

BELTRAMO'S AND DRAEGER'S fight move by BevMo to
open wine, liquor store in downtown Menlo Park. Page 9

The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

AUGUST 23, 2006

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Ready to Ride

Anna Mollenhoff, 4, gives
a pep talk to her mount
before entering the ring at
the Menlo Charity Horse Show
in Atherton. More pictures
from the show start on

PAGE 14

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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/David Boyce

West Menlo casualty

A woman at the wheel of a black Chevy Tahoe SUV, according to a witness, backed "at high speed" over the wrought-iron cage protecting this young sycamore tree and drove off without a backward look. The tree, in front of the Avanti Pizza parlor at 3536 Alameda de las Pulgas in West Menlo Park, is another casualty in a series of replantings necessitated by careless drivers.

Atherton

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Voting machines

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Money & Business

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Get a glimpse of the horse-centered world inside the Menlo Charity Horse Show, where tots in jodhpurs rub elbows with top competitors. Photo essay by Marjan Sadoughi begins on **Page 14.**

CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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Many people take their doctors' admonitions about reducing dietary sodium intake to heart, but they are sorely missing the taste salt imparts to their food. Given the prevalence of hypertension in our population, this restriction may be wise. If you are allowed any salt, however, be sure to maximize its benefit. If you may salt at all, it is much more effective to use your sodium allowance in the cooking and preparation stage rather than salting at the table. Salting during cooking changes and enhances the taste of many foods, draws moisture out of vegetables, and greatly augments the flavor of most foods that should be boiled in salt water.

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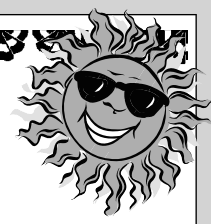
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Low-down tactics go high-tech

Name calling isn't unheard of when it comes to local political races, but name stealing may be a phenomenon specific to Menlo Park.

Richard Cline, one of six candidates vying for three open seats on the City Council, recently discovered the domain name he had planned for his Web site — ClineForCouncil.org — was swiped out from under him.

So whose name is registered under the domain name? Resident Sue Kayton, a major political supporter of the current council majority whose seats are all up for re-election — council members Mickie Winkler, Lee Duboc and Nicholas Jellins.

The domain name is listed on Mr. Cline's ballot statement, and he said he's trying to amend his statement to include his new Web address — ClineForCouncil.com.

Ms. Kayton said Mr. Cline is "incompetent" for advertising a domain name before registering it under his name.

Who are the people in your neighborhood?

Apparently skimming gunk out of swimming pools and flinging newspapers uses the same set of muscles. At least, these were the overlapping skills of an itinerant pool boy/newsie wandering the streets of Atherton recently.

Two Atherton residents reported seeing a young man wearing a shirt with a shamrock on it, selling newspapers without a permit on Fairview Avenue on August 12.

When a concerned citizen stopped the man later, as he was heading north on Atherton Avenue, he said that he was the new pool boy in the area and behaved aggressively, according to the Atherton police department.

A friendly neighborhood police officer found the man and issued him a warning citation.

Edited by Andrea Gemmet,
agemmet@almanacnews.com.

Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Nonprofit 'pushed out' of pools, says head of SOLO swim program

■ He says Tim Sheeper is restricting access to Menlo Park's new aquatics center, violating his contract with the city.

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

The head of a Menlo Park nonprofit swim program for some 300 people — including at least 150 Menlo Park residents — says his swimmers are being pushed out of the city's new aquatics center by Tim Sheeper, head of the for-profit company that recently took over operation of the three-pool facility.

Chris Hinshaw, board president of nonprofit SOLO Aquat-

ics, said his group — which has used the Burgess pools since 1994 and is guaranteed access to the pools in a contract between Mr. Sheeper and the city — said he may file a complaint with the city if the problem isn't resolved.

Mr. Sheeper has not responded to repeated requests by the Almanac for comments.

Mr. Hinshaw said he has tried to negotiate with Mr. Sheeper, head of Menlo Swim and Sport LLC, but Mr. Sheeper has denied his

requests for sufficient lane space and guaranteed access to the center during hours that reasonably accommodate SOLO swimmers.

Mr. Hinshaw, initially a supporter of the privatization of the aquatics center, said Mr. Sheeper's actions violate provisions in the contract agreed upon by the city and Mr. Sheeper, and approved February 28 by a 3-2 City Council vote.

SOLO's rights

According to the contract, Mr. Sheeper inherited an outstanding obligation to just one group in assuming operation of the center: SOLO Aquatics.

One of the 36 provisions in the

contract calls for Mr. Sheeper to provide SOLO with lane hours at no cost, "upon reasonable terms and conditions."

City Attorney Bill McClure said Mr. Sheeper inherited the responsibility because SOLO Aquatics provided the city with lane space at Menlo-Atherton High School — where the group also rents space — for city programs when the Burgess complex was under construction in 2005.

He said the city was obligated to provide SOLO about 2,200 lane hours at no cost, and that commitment was transferred to Mr. Sheeper when he took over

See **POOL**, page 8

Wheel wars

Bicyclists, including the "lunch bunch" ride seen pedaling down Portola Road, have raised the ire of some Woodside residents, who say the town has become a mecca for rude, road-clogging riders. A fundraising ride for Woodside High School is getting caught in the crossfire.

See story on Page 8.

The Almanac/David Boyce



Portola Valley crash victim is on his feet and recovering

■ Andrew Box says he learned a lesson.

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Andrew Box, the Portola Valley teen admitted to Stanford Hospital in critical condition after an August 12 solo-vehicle rollover crash on Portola Road in Woodside, is out of Stanford Hospital and walking around at home.

"I'm doing pretty good, actu-

ally," he told the Almanac in a telephone interview on Friday, August 18.

The initial accident report from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office described Andrew, a passenger in the car, as being in critical condition and in an induced coma with "severe neurological damage and internal injuries."

But a CAT scan showed "minor damage" to his brain, with "some bleeding (and) some swelling," a

3-inch cut near his right eye and some bruising, said John Box, Andrew's dad. Andrew was in the intensive care unit for two days, Mr. Box said.

The cut has since been stitched and Andrew's vision is 20-20, Mr. Box said. "The only thing we're really concerned about (now) is short-term memory loss," he said. "He's doing well. We're keeping him in. After a couple of hours of activity, he gets pretty tired. ... We're happy

with the progress he's made."

Memory loss, if it occurs, is a short-term concern. Andrew, who is about to turn 18, is also about to start his freshman year at St. Mary's College of California in Moraga. However with the brain's ability to recover, memory loss over the long term is not a concern, his dad said.

The accident has become a turning point in his life, Andrew said.

See **CRASH**, page 8

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Rescue expert, firefighting veteran named chief of MP fire district

■ He led rescue task force deployed to New Orleans and the World Trade Center.

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Harold Schapelhouman said he's not planning on "turning the place upside down" when he takes over as chief of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District on January 1.

He will, however, work to increase community outreach and education programs focused on fire prevention and disaster preparedness, he said last week after his appointment was announced.

Mr. Schapelhouman, a 25-year fire district veteran who was promoted to deputy chief in April, was appointed to the district's top position by a unanimous vote of the district board on August 15.

The district encompasses Menlo Park, Atherton, East Palo Alto and nearby unincorporated areas.

He will be the first chief to be appointed from within the district ranks in 21 years, according to John Osmer, president of the district board.

Except for a nine-month stint as a student firefighter in Los Altos, he has spent his entire career at the Menlo Park district, holding positions ranging from dispatcher, firefighter and fire investigator to training captain, division chief of special operations and deputy chief.

He will succeed Doug Sporleder, a retired chief of the Santa Clara County Fire Department who last August took up the reins at the district to help the board choose a permanent chief.



The Almanac/Kainaz Amarila

Harold Schapelhouman last September upon his return from rescue operations in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Schapelhouman, 45, was instrumental in shaping the district's emergency preparedness and rescue programs. Until he was appointed deputy chief this year, he headed California Task Force 3, one of the state's eight regional urban search and rescue teams, and one of 28 federal teams.

The task force is administered by the Menlo Park fire district, and made up of Bay Area firefighters, search and rescue specialists, medical professionals and others needed to deal with disasters. It was deployed to the World Trade Center after the September 11 attacks, to New Orleans last year to help rescue flood victims, to Oklahoma City in the aftermath of the terrorist bombing of the Murrah federal building, and to many other natural disaster and high-security sites since it

was formed in 1991.

Mr. Schapelhouman made his mark in the emergency preparedness and rescue arena even before the task force was created in 1991. Early in his career with the district, he and another junior firefighter were sent to participate in a county-sponsored emergency response and critical care exercise. That's when they discovered that many of the written guidelines for county emergency workers responding to a disaster were dismayingly outdated.

So he and his colleague took on the task of updating information in the county's response protocols, "and that morphed into developing emergency guidelines," he said.

He then began attending classes and focusing on disaster response, networking with emergency workers from other areas who had dealt with their own disasters to learn from their experiences.

When the government launched its project creating search and rescue task forces throughout the country to deal with disasters, Mr. Schapelhouman was a key player in the district's winning the contract to administer and house California Task Force 3.

"We were in a position to bid at that point," he said, adding that he lobbied the fire chief at the time, Jim Bennett, to push for the district's leadership role.

Born in Canada, Mr. Schapelhouman grew up in Palo Alto and other Peninsula towns. He lives with his wife Lada and daughter Meaghan in San Jose, 23 miles from work — meeting the district's residency requirement for its fire chiefs by two miles, he said.

Rosener House honors veterans, dedicates flag

Peninsula Volunteers Rosener House held a dedication ceremony recently with a new American flag to honor its war veterans.

Those taking part were Don D'Amico, assistant group facilitator and a sergeant first class for the

82nd Airborne during the Korean War; Joseph Bacile, a World War II D-Day veteran; Hy Booth, a World War II Army Air Corps veteran; and Claud Dunn, a World War II 3rd Army engineer who served under Gen. George S. Patton.

The veterans were thanked at the July 21 event for their service as they shared memories of their service days. The flag was donated by Rosener House social worker Carol Denehy, in memory of her father.

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REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Home Owner Association Responsibilities

Q: I own a condo in a small complex and have recently discovered dry rot in my bathroom ceiling. It may be from an old leak from the condo above me. Is the HOA or the upstairs condo owner responsible to make these repairs?

A: Most condo rules, contained in recorded documents called Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs), define the respective responsibilities of individual owners and home owners associations (HOAs). Typically the condo owner is responsible for everything within the unit itself from the bare walls inward. The HOA is usually responsible for everything from the bare walls outward. This means that the dry rot you have found is probably an HOA responsibility.

If the damage is recent enough that its origin can clearly be traced to the unit above you, then the upstairs owner should bear the cost of the repair. Sometimes it is impossible to tell whether dry rot was caused by the adjacent unit or by an outside source, such as the roof or window. It may not have come from the bathroom above yours at all. Water can penetrate deep inside a building and travel horizontally.

If the building itself is older, you may not be able to confirm when and how the damage occurred without extensive forensic testing. This is why buyers need to be cautious when buying a unit in an older building. The HOA should be reasonably diligent in inspecting the building and keeping it well maintained. This is the best way to protect its integrity.

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

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High school charity ride caught up in Woodside bike flap

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

The inaugural Tour for Woodside, a fundraising bike ride benefiting the Woodside High School Foundation, is off to an inauspicious start.

Organizers, who hope to make the September 23 bike ride the centerpiece of its annual fundraising campaign for the public school, have found themselves squarely in the middle of escalating tensions between bicyclists, town officials and a contingent of Woodsiders who say the town is being overrun by hordes of two-wheelers.

"We've worked very hard at making this a successful ride — a top-notch ride," said Jackie Ballinger, a Woodside resident who is serving as the director of the bike ride.

But instead of an enthusiastic response from local bicycle organizations, Tour for Woodside organizers found their e-mail inboxes full of scathing messages from irate cyclists, she said.

"I wonder if this ride is being promoted by the same Woodside residents who don't want us riding on their roads?" said one e-mail. "And now it appears they're inviting us to spend our money to participate in a ride that benefits their community?"

Another writer suggested riders boycott Woodside businesses.

"The high school really has

nothing to do with the town of Woodside," said Diane Carr, president of the Woodside High School Foundation. "We're looking to raise money for the school. None of the money is going to the town of Woodside."

Not only that, she said, relatively few Woodside High School students are Woodside residents.

Lorri Lown, the founder of the 1,200-member bicycling group Velo Girls, said the ride's Web site, tourforwoodside.com, makes it appear that the ride benefits the town, not the school. News of the ride also came on the heels of two major charity bike rides being canceled after the Woodside Town Council wouldn't issue them an event permit, she said.

"Woodside is the centerpiece of most rides through the Peninsula," Ms. Lown said. "My hope is that they heard what I had to say."

However, she said that since her initial reaction to the ride, which was announced last month, the high school's representatives have done a good job of educating her about the purpose of the ride and its lack of affiliation with the town.

"I'm very aware that a small minority of residents in Woodside are very vocal, and really wish cyclists were not allowed in their town at all," said Ms. Lown.

She said she leads many rides for Velo Girls members through the town, including a weekly

Tuesday ride that ends with dinner at Buck's restaurant.

"Unfortunately, there are people who are so annoyed that they run cyclists off the road with their cars, and generally make us feel uncomfortable," she said.

Woodside Mayor Deborah Gordon, who has been doing outreach to bicycle groups in the hopes of reaching a detente between the town and cyclists, said the school fundraiser is getting hit from all sides.

"The town folks are taking down their signs, and the bike folks are saying, 'Gosh-darn those Woodsiders, they don't want us to ride our bikes but they want to take our money,'" Ms. Gordon said.

She pointed out that Woodside High School isn't even in the town of Woodside.

"It's a shame for all the kids who go there, that their fundraiser is having a problem because of what adults are doing," she said. "I really feel for them."

Ms. Gordon said she wants to see every road in the town be safe and pleasant for all users, whether in a car, on a bike or riding a horse.

She also said that at the October 11 meeting the Town Council will be revisiting its special events rules that limit permits to two a month. The charity bike rides that did not receive permits, the Ride to Defeat ALS and one benefiting the South Pen-



Photo by Barbara Wood

John Maroney and Jackie Ballinger head up the Woodside High fundraising bike tour.

insula Hebrew Day School, would have exceeded the two-a-month limit on events.

Ms. Carr, who is a Woodside resident herself, said Tour for Woodside organizers went to great lengths to be sensitive to Woodsiders when planning the ride's three routes, adding that the response has been great from volunteers and sponsors.

Cycling teams from Stanford University, U.C. Berkeley and U.C. Davis have said they will attend, but so far the response

from other bicyclists has been lackluster, Ms. Carr said. Organizers are hoping to attract at least 500 riders; so far about 20 are signed up, she said.

However, she said she's staying optimistic, because she's been told that it's typical for most signups to happen at the last minute, with about 30 percent occurring on the day of the ride.

"I just hope we don't have more volunteers than riders," Ms. Carr said. ■

POOL

continued from page 5

the aquatics center.

He also noted that during Mr. Sheeper's five-year lease, he has an ongoing responsibility to provide SOLO Aquatics with lane space because the nonprofit is a community group.

According to the contract, community groups and individuals, such as local swimmers who don't participate in Mr. Sheeper's programs or classes, are guaranteed access to the new, \$6.8 million publicly funded aquatics center.

"Pushed out"

But Mr. Hinshaw said SOLO Aquatics is being "pushed out" of the center.

He said that Mr. Sheeper, since winning his bid to operate the pools in February, has yet to offer a schedule of lane hours that accommodates Mr. Hinshaw's swimmers.

Mr. Sheeper's previous offers,

he said, wouldn't provide SOLO Aquatics with the number of lanes the group needs to conduct its programs and classes. The offers also were for hours that wouldn't accommodate SOLO swimmers, he added.

"I've got kids in the community ready to go, and I don't have any other options," Mr. Hinshaw said. "If needed, I'm ready to contend that he's in breach of his agreement with the city, and [the city] should terminate his contract."

Mr. Hinshaw said he plans to meet with Mr. McClure on August 29; he then will evaluate his options and may decide to file a formal complaint.

A formal complaint would be reviewed by City Manager David Boesch. If he determines the complaint has merit, and the issue goes unresolved after the city intervenes, Mr. Boesch has the ability to terminate the contract.

A decision to terminate the contract could be appealed to the

City Council, Mr. McClure said.

He added that after a July 21 meeting in which city staff outlined to Mr. Sheeper and Mr. Hinshaw what SOLO Aquatics is owed, he has "no reason to believe" a complaint will be filed.

Failure to negotiate

But since that July 21 meeting, Mr. Hinshaw said, negotiations with Mr. Sheeper are still unsuccessful.

He said that Mr. Sheeper has told him multiple times that once SOLO Aquatics' free lane hours run out, the nonprofit will not be offered space at the aquatics center.

"The city has been great — they've been exceptional at relaying to [Mr. Sheeper] what SOLO is owed," Mr. Hinshaw said. "But [Mr. Sheeper] is giving me nothing, and despite the city's work, that hasn't changed."

He said that because of the delayed negotiations, SOLO has lost revenue, and may have to cut some of its fall program-

ming scheduled to be held at the Burgess center.

Previous support

Mr. Hinshaw stated his support for Mr. Sheeper and the privatization of the aquatics center at the council's February 28 meeting.

He did so, he said, because Mr.

CRASH

continued from page 5

"I'm looking forward to going to school," he said. "I'm looking forward to a new beginning."

Andrew attended both Ormondale elementary and Corte Madera middle schools in Portola Valley and is a member of the class of 2006 at Woodside High School. When he's looking to relax, Andrew said he likes to ski, fish and hunt water fowl.

He was injured at about 2:45 a.m. when a car driven by Portola Valley resident Justin Hughes, 18, overturned on Portola Road

Sheeper contacted him in January, asking if he would support efforts to privatize the pool if SOLO Aquatics still received the lane hours it was owed and was guaranteed access to the facility.

"I supported this deal thinking I was doing the best thing for my swimmers," Mr. Hinshaw said. "I was betrayed." ■

near Old La Honda Road in Woodside.

Lt. Ken Jones of the Sheriff's Office said that Mr. Hughes told him after the accident that he'd been drinking and had been driving at about 70 mph in a section of Portola Road where the speed limit is 40 mph. Criminal charges are likely, Lt. Jones said.

Asked about lessons he'd learned from the accident, Andrew replied: "I definitely learned a lesson about getting in the car with someone who's drunk. I definitely learned just not to do that. Definitely not a good idea." ■

CHP shooting in Atherton critically wounds Redwood City man, 37

■ Incident begins with high-speed car chase through Menlo Park.

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

A Redwood City man remained hospitalized in critical condition on Monday afternoon after being shot on an Atherton street by a California Highway Patrol officer following a car chase on Saturday, August 19, around 1 a.m.

In an incident that started on U.S. 101 near Willow Road, a CHP officer in a patrol car chased Nelson Gonzalez, 37, through Menlo Park in a looping arc west on Willow, north on Alma Street and east on Oak Grove Avenue at speeds up to 90 mph. The chase ended at about 1:10 a.m. in the Lindenwood neighborhood of Atherton, said Lt. Glenn Nielsen of the Atherton Police Department.

The CHP officer, who was out of his car, fired several shots at Mr. Gonzalez in his car after Mr. Gonzalez ran his small white sedan into a thicket in a residential side yard at the intersection of Oak Grove and Greenoaks Drive, Lt. Nielsen said.

Asked if Mr. Gonzalez was armed, Lt. Nielsen said he didn't think he was.

Deputies in two patrol cars from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office were on the scene as backup, Lt. Nielsen said.

A Stanford Hospital spokeswoman said Monday, August 21, that Mr. Gonzalez remains in critical condition. Lt. Nielsen described Mr. Gonzalez as "recovering from his injuries," which include at least one gunshot wound to his torso. The CHP officer was not injured, he added. The officer has not been identified.

Lt. Nielsen said he did not have detailed information on

the incident, including where the CHP officer was standing relative to Mr. Gonzalez's car when he fired the shots.

When asked if the CHP officer had given Mr. Gonzalez a verbal warning and if Mr. Gonzalez spoke English, Lt. Nielsen referred the Almanac to the CHP. The CHP did not return repeated calls.

Atherton police are leading the investigation in cooperation with the county crime lab, the CHP and the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office, Lt. Nielsen said.

The District Attorney's Office is involved because an officer used a gun, District Attorney Jim Fox told the Almanac. Mr. Fox added that the officers on the scene were trying to get Mr. Gonzalez to leave his car and that he may have been shot because he was trying to drive away and "did not abandon his vehicle." ■

Local liquor vendors oppose BevMo

■ Newly formed group says alcohol retailer would hurt local businesses.

By Sean Howell

Special to the Almanac

Six local alcoholic beverage vendors — including Beltramo's and Draeger's — have formed an organization to oppose the plan of nationwide alcohol retailer Beverages & More (BevMo) to move into the former Dal Baffo restaurant site on Santa Cruz Avenue in downtown Menlo Park.

The newly formed Menlo Park Purveyors of Wines and Spirits sent a letter to the Menlo Park Planning Commission last week, asking that the city deny BevMo a conditional use permit to occupy the space.

The group consists of Beltramo's Wine and Spirits, Country Corner,

Draeger's, Sharon Heights Wines & Spirits, Tri E-Z Foods & Liquor, and the Willow Market.

BevMo has applied for a permit to move in at 878 Santa Cruz Ave., between University Drive and Crane Street.

BevMo's plans call for a small-scale store with wine tasting, similar to the store in Willow Glen, rather than a full-sized store like the one in Redwood City.

The letter, addressed to Planning Commission Chairman Harry Bims, stated that the addition of BevMo would threaten the business of local liquor vendors and degrade the character of Santa Cruz Avenue and the small-town feel of Menlo Park.

The letter said that Menlo Park

already has enough liquor vendors with Safeway and Trader Joe's, in addition to the six members of the Purveyors of Wines and Spirits.

The group is arguing that BevMo would not generate more sales tax revenue for the city, but would instead only spread liquor sales over more vendors.

In a letter to the Almanac, Dan Beltramo, a principal owner of Beltramo's, said: "It will only take a few more formula driven retailers in the center of Menlo Park to change the creative appeal and spirit of the neighborhood for many years to come."

BevMo's application for a conditional use permit could appear before the Planning Commission at a public hearing as early as mid-September, said city staff. The commission's decision could be appealed to the City Council. ■

Task force to tackle Menlo Park child care bids

The city-sponsored task force formed to recommend what operator should run the city's child care programs is scheduled this week to discuss and rank three proposals to operate the programs.

The task force — nine parents, child care specialists and appointed officials known as the Menlo Park Child Care RFP Committee — is scheduled to meet at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, August 23, in the Burgess Recreation Center at 700 Alma St.

The group is scheduled to

■ MENLO PARK

discuss bids from three potential operators — Pacifica-based Building Kidz; Redwood City-based start-up Learning Adventures; and the city itself.

The three bidders responded to a request for proposals issued by the city — a process pushed by City Council members Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc, who say the city's programs are too costly. Mayor Nicholas Jellins also supported putting the pro-

grams out to bid.

The bids are for operation of the preschool and school-age programs based in the Menlo Children's Center; the Belle Haven child care programs are not included.

The committee is scheduled to interview the bidders, and, at its September 6 meeting, make a recommendation to forward to the council.

The proposals are available at the city clerk's office in the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.



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Controversial e-voting machines approved by county supervisors

■ Speakers raise concerns over accuracy, fraud; Slocum pledges to focus on security.

By Sean Howell

Special to the Almanac

When county residents step into the polling booth this November to cast their votes for city council, school board and special district board members, they'll be using new electronic voting machines unanimously authorized last week by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

Despite protests and warnings from a range of speakers at the board's August 15 meeting — including David Dill, a prominent professor of computer science at Stanford and founder

of the nonprofit Verified Voting Foundation — the supervisors approved the purchase of 2,100 voting machines manufactured by Hart InterCivic of Austin, Texas.

The machines will cost \$10.5 million, though the county will pay only \$1.5 million of that total.

San Mateo County Chief Elections Officer Warren Slocum defended the new machines, saying that they would simplify the jobs of election administrators, make it easier for the disabled to vote, and save the county about \$1 million over the next four years.

But members of the public, who spoke for more than an hour during the hearing, raised concerns that the electronic machines would be more prone to error and fraud by the manufacturer or voting officials.

Mr. Slocum told the supervisors that he and his staff are "committed to setting the gold standard for the [electronic voting] approach."

Disability access

The county needs to acquire

the new machines because the existing optical scanners don't comply with federal standards for disability access, Mr. Slocum said. The Hart systems will allow disabled citizens to vote in secrecy for the first time in county history, he said.

In response to speaker com-

Mr. Slocum acknowledged that federal standards for electronic voting security are inadequate, but said that the county would work with private organizations to test the machines' accuracy before using them.

Mr. Dill, the Stanford computer science professor, said he isn't convinced that the new machines would be secure. His organization, Verified Voting Foundation, works to persuade states to use paper trails, but he said that the system, and even paper trails, are still untrustworthy and can be invalidated by minor operator errors.

Mr. Dill urged the county to hold off on the electronic machines until more is known about the technology. He advised that it continue using the current system or buy newer, less expensive scan machines in the meantime.

'Today does not represent the end of our conversations about security practices.'

WARREN SLOCUM,
CHIEF ELECTIONS OFFICER
SAN MATEO COUNTY



ments, he acknowledged it would be possible to install just one Hart machine for the disabled at each polling station, and continue to use the existing optical-scan machines for other voters. That option, though, would be more costly and make it more difficult for polling officials to manage, he said.

Purchased in 1992, the optical scanning machines are outdated and also waste large amounts of paper because polling stations are required to have far more ballots — in three languages — available than are actually used.

With the new system, there is no need for a printed ballot, although voters will receive a paper printout recording their vote when they leave the poll station. In addition, each vote will be printed out for the county's records, leaving a paper trail that officials will be able to check after the election.

Concerns about accuracy

A number of residents expressed concern about the accuracy of the Hart machines, known as eSlate, citing reports of electronic vote fraud, most notably in the 2004 presidential election.

Some fear that the systems could be hacked or manipulated by the supplier or election officials, or that problems in the software or hardware could cause errors.

Accountability issues

Much of the supervisors' deliberations revolved around the issue of whether Hart InterCivic would be held accountable for their machines in case voting errors occur.

"If there are significant problems with the machines or the paper trails in the future, there will be a lot of people who were at that meeting who will be saying 'I told you so,'" Mr. Dill said afterward.

The county's contract with Hart allows for the appointment of an independent third party that could check machines for tampering and review the company's software code.

Alan Dechert, president of the Open Voting Consortium, warned that the Hart machines might soon be outdated if the state or federal governments pass legislation requiring stricter standards for voting machines.

Dr. Katherine Forrest of Portola Valley, co-founder and director of operations for the Commonweal Institute, a Menlo Park think tank, raised the possibility that the county could face civil and criminal lawsuits if it doesn't protect itself from liability.

Supervisor Mark Church said that he would create a subcommittee that would work with Mr. Slocum and concerned citizens to review the safety of the system.

Mr. Slocum pledged to consult with Mr. Dill as well as several voting organizations. "Today does not represent the end of our conversations about security practices," he said.

Although the county plans to use the new machines in November, voters will still be able to request a paper ballot or vote absentee. ■

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Council backpedals, then forges ahead with audit

■ Council persuaded to go ahead with third phase of audit of building department.

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

Just how much more does the Atherton City Council need to know about the town's embattled building department?

The target of both a personnel investigation and an increasingly in-depth audit, Atherton's building department has been under a cloud of suspicion since its head, Building Official Mike Hood, retired suddenly at the end of June.

So far, an internal audit led by Finance Director John Johns has turned up nearly \$145,000 in uncollected building fees, most stemming from excavation permits granted in May 2005.

Last month, the council told Mr. Johns to come back with a plan for the third phase of an audit scrutinizing the building department's procedures and practices, as well as its books. This month, however, some of the council members had a change of heart, balking at both the \$32,000 price tag and

the usefulness of getting more details on the department's sloppy practices.

At the August 16 council meeting, Mr. Johns proposed to examine between 40 and 60 building permit files that appear problematic, and to use an outside building professional to verify such things as building height and setback requirements. Mr. Johns told the council that auditors would go through files over the past five years and thoroughly examine the ones that appear to have been improperly handled.

"I'm concerned with why we're spending \$32,000 and going through files for five years when we know what needs to be done," said Councilman Jim Janz.

Mr. John said there are still a number of questions to be answered on how effective the building department was in adhering to Atherton's codes, and if the rules were applied consistently to all applicants. Findings from a third phase of the audit would help identify

No election in Atherton

The Atherton City Council election in November has been canceled.

Three of the council's five seats are up for election, and the only candidates are the three incumbents: Alan Carlson, Jerry Carlson and Charles Marsala.

At its August 16 meeting, the council voted to appoint the three incumbents to four-year terms, rather than go ahead with the general municipal

election on November 7. The vote was 4-0, with Jerry Carlson abstaining.

The council's decision means that Alan Carlson will be appointed to a third term and that Mr. Marsala, currently serving as mayor, will be appointed to a second term. It will be the first full term in office for Jerry Carlson, who was appointed in January to fill the late Councilman Bill Conwell's vacant seat.

Decision due on town report

Atherton's city attorney said he would decide by the end of this week whether to honor the Almanac's request to make public a special investigator's report on the Atherton Building Department.

The report by attorney Lance Bayer, who was hired by the town last winter, was kept under wraps and only recently released to the Atherton City Council in a closed session meeting.

Atherton residents and council members alike had been agitating to see the report. Atherton City Attorney Marc Hynes said that the employees' right to privacy on personnel matters trumps the public's right to know.

The Almanac is seeking release of the report because the lack of information has cast a cloud of suspicion over all building department employees, said Almanac News Editor Renee Batti.

Mr. Hynes said he would respond to the Almanac's August 4 public records request no later than August 25. He referred to a current case in Santa Clara County Superior Court involving the release of a report about moonlighting city of Palo Alto utility workers, saying that developments in that case "may have a bearing on (the) release of some or all of the information you have requested from the town."

■ ATHERTON

priorities for new procedures and computer systems that need to be put into place in the building department, he said. Some changes to department practices have already been made, he said.

Councilman Alan Carlson argued that the previous two phases of the audit did a good job in identifying problems ranging from poor record-keeping and an inadequate computer system to procedures that weren't in place or weren't followed.

"I doubt we did have consistency in the past. I'm willing to say that we did not," said Mr. Carlson. "Let's move forward."

That argument met stiff resistance from Councilwoman

Kathy McKeithen, who was the first to urge the council to look into complaints about the building department.

"We're not going to clear the air and restore credibility in the building department until we address all of these issues," Ms. McKeithen said. "This will look like another cover-up. Let's not go on the cheap now."

She said she expected the audit to continue to reveal the creativity some applicants employed in circumventing or deceiving town officials about their construction projects. The town can't prevent abuses that it doesn't anticipate, she said.

"I suggest that we darn well spend the \$32,000 — it's darn worth the credibility, if nothing else," she said.

Mr. Carlson and Mr. Janz

questioned how much information could be gleaned from files kept by a department that didn't even keep records of inspection reports — the reports were given back to the contractors, Mr. Johns said.

Eventually, after an extensive grilling of Mr. Johns and putting questions to interim building department head Gary Binger, the council voted unanimously to go ahead with phase three of the audit. However, the council directed Mr. Johns to try to curb costs and asked him to use his discretion to cut back or halt the audit if it failed to turn up useful information.

Mr. John said he expected to complete the audit by early October and have a report ready for the council's regular council meeting on October 18. ■

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Kids rally to save Foster's Freeze

Favorite ice cream stop is due to be demolished next year.

Brady Gallagher, 13, and his brother Nicky, 12, of Menlo Park say they have gathered in the past week some 400 signatures on a petition to save a Menlo Park landmark, Foster's Freeze.

A favorite ice cream and hamburger stop at 850 Oak Grove Ave. for generations of local families, Foster's Freeze is due to be demolished as part of a plan to build 135 condominiums and 22,500-square-foot of commercial space on Oak Grove near El Camino Real.

Nearly every day last week, for a couple of hours a day, the boys and

MENLO PARK

their mother, Laurie Gallagher, have stood out in front of Foster's Freeze, gathering signatures.

"Nearly everyone signs it," said Ms. Gallagher. "There is a real uproar."

She and the kids say they'll present the petition to the Menlo Park City Council on August 29, when the development plan, known as the Derry project, is on the agenda.

"It's amazing how many residents didn't know it would be leaving," said Ms. Gallagher.

Brady and Nicky and their friends "ride their bikes and come here — all the kids come here," said Ms. Gallagher, who

Lining up: Brady Gallagher, right, and his brother Nicky, second from right, gather signatures to save their landmark ice cream shop.

The Almanac/
Marjan Sadoughi



added that the shop dates back to the 1940s.

"I talked to this older man who said he took his wife here on their first date," she said.

The shop opened in 1949, according to records checked by Frank Helfrich of the Menlo Park Historical Association.

Brady, who noted that a neighbor inspired him to start the petition drive, said he likes Foster's Freeze because the food is "good and affordable."

The Derry project involves building 10 two- and three-story structures on a 3.5-acre

INFORMATION

The Menlo Park City Council will hold a public hearing on the Derry proposal at its August 29 meeting. The meeting is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

site owned by the Derry family between El Camino Real and the Caltrain station.

The site borders Oak Grove Ave and Derry Lane and is home to several businesses, including

Foster's Freeze and the Wo Sing Laundry and Dry Cleaners.

The San Mateo-based O'Brien Group is partnering with the Derry family in the project.

Jim Pollart, vice president of land acquisition and planning for the O'Brien Group, said "it's certainly a possibility" that existing tenants could fill the new commercial space, but detailed negotiations with any of the tenants have yet to take place.

If approved by the council, constructions could start in early 2007 and be finished by late 2008, Mr. Pollart said. ■

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Armed robbers strike twice in Menlo Park

Armed robbers held up the Wells Fargo Bank in the Sharon Heights shopping center in Menlo Park on August 17, about 12 hours after an armed man struck a gas station convenience store on El Camino Real Wednesday night.

The incidents do not appear to be related, said acting Sgt. Kevin Paugh.

Three men, some carrying handguns, robbed the bank at 325 Sharon Park Drive at around 9:15 a.m. Thursday, Sgt. Paugh said.

The men entered the bank and immediately ordered all employees and the sole customer to the

floor. Everyone complied, and no one was physically harmed, Sgt. Paugh said.

Some robbers leapt over the counters and removed money from the drawers, he said. The suspects then ran to a vehicle waiting nearby and fled west on Sand Hill Road toward Interstate 280.

Police would not disclose the amount stolen.

The suspects were described as black, in their late teens or early 20s, and wearing white sweatshirts and jeans. Witnesses described the vehicle as a BMW 3-series with tinted windows

and black or dark-colored rims.

Police ask anyone with information to call the investigating detectives at 330-6360 or 330-6363, or the anonymous tip hotline at 330-6395.

Store robbed

A man with a handgun held up a convenience store at the Valero gas station at 275 El Camino Real in Menlo Park at 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sgt. Jill Jensen of the Menlo Park Police Department reported.

The man entered the store and pointed the gun at a clerk, who was alone at the time, Sgt. Jensen said. The armed man demanded that the clerk unload the cash register, and the clerk handed over the money.

After taking the cash, the man ran out of the store and entered a vehicle parked less than a block away on Cambridge Avenue, Sgt. Jensen said. The car was described as a tan or gold Oldsmobile Alero from the early 1990s.

The suspect is described as approximately 5 feet 6 inches tall and of average build. He was wearing a black ski mask and a black short-sleeved shirt with a white long-sleeved shirt underneath.

Police ask anyone with information to call the station at 330-6300, or the anonymous tip hotline at 330-6395. ■

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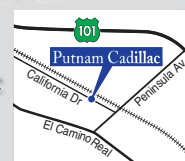


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A PHOTO ESSAY BY MARJAN SADOUGHI

MENLO CH



One week every summer, the wide open expanse of the Menlo Circus Club's polo field becomes a mini-equine metropolis of temporary stalls, as hundreds of horses and riders assemble in Atherton for the Menlo Charity Horse Show. On a warm August day, the musk of horseflesh, the sweet, dusty smell of hay and the underlying odor of manure permeate the air, creating an irresist-

ible olfactory lure for horse lovers.

This year's show, which ran August 8 through 13, drew 650 horses and riders, and had a waiting list of more than 300 competitors who didn't manage to sign up fast enough.

Inside the country club's grounds, fancifully designed jumps in three separate show rings are only part of the charity horse show's allure — at times the event seems

Clockwise from top: A sudsy Sebastian gets a thorough bath from Eduardo Vega; a blind youth uses his fingers to explore horse shoes provided by Woodside farrier Butch Coggins; Oscar Ahumada affixes a horse shoe; José Jimenez flings sawdust as he cleans the stalls, a Herculean undertaking considering the 650 horses at the show.



ARITY HORSE SHOW

STORY BY ANDREA GEMMET

more like a reunion for the horsey set than a serious competition with a \$40,000 prize purse for the Grand Prix event.

Amid the saddles, jodhpurs and gleaming tack, some of the show's beneficiaries could be found getting a hands-on understanding of the equestrian world. Proceeds from the show are donated to the Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Palo Alto. Last year, the six-

day event raised more than \$400,000 for the organization. Atherton resident Betsy Glikbarg, the show's chair, says the finally tally isn't in yet, but it promised to exceed last year's total.

The elite competitors of the show hunter and jumper world rubbed elbows with novice riders there to participate in their first lead-line show. Grooms worked diligently to care for their four-legged charges and spectators

shopped for belt buckles and other equestrian goodies in between events.

Riding togs gave way to formal wear for the traditional Friday night dinner dance, and then it was back to boots and blazers as the competition reached its peak over the weekend. And then when it was over, like pampered movie stars, the horses retreated into their trailers and disappeared until next year. ■

See **HORSE SHOW**, page 16



Clockwise from top left: Chatting in the practice ring; winner John French of Woodside leads Overseas back to the ring; neighborly horses check out the competition; judge Andrew Lustig of Savannah, Georgia, scrutinizes a rider in a hunter competition for ages 15 and under; Guy Thomas and his mount from Willow Tree Farm in Woodside sail over a jump; Lorena Soulodre of the Vista youth group gets help feeding treats to a willing horse.



MENLO CHARITY HORSE SHOW

HORSE SHOW
continued from page 15



Clockwise from top left: A small rider sits atop a big horse in the lead-line class for ages 6 and under; horse show manager Walter Haub (left) and announcer Matt Hinton iron out some details; waving to an admiring public; Loren E. Buclaw peeks out from her display of handmade belts; Daphne James, 7, shows off her ribbon; prize ribbons bathed in sunlight; photographer Jim Sansoterra leans in to take a shot of Nick Hanness and Rosie Garlock of Atherton;



School board election takes shape in MP

By Marjorie Mader
Almanac Staff Writer

There will be an election in the Menlo Park City School District after all with four candidates vying for three board seats and four-year terms November 7.

Noria Zasslow, who ran for a board seat four years ago, is the latest and final candidate to enter the race. She filed papers on August 8; the filing period closed August 16.

Three candidates — incumbent Laura Linkletter Rich and school-community volunteers Jeffrey B. Child and Deborah J. Fitz — turned in their papers the first day of filing on July 17.

All vacant positions are for four-year terms.

Long before the candidate filing period opened, trustees Nancy Serrurier and Carol Orton said they would not seek re-election.

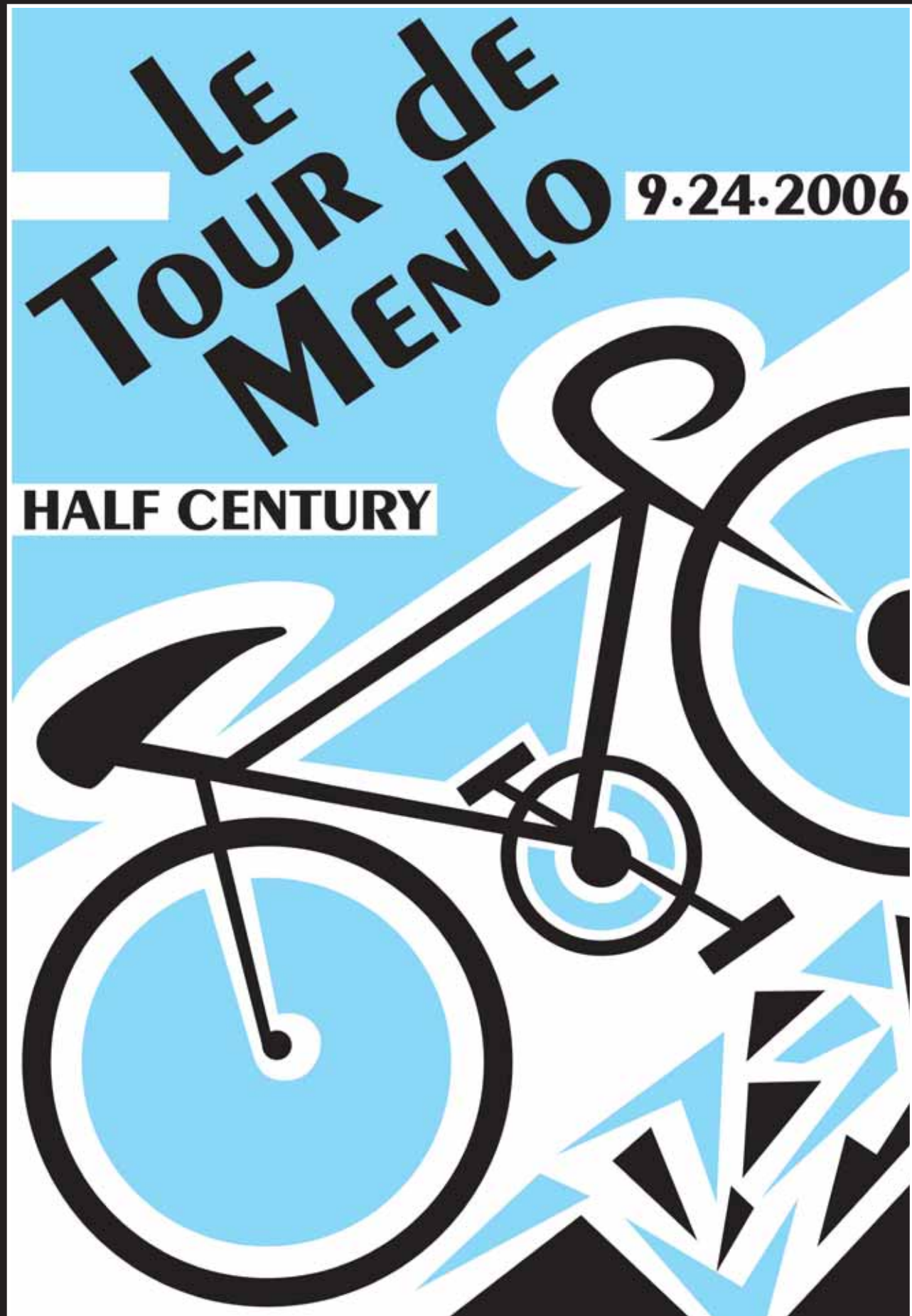
Ms. Zasslow will be listed on the ballot as mother-translator. She neither campaigned nor filed a candidate's statement when she ran for the board in 2002.

In 2004, she triggered an election for a seat on the San Mateo County School Board in the district that includes Menlo Park. She also ran unsuccessfully last November for a seat on the Sequoia Union High School District Board.

Ms. Rich, president of the school board, has been involved in district schools as a parent, and an Encinal PTA president and board member for the past eight years. She also has worked on education issues as a participant in the California School Boards Association's Delegate Assembly and the county school board association.

Mr. Child, whose ballot designation is financial manager, was co-chair of the district's successful 2003 parcel-tax election campaign. He also was financial treasurer this past year of the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation, which during that year raised \$1.6 million in grants for the district.

Ms. Fitz was a co-chair of the district's community campaign that worked to pass a \$91.1 million school bond on June 6. The funds will be used to replace portable classrooms at the district's four schools, build additional classrooms and expand multi-use facilities to meet the needs of projected enrollment growth. Her ballot designation is community volunteer. ■



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Where are City Council minutes?

■ There is no written record for past four months of council decisions.

By **Rory Brown**

Almanac Staff Writer

In the past four months, the Menlo Park City Council has voted to privatize the city's \$6.8 million aquatics center, seek bids to operate its child care programs, and put two measures on the November ballot.

Yet, there is currently no official written record of which council members voted for or against these and other actions. Recent council decisions are documented only through archived videos and "Webcasts" — online broadcasts — because the city clerk has fallen behind on producing written minutes of council meetings, which traditionally have been accessible online and in City Hall.

The four-month backlog of minutes has sparked a debate that, for the most part, has taken place through letters to the editor in the Almanac.

Resident Nancy Borgeson accused the city of "malpractice" for its backlog of minutes in a July 26 letter to the Almanac.

Ms. Borgeson said the city is, in effect, violating its only policy of making minutes available to the public, and the backlog is restricting the public's ability to access public information.

City Manager David Boesch and council members Nicholas Jellins, Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc have dismissed Ms. Borgeson's claims, arguing that the city clerk, Silvia Vonderlinden, is overburdened with other tasks, and videotapes and Webcasts of the meetings are made immediately available to the public.

Mr. Boesch replied to Ms. Borgeson's letter with a letter of his own, saying there has been no direction given to Ms. Vonderlinden to stop producing minutes — she is simply a "one-person" office with a heavy workload.

Minutes have traditionally gone to the council for approval several weeks after the original meeting date, but Ms. Winkler said written minutes are a "very sketchy" record of council decisions compared to videotapes and online Webcasts.

"This is the most open council

that has ever existed," Ms. Winkler said. "With all of the technology at our citizens' disposal, they know what decisions the council is making."

■ MENLO PARK

Written records
But videotapes and Webcasts don't replace minutes as an official record of council decisions, said Terry Francke, a general counsel for CalAware, a state group that advocates open government.

"Minutes are a legal record of the actions taken by the council," Mr. Francke said. "Telling the public to go elsewhere for records is the equivalent of saying ... 'just go to the meeting and sit through it.' I'm surprised the council itself is putting up with this."

Ms. Borgeson, in a second letter e-mailed to the City Council, said written minutes are also a much more convenient record to navigate, particularly if the issue of interest is discussed over a series of council meetings.

"I know from experience that if a city resident wants to refer to a council decision ... the resident may have to scan 30 to 36 hours of bad videotape to find the item of interest versus spending 15 to 20 minutes scanning the written minutes," she said in the e-mail.

Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson said the minutes backlog is "clearly a problem that needs to be addressed," and noted the best solution may be temporarily hiring additional staff to help Ms. Vonderlinden catch up.

Ms. Vonderlinden said she's trying to get minutes completed and posted on the city's Web site to the best of her ability.

The April 4 council minutes went before the council at its August 1 meeting, but several changes were made by council members, meaning they could not be approved until a later meeting. The last posted minutes are from the March 28 meeting. ■

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Palo Alto seeks Stanford Shopping Center expansion

■ City, center in early talks to expand mall by almost 20 percent.

By Molly Tanenbaum
Palo Alto Weekly Staff Writer

Stanford Shopping Center may experience another growth spurt soon, if Palo Alto officials pushing for increased sales-tax revenue — to the tune of \$2.25 million a year — get their way.

Early talks between the city and the shopping center's management company, Simon Prop-

erty Group, have looked at the possibility of expanding the mall by nearly 20 percent, which would follow suit with other growing area malls such as Valley Fair in San Jose.

Additions to the shopping center could also include a hotel.

"We need to talk and work with the center to understand what they need," said Councilman Bern Beecham. "I don't expect something to happen overnight."

The talks between the city and Simon Property Group about growing the city's largest sales-tax revenue generator are "very, very preliminary," said Susan Arpan, the city's manager of economic development and redevelopment. "Nothing has moved forward yet," she said.

However preliminary, such talks are in line with the "Revenue Creation and Expense Reduction" study session held July 31 by the City Council. Looking out past July 2008, two of the major ideas discussed at

that meeting included increasing Stanford Shopping Center's sales-tax revenues and attracting a new hotel to Palo Alto.

"I would love to see their sales tax increase by a third," Mr. Beecham said. However, he added, "I don't see that as growing in square footage by a third."

City staff, in its July 31 presentation, had targeted a \$2 million increase in shopping center tax revenue, along with \$250,000 from the hotel. Stanford Shopping Center, currently at 1.4 million square feet, could expand by another 250,000.

"It means a great deal for our economic health," said Planning Director Steve Emslie. "We depend a lot on sales-tax revenue."

Approximately one-fifth of the city's \$100 million revenue stream is derived from sales taxes,

according to 2004-05 figures.

The location of a new, medium-sized hotel is uncertain, but Mr. Emslie said the mall's expansion would probably be in keeping with growth from seven years ago.

"When they expand, like other centers that have done this, they'll take up some additional footprint in the parking lot and they'll make up the parking by building a parking structure," he said.

If the shopping center were to expand, it would have to coordinate with the "imminent redevelopment" at Stanford Medical Center, said Bill Phillips, managing director of real estate for the Stanford Management Company.

Mr. Phillips noted that the hospital itself will need to meet new state earthquake safety standards soon, which may include expansion of the medical center. ■

Six candidates running for City Council

■ Incumbents Winkler, Duboc say they support newcomer Boyle.

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

Six candidates have filed papers to run for three open seats on the Menlo Park City Council.

Three of the candidates turned in their papers on August 16, the filing deadline: parks and recreation commissioners Richard Cline and Heyward Robinson, and Linfield Oaks resident Vincent Bressler.

All three candidates say they oppose the current council majority of council members Nicholas Jellins, Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc.

Incumbents Winkler and Duboc are seeking re-election, but Mayor Jellins is not seeking another term.

Ms. Winkler and Ms. Duboc have aligned themselves with candidate John Boyle, a member of the city's Transportation Commission. The three candidates pledge support for one another in their ballot statements.

Ballot statements for all six candidates are available for public viewing at the city clerk's office in the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

MP election measures designated J and K

The two local ballot measures that will go before Menlo Park voters — an advisory measure on sports fields at Bayfront Park, and a proposed tax on utility bills — have been labeled Measure J and Measure K, respectively, on the November ballot.

Measure J will ask voters if they support spending an estimated \$15 million to \$17 million to build four sports fields on 15 to 17 acres of Bayfront Park, the 160-acre park off Marsh Road.

■ MENLO WATCH

City Council members Nicholas Jellins, Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc voted to put the measure on the ballot. Council members Kelly Fergusson and Andy Cohen opposed it.

Measure K is a utility tax measure that, if approved, would authorize the city to tax water, gas and electric bills up to 3.5 percent; and telephone, cell phone and cable bills up to 2.5 percent. The tax, if passed, is expected to raise about \$2.5 million a year for the city.

A simple majority is needed to pass the measure. The council voted 5-0 to put the measure on the ballot.

Primary arguments for and against the ballot measures are available at the city clerk's office.

Rebuttal arguments can't

exceed 250 words, and are due at the city clerk's office by 5 p.m. August 25.

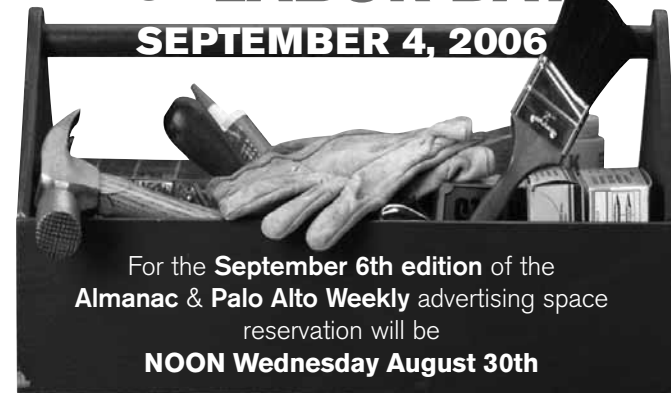
Nominees sought for environmental awards

The Menlo Park Environmental Quality Commission is now accepting nominations for "Environmental Quality Awards" — a process that awards individuals, businesses, groups and organizations for environmentally conscious projects, practices and activities.

Nomination forms, which include descriptions of the award categories, can be downloaded online. Go to www.menlopark.org, and under "News Releases" click on "Nominations for environmental quality awards."

Nominations are due by October 3. E-mail completed nomination forms to ddryer@menlopark.org.

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Abrupt resignation sparks MROSD board election

By Jay Thorwaldson
Editor, Palo Alto Weekly

It will be a shoo-in election November 7 for four members of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board of Directors — but not for a fifth member, Deane Little, who abruptly resigned this month.

Mr. Little said he plans to move to Boulder, Colorado, but announced his resignation more than two months too late for someone to run for his seat in the regular election. The district's Board of Directors will have to appoint a replacement or call a costly special election to fill the seat.

Mr. Little, a biologist and a Colorado native, told the Palo Alto Weekly he only recently made up his mind to make the move and he was still unsure until recent weeks. He said the move is for

professional reasons and to be near his family and parents, who are in their 80s.

Mr. Little is known for taking artistic landscape photos of district lands, which have been exhibited throughout the area. He also had a special interest in using natural means to control invasive species on district lands.

Meanwhile, a majority of the seven-member board faces a pain-free re-election.

Larry Hasset, who represents the Skyline Ridge and Coastside area and owns the Palo Alto Hardware store in downtown Palo Alto, was the only incumbent who faced a serious challenger. But the challenger, Gene Johnson, did not have enough valid nomination signatures because a number of his signers lived outside the district, according to the San Mateo County Registrar of Voters. Just before the filing deadline, Johnson brought in a second set, but only 47 of the 50 required signatures were deemed valid, and even after Johnson and his wife both signed he came up one short.

Other incumbents Nonette Hanco of Palo Alto, Mary Davey of Los Altos Hills and Pete Siemens of Los Gatos have no one running

against them, district spokesman Rudy Jurgenson reported after the 5 p.m. Friday filing deadline.

Ms. Hanco has served on the board since the district was formed in 1972, unopposed for re-election except for a challenger in 1972 who decided not to campaign. In 1970 she convened the first meeting to discuss whether to try to create such a district.

Ms. Davey became involved in the creation of the district within the first weeks of the effort, but has served on the board only since the early 1990s.

One person, Jim Lauth, took out filing papers to run in Ms. Davey's ward but failed to turn them in by the deadline Friday.

Both Ms. Davey and Ms. Hanco represent portions of Palo Alto due to a recent redistricting that shifted some boundaries between the seven wards.

Mr. Little said he was unaware of criticisms of the board in past decades, following late resignations that forced the board to appoint someone or allowed an insider candidate to file at the last minute. He would have had to resign by last June to allow time for the board to set a special election for his seat.

In a notorious incident in the 1970s, former board member Bill Peters simply failed to show up to file re-election forms and a different candidate, Ed Shelley, showed up instead with his own filing papers. The sleight-of-candidate move prompted the state Legislature to pass the current law allowing five extra filing days when an incumbent fails to file.

The district board is scheduled to consider whether to appoint

someone or to call a special election, at an estimated cost of about \$800,000, compared to about \$100,000 when combined with a regular election.

The district board represents a three-county region stretching from south of Los Gatos to San Carlos and from the bay to the San Mateo County coast.

Remaining board members not facing re-election this year include current President Jed St. Cyr and Ken Nitz. ■

Witness nails van thieves

Woodside might not be the best town around to solicit gas money for a stolen van.

Two San Jose teenagers with a stolen van parked in front of Robert's market in downtown Woodside on August 15 when the van ran out of gas, said Lt. Ken Jones of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

They walked in front of Robert's soliciting money for gas. Then, they walked to the nearby Chevron station and filled up a container with gas.

While the men were gone, an alert witness got suspicious and called the phone number listed on the side of the white Chevy van,


which belongs to Jose's Landscaping, owned by Jose Galleloes of San Jose. Mr. Galleloes told the caller the van had been stolen in San Jose, Lt. Jones said.

The witness called police, and sheriff's deputies showed up to arrest the two suspects: Joseph Broussard-Mosley, 18, and a juvenile, age 17.

Lt. Jones said deputies found a loaded handgun on the juvenile.

The suspects were charged with auto theft, among other charges. Mr. Broussard-Mosley is being held at the San Mateo County jail, and the juvenile is being held at the Hillcrest detention facility in Belmont.

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EYE CARE NEWS

Presented by **Mark Schmidt**
Licensed Optician

MAKING THE GRADE

According to a recent U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention review, nearly two out of three children receive no preventive vision care before entering elementary school. And in their paper called *Making the Grade*, a more recent report from the Vision Council of America reveals that only one state (Kentucky) requires all children to receive an eye exam by an eye doctor before starting elementary school. Thus, it is up to the vast majority of parents in this country to

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P.S. Amblyopia, or "lazy-eye," the leading cause of vision loss in children, affects half a million preschoolers.

Mark Schmidt is an American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners Certified Optician licensed by the Medical Board of California. He can be easily reached at Menlo Optical, 1166 University Drive, Menlo Park. 650-322-3900

Community

NEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

David Johnson brings enthusiasm to role as Rotary Club president

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

David R. Johnson, Menlo Park's business development manager, is the new president of the Menlo Park Rotary Club. He is serving a one-year term.



David Johnson is the city's business development manager.

Mr. Johnson joined the local club shortly after he was hired as the city's business development manager in 2003. However, he has been a Rotary member since 1991, when he joined the Rotary Club of Los Angeles.

He hopes his experience in such a large club will benefit Menlo Park's club of 70 members.

"Service Above Self" is the Rotary motto, says Mr. Johnson. Members are expected to become involved in one of the organization's four focus groups: youth, vocational, inter-

national and community.

With a focus on youth, Menlo Park Rotary gives \$60,000 a year in scholarships to local high school seniors.

The club also has taken a serious interest in Garfield Elementary School in Redwood City, where most of the students speak English as a second language. Twenty-nine volunteers work with third-graders in an English reading program.

The club also sponsors a science camp for fifth-graders and, last year, took seventh-graders on a field trip to Menlo School. It was

their only field trip of the year.

The Menlo club is working jointly with the Rotary Clubs of Woodside and Portola Valley on a water purification project in Guatemala after undertaking a similar project in Baja, California last year.

"We are a very involved club," says Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson came to Menlo Park from the city of Sunnyvale where he worked with the director of the public safety department. Previously, he worked in business development for Home Savings of America and Glendale Federal banks.

He has a degree in political science and economic theory from the University of California at Los Angeles.

Mr. Johnson lives in Sunnyvale with his wife, Vickey, who is director of library services for the County of San Mateo. ■

DMV accepts online 'e-checks'

The Department of Motor Vehicles recently adopted electronic checks, called e-checks, as an option for paying for services via a computer.

E-checks work like debit cards. Money is transferred from a customer's checking account, with one notable difference: Instead of entering a four-digit PIN number,

the customer must enter the bank-routing number and the customer-account number from the bottom edge of a check.

Steve Haskins of the DMV said the procedure is self-explanatory once begun, and that if it doesn't work out for some reason, the customer should revert to using a credit card.

Kepler's seeks volunteers for 'anniversary' events

Kepler's Books and Magazines in Menlo Park is looking for more than 100 volunteers to help with events scheduled to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the beloved bookstore's reopening.

Owner Clark Kepler closed the bookstore in August 2005, citing the economic downturn, but the community rallied to reopen the

Menlo Park landmark in October.

The main event, scheduled for October 14 in Burgess Park, includes a book swap; appearances by local artists, musicians and authors; games and book sales.

Kepler's plans to hold more than 20 readings by authors throughout the month.

Other planned events include:

an annual membership drive, a "Family Spook" day, and a sneak peak at upcoming books for parents, educators and librarians.

Volunteers will receive a T-shirt, and those logging more than 15 hours will get a \$20 gift certificate for the bookstore.

For more information, or to sign up to volunteer, e-mail VolunteerYes@keplers.com.

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No Mark Up! No Commission!

Menlo Park salon owner wins bodybuilding competition

By Sean Howell

Special to the Almanac

Scott Blackburn proudly displays two photos in the hairdressing salon he owns with his wife, Visions Artwear and Salon, at 644 Santa Cruz Ave. in Menlo Park.

It would be hard to find two photos that seem more out of place in a salon: Both depict Mr. Blackburn, 61, flexing his muscles at the national amateur bodybuilding competition that he won in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on July 22, hosted by the National Physique Committee (NPC).

According to Mr. Blackburn, the fact that he entered the contest at all may be even more improbable than the presence of photos of ripped muscles and a shaved head in a store that specializes in hair.

He hadn't even considered bodybuilding as a vocation until he hit the half-century mark. He was lifting weights at the Pacific Athletic Club in Redwood City one day in 1995 when a trainer approached him and asked if he had ever entered a competition.



Scott Blackburn at bodybuilding competition in Pittsburgh.

The question took Mr. Blackburn by surprise; he had only been lifting weights for five or six years, and had never considered himself to have a bodybuilder's physique.

Nevertheless, he entered a competition in San Jose and took second place in his age division. He claimed the Cali-

fornia state championship for 50-and-up in 1996 before various projects, including a home renovation, took him away from the sport for a decade.

When he turned 60, Mr. Blackburn decided to try again and promptly won a California state title in his new age group in his first competition back.

"I lift heavily for about two hours, five to six days a week, and diet (leading up to competitions)," Mr. Blackburn said. "People don't realize how hard it is."

He said that knowing he has an upcoming competition helps motivate him to train and diet. He decided to enter the NPC contest a year in advance, and waited anxiously for the date that he could officially sign up to add a sense of urgency to his workouts.

His victory in the tournament means that he will not be allowed to compete in it again: The winner of the amateur contest is automatically bumped up to professional status.

Next year, he plans to enter a competition in New York with a friend who works as a trainer. ■

Lorry Lokey pledges \$25 million for education

Atherton resident Lorry Lokey, founder and chairman of Business Wire, has committed to donating \$25 million to the American Technion Society, which supports higher education in Israel by raising money for the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.

Mr. Lokey's gift will be used for a combined life sciences and engineering research center at the campus in Haifa. The research center will be headed by 2004 Nobel laureate in chemistry, Aaron Ciechanover, according to a spokesman for the American Technion Society.

Mr. Lokey made his decision during the recent American Technion Society's annual mission to the campus, said spokesman Kevin Hattori.

"I feel that Israel has in the Technion an asset as valuable as MIT and Cal Tech combined," said Mr. Lokey in a statement.

"I was very impressed by what I saw during my visit. And despite recent criticism about the huge decline in the quality of education in Israel, I chose to invest in Israeli education to help make it even better."



Lorry Lokey has given more than \$200 million to educational projects in the U.S.

Mr. Lokey built Business Wire — a San Francisco-based wire service that distributes press releases electronically — from a one-man outfit with six clients to a company with average monthly billings of \$12 million. Berkshire Hathaway recently purchased the company.

Over the past 15 years, Mr. Lokey has given more than \$200 million to educational projects at Stanford, his alma mater, Santa Clara University, Mills College and the University of Oregon, said Mr. Hattori.

Other beneficiaries include the newly completed Peninsula Jewish Community Center in Foster City and Alameda Elementary in Portland, Oregon.

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Key to high school calculus

Slow and steady can win the race as well

By Gregg Whitnah

Math Chair, Menlo-Atherton High School

High school educators know that calculus holds the key to many technical professions. But how do we deliver that key to our students?

After decades as a math educator, here's my answer: steadily and carefully. "Accelerated" calculus may not really speed comprehension and retention of important math skills. Worse, it can leave promising students behind.

Many technically minded high school students try to get a jump-start in science or engineering by learning calculus early. Often, they begin doing some calculus in accelerated courses as sophomores, or even as freshmen.

In any case, most schools determine kids' mathematical future early. In ninth grade, at the age of 13 or 14, students enter a four-year math track. Qualifying juniors and seniors take calculus AB, often taught in one semester, followed by calculus BC, also in as short as a semester.

This pace of instruction works for kids who show early math aptitude, along with general concentration, discipline and study skills. But what about kids who show "late aptitude"?

Teens develop at their own pace. The adolescent years are intense, and big changes occur unexpectedly. At 14, a student may show a dismaying lack of math skill. By 16, the picture may improve dramatically. We need a curriculum that keeps the door open to math instruction throughout high school.

At Menlo-Atherton High, we encourage kids to take as much math as possible, regardless of personal goals or career plans. I know math-phobic students who graduated college with a humanities BA, applied to grad school in business, economics or public policy — and found they needed calculus for a master's degree. Most high school kids benefit from a steady exposure to math.

At M-A, pre-calculus is open to everyone and is not divided into levels or tracks. We encourage students to move on to calculus at an appropriate rate.

For example, kids can do calculus AB over two semesters, then study BC in another two. They can also take AB in an accelerated summer course. Either way,

MY TAKE

About the author: Gregg Whitnah is a calculus teacher and math department head at Menlo-Atherton High School. After teaching a summer calculus program this year, he decided to write this article for the Almanac.

we ensure that students test and review what they have learned before studying new material.

Every year I encourage several students to take either algebra II and pre-calculus or algebra II and geometry concurrently. When kids, particularly boys, start to remember things, get organized and grow up -- it's time to catch up, in math.

And what are they "catching up" with but our own expectations? If we simply expect kids to steadily apply themselves

and take the time they need to learn as much math as possible, in the end they can surprise us.

Of M-A students who take the College Board exam in advance placement calculus BC, more than 70 percent get the highest possible score. Some of these kids have taken the AB and BC course slowly, some quickly.

In the end, they get an open attitude to math. This openness may explain why half of our graduating students have taken statistics. ■

'We need a curriculum that keeps the door open to math instruction throughout high school.'

M-A MATH CHAIR GREGG WHITNAH

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OBITUARIES

Peter Black

Executive and wine expert

Peter Harrell Black died August 13 at his home in Atherton after an eight-month battle with lung cancer. He was 78.

Mr. Black was born and raised in Palo Alto, but also lived in San Francisco and Menlo Park. He attended Lowell High School in San Francisco, and in 1950 graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity.

In 1969, he graduated from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business Executive Program. His 35-year career as a division manager for Continental Can Co. took him to Darien, Connecticut, and Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, then back to Atherton as a permanent resident.

Mr. Black was an active member of Cypress Point Club, Pacific Union Club, Thunderbird Country Club, and Menlo Country Club, where he served as president from 1985 to 1987.

In addition to golf, he was passionate about wine, say family members. He was chairman or served on wine committees at the Menlo Country Club and the Pacific Union Club for more than 35 years. He was also an adviser to the Vintage Affaire wine auction, a member of the Confrerie Des Chevaliers Du Tastevin, and a member of the U.S. Seniors Golf Association.

He is survived by his wife of 15 years, Dawn; and his children, Kathy Spieker, David Black, Liz Black and Sarah Thornton. He also leaves stepchildren Stephen Yates, Michael Yates, Karen Weiss, Jeff Yates, Russell Yates and Trish Mitchell; and 22 grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Elizabeth Ann Bartlett Black.

His family and friends will miss "Jamps" dearly, especially on Christmas morning, when he made the grandchildren his famous buttermilk pancakes, say family members.

Private services will be held. Memorial contributions may be sent to the Palo Alto Medical Foundation Oncology Research Fund and the Golden Retriever Rescue Foundation.

Thomas Del Sarto

Pitcher for S.F. Seals

A memorial Mass will be celebrated at 3 p.m. Thursday, August 24, at the Church of the Nativity, 210 Oak Grove Ave., Menlo Park, for Thomas D. Del Sarto.

Mr. Del Sarto died August 6 after a lengthy battle with brain cancer.

He was 74.

Born in San Francisco, he moved to Menlo Park in 1942. He was well-known as an athlete in his early years. He signed with the San Francisco Seals as a left-handed pitcher after graduating from Sequoia High School in 1950.

After retiring from the Seals, he played semi-pro baseball until the late 1970s with the Palo Alto Oaks, San Mateo Blues and Ellisbrooks Clubs, leaving with an impressive win record, say family members.

He was with the U.S. Postal Service in Menlo Park for 31 years. He was a longtime member of the Menlo Park Italian-American Social Club, and a 41-year member of the Palo Alto Elks.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Lovey; his mother, Lida; three sons, Tommy, Rolly and Rob; and eight grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the Sequoia High School Alumni Association, c/o Del Sarto Sports Scholarship, P.O. Box 2534, Redwood City, CA 94064-2534; or Guide Dogs for the Blind, P.O. Box 3950, San Rafael, CA 94912.

Arrangements were under the direction of the Menlo Park chapel of Spangler Mortuaries.

David H. Phillips

Securities trader

David H. Phillips of Atherton died August 17 at home after a brief battle with cancer. He was 64.

Mr. Phillips was born in Long Beach and attended schools in Berkeley and Los Altos. In 1963 he graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity. After graduation, he served for two years as an officer in the U.S. Army. He was stationed in Korea and Spokane, Washington.

For 37 years, Mr. Phillips was a securities trader on the floor of the Pacific Stock Exchange, most recently with Morgan Stanley. For several years he served on the board of governors of the exchange, including a term as vice chairman.

After retiring in 2002, he spent time gardening, traveling and coaching the golf team at Woodside High School, a role he enjoyed very much, say family members.

He is survived by his wife of almost 39 years, Judy; daughters Elizabeth Kelley of Oak Park, Illinois, and Ashley Frieden of Atlanta, Georgia; mother Elizabeth Girgich; brothers John and James; and three grandchildren.

A private memorial gathering will be held. Contributions in his memory may be made to the Woodside High Golf Team, attention: Kathy Soulard, treasurer, 199 Churchill Ave., Woodside, CA 94062; or to the Peninsula Humane Society, 12 Airport Boulevard, San Mateo, CA 94401. Arrangements are under the direction of the Woodside Chapel of Crippen & Flynn.



Members of the Menlo Country Club swim team.

Menlo Country Club wins swim title

The Menlo Country Club won the recent Peninsula Interclub Swim League (PISL) Swim and Dive Championship at the Avery Aquatic Center on the Stanford University Campus. The club also finished first in the PISL dual meets held throughout the year.

The other clubs that participated in the July 23 meet were Sharon Heights, Los Altos, Circus Club, Palo Alto Hills and Peninsula.

At the meet, Menlo won 25 gold medals, 15 silver and 12 bronze.

The team included over 90 swimmers. Chris Rubin was head coach, with assistants Dave Marzoni, Jackie Gowin and Diana Westly.

— Anne MacDonald

Kucera competes in 'cutting' competition

Hollie Kucera of Atherton, 16, finished 11th at the recent National High School Rodeo Association championships in cutting, a rodeo event in which the rider tries to keep a cow from returning to the herd by positioning a horse between them.

Competing in a field of 119 riders, Hollie finished the first round tied for 16th. She then tied for third in the second round, sending her to the championship round of 20 riders.

But after posting scores of 218 and 220 in the first two rounds, she lost steam in the final round and scored only 197 points to finish 14th in that round. That dropped her to 11th overall.

The event ran from July 24



Hollie Kucera, of Atherton, 16, won the California high school state title in cutting. The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

through July 30.

Hollie had won the California state championship in cutting at the state finals in Bishop on June 24. Though she has been involved in

rodeo for about eight years, she only began cutting two years ago.

Hollie will be a junior at Palo Alto Prep next year.

Police Calls

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

ATHERTON

Stolen vehicle report: Locked truck with lumber in back stolen, 200 block of Camino al Lago, August 16.

MENLO PARK

Bomb threat report: Police evacuated Trader Joe's after a false bomb threat was called in, 700 block of Menlo Avenue, August 14.

Grand theft reports:

- Four racing tires stolen from back of trailer, 2100 block of Clayton Drive, August 14.
- Cash stolen from business, 700 block of Santa Cruz Avenue, August 14.
- Jewelry and art objects taken from business over past few months, 100 block of Arbor Road, August 15.
- Bicycle stolen from business, 1000 block of El Camino Real,

August 16.

Stolen vehicle report: White Honda Accord stolen, 1100 block of Hollyburne Avenue, August 16.

Auto burglary reports:

- Window smashed and stereo taken from locked vehicle, 1400 block of El Camino Real, August 11.
- CharStyle:bullet>n Stereo equipment stolen from locked vehicle, 1100 block of Willow Road, August 13.

Burglary reports:

- Two bikes stolen from garage, 700 block of Creek Drive, August 11.
- Wallet stolen from residence, 500 block of Pope Street, August 15.

Fraud reports:

- Fraudulent check cashed at bank, 3000 block of Sand Hill Road, August 16.
- ATM card number sent in response to fraudulent e-mail, 300 block of Middlefield Road, August 17.
- Identity theft, 400 block of Chester Street, August 17

WOODSIDE

Theft: Mail stolen from several mailboxes, 100 block of Quail Meadows Drive, August 15.

LETTERS

Continued from page 27

and a gift to our residents.

As a frequent senior user of the pool, I am thrilled, not only with the facilities but particularly pleased by the enthusiasm, creativity, and friendliness of the staff. What is that worth? I call it a home run for Menlo Park.

Using terms like "accounting sleight of hand" and "child care fiasco" and "giving away assets" seems to me to be a bit over the top and hopefully not a precursor to a nasty election campaign season. Let us hope we don't sink to a replication of national and state election shenanigans.

Michael Anderson
Trinity Drive, Menlo Park

City staff is best child care option

Editor:

I am writing to rebut statements made by Hank Lawrence in his letter last week regarding the child care privatization controversy.

First, as several others have previously noted, indirect costs represent phantom potential cost savings, as such bureaucracy-related costs (administrative

overhead, general liability, and so on) do not simply go away with privatization.

And the city did admit that fact in last week's story, in the following quote: "She (City Finance Director Carol Augustine) acknowledged the majority of child care costs for the current fiscal year would remain if the programs were privatized."

Second, in arguing about the quality of child care that can be provided by private firms, Mr. Lawrence points to Children's Creative Learning Centers (CCLC) as a positive example, conveniently ignoring the fact that CCLC did not actually place a bid for taking over the city's program.

Instead, the city received only two outside bids — one from a firm that exists only on paper, while the other is from a small, nondescript firm headquartered way over in Pacifica that has been in business for less than four years. These are hardly worthy candidates to take over the high-quality program that has been run by city employees for many years, with the high quality of the city-run program being openly acknowledged by everyone involved.

For example, the owner of the Pacifica operation bidding for the contract says on the first page of

her bid document that, "Menlo's Children's Center currently has an excellent program that is well-liked by the parents."

The real-bottom line here is that: 1) tuition pays over 99 percent of direct program costs (a cost recovery level that is matched by only one other city program, gymnastics); 2) potential savings associated with indirect costs are illusory; and 3) no worthy contenders have bid to take over the program. Given all that, it is high time that — as the Almanac called for in its August 9 editorial — the City Council scrap its current rush-job push to privatize child care.

David Buckley
Oak Grove Avenue,
Menlo Park

PV film producer acknowledges a lot of help

Editor:

I would like to thank the Almanac for the August 9 cover story about "Our Feature Presentation." It was a dream not just for me and Gardner, but for all the people who worked on the film.

I would also like to take the time to acknowledge all the people from Portola Valley,

GUEST OPINION

continued from page 27

Enough is enough. The current program has won rave reviews from parents and the community alike because the staff is caring and highly qualified. The teachers and aides have averaged zero turn-over for several years and have a combined 75 years of working experience. Parents even supported raising service fees to keep the doors open amid threatening cutbacks — a sure sign that children are getting the best care.

Privatizing child care and other city services doesn't make dollars and it doesn't make sense. If we continue to privatize our great services, what's next?

We can't imagine living in a city that contracts out services to companies that care only about making profits — not about the community. These companies are interested only in their bottom line and their own financial interests.

The City Council needs to stop jeopardizing valuable city services and put a halt to needless spending. Let the proven, outstanding and economically sound services like child care stand.

It's what's best for the children and the community.

Vic Lovell is a retired psychologist who has lived in Menlo Park for nearly 50 years. Roxie Rorapaugh is a former computer programmer who has lived in Menlo Park for 12 years. They live on Sherman Avenue.

Woodside, Atherton, Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Los Altos who were not mentioned and who were so instrumental in making this film happen.

We received free locations at businesses and homes as well. It was just overwhelming how enthusiastic everyone was. Thank you.

JoAnn Loulan (producer)
Gardner Loulan (director)

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Letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome.

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Tug of war at Coyote Point

Sadly, the competition between friends of the struggling museum and children's zoo at Coyote Point and an eager group of philanthropists aligned with Al Gore's effort to halt global warming appears to be a fight between two camps of good guys.

Both the Committee to Save Coyote Point Museum and the 11th Hour Project have nothing but the best of intentions, especially when it comes to educating the public and children about important environmental matters.

The museum and children's zoo, located on a bluff just south of San Francisco International Airport, was rebuilt 25 years ago and is one of the first museums in the country dedicated to environmental education. But its leadership and finances have been sagging in recent years, and its board apparently decided to turn the facility over to the 11th Hour Project, which hopes to invest up to \$50 million over five years at the three-acre site to build a high-tech global warming demonstration project.

The decision to end the museum's mission at Coyote Point was taken out of the public eye, as was the arrangement with the 11th Hour Project, a move that did not sit well with employees or a group now calling itself the Committee to Save Coyote Point Museum. The committee has raised more than half of the \$300,000 it believes is needed to keep the museum going and fend off the takeover by 11th Hour.

Right now both sides are lobbying to win rights to the property, which the county leases to the museum for \$1 a year. Supervisor Jerry Hill has called the competition a firestorm. Museum lovers and loyalists, including founders and longtime supporters, rallied to save it; they raised \$108,000 in three days.

The museum board backtracked. In a press conference August 2, board president Rob Thomas announced there were no immediate plans to close the museum while the board examined proposals from the two groups. He declined to name anyone involved in the 11th Hour Project and referred people to its Web site.

Just a few weeks ago, the Almanac received anonymously a copy

of a proposal labeled "Climate Central at Coyote Point: A Life-Changing Experience," which contains information that has not been made public.

The proposal is indeed visionary. It calls for redefining environmental education beyond museums to a "living, active, evolutionary encounter." It calls for interactive high-tech experiences where visitors can witness first-hand the melting of polar ice or a dust cloud over China. It proposes an Imax theater; an organic restaurant called Gaia; an "Edible Schoolyard"; and a biodiesel ferry to transport visitors to its weekend farmers' market.

Founders and top backers are Wendy Schmidt, president of the Schmidt Family Foundation and wife of Google President Eric Schmidt; and Amy J. Rao, founder and CEO of Integrated Archive Systems in Palo Alto.

Glamorous and important as the 11th Hour group's Climate Central project is, it has been tainted by the secrecy of its presentation, and the disregard for the extraordinary value of the existing museum and the potential it still has.

This is not the way decisions involving public property and public money should be made. Clearly the 11th Hour Project supporters are skilled at high-stakes maneuvering. However, they — and the museum board — appear tone-deaf to the importance of publicly dealing with public issues.

We hope members of the 11th Hour Project can see the advantage of building on an existing program that already engages thousands of children in learning about their environment the direct way: by seeing, touching, smelling and hearing.

Climate change is enormous and important. We clearly need to be more informed about it. But real awareness needs to be built on the understanding of who we are and how we fit in with the world immediately around us. That is best built into us when we are young.

With the present Coyote Point Museum, we have a wonderful tool that is already building that awareness. Let's not destroy it. Let's nurture it and build on it.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Theater guardian should move to Menlo

Editor:

Winter Dellenbach, a resident of Palo Alto, appears to be the self-appointed guardian of the Park Theater in Menlo Park.

In her letter last week, she yet again asserts that the town should limit use of the structure to a theater. She also asserts that this is a sound business decision, asserting knowledge of the business dealings between the owner and Landmark Theaters without sourcing her information.

While Ms. Dellenbach is free to advocate this position, she would have more credibility if she were to relocate to Menlo Park and register as a Menlo voter. She could then argue her position from the status of a Menlo

See **LETTERS**, next page



Portola Valley Archives

Our Regional Heritage

Hazele Tiemann (later Jelich) and Ethel Farrell (later Dwyer) stand in front of their ice cream shop in the 1930s. The young women were both single and ran their business from 1936 to '39. Hazele met her husband, Portola Valley resident George Jelich, in the creamery. The store was located in Menlo Park, "next to the Post Office."

Internet history began at Zot's

By Nancy Lund

The year 2006 is significant in two important local anniversaries. More than a century apart, one is of regional interest; the other marks an event of worldwide significance. Each has a connection to one Portola Valley building.

First, the oldest commemoration. San Mateo County is

celebrating its sesquicentennial this year. It was April 19, 1856 when the county was created. Few county buildings have survived for those 150 years. One is Portola Valley's Alpine Inn, also known affectionately as Rossotti's or simply Zot's. Opened originally in the 1850s by Felix Buelna as a place for "Californios" to drink and gamble, its survival is one of the surprising quirks of history.

In 1908 David Starr Jordan, Stanford's first president, wrote to the county Board of Supervisors about the little building known today as the Alpine Inn. "The Wunder is unusually vile, even for a roadhouse, a great injury to the university, and a disgrace to San Mateo County," he said.

Wouldn't he be surprised to know that that same rough little structure at the intersection of Arastradero and Alpine roads has not only survived but also was the site of an event that marked the beginning of an unparalleled change in the way people across the planet live, work, and play?

The second event being commemorated this year took place 30 years ago, on August 27, 1976. Researchers from SRI International in Menlo Park chose Zot's



Don Nielsen, Computer History Museum SRI's Nicki Geannacopulos compiles and sends the first two-network message from the Alpine Inn.

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

Park voter and attempt to build support for her position among other Menlo Park voters.

If she prevailed, she would then, as a Menlo Park taxpayer, have the privilege of sharing in the litigation costs and in any potential liability should the owner take the town to court on the basis that this is an illegal taking under the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution.

R.P. Girouard
Irving Avenue, Atherton

Another view of child care savings

Editor:

Your August 9 editorial titled "Phantom savings in private child care" compels me to respond with a different point of view.

You state that expensive staff time has been utilized and lost while preparing the process for private operators to bid on operating the city's child care facilities.

Why is this lost time? I would

always want to know what the market value and income-generating potential of an asset might be. And from my perspective as a long-time, taxpaying property owner, this is just basic business 101. (Apparently, a recent bid from a private entrepreneur values it at \$108,000 per year and no salary or unfunded health and pension costs would be charged to the city.)

Now, we (the residents) are ready to compare this with a city-managed union-operated program. The value of this information to the taxpayer/voter? Priceless. Question: what accounting method was used to calculate the break-even point of the city-run program? I'll bet it did not include the present cost of future liabilities like health and pensions.

The editorial goes on to question why the city gave away the Burgess swimming pool complex, a city asset, to a private operator? The answer: It is not a give-away. The present privatized program is a benefit to the city staff (no periodic union salary negotiations, no unfunded future pension negotiations)

See **LETTERS**, page 25

■ PANEL OF CONTRIBUTORS



Nancy Lund is a member of the Almanac's Panel of Contributors and the town historian of Portola Valley.

for a special ceremony. The SRI mobile radio laboratory, housed in a large van, pulled up outside the roadhouse one warm summer afternoon. The scientists placed a computer terminal on one of the picnic tables out behind the building and connected it to the van. Then they proceeded to send a long electronic report.

In a February 2002 article from "CORE 3.1," the journal of the Computer History Museum of Mountain View, Don Nielson, former vice president of SRI's computer science division, called this electronic message (not yet called e-mail) "... the first internet transmission..." What a surprising addition to the annals of the oldest surviving roadhouse in California.

And why did the scientists choose Rossotti's for this event? "It was a well-known place and far enough from SRI to qualify as 'remote' but close enough to have good radio contact through a repeater station atop a hill above Stanford," Mr. Nielson reported. Perhaps they also liked the

idea of linking the past with the future, using one of the oldest buildings in the area for a landmark event they believed would revolutionize the future.

Scientists at SRI and other places had been working on developing this flexible integration of dissimilar digital communications networks for two or three years. The SRI scientists had been testing this new protocol for some weeks and decided to acknowledge their success with the little celebration at Rossotti's.

Technical details, including a diagram of the Rossotti's transmission, can be found in the article "The SRI Van and Computer Internetworking" in that 2002 Computer History Museum journal.

Although ARPANET transmissions had been taking place since 1969, now two

dissimilar networks had been linked for the first time. A year later, in 1977, three networks were linked in transmissions, and the internet was on its way.

Few who join the crowd at the rustic tables for hamburgers and beer know about that momentous afternoon 30 years ago. The internet age began when an electronic message was sent from the picnic grounds of Zot's via the radio network to SRI International and on through a second network (the ARPANET) to its final destination in Boston.



Don Nielsen, Computer History Museum Casually dressed SRI scientists look on during the first two-network transmission on August 27, 1976, at the Alpine Inn in Portola Valley. From left are Don Cone, Nicki Geannacopulos, Dave Retz, Ron Kenzelman, Jim McClurg and Jim Mathis. The experiment was called the first internet transmission.

Council's personal agenda hurting Menlo city services

By Roxie Rorapaugh and Vic Lovell

On August 29 the Menlo Park City Council will revisit its latest controversial plan to privatize city services. This time child care is on the chopping block.

But with the months of time and money wasted on the issue — and a new report stating that outsourcing child care saves practically nothing — it's time the council stops forcing its privatization agenda on the community and allows children to receive the high-quality care they're entitled to.

That means keeping the existing, top-notch service as is. It's best for the children and it's best for the city.

As Menlo Park residents, our chief concern is making sure our tax dollars are used responsibly. Subsidizing private corporations is not how city dollars should be spent. Instead, we should invest in quality services that make



Menlo Park a great place to live.

When the council majority of Mickie Winkler, Lee Duboc and Mayor Nicholas Jellins claimed that city child care

was running a \$444,000 deficit, they saw a chance to push their agenda by rushing the bidding process for private companies to buy out the service, without thoughtful consideration of what the true costs of child care are.

Now, an article in the August 9 Almanac shows that the monumental savings that privatization would bring were monumentally misleading. The report shows that the city-run child care actually recovers its costs, save for about \$4,500

— a far cry from the \$444,000 deficit the city manufactured.

This isn't the first time the city fudged its numbers. Months ago they used a trumped-up \$2.9 million deficit to justify cutting city services. The city back-pedaled when that number didn't pan out, either.

And their privatization agenda isn't new. In February they irresponsibly handed over the new swimming-pool facility, built with \$6.8 million of our public funds, to a private operator — rent-free.

And last year the council tried to force a proposal to convert (much) of beautiful Bayfront Park into a privately owned golf course, with almost no public input. The community, outraged by the lack of public process and the privatization of our public park, successfully beat that proposal.

See **GUEST OPINION**, page 25

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