

MENLO COUNCIL OKs former Cadillac site zoning change in approving Derry project. Page 11

The Almanac

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

SECTION 2 **PenStyle**
A Weekly Journal of Pennington, NJ • A September 27, 2006
ALSO INSIDE • SPORTS 37 | CALENDAR 38 | CLASSIFIEDS 49

Crazy about convergence

Stylish design triumphs as tech gadgets become more ambitious, integrated into lifestyle

New Section Inside

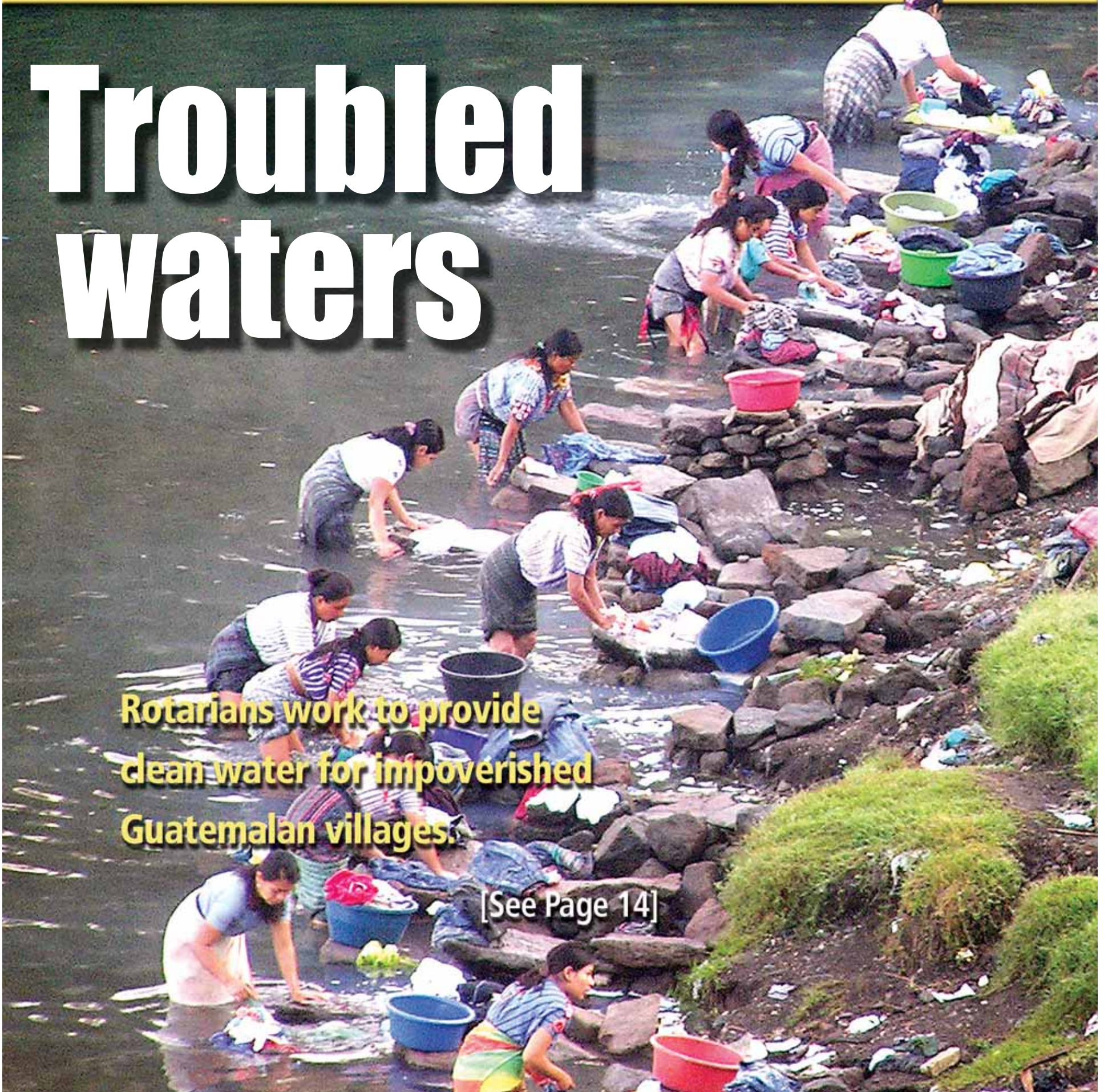
SEPTEMBER 27, 2006

www.AlmanacNews.com | VOL. 42 NO. 4

Troubled waters

Rotarians work to provide clean water for impoverished Guatemalan villages.

[See Page 14]



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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Blazing through the neighborhood

A bicyclist pushes up the hill on Farm Hill Road during the Tour de Menlo cycling event sponsored by the Rotary Club of Menlo Park and the Almanac on Sept. 24. More than 170 riders took part in the event, which raised money for tutoring and scholarships. See story on **Page 18**.

Atherton

- Facing revolt, City Council dumps excavation fee. **Page 5**
- A group of residents and builders are moving ahead with plan to recall Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen. **Page 12**

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Police and fire

- Former Menlo Park recreation leader Tyrone Williams charged with child molestation. **Page 9**
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On the cover

Guatemalan women from the villages surrounding Lake Atitlán in Santiago wash their clothes in the lake, where they also get their drinking water. Members of the Menlo Park Rotary Club and Rotary International visited three villages near the lake in late June, as well as two others, to find ways that their club could help purify the water. The photo, by Roger Toguchi, was taken from the Rotarians' hotel across the way. See story, **Page 14**.

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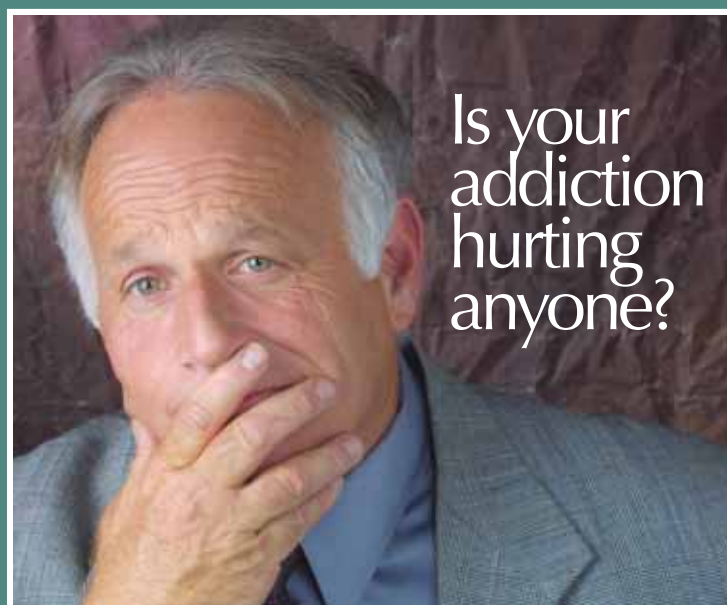


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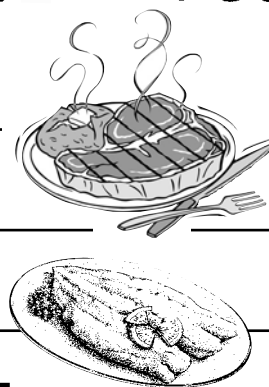
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Local News

MENLO PARK | A T H E R T O N | W O O D S I D E | P O R T O L A V A L L E Y

Police report 11 burglaries in one week

Menlo Park police report 11 residential burglaries in the past week, including four in Menlo Park's Allied Arts neighborhood, where police have increased nighttime patrols and distributed fliers to residents' mailboxes warning them to lock their windows and doors at night.

About half of the 11 burglaries occurred east of El Camino Real. Computers were known to be taken in four of the burglaries.

Three homes in the Willows neighborhood were burgled, two in the Flood Park Triangle neighborhood and one in Belle Haven.

West of El Camino Real, the incidents included a home on Hoover Street in downtown Menlo Park and four in Allied Arts.

In a Sept. 20 burglary on Blake Street in the Allied Arts neighborhood, someone got in without the use of burglary tools and got out with \$3,000 worth of unspecified goods, police said.

In each of three burglaries on College Avenue on Sept. 18, the method of entry was again through an unlocked window or door. In one case, \$40 in cash was stolen, in another things were just moved around a bit, and in the third some juice and bottled water was taken from a garage.

The danger in a crime like this is that a resident wakes up to noises, goes downstairs to investigate and ends up in a confrontation, police said.

"That's the scary part," said Sgt. Ron Prickett of the Menlo Park Police Department. "We're hoping that it doesn't turn into anything but a property crime. If (residents) don't want to investigate the bump in the night themselves, they should call 911."

For tips on how to protect your home, call 330-6300 and ask for Liz Fambrini, ext. 376, or Officer Scott Mackdanz, ext. 338, at the code enforcement office.

Atherton council dumps excavation fee

■ Council members say they were shocked by the size of the fees, in one case amounting to more than \$90,000.

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

Atherton builders who paid a controversial excavation fee will get their money back.

The fee was unceremoniously dumped by the City Council at its September 20 meeting, following a public outcry and threats of litigation.

Council members voted unanimously, and without comment, to rescind the fee — a surcharge of \$22 per cubic yard of dirt trucked on- or off-site — by passing a resolution that cited "substantial unanticipated financial burdens" caused by the fee. The town will refund the approximately \$350,000, plus interest, that was collected since May 2005.

After the meeting, council members told the

Almanac they were shocked by the size of the excavation fees, in one case reportedly amounting to more than \$90,000.

City Attorney Marc Hynes announced the council's intention at the very beginning of the meeting, stunning the crowd of more than 100 people, many of whom had shown up expressly to complain about the excavation fee.

"You all have pulled the rug out from under me. I spent hours and hours preparing for a fight," said Atherton resident Carol Flaherty, a vocal opponent of the fee.

She thanked the council for taking residents' concerns seriously.

Atherton added the excavation surcharge over a year ago after a town-commissioned study found that dirt-laden trucks caused extensive damage to its streets.

Since the fee took effect, the town has issued 20 excavation permits and collected approximately \$350,000 in off-haul fees, according to Gary Binger, the town's interim planning/building administrator.



The Almanac/David Boyce

Atherton City Attorney Marc Hynes, left, announced the council's intention to drop the fee. City Manager Jim Robinson is on the right.

A town audit turned up \$134,000 in excavation fees that should have been charged by the building department but weren't. Those uncollected fees stemmed from fewer than one dozen permits issued the first week the

See **FEES**, page 8



Candidates shake hands and chat after the forum that drew about 100 people to the Menlo Park council chambers.

Photo by Michael Mullady

Two camps stand ground at MP election forum

By **Rory Brown**

Almanac Staff Writer

■ MP ELECTION

Union, real estate agents announce endorsements, **Page 12**

Despite claims by Menlo Park City Council candidates that the city's political scene doesn't have to be divided, two distinct camps exchanged blows at a forum last week.

The two sides agreed on the key problems facing the city — lagging sales tax revenue, a shortage of sports fields, and vacant properties on El Camino Real — but were split on the solutions.

The Derry project referendum and the Bayfront Park ballot measure were key matters that divided the candidates

into two clear-cut camps.

Each side has put forward three candidates to vie for three open seats on the five-person council, and the candidates didn't shy away from criticizing their opponents in front of some 100 people at the forum, some of whom submitted written questions for the candidates to answer.

The forum was hosted by the League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County

and sponsored by the David D. Bohannon Organization.

Incumbents Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler have sided with John Boyle, a member of the city's transportation commission, to keep the council under the control of the current majority, and, in their words, "move forward" with improving the city's economy, including its sales tax base.

The majority's opponents are Linfield Oaks resident Vincent Bressler and parks and recreation commissioners Richard Cline and Heyward Robinson. These three candidates say they are running independent cam-

paigns — they each have their own campaign literature while their opponents are pooling their resources — but are supported by key political figures who oppose the current majority.

"The current council majority is good at making decisions, but bad at getting results," said Mr. Robinson. He pointed to the city's decreased sales tax revenue.

Mr. Boyle said the city has "turned a corner" as the current majority has made strides in making the city more business-friendly. He said he wants to continue a process sparked

See **ELECTION**, page 8

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Mark Flegel takes top Rotary post

Owner of Flegel's furnishings heads a district with 39 clubs, 2,000 members

By Jane Knoerle

Almanac Lifestyles Editor

As a district governor of Rotary International, Mark Flegel of Atherton has a big job, but he is well-prepared for it.

On July 1 he began a one-year term as governor of District 5150 of Rotary International, which includes San Mateo, San Francisco and Marin counties. He was elected by a nominating committee made up of the last five governors of the district.

Mr. Flegel, who is president of Flegel's Home Furnishings in Menlo Park, has been a member of the Menlo Park Rotary Club since 1982, and served as the club's president in 1992. To be eligible to become district governor, a Rotarian must be a past president of his club and have held district positions.

Mr. Flegel's preparation for the new job included training sessions in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The final seven-day session in February in San Diego was attended by 529 governors-elect from 168 countries.

"On the last night we were asked to come in national costume," he says. What did he wear? A tuxedo.

Mr. Flegel's wife, Anne, accompanied him to all the training session locations. The wives of governors are also expected to represent Rotary International and attend many district functions.

Mr. Flegel's district has 39 clubs with a total of 2,000 members. Since July he has visited and spoken at each one.

"I have found each club has its own personality, and I have been amazed by the volume of community and international service our district performs," he says.

"We are one of the smaller districts in size in Rotary International. The largest includes all of Alaska and Russia to the Ural Mountains," he says.

Mr. Flegel is well aware of the big picture in Rotary International. In June he attended the Rotary International convention in Copenhagen, Denmark, with 15,000 delegates. The year before, when Rotary International marked its 100th anniversary in its founding city, Chicago, he was one of 30,000 delegates.

Rotary's Web site, www.rotary.org,



Anne and Mark Flegel are a team when it comes to attending many Rotary functions.

rotary.org., says Rotarians belong to more than 32,000 clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.

Membership in the clubs represents a cross-section of a community's business and professional men and women. Rotary clubs meet weekly, are non-political, non-sectarian, and open to all cultures, races and creeds.

Menlo Park Rotary meets each Wednesday in the Menlo Park Recreation Center and has 70 members.

Mr. Flegel has goals for his year in office. One is to raise membership in his district by 25 percent. How do you accomplish this? "We ask club members to invite their friends or business contacts to lunch to learn more about Rotary. Several clubs have already reached their goal."

Another goal is for the district to raise \$500,000 this year to help fund some of Rotary's 25,000 humanitarian projects around the world.

In his district newsletter message, Mr. Flegel says: "By cleaning parks and trails, providing dictionaries for third-graders, tutoring fourth-graders, digging wells in Ghana, providing clean water for a migrant camp in Mexico, our district leads the way in service ideas that become reality and change lives."

Mr. Flegel is a walking encyclopedia on Rotary good works. He can quote facts and figures on an impressive array of projects, including a massive drive to rid the world of polio. Rotary is part of a

global partnership that since 1985 has reduced the number of polio cases in the world by 99 percent, he says.

"In one day, 120 million children were immunized against polio in India," he says. "Six hundred million dollars and 20 years later, polio is only endemic in four countries, with less than 1,000 infected. That's Rotary in action."

Rotarians have also played an important role in the United Nations, he says, since its founding in San Francisco in 1945. Fifty-four of the original delegates were Rotarians and the first five secretary-generals were, too. Rotary also has a permanent seat at the United Nations.

When Rotary Day is celebrated November 4 at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, Mr. Flegel and his wife, Anne, will be present. They will attend Rotary Day ceremonies and a brunch the next day with Bill Boyd, Rotary International president, and 15 fellow governors.

While taking part in the international scene is a heady adventure, the Flegels also do their part at home. For the past 20 years, they have hosted young professionals in their home as part of Rotary International's group study exchange. They are also currently hosting a 16-year-old girl from the country of Georgia, who is participating in a Rotary Youth Exchange Program while attending Sequoia High School. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



New condominium in a large development

Q. I recently bought a new condominium in a large development. Maybe because it is one of the few new condos downtown, it has appreciated a lot. I would like to sell now as I have concerns about the market and that it may be going down. However, I have only owned it for 6 months and it has been an investment property for me. What are the consequences of selling now?

A. Owners who sell an investment property, that is one that is not owner-occupied, before they've held it for one year, are required to treat the sale as a short-term capital gain and pay tax at ordinary income tax rates.

The rate can go as high as 35% depending on your tax bracket. That means you could lose much of the gain you have made in a short period of time. If you hold the property for a year or more before selling, sale proceeds are considered long-term capital gains and are taxed at 15%.

One way sellers can defer any tax obligation

on the sale of investment property that's not owner-occupied is to plow the proceeds into property equivalent in value under Section 1031 of the Tax Code. Of course, this begs the question: if you think the market is going down, why would you invest in another property? However, you can never market-time. If you are happy with the profit you have made on your condominium and want out of it, you should sell or exchange. But maybe the better thing to do is hold on for another six months, see where the price is then and think about selling with only a 15% capital gain. History has shown that the real estate market always comes back after a correction so you may even decide to keep it.

If you decide to do an exchange, you have up to 45 days to identify a comparable property and 180 days to conclude the transfer.

A real estate professional can help you find the property and make the sale, but an exchange intermediary must handle the exchange part of the transaction.

For more information on 1031 exchanges, feel free to call me. We have the names of exchange companies and any other information you may need.

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

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- 1 Charles Wadsworth and Spoleto USA Chamber Music
- 11 *What Makes It Great?* with Rob Kapilow and the Stanford Chamber Strings
- 15 St. Lawrence String Quartet with Pedja Muzijevic, piano
- 18 Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble
- 20 Natalie MacMaster, fiddle
- 25 Badi Assad
- 28 Rinde Eckert, *Horizon*
- 28-29 Diavolo Dance Company

NOVEMBER 2006

- 3 Manuel Barrueco, guitar, with Cuarteto Latinoamericano

DECEMBER 2006

- 1 Kronos Quartet
- 3 St. Lawrence String Quartet with Jon Kimura Parker, piano
- 12-13 *A Chanticleer Christmas*

JANUARY 2007

- 10 Gryphon Trio
- 12 Anonymous 4, *Long Time Traveling*
- 20 Ute Lemper
- 24 Sō Percussion
- 26-27 Richard Alston Dance Company
- 28 Ladysmith Black Mambazo
- 31 Roby Lakatos Ensemble

FEBRUARY 2007

- 3 Anthony de Mare, piano, and Steven Mayer, piano, *The American Piano*
- 7 Jerry Quickley's, *Live From the Front*
- 10 Emerson String Quartet
- 16 King's Singers
- 23 Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble with Stanford Taiko
- 25 *What Makes It Great?* with Rob Kapilow and Vassily Primakov, piano

MARCH 2007

- 2 Borromeo String Quartet
- 4 Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, *The Four Seasons: A Cycle of the Sun*
- 7 Klezmer en Buenos Aires
- 14 Boys of the Lough
- 16 Company Vincent Mantsoe, *Men-Jaro*
- 17-18 Aquila Theatre Company, *The Canterbury Tales*

APRIL 2007

- 1 Jupiter String Quartet
- 7 Louis Lortie, piano
- 11 Paco Peña with the Stanford Chamber Chorale
- 22 St. Lawrence String Quartet with Tara Helen O'Connor, flute; Daniel Phillips, violin; and Andrés Díaz, cello
- 25 Irvin Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra
- 28 Emio Greco | PC, *Hell*
- 29 Deborah Voigt, soprano

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Facing revolt, council dumps off-haul fee

FEES

continued from page 5

excavation surcharge went into effect.

Council members had asked for a legal analysis of the excavation fee, which they apparently received during a closed-session meeting with the city attorney.

A number of contractors and residents called the excavation fee exorbitant and said it represents an illegal tax.

According to Ms. Flaherty, the town is already compensated for construction-related road damage through its road-impact fees, and the excavation surcharge amounted to an excessive double charge. She said the excavation fee for a retaining wall on her property amounted to over \$55,000.

Since the end of June, the town has entered into four standstill agreements with protesting builders allowing excavation to go on while delaying collection of the fee until the dispute is resolved. State Controller Steve Westly and Ms. Flaherty are among the four with standstill agreements, according to Mr. Binger.

The council's rationale for revoking the fee is that it "resulted in charges substantially greater than expected on some new construction or reconstruction projects, and has resulted in substantial unanticipated financial burdens on some individuals," according to the resolution prepared by Mr. Hynes.

It was silent on the issue of the off-haul fee's legality.

"I applaud the decision and I do

not ask for further explanation," Ms. Flaherty said at the meeting.

Councilman Alan Carlson told the Almanac that the council discussed the subject in closed session because some people had clearly threatened litigation against the town.

A review of the original staff reports shows the council didn't anticipate the burden the fee would place on some builders, Mr. Carlson said.

"There was a lot of discussion that went on in closed session which I can't talk about, but I think it's fair to say we were amazed at the size of the bills people were getting from the excavation fee," Councilman Jim Janz told the Almanac. "I think rescission was the only option — we would have had a taxpayer revolt on our hands."

He said he couldn't comment on whether the fee was legal or illegal, but that the argument that it was unfair to have an excavation surcharge and road-impact fees had merit.

"Some people call it double dipping, and they would've had a good argument, frankly," Mr. Janz said.

Losing the revenue from the excavation fees will cause a drop of about one-quarter in the town's annual roadwork budget, said Mayor Charles Marsala. He said the uproar caused by the off-haul fee pointed to the need for more community outreach or council study sessions before the fee was approved.

"Hindsight is always easier," he said. ■

Allied Arts permit approved

A new permit for the Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park to expand its operations was approved by the City Council on a 5-0 vote at its September 19 meeting.

The permit is a compromise between the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary, the owner and operator of the guild, and the neighborhood group that previously sued over expanded operation of the guild.

Under the new permit, the auxiliary has reduced, from its original proposal, the number and size of evening events proposed for the guild's complex at 75 Arbor Road.

The agreement was reached in July, 10 months after Allied Arts Neighbors, the neighborhood group, successfully appealed a lower court ruling that allowed the auxiliary to expand operations at the guild.

■ MENLO WATCH

Environmental awards

The deadline for nominations for Menlo Park's "Environmental Quality Awards" is Oct. 3.

Nominations are sought by the Environmental Quality Commission, which 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 MenloPark.org, and under "News Releases" click on "Nominations for environmental quality awards invited." E-mail completed nomination forms to ddryer@menlopark.org.



Above, an aerial view of five of the candidates. The sixth, incumbent Mickie Winkler, makes a point at right.

Photos by Michael Mullady



Two camps stand ground at MP forum

ELECTION

continued from page 5

by Ms. Winkler and Ms. Duboc — consideration of putting some city services out for competitive bid to cut the city's costs.

Derry project

All three of the majority's opponents said they support the referendum campaign against the Derry project, a plan to build 135 condominiums and more than 22,500 square feet of commercial space between El Camino Real and the train station. The council approved the project 4-1, with Andy Cohen opposed.

Ms. Duboc said the project will enhance the city's downtown area, and turn "commuters into residents." She said the referendum campaign is motivated by politics.

Mr. Cline said the plans for the building are "beautiful," but questioned the long-term vision for El Camino Real.

"We can't just spot-plan this through," he said. "Let's take a step back and plan the entire corridor."

Bayfront Park

The camps are also divided on Measure J, the advisory ballot measure that asks voters if they support moving forward with plans to build sports fields for

■ SCHOOL BUSING?

The forum's audience clapped enthusiastically when Councilwoman Lee Duboc said the Menlo Park City School District is looking at a plan to bus children to and from schools, and thus cutting into traffic congestion. See "School busing: Is it feasible in Menlo Park?" on **Page 10**.

\$15 million to \$17 million at the 160-acre Bayfront Park off Marsh Road.

"This is a contentious issue, and we've put it to the voters for that reason," Ms. Winkler said. "We won't do anything that puts anyone at risk, including the environment."

Mr. Bressler said the current majority has "ignored" recommendations by the parks commission to build fields on other sites, and past councils should have negotiated with developers to build additional fields.

Really divided?

The candidates had different takes on the state of the council

■ ON CABLE TV

The candidate forum will be broadcast on cable Channel 27 on Tuesday, Sept. 26, at 9 p.m.; Wednesday, Sept. 27, at 1 p.m.; and Friday, Sept. 29, at 9 p.m.

and local politics.

"I question the assertion we have a polarized City Council," Mr. Boyle said, prompting moans and laughter from the audience. He said that 13 percent of the current council's decisions have been made by 3-2 votes, and that the notion that council is always divided has been created by the press.

The majority's opponents said the council is polarized, and pegged blame on the majority, which doesn't encourage public input, they said.

Mr. Bressler said his views "cut across the polarization," which also prompted some laughter from the audience.

One thing the candidates did agree on is the need to mitigate increased traffic.

Ms. Winkler said the city should eliminate parking on El Camino Real during business hours, and consider grade separations at the railroad crossings and another turn lane on northbound El Camino Real at Ravenswood Avenue.

Mr. Cline said the city should direct traffic toward Sand Hill Road rather than El Camino Real.

Ms. Duboc noted that the Menlo Park City School District is looking at setting up a system to bus children to and from schools, decreasing traffic in neighborhoods near schools. ■

Former MP recreation leader charged with child molestation

■ Three cousins claim to be victims.

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

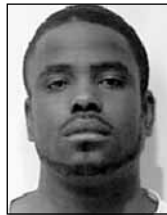
In a cooperative effort with police in Kentucky and Tennessee, detectives from the Menlo Park Police Department have arrested a former recreation leader from the city's Onetta Harris Community Center on charges of child sexual molestation that occurred between 1995 and 1997.

Tyrone Darnell Williams, 28, was arrested in Oak Grove, Kentucky, on 55 counts that range from inappropriate touching to sexual intercourse, said Deputy District Attorney Melissa McKowan. She said she issued a warrant for Mr. Williams' arrest on Sept. 8 after three of his cousins, all of whom were under the age of 14 at the time of the alleged inci-

dents, came forward and told their stories.

It is unclear how long Mr. Williams worked for the city, but he was definitely employed at the Onetta Harris center in the Belle Haven neighborhood, Ms. McKowan said. She added that none of the crimes he is accused of occurred in the context of his work at the community center, but rather are alleged to have taken place "in a home setting."

After the warrant was issued, three Menlo Park police detectives, acting on a tip, traveled to Kentucky where they enlisted the help of local police to find Mr. Williams, said Major William Dukes of the Oak Grove Police Department. He was arrested on



Tyrone Williams

Sept. 14.

In looking for him, Major Dukes said Oak Grove officers and Menlo Park detectives initially staked out an apartment in Oak Grove but shifted operations to just across the state line in Clarksville, Tennessee, after neighbors tipped them off that Mr. Williams had moved there.

Mr. Williams, given a choice of being arrested in Tennessee or Kentucky, chose Kentucky and was interviewed in Oak Grove by the Menlo Park detectives, who then brought him back to California after he waived his extradition rights, Major Dukes said.

Mr. Williams is now in the San Mateo County jail with bail set at \$1 million and with a preliminary hearing set for 9 a.m. Friday, Oct. 6 at the San Mateo County Superior Court in Redwood City, Ms. McKowan said. ■



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Dousing embers left from the 2-acre wildfire in Huddart Park are two state prison inmates, crew members working with the California Department of Forestry's Delta Community Camp.

Huddart Park blaze burns 2 acres

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Firefighters are investigating the source of a blaze in a remote section of Huddart Park in Woodside. The 2-acre wildfire was contained just before 11 a.m. on Sept. 25, about 8 hours after it was first reported, said Chief Armando Muela of the Woodside Fire Protection District.

It took fire crews more than four hours to locate the fire and then, using a bulldozer and hand crews, to clear a path to reach it.

The fire appears to have originated alongside the popular Crystal Springs trail, near its junction with the Dean trail, said Woodside Fire Marshal Denise Enea. As of Monday afternoon, investigators saw no sign of arson, although it's likely that some kind of human intervention caused it, she said.

"I don't think we'll ever know what started it," Ms. Enea said. "I'd like to believe it was just carelessness."

Seventy-one firefighters, six fire engines, two water tenders and two inmate hand crews fought the fire, jointly commanded by the California Department of Forestry and Woodside fire, said Scott Jalbert, a CDF battalion chief. Crews had a tough time getting water to the fire, because the trail was too steep and narrow for the large water tenders, said Tena Anderson, a CDF battalion chief.

A helicopter was called in to drop water on the blaze for about an hour in the morning, said Chief Muela.

There were no injuries, evacuations or structures threatened by the fire.

Huddart Park was closed all morning and CDF crews were set to spend the night making sure the fire was out. The fire was largely restricted to underbrush and leaf debris in a heavily wooded area, a mixed canopy of oak and madrone trees.

The aftermath of the fire resembled a controlled burn, with trees intact but much of the dry brush cleared out, Ms. Anderson said. ■

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Steve Lewis is President of Lewis & Mathews Investment Management, Inc., which is a personal financial advisory firm in Menlo Park. He teaches investment courses for various colleges and institutions in the area. He is a financial author and has appeared on national radio and television. He is a past officer and has served as a board member of the S. C. International Association of Financial Planners. He has served on the National Academy Advisory Board of IAFP and is a member of the Palo Alto Financial Planning Forum. Among others, he has written for *Money Magazine* and *Dow Jones' Barron's*.

Steve Lewis has taught over 30,000 Northern Californians his money managing techniques

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School busing: Is it feasible in Menlo Park?

■ Major obstacles: cost and whether enough parents will use it.

By Marjorie Mader
Almanac Staff Writer

In response to community concerns about traffic congestion around schools, the Menlo Park City School District has asked an outside consulting team to study the feasibility and costs of providing bus transportation for students traveling from home to school and back.

Among the obstacles: the cost and whether enough parents will actually use it.

A survey of parents last May showed there was "strong support for school transportation, but many families wouldn't use it," said school board president Laura Rich, who tabulated the results.

Trustees have signed an agreement with a state-funded agency, the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, to conduct the study. The team operates from the office of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools.

Team representative Mike Rea plans to come to the district and begin the study in mid-October. The report should be ready for review at a board meeting in early January, said Superintendent Ken Ranella.

Trustees also asked the team to address the feasibility and costs associated with:

■ Shuttle service between designated points in the community.

■ Busing for school field trips.

■ Transportation for students living in the Ravenswood district and voluntarily attending Menlo Park schools under the Tinsley program, created under a court settlement in 1986

A survey of parents showed there was 'strong support for school transportation, but many families wouldn't use it.'

to reduce racial isolation and improve educational achievement.

Transportation for Tinsley students is provided through

a busing agreement with the Sequoia Union High School District, and funded by the participating districts and the state.

Major obstacles

Cost is a major obstacle to busing because the district is not eligible for state funding for school transportation, Mr. Ranella said. Bond funds cannot be used for transportation.

Among questions needing answers: How much would transportation costs encroach on district funds for educating students? How many families would actually use school bus transportation? How much would families be willing to pay for bus transportation?

A total of 666 parents, representing 849 students (of about

2,200 students enrolled in the district) responded to the survey. Sixty-two percent said a busing program should be self-supporting. Almost 25 percent said they would support busing if the fees did not exceed \$750 a year, but that support dropped to 6.4 percent if the fees were up to \$1,000 a child per year.

School bus transportation vanished in the Menlo Park district after passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, which limited property taxes to 1 percent of the assessed value. Annual increases in assessed value are capped at 2 percent. Previously, local property taxes furnished two-thirds of school revenue. ■

Special meeting Wednesday on school planning

The Menlo Park City School District is considering changing the grade configurations and attendance area of its elementary schools to deal with anticipated enrollment growth through 2015.

The public is invited to a special board meeting at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 27, to hear and comment on initial reports on this topic. The meeting will be in the Encinal School multi-use room, 195 Encinal Ave. in Atherton.

Voters approved in June a \$91 million bond measure to expand and update the district's schools.

Before developing facility projects, the district needs to determine the size of enrollment and grade levels at each elementary school, said Superintendent Ken Ranella.

"It is evident, given the size and capacities of our schools, that Encinal, our largest campus, must substantially grow in enrollment, and Oak Knoll and Laurel schools must be structured to decline," he said.

During the meeting, the superintendent will present initial studies, and options for reconfiguring Laurel, Encinal and Oak Knoll schools. Community members will have an opportunity to comment during a public hearing.

Topics for further study may be identified by the board and discussed at its special meeting Wednesday, October 25.

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The **Almanac**

Former Cadillac site rezoned, too

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

When the Menlo Park City Council recently approved the Derry project, consisting of 135 condominiums and more than 22,500 square feet of commercial space near El Camino Real, it also set the gears in motion for an equally dense development right next door — as well as for a possible challenge on procedural and legal grounds by a group of unhappy residents.

At the same time the council green-lighted the Derry project, it also rezoned the adjacent 3.45-acre site at 1300 El Camino Real, the former site of a Cadillac dealership. The move, which caught some members of the public by surprise, means that a high-density project proposed for that site has already cleared a key hurdle.

Yet, legally required public notices for public hearings on the

Derry project didn't mention consideration of rezoning the former Cadillac site; nor did City Council agenda items pertaining to the Derry rezoning and required general plan amendments include rezoning and general plan amendments for the adjacent site.

Members of Menlo Park Tomorrow, the resident group leading a referendum campaign against the Derry project, are looking carefully at the rezoning of the former Cadillac site.

"There are severe procedural and legal questions about how this has developed," said Jack Morris, a former Menlo Park mayor and councilman and a member of the group.

San Mateo-based Sand Hill Property Co. is proposing 134 apartments and about 80,000 square feet of commercial space for the former Cadillac site. The proposal calls for about 39 residential units per acre, and buildings

■ MENLO PARK

between 50 feet and 60 feet tall.

The old zoning limited development projects to 18 residences per acre and structures no taller than 30 feet.

Although rezoning 1300 El Camino Real doesn't guarantee that the proposed project will be approved, questions arise over why the city opted to move forward with one project while approving another — as well as over the adequacy of the city's legally required public notification of the rezoning.

Acting City Attorney Dan Siegel said public notices issued by the city were sufficient. The notices said that parcels "in close proximity to the Caltrain station" could be rezoned in the approval of the Derry project. That site is at the intersection of El Camino and Glenwood Avenue.

Community Development

building "transit oriented development" near the train tracks.

The council voted 4-1 on August 29 to approve the Derry project, with Councilman Andy Cohen opposed.

The agenda item for that meeting, as well as the notice of public hearing published as a paid advertisement in the Almanac before the meeting, specifically identified the parcels at 550-580 Oak Grove Ave. and 540-570 Derry Lane as the property being considered for rezoning and other changes. The 1300 El Camino Real site was not mentioned in those notices. ■

Shelter Network breakfast Oct. 5 benefits homeless

A benefit breakfast for Shelter Network, whose programs help some 3,100 homeless people a year get back on their feet, will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 5, at the Hyatt

Regency Hotel, 1333 Bayshore Highway in Burlingame.

Jeanette Walls, an MSNBC columnist and author of "The Glass Castle," will talk about growing up homeless, and over-

coming its obstacles to become self-sufficient.

Tickets are \$75 per person or \$1,500 for a table. For information or to order tickets, call 685-5880 or go to shelternetwork.org.

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City of Palo Alto Recreation Presents



22ND ANNUAL PALO ALTO WEEKLY MOONLIGHT RUN & WALK FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2006

TIME & PLACE

PLEASE NOTE TIMES: 5K walk 7:30pm, 10K run 8:15pm, 5K run 8:45pm. Run night registration 6:30 to 8:00pm at City of Palo Alto Baylands Athletic Center, Embarcadero & Geng Roads (just east of the Embarcadero Exit of Highway 101). **Parking** — go to PaloAltoOnline.com to check for specific parking locations.

COURSE

5K and 10K loop courses over Palo Alto Baylands levee, through the marsh lands by the light of the Harvest Moon! Course is flat, USAT&F certified (10k run only) on levee and paved roads. Arrowhead Water at all stops. (Course map available at www.PaloAltoOnline.com)

REGISTRATIONS & ENTRY FEE

Preregistration fee is \$20 per entrant (**postmarked by September 29, 2006**) and includes a long-sleeve t-shirt. Late/run night registration is \$25 and includes a shirt only while supplies last. **A scantron card must be filled out at race night registration.** **Family package:** Children under 12 run free with a registered adult. A completed entry form for each child must be submitted with Adult registration. A limited number of adult small t-shirts may be available for \$10 through preregistration process. **Please indicate on form and include \$10. No confirmation of mail-in registration available. Registration also available online at www.PaloAltoOnline.com. Refunds will not be issued for no-show registrations (and t-shirts will not be held).**

TEAMS: Preregistration opportunity for Sports Teams of 10 or more runners; contact **Amy at (650) 326-8210 ext. 285.**

MINORS: 13-18 years of age.

If not pre-registered Minors **MUST** bring signed parental/waiver form (below) on race night to participate. **In addition scantron card must be completely filled out at race night registration.**

DIVISIONS

Age divisions: 12 and under; 13-19; 20-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60-69, and 70 & over with separate divisions for male and female runners in each age group. Race timing provided for 5K and 10K runs only; not 5K walk.

COMPUTERIZED RESULTS by A Change of Pace

Race results will be posted on the Internet at www.PaloAltoOnline.com 10am on 10/9. Registration forms must be filled out completely and correctly for results to be accurate. Neither Change of Pace nor Palo Alto Weekly are responsible for incorrect results caused by incomplete or incorrect registration forms.

AWARDS/PRIZES/ENTERTAINMENT

Top three finishers in each division. Prize giveaways and refreshments. DJ, Efen Ayala. Pre-race warmup by Andre Bobo.

BENEFICIARY

Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund. A holiday-giving fund to benefit Palo Alto area non-profits and charitable organizations. In April 2006, 43 organizations received a total of \$220,000.

MORE INFORMATION

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For safety reasons, no dogs allowed on course for the 5K and 10K runs. They are welcome on the 5K walk only. No retractable leashes! Please bring your own clean-up bag. Jogging strollers welcome in the 5K walk or at the back of either run. Flashlights/head lights recommended.

Union, Realtors endorse candidates

■ MP ELECTION

Several local groups and organizations have announced endorsements for city elections, including the six-candidate race for three open seats on the Menlo Park City Council.

The San Mateo County Democratic Party has endorsed candidates Richard Cline and Heyward Robinson.

The two candidates have also been endorsed by the Service Employees International Union Local 715, the union that represents most of the city's "miscellaneous" (non-public safety) employees.

Candidate John Boyle and incumbents Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler have been endorsed by the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors Political

Action Committee.

The three candidates are running on a slate, and are opposed by Mr. Cline, Mr. Robinson and Linfield Oaks resident Vincent Bressler.

'Booze and Schmooze'

The League of Women Voters is inviting the public to meet candidates for local elections at an event on Tuesday, September 26, called "Booze and Schmooze."

The event is from 5 to 7 p.m. at the British Bankers Club at El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue in Menlo Park.

Candidates for contested seats on the Menlo Park and East Palo Alto city councils and the Menlo Park City and Ravenswood school boards have been invited.

Tickets are \$5 each, cover admission and one drink. Tables to display candidate materials are \$20.

Linfield Oaks forum

A Menlo Park City Council candidate forum hosted by the Linfield Oaks Neighborhood Association is scheduled for Wednesday, October 4, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

The forum will be held in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

County will use paper ballots in November after all

San Mateo County's chief elections officer has decided against a full-scale conversion to electronic voting machines on November 7 over concerns that there's too little time to train poll workers and to perform needed testing of the 2,625 new machines by election day, among other factors.

Chief Elections Officer Warren Slocum announced on Monday that county polling places will have only one electronic machine, plus the long-familiar paper ballots used since the early 1990s. One consequence of the

decision is that election results may not be available until around 4 a.m. Wednesday. That's because the paper ballots will be counted in the county's central elections offices instead of at each precinct, as was the practice under the old voting system, Mr. Slocum said.

The county Board of Supervisors approved the new voting equipment manufactured by Hart Intercivic in August, with the intent to fully convert to the new system for the November election.

Group takes first step to recall McKeithen

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

A group of Atherton residents and builders said this week they are serving Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen with papers announcing their intention to recall her from public office.

The recently formed Atherton Residents for Responsible Governance was galvanized by the upheaval in the town's building department and the year-old excavation fee. The group said department staff were above reproach, and blasted the excavation fee as exorbitant and illegal.

Jilian Manus Salzman, a member of the group, said she believes Ms. McKeithen violated Atherton's code of conduct by publicly demeaning former Building Official Mike Hood, among other things. A petition signed by 25 residents was sent

See **RECALL**, page 18

Sen. Simitian calls town hall meeting

State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, will hold an 11th state Senate district town hall meeting from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 28, at City Hall in Redwood City, 1017 Middlefield Road. For more information, call 688-6384.

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Participants in the Rotary Club's trip to Guatemala, on a hike above Lake Atitlan. From left, in white shirt and tan cap, Dr. Mark Campbell; in tan vest and sunglasses, Roger Toguchi; in blue- and white-striped shirt, Betty Toguchi; in blue shirt, Renate Campbell.

Good will to Guatemala

Story by **SEAN HOWELL** ■ Special to the Almanac

Photos by **ROGER TOGUCHI**

flows malala

Local Rotarians work
to provide clean water for
small, impoverished villages

manac

The river where residents of the villages of Choatulum and Rio Blanco go for their drinking water.

LUSH HILLSIDES FILLED with coffee plants surround the small towns of Rio Blanco and Choatulum, a two-hour drive from the city of Antigua in southwestern Guatemala. They provide a beautiful backdrop for the women who spend much of their day trekking between the towns and a nearby spring, carrying buckets of water home on their heads to their families, but they belie the arduousness of the women's work.

Many of the women walk back and forth on this road for over six hours a day, the time it takes to make four trips to gather the 20 gallons of water that a family of six requires. Even then, the water has to be boiled first. Many choose to forego the spring entirely, opting instead to drink from a shallow, polluted river about a half-mile away.

On June 10, two local couples associated with Rotary — former Menlo Park club co-presidents Roger and Betty Toguchi, and Rotary International member Mark Campbell and his wife, Renate — traveled to five Guatemalan villages that are home to indigenous Mayans to look into the water problem and talk about possible solutions with community leaders. World Neighbors, an organization that works with rural communities, helped organize the trip.

Based on the facts the Rotarians gathered during that 10-day trip in June, the local organization has set out to raise nearly \$35,000 to provide clean water to Rio Blanco and Choatulum, each with a population of about 400 people. Those two villages were chosen because they have the most infrastructure in place, according to Ms. Toguchi. The other three towns they visited are nestled around Lake Atitlan.

The water project calls for installing pipes from two near-

by lakes up the hill to the villages, and to eventually provide townspeople with individual UV purification buckets — a new, easy-to-use technology that will allow residents to filter their water after it's delivered to their homes.

Rotary will also supply latrines and a gray-water disposal system, if all goes according to plan.

“We don't drink the water, we chew it.”

The Campbells and the Toguchis were accompanied to Guatemala by water specialist Florence Cassaseuce. They had worked together on a similar project last year to provide UV filtration buckets to outlying areas of La Paz, in Baja California. The project was so successful that the World Bank awarded Ms. Cassaseuce a \$172,000 grant to provide UV bottles for all of Baja.

World Neighbors heard about the Rotarians' efforts in Mexico and urged them to undertake a similar project in Guatemala.

“We were just planning to give them UV buckets, until we saw how far away they were from the water source,” Ms. Toguchi said.

She said that when Ms. Cassaseuce measured the level of bacteria in the nearby river, the townspeople responded that they are aware that the water's bad — they just have no money to improve it.

The results of the test confirmed what an observer would note simply by looking at the silt-filled water: It's not safe to drink.

Diarrhea is a common problem for people drinking the water, as is the more serious threat of bacterial dysentery. Rio Blanco saw 20 cases of it in the month of May, with one death.

See **GUATEMALA**, page 16



A bucket of silty drinking water in the village of Choatulum, where Rotary Club funds will be used to install pipes to a clean water source.



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GUATEMALA

continued from page 15

To the people in the two towns, it's clear that there's a problem. Women complain that the clothes they wash in the river often come out brown. They even have a saying: "We don't drink our water, we chew it."

Crushing poverty

When the Toguchis and Campbells reached Guatemala, they discovered that the water issue is only symptomatic of the problems faced by the communities there. They also found an alarming degree of poverty, made worse by a government that has done little for the people.

Most homes are single-room shacks with dirt floors. Some of the families have acquired chimneys only recently, and many have done so reluctantly — they use open charcoal stoves to both cook their food and heat their homes, despite the health risks (such as asthma) posed by the smoke.

Ms. Toguchi was surprised to find that schools in many towns she visited didn't have basic school supplies, and she quickly rushed to buy materials and chairs in some of the villages for nominal prices.

When she asked townspeople why the government wouldn't help them get drinking water, many responded by saying that the government doesn't care about them. Though they make up nearly half of the country's population, Mayans are a social minority, relegated to rural areas while the dominant Mestizos and Latinos, of mixed Mayan and European (usually Spanish) heritage, live in the cities.

Clean water by July?

The Rotarians hope to secure funds for the water projects by the beginning of next year, and to complete them by July. They have received donations from the San Carlos Rotary club and the Vashon Island club in Washington, and will receive additional matching funds of three to four times the amount they raise from the Rotary district organization and Rotary International. The clubs have



Water specialist Florence Cassaseuce, left, and Dr. Mark Campbell test the water at a sink in Xejuyu, near Lake Atitlan, as a boy from the house looks on. The pipes in the village are only two and a half inches thick, so each family gets water for only two hours at a time every two days.



'We hope that this will be a model for other projects around the world.'

BETTY TOGUCHI,
SPEAKING OF THE GUATEMALA
WATER PROJECT

raised \$6,500 so far.

In the future, Ms. Toguchi said, she hopes the club will also try to provide UV buckets for the other three towns they visited. Other projects she'd like to see Rotary take on include installing self-contained stoves with chimneys for more families in the villages, and donating much-needed supplies to local schools.

In addition to providing

Rio Blanco and Choatulum with clean water, the current project will allow the town's women to have more free time, Ms. Toguchi said. She was impressed by the weaving and embroidering skills of many of the women, and said they told her they would spend their time doing that instead of gathering water if a purification system were in place.

Still, money will be scarce. Ms. Toguchi said that the women told her it takes over 60 hours to weave a standard item of clothing, for which a worker might hope to receive \$15, U.S. She showed off two purses that she bought in Guatemala for a pittance compared with what they would go for in this country.

Though the Rotarians' project focuses on an isolated area, Ms. Toguchi hopes that other organizations will take notice.

"We hope that this will be a model for other projects around the world," she said.

The Toguchis said the trip underscored the privileges enjoyed by U.S. citizens. "I'm grateful I was born in the United States," said Mr. Toguchi, who added that he felt relieved when he stepped back onto U.S. soil. "I'm happy I don't live in state of constant fear. There are no guards, no barbed wire."

"We take water for granted," added Ms. Toguchi. "It made me ask myself, 'Why do I drink bottled water?'"

coming next week...



Food&Drink



READ THIS BEFORE YOU SIGN

On September 12th, the Menlo Park City Council approved the Derry Project - concluding a comprehensive three year planning and public review process. That same day, five residents announced their intention to overturn the project approval by referendum - petitions are now being circulated.

“Members of my family have lived and worked in Menlo Park for more than 50 years and four generations. Our goal was to create a very high-quality, tasteful, mixed-use project that everyone can be proud of.” -Blake Derry

What the Almanac is saying about Derry Opponents and their Petition Campaign...

*The Almanac calls it a “**Misguided Challenge**”. “The petitioners have said nothing until now, after the debate is over...Where were the opponents when the Planning Commission and the City Council were reviewing all the plans and specifications over the last two years?” “The Derry project is a done deal and the petitioners should accept it and move on.”*

The Almanac – Viewpoint
Misguided Challenge to Derry Project -9/19/06

Community Leaders and Local Business Owners agree...

“I voted for this project because of the quality of the design, because of the quality of the materials, because this is the appropriate place for density. It’s got a fine public space and a fine retail and commercial concept.”

Kelley Ferguson, City Council Member
City Council Meeting -9/19/06

“Clearly, the Derry Lane project will bring much-needed affordable housing to Menlo Park.”

Elizabeth Lasensky, Housing Commissioner

“The Derry project is good for local businesses and good for downtown Menlo Park!”

Terry Kent, Chairman of the Board, Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce

“O’Brien and Derry have generously agreed to provide financial support in our business relocation. We appreciate their cooperation.”

Mr. Lee, Owner, Foster’s Freeze

In September, 2002, the Menlo Park City Council identified the Derry property as a high priority site for high density housing as part of the General Plan Housing Element Update.

GET THE FACTS BEFORE YOU SIGN THE PETITION

Your signature on the petition will stop this project and Menlo Park will lose millions in benefits.

For more information call 650-377-0300 or visit www.derryatmenlo.com. This ad paid for by Friends of Derry sponsored by The O’Brien Group and the Derry family.

Cyclists take on Tour de Menlo hills

More than 170 cyclists took part in third annual le Tour de Menlo Sunday, riding either 30 or 50 miles routes along the challenging terrain of the Mid-Peninsula.

The 50-mile course included five hill-climbs totaling 5,000 feet, an elevation gain that exceeds riding to the coast and back. Two of the climbs, on Crestview and Mylendy in San Carlos, were timed, and prizes will be awarded to the "King and

See photo on **Page 3**.

Queen" of the hill for the first- and second-best times.

In the women's division, this year's winners are Victoria Bastide of Menlo Park, who set a new women's record of 19 minutes total for the two climbs. Laura Stern of Menlo Park, who finished in 22 minutes, was runner-up.

Jesse Bastide of Menlo Park and Robert Pasco of Belmont

finished in a tie for first in the men's division, with a total time of 16 minutes, also a record.

The winners will receive either a \$100 gift certificate from Menlo Velo cycle shop in Menlo Park, or a pair of MauiJim sunglasses.

The ride started at Menlo-Atherton High School, and moved north through Redwood City, San Carlos, Belmont, San Mateo and Hillsborough.

Former six-time profession-

al Canadian road-race champion Linda Jackson, riding with a group from Palo Alto Bicycles, said she enjoyed the event: "It is a great ride. It has neat, steep hills, which are the

area's best-kept secret."

Proceeds from the ride, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Menlo Park and the Almanac, will support the Rotary tutoring project at Garfield School and Rotary college scholarships, which are awarded every year to local high school students.

OICW to hold open house Oct. 5

OICW's annual open house will feature live jazz, guided tours, and food prepared by the job-training center's culinary trainees on Thursday, Oct. 5, from 4 to 7 p.m. at 1200 O'Brien Drive in Menlo Park.

Over 40 years, the Menlo Park job-training center has helped

some 100,000 people prepare for jobs ranging from carpentry to computers. Last year, it helped 6,000 low-income people get on their feet, according to the OICW Web site (oicw.org).

To sign up for the free festival, call 330-6491, or go online to openhouse@oicw.org.

RECALL

continued from page 12

out on Friday by certified mail to start the recall process, she said. The group will then have four months to gather 700 signatures in order to hold a recall election, she said.

Ms. McKeithen gave a staunch defense of herself and a rebuttal to those who seek to recall her at the council's Sept. 20 meeting. She said it was her duty to take residents' complaints about the building department, such as employees accepting gifts and illegally granting permit extensions, to City Manager Jim Robinson.

Those complaints triggered an investigation that was authorized by the entire council, Ms. McKeithen said. Internal audits showed that the department's procedures needed to be

changed, she said.

"It's a sad day when people in pursuit of their own self interests (work against) the common good of the town," Ms. McKeithen said.

Ms. McKeithen said she has no personal agenda and is working solely for the good of the town.

"This is a sad day for her? This is a sad day for all of us, to have to go through this to get representation on our council," Ms. Manus Salzman said after the meeting.

Another group member, Alan Douglass, an Atherton resident and developer, accused Ms. McKeithen of being anti-builders and anti-development.

The fact that the City Council bowed to public pressure at the Sept. 20 meeting and rescinded the excavation fee doesn't change their commitment to recalling Ms. McKeithen, group members said. ■

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- 1 Charles Wadsworth and Spoleto USA Chamber Music
- 11 *What Makes It Great?* with Rob Kapilow and the Stanford Chamber Strings
- 15 St. Lawrence String Quartet with Pedja Muzijevic, *piano*
- 18 Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble
- 20 Natalie MacMaster, *fiddle*
- 25 Badi Assad
- 28 Rinde Eckert, *Horizon*
- 28-29 Diavolo Dance Company

NOVEMBER 2006

- 3 Manuel Barrueco, *guitar*, with Cuarteto Latinoamericano

DECEMBER 2006

- 1 Kronos Quartet
- 3 St. Lawrence String Quartet with Jon Kimura Parker, *piano*
- 12-13 *A Chanticleer Christmas*

JANUARY 2007

- 10 Gryphon Trio
- 12 Anonymous 4, *Long Time Traveling*
- 20 Ute Lemper
- 24 Sô Percussion
- 26-27 Richard Alston Dance Company
- 28 Ladysmith Black Mambazo
- 31 Roby Lakatos Ensemble

FEBRUARY 2007

- 3 Anthony de Mare, *piano*, and Steven Mayer, *piano*, *The American Piano*
- 7 Jerry Quickley's, *Live From the Front*
- 10 Emerson String Quartet
- 16 King's Singers
- 23 Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble with Stanford Taiko
- 25 *What Makes It Great?* with Rob Kapilow and Vassily Primakov, *piano*

MARCH 2007

- 2 Borromeo String Quartet
- 4 Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, *The Four Seasons: A Cycle of the Sun*
- 7 Klezmer en Buenos Aires
- 14 Boys of the Lough
- 16 Company Vincent Mantsoe, *Men-Jaro*
- 17-18 Aquila Theatre Company, *The Canterbury Tales*

APRIL 2007

- 1 Jupiter String Quartet
- 7 Louis Lortie, *piano*
- 11 Paco Peña with the Stanford Chamber Chorale
- 22 St. Lawrence String Quartet with Tara Helen O'Connor, *flute*; Daniel Phillips, *violin*; and Andrés Díaz, *cello*
- 25 Irvin Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra
- 28 Emio Greco | PC, *Hell*
- 29 Deborah Voigt, *soprano*

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August home sales drop reflects trend

■ Prices flat to lower in local counties.

Home sales declined sharply in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties in August, DataQuick Information System reported Sept. 21.

Sales fell to 2,126 homes in Santa Clara County, a 25 percent drop from August 2005. In San Mateo County, the decline was 18 percent to 792 homes.

Home prices were flat in Santa Clara County: The median price of \$658,000 was a fraction of a percent higher than in August 2005, DataQuick reported.

San Mateo County had the steepest price drop — 7 percent — in the nine-county Bay Area, the company said. The county's median price was \$721,000.

First-half numbers

The August numbers continue a trend seen in the first half of

the year, in the January-June period.

In Atherton, East Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Menlo Park, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Portola Valley, and Woodside, sales in the January-June period dropped 13 percent from the same period in 2005, according to the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors, based on information derived from REInfoLink.

Sales in the first half of 2005 totaled 1,213 homes, while this year 1,053 homes were sold.

Only in Palo Alto did sales increase, from 267 homes in the first half of 2005 to 280 homes in 2006.

Median prices, meanwhile, in the January-June period have increased in Atherton, East Palo Alto, Los Altos Hills, Mountain

View, Palo Alto, and Woodside. They decreased in Los Altos and Portola Valley and stayed the same in Menlo Park.

Several things are going on in the Bay Area home market, DataQuick President Marshall Prentice said.

"Many homes are being offered for sale at unrealistically high prices as sellers try to game the peak of the market," he said. "Buyers appear to be tak-

ing a wait-and-see approach as sellers get real with their asking prices.

"The market seems to be going into a lull, until this all shakes out. It does appear that the strong appreciation of the recent past is leveling off."

Bay Area sales in August were the weakest for that month since 1997, when 9,080 homes were sold, he said.

DataQuick found that 9,128

new and resale houses and condos were sold in the nine-county region last month, up 15 percent from July but down 25 percent from August last year.

DataQuick spokesman John Karevoll said that indicators of market distress are still largely absent. The use of adjustable-rate mortgages has decreased in the past six months and while foreclosure rates are up from last year's low point, they are still below normal levels, he said.

The Palo Alto Weekly and Bay City News Service contributed to this report.

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– Wednesday, September 27
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– Saturday, September 30
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Call (650) 723-4600 or visit www.lpch.org to register or obtain more information on the times, locations and fees for these and other courses.



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Disaster Preparedness Day on Saturday

Earthquake, fire, flood, bird flu, terrorist attack. They can happen here. And when they do, we'll do much better if we have prepared — individually and as families — with education, planning, practice and supplies.

Families can get a good start preparing — and have some fun, too — at San Mateo County's second annual Disaster Preparedness Day on Saturday, Sept. 30, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the San Mateo County Event Center, 2495 S. Delaware St. in San Mateo.

There will be first-aid and emergency equipment demonstrations. Participants can learn the do's and don'ts for surviving in an emergency, and receive instructions for emergency kits and disaster planning.

Admission is free; so are hot dogs and soda. And the first 1,500 families will receive a free gift.

Disaster Preparedness Day climaxes a month of efforts and training by local safety agencies as part of National Preparedness Month.

"Every household, every employer, every school should have plans as well as appropriate supplies," said Supervisor Adreinne Tissier. "Depending on the situation, we may have to take care of ourselves for a week or longer."

Sheriff's Lt. John Quinlan, director of the county's Office of Emergency Services, warned against the complacency that can build up, as things remain quiet and unthreatening, even after a disaster like Hurricane Katrina.

"Go look at the pictures of flooded New Orleans, take away the floodwaters, and it could be Daly City or Redwood City or Burlingame after the next big quake," Lt. Quinlan told the Board of Supervisors on Sept. 12. "We know something bad is going to happen. We think it will be an earthquake. But if we're prepared for an earthquake, we're prepared for anything."

For information on Disaster Preparedness Day, call the Office of Emergency Services at 363-4790, or Supervisor Tissier at 363-4572.

For preparedness programs in the South County, call the Menlo Park Fire Protection District at 688-8400, or the Woodside Fire Protection District at 851-1594.

People Who Care Awards for helping disabled people

Four San Mateo County residents, the Mental Health Association, and a business will be honored for their work to help people with disabilities at the People Who Care Awards Dinner on Friday, October 6, at the South San Francisco Conference Center, at 255 South Airport Boulevard.

Dinner at 7 p.m. will be preceded at 5:30 p.m. by a reception with no-host cocktails, an art showcase of works by local artists with disabilities, and a silent auction.

Individual awards will go to: Randy Kiefer for his work with Rebuilding Together Peninsula for a disabled mother and daughter; Susan Houston, director of senior services for the Family Service Agency; and Shelley Denny, a special education teacher with the San Mateo County Office of Education.

Childe Abutin will receive the business award for her caring and sensitivity managing Burlingame Hacienda, a board and care home. The Mental Health Association will receive the agency award for innovative programs to help people with psychiatric disabilities.

The Lore Radisch Lifetime Advocacy Award will go to Sheryl Young, CEO of Community Gatepath of Burlingame for developing innovative programs that support people with disabilities and their families.

Jerry Hill, president of the Board of Supervisors, will be master of ceremonies at the event, sponsored by the supervisors and the Commission on Disabilities.

Tickets at \$50 each may be ordered by calling the Commission on Disabilities at 573-2580.

Theater party benefits battered women network

The Zonta Club of Silicon Valley will sponsor a theater party to benefit the Support Network for Battered Women at 2 p.m. Sun-

day, Oct. 8, at the Dragon Theatre, 539 Alma St. in Palo Alto.

The play, "Underpants," is a comedy by Steve Martin. Tickets

are \$25 and include a reception to meet the actors after the show. For tickets, call 444-7560.

Zonta International is a world-

wide service organization of business and professional executives dedicated to advancing the status of women. The Silicon Valley chapter, founded a year ago, meets for dinner at 6 p.m. the second

Tuesday of each month at the Bay Cafe in Palo Alto.

The organization is interested in recruiting new members. For more information, call 444-7560.

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Arts & Olive Festival in Woodside

Olives, flavored olive oils and vinegars will be available for tasting at the ninth annual Arts & Olive Festival, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 1, at Canada College, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd. in Woodside.

Carol Anglin will give a talk, "The Passionate Olive: 101 Things to Do with Olive Oil," at 2 p.m. in Building 13, Room 15.

There will be an olive-curing demonstration, a kids' corner, and food and wine from local vintners and restaurants. Musicians and dancers will perform on two stages.

The festival will feature a designers' sale of textiles, artwork and home accessories, organized by the Canada College student chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers. The sale will be in Building 13, Room 17.

Admission to the festival is free. For information, call Julie Mooney at 306-3428 or go to www.olivefest.org.

Author's talk: 'When Words Heal'

Menlo Park author Sharon Bray will discuss her new book, "When Words Heal: Writing Through Cancer," on Wednesday, Sept. 27, at the Community Breast Health Project, 390 Cambridge Ave. in Palo Alto.

The 7:30 p.m. event will include readings, a book signing and refreshments.

Ms. Bray, a cancer survivor, leads writing workshops for women with cancer at the Stan-

AROUND TOWN

ford Cancer Center, the CBHP and at other Bay Area locations. Her new book explores the power of words to heal and offers guidance to people with cancer who want to tap into those healing powers.

In addition to Ms. Bray's comments and reading, members of her writing groups will read from their work.

For more information, call Ms. Bray at 325-0680.

Menlo Brass Quintet performs October 6

The Menlo Brass Quintet will perform in a concert beginning at 7 p.m. Friday, October 6, in the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, 950 Santa Cruz Ave. in Menlo Park.

The concert will include music ranging from Handel to Gershwin and Duke Ellington. The ensemble will also perform Dixieland jazz and a piece by film score composer Michael Kamen.

Admission is free. For more information, call 364-8413 or visit www.menlobrass.com.

Rhododendron Society

Free root cuttings will be available at the propagation meeting of the DeAnza chapter of the American Rhododendron Society, from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, September 30, in the Senior Center at Hillview Community Center, 97 Hillview Ave. in Los Altos, off San Antonio Road.

Many vireya rhododendrons will be in bloom and all materials will be provided. Past president Tom Wynn will conduct the workshop, which will be

followed by a potluck. For more information, call Alma Fletcher at 851-1334.

Columbus Day

The Italian-American community of San Mateo County is observing Columbus Day on Saturday, Oct. 7, at the San Mateo County History Museum.

Starting at 12:30 p.m., there will be bocce ball in Courtroom A. In the rotunda, Pasquale Esposito will be among entertainers performing traditional Italian music. Italian food and wine will be available. Cost is \$15 for adults; and free for children under 12. The museum is located at 750 Middlefield Road in Redwood City. For information, call 299-0104.

Rebuilding Together offers free home repairs

Low-income homeowners who meet certain conditions may apply for a free home

renovation from Rebuilding Together Peninsula by October 1, a representative of the non-profit organization said.

To be eligible for the services, homeowners must qualify as low-income and must either have children or be elderly or disabled. The offer covers homes from Sunnyvale to Daly City.

Among the types of repairs that the program offers are general cleanup, landscaping, roof repairs, plumbing, electrical work, painting and handicap modifications.

Most homes will be renovated on one day: April 28, 2007. Able-bodied family and friends of participants are expected to work alongside RTP volunteers.

To apply, contact the Rebuilding Together Peninsula office at 366-6597, e-mail info@rebuildingtogetherpeninsula.org, or download an application on the Web site at rebuildingtogetherpeninsula.org.

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New Ravenswood sports league looking for coaches

By **Stephanie Cadora**

Special to the Almanac

Ravenswood Youth Athletic Association, a startup, faith-based sports league that provides low-cost sports programs to kids in East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park, has launched its soccer season.

Although the first games on

September 16 had 400 boys and girls, ages 4 to 18, participating at Cesar Chavez School, there still may be room for kids to register, particularly girls.

The league is also still looking for more volunteer coaches and referees.

Many of the leagues west of the Bayshore freeway in Palo Alto and Menlo Park are financially out of reach for Ravenswood residents,

said Shannon Pekary, a software developer and resident of East Palo Alto. That's why he started the nonprofit league, he said.

Mr. Pekary said that RYAA will work to strengthen the community at the same time that it provides positive sports programs — soccer to begin with and basketball, football and wrestling to follow.

A Christian-based organization,

it aims to build character and faith in two ways, he said: Coaches will deliver three-minute lessons in the middle of practice to emphasize cooperation and hard work; and partnerships with local churches will help guide kids to resources that can help them develop. Coaches will also lead prayers on the field before each game.

"What excited me was the opportunity not only to offer a

diversion for the area's youth, but to help kids grow and mature into healthy adults — physically, socially, spiritually," Mr. Pekary said in a written statement. "Kids need purpose in their lives, and we hope to help them find it."

Soccer registration is \$40; scholarships are available.

Those interested in coaching, refereeing, becoming a league sponsor, or otherwise getting involved can visit www.ravenswoodsports.org or call 248-0488 for information.

OBITUARIES

Myrtle Harris

Community volunteer

A memorial service for Myrtle Elizabeth Whitsett Harris of Menlo Park will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 7, at the Woodside Village Church in Woodside, where she was a longtime member. Ms. Harris died September 14 at Stanford Medical Center after a battle with cancer. She was 72.



Myrtle Harris

Ms. Harris was born in Los Angeles. She earned a bachelor's degree from Occidental College, and in 1958 earned a master's degree in education from Stanford University. That same year she married William Nelson Harris.

Ms. Harris was active in education and the community. Her community service included serving as an alumni trustee of Occidental College, and serving as president of the Myrtle L. Atkinson Foundation and as a director of the W.P. Whitsett Foundation. She was dedicated to the YWCA and served as a member of the World Service Council for more than 30 years. She also served on the Mid-Peninsula YWCA board for 10 years.

Ms. Harris established the W.P. Whitsett chair and lecture series in California history at California State University, Northridge, and served on the President's Investment Board of that university. She was a member of the chaplaincy advisory committee at Stanford Medical Center and a member of the Family Service Agency of San Mateo County.

Ms. Harris is survived by her husband, William Harris; sons Robert of Corvallis, Oregon, John of Bellevue, Washington, and Bill of Menlo Park; brother John F. Whitsett; and seven grandchildren.

Memorial gifts may be made to Sempervirens Fund, Drawer BE, Los Altos, CA 94023.

Minerva Herbein Hartzell

Portola Valley centenarian

Minerva Herbein Hartzell, whose life spanned 100 years, died Sept. 16 in Portola Valley, where she lived for the past 37 years.

She married her childhood sweetheart, Harry E. Hartzell, on September 23, 1930. Last fall, shortly before his death, they celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary.

The Hartzells moved to The Sequoias, the retirement community in Portola Valley, in 1969. In connection with her husband's

career with Hercules Powder Company of Wilmington, Delaware, Ms. Hartzell lived in various cities in the United States and, before World War II, near Manchester, England.

After the war she and Mr. Hartzell lived for 20 years in London, where he was managing director in Hercules' London office. They cultivated their interest in concert music and opera, collected art and traveled extensively.

At The Sequoias, Ms. Hartzell organized the popular Music at Four concerts, which brought noted and aspiring musicians to the retirement community. She was an accomplished seamstress and needlewoman, and was well known for the stylish hand-knit suits in her wardrobe, said her family.

Ms. Hartzell was born into a Pennsylvania Dutch family, and grew up in Bechtelsville and Boyertown, Pennsylvania. She graduated with a degree in music from Bluffton College in Ohio and taught music in New Jersey public schools until her marriage.

She is survived by her son, Harry E. Hartzell Jr., a retired Palo Alto pediatrician; three grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, 4000 Middlefield Road, #M-1, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Menlo Park police nab auto burglary suspect

By **Stephanie Cadora**

Special to the Almanac

It may be all in a day's work if you ask officers in the Menlo Park Police Department about the corralling of an auto burglary suspect last week, but they appear to have executed a textbook example of the right hand knowing what the left hand is doing.

A man whose locked truck had been burglarized in front of a business on the 500 block of Willow Road on September 22 called 911 at about 1:10 p.m. Within the hour, police found and verified the stolen items and arrested a suspect as well as a possible juvenile accomplice.

The suspect, Oscar Jimenez, 18, of East Palo Alto, was originally pulled over in the Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park about 10 minutes before the 911 call for not wearing a seat belt. Because he did not have a driver's license, he was cited and

released. During the inventory of his 1994 Cadillac Concourse, police found suspicious looking stereo equipment in the glove compartment and the trunk.

Police then contacted the man who made the 911 call to verify the exact descriptions of the stolen items, and found that they matched the equipment discovered in the Cadillac.

With the department on alert and with a description of the suspect, officers patrolled the Willows neighborhood and re-encountered Mr. Jimenez and a male juvenile companion in a parking lot on Willow Road. Both were taken into custody on charges of auto burglary and possession of stolen property.

The Menlo Park Police Department is asking anyone with information, or who witnessed the incident, to call 330-6300 or the anonymous tip hotline at 330-6395.

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

Arson report: Plastic picnic table burned, Selby Lane School on Selby Lane, September 18.

Check fraud report: Letter received stating Lotto won for \$4,800 — check enclosed — and \$2,500 owed in taxes, first block of Tuscaloosa Avenue, September 18.

Burglary report: Rocks thrown through window and plasma TV stolen, first block of Austin Avenue, September 19.

Auto burglary report: Windows broken and MP3 player stolen, first block of Shearer Drive, September 20.

MENLO PARK

Grand theft reports:

■ Golf clubs stolen, 100 block of Oak Court and 300 block of Sharon Park Drive, September 18.

■ Bicycle stolen, 1100 block of Elder Avenue, September 20.

■ Bicycle stolen, 1900 block of Euclid Avenue, September 21.

Fraud reports:

■ Fraudulent credit card usage, 800 block of Oak Grove Avenue, September 15.

■ Unauthorized withdrawal from bank account, 600 block of Santa Cruz Avenue, September 20.

Burglary reports:

■ Computer and bicycle stolen, 1200 block of Hoover Street, September 15.

■ Camera and computer software stolen, 900 block of Christopher Way, September 16.

■ Residential items moved around, 700 block of College Avenue, September 18.

■ Cash in amount of \$40 stolen, 700 block of College Avenue, September 18.

■ Twenty bottles of water and some juice stolen, 600 block of College Avenue, September 18.

■ Items moved around and losses unknown, 100 block of Oak Court, September 18.

■ TV, computer and stereo stolen, 100 block Oak Court, September 18.

■ Window smashed and computer stolen, 900 block of O'Brien Drive, September 19.

■ Bicycle stolen, first block of Lorelei Lane, September 19.

■ Items worth \$3,000 stolen from occupied residence, 400 block of Blake Street, September 20.

■ Losses unknown, 1300 block of Madera Avenue, September 21.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Auto burglary report: Wallet and mobile phone stolen, Alpine Road at Willowbrook Drive, September 18.

Stolen vehicle report: Green 2000 Mazda Protege, 100 block of Sandstone Street, September 17.

Pop Warner Vikings teams sweep games

By **Jim Gallagher**

Vikings Boosters

Saturday, Sept. 23, in Santa Cruz was a big occasion for Menlo-Atherton Vikings Pop Warner football teams, as all the M-A squads triumphed over their Surf City competition. Following is a summary of the results.

Tiny Mites: Floyd Gazaway ripped off a 50-yard run, then scored the game's only touchdown as the Vikings dominated the host Sea Lions in a non-scoring contest. M-A not only shut out the home team, but tallied an insurance safety on a three-way tackle in the end zone by Stavro Papadakis, Cameron Meacham and P.J. Lopez. **Mitey Mites:** Menlo-Atherton stifled a helpless Santa Cruz offense en route to an easy 24-0 victory. Keenan Gates broke away for two Vikings touchdowns, and other scores came from Adam Greenlow

and Anthony Gabb. Quarterback Cameron Kirkpatrick handled the M-A offense deftly, aided by hard running from David Teu. Charlie Roth and Michael Fekete sliced consistently into the Sea Lion backfield, once hurling Santa Cruz back 47 yards in a single series of downs.

Junior PeeWees: Combining their customary steel curtain defense with a variety of offensive fireworks, the undefeated Vikings polished their spotless record with a 26-0 victory. Jaime Carranza, normally a defensive standout, scored his first touchdown on a short plunge after an electrifying run by Campbell Roellig. Ryan Blocker added another score, while Quarterback Landon Baty tallied on a 40-yard rollout, and threw a 15-yard touchdown pass to Khalil (Lil) James. Dominic Andrightto kicked a two-point conversion. Bobby Roth's timely interception was a defensive highlight.

PeeWees: Menlo-Atherton had to dig

in on defense to preserve a 14-12 victory over a feisty Santa Cruz team. Jake Britschgi led a fourth-down stop on the Vikings' 20 yard line to frustrate a last-ditch Santa Cruz bid. Talaiasi (T) Teu scored a Vikings touchdown and two critical conversion runs, and Sean Barrett added the other six-pointer. Jack Heneghan, Tualupe Tau and Michael Falepouono were particularly active for the aggressive Menlo-Atherton defense.

Midgets: Menlo-Atherton's tailback tandem of Charlie Koka and Tavasa Pale rang up more than 200 rushing yards and two touchdowns as the Vikings turned back the host Sea Lions 38-12. Quarterback Josiah Paye tossed a touchdown pass to wideout B.J. Prema, and sure-fingered Brandon Gibson added two scores — one on a pass from Paye, the other on an interception return. M-A defenders limited a dangerous Santa Cruz offense to two scores.



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LETTERS

continued from page 27

disagree with it.

Lorie Sinnott
Planning Commissioner
Rose Avenue, Menlo Park

Polarization in eyes of beholder

Editor:

Last week the League of Women Voters sponsored a forum for all six candidates running for the Menlo Park City Council.

The audience roared with laughter when candidate John Boyle said the present council is "not polarized."

Another candidate noted that Mr. Boyle's name is presently on street signs with incumbent candidates Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler. If Menlo Park residents want a change in our city's direction, and not business as usual, they should view this debate, which will be rebroadcast on cable TV soon.

The other three candidates, Vince Bressler, Rich Cline, and Heyward Robinson, will eliminate the polarization of our council if elected.

Margaret H. Carney
Claremont Way, Menlo Park

Another swipe at Sand Hill Road

Editor:

Sand Hill Road? Every two years this strip of pavement becomes part of the Menlo Park election campaign bag of ammunition.

The League of Women Voter's forum last week was no exception. John Boyle, the newest member of the Mickie Winkler/Lee Duboc slate, was assigned the task of dragging Sand Hill Road into the fray.

Here is what happened: The widening of Sand Hill Road involved not only the intersection within Menlo Park, the developments that the road facilitated, and the traffic it generated. It also included the cost and why Menlo Park should not have had to pay for any part of it. The negotiations that Mr. Boyle claims never occurred actually did occur and money was a key point of disagreement.

In previous councils, there were some who wanted to accept Stanford's offer that it would pay a maximum of \$10 million for the intersection. Council members Sorenson, Grant, Tolles, Burmeister, Jellins and Valencia are on this list. Had this group been allowed to accept Stanford's deal, Menlo Park would

now be in greater debt than it is. The road reconfiguration costs reached approximately \$14 million, leaving \$4 million that would have been Menlo Park's responsibility.

Yes, Mr. Boyle, there were negotiations and much to my sorrow, in 2002 I initiated those negotiations abandoning my long-held position that Menlo Park should be protected from Stanford's developments. I was adamant that this acrimonious issue had to be put to rest and also that the university should pay 100 percent of the cost. The deal I brokered gave Stanford the road, but on their dime.

History is boring but without knowing the past, campaign drive gets packed with misinformation by novice candidates for the shock value. This we/them approach in every election is the fundamental reason Menlo Park voters have been exploited by polarizing candidates for the last 15 years.

Moderation and truth are values that all candidates need to embrace.

Steve Schmidt
City Council member,
1994-2002

Continued on next page



Stephanie Ann CHANCELLOR

Dec. 14, 1977
 Nov. 19, 2000

Stephanie Ann Chancellor, a native of Palo Alto, California, succumbed to Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma at the age of 22. She attended Palo Alto public schools (Class of 1996). She was diagnosed with Lymphoma in her junior year at Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she was studying Interior Design. She returned home for treatment at Stanford University Hospital, but after a valiant twenty-one month struggle, she lost her battle with the disease.

In the United States, every nine minutes, another child or adult dies from leukemia, lymphoma, or myeloma. Current Chemotherapy and radiation treatments have low rates of success, and often bone marrow transplantation is the only remaining treatment option. A shortage of bone marrow donors means that some patients are left without even that hope of recovery. There is a serious need for continued research and education about these diseases.

The Stephanie Ann Chancellor Foundation for Leukemia/Lymphoma Research was founded primarily to aid in the ongoing search for effective therapies and cures. Additionally, the Foundation hopes to educate the public about the importance of becoming a bone marrow donor. Through the generosity of supporters at all levels, the Foundation has been able to transfer one-hundred and ten thousand dollars (\$110,000) to the Stephanie Ann Chancellor Research Fund at Stanford University Hospital in its first four years. The Research Fund has contributed to significant research advances. You can be part of "Building a Bridge Between Hope and a Cure."

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Continued from previous page

A call for change in leadership

Editor:

Menlo Park needs a change of leadership.

The current City Council majority of Mickie Winkler, Lee Duboc and Nicholas Jellins has proved time and again that it does not want the public to have a say in the city's decision-making.

Secret maneuverings accompanied by faulty decisions have repeatedly wasted the city's time and money as they pursue projects that are either not supported by the community or are totally unfeasible.

One example is the Bayfront Park golf course fiasco. The council majority failed to make the city's Parks and Recreation Commission aware of the golf course plan until negotiations between the council majority and the developer were well under way.

As is well known now, the developer's proposal was not feasible as it completely ignored issues surrounding the use of wetlands. This oversight by the council majority cost Menlo Park tens of thousands of dollars.

Operating in secret without public input is bad governance.

Menlo Park deserves far better.

Jennifer Fisher
Hermosa Way, Menlo Park

Shocked by stance on referendum

Editor:

At Wednesday night's candidate debate, I was shocked to hear Vince Bressler, Rich Cline and Heyward Robinson announce their support of the referendum to cancel the Derry project that the city approved after years of negotiation.

If the referendum passes, it could end up costing the city millions of dollars if the developer files a breach of contract suit against the city. We approved the project and they have signed contracts. If the project is canceled, they will forfeit millions, and may decide to sue the city to reimburse them.

Sue Kayton
Doris Drive, Menlo Park

Convenient support for referendum

Editor:

What does it take in Menlo Park to make a decision?

The Menlo Park City Council approved the Derry project by a 4-1 vote after three years of hearings and unanimous

approval by the Planning and Housing commissions.

The project will offer relatively affordable condominiums, including units below market rate, and retail space. The location next to the train station will allow the residents to commute to work by train and shop at Menlo Park stores without car trips. The developers will be paying over \$5 million in fees to our community, more than twice the revenue of a proposed utility tax.

The project being a change, it is not surprising that certain residents have decided to fight the development. What is surprising is that City Council candidates Heyward Robinson, Vince Bressler and Rich Cline have joined the anti-Derry group. They say that they don't like the process.

Where were Messrs Robinson, Bressler and Cline during the three years of hearings? It seems that not liking the process is a euphemism for not liking the decision but not wanting to offend anyone who did like the decision. It allows them to make political capital by blaming their City Council opponents Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler because as incumbents, if the process were bad, they would presumably be to blame.

I wonder if we will see a lot of

back-pedaling explanations by these candidates over the next few weeks about their positions on the project and their desire to trash the three years of work by city committees and involved citizens? Their actions so far on this issue make me doubt that Messrs Robinson, Bressler, or Cline would be very good City Council people.

Dave Gildea
Hermosa Way, Menlo Park

Don't kill the golden goose

Editor:

Imagine this task: The knight must not only kill the dragon and find the princess, but he must also reverse a decade of declining business in the land of Menlo Park without upsetting any of the interest groups.

The princess might as well get used to a life in the tower. How tempting to attack city leaders. So OK, not all their ideas are perfect. After all, this council actually stick their necks out to solve nearly intractable conflicts between budget income and services.

There's no "safe" way of keeping our small town feel without the Mary Jo Borak, Steve Schmidt, Gail Slocum disaster of driving away the investment and business taxes that make it possible. (How amusing that candi-

dates Rich Cline and Heyward Robinson try to put the decade of demise of El Camino on the current council.)

This week's easy target is the Derry project, the first truly green downtown project, a real transit-oriented development which went through more public hearings than Bill Clinton's private life. Commissioners spent a dozen hours each studying, questioning this project.

It can turn those funky corrugated buildings of the sad east edge of El Camino into real vitality, and it is excellent architecture too. What signal do we send to the good developers by signing some alarmist petition?

A more relevant fable would be the goose that laid the golden eggs. We used exhaustive, good process for Derry across two years. The few opponents simply refuse the result and believe enough people will sign anything that they can get 1,800 signatures and tie the project up with a special election (that you and I pay for). But this goose would pay big fees up front, bring in taxes and enliven Oak Grove Avenue and El Camino Real if we just let it live.

Henry Riggs
Callie Lane, Menlo Park

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Another quick, and quiet, fix in Atherton

Atherton has made yet another major decision behind closed doors, leaving the public to wonder what will happen next in the probe of the town's troubled building department.

Last week, town attorney Marc Hynes told a crowd of more than 100 residents and builders at a council meeting that a controversial excavation fee would be rescinded and paid back, with interest, to property owners who were charged \$22 for every cubic yard of dirt trucked on or off a building site. The unani-

EDITORIAL
The opinion of The Almanac

mous council decision came after an irate group of residents challenged the legality of the fee, which set off a second look at the ordinance by Mr. Hynes,

who last year had said the fee was within the law.

The imbroglgio began several months ago, when Mike Hood, the building department's long time administrator, abruptly retired and left town after an investigation by a private attorney that has never been made public. The Almanac has called for Mr. Hynes and the City Council to release the report, which resulted in at least one employee's being disciplined and moved out of the department. An internal audit found that building department employees failed to collect about \$134,000 in excavation fees last year.

Last week's decision came after Mr. Hynes' review, but as in the case before, no official explanation was issued, although Councilman Jim Janz later said that the council backed away from the fees due to the residents' revolt. Presumably, Mr. Hynes

told the council that the fee was not legally defensible after all.

Regardless of the outcome, the public remains in the dark about exactly what transpired in the earlier probe of the building department, and exactly what Mr. Hynes discovered about the fee's legality that presumably caused him to change his mind.

And although we are sure City Manager Jim Robinson and the City Council wish the entire episode would go away, it clearly is just getting started. Residents who challenged the fee now vow to recall council member Kathy McKeithen, while another faction is focusing on Mayor Charles Marsala.

We doubt if this will do residents of the town any good or result in the changes needed to rein in property owners who are eager to dig complete basements under the maximum-size 7,800-square-foot home on a typical one-acre lot in Atherton. Surely the town can find a way to recoup the damage done to local roads and streets from the hundreds of trips from huge dump trucks used on these projects.

Finally, we urge the council and Mr. Hynes to adopt a much more open policy so that all residents can know and understand what is happening in this case, and the others that are sure to follow. Mr. Hynes should work with the council to release information about the investigation, as well as the decision to dump the excavation fees. All town officials should realize that they serve the people of Atherton; the public has a right to know all the details about the building department probe, and why the excavation fee was unceremoniously dropped.



Photo by Marion Softky, courtesy of Jac Audiffred

Our Regional Heritage

Searsville Lake in Woodside was a popular recreation spot in 1975. It closed a year later after 54 years of commercial operation.

LETTERS

Our readers write

More information about Derry project*Editor:*

On behalf of the Derry family and the O'Brien Group, I am writing to provide additional information about the Derry project, which was recently approved by the Menlo Park City Council after a three-year public review process.

The Derry public review process was comprehensive, open and productive. Prior to submitting a formal development application, we presented our concept for the project to the City Council in January 2004, where it was favorably received.

During four meetings with the Planning Commission over 18 months, all elements of the project were reviewed, from architectural design to building materials to potential commercial uses. As a result of those very detailed Planning Commission meetings, we made numerous, and often significant, changes to the project including increasing the amount of commercial space by 30 percent and completely redesigning and expanding the underground parking garage.

Throughout this three-year process, the public was invited to participate and provide input. We listened to community concerns and made real changes to the project to address those concerns.

That is why, at the end of the process, the project was approved unanimously by the Housing Commission and the Planning Commission, and approved by a 4-1 vote of the City Council.

The Derry project will provide a number of important benefits to the community:

■ Payment of more than \$5.5 million in development fees to the city to fund police and fire protection, schools and parks.

■ A reliable long-term revenue stream for the city.

■ Much-needed affordable housing for moderate-income residents of our community, including 21 BMR units.

■ Redevelopment of an underutilized area of downtown adjacent to the train station with attractive new retail and restaurant spaces and a public plaza.

We worked hard with the community for three years to create a development that maximizes community benefits and minimizes community impacts. It strikes us as grossly unfair to the entire community that a small group of residents who chose not to participate in the process at any point over the last three years are now threatening to derail the development.

We urge you to get the facts

Referendum an opportunity for voter choice

By Jack Morris

Recently the City Council changed Menlo Park's zoning laws, nearly tripling the housing density, changing the counting definitions, and doubling commercial density in downtown commercial "mixed use" areas.

The major policy change was not a result of an open, public discussion on the future of Menlo Park, but instead buried in approval of a single item, the "Derry project." This is the most significant and intense urbanization change ever proposed for downtown Menlo Park, and it applies to more than the Derry site.

With the referendum, citizens will get a chance to learn the facts and vote on our future. The Derry condo project is the first in a wave of at least three large downtown dense condo/commercial projects. These will bring "unavoidable" negative impacts on quality of life, schools, traffic, downtown parking, access to playing fields, open space, and city services.

When we replace car dealerships and

retail outlets with high-density condos, we lose sales tax and increase demand for city services, simultaneously reducing revenues and increasing city costs. These projects will replace and therefore permanently eliminate important parts of our retail sales tax base.

Instead of formalizing a community vision and an economic plan that specifically attracts sales tax producers, the council is making ad hoc decisions based on developer requests. For example:

■ By granting special zoning easements, public abandonments, and increased densities, the council created for the Derry project alone at least \$35 million of its value, and got no public benefit in return beyond routinely required fees.

■ This change does not follow the existing approved general plan.

This ad hoc zoning by the council conceals important policy decisions and quietly gives pre-approval for a similarly dense follow-on project at the former Cadillac dealer site.

■ The new zoning sets a precedent for other proposed downtown housing projects. In particular, it crowds out of sales-tax produc-

ing retail space. In the long run, this drives down sales tax and increases demand for city services. The policy is not sustainable.

■ The zoning and general plan changes are unnecessary for revitalization. Mixed-use housing projects such as Menlo Square and just-approved Beltramo's adhere to long-standing density regulations.

With no formal plan for economic revitalization or for the "look and feel" of the El Camino corridor, the council majority will continue to make decisions, project by project. The referendum represents the only chance for citizens to participate meaningfully in these important decisions.

Citizens should vote on the new zoning laws. Menlo Park should insist on appropriate public compensation from the developers in exchange for community generosity. Supporting the referendum may be the last chance to participate in creating a community vision for downtown Menlo Park and El Camino Real that is sustainable and benefits Menlo Park.

Give the people a vote.

Jack Morris is a former member of the City Council who lives on Baywood Avenue.



before you consider signing the petition opposing the Derry project. You can get more information by visiting our Web site at www.derryatmenlo.com.

**Jim Pollart, vice president
The O'Brien Group
Foster City**

Golf course plan hatched a year ago

Editor:

October 25, 2006, will mark the one-year anniversary of the Menlo Park Parks and Recreation meeting where the public first saw plans for a golf course and a sports complex on the tidal pond at Bayfront Park.

The rationale at the time for privatizing the heart of the park for a golf course, clubhouse, parking lots and roads and for the athletics complex was that the park maintenance fund was running out of money. And Menlo Park would get "free" fields.

It was never convincingly explained, among so many other things, how the golf course was going to offset the cost of maintaining the park, which would still have expenses.

The golf course and athletic complex on the tidal pond were environmentally, legally and financially highly risky. Highlands Golf had the good sense to withdraw their proposal.

One year later, we have before us Measure J, a request to the voters for a blank check to build an athletics complex on the heart of the park. To be included in this plan are four competitive-size fields, road upgrades, a snack shack, bleachers, park-

ing lots, lights, and bathrooms. What Measure J doesn't have are spending limits or oversight.

This complex will have many of the same environmental and financial risks as the golf course; it will cost millions to build, and the yearly maintenance of the complex alone, excluding the remaining park, will be extraordinarily high.

That's a huge subsidy. It makes the slight child care facility offset a mere pittance. It would divert funds from other recreation programs that were promised better and expanded facilities, such as the Burgess gym and basketball court.

And building a \$17 million-plus sports complex doesn't answer the original question: How will we finance the long-term maintenance costs of the park?

Wise voters will see that Measure J is a boondoggle. We need reasonable field solutions, not endless debt. And we need a vision for keeping Bayfront Park as our last open parkland.

**Elizabeth Lasensky
Fremont Street, Menlo Park**

No on Measure J

Editor:

When I first joined the Menlo Park Arts Commission in 1987, I became aware of the Wuthering Heights beauty of Bayfront Park and its minimal-impact sculpture. My then young daughter always enjoyed the city-sponsored kite flying days.

I agree with the Parks and Recreation Commission that there is not enough information on which to base a development decision. The technical stud-

ies that were done when a golf course was first proposed there, about 15 to 20 years ago, need to be reviewed and updated.

At that time, a golf course and playing fields were deemed to be technically unfeasible, due to water issues, fertilizer/herbicide on top of landfill issues, and gas from garbage issues.

I believe the old information is all current, with the possible exception of the quantity of gas emissions, as well as the drought, which was true then and will be true again, but is not true right now. Even if a majority of the citizens of Menlo Park are willing to undergo rationing in order to water this proposed development, is irrigating over a landfill technically feasible?

Unless these issues have changed, there is no point in considering development. Too bad the City Council majority ignored requests for this review, in favor of scheduling an expensive election.

Do we want our children playing on the continuously settling surface of a landfill? Is the cost feasible in this time of austere budgeting?

Some citizens prize open space while others can't see open space without imagining some kind of development. And Menlo Park is under no obligation to provide playing fields or golf courses to anyone else.

Please vote NO on Measure J.
**Margaret Fruth
Peggy Lane, Menlo Park**

Respect the council's Derry project decision

Editor:

Last week I attended the debate

sponsored by the League of Women Voters and was glad to hear all of the challengers say that if they were elected they would "put an end to divisive politics," "listen to our city commissioners," and work to "bring businesses back to Menlo Park."

So after all of these pleasant-ries, I was surprised to hear the residentialist slate of candidates (Vince Bressler, Rich Cline and Heyward Robinson), none of whom spoke up during the public hearings on this project, all say that they supported a referendum to overturn the City Council's approval of the Derry project. This is a project that after numerous public hearings was recommended by staff, unanimously recommended by the Housing Commission and Planning Commission, and approved by a 4-1 supermajority of the City Council (including Kelly Fergusson).

Even more surprising was when Mr. Robinson said that if he were elected he would "get the developer back to the table to get the project right." What makes candidate Robinson think that the developers would come back to the table if the city reneges on this deal? What makes him think he would be a better negotiator than all those involved before him?

If this referendum proceeds it will bring further uncertainty to the business climate in Menlo Park. It's time to put campaign stunts aside, do what is best for the community, and respect the outcome of our city's decision-making process, even if you

See **LETTERS**, page 24

Arastradero Acres, Palo Alto



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