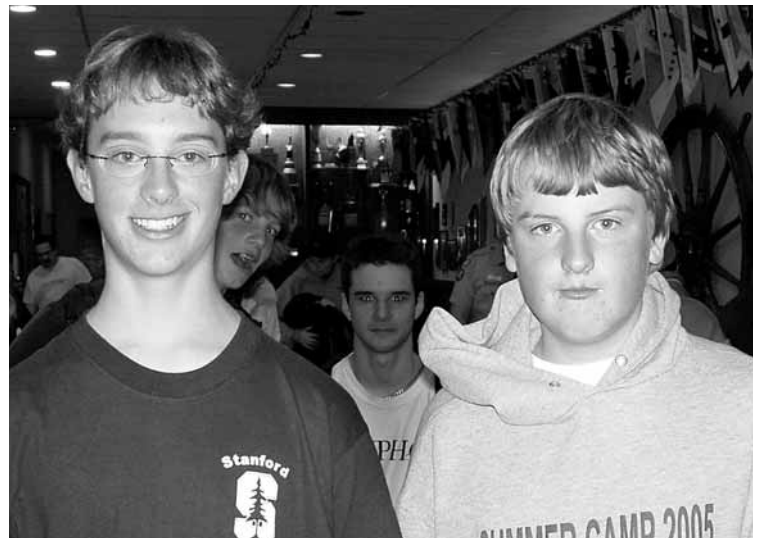
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The sailing team of Will Larsen, left, and Robbie Butler will participate in an international Sea Scout sailing race in Florida.

## Local sailors to compete in Koch Cup regatta

Will Larsen and Robbie Butler, both 14 and residents of the Skylonda area, make up one of five sailing teams chosen from western states to participate in the William I. Koch International Sea Scout Cup regatta.

The five-day event, open to Sea Scouts from ages 14 to 21, will be held July 23-29 at the Coral Reef Yacht Club in the Coconut Grove neighborhood of Miami, Florida.

Each team races in a two-person sailboat called a Vanguard Club 420.

Will and Robbie are graduates of Ormondale and Corte Madera schools in Portola Valley.

Among other teams competing is one from Redwood City; the shipmates are Jacob Luras and Nick Perrone.

Will Larsen and Nick Perrone

are the two local skippers; they both go to Summit Prep High School in Redwood City. Robbie Butler and Jacob Luras are the two crew members; they go to Woodside High School.

Both local teams are members of the SSS Gryphon Sea Scout Ship (Web site: sssgryphon.org).

Will and Robbie participate through the Peninsula Youth Sailing Foundation out of the Port of Redwood City. The nonprofit foundation, affiliated with the Sequoia Yacht Club, lets all local high school kids sail and race regardless of ability to pay. It is run by Portola Valley resident Eric Anderson (Web site: pysf.us).

For more information on the Koch Cup regatta, go to seas-coutcup.org.

## Western equestrian show slated for June 13-18

Cowboy hats and chaps will replace hunt caps and breeches when "Reining by the Bay" returns to The Horse Park in Woodside June 13-18.

Riders will compete for more than \$100,000 in prize money and awards during the six-day show, which is one of the largest on the West Coast. The show is free and open to the public.

Reining is designed to show the ability of a ranch horse within a show arena. Horses perform a variety of patterns that simulate working with cattle. They are judged on the smoothness, speed, finesse and attitude with which they perform their maneuvers.

Reining was recently added to the roster of Olympic sports.

The biggest money event of the show will be a \$75,000 derby

class on Saturday afternoon, June 17, open to 4-, 5- and 6-year-old horses. Andrea Fappani of Scottsdale, Arizona, who won last year's derby riding "The Mighty Gambler," will again be competing.

The show will also include a series of \$5,000 to \$15,000 derby events for both professional and non-professional riders. More than 300 horses are expected to participate.

An exhibitors' party following the derby finals at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday is open to the public.

Tickets for the buffet dinner may be purchased at the horse show office for \$30.

There will also be a Western trade fair featuring equestrian art, tack and gifts.

For more information, go to [www.reiningbythebay.com](http://www.reiningbythebay.com).



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# M-A boys clean up at recent golf event

The second annual Menlo-Atherton High School Bears Classic golf tournament was held recently at Coyote Creek Golf Club to raise money for the boys varsity and junior varsity golf teams. About \$7,500 was raised.

Coaches were Buff Giurlani and Mike Staskus.

The low-net winner was the defending championship team from last year made up of Will Bauer, Mikey Stanzler, Peter Gruber and Matt King. They shot 27 under.

Freshman varsity team member Nick Sakol led team Sako to take the low-gross team trophy with a score of 1 under. Nick shot 67 to take the low individual gross honors.

Jamie Walsh, Michael Quaglietti and Elliot Hume, who are the core of the varsity team, took second place in low gross. Jake Hall Toy, who teamed up with Marty Cooper from last year's varsity team, narrowly came in third place in both the low-net and low-gross divisions.

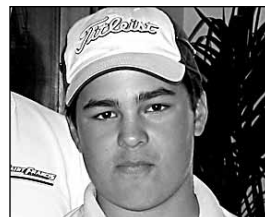
Will Bauer and Peter Gruber shared individual low-net honors with a net of 61.

Nick Sako won the long drive contest for men, and parent Becky Jackson won the long drive for women. Brian Jordon won closest to the pin.

one of the youngest teams overall and as the section underdogs among nearly 100 other schools.

On the team are juniors Elliot Hume and Jamie Walsh, sophomores Jake Hall Toy and Nick Chladek, and freshmen Nick Sako and Ben Jackson.

— Reports by tournament coordinator Norm Hall and Linda Sako.



**Above:** Low-gross team, from left, Tom Sako, Tom Neylan, Nick Sako and Greg Sako. **Below:** Low-net team, from left, Will Bauer, Mikey Stanzler, Matt King and Peter Gruber.



# Meet John.

## CCS tournament

In other M-A golf news, the boys varsity golf team ended its season recently, placing eighth at the Central Coast Section finals at Rancho Canada West in Carmel Valley.

This was the first time in four years the Bears made it to the final round, and they did it as

## Coed softball teams seek new players

The Woodside Recreation Committee's Summertime Coed Softball League is gearing up, and looking for a few new players to round out existing teams.

Players must be 30 years or older, and have an affiliation with Woodside such as living or working in the town, or having children attending Woodside School.

Games begin at 6 p.m. on weekdays starting on June 24 and run through mid-September at Woodside Elementary.

The cost is about \$45 for the season.

For more information and applications, go to woodsiderec.com, or call Richard Mainz, 851-3940.

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# Community

NEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

## Stable tour, English tea slated for this Sunday

By Jane Knoerle  
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

The Day in the Country stable tour promises visitors not only a tour of five of Portola Valley's and Woodside's private barns, but a chance to enjoy an English high tea on the grounds of a private Portola Valley estate.

The tour, sponsored by the Los Altos Hounds, takes place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, June 11.

This is the 14th year for the stable tour, but a first for high tea. "The high tea should be beautiful. The gardens (where it will be served) are absolutely gorgeous," says Mindi Baxter, co-chair of the event with Carol Arnold.

On the stable tour, visitors are sure to "ooh" and "aah" over the two 1-month-old foals that will greet them at a barn just completed in Woodside. The foals' moms are rescue horses, thoroughbreds that have been injured and can no longer race. They are leading the good life, however, in a handsome cedar-shake barn equipped with all the amenities, including a wash rack and built-in fly control.

Other crowd-pleasers are Smith and Wesson, a pair of Clydesdale horses. Their barn is set among giant redwoods. It has knotty pine

stalls and interiors, rubber interlocking floors, a "whole house" vacuum system, indoor and outdoor wash racks and a huge arena that can be used to run reining patterns or drive carriages.

The stable tour will also include dressage, carriage driving and field hunter demonstrations, a chance to browse through equine art and gift items, and bargains at a used tack sale. There will also be a "name the foal" contest.

Ms. Baxter of Santa Cruz, co-chair of the event, is also master of the Los Altos Hounds, a riding club organized in Los Altos Hills in 1953. Today the club rides from November to March in the Woodside-Portola Valley area and other locales in Northern California where the riders follow the hounds over hills and fences.

Ms. Baxter has planned the high tea, which will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The menu will include scones with clotted cream, strawberries, assorted tea sandwiches, cookies, cream puffs and chocolate eclairs. Iced tea, lemonade, and white wine will be served, as well as hot tea.

Tickets for the tea are \$25; advance reservations are suggested. They are in addition to the tour tickets, which are also \$25.

Tickets and tour information



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi  
**Carol Arnold**, above, feeds a carrot to Clear Skies, who with her month-old foal, Summer Sky, will be greeting visitors on the stable tour. At right, this handsome Portola Valley barn is one of five to be featured on the "A Day in the Country" stable tour.



may be picked up the morning of the tour at Woodside Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, corner of Woodside and Whiskey Hills roads. For more information, call 851-2551. ■

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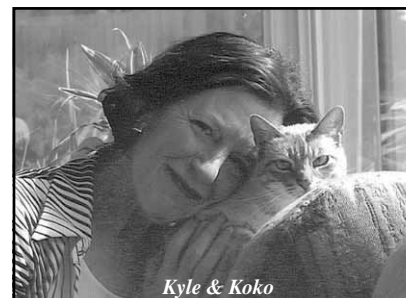
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# A run for Olivia

Local runners join in race to defeat Krabbe disease

By Jane Knoerle  
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

Saturday, June 10, is the second running of Olivia's Miles. It honors Olivia Kemist, whose short life was halted last December by a rare ailment known as Krabbe disease.

Olivia's parents, Adam and Micheline Kemist, owners of the Runner's High in Menlo Park and Los Altos, have organized the race as a celebration of Olivia's life and to raise money for the Spark Foundation. The foundation is a nonprofit that grants money to continue treatment for children like Olivia and provide research to find a cure.

Krabbe disease is a hereditary, degenerative disorder that affects the nervous system. Children with the disease have a life expectancy of less than two years. Olivia beat those odds only by a few months.

Dr. Gregory Enns of Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hos-

pital worked with Olivia, but was unable to find a cure in time. He is continuing research into the mystery of the disease.

Olivia's Miles, 1-mile and 5K runs, will be held in Menlo Park, starting at Fremont Park.

The runs will be held on a flat course through tree-lined streets in Menlo Park. The 1-mile race for competitive runners begins at 8 a.m. The 5K race, open to both runners and walkers, begins at 8:30 a.m.

A kids' run for children under 12 starts at 9:15 a.m. in Fremont Park. Children will receive a medal, goodie bag and photo.

The event is free for children under 12 taking part in either run with a parent, but an entry form for each child must be submitted with the adult's registration. Registration is not required for the kids' race.

Prizes will be provided by running companies and merchants from downtown Menlo



Olivia Kemist suffered from Krabbe disease, a rare degenerative disorder.

Park and Los Altos.

Adam and Micheline Kemist, who are both avid runners, have been proprietors of the Runners High for 11 years. They also have a "retro" clothing store on Evelyn Street in downtown Menlo Park.

The store is named OH for the Kemists' two daughters, Olivia and Hannah. Hannah is a healthy 2-year-old.

Entry fee for the event is \$25. To register, go to runnershigh.com or active.com. Entry forms may also be picked up at Runners High, 859 Santa Cruz Ave., or OH, 1060 Evelyn St., Menlo Park. Late entries will be accepted from 7 to 7:45 a.m. on the day of the race.

# Community foundation gives \$900,000 in grants

Fifteen nonprofits in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties will benefit from grants of \$905,500 from the Peninsula Community Foundation.

This second round of quarterly grants raises the total grants to community organizations to more than \$2 million for 2006.

The Ravenswood Family Health Center in East Palo Alto, will be the chief beneficiary of this round of grants, with \$250,000 to strengthen its capacity to provide medical services to underserved populations in Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks.

Since it opened in 2000, the center has provided more than 80,000 medical, health, education, immunization and social service visits, and enrolled almost 14,000 different patients.

These patients are under social and financial stress: 97 percent have incomes less than 200 percent of poverty level; 70 percent are Latino; and 61 percent are uninsured.

This is the second year the center has received this operating grant, said Kathleen Alexander of Woodside, development director. "This year we will focus on increas-

ing revenue from insurance." That means enrolling people, particularly children, in existing insurance programs, like Healthy Families and Healthy Kids, she explained.

Other programs providing services in South San Mateo County that received grants include:

■ San Mateo County's Prenatal-to-Three Initiative, which will receive \$150,000 to promote prenatal and family health for low-income families;

■ The San Mateo County Office of Education, which will receive \$60,000 to strengthen first and second language development programs for small children in both English and Spanish.

The Peninsula Community Foundation has been supporting charities and nonprofits in the community since 1964. With assets of over \$611 million, it handles over 750 individual charitable funds. Last year, it awarded \$92 million in grants to more than 2,000 organizations through its Endowment for the Community.

For information, call 358-9369, or go to pcf.org.



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Christina Holmes

**Hillview students**, including Keiko Wolff, served parent Andy Kessler and 800 other party-goers at the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation's dinner and auction.

## Menlo Park school foundation event raises record sum

By Marjorie Mader  
Almanac Staff Writer

The Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation set new records for fundraising for Menlo Park public schools when its annual auction and dinner last month netted an all-time high of \$645,000, making it the largest fundraiser in the organization's 24-year history.

Because of the auction's success, the foundation is now on course to meet its goal of granting \$1.6 million to the Menlo Park City School District, foundation co-presidents Carol Fields and Peggy Propp announced last week.

Foundation grants finance "essential personnel and programs," including libraries, science, technology and music education, at the district's four schools, Laurel, Encinal, Oak Knoll and Hillview Middle.

The \$1.6 million grant, which represents 6 percent of the district budget, will be presented to the school board at its June 21 meeting. The funds will be used during the coming school year.

A crowd of 800 party-goers — showing their school spirit by wearing cheerleader and drill team outfits, letter jackets and sweaters, togas and prom dresses — gathered under an enormous tent on the Menlo

College campus May 13 for the dinner and auction.

A key to the event's success was moving it from the traditional private garden setting to the larger venue and the work of some 300 volunteers to stage the event.

"Menlo College donated the use of its campus, which was an enormous gift for the foundation and the community," said Ms. Fields. "Their generosity allowed us to expand our attendance from 650 last year to 800, with room to grow."

The foundation set records across the board: revenue up 20 percent, attendance up 23 percent, and items available for bid up 43 percent, said the co-chairs.

The record results came from the sale of more than 550 items, donated by parents and local businesses, and the lively bidding during both the silent and live auctions.

State Sen. Joe Simitian, in his second year as guest auctioneer, banged the gavel on winning bids that totaled about \$175,000. The highest bid for a single item was \$25,000 for "You Go Girls ... to the Oprah Show," a getaway for four to Chicago that included tickets to a taping of the television show and luxurious accommodations.

A private viewing of the Mona Lisa at the Louvre in Paris and a four-night getaway to the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, were among the unusual items up for bid during the oral auction.

The silent auction raised about \$249,000, a 42 percent increase over last year.

Almost \$49,000 to bring scientists in residence to the four schools next year as a pilot program. Before opening the bidding, Hillview science teacher Alicia Payton, also a Hillview graduate, spoke about the role of a strong, hands-on science program in the schools.

The all-volunteer team that "captained" the event included: Julie Brody, Ellen Lease, Lisa Grossman, Grayson Lane, Kim Young and Moni Puri-Schlotter and the behind-the-scenes team of Adrienne Wong, Marianne Dean and Kathy Oppenheimer.

The Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization with an all-volunteer board. To learn more about the foundation, visit the Website [mpaef.org](http://mpaef.org). ■

### COLLEGE GRADS

■ **Kathryn Sullivan** received a bachelor of science degree in biomedical engineering with distinction from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Her parents are Jay and Steve Sullivan of Woodside.

■ **Christopher Carter** of Atherton has graduated from Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, with a bachelor of arts degree in history.



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# Grocery store may follow post office in closing

■ Owner looking for a buyer to keep market open.

The Portola Valley post office inside John's Valley Foods is closing June 12, but the future of the grocery store in which it has been located for the past five years is uncertain.

Owner John Meany said he is in the process of separating himself from the store and is hoping to

find a new owner by the end of June, but it could be the end of July. "I just want to retire and have a little fun here," he said. "Life's pretty short."

The possibility that a buyer may not be found and that the store may close has been upsetting for regular customers, particularly the elderly, Mr. Meany said. "It's like a trauma in their lives," he said. "You'd think it was the end of the world coming. They've just grown accus-

tomed to it."

The store, which opened in 1977, has always been profitable, Mr. Meany told the Almanac. Asked about the prospects of finding a buyer, he replied: "I wish I knew. If I had an offer, I'd tell you."

The U.S. Postal Service does not allow a post office to change hands without an extensive background check, Mr. Meany said. Coordinating that with finding a buyer for the store "would have

been nice" but difficult, he said. He gave the postal service 90 days notice in announcing the closure, he said.

The Portola Valley Hardware and Portola Cafe Deli have applied to take on the post office, Planning Manager Leslie Lambert said.

The necessary steps in communicating with the postal service to make the transfer can be time-consuming. The last time the post office moved — from the now-departed pharmacy

to John's Valley Foods in 2001 — Ms. Lambert had to call on Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Atherton, to expedite the process.

If the town were without a post office, mail delivery would be uninterrupted but residents would have no location to buy stamps or mail packages.

Stamps can be bought online at [shop.usps.com](http://shop.usps.com) and from the letter carrier, Ms. Lambert said. A mailbox is located at Town Hall at 654 Portola Road.

## Portola Valley picnic this Saturday

Portola Valley's annual 2.6-mile friendly race — by foot, by bicycle, by scooter — along Alpine and Portola roads from the Alpine Inn to the kid's playground at Town Center is set for this Saturday morning.

The June 10 town picnic unofficially starts at 9 a.m. with registration at the Alpine Inn at 3915 Alpine Road for the Zots to Tots race, which happens an hour later at 10 a.m. The picnic itself begins at 11 a.m. at Town Center. Besides barbecue and cotton candy, there will be live music, carnival games and a collector car show.

People of all ages are invited to the race and all racers receive a race bib, a T-shirt and a ribbon. Registration is \$10 per person, with a discount for families.

The Nate Pruitt Group will provide the music; games will include a dunk tank, an inflatable obstacle course and a climbing wall.

Antique and collector vehicles owned by residents will be on display in the parking lot in front of the Historic Schoolhouse.

For information on the race, call Jim Totte at 245-6851. For more information on the picnic, including volunteer needs, call Community Events Committee chair Liz Sweeney at 851-4553.

## Art sale Saturday

Artist Adele Seltzer, whose studio in Portola Valley Town Center is scheduled to close by August 1, is having a discount sale of her paintings, prints and metal work on Saturday, June 10, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 765 Portola Road.

Ms. Seltzer has exhibited her work in museums on both the East and West coasts, including the San Jose Museum of Art and the de Saisset Museum at Santa Clara University, she said.

The Town Center studios of Ms. Seltzer and seven other artists will be destroyed in the fall to make way for a new complex that includes a Town Hall, library and community hall.

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## OBITUARIES

### Walter E. Meyerhof

Physics professor, founder of Varian Fry Foundation Project

Walter E. Meyerhof, a Stanford University professor emeritus of physics and a Menlo Park resident since 1949, died May 27 from complications of Parkinson's disease. He was 84.



Walter Meyerhof

Born in Kiel, Germany, in 1922 — the same year his father, Otto Meyerhof, won the Nobel Prize for medicine — Mr. Meyerhof was forced to flee Europe during World War II. He and his parents were living in France when it became occupied by Nazi forces. And when the Nazis began rounding up Jews, many of whom had already escaped persecution in Germany, the 18-year-old Walter and his parents were helped in their escape to the United States by a non-Jewish American, Varian Fry.

They were three of 3,000 to 4,000 people rescued by Mr. Fry, and after Mr. Meyerhof retired, he attempted to repay the debt by establishing the Varian Fry Foundation Project, based in Menlo Park.

Founded by Mr. Meyerhof in 1997 under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee, the foundation strives to spread the word, mainly through classroom curricula, about the heroic deeds of Mr. Fry, who died in 1967. Mr. Meyerhof directed the foundation until recently.

Mr. Meyerhof earned his doctorate in physics in 1946 from the University of Pennsylvania. He began his career at Stanford in 1949, and retired in 1992. A textbook he wrote, "Elements of Nuclear Physics," is still used in college classrooms, according to

family members.

His career was distinguished by a number of awards and recognitions, including the Lloyd Dinkelspiel Teaching Award from Stanford, in 1977; the Tenured Faculty Development Award from Stanford, 1977-78; and an honorary doctorate from the University of Frankfurt, 1980.

His work in physics and in the nonprofit Varian Fry foundation didn't prevent him from pursuing other interests, and during his later years, he took up writing and watercolor painting. After taking the popular "Life Stories" class offered at the Menlo Park Library by Sheila Dunec, he published a book, "In the Shadow of Love: Stories From My Life."

His wife of 59 years, Miriam, said he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease last year.

In addition to his wife, who also had to flee Nazi Germany, Mr. Meyerhof is survived by two sons, Michael of Menlo Park and David of Burbank; a grandson, Matthew; and a sister, Bettina, of Seattle.

### Holt Ashley

Stanford professor

Holt Ashley, a Stanford University professor emeritus of aeronautics and astronautics and of mechanical engineering, died May 9 at his home in Woodside. He was 83.

"His contributions to aerospace were as large as he was," Stanford Professor Brian Cantwell, chairman of the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics, said at Mr. Ashley's memorial service. Mr. Ashley was 6 feet, 8 inches tall.

Mr. Ashley was born in San Francisco. He took time off from his studies at the California Institute of Technology to serve as a weather forecaster and reconnaissance officer in the U.S. Army Air Corps serving over the North Atlantic and in Europe.

He earned a master's degree and doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and taught there through 1964. He then taught at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur, founding the university's Department of Aeronautical Engineering.

He returned to California in 1967 to join Stanford's Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and retired from full-time teaching in 1989.

"Professor Ashley encouraged us to work on hang gliders or take a summer to think about sailboats or to think about flapping vehicles, whatever, to think independently and to think deeply," said Ilan Kroo, professor of aeronautics and astronautics, who had been one of his students.

Mr. Ashley is survived by a sister, Joan Ashley Ennis, of Silver Spring, Maryland. He was preceded in death by his wife, Frances Day Ashley.

Memorial donations may be made to the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2500 16th, St. San Francisco, CA 94103-4213.

### Robert B. Rubin

Ophthalmologist

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. Thursday, June 8, at Stanford Memorial Church for Dr. Robert E. Rubin of Woodside. Dr. Rubin died May 18 at Stanford Medical Center at the age of 65.

A well known ophthalmologist, Dr. Rubin had been in practice at 1101 Welsh Road in Palo Alto since 1978.

Born in Philadelphia, Dr. Rubin was raised in Miami Beach. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Florida, where he met his future wife, Patricia. He graduated from the University of Miami Medical School, interned at the University of Southern California Medical Center, and completed his ophthalmology

residency in Cincinnati. He served in the U.S. Air Force in Montgomery, Alabama.

Returning to civilian life, he established his first practice in Los Altos in 1972.

Moving his offices to Palo Alto and Mountain View, Dr. Rubin developed a loyal patient base because of his ability to comfort and connect with patients, say family members. He specialized in cataract surgery and was an early practitioner of radial keratotomy and the Lasik technique. He was a longtime member of the Peninsula Eye Society.

Dr. Rubin was an avid golfer, and a member of the Stanford Golf Club and the Olympic Club in San Francisco. He was also a member of the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton.

Dr. Rubin is survived by his wife of 42 years, Patricia, of Woodside and San Francisco; daughter Shannon of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico; son Christopher of San Francisco; and one grandson.

The family prefers memorials to [www.guidedogs.com](http://www.guidedogs.com), Surgical Eye Expedition at [www.seeintl.com](http://www.seeintl.com), or the Pacific Community Foundation at [www.pcf.org](http://www.pcf.org). Arrangements were under the direction of Spangler Mortuaries.

### Carroll Cahill

Portrait artist

Carroll Kales Cahill of Woodside died May 25 at El Camino Hospital after a lengthy battle with rheumatoid arthritis and its complications. She was 80.

Ms. Cahill was born in Oakland and graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1947. She married Peter Cahill in 1953, and the couple lived in San Francisco for 36 years before moving to Woodside in 1989.

Ms. Cahill was an artist who specialized in oil paintings of children and landscapes. Her portraits of children and grandchildren hang in the homes of many of her friends. She enjoyed hiking in the Sierra Nevada

mountains and in the countryside surrounding Woodside, say family members. She also traveled extensively abroad.

Ms. Cahill is survived by her husband of 53 years, Peter; children, Sally Cahill of Alamo and Michael Cahill of Ojai; and a brother, Sheldon Kales, of Irvine. A daughter, Susan Cahill, preceded her in death.

Donations in Ms. Cahill's memory may be made to the Arthritis Foundation, Northern California chapter, 657 Mission St., San Francisco, or to St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, 3500 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, 94025.

### Earl H. Rhodehouse

Former Menlo fire captain

Retired Menlo Park Fire Protection District Captain Earl H. Rhodehouse died May 28 in Yuma, Arizona. He was 85.

Mr. Rhodehouse was born in San Francisco and grew up in Palo Alto. He graduated from Palo Alto High School and served in the U.S. Navy for four years during World War II. He served in the Menlo Park Fire Protection District for more than 30 years, retiring in 1974. He spent much of his career at Station No. 5 on Fair Oaks Avenue.

Captain Rhodehouse and his wife, Nita, raised five children in the North Fair Oaks neighborhood of unincorporated Menlo Park.

He is survived by his children, Beverly Cole of Penn Valley, California, Gary and Glenn Rhodehouse, both of Magalia, California, Cookie McClard of Quincy, and Sue Guglielmone of Redwood City; sister June Gallaher of Los Altos; 10 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of almost 60 years, Nita.

The family prefers memorials be made to the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, Attention: Task Force 3 Urban Search and Rescue Team, 300 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park 94025.

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## Let Us Hear From You

Letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome.

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## The Almanac

# Donna Morrow: Husband's trial

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Don't expect the much-delayed murder trial of Joseph Morrow to start up anytime soon.

The trial of Mr. Morrow, who is accused of killing his wife Donna in their Menlo Park home in 1991 and hiding her body in Los Gatos, got started in March, but has been on hold since April.

The reason for the hold-up? During the wrangling over pretrial motions — what evidence should be included and what should be left out — Mr. Morrow's defense attorneys alleged that the case's previous prosecutor, Jack Grandsaert, acted improperly when bringing evidence before a grand jury that led to Mr. Morrow's indictment on murder charges.

The catch is that Mr. Grandsaert handed off the Morrow case when he was made a San Mateo County Superior Court judge.

Defense attorney Robert Courshon said that presiding Judge Craig Parsons should be disqualified from deciding whether Mr. Grandsaert acted improperly as a prosecutor, since it would be awkward to have one judge opining on a fellow judge's conduct.

So far, an out-of-county judge and the state Court of Appeals have

ruled that Judge Parsons can, in fact, hear the motion about Judge Grandsaert's alleged misconduct when he was a prosecutor.

Now the matter is in the hands of the California Supreme Court. Mr. Courshon said he filed a petition with the court on May 22. As of the Almanac's deadline, there had been no word about whether the court will hear the appeal.

At issue is a 1992 letter from a death row inmate claiming that Donna Morrow was killed by people he knew and her body had been dumped in the Bay at Port Chicago. Mr. Courshon contends that then-prosecutor Grandsaert was obligated to tell the grand jury about the letter because it contained potentially exculpatory evidence that could have exonerated Mr. Morrow.

"Not only legally, but from a practical standpoint, it's better to have a visiting judge step into that position," Mr. Courshon said. "It's difficult to indicate that one of your fellow jurists had done something wrong."

Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe, the Morrow case's current prosecutor, said the letter was "a complete fraud."

When the grand jury was con-

vened in 2003, Ms. Morrow's body had already been found buried on a 36-acre Los Gatos property she and her husband had owned, so there was no point in bringing it up, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

He told the Almanac he doesn't think the state Supreme Court will take up the issue. ■

## Woodside man dies Sunday from self-inflicted wound

Romano Surian, a 53-year-old Woodside man possibly also known as Michael Romano, fatally shot himself in the chest Sunday, June 4, while in his one-bedroom cottage on Ravine Drive, said Capt. Don O'Keefe of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff's deputies were called by Mr. Surian's parents, who also live on the property and who had heard a gunshot. Mr. Surian was pronounced dead at the scene, said Capt. O'Keefe.

The weapon was a 22-caliber rifle owned by Mr. Surian.

There was no suicide note. But Mr. Surian's parents told

## Fire damages garage, home

Menlo Park firefighters quickly controlled a garage fire and prevented extensive damage to the adjoining house in the 200 block of Ivy Drive in Menlo Park on Tuesday, May 30.

Firefighters got the call at 1:11 p.m. and the fire was under control at 1:27 p.m., said Capt. Ben Marra of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

The fire burned through a garage door and into the kitchen, but no one was injured, Mr. Marra said.

## ■ POLICE CALLS

### ATHERTON

**Burglary report:** Laptop stolen, Encinal Avenue, May 29.

**Fraud report:** Someone attempted to acquire mortgage using victim's Social Security and driver's license numbers, and credit card and bank account information, 200 block of Park Lane, May 30.

### MENLO PARK

#### Fraud reports:

■ Jennifer Nakamoto, 37, of Portola Valley arrested on charges that include not paying entire motel room bill, Best Western Riviera at 15 El Camino Real, May 26.

■ Identity theft, 300 block of Sharon Park Drive, June 1.

### WOODSIDE

**Burglary report:** Three saddles and two revolvers missing from tack room, 200

block of Winding Way, May 25.

#### Accident reports:

■ Driver hospitalized and listed in critical condition after solo vehicle rollover accident and collision with tree, Jefferson Avenue near Godetia Drive, May 27.

■ Motorcyclist lost control, collided with pickup truck and was taken to Stanford Hospital with complaints of back pain, Highway 84 west of Portola Road, May 29.

### PORTOLA VALLEY

**Fraud report:** Theft of resident's name and home address used to obtain Sears credit card and charge about \$2,000, 300 block of Cervantes Road, May 25.

**Suicide attempt report:** Sheriff's deputy called ambulance upon discovery of unconscious woman locked inside parked running vehicle with various drugs and alcohol visible, 300 block of Grove Drive, May 28.



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### Events & Lectures

**"Healthful Eating for Patients with Heart Failure"**

Monday, June 26, 3:30 – 5 p.m.

Susan Zipin, R.D., CDE, Nutrition Services

Discussion of food choices with a focus on measuring sodium intake and daily food requirements. Come discuss what else you should consider in addition to salt restriction.

**"Taking Control of My Medicines"**

Thursday, July 13, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Kathleen Orrico, Pharm.D., BCPS, PAMF  
clinical pharmacy coordinator and assistant  
professor of pharmacy, UCSF

Learn about tools and techniques to help you organize a complicated drug regimen and remember to take your medicines, as well as the questions you need to ask about your medicines.

Hearst Center for Health Education, Level 3, Jamplis Building, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, 795 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. RSVP to (650) 853-4873.

### Classes

**"Good Nutrition and Feeding Practices for Toddlers,"** Wednesday, June 7, 10 a.m. – noon

This class will address parental concerns regarding nutrition and feeding practices. It should be attended by parents or caretakers only.

**"What You Need to Know About Warfarin,"** Wednesday, June 28, 2 – 3 p.m.

Learn what warfarin is, why you are taking it and how you can help yourself.

**"Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program,"** begins Monday, July 10, 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Free orientation on Wednesday, July 5, 6:30 – 9 p.m. The program is designed to help people learn how to deal effectively with physical and emotional stress by providing training in breathing, meditation and gentle yoga.

**"Advance Health Care Directives,"** call for available dates and times.

PAMF's specially trained volunteers will provide advice and answer questions about the Advance Health Care Directive form. Free.

### Support Groups

Cancer (1st & 3rd Tuesdays) • Diabetes (1st Wednesday) • Multiple Sclerosis (2nd & 4th Mondays) • Healing Imagery for Cancer Patients (June 14 & 28)

For information on class fees and to register, call the Education Division at (650) 853-2960.



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Saturday, July 8th	Tuesday, July 18th
Monday, July 10th	Wednesday, July 19th
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**Senior Staff Writers**

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**Special Sections Editors**

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**Photographer** Marjan Sadoughi

**Design & Production**

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Bill Rayburn

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editor@AlmanacNews.com

e-mail photos with captions to:

photo@AlmanacNews.com

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## Why mix fields, child care with election?

It is clear that Menlo Park's current City Council majority is attempting to set the stage for a November 7 referendum on their political philosophy in two major ways: a straw vote on the question of building playing fields at Bayfront Park, and privatizing the city's child care programs.

In recent weeks, the ruling trio of Mayor Nicholas Jellins, Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc said they want to ask voters whether the city should build fields at Bayfront Park, the former landfill. This politically charged but highly dubious straw poll would more likely confuse and ultimately disappoint voters, although the council majority will be more than willing to promote the idea in their re-election campaigns. So far none of the three has announced.

The council is also speeding up the process that could lead to the city's child care programs being operated by a private business, rather than the city staff members who now oversee it. The first meeting of a yet-to-be-filled task force was held last week, and it quickly became evident that the process, which the council wants to speed up in order to enter negotiations with a provider by September, is moving far too quickly. The plan to convert to a new operator in January, rather than at the beginning of a school year, was labeled a major flaw by at least three parents who sit on the task force.

Use of Bayfront Park is a recurring theme of the council majority, first in their unsuccessful effort to build a golf course with playing fields there, and now as a site for just playing fields. Large crowds supporting youth soccer and Little League baseball turn out for most council discussions of the fields, so the council majority enjoys playing to the crowd. But unless there is a major change in the regulatory process, we believe it will be virtually impossible for the city to get approval for tearing up the park for playing fields now, or anytime in the future. In the meantime, the council majority continues to ignore the advice of its own Parks and Recreation Commission, which suggested ways in a new study to more fully utilize the fields available now.

The worst part about this effort is that city staff has not yet approached agencies that must approve any changes at the park, and won't do so until after the November election. We believe it

is highly misleading to build up the hopes of youth soccer and baseball supporters when the city staff and the council majority know the very long odds of such a plan being approved.

Menlo Park voters can expect the rush to privatize more city services to play a large role in any re-election campaign mounted by the council majority, including the decision to turn the new pool complex over to a private operator. This move was made so quickly that city staff had very little time to analyze the impact.

The same fast-track process will almost certainly hamper the child care decision, which when first proposed had a much more generous timeline to study the option, draw up a request for proposals and to receive bids.

What is the rush on these two issues? Why not wait until city staff can at least make an educated guess about the regulatory hurdles that will face converting a portion of Bayfront Park to soccer and baseball fields?

And why not slow down the process for receiving proposals from child care providers, so the city staff and the advisory committee can fully discuss the implications a new operator might have on the programs? Why transfer operation of child care at mid-year,

rather than at the beginning of the school year?

The council majority seems to think that city programs can be operated like a business, and that changes can come quickly and easily without a lot of study.

But that is not how government operates. The majority may have three of five council votes, but their actions impact all Menlo Park residents, and in these cases, a wrong, hastily-made decision could haunt the city for years to come. Speeding up the deliberative process, and freezing out the contributions of their fellow council members simply creates dissension and bad decision-making.

There is still time for the council majority to change their mind and pursue more information about Bayfront Park and to slow down the request for proposals on child care. Rushing either idea just to have something for voters to see at the November election is unnecessary. Menlo Park voters know plenty about the council majority already.

**EDITORIAL**

The opinion of The Almanac



**Welcome.** Marla Regan, left, with son Julian, and Susie Danzig with son Luke visit the new Menlo Children's Center in April.

The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi



### Our Regional Heritage

Woodside volunteer firefighters train at the site of the Neuman Brothers store in 1930. A few years later, the store moved to Woodside and Mountain Home roads, where Roberts grocery stands today. Firemen in the photo are not identified.

Woodside Library Collection

**WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?**

All views must include a home address and contact phone number. Published letters will also appear on the Almanac web site: [www.AlmanacNews.com](http://www.AlmanacNews.com)

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**CALL** the Viewpoint desk at 854-2626, ext. 222.

## LETTERS

Our readers write

**Thermae Day Spa isn't going anywhere***Editor:*

A May 17 letter to the editor in the Almanac discussed the Thermae Day Spa in Menlo Park. The letter stated that the rent was going to increase and Thermae would be losing their lease. It has caused an unprecedented number of negative rumors about Thermae. I want to properly state the facts.

Contrary to the perception left by the May 17 letter, Thermae's flagship location is doing very well and its second location in Palo Alto is gaining momentum. Since its inception in 2002, the Thermae business has an average growth rate in excess of 35 percent annually.

Thermae has been considering investing in future growth through additional locations and is developing a proprietary Thermae brand of skin and body wellness products.

This by no means is an indication that having a small business in the Midpeninsula is without challenges our real estate taxes are among the highest around; our state employment regulations do not seem to have been created with the small business owner in mind; and we have some of the nation's highest energy costs and suburban commercial rental rates.

Thermae has successfully navigated these challenges and has built a very loyal and growing group of customers. As the owner of Thermae, I look forward to serving and providing

**Mad COW disease in Woodside**

By Andrea Gemmet

Woodside is one rough town. In the rough-and-tumble frontier of cyberspace, Woodside's patina of rural tranquility has given way to a seething hotbed of crankiness. Citizens of Woodside, or COW, is a year-old anonymous blog/community bulletin board rife with bovine-inspired puns.

Seriously, there's more wince-inducing wordplay than there are flies on a ... never mind.

Beyond the cheeky cattle decorating the site, there's a fair amount of manure being spread around. One of the latest postings lists the results of a blistering survey on Woodside officials and town staff.

On the bright side, most of the respondents like tree removal permits, Councilman Pete Sinclair, Town Clerk Janet Koelsch and Deputy Town Clerk Tara Sanders. Everyone and everything else, not so much.

About 170 people opined on the performance of town staff and council members, out of nearly 2,000 survey responses.

It's no surprise that people aren't too thrilled by the arduous process of getting building permits and variances in Woodside. The town is in the midst of what could be a significant change in the handling of applications and

customer service, but only time will tell whether these efforts will reduce the great backlog of ire that residents have stored up.

It's my job to be impartial, and I find I can usually empathize with those on both sides of the issue. I myself have been less than thrilled with public officials from time to time.

Occasionally, while languishing at unconscionably lengthy council meetings, I must distract myself with the plight of the council members themselves. Contemplating the long hours, the non-existent pay, and the exposure to verbal abuse is good antidote for journalistic self-pity.

But it's one thing to have to sit there and listen to a tirade from a hot-under-the-collar constituent who has come to a meeting, but it's quite another to have to take anonymous potshots from a bunch of online bull-slingers.

Every democracy needs its gadflies, those die-hard citizens who buzz around council chambers, write irate letters to the editor and engage in a little finger-wagging just to remind those in charge that they are being watched.

I've always admired those folks, who, like the council or commission members themselves, aren't being paid to sit through those meetings.

**REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK**

**ANDREA GEMMET** is an Almanac staff writer who covers Woodside.

our customers an oasis from the everyday stresses of life for a long time to come.

**Elizabeth Hawkins**  
Proprietor, Thermae Day Spa

**Atherton, Pop Warner football need timeout***Editor:*

Last month, the Pop Warner youth football league made a request to practice and play

games at Menlo-Atherton School in Atherton as they have for seven years, but which now fall outside of the school events guidelines policy passed last year.

Following the wishes of school neighbors, the Atherton Town Council decided to hold firm on the events policy, which effectively bars Pop Warner teams from using the M-A football field.

After its start in 1999, Pop Warner has grown and a new

sound system and artificial turf were added at the field. As a result, neighbors lost the quiet enjoyment of their backyards. The upcoming construction of M-A's planned Performing Arts Center adds to their concerns.

I believe we can find compromises and positive solutions for M-A, Pop Warner, and the neighbors. Before recent meetings between town staff and M-A school officials, I asked

Maybe they've got an agenda to pursue, and maybe they have an enviable amount of free time on their hands, but they are brave and ornery enough to stand up and speak truth to power despite the consequences.

Reporters tend to have a more uneasy relationship with bloggers, the Internet-era gadflies, for several reasons. While it's cheering when anyone takes the time to pay attention to local politics, bloggers aren't bound by the same professional ethics of fairness, accountability and accuracy as journalists.

The survey on CitizensofWoodside.com raises a lot of questions, but thanks to the anonymous nature of the site, I can't pick up the phone and ask anyone about them. The site would gain a lot of credibility if those behind it were willing to step up and identify themselves.

Instead, there's some hoo-ha posted at this site about the "time-honored" American tradition of using pseudonyms, and a reference to the Federalist papers. American history was never my best subject in school, but as I recall, no one used any pseudonyms when they were signing the Declaration of Independence, a document that would have served as a death warrant for the signers if England had won the Revolutionary War.

As for whether Almanac readers object to any of the statements I've made about COW, the survey, public officials, bloggers, or the entertainment value of town council meetings, they know exactly where to address their comments or complaints. Just check out my byline at the top of the story.

the residents for a list of their concerns and presented them to school and district officials.

At the last Atherton council meeting, I proposed issuing a 30-day permit to Pop Warner for extending weekday practice to twilight and evaluating what improvements have been made. If not enough mitigation can be done, we would not issue a permit to start the season.

Since then I have toured the fields and have been informed that the school wants to help and can open other fields to Pop Warner, thus moving warm-up stretching away from neighbor's fences. Pop Warner can reduce weekday practices to Monday through Thursday during August and Wednesdays and Fridays in September. This would be a total of 32 hours outside of the guidelines. Pop Warner would not use the M-A sound system.

Atherton relies on outside groups for its recreation programs, so we need to provide opportunities for neighbors and league officials to have constructive dialogue.

Pop Warner is an integral part of our community. It introduces kids from different socio-economic backgrounds to a team environment that stresses schoolwork as much as it does team work. Residents have a right to enjoy their own recreation in their own yards. I believe we can work together and find a balance.

**Charles Marsala,**  
Mayor of Atherton

**Trail could benefit bikers, hikers**

By Angela Hey

I have a suggestion for Stanford Weekend Acres resident and cyclist Alicia Vera, who said in a letter last week that there is no bike lane if you go from Alpine Road to Santa Cruz Avenue to east Sand Hill Road at what she terms "suicide corners."

In fact, I have managed to cut one to two minutes off cycling time to Menlo Park by using the new bike path, thereby avoiding two sets of lights. Despite a somewhat sharp corner — it really is much safer to use the bike path. However good a cyclist you are — and I like to stay on the road usually — there are benefits to purpose-built trails.

I am looking forward to seeing the all purpose trail extended up Alpine Road. Alpine Road is no place for insecure toddlers on wobbly bikes, parents cycling with babies in trailers or boomer cyclists taking up the

sport for the first time. I have had to shelter kids with my bike as they have tried to navigate the road bike lanes to and from Stanford up into the hills.

I have also had to brake suddenly more than once as dark cars (which are difficult to see with peripheral vision) zoom out of the houses close to Stanford's proposed Alpine Trail. So I am leary of those who disregard cyclists as they enter Alpine Road and seek to ban Stanford's generous offer of a multipurpose trail up Alpine Road.

There are relatively few paved biking trails of significant length in the area — Sawyers Creek, Foster City/Redwood Shores, Los Gatos Trail, Shoreline, Sausalito and Coyote Hills. So I can't wait for the day when I can take my boomer friends who are rediscovering cycling, but scared stiff in a bike lane, along a local paved trail.

There are very many hiking trails in

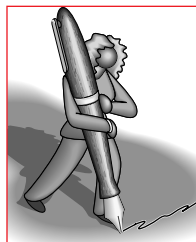
the Almanac's territory — Arastradero Preserve, Windy Hill, Huddart Park, Wunderlich, Portola Valley town trails, the Dish, to mention a few. Those who think that the Stanford Alpine trail is not good for hiking have plenty of places to go and unselfishly should envision the Stanford Alpine trail as a boon to casual cyclists.

As gas prices rise and their knees weaken, they can take up cycling and be pleased that Stanford has provided a safe route to get to the campus, mall and hospital.

One more point: Where there should be a bike sign painted in the road is in the middle of the turn lane that leads west on Sand Hill when approached from Alpine Road. That is where the planners missed out.

It really is slower to stay in the bike lane heading straight on along Santa Cruz and then stop to turn one's wheels across the lights to cross Santa Cruz and point up the hill. Also, there are a couple of other bike signs missing from the junction on left-hand turn lanes.

*Angela Hey lives on Alpine Road in Portola Valley.*

**GUEST OPINION**



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