

GENES AND NOBEL PRIZES
run in the Kornberg family. Page 5

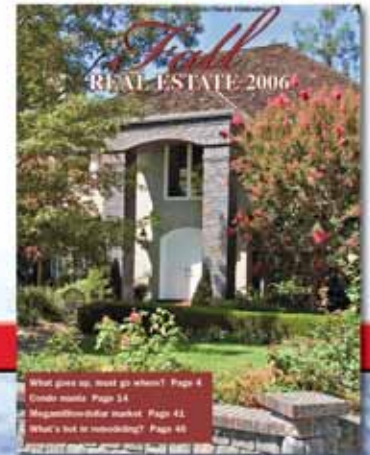
The Almanac

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

OCTOBER 11, 2006

www.AlmanacNews.com

VOL. 42 NO. 6



Fall Real Estate inside

Up and Away

Horizons expand for local teens
filming a documentary about
their Himalayan peers
Page 14



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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Association

Elegant again

A restored Courthouse Square in Redwood City, shown in this artist's rendering, officially debuts Sunday with an all-day fiesta celebrating the first 150 years of San Mateo County history. At 12:30 and 3 p.m., visitors can take in a 50-minute re-enactment of a scandal linked with the birth of San Mateo County. See story on **Page 18**

Atherton

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Menlo Park

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Fall Real Estate

■ See special section with this issue. Stories include: What goes up, must go where? (Page 4) Megamillion-dollar market. (Page 41)

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On the cover

The kingdom of Nepal, home of this breathtaking view of glacier-fed Lake Tilicho, awaited local teens who made the arduous trek through the Himalayas this summer. Film and video students from the Riekes Center are making a documentary about Nepalese teens following their eye-opening month-long trip. Photo by Kenny Meehan. Story begins on **Page 14**.

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THE ALMANAC (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Wednesday by Embarcadero Publishing Co., 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-4455. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices. Adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for San Mateo County, the Almanac is delivered free to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside. Voluntary subscriptions for \$30 per year or \$50 per 2 years are welcome from residents of the above circulation area. Subscription rates for businesses and for residents of other communities is \$50 per year and \$80 for two years. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Almanac, P.O. Box 7008, Menlo Park, CA 94026-7008. Copyright ©2006 by Embarcadero Publishing Co., All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

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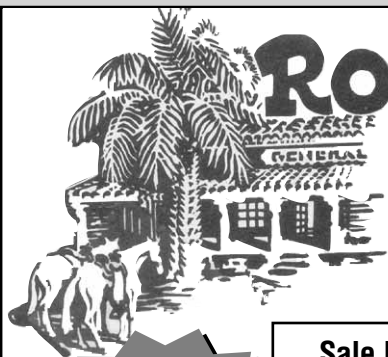
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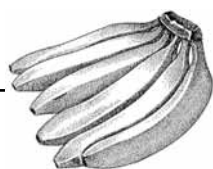
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A Flower To Fall For

The chrysanthemum is a gorgeous, multi-petaled flower that is often associated with the changing leaves of autumn. This beauty has its origins in China, where legend has it that an elderly emperor once heard of an herb that would give him eternal youth.

This herb was said to grow on Dragonfly Island and could only be picked by young people. So, the elderly emperor sent 24 children on the long journey to the island. When they finally arrived, there was no sign of the magic herb. In its stead stood the golden chrysanthemum, which came to symbolize the Chinese people's ties with their country. In the Western world, the chrysanthemum is also featured in many legends.

At Roberts Market, we have a great flower section, that you can buy the best floral products in the area from. Come in and ask about a chrysanthemum, we'd be happy to show you some, and help you pick a great flower, or floral arrangement. We offer a wide variety of foods from all over the world. We are your source for specialty foods including Indian, Asian, European, and other specialties. Don't forget fresh cut flowers from our floral department to grace your table.

Hint: In Greek, "chrysanthemum" means "golden flower," which, today, personifies the harvest season.



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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

GM plans MP auto mall

Deal depends on 50/50 split of sales tax revenue with the city.

By **Rory Brown**
Almanac Staff Writer

General Motors plans to buy about 22 acres of Tyco Electronics' campus in east Menlo Park to build an auto sales center on Bayfront Expressway at Willow Road, the city of Menlo Park announced last week.

The plan is for GM to create an initial cluster of new auto sales stores on 8.5 acres of the property, said David Johnson, the city's business development manager.

Non-GM dealerships or "destination-type regional retail

uses" on the remaining 13.5 acres of the property will be pursued, he said in the city's Oct. 5 announcement.

For the proposal to move forward, the city must approve the plan, including agreeing to split with GM on a 50/50 basis the sales tax revenues from the sale of cars.

"It is our understanding that without this arrangement there will be no deal," Mr. Johnson said. "That was made very clear from the beginning."

GM plans to present the pro-

See **AUTO MALL**, page 8



General Motors plans to purchase 22 acres of land from Tyco Electronics to build an auto mall on Bayfront Expressway at Willow Road.

TownSquare Forum

The Almanac has launched a new Web site that provides a forum for you to post news, information and opinions directly to the community.

Called Town Square, the forum is intended to be a helpful resource on matters large and small for people who live in the Almanac communities: Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside.

You can use it to report sports scores, ask a question of your neighbors, let people know about a great restaurant, and express your views on the Menlo Park City Council election.

In addition to posting topics, you can comment on topics raised by others.

The new Web site has several other features, including news updates throughout the week between editions of the Almanac.

Go to AlmanacNews.com and share your news and views with your neighbors.

The Almanac
MENLO PARK • ATHERTON • PORTOLA VALLEY • WOODSIDE
Online

Genes and Nobel Prizes run in the family

Roger Kornberg wins Nobel Prize 47 years after his father.

By **Marion Softky**
Almanac Staff Writer

In 1959, Dr. Arthur Kornberg of Portola Valley won the Nobel Prize in Medicine for synthesizing DNA, the molecule that carries the master code for all life, in a Stanford laboratory.

On Dec. 10, 2006, his oldest son, Dr. Roger Kornberg of Atherton, will receive the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the next-generation discovery: how RNA copies the genetic information coded in DNA, and uses it to build proteins, which can then grow into blood, bone, nerve or hair. This process is called transcription.

"Transcription is necessary for all life," said the Nobel press release. "This makes the detailed description of the mechanism that Roger Kornberg provides exactly the kind of 'most important discovery' referred to by Alfred Nobel in his will."

It was a week of celebration at Stanford, as the university celebrated two Nobel prizes in three days to faculty of the Medical School, where Dr. Kornberg is a professor of structural biology. Dr. Andrew Fire, a professor of pathology and genetics, won the Nobel Prize in Medicine for related work on how RNA can turn off processes that lead to diseases, such as cancer or inherited diseases like Down's syndrome.

"Roger Kornberg is one of our nation's treasured scientists," said Dr. Philip Pizzo, dean of the School of Medicine. "His work has deepened our understanding of the 'message of life,' and how it contributes to both normal and abnormal human development, health, and disease."

What Roger Kornberg did was supposed to be impossible. It did take 20 years of dogged, detailed research to figure out how the key enzyme, called RNA polymerase, actually copies the genes from DNA into RNA, which then regulates creation of other cells.

"The DNA holds the genetic information, but it's silent; you have to get the information out," explained Eric Shooter of Portola Valley, an emeritus professor of neurobiology at Stanford. "You have to have a mechanism to read the DNA."

Working at Stanford, Dr. Kornberg and generations of colleagues managed to isolate complex molecules, analyze their structure, and show how they worked — down to the atomic level.

This was not easy; RNA polymerase has some 30,000 atoms. At a university-wide celebration Oct. 6, Joseph Puglisi, chair of the Department of Structural Biology at the medical school, credited Dr. Kornberg's expertise in biology, chemistry and physics — and his tenacity — for his success.

"It was a technical tour de force that took about 20 years of work to accomplish," Dr. Puglisi said. "Like other great scientists, Roger doesn't quit. He's stubborn."

Key to mapping the atoms in RNA polymerase were pictures taken with high-intensity X-rays at the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC), which stretches two miles into the foothills just south of Sand Hill Road.

"We could not have solved the problem without the exceptional facilities given to us by SLAC. They were indis-

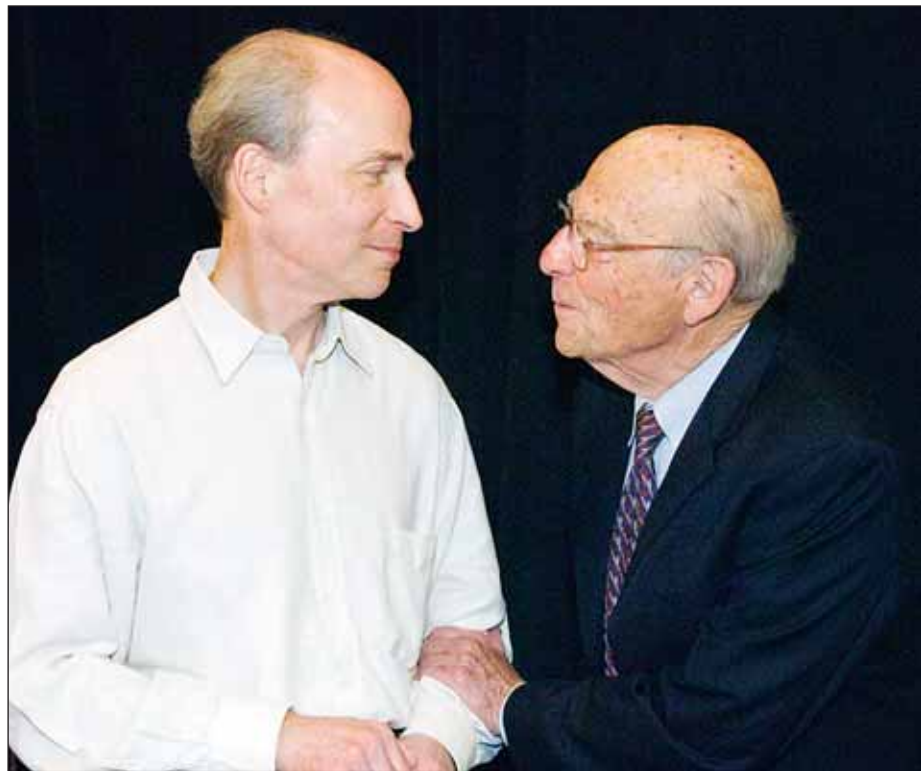


Photo by Linda Cicero/Stanford University News Service

Roger Kornberg of Atherton, the Nobel laureate in chemistry for 2006 listens to his father, **Arthur Kornberg** of Portola Valley, the 1959 Nobel laureate in medicine, after a press conference Oct. 4 at Stanford.

pensible," Dr. Kornberg said.

Since the early 1990s, Dr. Kornberg and his team — including his wife, Yahli Lorch, also an associate professor at Stanford — beamed the lab's really bright X-rays through crystallized proteins, and watched how the X-rays scattered. The results showed the three-dimensional atomic structure of proteins in great detail — and even caught them in the act of changing.

"These studies offer our most detailed

glimpse into the inner workings of one of nature's most remarkable molecular machines," said SLAC Deputy Director Keith Hodgson.

In the genes

Dr. Arthur Kornberg was one of those who has been expecting his son to get the Nobel Prize for several years. "His work has been awesome," the earlier Nobel

See **KORNBERG**, page 8



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Wife 'swaps' Woodside for Texas pig farm

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

The five kids were great, but she could have done without the pigs, the humidity and the 100-degree temperatures, says Woodside resident Tina Lovazanno.

In August, the self-described girly-girl traded her comfortable life on the Midpeninsula for a two-week stint on a family farm on the Texas-Louisiana border for the ABC reality series "Wife Swap."

The one-hour show featuring Ms. Lovazanno airs Monday, Oct. 16, at 8 p.m.

Each week, the unscripted show takes two women from very different walks of life and has them trade homes and families. The women spend the first week living by the rules of the lady of the house, and then get to set their own rules for the second week.

Ms. Lovazanno left her husband Bruce and their two "very spoiled girls," Kaila, 14, and Shae, 12, to care for Dana Clover's five children, husband and farm animals.

"It was very challenging for me," says Ms. Lovazanno.

She hadn't seen "Wife Swap" when a scout contacted her about being on the show, she says. As a result, she ended up feeding pigs in designer leather shoes, she says.

"They told me to pack like I was going on vacation," says Ms. Lovazanno.

ABC is billing the episode as a swap between a "redneck housewife" who embraces old-fashioned country values and a "status-conscious housewife who treats her own mother like a nanny and a maid."

"I didn't know much about it, but now I've been watching the show and realizing that probably a lot of things will be taken out of context," Ms. Lovazanno says, admit-



The Almanac/Jane Knoerle

Tina Lovazanno, right, was tapped for the unscripted ABC show "Wife Swap" after scouts saw a 2002 Almanac article about the Girly Girl Fashion Lounge she opened with her sister-in-law **Jennifer Lovazanno**, left.

ting to being a little nervous about her episode. "They're probably going to set us up to amplify our differences."

The swap was rough on daughter Kaila, but younger daughter Shae breezed right through the experience, Ms. Lovazanno says.

"Sometimes, my older daughter had a hard time and her dad had to step in and protect her, be her knight in shining armor," she says. "He's a good dad."

The five Clover children, who range in age from 2 to 14, embraced her right from

the start, and she had a hard time leaving them, she says. Meanwhile in Woodside, Ms. Clover was ready to "jump all over" her girls at the beginning and lecture them about values and the importance of hard work, Ms. Lovazanno says.

"But in the end, she really ended up liking them a lot," she says. "Even though they're spoiled, they are very nice girls."

Her Texan counterpart also ended up really loving the Bay Area, Ms. Lovazanno says. "She was in heaven," she says. ■

Magical Menlo Park garages

The media is abuzz about Internet search engine Google Inc.'s deal to purchase You Tube Inc., the online video phenomenon, in a deal worth \$1.65 billion in stock.

But there's another thing the year-old You Tube has

in common with Google — both companies got their start in Menlo Park garages.

Last month, Google bought the Santa Margarita Avenue house where founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin leased the garage to house their start-up business eight years ago.

According to You Tube's online fact sheet, the company got its start in a Menlo Park garage in February 2005, and made the leap to its offices in San Mateo after getting funding from Sequoia Capital, also in Menlo Park.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



What is in future?

Q. I know that everyone is saying the market is going down? Is that the case here on the peninsula? We would like to buy a house but are very concerned that if we need to sell for any reason that we will loose money.

A. There is no question that the current market is in a state of transition. Certainly the rate of appreciation is down from the last three years when it was double digit every year. In my opinion, that is an important point for us to remember. The housing market was indeed suffering from the dot com bust. Prices on the higher priced homes when someone HAD to sell were slashed 30 and 40% from what they were bought for in 2000. But that whole time was unreal for the housing market. This was followed closely but the September 11th attack when the market was paralyzed in the near-term.

It took several months for properties to begin to sell at a robust rate again, but look what happened when it did take off. We have had three or four years of what the analysts consider unprecedented appreciation. And it was the housing market that lead the economy out of the doldrums.

So with relatively low interest rates and many more houses to choose from, this could be a good time to buy if you find the right house. However, if you buy a house that has major negative which cannot be overcome, you could face a financial loss if you need to sell within a couple of years. Look carefully at the location, floor plan and neighborhood schools; if these are all in the plus column, I wouldn't worry. No one can predict the future, but based on the past, this area seems to always come out of a slump stronger than ever.

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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Woodside resident Janice Garber dies in crash on Highway 84

A solo-vehicle accident shortly after noon Sunday, Oct. 8, ended the life of Woodside resident Janice Garber, 59, whom firefighters found dead in an overturned Jeep SUV in rural heavy brush along Highway 84 west of La Honda and about four miles east of U.S. Highway 1.

Firefighters used the Jaws of Life extraction tool to remove Ms. Garber, said Chief Larry Whitney of the La Honda Fire Department. While a rescue helicopter waited at the scene, medics determined that she was dead, Chief Whitney said.

The vehicle had also col-

lided with a tree, said Officer Eric Parsons of the California Highway Patrol. Ms. Garber, the only occupant of the vehicle, had been wearing a seatbelt, he added.

The CHP asks that anyone with information call CHP Officer Lack at 369-6261.

KORNBERG

continued from page 5

Prize winner said. "It was always a matter of when, not if. You never know."

Growing up in Portola Valley, Dr. Kornberg' three sons, Roger, Tom and John, had the advantages of scientific nurture, as well as Nobel genes.

At the celebration, Dr. Arthur Kornberg recalled how he used to take one of his boys along when he went to the lab, and give them projects — like measuring ph. When he asked Roger what he would like for Christmas, the answer was, "A week in the lab."

When he was at Woodside High School, Roger Kornberg had the chance to work in the laboratory of Dr. Paul Berg, another Stanford Nobel Prize winner.

"Roger was a scientist from the beginning. He never showed any other interest," said his

brother, Thomas Kornberg, also a scientist, and professor of biochemistry at the University of California-San Francisco.

The third brother, John, is an architect who lives in Portola Valley and designs laboratories.

Roger Kornberg remembers talking science at dinner and doing it on weekends. "Both my parents had fine scientific minds, and taught by example how to approach questions and problems in a logical, dispassionate way," he said. "Scientific reasoning became second nature."

Roger Kornberg received his undergraduate degree in chemistry from Harvard in 1967, and his doctorate from Stanford in 1972. Between 1972 and 1975, he went to England, where he was a postdoctoral fellow and staff member at the Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge. After two years as assistant professor at the Harvard

Medical School, he returned to Stanford in 1978 as a professor of structural biology.

Dr. Kornberg is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and other leading professional organizations. He has received numerous awards, edited professional magazines, and published more than 180 journal articles.

The Kornbergs live in Atherton and have three children in local schools, including a son at Stanford. No word yet on whether they're headed into science.

December in Stockholm will be the second visit for Arthur and Roger Kornberg. Roger remembers it vividly from when he was 12, and his father was honored.

The count is not final yet, but quite a few Kornbergs look forward to Stockholm during a time of long nights. "It's the best party in the world," said Arthur Kornberg. ■



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Inside story

Now visible after workers extracted toxic materials from the old Portola Valley Town Hall, the aged but still hardy framing of this and other buildings at Town Center may continue serving the town, either as lumber in the new complex there or sold to a recycler as a down payment for other materials, said Councilman Ted Driscoll.

AUTO MALL

continued from page 5

posal to the City Council on Tuesday, Oct. 10.

GM had previously been in talks with the city to build an auto center near Marsh Road and U.S. 101. After both parties determined the site near Marsh Road wouldn't work, attention turned to the Tyco property, Mr. Johnson said.

Because of groundwater contamination and the need to remove an on-site power substation, the site was initially labeled "challenging at best," Mr. Johnson said, and he was "thrilled" to see Tyco and GM come to an agreement.

"This makes us part of [GM's] national recovery strategy," he said.

"This announcement culminates more than a year of

■ INFORMATION

The Menlo Park City Council is scheduled to hear a presentation by General Motors and give direction on the auto mall proposal at its meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 10. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

effort between GM, Tyco and the city of Menlo Park," said Mayor Nicholas Jellins in a press release. "A great deal of energy has gone into locating and securing a suitable high visibility and accessible location for dealerships."

All six candidates for three council seats in the Nov. 7 election expressed initial support, although at least one had reservations about splitting the sales tax.

Heyward Robinson said the

news is "a very positive development," but called the sales-tax split "a big concern — it's a potential deal breaker."

Others said that part of the package would have to be examined before they could express an opinion on it.

Councilwoman Mickie Winkler noted that the proposed site "provides a lot more dealership space" than lots previously used on El Camino Real.

"This isn't going to solve the city's budget deficit, but it's a big step forward," said Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson.

"I'm cautiously optimistic the city should be able to land this big deal," said candidate John Boyle. "I like the fact it's on the periphery of our city rather than downtown."

"This is obviously very good," said Vincent Bressler. "This is the kind of change to the general plan I could get behind."

Sales taxes

First-year sales tax revenue for the city in the 50/50 split is estimated by GM at \$750,000, Mr. Johnson said. Over the estimated 40-year life of the project, net revenues to the city are estimated at a minimum of \$38 million, he said.

The 50/50 sharing of sales tax revenues is proposed to last 15 years, or until GM receives an "agreed-upon total payment" of \$10 million, Mr. Johnson said.

The city's sales tax revenue has dropped in recent years as

all but one of the city's four auto dealerships have closed shop.

Council action

Since the election for three seats on the five-member council takes place is less than a month, the decision on the auto mall will likely be up to the next council.

The project would require a traffic study, and possibly a mitigated negative declaration or an environmental impact report, said Mr. Johnson in a staff report. Also, the city's general plan and zoning ordinance would have to be amended, he said.

GM has not decided which brands of cars it plans to sell at the Menlo Park site. Terms of the agreement between GM and Tyco were not disclosed. ■

Doctors say: Get your flu shots now

San Mateo County health officials are advising all residents to get vaccinated before the flu season arrives.

County flu-shot clinics begin Oct. 12 and run through December for those who are 60 or older or have a chronic

health condition. The suggested donation is \$5. For a clinic schedule go to www.smhealth.org/flu or call 573-3927.

For other flu clinics, call Sutter VNA at 1-800-500-2400 or go to www.finda-flushot.com. Also check with

participating pharmacies.

"Annual flu immunization is especially important for adults 50 and older, anyone with chronic health conditions, pregnant women, and all children aged 6 to 59 months," says Dr. Scott Morrow, San Mateo County health officer.

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Menlo Park council candidates report campaign finances

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

The first campaign finance reports of the Menlo Park City Council election show certain organizations and residents lined up behind one or the other camp of candidates running for three open seats on the council.

One camp supports the current majority on the council and is made up of incumbents Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler, and newcomer John Boyle. Among their key supporters are real estate interests.

Members of the other camp say they are running independent campaigns but they are united in their opposition to the majority. The "opponents" are Heyward Robinson, Richard Cline and Vincent Bressler. Two of these candidates, Robinson and Cline, are backed by a union that represents city employees; all three received donations from supporters of the Derry condo-commercial project referendum.

Top fundraisers

Heyward Robinson led all candidates with \$14,538 in monetary donations from Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, according to campaign finance reports filed Oct. 5.

Mr. Robinson has a slight edge over John Boyle and incumbents Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler, who have raised \$13,939, \$12,524 and \$11,217, respectively.

Mr. Cline and Mr. Bressler received \$7,250 and \$6,556, respectively.

Most of the candidates have also lent funds to their own campaigns. Ms. Duboc lent herself \$9,580; Mr. Cline, \$5,000; Mr. Boyle, \$3,000; Ms. Winkler, \$2,000; and Heyward Robinson, \$1,000.

Mr. Bressler gave \$500 to his campaign through a monetary donation, not a loan.

"Majority" candidates

Each of the three "majority" candidates — Boyle, Duboc and Winkler — received donations of \$2,500 from the California Real Estate Political Action Committee, a committee tied to the Los Angeles-based California Association of Realtors.

The three candidates also each received \$1,000 from Howard Crittenden, a real estate broker and owner of the Park Theatre building; \$500 from Art Flegel, founder of Flegel's Home Furnishings; \$500 from Tod Spieker, a Palo Alto-based real estate agent; and \$250 from

Byron Brill, the property manager for Freestone Property Inc.

Architect Sam Sinnott also donated \$249 of office rent to each of the three candidates.

During the 2002 election, then-candidates Duboc, Winkler and Nicholas Jellins vowed to not take contributions from developers due to criticism candidates have faced in past elections for doing so. The "majority" candidates say they are not making that pledge this year, but they have agreed to not seek the endorsement or financial support of labor unions, specifically the Service Employees International Union Local 715, which represents the city's non-safety employees.

Ms. Duboc said the decision was made to "avoid a conflict of interest" as employee negotiations take place "behind closed doors."

In 2002, SEIU Local 715 endorsed candidates Duboc, Jellins and Winkler.

Also backing the "majority" are former councilman Raymond "Dee" Tolles and Reginald Rice, a member of the city's transportation commission. They each contributed \$200 to each of the three "majority" candidates. A residents' group, Citizens for Unobstructed Traffic, also donated \$241 to each of the three candidates.

Mr. Boyle and Ms. Duboc each received \$500 from the Lincoln Club of Northern California, a Burlingame-based Republican political action committee.

The largest non-monetary contribution was provided to Menlo Park Matters, a residents' group that supports the "majority" candidates of Boyle, Duboc and Winkler. The group has received \$10,330 in contributions — \$6,000 of which represents the value of polling services donated by the San Francisco-based firm, Dresner, Wickers and Associates LLC. The firm polled Menlo Park voters by telephone in September.

The "opponents"

Candidates Bressler, Cline and Robinson — the three candidates who oppose the "majority" — have received donations from the supporters of the Derry condo-commercial project referendum, including Morris Brown and David Speer, who have contributed \$325 and \$500, respectively, to each of the three.

Mr. Speer, a council candidate in 2002, is also listed as the treasurer for Menlo Park On Track, a residents' group that donated \$152 to each of the three "opponents."

Former councilman Paul Colacchi, a frequent opponent of Ms. Duboc and Ms. Winkler, gave \$250 to Mr. Cline and Mr. Robinson, and

also lent Mr. Cline \$1,000.

Not included in Mr. Cline's or Mr. Robinson's finance reports are any contributions by local unions. SEIU Local 715 has endorsed both candidates, but the union is conducting its own campaigning, rather than donating funds to particular council members, according to SEIU spokespeople.

Other key contributions to Mr. Robinson are: \$2,000 from his mother, Susan Robinson of Charleston, South Carolina; \$500 from California state Controller Steve Westly; \$942 from John and Roberta Carcione of Menlo Park; plus \$3,200 in non-monetary contributions.

Mr. Cline received \$1,500 from his father in law, Luigi Pietrantoni of San Leandro.

Contributors

Below are the other donations of \$200 or more listed on the six candidates' campaign finance forms filed last week. The candidates are listed in alphabetical order. The information includes donors' names, cities of residence, occupations, and amounts contributed.

■ **John Boyle:** Russ Hall, Menlo Park, venture capitalist, \$500; William Hooper, Menlo Park, self-employed, \$500; Julie Brody, Atherton, volunteer, \$300; Nick Naclerio, Menlo Park, electrical consultant, \$300; Cassius Kirk, Menlo Park, retired, \$250; Kimberly LeMieux, Menlo Park, Laurel Homes, Inc., \$250; Randy Merk, Menlo Park Investment executive \$250; Michael Stoner, Menlo Park, developer, \$250; Bruce Ochiano, Menlo Park, financial advisor, \$200.

■ **Vincent Bressler:** Nona Bressler, Murray, UT, retired, \$500; Robert English, Menlo Park, technical director, \$500; Elias Blawie, Menlo Park, attorney, \$300; Chuck Bernstein, Menlo Park, educator, \$250; Charles Bourne, Menlo Park, retired, \$250; Don Brawner, Menlo Park, landlord, \$250; Ross Wilson, Menlo Park, electrical engineer \$250.

■ **Richard Cline:** Elias Blawie, Menlo Park, attorney, \$300; Diane Savage, Menlo Park, attorney, \$300; Chuck Bernstein, educator, \$250; Charles Bourne, Menlo Park, retired, \$250; Don Brawner, Menlo Park, landlord, \$250; Margot Lockwood, realtor, \$200; Elton Sherwin, Menlo Park, venture capitalist, \$200; Jane Williams, Menlo Park, chief executive officer of Hand Held Advisors, \$200.

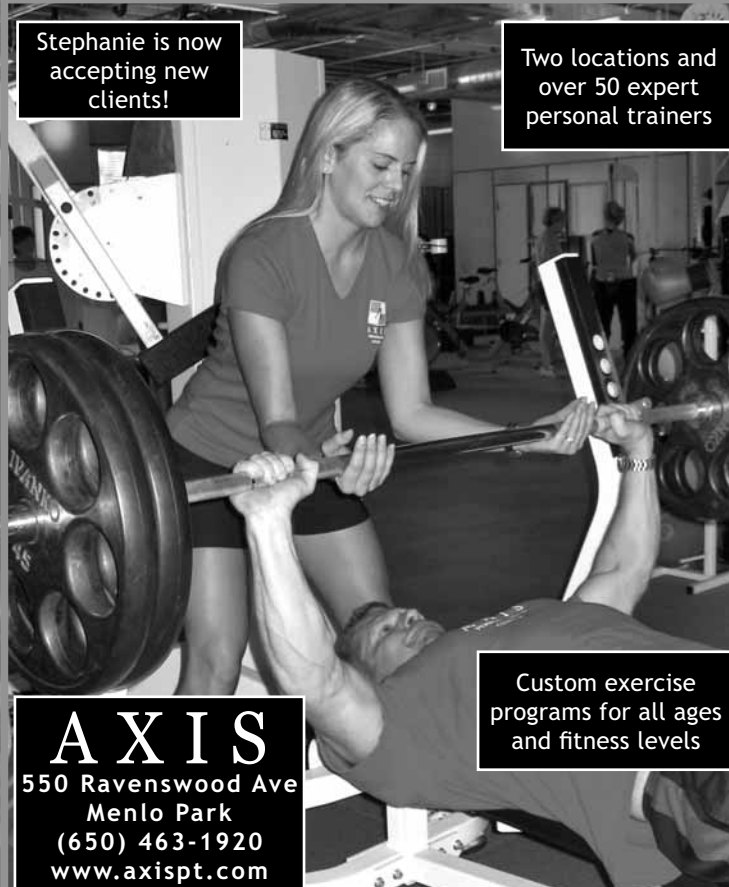
■ **Lee Duboc:** Robert Duboc Sr., Kansas City, MO, retired, \$500; Boyd Smith, Palo Alto, WSS Properties, \$500; Nick Farwell, Menlo Park, retired, \$400; Nicholas Naclerio, Menlo Park, electrical consultant, \$300; B. Michael Anderson, Menlo Park, retired, \$250; Richard Burruss, Palo Alto, retired, \$250; California Women's Leadership Association, Fullerton, CA, political action committee, \$250; Monica Corman, Menlo Park,

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More details on building department problems in audit report

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

The latest audit of the Atherton Building Department is in, with yet more examples of “apparent violations” of town rules.

Finance Director John Johns’ 18-page report on the recent internal audit of the department’s practices was released Friday, Oct. 6. In it, he details problems that will sound familiar to anyone who’s followed the building department’s travails since the retirement of Building Official Mike Hood in June.

The department has undergone two previous internal audits, as well as a personnel investigation.

The latest audit report makes specific recommendations for improvements. A key one is a

■ ATHERTON

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change in the management structure of town staff to increase the oversight of the building official that runs the department.

At the Wednesday, Oct. 18, meeting, the Atherton City Council is expected to review both the audit report and a proposal for revamping the building department’s policies and procedures from Gary Binger, the interim planning/building administrator.

Several of the apparent violations described by Mr. Johns involve possible misuse of the building official’s discretionary authority.

To counter such problems in

the future, he recommends two possible solutions: giving Atherton’s city planner the authority to interpret and enforce Atherton municipal code, in effect making the planner’s authority equal to that of the building official; or increasing the responsibilities of a code enforcement officer to review permitted building projects and enforce the municipal code.

The report singles out four problematic properties. One project involves possible finessing of the grade calculations on a heavily sloped lot that affect the building height calculation. Instead of being measured at 31 feet, 1 foot taller than allowed, it’s 29 1/2 feet, just under the 30-foot maximum height, thanks to an unusually complex method of figuring out the average natural

grade. That property also appears to exceed the maximum floor area allowed by 2,500 square feet, the report said.

Another project involves a guest house with a basement built near the property line that was approved after the City Council banned such basements. Two of the projects involve permits that should have expired but were kept current in apparent contradiction of town rules — in one case, construction is reportedly still ongoing 29 years after the permit was originally issued in 1978.

Permits are supposed to expire when there is no construction activity for 360 days.

Atherton Mayor Charles Marsala said he planned to meet with City Manager Jim Robinson and Mr. Binger to get more

information about the apparent violations in the report.

Since he moved to Atherton in 1998, there’s been a great deal of change in the size and scope of building projects, Mr. Marsala said.

“Structures have gone from 3,000 square foot ranch homes to \$3 million-\$5 million projects, and we obviously need to modernize the way we keep on top of projects and keep records,” he said. “That’s clearly, as a town, what we need to do.”

However, Mr. Marsala said, it’s not clear to him whether all four properties singled out in the report are truly in violation of town rules. For example, Atherton officials have admitted that rules regarding basements are confusingly written and need to be cleaned up, he said. ■

Housing, office projects: Public comment sought

Two projects planned for the Linfield Oaks neighborhood are approaching key checkpoints.

The Planning Commission has set a public hearing for Oct. 23, on a proposal by Palo Alto-based Summer Hill Homes to demolish an office complex and build 33 single-family homes at a site at 75 Willow Road, between Waverly Street and Middlefield Road. The hearing is set for 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

A public hearing has been set for the same meeting on a

■ MENLO PARK

proposal by the Portola Valley-based Pollock Financial Group to convert an existing 48,400-square-foot office building at 321 Middlefield Road to medical offices.

The final environmental impact reports for both projects are scheduled to be available for public comment Oct. 10-23.

The reports will be on file at the main library and the first floor of the administration building at the Civic Center. Send comments to dmchow@menlopark.org.

Meetings focus on reorganizing MP schools

By **Marjorie Mader**

Almanac Staff Writer

More information to help trustees of the Menlo Park City School District move toward a decision on reconfiguring the three elementary schools to house an enrollment boom will be presented Wednesday, Oct. 11, at the 7 p.m. school board meeting in the district office, 181 Encinal Ave. in Atherton.

Additional information will be presented at a second meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 25. That’s when trustees could make a decision on changing the grade levels at Laurel and Encinal schools and shifting school attendance boundaries that could bring future students to Encinal from the Oak Knoll area.

This Wednesday, the district’s recently hired planner/program manager Ahmad Sheikholeslami will discuss the development of a multi-year facility master plan to guide the planning and construction of facilities, financed by the \$90 million bond measure endorsed by voters June 6.

The presentation is designed to clarify the planning process that will involve staff members and other constituents and the timeline by which planning will occur, said Superintendent Ken Ranella.

The plan will include educational specifications for most curricular areas; program decisions, such as the configuration of the schools; extent of modernization of facilities; and the scope of the Hillview Middle School project. It also will

address environmental specifications, program budget and schedule.

At the Oct. 11 meeting, Assistant Superintendent Jo Sauer Mitchell will discuss two options for foreign language instruction in the elementary grades as a prelude to discussion of a possible magnet program to be housed at an expanded Encinal.

Offering a foreign language immersion program is considered the most cost-effective option and one that could attract families voluntarily to Encinal.

For more information, check the district’s Web site mpcsd.org under “Reconfiguration.” An email to board@mpcsd.org goes to all five board members and the superintendent. ■

CAMPAIGN

continued from page 9

Realtor, \$250; Cassius Kirk, Menlo Park, volunteer, \$250; Kim LeMieux, Laurel Homes, Inc., \$250; Nancy Davidson, Menlo Park, retired, \$200; John Inglis, Jr., Menlo Park, vice president of Wedbush Morgan Securities, \$200; George Liddle, Menlo Park, former councilman, \$200; Bruce and Anita Ochieano, Menlo Park, self-employed, \$200.

■ **Heyward Robinson:** Robert English, Menlo Park, technical director, \$500; Susan Ravenel, Charleston, SC, homemaker, \$500; Irene Searles, Menlo Park, homemaker, \$470; Mitchel Slomiak, Menlo Park, consulting CFO, \$380; Elias Blawie, Menlo Park, attorney, \$300; Bennett Johnston, Sausalito, entrepreneur, \$300; Diana Ekedahl, Menlo Park, retired, \$250; Robert Ekedahl, Menlo Park, retired, \$250; Rob Friedman, San Diego, physician, \$250; Karen Grove, Menlo Park, homemaker, \$250; Jordan Gruber, Menlo Park, writer, \$250; Elizabeth Houck, Menlo Park, product

manager, \$250; Jim Madison, Menlo Park, lawyer, \$250; David McLaughlin, Menlo Park, attorney, \$250; James Tooley, Menlo Park, engineer, \$250; Jane Aaron Ttee, Menlo Park, writer, \$250; Kristin Vais, Menlo Park, none, \$250; Eric Arons, San Francisco, SRI engineer, \$200; Caroline Ellerbe, Latta, SC, homemaker, \$200; Honor Fullerton Stone, Menlo Park, physician, \$200.

■ **Mickie Winkler:** Louis Deziel, Menlo Park, marketing consultant, \$500; Robert Anderson, Menlo Park, retired, \$300; G. Nicholas Farwell, investment company employee, \$300; Nicholas Naclerio, Menlo Park, electrical consultant, \$300; B. Michael Anderson, Menlo Park, retired, \$250; Patrick Corman, Menlo Park, self employed, \$250; Cassius L. Kirk Jr., Menlo Park, retired, \$250; Tom and Kim LeMieux, Menlo Park, Laurel Homes, Inc., \$250; Peter Edmonds, Menlo Park, retired, \$200; Bruce Ochieano, Menlo Park, financial advisor, \$200; Michael Stoner, Menlo Park, developer, \$200; Adam Winkler, San Mateo, engineer, \$200. ■

PV meeting: Town Center bids, design

At its meeting this week, the Portola Valley Town Council may award contracts on Town Center-project bid packages, including the salvage of lumber and other reusable materials from the 1950s-era school buildings now in the process of being torn down.

The council meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11, in

the Historic Schoolhouse at 765 Portola Road.

Also on the meeting agenda:

■ A presentation/update on the Town Center design by the architectural design team of Siegel & Strain.

■ Discussion of and possible council action on committee reports on allowing dogs on Coal Mine Ridge trails, and on

the idea of an off-leash dog recreation area near Ford Field.

■ Council action on a policy amendment to create standards by which homeowners on property with landslide potential can increase the size of their houses.

■ BIRTHS

Menlo Park

■ Nicole and John Osmer, a daughter, Sept. 29, at Sequoia Hospital.
■ Jennifer and Brian Roberts, a son, Sept. 15, at Sequoia Hospital.

Woodside

■ Kathleen Shea and Joseph Lopez, a son, Sept. 21, at Sequoia Hospital.
■ Janie and Paul Dawes, a daughter, Sept. 22, at Sequoia Hospital.
■ Megan and Jeffrey Bernstein, a daughter, Sept.30, at Sequoia Hospital.

■ COLLEGE NEWS

■ **Jeffrey Hayes** of Menlo Park, will spend the 2006-2007 academic year in Germany as part of a study-abroad program with Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, where he is a junior. In addition to his schoolwork, he will have the opportunity to take part in a study-travel program and an internship.

Event promotes open space, conservation easements

By Marion Softky
Almanac Staff Writer

The setting was perfect. A rare sunset glowed red through the oak trees as close to 100 Woodside open space supporters watched the wooded hills fade into darkness across the San Andreas Fault.

The party, sponsored by the Woodside Open Space Committee, celebrated open space in Woodside and promoted ways for residents and landowners to "Keep the woods in Woodside."

The Bay Area is one of 32 biodiversity hotspots in the world, noted Walter Moore, executive vice president of the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). "We have an incredible diversity of plants and animals, from giant redwoods to the salt marsh harvest mouse."

The Peninsula has "an amazing conservation legacy," Mr. Moore said. This takes the form of large areas that have been preserved in public ownership thanks to government and individual actions.

This legacy includes 23,000 acres of the San Francisco watershed; Filoli; the Phleger estate, now a national park; Huddart and Wunderlich county parks; and more than 50,000 acres preserved by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, including Teague Hill and Thornewood open space preserves in Woodside.

Craig Adams of the Woodside Open Space Committee focused on Woodside, which has 5,350 people, 1,950 houses, and 8,825 vehicles.

If every lot in Woodside were developed to the maximum, Mr. Adams said, there could be 268 more homes that would occupy 1,600 acres — 1.6 times the size of Wunderlich Park — plus 735 new residents, and 940 new vehicles.

Mr. Adams urged residents to be good stewards of their land and think about the effects of landscaping, lighting and fencing. "We should understand that we share the land with plants and animals," he said.

Mr. Adams also urged landowners who live next to parks or open space to consider obtaining a conservation easement to protect their land into the future.

Conservation easements are not just land adjacent to parks, said Bill Hutton, a top conservation lawyer. Any landowner whose property contains conservation values that meet certain legal standards might consider a conservation easement that would permanently preclude some uses.

Mr. Hutton led the audience through the intricacies of conservation easements, how to get them, and their potential tax



Virginia Dare, left, chair of Woodside Open Space Committee, with hostess Karie Thomson.

benefits. In the last 25 years, the land trust movement and new laws "have stimulated a whole conservation industry," he said. Virginia Dare, chair of the Woodside Open Space Committee, offered to help landowners find ways to preserve their land. "We'll help develop a relationship," she said. "We'll work with landowners to conserve property."

To learn more, or to contact the Woodside Open Space Committee, call Hope Sullivan at Town Hall, 851-6790. ■

Woodside to invest \$200K in permit-tracking software

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

The Woodside Town Council approved a key piece of a plan to make the town's building process more user-friendly.

New permit-tracking software will allow builders to track their projects' permit status online, among other things. Replacing the town's access database with a more sophisticated and easier to use software system was one of 17 recommendations for improving Woodside's development services made by consultants Management Partners.

The new system, Trakit, from CRW Associates was the top choice of town staff, and at an estimated \$200,000, is cheaper

than two other software systems under consideration, said Town Manager Susan George at the Sept. 26 council meeting.

Nine other Bay Area cities use the Trakit software, including Redwood City, Belmont and Burlingame. Hillsborough is in the process of implementing it, Ms. George said.

An in-house task force has been working since June to research software options, as well as going to demonstrations and getting feedback from other cities, she said.

The council voted 6-0, with Mayor Deborah Gordon absent, to begin negotiations to buy the software and skip the competitive bid process.

In November, the Town Council made improving the much-

maligned building process the town's No. 1 priority. Complaining about how difficult it is to get permission to build anything is a time-honored pursuit in Woodside, but council members are staking their hopes on directives from the Management Partner study to make the process quicker and less painful.

A key recommendation is the addition of a new full-time engineer to oversee development services. Eunejune "EJ" Kim was hired in May to fill the new position.

Other key components to the improvement plan include creating a detailed application checklist, setting timelines for plan reviews and standards for customer service, and measuring employee performance against them. ■



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The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Sarah Carrade, a county community program specialist, demonstrates the new eSlate voting machines.

New eSlate voting machines to be demonstrated Thursday

Anyone interested in learning about San Mateo County's new eSlate voting machines is invited to two demonstrations on Thursday, Oct. 12, from 3 to 6 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m., at The Sequoias, 501 Portola Road in Portola Valley.

While the county is buying the new machines to meet legal requirements for voting that is accessible to all, it is backing off from relying entirely on them on Nov. 7. Most people will use paper ballots, but each precinct will

have one fully accessible eSlate machine.

The time frame for educating the elections staff, poll workers and public on the complex new machines was just too short to guarantee a reliable election, according to Chief Elections Officer Warren Slocum.

The eSlate machines use a new six-step voting process, during which errors may be corrected; the result is a verifiable vote and a paper record.

Coldwell buys Encore Property

■ Tom Hilligoss started Encore in 2000.

By **Jane Knoerle**
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage has acquired Encore Property Inc. in Menlo Park, founded by Realtor Tom Hilligoss in 2000 and operated out of a building he had built at 3555 Alameda de las Pulgas in West Menlo Park.

The residential real estate firm accounted for \$85 million in sales over the past 12 months, Coldwell Banker said.

"We were able to come to very satisfactory terms," said Tom Hilligoss, who founded Encore six years ago. "I'm pleased that Coldwell Banker found value in our company."

The Encore name will be discontinued and Mr. Hilligoss and his four sales associates will work with Coldwell Banker at a satellite office at 1295 El Camino Real in Menlo Park. They will

■ BUSINESS

Post news, views
on AlmanacNews.com

continue to concentrate on properties in the Atherton, Menlo Park, Woodside and Portola Valley communities, he said.

Mr. Hilligoss has listed the Encore office building in West Menlo Park with a commercial real estate broker and he is looking to lease out space in it. The building is on the site formerly occupied by McQuarrie's Pharmacy for 45 years.

Coldwell Banker president Avram Goldman said Encore Properties had grown to be among the most prestigious boutique brokerages on the Peninsula.

Mr. Hilligoss, who has been in the real estate business since 1985, is no stranger to Coldwell Banker. For 15 years he worked in the same Menlo Park office as it changed hands three times,

ultimately becoming part of Coldwell Banker.

A Menlo Park resident, Mr. Hilligoss has lived on the Peninsula since 1964. He attended Encinal School and Menlo-Atherton High School, and received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Menlo College.

As a member and director of the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce, he was chairman of the fundraising committee from 1984 to 1988. During that time, he helped create "Connoisseur's Marketplace," Menlo Park annual street festival, and served as its first chairman.

Mr. Hilligoss said real estate in the Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside areas will continue to bring top dollar and the Peninsula market remain strong "because the Peninsula has such a limited amount of undeveloped space and the lifestyle here is so desirable."

County staff and poll workers will show the disability-accessible model that allows people to

vote who are blind, paralyzed, in a wheel chair, or have difficulty with hand coordination.

The public is welcome. For information, call Onnolee Trap at 851-1501.

THE ROUNDTABLE AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESENTS

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The final decade of the 20th century was a time of great optimism. The fall of the Iron Curtain, expansion of the European Union, and the technology revolutions of the 1990s promised to unite diverse people.

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What is the way forward in the midst of these challenges? What is Stanford doing to help address these issues?

Join us for this provocative discussion hosted by Stanford President John Hennessy and moderated by veteran journalist Ted Koppel.

Panelists

John L. Hennessy, *Stanford President and Bing Presidential Professor*

Jean-Pierre Garnier, *CEO, GlaxoSmithKline*

The Hon. Anthony M. Kennedy, *Supreme Court justice*

William Perry, *former Secretary of Defense, Berberian Professor in the School of Engineering*

Dr. Lucy Shapiro, *Ludwig Professor of developmental biology and cancer researcher*

George P. Shultz, *former Secretary of State, Ford Distinguished Fellow, Hoover Institution*

Jerry Yang, *co-founder, Yahoo!*

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Responsible Fiscal Management

Menlo Park, like most cities on the peninsula, is facing financial challenges. As a result of a lost high tech business revenues and the skyrocketing costs of employee pension and health benefits our leaders have had to make difficult yet responsible budget decisions. The results of the last four years have been:

15% Increase in Total Revenues
No reduction in the General Fund Reserve
No major cuts in services

The inputs from *Your City/Your Budget* helped us define budget priorities and will result in a further \$1 million in cost savings.

However, Menlo Park continues to face budget challenges:

- A projected \$1.85 million (6%) deficit in 2007 to cover the cost of long overdue road maintenance
- A 27% increase in employee salary and benefit costs despite a 13% reduction in the number of employees
- An estimated \$13 million in unfunded retiree health benefits

John Boyle, Lee Duboc, and Mickie Winkler have a plan to address these challenges without cutting services.

Step #1: Grow hotel occupancy taxes: Hotels generate significant tax revenue with less traffic impact than retail. The city receives \$1 million for every \$10 million in hotel charges. We support the new hotel at Sand Hill Road and I-280 that will generate up to \$1.9M/year in occupancy taxes. We support the construction of a conference center adjacent to the Stanford Park Hotel on the vacant auto lot.



New Hotel at Sand Hill & 280

Step #2: Grow our business-to-business tax base: Prior to Duboc and Winkler being elected, the city lost over a billion dollars in high-tech business from the area east of 101. This resulted in a loss of approximately \$6 million per year or about 50% of our 2000 sales tax revenues. We hired a business development manager, are streamlining our use-permit process and redeveloping commercial properties along Bayfront expressway to attract businesses back to Menlo Park. Business-to-business tax revenues are up 22% since 2002.

Step #3: Restore Pride and Prosperity to Downtown: We support redevelopment with mixed housing, office, and retail to bring customers to our existing establishments, add new retail space, and provide affordable housing. This is resulting in a step up in property taxes (the city's primary source of income), funding for new parks, and sales tax revenues. We currently have six projects underway that will add over 72,000 sq ft of retail space.



Mixed-use Development on Derry Lane



Reopened Burgess Pool

Step #4: Control personnel costs through selective outsourcing: Salary and benefit costs are rising at more than 3x the rate of inflation and now make up 73% of the general fund budget, up from 56% just five years ago. The only way to control spending is to limit the growth in personnel costs. The outsourcing of Burgess pool operations is already saving the city over \$400 thousand dollars per year while expanding the service and increasing customer satisfaction to 93%.

If you want leaders who understand the complex financial challenges facing our city...

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Up and Away

Horizons expand for local teens filming a documentary about their Himalayan peers

Photo by Kenny Meehan

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

In Nepal, the air is thin, the mountainsides frequently unstable, and the yak meat is tough. Very, very tough.

For a group of local teens studying video and film, traveling off the beaten path for a month in Nepal proved an eye-opening and thought-provoking experience.

Not only did the journey illustrate the contrasts between the Bay Area and the remote country in the Himalayas, but in getting to know Nepalese teenagers, they also discovered the similarities.

To prepare for their trip, the 15 teens, led by Menlo-Atherton High School alumni Kenny Meehan and Matt McCroskey, spent the summer studying photography or filmmaking at the Riekes Center in Menlo Park, as well as Nepali culture. They spent the

month of July in Nepal, and have been hard at work on a feature length documentary and a companion coffee table book about their adventures. A preview screening of the documentary is tentatively scheduled for next month.

“The heart of the documentary was looking at what life is like for high school kids (here) and then going to a high school deep in Nepal and looking at what life is like for those high school kids,” says Mr. Meehan. “And then, there’s the whole adventure of getting there, too.”

There were no climate-controlled tour buses for these travelers. The group made its way through Nepal’s Annapurna region via long treks on foot and by horseback, and was stranded for several days when landslides blocked the route. It was thanks to the good graces of the Nepalese army and their helicopters that the group made it to their next destination.

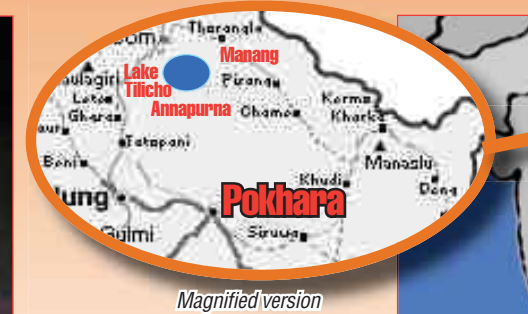
“As a tourist, it can be really hard to see what it’s like for normal people who live in



Photo by Matt McCroskey



Photo by Kenny Meehan



Magnified version

Above, Kenny Meehan, Scott Wertz, Nick Peters, Dawa the nomadic monk, Delan Tai, Dillon Webster and Sarah Charley pause beneath the prayer flags they’d just hung in the village of Ngawal; **far left**, Sarah Charley films the festival at Milarepa cave; and bonding with Nepalese teens on the way to Tilicho Lake.



Photo by Matt McCroskey

the area, what their everyday lives are like,” he says. “We had friends who could open the door to what it was really like to be a Nepali person.”

And Nepal seemed the perfect place to take kids out of their comfort zone and turn them into travelers, not tourists.

“I think you learn and grow when you are that much out of your comfort zone. These kids are pretty cool, so it was great to see them lose their cool,” says Mr. McCroskey. “I’m sure it’s presumptuous of us, but just from what we experienced, we felt we could almost guarantee that if they were willing to keep their eyes open, it would be a life-changing experience.”

And that certainly seems to be the case.

Despite the language barrier, it was actually easier to make friends in Nepal than it is at home, says Greg Starling, a Portola Valley resident who is a senior at Summit Prep.

“Kids there are way friendlier,” he says. “We just met these kids on the street and they

just adored us, and we adored them.”

Greg says he was struck by how much easier it was to make friends in Nepal than it is at home — even despite the language barrier. In Kathmandu, a pickup game of soccer or a conversation with someone you meet on the street leads to being invited home for lunch with the family, he says.

At the moment, he’s one of a handful of teens working on organizing and editing film shot on the trip in the “video barn,” a low-roofed shed tacked on to the end of the labyrinth-like Reikes Center compound in unincorporated Menlo Park. Beyond the sliding pocket door, the sound of young athletes rolling medicine balls, practicing volleyball serves and running drills is a constant clamor.

“American kids are always brainwashed by their parents about murderers and stuff. Don’t talk to strangers,” says Greg. “I don’t know if it’s the same in Nepal, but it didn’t seem that way.”

See **NEPAL**, page 16



Above, an energetic group of novice monks surrounds Kenny Meehan in Kathmandu; **far right**, Sarah Charley with two colorfully painted babas on a spiritual quest in Kathmandu; and Justin Shetler contemplates Buddhist statues in an abandoned house.



Photo by Matt McCroskey



Photo by Tashi Ghale

NEPAL

continued from page 15

It was like, oh, I'll have lunch with you, I'll take you to my house."

Greg says he enjoyed Nepalese food, despite the tensile strength of yak meat.

"To chew it takes twice as long as it does to chew steak or chicken," he says. "But it had some flavor. I dug the flavor."

He even watched a yak get slaughtered, which gave him an appreciation for how Nepalese people are not removed from the sources of their food, he says.

"They don't go to a butcher shop, and they don't have machines kill them, and then slice and dice it," he says. "They do everything themselves, so I thought it was amazing to see them."

For Sarah Charley, a Menlo-Atherton's senior who lives in Portola Valley, a defining moment of the trip was an excursion to breathtaking Lake Tilicho with a group of Nepali kids. She and five local girls spent the night sharing three narrow beds that they pushed together, Sarah says. In her thermals and sleeping bag, perched on the end of the beds, she says she felt very foreign and very far from home.

"In the middle of the night, I had an arm flop over onto my head," she recounts, laughing and demonstrating. "And at another point in the night, I rolled off the bed, which woke everyone up."

In the morning, she found that the awkwardness she had felt had disappeared.

"We were actually able to sit down and laugh about it," says Sarah. "I didn't think that was possible, just because humor depends a lot on speaking the same language, but we were actually able to sit down and make jokes about it."

Leaning over a computer where she's editing a sequence showing the group's second helicopter trip, this time heading home from the remote village of Manang, Sarah tells the story of the colorful medal she has hanging around her neck.

"Tashi's reincarnated grandfather gave it to me. He gave one to each of us when we went to his monastery," she says matter-of-factly.

Tashi Ghale, a Nepalese friend of Mr. Meehan

and Mr. McCroskey who came along as a guide, had a grandfather who was a much-respected Buddhist teacher, Lama Gyalpo. The group met Karma Lungtok Tenpe Nima, the young boy who is believed to be the lama's reincarnation, at a monastery in Kathmandu.

"When (Tashi's) grandfather died, I guess a few years later, this little kid kept on recounting memories that weren't his," she says. "I guess they just found out that he was Tashi's reincarnated grandfather, because those were all things that happened to (him). It was really peculiar for me, because it was something so different. I didn't really know whether I believed it, or didn't believe it."

Ultimately, she says, she just accepted that there are unexplained phenomena in the world, and that reincarnation might be one of them.

Looking around the Riekes Center video barn one can see that almost everyone who went on the Nepal trip is wearing one of the medals, along with prayer beads or necklaces they acquired there.

Delan Tai, an M-A senior from Portola Valley, has been putting in long hours working on documentary footage since he returned from the trip.

"This was probably the most intense and view-changing experience of my life," he says. "You know how people would say, 'Traveling is really good and you should spend a semester abroad?' Now that I've come back, I think I'm really starting to understand that it helps you look back on your life. It gives you a really different viewpoint on society's morals."

Comparing his life, full of stress about doing well in school and getting into college, with the lifestyle of the teens he got to know in Manang was eye-opening for Delan.

"They're much simpler, they don't have as much money, and their lifestyles are pretty much like (those of) farmers, but they're also really happy," Delan says. "I think college is important, but I don't think worrying is healthy. Time is a big issue here, and in Manang, they were on what's called Nepali time, which is usually two hours off the mark. It was way more laid back, and it kind of connected me more to ... what's really the point of life, in a way."

Plus, there's nothing like a life-threatening experience or two to make you reconsider your priorities. For Delan, who hastened to add that they were "not *that* life-threatening," coming across recent landslides and avalanches made him philosophical about his mortality.

And there was also a brush with an electrically charged string of prayer flags during a thunderstorm that shocked his head and set his hair standing on end.

"It was enough to get you excited and to change your view of what you should be fearful about," he says. "Because I definitely have come home now and noticed that my mom or my friends' parents will start freaking out about really little things."

The perils of trekking through a mountainous developing nation like Nepal weren't lost on Mr. Meehan or Mr. McCroskey, either.

"It was like being a parent for 15 kids in a Third World country while trying to direct a film," says Mr. Meehan.

While being able to combine three things that he loves — traveling, filmmaking and teaching kids — was a dream come true, he says the experience was not exactly relaxing. While the students could rest after a long day of hiking, he and Mr. McCroskey had their hands full.

"The whole time they were relaxing and going to sleep, it would be us running around, getting food, making sure people were hydrated, pulling leeches off of

From top: A helicopter arrives to transport the group over a landslide-closed trail; Matt McCroskey, Greg Starling and Kenny Meehan critique Jonathan Mules' video editing at the Riekes Center video barn; and Delan Tai consults with Kenny Meehan.



Photo by Kenny Meehan



The Almanac/Marjan Sadough



The Almanac/Marjan Sadough

NEPAL
continued from page 16

people, bandaging swollen ankles, renting horses, renting porters," Mr. Meehan says. "And that's just keeping people safe."

Keeping video equipment running, making sure the documentary was on track, and being stranded by the occasional landslide added to the stress, he says.

"It was definitely a transition into adulthood for us," Mr. Meehan says.

He came away from experience with his own revelations about the difference between American and Nepalese teens.

"The Nepali students bend like grass in the wind," he says. "But if we got behind schedule or had a change in circumstances, for the

majority of (our) students, it completely threw their world off."

Mr. Meehan and Mr. McCroskey say they came to Riekes Center to help get the film department established, and they feel they are leaving it in good shape as they embark on the next phase of their lives. With a rough edit of the documentary in hand, the two men are leaving Menlo Park and heading to Los Angeles to pursue their filmmaking careers. They plan to polish up the editing, work with a composer on the soundtrack, and then enter the documentary in film festivals and shop it around to public television stations.

"The editing the kids did was more for them than for the movie," Mr. Meehan says. "It was a good experience and really empowering for them, but they're not a professional crew of editors. Matt and I are going over what they started. It's a little bit better than starting fresh, because it gives Matt and I a different perspective than we would've had." ■

Pros, cons on state ballot measures

ELECTION 2006

Post news, views on AlmanacNews.com

The pros and cons of the 13 state ballot propositions will be presented by the League of Women Voters at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 18, at The Sequoias, 501 Portola Road in Portola Valley (entrance off of Willowbrook). Leaguespeakers will explain the five bond issues, seven constitutional amendments, and one initiative statute to be decided by California voters on Nov. 7.

The complete texts of these ballot measures appear in the ballot pamphlets that are sent to all registered voters.

The event is free and open to the public. For information, call Onnolee Trap at 851-1501.

League potluck on Proposition 89

The League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County will

hold a potluck dinner to discuss Proposition 89 on Tuesday, Oct. 17, at 6:30 p.m., with the program at 7:30 p.m., in Sharon Heights in Menlo Park.

Proposition 89 would create a voluntary system of public financing for elections and limit political contributions to candidates and ballot measures.

The speaker will be Genel Morgan of the California Nurses Association, which is sponsoring the initiative. Proposition 89 is also supported by the League of Women Voters of California and Common Cause.

To sign up, call Linda Craig at 322-6914, by Oct. 16.

Atherton event for Assembly candidate

Virginia Chang Kiraly, a Menlo Park resident who is the Republican candidate for state Assembly District 21, is having a campaign event on Tuesday, Oct. 10, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Atherton Mayor Charles Marsala's house.

Mr. Marsala is co-hosting the event with San Carlos Mayor Matt Grocott, Redwood City Councilman Jeff Ira and Menlo Park Councilwoman Lee Duboc.

The event coincides with statewide house parties organized by Californians for Schwarzenegger in support of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's re-election campaign.

To make reservations, e-mail events@VirginiaChangKiraly.com for information.

WHAT IS THE RIEKES CENTER?

The Riekes Center for Human Enhancement is a nonprofit mentoring organization founded by Gary Riekes of Woodside. Located in a renovated warehouse at 3455 Edison Way in the North Fair Oaks area, it offers middle and high school students opportunities to improve in athletics and the arts through summer and after-school programs. The 40,000 square-foot space houses a modern athletic facility, batting cages, a nature studies department, a sound room and a video center. Financial aid and work-study arrangements are available. Call 364-2509 or go to www.Riekes.org.

About half the students on the Nepal trip got scholarships from the Decision Education Foundation, a Palo Alto-based organization dedicated to helping people better their lives by learning to make informed, intelligent decisions. Call 475-4474 or go to DecisionEducation.org

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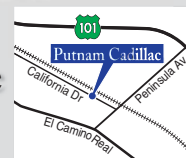


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Community

NEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Courthouse Square opens Sunday

Starting Sunday, Oct. 15, Courthouse Square in Redwood City will look much as it did 70 years ago, before a Depression-era concrete annex replaced the elegant facade of San Mateo County's historic domed courthouse.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Redwood City, the San Mateo County Historical Association, and Wells Fargo Bank will host a day of educational events and festivities to celebrate the opening of Courthouse Square after 18 months of construction.

"San Mateo County: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" will be the theme of activities focused on the county's sesquicentennial

See picture on Page 3.

— its first 150 years.

Visitors will be able to enter the History Museum through the restored front doors of the 1906 courthouse for the first time in over 60 years to view new and old exhibits highlighting the county's colorful history.

Scheduled events in the museum include:

■ 11 a.m., opening of the Wells Fargo Learning Center, a state-of-the-art classroom to foster learning about county history.

■ 12:30 and 3 p.m., performance of "Corrupt County Capers," a 50-minute re-enactment of the

back-room dealings and drama that surrounded the creation of San Mateo County in 1856.

Outdoors will be the historic Wells Fargo stagecoach — available for climbing and photos — antique autos and a fire engine, and the popular "Museum on Wheels," a restored 1962 school bus fitted out as a traveling museum.

Visitors can stroll through "History Lane," where city historical groups will set up displays of their local history.

Admission is \$1.50 for adults, and free to seniors, museum members, and children under 6.

For more information, call 299-0104; or go to smc150.org.

Redwood City celebrates its new downtown Oct. 15

In conjunction with the opening of Courthouse Square, Redwood City's revitalized downtown will be celebrated Sunday, Oct. 15, from noon to 7 p.m., with entertainment, music, food, tours and family activities. Theatre Way and parts of Broadway will be open only to pedestrians.

There will be four stages with live entertainment, along with street performers, tango dancing, and a blues performance at the Little Fox Theatre. There will also be horse-drawn carriage rides, face painting, a pumpkin walk, classic car and carriage displays, and walking tours of the Fox Theatre and other historical buildings.

The festival marks the completion of two main areas: Courthouse Square and the new retail-cinema complex.

Middlefield Road has been redesigned from Winslow to Broadway and has been dubbed "Theatre Way." The new design features granite paving and a European feel. It can be easily closed to traffic and used for community events.

The new Century Downtown 20-screen movie complex is located on the block bounded by Broadway, Middlefield and Jefferson. There is an underground parking garage and 85,000-square-feet of retail shops and restaurants. The complex's food services include:

Hats off to candy man Chuck Huggins

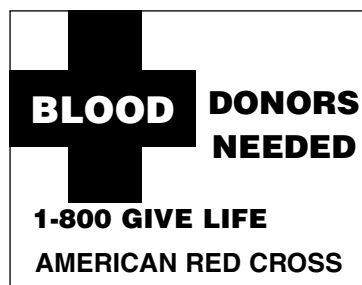
Chuck Huggins of Woodside, retired CEO of See's Candies, will be honored by the California Historical Society with a luncheon at the St. Francis Hotel on Tuesday, Oct. 17.

Robert A. McNeely, president of the historical society, will present Mr. Huggins with the Californian Award. Phil Frank, San Francisco Chronicle's "Farley" cartoonist, will be master of ceremonies. There will be entertainment by Bob Schultz & the Frisco Jazz Band.

Mr. Huggins has been an influential community leader and contributed to hundreds of worthy causes. The society's invitation describes him as "retired CEO and president of See's Candy, philan-

thropist, jazz artist, animal lover and conservationist. His family touts that he is the world's greatest dad, grandfather and husband."

Tickets to the luncheon are \$150 with proceeds supporting the California Historical Society. For information, call 415-357-1848, ext. 215.



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Levys named philanthropists of the year

With the theme "Someone to Watch Over Me," United Way Silicon Valley thanked its most generous donors Sept. 26 with a gala in their honor at the home of Guila and Jim Pollock in Portola Valley.

Portola Valley residents Richard M. Levy and his wife Sue were named "Philanthropists of the Year" for their contributions to United Way's campaign to bring the 211 information and referral

system to Santa Clara County.

The Levys announced at the event that they have committed an additional \$250,000 to the 211 system, a hotline and Web site that connects people with community services and volunteer opportunities. The toll-free telephone number will be available in February 2007. (For information, check www.211.org.)

Mr. Levy is board chairman of Varian Medical Systems,

where he recently retired as chief financial officer.

The Levys were also honored for their individual commitments to United Way. Mr. Levy has spent many volunteer hours helping United Way during its transformation to the Community Impact model, which focuses on restoring stability in times of crisis.

He joined the United Way's board of directors in 2005 and serves as its vice chairman. He is also vice chairman of the



Richard and Sue Levy of Portola Valley were honored September 26 by the United Way Silicon Valley.

board of trustees for the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and co-chair of Joint Venture Silicon Valley Smart Health Initiative.

Sue Levy is a founding member and contributor to United Way's Women Leading Change, an initiative designed to help single mothers achieve self-sufficiency through financial education and a matched savings program.

The gala honored Tocqueville Society members, those who give \$10,000 or more each year to the United Way. Last year, the society's 106 members gave \$1.36 million to United Way Silicon Valley.

'Walking for Ben' event Saturday in Menlo Park

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

Once again Jim and Clara McGovern will be "Walking for Ben" Saturday, Oct. 14, at Burgess Park in Menlo Park in memory of their grandson, Ben McGovern, who died in 1999, three months before his third birthday, of a rare form of leukemia.

The walk, which will raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, is held in conjunction with the society's national "Light the Night" event, when teams of friends and co-workers gather across America holding illuminated balloons — white for survivors and red for supporters.

"We're expecting 1,000 people this year" at the Menlo Park event, says Mr. McGovern.

This is the third "Walk for Ben," which the McGovern family started in 2004, using their own money to set up the activities. So far, the walks have raised more than \$780,000, they said. Their goal for this year is \$1 million. All proceeds go to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, which funds research grants across the country in an effort to find cures for blood cancers.

The event starts at 5 p.m. at Burgess Park. No reservations are required. After participants make a donation and receive a "Walking with Ben" T-shirt, there will be a barbecue with food donated by Safeway and Mollie Stone. The 1.5-mile walk will start at 7 p.m. and continue, with red and white balloons bobbing in the dusk, down Santa Cruz Avenue to Ravenswood and back, taking about 35 to 40



Ben McGovern

minutes. At the conclusion of the walk, the winner of a drawing for a five-day fishing trip to Alaska will be announced.

Jim McGovern is chairman of the event. The honorary chairmen are Duncan Matteson, Bill Walsh and Ronnie Lott.

For more information, call 595-9255 or go to www.walkingforben.org.

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BUON GUSTO

Woodside home is burglarized

Someone stole about \$10,000 in jewelry and electronics from a Woodside home in the 100 block of Highland Terrace on Sept. 27, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office reported. Entry was gained through an unlocked door, deputies said.

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The Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Teen Ambassadors are hosting a Fall Fest on October 8th from 12-4 pm at Mitchell Park in Palo Alto. Festivities include a teen health fair and a battle of the bands. There will be free food, great music and cool giveaways!
- Sunday, October 8
- * WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT EATING DISORDERS**
Learn the signs, symptoms and latest treatments for children and adolescents with eating disorders. This seminar will be presented by the Directors of the Comprehensive Eating Disorders Program at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.
- Wednesday, October 11
- * BECOMING GRANDPARENTS**
Designed for new and expectant grandparents, this class examines the changes in labor and delivery practices, the latest recommendations for infant care and the unique role of grandparents in today's society.
- Thursday, October 12
- * CHILDBIRTH CLASS IN THE CITY**
Come learn about childbirth preparation in a retreat-like setting at the Hotel Monaco in San Francisco. This course includes breakfast and lunch for two at the hotel, as well as participation in breastfeeding and cesarean birth classes.
- Saturday, November 18

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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Walking to school in Woodside: plan to make it safer

■ Will businesses support no-parking zones on Woodside Road?

By **Andrea Gemmet**
Almanac Staff Writer

It's one of those conundrums of modern life in the suburbs: Parents don't let their kids walk to school because of all the dangerous traffic. Of course, one way to lessen traffic is to let kids walk or ride their bikes to

school and reduce the crowd of vehicles surrounding schools at pickup and drop-off time.

It's a particular problem for Woodside Elementary School, located on busy Woodside Road.

Parents of children there proposed a list of measures to make it safer for kids to walk or bike to school, a plan that won the

endorsement of the Woodside Town Council at its September 12 meeting.

The plan calls for extra traffic enforcement, creating "no parking" zones to keep walking paths and bike lanes free of parked cars, and posting additional "school zone" signs.

"It's really unsafe for kids," said Millo Fenzi, a Woodside school parent and member of the town's Bicycle Committee, who spearheaded the effort.

Some of the proposed no-parking zones are likely to run afoul of nearby businesses, such as Roberts market, that rely on street parking

to augment undersized parking lots. Mr. Fenzi said he spoke with several key business owners about the parking issue and found that they were "all willing, but not necessarily excited about it."

Another potential stumbling block is getting approvals by Caltrans, the state agency that has jurisdiction over Woodside Road/Highway 84.

"We need to really work with Caltrans, or they'll assign it to an engineer and what we end up with won't look anything like Woodside," said Councilman Dave Tanner.

The council authorized Town

Manager Susan George to do whatever it takes to put the plan into place. It was a 4-1 vote, with Sue Boynton opposed and Paul Goeld and Carroll Ann Hodges absent.

Town staff nixed one proposal — adding a crosswalk on Woodside Road near Woody, the giant wooden fish near Buck's restaurant. Staff said it was an unsafe location for a crosswalk and that Caltrans would never approve it.

Council members acknowledged that the town was merely taking a first step toward making it safer for kids to walk or ride to school. ■

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Fadiman film examines 2004 election

By **Stephanie Cadora**
Special to the Almanac

Some voters had to stand in line in the rain for up to 13 hours to vote in Ohio during the 2004 presidential election. Others said that touch-screen voting machines had glitches that changed their votes.

Menlo Park documentary

filmmaker Dorothy Fadiman examined these and other issues in the first iteration of her film — "Who Kidnapped My Vote?" — about one year ago.

Now, she is screening a new version — "Stealing America: Vote by Vote" — that goes into greater depth about the events that unfolded on the night of the 2004 election and since, and examines possible solutions to the nation's electoral problems.

The film will be screened free at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 15, at the Cubberly Community Center theater at 4000 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.

"Clearly there was a wide spectrum of problems: disenfranchisement, numbers that didn't match the exit polls, a wide discrepancy," Ms. Fadiman

said in an interview.

She is critical of the news media, both print and broadcast, for failing to pursue the story.

She interviewed many people about the problems, including a data polling analyst associated with Harvard University, a reporter from the Miami Herald, a syndicated columnist in Chicago, and computer experts. ■

■ INFORMATION

"Stealing America: Vote by Vote" will be shown at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 15, at Cubberly theater, 4000 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. Admission is free but reservations are requested. Those with reservations are asked to arrive by 7 p.m. To reserve a space or buy a CD, e-mail info@concentric.org.

Housing Leadership Day on October 20

"Homes for San Mateo County: A Great Investment" will be the topic of Housing Leadership Day 2006, on Friday, Oct. 20, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Oracle Conference Center, 350 Oracle Parkway in Redwood City.

Morning speakers at the event, sponsored by the Housing Leadership Council, will be Tom Bailard of the Threshold 15/10 Project — formerly Housing Nachos — and a panel moderated by Assemblyman Gene Mullin, D-South San Francisco.


Lynn Jacobs, director of the state Housing and Community Development Department, will speak at lunch on state Proposition 1C, the Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund Act of 2006.

Afternoon sessions will include: financing new housing; housing for people with special needs and the HOPE Plan to End Homelessness; community engagement in land use; prospects and dangers in state propositions; and a mock planning commission meeting.

The event will also include a housing fair, two awards, and a working session on strategy at 3:15 p.m.

Registration is \$35 for members and \$50 for nonmembers of the Housing Leadership Council.

For information or to register, call 872-4444; or go to hlscmc.org.



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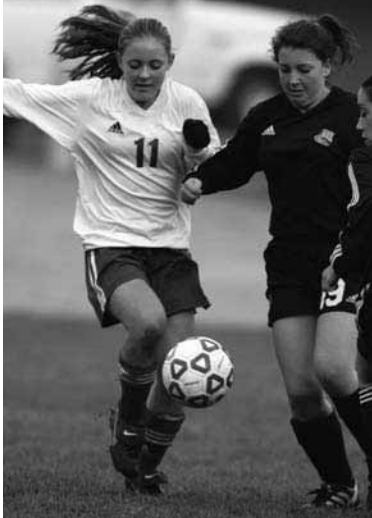
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Laura Cheney and Daniel Beltramo



Tara Maves and William Lynch



Karen Lent and Thomas Bowe



Brooke Nysten and Mike Budelli



Margaret Mary Rae and Brian Shepard

Weddings

Cheney-Beltramo

Laura Kathryn Cheney and Daniel Alexander Beltramo, Jr., were married June 17 at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Berkeley, the church where the bride's parents and maternal grandparents were married. A reception followed at the home of the bride's parents in Pleasanton.

The bride is the daughter of Suellen and Dr. Leonard Cheney. She is a graduate of UC Davis where she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She received her master's degree in physical therapy from the University of California at San Francisco. She is a physical therapist employed at San Leandro Outpatient Rehabilitation.

The bridegroom is the son of Margaret R. and Daniel A. Beltramo of Atherton. He is a graduate of Menlo School and Stanford University where he also obtained his MBA degree. A year and a half ago, he founded Vizu, an internet market research company.

The couple met through the recommendation of one of the bridegroom's classmates from the business school. Given their shared passion for Italy, their first date was over an Italian dinner.

After a honeymoon in Fiji and Sydney, Australia, the newlyweds are living in San Francisco.

Maves-Lynch

Tara Maves and William E. Lynch were married Sept. 16 at Ulla Vineyards in Grass Valley. A reception was held after the ceremony.

The bride is the daughter of Chrissy Liebgott and Mark Maves of Grass Valley. She is a graduate of the University of Nevada-Reno where she was captain of the University of Nevada's women's track team. She is employed as a new business project coordinator for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

The bridegroom is the son of Linda and William Lynch of

Portola Valley. He is a graduate of Menlo-Atherton High School and the University of Nevada-Reno where the couple met. He played football for Foothill Community College and the University of Nevada. He is a personal trainer.

Nikkie Maves was her sister's maid of honor. Cori Maves and Stephanie Rikers were bridesmaids. Sisters Rilee and Lexie Megron were flower girls. Eric Parks was best man. Michael and Caden Maves were groomsmen.

Following a wedding trip to Cabo San Lucas, the newlyweds are living in Reno.

Lent-Bowe

Karen Lent of Mountain View and Thomas R. Bowe of Woodside were married August 26 at Woodside Village Church. After the ceremony a dinner was held at Bella Saratoga in Saratoga for family and close friends.

The bride, a resident of Mountain View for 40 years, was an executive assistant at Sylvania/GTE Government Systems for 12 years. She has two adult children

and an 8-month-old grandson.

This is the first marriage for Mr. Bowe, who has lived in Woodside for 28 years. He has a master's degree in engineering from Northeastern University in Boston and a doctoral degree from Stanford University. He is employed as a research health science specialist for the Veterans Affairs in Menlo Park.

Nysten-Budelli

Brooke Nysten and Mike Budelli were married June 24 in an outdoor ceremony at the Resort at Squaw Creek in Squaw Valley, where a reception followed.

The bride is the daughter of Jim and Linda Nysten of Stockton. A graduate of St. Mary's High School and Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo, she is a first-grade teacher at St. Joseph's Elementary School in Atherton.

The bridegroom is the son of Robert and Tana Budelli of Menlo Park. He is a graduate of Sacred Heart Prep and Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo. He is employed in high-tech sales.

Jennifer Nysten was the maid of

honor. Chris and Robert Budelli Jr. were best men.

After a honeymoon in Hawaii the newlyweds are living in their new home in Redwood City.

Rae-Shepard

Margaret Mary "Maggie" Rae and Brian Folger Shepard were married June 3 at the Church of the Annunciation in Crestwood, New York. A reception was held at the Apawamis Club in Rye, New York.

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Phil Tighe, a friend of the bridegroom.

The bride is the daughter of Patricia and Roger Rae of Pelham Manor, New York. She graduated cum laude from Boston College in 1989. She is vice

president of brand management in the marketing department at Visa USA in San Francisco, where she and her future husband met.

The bridegroom is the son of Sally Loudy of Menlo Park and the late Hal Shepard. He is the stepson of David Loudy. Brian grew up in Atherton and is a 1984 graduate of Menlo School and a 1988 graduate of the University of Arizona. He is the owner of a residential real estate company in San Francisco.

Sara Marra was her sister's matron of honor. The bridegroom's stepfather, David Loudy, was his best man. Six nieces of the bride and bridegroom were flower girls.

After a honeymoon in Hawaii, the couple will continue to reside in San Francisco.

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OBITUARIES

Richard Rockhold*Former Del Monte Foods CFO*

A celebration of the life of Richard "Dick" Rockhold of Menlo Park will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 20, at Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Ave., Atherton. Mr. Rockhold died Sept. 4 at Stanford Medical Center after a six-month battle with pulmonary hypertension. He was 76.

Mr. Rockhold was born in San Jose and grew up in Los Altos. He graduated from San Jose State University, where he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity. In 1951 he married his high school sweetheart, Louise Jordan. After living in San Francisco for nearly 10 years, the couple moved to Menlo Park in 1963.

For more than 50 years, Mr. Rockhold worked in corporate finance and accounting. He went to work for Del Monte Foods in 1961 holding several executive accounting positions. In 1980 he was named vice president and chief financial officer until he retired from Del Monte in 1988. He later was associated with McCullough, Andrews & Capiello and as a consulting chief financial officer for several firms. He joined Pacific Printing and Fulfillment as a partner in 1993.

Mr. Rockhold was a president of

the Financial Executives Institute of San Francisco, vice president of the World Trade Club, and a member of the advisory committees for the Woodside Methodist Church (at the corner of Woodside Road and Alameda de las Pulgas), Mills College and UC Berkeley. He volunteered hundreds of hours in support of the Woodside-Auxiliary to Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. He and his wife, Louise, always volunteered their help on the annual Tally Ho benefit for the Packard Hospital.

Mr. Rockhold was a sports enthusiast, holding 49er season tickets since 1954. He enjoyed keeping fit and valued the friendships he made while skiing, cycling and going to the gym, say family members. He documented the many trips he and his wife made with his photographs.

A Dixieland jazz and Big Band fan, Mr. Rockhold had thousands of recordings, including a number of rare "78s," say family members. He and his wife traveled to many jazz festivals.

He is survived by his wife, Louise Rockhold of Menlo Park; children Craig Rockhold of Palo Alto, Janice Gibbons of San Jose, and David Rockhold of Beaverton, Oregon; and seven grandchildren.

The family prefers donations be made to The Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's

Health, 400 Hamilton Ave., Suite 340, Palo Alto, CA 94301, telephone 497-8141.

Melva Smith*Woodside resident for 60 years*

With her family at her side, Melva Smith died Sept. 14 after a four-year battle with lymphoma. She was 93.

Ms. Smith was born in The Dalles, Oregon, and attended Oregon State University. Her family later moved to California. After her marriage to Whitman Smith, the couple moved to Woodside in 1946. They built a house among the vineyards on La Questa Way.

The daughter of former associate minister Howard Patrick McConnell, Ms. Smith was a longtime member of the Woodside Village church. She was in charge of

countless rummage sales, catered many weddings, and prepared breakfast for church members on Sundays, say family members.

She began working for Sunset magazine in the entertainment and test kitchens in 1978 and continued at the magazine for 18 years.

She is survived by daughters Linda Cole and Jeanne Smith-Fletcher; sons Howard Smith and Craig Smith; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. Her husband, Whitman Smith, died in 1992.

A private service will be held at a later date. Memorials may be made to Hospice and the Lymphoma Society.

Veva Reed*Widow of former Woodside mayor*

Veva Louise Reed died Oct. 2 in

Redwood City at the age of 94.

Ms. Reed was a 43-year resident of Woodside. She was active in the San Mateo County Horsemen's Association, the Women of Moose, Bridgers, and Woodside Road United Methodist Church. She was a San Mateo County employee, working in several departments before retiring.

Ms. Reed was the wife of former Woodside mayor, the late Lewis C. Reed. She is survived by one grandchild and one great-grandchild. Her daughter, Lou Ann Douty, preceded her in death.

Graveside services have been held. Memorials may be made to the Woodside Library, 3140 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 94062.

Pumpkin festival in Half Moon Bay

The Half Moon Bay Art & Pumpkin Festival will be held Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 14 and 15

This year's festival will include 250 booths with thousands of handcrafted items. There will be a pancake breakfast, a haunted house, Great Pumpkin parade, pumpkin run, and a scarecrow contest.

"Farmer Mike" will demonstrate his skill in carving giant pumpkins into sculptures. There will be juggling, comedy, and magic on the Family Stage, as well as live music throughout the festival.

Pumpkin-flavored pancakes, pie, bread, cake, fudge, ice cream, caramel apples, and chicken sausages will be

for sale. Visitors can also feast on grilled Portuguese sausage, calamari, garlic fries, clam chowder, grilled corn on the cob, hamburgers and more.

The festival runs Oct. 14-15 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Main Street between Miramontes and Spruce Street in Half Moon Bay. For information, go to www.miramarevents.com.



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■ 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.

MENLO PARK

Stolen vehicle reports:

- Green 1996 Honda Accord stolen from in front of residence, 1300 block of Willow Road, September 22.
- Dark blue 1991 Toyota Camry stolen from in front of residence, 800 block of Coleman Avenue, September 24.

Grand theft reports:

- Bicycle stolen, 700 block of Partridge Avenue, September 27.
- Unlocked car rifled and shoes with

expensive orthopedic inserts stolen, 1300 block of Woodland Avenue, September 27.

- Shed broken into at construction site and \$4,300 worth of equipment stolen, first block of Politzer Drive, October 5.

Burglary reports:

- Window broken and computer, printer and projector damaged, Belle Haven Elementary School in 400 block of Ivy Drive, September 25.
- Computer equipment stolen from vehicle, 1100 block of Chestnut Street, October 2.
- Residence ransacked and jewelry and credit card stolen, 1900 block of Oak Avenue, October 2.
- Two storage sheds broken into and

padlocks damaged, 1100 block of O'Brien Avenue, October 3.

- Storage locker broken into and household items taken, 800 block of Coleman Avenue, October 4.

Auto burglary report: Two cases of CDs stolen from vehicle, 200 block of Oak Court, October 2.

Fraud reports:

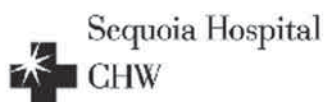
- Checks forged using resident's Social Security number, first block of Robert S Drive, September 30.
- Resident's bank account number used electronically to steal \$35.95, 1600 block of Adams Drive, October 4.
- Company check forged, 1000 block of Berkeley Avenue, October 5.



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Next session: October 17th, 2006, 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM Cañada College Campus, Bldg. 3, Room 148, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., Redwood City, CA 94061. For more information please call Sandy Ballance at 650.306.3193 or send email to sballanc@sfsu.edu. Visit www.sequoiahealthcaredistrict.com/nursinginfo.html



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LETTERS

continued from page 27

dance at the recent League of Women Voters candidate forum, I was surprised at the misleading words in Ms. Carney's letter to the editor Sept. 27. She both exaggerated the negative and left out key important facts.

When candidate John Boyle suggested that perhaps the council wasn't as polarized as asserted, there was snickering from a handful of his opposition supporters in the back of the room. It was certainly not a "roar of laughter." What Ms. Carney failed to mention was that Mr. Boyle then proceeded to share his facts that over 65 percent of the sitting council's total votes have been unanimous and that less than 13 percent of the votes were split 3 to 2.

The facts suggest that our City Council does tend to agree on the vast majority of votes that come before it.

There clearly is some level of debate and disagreement on some issues, as there probably should be in a healthy government. After candidate Boyle shared these facts, there truly was a roar of applause.

Doug Farel
Fanita Way, Menlo Park

Three good candidates for school board

Editor:

Lucky. That's how I feel when I consider the caliber of three candidates running for the Menlo Park City School board.

I've worked with Deborah Fitz, Jeff Child and Laura Rich in various capacities to benefit local

schools and they are outstanding in their dedication to elementary and middle school education.

I met Deb Fitz 20 years ago when she was at Stanford Business School with my husband, John Moragne. As an educated businessperson and mother of four children, Deb understands the twin necessities of a strong curriculum *and* facilities that meet safety, technology and physical education standards.

I've known Jeff Child since the 1970s when we attended M-A high school. Even then he was active in school matters and a leader in student activities.

Today, I serve on the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation with Jeff, who applies his superb finance skills as our treasurer. Jeff has four young children in the district and improving our schools is his great passion, second only to coaching youth sports.

Current school board president, Laura Rich, has already served our district for eight years and we are so fortunate that she is willing to return. She combines her expertise in design, technology and communication to create Community Reports, electronic newsletters and Web sites that educate district parents and residents on a number of education matters. Her experience on the board is priceless.

I hope you'll join me Nov. 7 in voting for these dynamic advocates of our local schools.

Kim Young and John Moragne
Santiago Avenue, Atherton

Support Rich, Child, Fitz for school board

Editor:

Our children went through the Menlo Park City Schools and

our grandchildren are now in those same schools. Our kids and grandkids are indeed fortunate to have outstanding schools and a terrific community that supports those schools. Many young families move to Menlo Park because of our great schools.

I am convinced that three candidates for the school board will work to protect and improve that excellent education for Menlo Park's kids. I support Laura Rich, Jeff Child and Deborah Fitz for school board because of their proven track record of involvement in our community and in our schools.

We are really lucky to have such talented, hardworking and dedicated people committed to the education of our children. That commitment of time and effort is a key quality in our school board members if we are to continue to enjoy topnotch schools. Please join me in voting for Laura Rich, Jeff Child and Deborah Fitz for school board on Nov. 7.

Lucile Spurlock
Creek Drive, Menlo Park

Fireplace smoke can choke neighbors

Editor:

You wouldn't dump your garbage over the fence into your neighbor's yard, and you wouldn't blast music through your neighbor's windows.

Please don't contaminate the air that your downwind neighbors have to breathe by burning wood or pressed logs in your fireplace.

Palo Alto and Menlo Park have wood-burning ordinances that prohibit putting wood-

burning fireplaces into new houses because it is recognized that wood-smoke contributes to a variety of lung diseases. Wood-smoke is not safer than cigarette smoke. If you can smell smoke, you are breathing highly polluted air.

Maria Kleczewska
Marmona Drive, Menlo Park

Glad to see interest in Guatemala water projects

Editor:

It is heartening to read about the local Rotary Club's interest in helping to build water projects for villages in the Guatemalan highlands.

We are local board members of a nonprofit organization that promotes community development in Guatemala. Founded in the 1980s in response to the civil war that disrupted village life throughout the highlands, PAVA (Aid Program for our Highlands Neighbors/ www.pavafoundation.org) has a solid track record of building infrastructure (bridges and water systems), constructing over 50 schools, providing scholarships to rural Mayan youth to complete secondary school and, recently, continue on to university. In conjunction with the Guatemalan Ministry of Education, PAVA is working to improve elementary school curriculum and pedagogy and to establish libraries in rural schools.

PAVA partners with communities to develop tree nurseries and undertake reforestation projects, develop home vegetable gardens, introduce wood-conserving stoves

and install latrines. PAVA has also focused on training mid-wives to improve maternal health care.

In response to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Stan in October 2005, PAVA partnered this year with the Denver Rotary and Rotary International (through the Guatemalan chapter) in conjunction with the NGO Water for People to repair several destroyed water systems in remote villages. A current Rotary-funded project is building "hand-washing stations" in 35 rural schools, which will significantly improve the level of hygiene available for thousands of elementary students.

Congratulations to the Toguchis, the Campbells and to local Rotarians for committing themselves to this rewarding work, as well as to Mark Flegel for stepping up to the position of Rotary district governor. Rotary International is an organization of tremendous spirit and dedication which consistently makes a difference in communities worldwide.

We look forward to learning about their experience and ultimate success in Guatemala.

Holly Myers
Portola Road, Portola Valley

Appalled by referendum tactics

Editor:

Yesterday I was approached by a volunteer seeking my signature for the Derry Referendum. I was appalled at the complete lack of factual information and the outright lies that he was

See **LETTERS**, next page

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Correcting several points on the Derry project

By Jim Pollart

There have been numerous articles and letters regarding the Derry project in your paper over the last several weeks. I am writing to address several points made by the project opponents which I believe need further clarification.

■ The Cadillac property was “up zoned” as part of the Derry project approval. This is not correct. The Cadillac property was and still is zoned “C-4” (18.5 units per acre). Redevelopment of that property at densities above 18.5 units per acre would require a rezoning from “C-4” to “PD.” The next City Council will have absolute discretion whether or not to approve such a rezoning.

■ The general plan amendment relative to the Cadillac property was a “last minute change” by the City Council and was not fully or properly disclosed to the public. This is also not correct. The general plan amendment for the entire block between

**GUEST
OPINION**

Oak Grove and Glenwood was initiated by city planning staff two and a half years ago at the outset of the Derry planning process. Information regarding this matter was clearly and prominently described in all Derry planning documents going back to 2004.

Your readers can verify this in less than five minutes by viewing the following documents on the “Community Development Projects” section of the city Web site: Sept 13, 2004 Planning Commission Staff Report (page 3), Mar 16, 2006 Derry Project EIR (page 1), and Aug 29, 2006 City Council Staff Report (page 1).

■ The city failed to obtain reasonable public benefits in exchange for the Derry project approval. The Derry project will

pay more than \$5.7 million to the city to fund police and fire protection, schools and parks. The Derry project includes 21 “below market rate homes” specifically designated for sale to moderate income families at deep discounts. And the Derry project has voluntarily offered additional benefits to the city, including construction of a new public street from Oak Grove Avenue to Glenwood Avenue, and other public infrastructure improvements. The total value of these voluntary contributions is estimated at over \$1 million.

We believe the most important public benefit from the Derry project is the very high quality of architectural design and building materials, the generous public spaces and the overall character of the development.

As with the widely praised Vintage Oaks neighborhood (which was built by the O’Brien Group in the late 1990s), we have gone above and beyond the city’s technical requirements to plan a development that will enhance the downtown environment and the overall community for years to come.

We believe that our focus on quality, and our willingness to work cooperatively with the community and the city over the last three years, is the reason the project was approved unanimously by the Planning Commission and approved by a 4-1 vote by the City Council.

We urge you to get the facts before you consider signing the referendum opposing the Derry project.

Jim Pollart is vice president of the O’Brien Group, the San Mateo-based developer of the Derry Project.

hearings! It will provide much needed affordable housing; it is within walking distance of the train and downtown; and it will bring tremendous revenue to the city. What more do they want?

I personally am very offended by the statement that we could have squeezed more out of the developer. The O’Brien Group is a highly respected, experienced developer who has spent three-plus years in the process and a huge sum of money to win approval of this project. Contrary to referendum rhetoric, good developers will not continue to pursue building in our city if they are treated this way.

I urge you to think twice before signing the petition and to vote for City Council candidates who

Measure J can be youth sports solution

By Todd A. Roberts

The guest opinion by attorney Jim Madison is short-sighted and surprising given his involvement in training youth soccer coaches. However, Jim has little appreciation for the gravity of the current situation with youth soccer in Menlo Park — a situation which has reached crisis proportions, given the scarcity of facilities to service a rapidly growing young population devoted to this sport. Measure J provides us an opportunity to seriously study and address this issue.

I am a long-time Menlo Park resident and have coached soccer for years. I can personally attest to the massive problem we face with our fields and the pressure put on our facilities by this increasing youth population. We must remember that new sports, such as lacrosse are also competing with soccer, football and baseball to share our playing fields. Also remember that Atherton has few playing fields but many children who play sports in Menlo Park.

I find it unbelievable that a city with the population and affluence of Menlo Park cannot work on this problem and provide some real relief, and it seems to me that Measure J could be the answer.

I am also surprised that some naysayers refuse to open their minds to the fact that Bayfront Park can be a major solution to this scarcity of public space and that Menlo Park will be able to afford the facility, if the preliminary studies indicate the feasibility of Bayfront Park for this purpose.

The voters of Menlo Park must also know that Measure J is not giving the city a blank check to build playing fields at Bayfront Park. It simply gives the city the right to study the feasibility, cost, and various design options. Given the crisis concerning the lack of space, what is the harm in doing this? All other options that have been explored for over 10 years (including some mentioned by Mr. Madison) have failed and the problem is worsening. Bayfront Park is under our control and provides a golden opportunity for a solution.

Allow me to personally explain in real terms the problem: drive by Lyle Park, one of a number of our parks that has practice fields. My daughter is on the Under 9 team, which prac-

tics with its sister team. They are only allotted one-quarter of the small soccer field and there are 26 third-graders on these teams. The remainder of this single field must be shared with three other older teams.

The girls Under 15 team I coach consists of 17 high school freshmen who not only do not have a full-sized field on which to practice and play, but are forced to practice on a sliver of grass between the sideline of the actual field and the sidewalk along the skateboard park at Burgess.

Every year our space gets smaller, when these girls need more space as they get older and bigger.

Our kids deserve better than this, and I am confident that the city can provide playing fields at Bayfront Park if it puts the interests of our children first. Bayfront Park can provide the solution. Measure J envisions a limited use of sports fields at Bayfront Park — only 17 out of 160 acres. The city would also be required to obtain all environmental and safety clear-

ances.

No golf courses are contemplated — 90 percent of the park will be set aside for hiking and related activities, with only 10 percent for sports fields. Is this too much to ask?

Building sports fields on landfill areas is not impossible: the consultant working with the city indicates that development is feasible and that the Burlingame sports complex, Shoreline and the Santa Clara golf course are examples.

Developer fees of up to \$6 million have already been earmarked for recreational purposes. User fees and private donations will also offset development expenditures.

I plan to vote yes on Measure J. It can provide the answer to our desperate need for space for our sports and the need to accommodate the thousands of young people in our community. A creative and positive Menlo Park City Council should be able to carry through with this endeavor.

Todd Roberts and his wife Debbie are parents of three young soccer players. He volunteers as a youth soccer coach, is a member of the board of the Menlo Park-based Mid Peninsula Strikers Futbol Club, and from 2000 to 2005 served as the regional coach administrator and instructor for Menlo Park/Atherton AYSO.



LETTERS

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using to get my support. I was told that the process was flawed, the city left \$18 million on the table, traffic would dramatically increase, and the special election wouldn’t cost us anything! I watched as less informed residents were lured into signing based on his faulty plea.

The supporters of this effort are acting in an irresponsible, reckless manner. This project is a model of outstanding mixed-use development. It has been endorsed by every city commission, it has passed an extensive environmental review process, and over the last three and a half years there have been 11 public

are opposed to this kind of political gamesmanship.

**Kimberly LeMieux
President, Laurel Homes Inc.
San Mateo Drive, Menlo Park**

Slocum majority to blame for ECR blight

Editor:

In 1994, the City Council, led by the “no-growth” majority of Slocum Morris, and Jones, enacted Ordinance 863, which severely limited the ability to revitalize the El Camino Corridor. One trick was to revise the car count so that virtually any increase in traffic would trigger an EIR.

The Jellins-Winkler-Duboc Majority has taken great pains

to redeem the city’s sullied business reputation, created in large part by Gail Slocum and successive city councils committed to the Slocum Doctrine of “Painful Business Growth.”

Now, Slocum has three disciples running for City Council: Heyward Robinson, Richard Cline and Vince Bressler. They claim they are not a slate. Nevertheless, Steve Schmidt complained in the Almanac that he was forced out of the race by his side. The leader of his side is Gail Slocum and Robinson, Cline, and Bressler are her own-select candidates.

It was the Slocum Majority’s master plan revision that laid the foundation for the El Camino

blight and her candidates are committed to her vision. Yet they have the unmitigated gall to complain about this blight.

Despite Slocum’s disciples’ roadblocks, Jellins, Duboc and Winkler have forged ahead and have six projects in the planning stages for the El Camino Corridor. Now, they are entering into negotiations with General Motors to allow them to purchase the Tyco property.

Are Gail’s obstructionists going to try to stop that, too? Say no to Gail, her candidates, and her anachronistic thinking and vote for Boyle, Duboc and Winkler — the visionaries for Menlo Park’s future.

**Hank Lawrence
Sharon Oaks Drive, Menlo Park**

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Published every Wednesday at

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Menlo Park, CA 94025

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The Almanac, established in September, 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County. The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior Court of San Mateo County to publish public notices of a governmental and legal nature, as stated in Decree No. 147530, issued November 9, 1969.

Voluntary subscriptions are available for delivery to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside at \$30 per year or \$50 for 2 years. Subscriptions by businesses or residents outside the area are \$50 for one year and \$80 for two years.



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

EMAIL your views to letters@AlmanacNews.com. Indicate if it is a letter to be published.

FAX to Editor at 854-0677.

MAIL or deliver to: Editor at the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

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

Don't be misled by Prop. 90

Local government officials all over the state are worried about a little-known initiative — Proposition 90 — that could cause a sea change in the way cities do business. And if it passes, it could handicap the Menlo Park City Council if it wanted to rescind general plan and zoning code amendments for the site of the former Cadillac dealership at 1300 El Camino Real.

The November ballot measure aims to convince voters that they must back Proposition 90 to protect their private property from being “taken” by evil government agencies. That charge is bogus, and we hope area voters take a

deeper look at the proposed law, which is being promoted by New York millionaire Howard Rich, who is also funding similar measures in five other western states.

Using the highly charged title “Save Our Homes Act,” proponents of Proposition 90 are attempting to traffic in the fear spread by a recent Supreme Court decision that authorized a local government to take several small homes in order to build a commercial development in Connecticut. A close read of the proposition shows that its real purpose is not only to oppose eminent domain, but to hamstring agencies that routinely pass zoning ordinances and other regulations that impact private property.

If Proposition 90 were to pass, an action by a government agency in California could force that agency to pay damages to an owner who successfully proved in court that his or her property lost value as a result of the action. This part of Proposition 90 runs far afield of any perceived threat of property being taken by eminent domain.

That's where the Menlo Park angle comes in. If Proposition 90 were to pass, the city could be liable if it rescinded the general plan and zoning code amendments permitting higher building heights and density at the Cadillac site. So far, city officials have not said if they see a threat from Proposition 90 in this or other cases.

The California League of Cities has voiced its concern, making

Proposition 90 one of the few initiatives it has opposed over the years. And nearby Palo Alto has actually rewritten ordinances in anticipation of the limits the proposition would place on its zoning powers should it pass.

Local governments and special districts were formed and approved by voters to act in the public interest, a fact many private property advocates have lost sight of in recent years. In virtually all cases, the taking of property or the so-called “down-zoning” of private holdings is avoided or adequate compensation is provided. Attorneys would have a field day suing local governments if the proposition became law.

Besides adding red tape and expensive lawsuits, the proposition could drive up the costs of virtually any public works project, including schools, roads, and public safety buildings. Environmental groups fear the proposition could block enactment of environmental protections at all levels of government.

There is no good reason for Proposition 90 to be enacted. Government agencies are not running roughshod over California property owners. Eminent domain is not a terrorist threat to private property rights. But Proposition 90 could easily be a costly thorn in the side of local governments, and at the same time line the pockets of attorneys who would gladly use it to their own advantage.

EDITORIAL
The opinion of The Almanac



LETTERS
Our readers write

Former Derry site owners support project

Editor:

We are writing in support of the Derry project on Oak Grove Avenue in downtown Menlo Park.

We are longtime residents, business owners and property owners in Menlo Park. We are the former owners of the Menlo French Laundry. Our family owned and managed the Menlo French Laundry from 1945-1990.

We are the previous owners of 558-560 Oak Grove Ave. We sold our property to the Derry family with full support of the Derry Project and the O'Brien Group.

We were every impressed with the architectural design and quality of the project, which is sensitive to the needs of Menlo Park and includes 21 affordable homes.

The property now stands in a run-down condition. The Derry project will enhance the downtown, and the El Camino



Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

The family of Joseph A. Donohoe, at left under tree, view a visitor arriving at their Holmgrove estate. The home and extensive outbuildings were built in 1868 on property east of Middlefield Road between Oak Grove and Ringwood avenues that is now the site of Menlo-Atherton High School. There was room for spacious gardens, an olive orchard, pasture for cows and horses, orchards and vegetable gardens on the property. Mr. Donohoe died in 1895 and the home was torn down in 1948 to make way for Menlo-Atherton.

See **LETTERS**, next page

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

Real/Caltrain corridor.

Where was the referendum group when discussion began on the project? Were they hiding under a rock? If the Derry project is turned down, it will hinder any further development to the El Camino corridor.

**The Lancestremere Family
Menlo Park**

Appreciates opinion on playing fields

Editor:

A huge thank you to James R. Madison for his excellent guest opinion on the fields at Bayfront Park issue (Measure J) in the Oct. 4 Almanac.

Here is a voice of common sense. Mr. Madison described the limitations and enormous expense of that proposal perfectly. He lists the reasonable alternatives, all of which should have been seriously considered instead of the current proposal.

For reasons of fiscal responsibility, for the sake of appropriate fields for our young players, for saving the Measure T funds, Measure J must be defeated.

**Christine Pixie Couch
Almanor Avenue, Menlo Park**

Trust council to decide on playing fields

Editor:

As a Menlo Park resident who thinks youth sports is an important part of life in our community, I believe Measure J is a positive step toward addressing our unacceptable field shortage.

While I don't claim to be a civil engineer who knows if it's feasible to build fields on the landfill at Bayfront Park (although many other towns have done it) and I am not part of the Menlo Park city staff that understands the details

Tiny tax a big boost for parks

By Bill Lane

We read daily headlines about global warming, rain forest destruction, polar ice melting, ozone depletion, endangered species, and pollution. All are critical now and for future generations.

With all the global, national, and state-wide environmental issues facing us, it's difficult to focus on environmental issues that affect our daily lives in our own backyard — southern San Mateo County. I hope all Almanac readers will give a high priority to thinking about our local county parks and become well-informed about Measure A and vote to support "Parks for the Future" in the upcoming election.

Although my longtime interest and continued support for our national and state parks continues, I strongly feel that rising fuel costs, traffic, and precious everyday "recreational family time" will make our local parks even more important in our lives, whether we reach them by public transit, bicycle, horseback, or simply walking. But, whether you use county parks or not, our "open space" benefits every one of us, young and old.

It is proven that most children benefit from a meaningful "park experience" that influences their whole lives. For many years, I have encouraged and supported "Classrooms in the Parks." And, a number of our county parks get an A-plus on that test, enabling thousands of children to visit the tide pools at Moss Beach, Woodside Store, Sanchez Adobe Historic Site, and many more.

Measure A will create a small source of revenue dedicated to support parks and recreation activities in all cities in the county, plus the Ladera and Highlands recreation districts and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. The county sales tax will be increased by only one-eighth cent. The revenue derived from this small increase is projected to raise \$16 million per year and cost the average resident only \$18 per year. It's a taxpayer's bargain compared to a fast-food dinner for four, a movie, or a daily latte.

Forty-eight percent of the money raised by Measure A will go to the 15 parks and recreation districts in the county. The remaining 52 percent of the money raised would go directly to the cities in our county. Cities will have full control of funds, and can spend them in any way they choose, provided it is

within the scope of the Parks and Recreation Department.

The Almanac communities of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley, and Woodside will see their fair share of funding from Measure A. The distribution formula gives small cities and towns like Atherton, Portola Valley, and Woodside a minimum of 1.357 percent of the revenue from the tax, which is estimated per city to be \$205,000 per year. Menlo Park, being a little larger, would actually receive \$328,733 per year.

Measure A allows us to protect precious open space and coastline and make some much-needed repairs to park facilities, including restrooms, drinking fountains, and playground equipment. It will also allow us to maintain and improve hiking, equestrian, walking and biking trails.

Last, but not least, Measure A is a fiscally responsible initiative. The funds will be controlled locally, and the revenue will be monitored and audited by the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG). Jurisdictions will submit reports certifying revenues are spent on parks and recreation-related expenses, and that general fund contributions are maintained.

Please join me and my family in supporting Measure A to invest in our wonderful San Mateo County parks, and, remember to vote on Election Day or with your absentee ballot.

Bill Lane lives in Portola Valley.



of how we will pay for it, I do trust our City Council to operate within the law to get these important questions answered.

The Almanac's Aug. 23 article "Six candidates running for city council" represents Measure J as asking voters if the city can spend \$15 million to \$17 million to build sports fields. I believe this is a misrepresentation of the measure that will misguide voters who are sensitive to our recent budget challenges.

It appears that the reporter didn't read the ballot text. While it is true that these are the preliminary estimates calculated by an outside, professional firm, the measure is specifically asking voters if the city can use 10 percent of the park space

to build fields only **after** the necessary environmental, safety, and financial requirements have been met. It is a responsible and proactive approach to solving a major problem in our community.

**Andy Kirkpatrick
Politzer Drive, Menlo Park
Little League Commissioner
Pop Warner football coach**

Reasons to vote against Measure J

Editor:

The primary reasons for voting against Menlo Park's Measure J are that open space is a precious resource, and that serene Bayfront Park is regularly used by countless residents young and old, including

kids learning to ride bikes, birders, joggers, walkers, dogs on leashes, folks of every ethnicity. But here's a reason that even soccer moms should vote no: Canada Geese.

Have you not read about problems with legions of Canada Geese on the lawns around Lake Merritt in Oakland? Or the fact that golfers at Mountain View's Shoreline Golf Links hate trudging through slimy goose droppings on greens and fairways?

Do you imagine that children playing soccer in Foster City enjoy sliding around in the foul leavings of fowl? Might this be a health hazard? Shoreline and lakefront properties are unsuitable for manicured lawns or even **faux** grass as on the Menlo-Atherton football

field. Geese will not respect "keep off the grass" signs. And they are not about to leave Bayfront Park where they reside in great numbers year-round, part of the diversity of life on that site.

Kids do need soccer fields, but there are many arguments against building them at Bayfront Park. The Canada Goose population is merely the messiest reason to vote No on J.

**Nancy Barnby
Spruce avenue, Menlo Park**

Council polarized, or not?

Editor:

As someone who was in atten-

See **LETTERS**, page 24

Majority plucked city out of stagnancy

By R.P. (Dee) Tolles

I thought it was ironic when I saw the Almanac photo showing the Derry project referendum backers collecting signatures at Menlo Center. It wasn't that long ago that referendum backers were fighting hard against the Menlo Center's development — an architectural jewel, now renowned for its vitality, activity, and the home of Kepler's Books and Cafe Barrone, two of Menlo Park's most cherished institutions.

Unfortunately this lively community meeting place has now become the battleground to kill the Derry project, one that will improve the quality and vitality of downtown Menlo Park.

Fears surfaced about Menlo Center,

similar to those of the Derry project now: fear of growth, of more traffic, of losing our small town feel, of change in general. The council conducted numerous hearings and after much fact-finding and deliberation, approved the project.

If the Menlo Center's opponents had succeeded in stopping the project we would instead have the used car sales lot and a sad little strip of fading retail, instead of Kepler's and Cafe Barrone.

I take exception to many of the points in the guest opinion piece written by Gail Slocum. The current blight on El Camino is directly attributable to the "slow-growth" policies of previous city councils. The 1994 council, led by Slocum, Jones and Morris, revised

the general plan to discourage redevelopment of outdated and underutilized commercial properties along the El Camino corridor. The net result was an effective down-zoning of ECR corridor property, causing a substantial loss in commercial property values.

Development was sparse until the current council majority of Jellins, Duboc and Winkler took bold decisive steps to reverse the ill-conceived and restrictive zoning policies of the Slocum years. The current council majority plucked the city out of its stagnancy and has moved it forward, resulting in a renewed interest by property owners to revitalize our city center.

We cannot let the fear of change smother our vision for a livable, walkable, and vibrant city center. The Derry project

fits into our long-range plan for more affordable housing, shops, and services downtown. It gives us attractive retail, and a gracious pedestrian plaza, and further extends the revitalization started with the success of the Menlo Center.

Next time you visit Kepler's Books or sit at Cafe Barrone sipping a latte, think about how precarious our vision for a revitalized downtown can be in these politically charged times, and how wonderful change can be. It's essential that we not allow a small group of residents who fear change and renewal stop the Derry project and all the good that project can bring to our downtown community.

The author, R.P. (Dee) Tolles, is a 36-year resident of Menlo Park. He was on the City Council from 1993 to 1996, and served as mayor from December 1994 to December 1995.

**GUEST
OPINION**

*What are the qualities
you should look for in a
real estate agent when
selling or buying a home?*

“After being on the market for an extended period, we really needed a fresh eye and a new marketing strategy. You brought energy, enthusiasm, and a new vision to the project. From the beginning you had a clear plan on what needed to be done to sell the property. Your ability to coordinate the vendors and schedule all of the work certainly took a lot of pressure off us.”

J. S. - Woodside

“We chose you because of your strong reputation in the market. We then developed what we now consider to be a lasting relationship based on your overwhelming knowledge of the market, your professionalism, your passion for the industry, and your genuine ability to care about your clients.”

D. and C. N. - Atherton

“I was very impressed with your handling the details of repairs, showings, contract hiccups, and everything to make this go smoothly. I and my siblings are very happy with the outcome. I know it was not your most expensive property, but I'd have never known it from the way it was handled, from the first meeting on.”

K. J. - Menlo Park



RESULTS!



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