

DERRY REFERENDUM supporters say they have enough signatures. Page 5

The Almanac

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

OCTOBER 18, 2006

www.AlmanacNews.com

VOL. 42 NO. 7

Voter's Guide 2006

Building sports fields at Bayfront Park is one of the key issues facing voters in the Nov. 7 election.

{SEE SECTION 2}



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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

The Wells Fargo wagon is a-coming

Monette Clemons (right) and Oliver Weiss roll through Woodside at the Saturday, Oct. 14, Day of the Horse event. A steady stream of visitors ignored the cloudy skies and converged on Town Hall for puppet shows, pony-petting, Jamie MacDonald's horseshoeing demos and the popular stagecoach rides. Elsewhere in town, equestrians rode the trails on a progressive ride.

Menlo Park

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On the cover

Almanac photographer Marjan Sadoughi captured a flight of geese coming in for a landing at Bayfront Park on a recent late afternoon. Menlo Park voters are being asked whether the city should pursue the possibility of building sports fields in the park. For coverage of that and other major ballot issues in the Nov. 7 election, see the Almanac's Voter's Guide in **Section 2**.

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Timothy Fidge & Co.

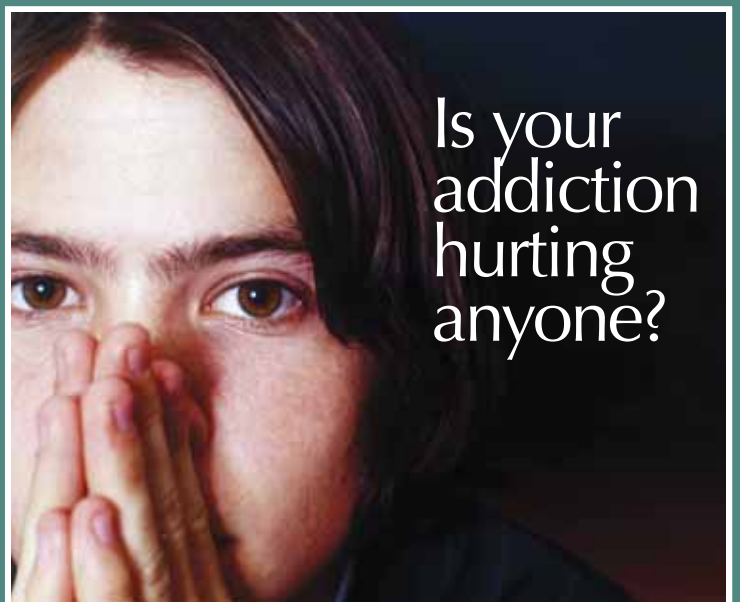
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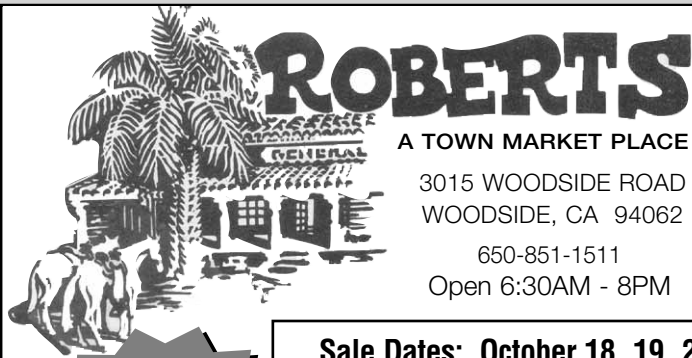
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If you like white wine, and you like good white wine, you are doing yourself a disservice if you don't at least try Sauvignon Blanc. At ROBERTS MARKET, we recommend you come and speak to a wine expert who can recommend some great wines for you, and your loved ones to enjoy. Our wine department is the most extensive in the area, more than most liquor stores. Don't forget fresh cut flowers from our floral department to grace your table.

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WINE



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Get your head on straight

Don Steiger reports the head of the Xian warrior that stood guard at his Sharon Heights home is back in place, thanks to the Almanac and Menlo Park code-enforcement officer Elizabeth Fambrini.



Elizabeth
Fambrini

The statue is a replica of one of the 8,000 terracotta warriors assembled by Emperor Qin in Xian China, more than 2,000 years ago.

Ms. Fambrini saw the photo of the headless warrior when it appeared in the Aug. 30 issue of the Almanac. Last week she spied the head on a resident's lawn across town. Seems the resident had retrieved it from the street in front of her house and put it on the lawn hoping somebody would recognize it.

Officer Fambrini returned the head to a delighted Mr. Steiger whose "Please return my head" sign on the statue first caught the Almanac's attention. "I'd given up. I had that sign up for a month," he said.

Remembering Coach Conners

Soon, exhausted soccer players at Woodside Elementary School can take a load off on a memorial bench celebrating the contributions of Dick Conners, a longtime Woodside resident who was deeply involved in the community, and coached soccer and baseball at the school in the 1970s. He died unexpectedly in March.

Donna Levin (Mr. Conners coached her sons) is tracking down other former players to raise money to install a bench by a small grove of redwoods at the end of the soccer field behind the school.

Ms. Levin is seeking \$15 donations to raise \$400 for the bench and a small plaque; call her at 851-1078. A short dedication ceremony is set for 11 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 19.



Vincent Bressler, from left, Patti Fry and Morris Brown pull wagons full of signed petitions on their way to City Hall.

The Almanac/
Marjan Sadoughi

First hurdle cleared in Derry referendum effort

■ Police called out 14 times as opposing sides clash in public spaces.

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

It could be Thanksgiving week before San Mateo County determines whether enough valid signatures were gathered to qualify a referendum for the ballot that would ask voters to rescind the Menlo Park City Council's approvals of the Derry residential-commercial project and related measures.

Referendum supporters say some 2,800 signatures were

wheeled into City Hall on little wagons on Oct. 12, a half-hour before the 5 p.m. deadline. Only 1,850 signatures — 10 percent of registered voters — are required to qualify the measure.

The signature-gathering effort was marked by tension and clashes between the petitioners and people aiming to dissuade others from signing the petitions. Police were called out on 14 occasions from Sept. 30 to Oct. 12 to address complaints of harassment, intimidation and

interference, according to police spokesperson Nicole Acker.

Morris Brown, a leader of the group Menlo Park Tomorrow, which organized the referendum effort, said the signatures had been put through screening software designed to "ascertain the level of 'rejects' that might surface when the signatures are validated."

As a result of the screening, he said, his group is confident that about 2,400 or more of the signatures are valid — from registered voters who are residents of incorporated Menlo Park.

City Clerk Silvia Vonderlinden

was counting the signatures on Monday, Oct. 16, and planned to turn over the task of verifying them to San Mateo County afterward. Results of the count were not available by the Almanac's press time. The city has 30 business days from Oct. 12 to let the referendum organizers know whether they collected the required number of valid signatures to qualify the measure for the ballot.

If so, the matter will go first to the council, which can either rescind its approvals or send the

See **DERRY**, page 8

Residents resist triple-digit parcel tax increase

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

■ SCHOOLS

Board members of the Las Lomitas Elementary School District say the district may need to increase its parcel tax by \$240 a year to cover rising costs associated with growing enrollment and special education.

Without a tax increase in that range, the district may face "significant" cuts to programs, board president David Bailard said in June.

But a recent poll shows voters are not likely to support anything close to that. According to the poll, conducted by the San Ramon-based pollster, the Center for Community Opinion, two-thirds of the voters would sup-

port a tax increase of no more than \$98.

Parcel tax measures require two-thirds' voter approval to pass. District property owners currently pay \$196 a year.

Asked if the survey results will mean cuts to program or staff, Mr. Bailard said that that would be a last resort, and that the district could first act to free up cash by lowering contributions to reserve accounts.

"At some point, we would need to look at employees and positions," he said. A discussion on the measure is scheduled for the 7:30 p.m. board meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 18, at the district office at 1011 Altschul Ave.

Trustee Lee Anderson said the \$240 tax

increase mentioned in June would "keep programs going as funded," and that there is maneuvering room. In 2003, he noted, then Gov. Gray Davis proposed deep cuts for largely self-supporting districts like Las Lomitas. The district avoided layoffs by not replacing departing staff and not rehiring new probationary teachers.

"I think that something like that will be possible this time," he said. "We're still chewing on the (poll) numbers." A saving grace in years past has been higher than expected property tax revenues, Mr. Anderson added.

There are other numbers to chew on, too.

See **PARCEL TAX**, page 8



What Every Parent Needs to Know About Eating Disorders

If Your Child:

- * Severely limits or refuses food
- * Fears gaining weight
- * Is underweight
- * Denies seriousness of low weight
- * Exercises excessively
- * Engages in binge eating and/or purging
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Wobber wins Radcliffe prize

Menlo Park woman researching in the Congo

By Sean Howell

Special to the Almanac

Victoria Wobber, a Menlo Park resident who attended Castilleja School, has been honored for work in anthropology that has taken her far from home — and from her original interests.

Ms. Wobber, who graduated from Harvard in January with a concentration in anthropology, received the Captain Jonathan Fay Prize from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study for her work in dog cognition. The institute awards the prize to members of the graduating class who have produced an outstanding work or piece of research in any field, according to its press release.

When Ms. Wobber enrolled at Harvard, she didn't know what she wanted to major in, according to her father, Ted Wobber. He said that she didn't like biology in high school, but became interested in it after taking a large survey course, "The Evolution of Human Nature," that explored human development by comparing it with that of other species.

The subject formed the basis for Ms. Wobber's current research and has taken her to Germany and Africa, where she spent the summer studying chimpanzees in the Congo, her father said.

In her thesis, Ms. Wobber examined the evolution of dogs' use of cooperative signals and suggested that human communication may have developed in a similar manner. She compared domesticated dogs with a previously unstudied breed, New Guinea Singing Dogs, that had gone without human contact for more than 6,000 years.

Ms. Wobber found that dogs perform better

Victoria Wobber plays with a baby chimpanzee in the Congo, where she spent last summer researching evolution.



than chimps on some signal tests, which suggests a close tie between canines and humans. For example, in tests where she would hide food under a cup, then gaze at it or point to it, the dogs she studied understood the cues faster than chimps.

She suggested that the way in which dogs developed an understanding of communicative cues over a number of generations may be similar to the way in which humans did so.

Ms. Wobber's early graduation didn't mean she took a break from her studies. Instead, she traveled to Leipzig, Germany, to work at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. In May, she returned to Africa — she had spent last summer in Uganda studying chimpanzees.

She plans to return to Harvard in the fall to begin a doctoral program in biological anthropology and continue to work on domestication as it pertains to human evolution. ■

'Mornings with Margaret' at Allied Arts

Dr. Margaret Deanesly of Menlo Park, a popular and funny lecturer on health, will return to the Allied Arts Guild with a follow-up lecture for seniors on Thursday, Oct. 26, from 9:15 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In "More about Aging: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly — Part II," Dr. Deanesly will cover heart disease and stroke; coping with arthritis; managing grief; facing problems with drugs and alcohol; accepting your children's lifestyles; and safe and sane travel.

Over some 30 years, Dr. Deanesly has built a reputation for giving funny, informative talks about health. Starting with "Mornings with Margaret" locally, she has built an international following — including the mixed audience in Dubai that heard her discuss men's

PEOPLE

health problems.

Last spring she received a Lifetimes of Achievement Award from Avenidas in Palo Alto.

The event is in the Sunset Room at Allied Arts Guild, 75 Arbor Road in Menlo Park. Space is limited. Tickets, at \$45 including lunch, are going fast. For information or to sign up, call Gerry Nelson at 325-9692.

Service league honors Elizabeth Gheleta

Elizabeth Gheleta of Menlo Oaks, retiring director of the Service League of San Mateo County, will be honored Saturday, Oct. 21, for her 38 years of helping inmates in the county's prisons and their families.

"Rekindling the Dream" is the theme of the party from 4:30 to 7 p.m. in the historic courthouse, now the San Mateo County History Museum, at 777 Hamilton Ave. in Redwood City.

The program will feature a court session in Courtroom A, with Superior Court Judge Craig Parson presiding.

Former Supervisor Mike Nevin, who has succeeded Ms. Gheleta as executive director of the Service League, will act as court clerk. Sheriff Don Horsley and Sheriff-elect Greg Munks will serve as bailiffs, with other legal leaders in the county playing court roles, including jurors.

Tickets start at \$38 each. For information or to purchase tickets, call Dianne Rummel at 363-4664, x 17; or go to service-league.org.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Are County Records Accurate?

Q. The county assessor's record for my property contains several errors; for example, the square footage of the house is wrong and the number of bedrooms is incorrect. Should I try to correct this?

A. The county records are generally accurate but if property is older, these records can often contain incorrect information. If older properties are expanded during a remodeling project, the assessor's office doesn't always update the record to include these additions. If the addition was done with permits the chances are good that the assessor's record will

reflect the changes. But site visits by the assessor's office are rare and this can result in discrepancies in the public record.

I don't think it is necessary to correct this information. If you really want accurate information on your property, a fee appraisal and a property survey would give you this. If you plan to sell your property, your buyer will have an appraisal done if he or she obtains a loan. Buyers don't rely solely on the public record when evaluating a property. Most of them recognize that the information can sometimes be unreliable.

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

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Residents resist big increase in parcel tax

PARCEL TAX

continued from page 5

Enrollment is expected to grow by 116 students, or 11 percent, over the next five years, and special education funding rose 39 percent this year, to \$1.9 million.

Why? Because the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, with its requirement to help children who have significant learning challenges, "is costing us more money," Mr. Bailard said.

The board is weighing a tax-increase ballot measure for a March special election in the K-8 district. Any increase would likely be lower than \$98 and would still be "a significant bump" up, said Trustee Lee Anderson.

The current parcel tax expires in July 2008. A measure in the March election may ask voters to renew the tax in July 2007 and have it go into effect at the same time.

Poll results

A poll of 302 registered district voters conducted between Sept. 6 and 15 showed strong support for renewing the tax and for increasing it by at least \$62 but support dropped off at \$98 and above.

Just 35 percent of respondents supported a \$243 increase.

A poll summary said the results "mean that, even among (district) parents, an increase of \$98 is just above the tax tolerance of this population."

A campaign to drum up support will be necessary. "Parents will need additional information about the impact of enrollment increases on class sizes and classrooms programs in order to increase support for a higher tax rate," the report said. "This (tax increase) education program is essential because all of the potential 'yes' votes in the parent population will be needed

to offset the less than two-thirds level of support found among the district's most active voters."

The poll showed 73 percent support for the idea of building in an automatic tax increase of \$9 a year, but only 48 percent agreeing to an annual increase based on the cost of living.

The current parcel tax needs a two-thirds majority approval every six years to renew it. Sixty-eight percent of respondents supported the idea of a revocable automatically renewed "evergreen" tax, as is done in Menlo Park and Los Altos school districts.

The survey showed the district receiving high marks for financial acumen, with 55 percent characterizing it as "excellent" or "above average" in financial management versus 39 percent in 2004.

Seventy-three percent credited the district with spending parcel tax funds wisely, up from 54 percent in 2004. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

The numbers struck home with Mr. Bailard. "I was very pleased," he said. "I think the whole board (saw) a really positive message come out of it."

Tight money supply

Projected district spending of \$14.5 million for the budget year ending July 2007 is 4 percent above spending for 2005-06 and 13 percent above 2004-05.

Reserves are tight. For 2006-07, the unrestricted reserve is expected to fall to about \$284,000, or 2 percent of spending, from 11 percent, or \$1.36 million, last year.

Can the district raise rents at Woodland School in Ladera and Phillips Brooks School in Menlo Park? Long-term leases won't allow such steps, Mr. Bailard said. ■



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Dry run

Harold Krakora of Menlo Park (seated at the left) takes a moment during his mid-day walk in Sharon Park on Oct. 9 to watch Mick Ynegas (driving the tractor at right) scoop up silt from the bottom of Sharon lake. Mr. Ynegas, who has been a park maintenance worker with the city of Menlo Park for 20 years, says it will take two more weeks of scraping and cleaning before the lake can be refilled. It's a procedure that's repeated every two or three years. In the meantime, the koi fish, who live in the lake, are enjoying a swim in the pond at City Hall.

DERRY

continued from page 5

question on to voters in a special election.

The referendum campaign's most talked-about component is the Derry project, which calls for building 135 condominiums and 22,525 square feet of commercial space on a 3.4-acre site bounded by El Camino Real, Oak Grove Avenue and the train tracks. It is so named because the property is owned by the Derry family.

But the referendum also is intended to rescind another ordinance change passed at the same time the Derry project won its approvals — one that greatly eases land-use restrictions on the adjacent site at 1300 El Camino Real, the former home of a Cadillac dealership. That change, Mr. Brown said, took many people by surprise.

Menlo Park Tomorrow members launched the referendum effort soon after the council approved the Derry project and the other land-use changes on Aug. 29, finalizing the actions on Sept. 13. Both votes were 4-1, with Councilman Andy Cohen opposed.

Although Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson had pushed for modifying terms of the ordinance changes, she ultimately voted for them.

Her reservations about the ordinance changes as approved were reflective of complaints voiced by referendum organizers: The city, they maintain, didn't negotiate adequate public benefits in exchange for allowing a boost in density on the site from 18.5 units per acre to 40; and any change to

land-use restrictions on adjacent parcels, including the former Cadillac site, should be approved in separate actions after appropriate public notification.

Jim Pollart, a vice president of the San Mateo-based O'Brien Group, the Derry project developer, said his firm is "going to take things one step at a time and withhold further comment on possible next steps" until the petition signatures are counted.

Clash of interests

Menlo Park Tomorrow had about 60 volunteers and six to nine paid signature-gatherers out in locations including Trader Joe's, Safeway on El Camino Real, Santa Cruz Avenue and the library, Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Pollart of the O'Brien Group said his company "used a combination of volunteers and paid people to get our message out to the public."

The clashing interests of both parties kept the police rolling to various scenes during the final days of the effort, with petition-gatherers accusing the O'Brien contingent of harassing them and following them from site to site, heckling and disrupting their interactions with residents, and intimidating potential signers.

Acting City Attorney Dan Siegel said he believes that no citations were issued by police, "but a couple of times, in order to keep the peace so that no citations would need to be issued, police encouraged all parties to leave."

O'Brien Group workers passed out fliers and urged potential petition signers to read their material

before doing anything, according to several people who were at the sites and spoke to the Almanac. "This was an inherently tense situation, but there were no serious problems between our people and the signature gatherers," Mr. Pollart said.

"When the police were called, they determined that our people and our activities were completely legal and acceptable."

But some of the petition-gatherers said the O'Brien contingent crossed the line a number of times. Volunteer Margaret Spak of Menlo Park said she went to the police station on Oct. 9 to file a complaint about two men "harassing" her and another signature-gatherer driving her from her post in front of the library.

One of the men followed her out to the parking lot when she was walking to her car, so she went to the nearby police station instead, she said.

On that and other occasions, the counter-referendum workers interfered with efforts to explain the referendum, and pushed their fliers between residents and the petitions they were trying to sign, at times causing the person to walk away without signing, Ms. Spak said.

A Menlo Park couple not wishing to be identified came to the Almanac office after witnessing what they called intimidating and troubling behavior by the counter-referendum people.

"It doesn't matter what side you're on," the man said, such tactics "are just not right." ■

Staff writer Rory Brown contributed to this report.

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Online

City moves ahead with auto mall

■ Plan involves 50/50 tax sharing with GM.

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

The Menlo Park City Council voted unanimously Oct. 10 to direct staff to enter into negotiations with General Motors on a plan to build an auto mall and retail complex on Bayfront Expressway at Willow Road.

GM is finalizing a deal to buy 22 acres of the Tyco Electronics campus at the southwest corner of the intersection to build the auto mall.

Under GM's initial plan, 8.5 acres would be allotted for GM dealerships, and non-GM dealerships or other retail uses would fill the remaining 13.5 acres.

The plan also calls for the city to give GM half of the city's sales tax revenue generated from the GM dealerships. All of the city's sales tax revenue from other auto dealerships or retail uses would go to the city, under the current plan.

Additional council approvals will be required, including amending the general plan and zoning ordinance, and conduct-

ing traffic studies. City Attorney Bill McClure said an environmental impact report is also likely.

If all goes according to plan, GM hopes to have their dealerships up at the site in 18 to 24 months, said Jim Gentry, a GM spokesperson.

GM has not decided which brands of cars it will sell at the site, and plans to identify the other dealerships or retail uses that would be built on the property in the next 60 days, Mr. Gentry said.

Spence Leslie, Tyco's director of site services, said permits have been acquired to demolish the existing structures on the property, and the environmental clean up of the site is under way.

The 22-acre site has been on the market since 2000, Mr. Leslie said.

Mayor Nicholas Jellins said GM and Tyco have been in negotiations for 13 months.

Sales taxes

First-year sales tax revenue from the GM dealerships is estimated by GM to be \$1.5 mil-

lion, meaning the city would get \$750,000.

Mr. McClure said sharing sales tax revenues is "a very common program throughout the state."

The sharing of sales tax is proposed to last 15 years, or until GM receives \$10 million.

Over the estimated 40-year life of the project, net revenues to the city are estimated at a minimum of \$38 million, said David Johnson, the city's business development manager.

The city's retail sales tax revenue has dropped from \$1.41 million in 2000 to about \$338,000 in 2005, largely due to auto dealerships closing shop along El Camino Real, Mr. Johnson said.

"This is something of a watershed in the development of Menlo Park's sales tax base," Mayor Jellins said.

GM had previously been in talks with the city to build an auto center near Marsh Road and U.S. 101, but after it was determined that various planning and environmental hurdles would make building the center a five-year project, attention turned to the Tyco property. ■

Speier predicts big trouble if Prop 90 passes

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

If voters approve state Proposition 90 on Nov. 7, Californians will see their local governments hamstrung, said state Sen. Jackie Speier in a 45-minute talk on Saturday in Portola Valley.

Ms. Speier spoke at the Historic Schoolhouse in one of several stops she is making around the 8th District as term limits force her into early retirement from the Senate.

To a small audience of 15, she voiced support for Proposition 87, a tax on domestic oil producers that she said is on the books in every other state and that would likely not raise gas prices because oil drilled in California is not suitable for gasoline.

As for the statewide school parcel tax, Proposition 88: "It would, in fact, equalize (K-12 funding) in a very significant way," she said.

On California's spending priorities, Ms. Speier noted two stark trends that she said reflect the lobbying clout of unionized prison guards: spending on prisons and higher education have gone in opposite directions.

Four years ago, 4 percent of the budget went to prisons and 7 percent to higher education, she said, whereas today the numbers are 8.9 percent and 2 percent, respectively. The recidivism rate



Almanac/David Boyce

State Sen. Jackie Speier spoke in Portola Valley on Saturday.

is around 70 percent, she said.

"It's costing us, as taxpayers, an extraordinary amount of money because there is no rehabilitation going on," she said. "It's a huge problem and it has to be addressed."

Proposition 90

On its face, Proposition 90 makes sense in its claim to protect citizens from governmental abuse of eminent domain, Ms. Speier said, but then added: "What's really insidious about this proposition is that it's not just about real property."

The proposition would allow

property owners to sue for "losses" resulting from government actions. Employers, for example, could sue the state if the Legislature were to raise the minimum wage, as could banks if the state restricted increases in ATM fees, she said.

"You can see how this proposition has the potential to really bring government to a screeching halt," she said. "Proposition 13 is going to look like kids' play in terms of (Proposition 90's) impact on government."

Howard Rich, the wealthy New York Libertarian and principal backer of Proposition 90, has "sort of made it his life's goal to go around the country and dismantle governments," Ms. Speier said.

"It's understandable that a politician who's termed out would say that about a leading backer of term limits," said Kevin Spillane, a spokesman for the "yes" on Proposition 90 campaign.

As for claims of lawsuits over minimum wages and ATM fees, Mr. Spillane called them "greatly exaggerated" talking points. Existing regulations would be exempt from Prop 90, as would be amendments "as long as they don't violate the initial intent" of the law, he said.

"I'm not criticizing Sen. Speier," he added. "I just think that she's been misinformed by the opposition campaign." ■

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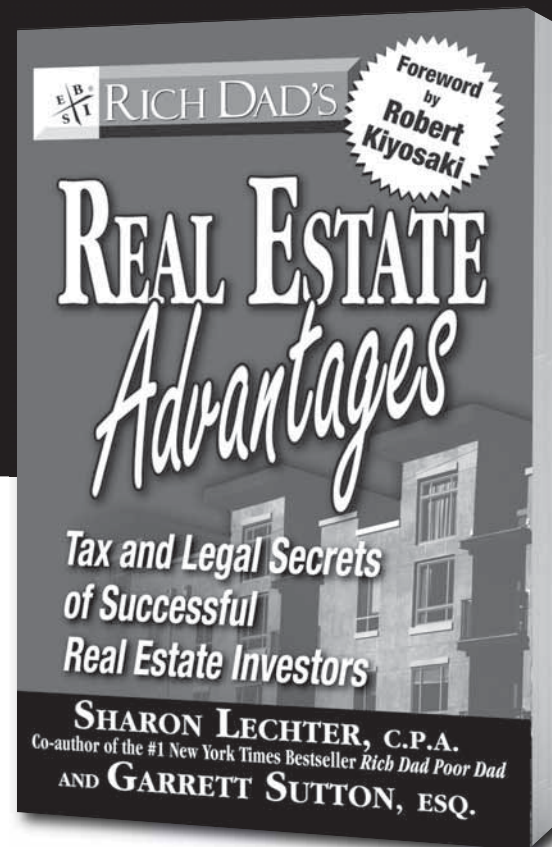


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Woodside town attorney: Limits on bike events unconstitutional

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Woodside may have to scrap most of its rules that limit charity bike rides and other events, now that the town attorney has declared the restrictions legally indefensible and unconstitutional.

A town ordinance requires permits for events of 50 or more people on public roads, and limits such events to two per month, unless the Town Council grants special permission. Although the regulation applies to any special event, it became a lightning rod in the ongoing tension between residents and bicyclists after the council refused to permit two charity bike rides — benefiting ALS and the South Peninsula

Hebrew Day School — that wanted to pass through town.

Gatherings such as demonstrations, marches and even bike rides are protected under the Bill of Rights, which guarantees freedom of speech and of assembly, said Town Attorney Jean Savaree.

“It’s a public road, the public has the right to use the road, and groups of the public have the right to use the road without any permit requirement being imposed on them, if they’re not impeding traffic or the use of the roads,” Ms. Savaree told the council at its Oct. 10 meeting.

The town can only impose permit requirements if an event will “unduly impede, obstruct, impair or interfere” with traffic or emergency vehicle access, she said.

She recommended that the council eliminate the two-per-month limit on events and drastically shorten the application timeframe. Under current rules, permit applications must be made at least 120 days prior to an event and the Town Council has 45 days to review the application. That should be shortened to several days, or several weeks at most, Ms. Savaree said.

The Town Council and the Bicycle Committee requested the review of the ordinance, which was adopted in 1988.

Old La Honda Road

The well-attended meeting was packed with members of the Old La Honda Road Association who lobbied to preserve a 12-year-old ban on bicycle events and any

other activities on their treacherous, winding road.

“Old La Honda Road is the most dangerous road in Woodside, for two reasons: the poor configuration of the road and the extremely high-volume of any type of traffic,” said Mary Zvirblis. “You can only fit so many people on a road that’s only 12 feet wide.”

Five association members gave a PowerPoint presentation about the huge amount of bicycle traffic, unpermitted bike club time trials, and the fear that comes from sharing a road that has 33 blind curves and no bike lanes. Several people called for more traffic enforcement by sheriff’s deputies, and complained about loud, aggressive, road-blocking bicyclists.

One contrary opinion came from Old La Honda Road resident Eric Risley.

“I think the greatest asset of the road is the bikers,” he said. “They slow the traffic down, they keep through-traffic off

the road, and they keep motorcyclists off the road.”

Ms. Savaree told the council that a blanket prohibition for Old La Honda Road would be hard to defend in court.

Flout the law?

Robert Susk, a former council member, said the town should do everything it can to discourage cyclists from riding through Woodside, such as closing the elementary school parking lot frequented by weekend riders.

“We’re creating a tourist attraction by allowing more and more bike activities,” he said. “I don’t believe now is the time to address a weakening of our ordinance. There have been no challenges (to it).”

Susan Doherty, one of the members of the Woodside Bicycle Committee at the meeting, said she knew that one group that was denied a permit for a charity bike ride prepared a complaint against the town and was ready to bring it to a judge.

Councilman Dave Tanner appeared unimpressed by the threat of lawsuits.

“What if we said, to heck with lawyers and laws, let’s just make rules and stick with them?” he said. “Would we not have Woodside any longer? Would we be spanked?”

Councilman Pete Sinclair told a cautionary tale about the state of Woodside 11 years ago.

“There were seven lawsuits against the town. The attitude then was, the law be damned, we’ll do what’s right for the town,” he said. “The result was \$150,000 in annual legal fees, no money for infrastructure and the roads going to pot.”

Mr. Sinclair called for more enforcement of traffic laws and stiffer penalties for scofflaws, a move supported by his colleagues. Councilman Paul Goeld said the bike riders drawing the most complaints are the so-called pack rides. Pack riders are widely criticized for running stop signs, behaving aggressively and refusing to let vehicles pass them.

“You cannot compare the rogue riders with the permitted charity rides where people want to do things right,” Mr. Goeld said.

No change yet

For the time being, the special events ordinance remains unchanged. Council members directed town staff to gather more information, hire a traffic engineer, and to return with a revised ordinance at a future meeting. Town Manager Susan George estimated it would take a couple of months before the issue comes back to the council.

“We won’t have any more events until May, and I think that those are already approved. Nothing is pending,” she said. ■

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- Upgraded childcare center at Burgess in a manner that saved over \$3 million
- Restored library funding

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Hillview student arrested following firearms threat

A seventh-grade student's threat to bring firearms onto the Hillview Middle School campus in Menlo Park and injure other students resulted in the student's arrest Oct. 10 by Menlo Park police.

Hillview Principal Mike Moore said the police were contacted as soon as school authorities were made aware of the threat.

"Even though no gun was actually brought to school, we have issued the longest suspension possible under the State Education Code and are considering expulsion," said Mr. Moore.

He told students over the morning televised Hillview news Oct. 11 that he was grateful for the several students who came forward to let school authorities know about the situation. They did not wait to see if an actual weapon appeared on campus, he said.

"I asked students to never

hesitate to let us know if they discover or hear about anything that would make the school less safe for any or all of us," said Mr. Moore.

He also made it clear to students that threatening people with serious bodily harm is a school offense subject to suspension, and a crime.

In an e-mail to Hillview parents, he asked their help in talking with their children and reinforcing the following message he shared with the students:

■ Don't make threats to injure other students. The school will treat threats seriously, even if no one is hurt.

■ Tell an adult right away if you think there's a reason that anyone might feel threatened or unsafe at school.

Man sentenced in death of teacher

There will be jail time, a fine and probation for the Colorado man whose car struck Michelle Mazzei, a 34-year-old fourth-grade teacher at Oak Knoll School, while she was cycling on Woodside Road on the morning of Oct. 2, 2005. She died that day in the emergency room at Stanford Hospital.

Theodore Charles Thornbrough, 68 at the time of the accident, pleaded "no contest" in August and was sentenced Oct. 10 to 90 days in jail, three years probation, two years' suspended driver's license and a \$1,600 fine that includes court costs, said Joshua Stauffer, deputy district attorney for San Mateo County.

He will also reimburse Ms. Mazzei's relatives for funeral costs and pay a \$50 monthly fee for the first two years of his probation, Mr. Stauffer said.



Michelle Mazzei was an experienced cyclist and tri-athlete.

Mr. Thornbrough must report to jail Dec. 2, either at the county jail in Redwood City or, with the agreement of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, in his home county in Colorado, Mr. Stauffer said.

Ms. Mazzei was an experienced cyclist and triathlete. Her sudden death deeply affected the communities at Oak Knoll School and the Menlo Park City School District.

About 500 people — children, teachers, parents, friends and community members — took part Sept. 17 in Menlo Park in the first Family Bike Ride honoring Michelle Mazzei.

The event, organized by teachers and sponsored by Oak Knoll School where Ms. Mazzei taught since 1996, raised \$11,000 for the Michelle Mazzei Fund for Environmental Education. The fund was established by friends and family at the Palo Alto-based Environmental Volunteers, where Ms. Mazzei participated in a teacher certificate program to incorporate environmental education in her classroom.

Antique dealer found competent to stand trial

Two court-appointed doctors have concluded that Bela Joseph Demeter, the 87-year-old Menlo Park antique dealer, is mentally competent to stand trial on charges that include six felony counts of child molestation, according to a report from the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

The allegations against Mr. Demeter, who owns Demeter Antiques Ltd. at 721 Oak Grove Ave., include cornering a 14-year-old girl in his store and kissing her and touching her breasts against her wishes, the report said.

His charges also include groping and kissing a youthful female officer from the Menlo Park Police Department, who entered his store undercover a week after the initial complaint, the report said.

Both the prosecution and the defense, on Aug. 4, waived their rights to a jury trial pending the outcome of the medical evaluation, said Steve Wagstaffe, the chief deputy district attorney, in the report.

With competency established, Judge John Runde of San Mateo County Superior Court reinstated criminal charges against Mr. Demeter. A preliminary hearing is set for 9 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 9.

Mr. Demeter remains free on \$250,000 bail. His attorney, George Eshoo, could not be reached for comment.



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Flu clinics open in Menlo Park

The Sutter Visiting Nurses Association & Hospice has begun its public flu shot clinics for this flu season with an ample supply of vaccine, according to the organization. The fee the shot is \$25.

Pneumonia shots are \$35. Flu shots are available for adults, as well as for children ages 9-13 (with a doctor's note) and 13-18 (with parental permission). There is no charge for the vaccines with proof of Medicare Part B.

Menlo Park locations are listed below.

- Preuss Pharmacy, 844 Santa Cruz Ave., Tuesday, Oct. 17, noon to 3 p.m.
- Preuss Pharmacy, 844 Santa Cruz Ave., Tuesday, Oct. 24, noon to 3 p.m.
- Menlo Park Pharmacy, 1610 El Camino Real, Saturday, Oct. 28, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- Draeger's, 1010 University Drive, Sunday, Oct. 29, noon to 3 p.m.
- Draeger's, 1010 University Drive, Saturday, Nov. 4, noon to 3 p.m.
- Preuss Pharmacy, 844 Santa Cruz Ave., Tuesday, Nov. 7, noon to 3 p.m.
- Menlo Park Pharmacy, 16100 El Camino Real, Saturday, Nov. 11, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Preuss Pharmacy, 844 Santa Cruz Ave., Tuesday, Nov. 14, noon to 3 p.m.

Flu shots at Little House

Flu shots will be available for \$5 on Friday, Oct. 20, from 8 to 11:30 a.m., in the auditorium at Little House, 800 Middle Ave. in Menlo Park. To receive a shot, sign up at the community services desk in person or call 326-2025, ext. 230.

Foundation give \$800,000 to parks

San Mateo County has received a welcome present to improve its parks.

The county Parks and Recreation Foundation presented gifts recently totaling more than \$800,000 to the Board of Supervisors for projects ranging from Bicycle Sunday on Canada Road, to restoration of serpentine grasslands at Edgewood Park, and improvements to the windsurfing staging area at Coyote Point.

The foundation gave the county \$479,681 in donations and in-kind gifts. In addition, it has secured over \$331,000 in grants that will go directly to the county for park projects.

"These are projects that will preserve the native habitats or enhance the visitors' experience," said Julia Bott, executive

director for the foundation, which is based in Flood Park in Menlo Park.

Since it was founded in 1998, the parks and recreation foundation has provided \$6.8 million to San Mateo County parks, supporting over 30 projects.

Other projects supported by the foundation include acquisition of the coastal bluff at Mirada Surf, and planning for a link in the Coastal Trail; regular support for volunteer and interpretive programs; new playground equipment at Flood Park; distribution of teacher guides and resource kits for teachers, including field guides, binoculars and hand lenses; fish restoration projects on Coastside streams and in Huddart Park; and radios for the volun-

teer Trail Patrol.

The foundation also published the book, "San Mateo County Parks: A Remarkable Story of Extraordinary Places and the People who Built Them," by Michael Svanevik and Shirley Burgett, in 2001.

More recently, the foundation has contributed to efforts to secure a dedicated funding source for county parks. In November, county voters will vote on "Parks for the Future," a proposed 1/8 cent sales tax to support county parks.

Most recently, Ms. Bott said, "We finally finished the parking lot and infrastructure for the Edgewood Interpretive Center."

For information, call the foundation at 321-5812, or go to supportparks.org.

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Corrections

■ The Almanac's Oct. 11 story titled "Menlo Park council candidates report campaign finances" lists Menlo Park resident David Speer giving \$500 to the campaigns of council candidates Vincent Bressler, Richard Cline and Heyward Robinson. Although

Mr. Speer donated \$500 each to Mr. Bressler and Mr. Cline, he gave only \$100 to Mr. Robinson.

■ In the Sept. 20 issue of the Almanac, a story on residents patrolling hiking trails in the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood incorrectly stated that the Town Council had authorized

the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office to deputize volunteers to explain the illegality of walking dogs on the trails. In fact, the council merely expressed interest in a Sheriff's Office program in Half Moon Bay in which residents volunteer for civilian patrol duties. If the Sheriff's Office

establishes such a program for Portola Valley, volunteers will not be deputies and will be answerable to the Sheriff's Office, not the Town Council. Resident volunteers may be issued Sheriff's Office jackets and would be allowed to hand out information explaining trail rules.

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Town & Country Businesses Support the Community



Three prominent women-owned businesses in Town and Country Village are joining together in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. A silent auction will take place throughout the weekend, with all proceeds to benefit the Community Breast Health Project, a Palo Alto organization.

Town & Country Village, slated to receive a \$20 million face-lift over the next several months, has been a Palo Alto landmark since 1950. It is the hope of developer Ellis Partners LLC that the renovations will enable the center to host more such events in the future.

Community

NEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Stars come out for PVs benefit

Carol Channing, Cheryl Burke, Jerry Rice lined up

By Jane Knoerle

Almanac Lifestyles Editor

Sherri Burke of Atherton is bringing the Peninsula Volunteers' benefit back to its glory days with "An Evening with the Stars" on Friday, Oct. 27, at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. The evening harks back to the days when the PVs put on such dynamite parties as "Farewell to the Fox," importing Hollywood celebrities to celebrate the last days of the Fox Theater in Oakland.

Ms. Burke wasn't aware of the PVs past performances, but she's determined to make this year's star-studded benefit an affair to remember. The stars? Top billing goes to international "star of stage and screen" Carol Channing who came to national prominence as the star of



Carol Channing will headline.

"Hello Dolly!"

Ms. Channing, who now lives in Stockton, married her childhood sweetheart, Harry Kullijian, at the Atherton home of Mervin and Roslyn Morris a couple of years ago. Ms. Morris is one of the Peninsula Volunteers' strongest supporters.

Fans of the television show "Dancing with the Stars" have a treat in store for them. Many of the celebrities and professional dancers from the show are coming to San Francisco to appear at the benefit. The galaxy includes Ms. Burke's daughter, Cheryl Burke, who was crowned champion of "Dancing with the Stars" in season two and is currently dancing in season three.

Local San Francisco 49er hero

See **BENEFIT**, page 17



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

African Library Project founder Chris Bradshaw, right, and Corte Madera students David Veal, left, and Ramiro Maturino sort donated children's books by size prior to packing them and sending them off to a new village library in Botswana.

African children have Portola Valley friend

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

In sub-Saharan Africa, books can be hard to come by. Mathews Sapemba Tistayane, a teacher in Malawi, owned his first book at 18 years old. With only a handful of textbooks to work with, Mr. Tistayane, like many of his African colleagues, often has to teach from memory, says Portola Valley resident Chris Bradshaw.

Ms. Bradshaw knows whereof she speaks as founder of the two-year-old African Library Project, where Mr. Tistayane

is now a director. The library project enlists U.S. volunteers to gather boxes of children's books and ship them to impoverished and isolated African villages that have agreed in advance to create libraries.

"Our mission," Ms. Bradshaw says, "is starting and improving small libraries." To date, volunteers have sent 20,745 books to 29 new libraries in Lesotho, two in Cameroon and one each in Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe, she says. Next up is Botswana, where the plan is to start seven libraries.

The villages involved in the program are located in countries where the official language is either English or French; a branch of the African Library Project is just getting off the ground in Paris, Ms. Bradshaw says.

It all began with her one visit to Africa in 2004 for a "pony-trek" family vacation in Lesotho. "I knew I wanted to do something for Africa before I went," she says. "I was deeply affected by the lack of resources and the poverty I saw

See **AFRICA**, page 16

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Chris Bradshaw helps create new village libraries in Africa

AFRICA

continued from page 15

and also the warmth and kindness of the people.”

Africa has been a lifelong interest. She minored in African studies during undergraduate work in sociology at Denison University in Granville, Ohio. She spent her junior year in college at the University of Sierra Leone. Her next trip to Africa may be to a library conference in Durban, South Africa, in 2007.

The idea of creating libraries

came to her while discussing with her son ways to help Lesotho villagers. Her first shipment of books included some from her own and her friends' libraries plus more from a library in Cupertino.

Ms. Bradshaw and her husband Steve Levin, a corporate leadership coach and consultant, have two children, ages 12 and 16, who attend Corte Madera School in Portola Valley and Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City. Before starting the library project, Ms. Bradshaw worked

as a YMCA executive for 10 years, then quit to home-school her children.

Among the volunteers who have sent books are several California public school communities, including Corte Madera and Ormondale schools, Woodside Elementary School in Woodside, and Summit Prep, which enrolls 80 to 100 students from the Almanac's circulation area.

For the families who collect, sort and pack books — and raise the minimum \$350 needed to ship them — the experience can

be a rare hands-on and important act of kindness undiluted by organized charities and other such middlemen, Ms. Bradshaw says.

Books are rare

In the kingdom of Lesotho, a roadless, mountainous country surrounded by South Africa, barefoot children often have to walk two to three hours each way to school, Ms. Bradshaw says. The kids endure such treks because career options in the Malealea Valley boil down to a choice between going to school or being a shepherd, she says.

Because teachers are influential role models, many students go on to become teachers themselves, which is “really quite wonderful because that’s what (the countries) need,” she adds.

The Lesotho school she visited in 2004 had a tiny classroom packed with 100 children and one teacher. “That is standard for an African classroom,” she says.

Textbooks are seldom available, she says, and as Mr. Tistayane noted, teachers often teach from recall because their training did not include reference books they could take with them. “Governments will supply textbooks if they have the money, but that is a huge, huge if,” Ms. Bradshaw says.

To connect children to books, the project guides U.S. volunteers in the logistics of gathering, boxing and shipping 1,000 to 2,000 selected books including English, math and science textbooks, children's books, atlases, encyclopedias and dictionaries. Paperbacks are preferred to keep mailing costs down.

Ms. Bradshaw says she hopes to provide books written in

native languages someday, but she says it's a problem in countries that often have no publishing industry, a scant market for native-language books and few native-language authors.

Because many of these children grow up not knowing of electricity or such amenities as stoves and toasters, the books are screened to avoid disruptive references to modernity, as well as references to American culture, religious beliefs and slang.

Villages, too, are screened. Members of the Peace Corps act as liaisons to gauge interest and commitment to keeping a library going. “Peace Corps volunteers are amazing people,” she says. “They're like what you want your sons and daughters to be.”

Getting books into the libraries has its own set of irritants, she says. Phone calls to African governments go unreturned, mail service is inconsistent and bureaucracies can delay delivery for months, often for unknown reasons. Politicians have arranged to have the books confiscated, only to grab the spotlight when the books “arrive” in the villages, she says. At least once, she has had to ask for help from a U.S. ambassador to get books delivered.

“Books are the tools for education and I think that a lot of the problems (in Africa) have come from not having enough educated people, people who don't have the tools and skills to stand up to leadership,” she says. ■

INFORMATION

To get involved with the African Library Project, go to www.africanlibraryproject.org.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS RECOMMENDS...

It's your state, your decision. NOW GO VOTE!

YES on PROP 1B -- Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, Port Security Bond Act *The League supports this bond package to help rebuild California's infrastructure, including projects in San Mateo County and the Port of Redwood City.*

YES on PROP 1C -- Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund Act *The League supports this bond measure, financing housing programs, brownfield cleanup so that industrial sites could be used for housing and parks throughout California.*

YES on PROP 1D -- Kindergarten-University Public Education Facilities Bond Act *The League supports this bond package to improve California's educational infrastructure, building new schools, modernizing existing ones, and reducing overcrowding.*

YES on PROP 1E -- Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act *The League supports this bond package to protect our existing water supply infrastructure, levees and storm water management systems.*

YES on PROP 84 -- Water Quality, Safety and Supply. Flood Control. Natural Resource Protection. Park Improvements. Bonds. *This initiative continues the League's past support of efforts to insure that California has clean water, adequate water supplies and natural resource protection.*

NO on PROP 85 -- Termination of Minor's Pregnancy. Waiting Period. Parental Notification. *The League supports parental rights. Mandatory notification laws sound good, but in the real world, these measures will put vulnerable teenagers in danger.*

YES on PROP 86 -- Tax on Cigarettes. *The League believes that the overwhelming social benefits of this measure greatly outweigh the downside of this earmarked tax.*

NO on PROP 88 -- Classroom Learning and Accountability Act. \$50 Real Property Parcel Tax. *The League supports equitable access to quality education, but this measure violates the League's State and Local Finance positions and is not real reform.*

YES on PROP 89 -- California Nurses Clean Money and Fair Elections Act of 2006. Public Financing of Campaigns. Corporate Tax Increase. *The League vigorously supports practices which enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office, and place realistic limits on campaign contributions and expenditures by special interests.*

NO on PROP 90 -- Government Acquisition, Regulation of Private Property *This measure redefines the eminent domain process in ways that will make it difficult for government to protect the environment, and increase costs to taxpayers.*

The State League of Women Voters takes no position on Prop 83 (Sex Offenders, Sexually Violent Predators. Punishment, Residence Restrictions, Monitoring). It is neutral on Prop 1A (Transportation Investment Fund) and Prop 87 (Severance/ Extraction Tax on CA Oil Producers).

The South San Mateo County League supports the 1/8 cent Sales Tax for County Parks Measure A, and the Menlo Park's Utility Tax Measure K.

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BENEFIT

continued from page 15

Jerry Rice, an Atherton resident, will also take top billing. Mr. Rice revealed a new talent last season when he finished second in "Dancing with the Stars."

Lisa Rinna, most recently a semi-finalist on the show and her husband, Harry Hamlin, formerly a member of the cast of "L.A. Law," will be guest celebrities. Emmitt Smith, who spent 12 years with the Dallas Cowboys and helped lead the team to three Super Bowl championships, is coming from Dallas and may show off his dancing skills. He is Cheryl Burke's partner this season. Louis Van Amstel, who is dancing with Monique Coleman in season three, is also making a guest appearance.

By flying down to Los Angeles every week to watch the filming of "Dancing with the Stars," Sherri Burke has become acquainted with the celebrities. "As family and friends, we're given the VIP treatment. After the taping, we all gather in the green room."

She has been a member of the Peninsula Volunteers for only a year-and-a-half. "I was looking for a place to give back to the community," she says. She became interested in the Peninsula Volunteers when she learned they have been providing programs and support for seniors in the community for the past 60 years.

Since she is the owner of two businesses that provide home care services for the elderly, joining the PVs seemed a natural fit. When asked by PV president Camilla Shroff to head the benefit, she said, "I'll be in the driver's seat, but I will need help." She chose Atherton

residents Zeni Mallari and Darlene Woodson to assist her.

The ballroom at the Palace Hotel accommodates 500 guests and Ms. Burke intends to reach that goal. "I am very, very confident," she says.

PVs at the Palace

Jan Wahl, television film critic, is mistress of ceremonies for "An Evening with the Stars." The benefit will also honor Carmen Christensen of Atherton with the Peninsula Volunteers Humanitarian Award for her many contributions to the community.

The event, which begins at 5 p.m. with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, will include live and silent auctions, entertainment, dinner, and dancing to the Adrian Davis Orchestra.

Tickets are \$250 each. Reservations may be made by calling Peninsula Volunteers at 326-0665. There will be complimentary motorcoach transportation leaving from Little House, 800 Middle Ave. in Menlo Park.

The gala's honorary committee chairs are Nancy Greenbach, Ann Griffiths, and Roslyn Morris. Honorary committee members are U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer, Rep. Anna Eshoo, Elsie Fioriani, Menlo Park Mayor Nicholas P. Jellins, Assemblyman Ira Ruskin, Jerry and Jackie Rice, state Sen. Joe Simitian, state Sen. Jackie Speier, and Jan Wahl.

Since 1947, Peninsula Volunteers has created and provided programs for the aging population in south San Mateo County. Each year it provides more than \$4 million in services, including 100,000 hot meals to seniors and the housebound. For more information, call 326-0665. ■

Up and away at Hiller Aviation gala

Guests may come in flying attire for the "Above and Beyond" gala to be held from 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21, at the Hiller Aviation Museum in San Carlos.

Al Myers, developer of the B-2 Stealth aircraft flight control systems, will be guest speaker. His topic: "What makes the B-2 Stealth Bomber fly?" Mr. Myers recently retired as vice president and treasurer of Northrop Grumman Corp.

A replica of the Stealth aircraft, signed by Mr. Myers, will be featured on each table.

Jim Gabbert is master of ceremonies for the evening, which includes cocktails and a silent auction at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7:30 p.m., followed by a live auction and presentation.

Tickets for the gala are \$350 each. Proceeds will be used to support the museum's many education programs, including school group tours, labs, camp

programs and special programs for Gifted and Talented Education.

For more information, go to www.hiller.org or call 654-0200, ext. 215.



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High schools may install surveillance cameras

With the recent spate of violence on school campuses around the country, the trustees of the Sequoia Union High School District may decide Wednesday to approve a staff recommendation and spend up to \$125,000 per school to install surveillance cameras, including at Woodside and Menlo-Atherton high schools.

The board meets at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 18, in the Birch Room of the district office at 480 James Avenue in Redwood City.

Also on the agenda for the meeting:

■ The district was awarded a federal grant of about \$550,000 for a three-year program to improve physical education at the schools.

■ The board will hear a report on the effort to verify residency of district students, including how the process works and how it is working.

■ Last summer, the Sequoia district granted a two-year charter to Summit Preparatory Charter High School. Sequoia trustees are scheduled to discuss the district's entitlement to a seat on Summit's governing board.

Foundation gives \$929,000 to Portola Valley schools

By Marjorie Mader
Almanac Staff Writer

It's official. The Portola Valley Schools Foundation has given its annual gift — \$929,684 — to the Portola Valley School District to fund budget items, staff positions, capital expenditures, endowment grants and classroom supplies during the 2006-07 school year.

Trustees accepted the grant and expressed their appreciation at the Oct. 4 board meeting.

Superintendent Anne Campbell said the foundation grant amounts to about 10 percent of the school district's \$10 million general fund budget for year.

The district is "incredibly

blessed to have such a dedicated and energetic group working on its behalf," said Ms. Campbell.

She also acknowledged the commitment and dedication of retiring foundation co-chairs Joy Elliott and Jon Goulden. "Their inspirational leadership was pivotal in achieving this impressive accomplishment," she said.

The funds were raised from these sources:

■ Annual campaign and gala: \$775,000 for the district's operating budget, providing about \$1,120 per child for the 692 students at the district's two schools, Ormondale (K-3) and Corte Madera (grades 4-8).

■ 21st Century Fund: A \$83,683

final distribution from the multi-year capital fund, to be used for staff and capital expenditures.

■ Endowment grants: \$36,927 for teachers and programs.

■ Escrow proceeds: \$22,757, derived from purchases at stores that give rebates to participating schools, for classroom supplies.

Foundation co-presidents Maria Geenen and Andy Thorson presented the grant to the district during September back-to-school nights at Ormondale and Corte Madera. ■

Let Us Hear From You...

Letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome. Mail your comments to: Editor at the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025 or email: editor@AlmanacNews.com (Please indicate if it is a letter to be published)

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NOTES

High schools compete in Robot Games

The 2006 California Robot Games on Saturday, Oct. 28, will include teams from Woodside and Carlmont high school (Team 100), and Menlo-Atherton High School (Team 766). The event features student-built 135-pound robots that will compete in a game combining elements of soccer and basketball in three vs. three alliances.

The competition will include qualifying matches from 9 a.m. to noon; playoff matches from 1 to 4 p.m., and an award ceremony at 4:30 p.m. It will take place at Pioneer High School, 1290 Blossom Hill Road, San Jose.

Over 20 high schools will compete in this off-season event that the Western Regional Robotics Forum sponsors.

Student honors

Notre Dame High School seniors Paulina Chognard and Emily Wyatt of Atherton have qualified as commended students in the 52nd annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Approximately 34,000 students in the U.S. will be honored this year as commended students for their academic promise.

Emily also qualified for the College Board's AP Scholar with Honor award. She is the daughter of Andrew and Nancy Wyatt of Atherton.

Meredith Buerger and Catherine Hagman, both 2006 graduates of Notre Dame High School in Belmont, have qualified for the College Board's Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction Award. Meredith is the daughter of Martin and Patrice Buerger of Menlo Park. Catherine is the daughter of Roger and Elizabeth Hagman of Menlo Park.

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Sports

NEWS OF LOCAL ATHLETES AND TEAM SPORTS

Alpine-Menlo team wins tourneys

The Alpine-Menlo Olé Under-16 year-old girls soccer team, part of the Alpine-Menlo Soccer Club, recently won tournaments in consecutive weekends, coach Patty Raleigh reports. The team includes players from Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside, and is coached by Christopher Sullivan.

The team took the championship in the Sacramento Suntan Classic, then bested its age group in the first annual Soccer by the Bay tournament.

Ole will compete in the top division of the Abronzino League in the fall, part of the California Youth Soccer League.

The Alpine-Menlo Soccer Club includes teams for boys and girls from Under-9 to Under-16, as well as an academy for younger players. For more information, go to alpinemenlosoccer.com.



Members of the Alpine-Menlo Olé Under-16 year-old girls soccer team. Pictured in back row, from left: Tiffany Kung, Katie Flanagan, Libby Cooper, Nicole Tomita, and assistant coach Chelsea Montero; middle row, from left: Brooke Marsal, Natalie Johnson, Sonia Kolarov, Aimee Raleigh, Madi Shove, and Alexa Crandall; front row, from left: Marie Alftin, Katie Howard, Betsy Builder, Casey Finch, and Ginny Miller.

Woodside Junior Riders name show winners

By Kate Daly

Special to the Almanac

Woodside Junior Riders recently completed its 59th summer season with a horse show for nearly 100 riders. On August 20, the program ended with an all-day event at Kiely Equestrian Center on Tripp Road in Woodside.

Open to school-age children living in the Woodside Fire Protection District, the program features group English riding lessons during the summer months.

The following riders placed first, second, and third, respectively, in the show's classes: Angela Martin, Lili Pike, and Lily Shanahan in Advanced Equitation over Fences; Alex Afzal, Lexi Phillips, and Katrina Nibbi in Intermediate Equitation over Fences; Jenna Fowler, Alicia Vixie, and Sadie Foti in Novice Equitation over Fences; Merilee Raynor, Juliet Porter, and Kathleen Gregory in Beginner Equitation over Fences; Lily Shanahan, Angela Martin, and Karina Quinlan in Advanced Equitation; Christine Flock, Nicole Dancer, and Alex Afzal in Intermediate Equitation; Lauren Lee, Jenna Fowler, and Anke Knauth in Novice Equitation; Jacqueline Porter, Juliet Porter, and Merilee Raynor in Beginner Equitation; Dea Dressel, Kelsey Grady, and Katharine Thomas in Walk, Trot, Canter; Kaitlin Baldwin, Dea Dressel, and Carina Cain in Walk, Trot, Canter over Fences; Miranda Grady, Sarah Huber, and Theda Knauth in Walk, Trot, Beginning Canter; Theda Knauth, Miranda Grady, and Bria Michelsen in Walk, Trot, Beginning

Canter over Poles; Patrick Dancer, Jessica Flores, and Gabrielle Couch, Brittany Flores, Teal Kurnie, and Jill Nielsen tied for third in Walk, Trot; Teal Kurnie, Jessica Flores, and Patrick Dancer in Walk, Trot over Poles;

and then Hannah Alston, Christopher Bechtel, Connor Bechtel, Madison Goldberg, Sage Kurnie, Liam Lee, Zarin Moshenin, Katie Raynor, and Elka Rubin — all earning first place in Lead Line.

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Team wins tourney

The Foothills Ladies U.S. Tennis Association 4.5 tennis team recently won the Northern California Sectional tournament in Carmel. (The USTA rates teams on a scale from 2.5 to 7.) The team, made up mostly of local women, goes to the nationals in Hawaii this month. Team members, from left, are Susan Lynch, Tami Berardi, Elizabeth Quinn (captain), Marilyn Morrell-Kristal, Mary Gustafson, Ellie Victor, Dorinda Jung, Morgan Bricca, Jane Solomon, Robin Johnston and Barb Fallon.



Meet Deborah.

Deborah Pappas is the Manager of our Palo Alto Office. With 25 years in the industry, she knows banking, and she knows her clients. A serious runner, you can often find Deborah cruising along the paths on Stanford campus.



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Vikings win in Sunnyvale

By Jim Gallagher

Vikings Boosters

Vikings football teams from Menlo-Atherton scored convincing Pop Warner wins over host Sunnyvale forces on Saturday, October 14. Following is a summary of the results.

Mitey Mites: Anthony Gabb took a fumble recovery 30 yards to score as the pint-sized Vikings dumped Sunnyvale 24-18. Malcolm Gates continued his offensive fireworks with two touchdowns, and Aaron Katzman added another tally. Adam Greenlow stepped in with a smooth quarterback performance behind offensive linemen Robert Wang, Matt Odell, John Guiragossian and Panos Anagnostou. Defenders Nick Becker and Will Ritchie made critical plays to preserve the victory.

Junior PeeWees: Slowed by a succession of penalty calls that negated three touchdowns, the Vikings nonetheless prevailed over a scrappy Sunnyvale team, 8-0. Khalil (Lil) James ran across for a Menlo-Atherton score that counted, and Domenic Andrighetto kicked the valuable two-point

conversion. Landon Baty, who had two touchdowns nullified by penalties, responded with an inspired all-around game. A chilling Viking defense, consistent all season, was led by Ryan Blocker, Stephen Chu, Jaime Carranza and Isiah Nash.

PeeWees: Quarterback Marcus Prioste enjoyed a big day during a 24-7 Vikings victory, tossing touchdown passes to Sean Barrett and Alex Lopez, and intercepting a Sunnyvale pass. Barrett also struck on a 60-yard scoring run up the middle, while Talaisi (T) Teu scampered 40 yards to paydirt. Marcus Franklin, Michael Falepouono, George Anagnostou, and brothers Anthony and Mark Fuller played conspicuous roles in a swarming Vikings defense.

Midgets: A fourth-quarter lead was not quite enough for the Vikings, who succumbed 34-20 to a furious rally by the Santa Clara Rockets. Josiah Paye added to his impressive season total with two scoring passes to B.J. Prema, and Tavasa Pale ripped off a 45-yard touchdown run. Santa Clara's relentless ground game, however, caught up with the M-A visitors in the final period.



Members of the Mid-Peninsula Strikers, a club soccer team that won the Hawaii Cup.

Strikers win Hawaii tournament

The Mid-Peninsula Strikers, a girls under-14 club soccer team made up of players from Atherton, Menlo Park, Palo Alto and Portola Valley, won the 20th annual Hawaii Cup, held on the island of Maui from July 12 through July 15.

In the final game, the team defeated a club from Long Beach, 1-0. It finished with three wins and two ties.

It was managed by Ron Espeseth and coached by Chris Bobb.

Team members are: Erika Athens, Melanie Bloom, Tess

Cain, Cat Carragee, Gillian Collom, Lauren Espeseth, Victoria Fernandez, Ann Heslin, Whitney Hooper, Julia Keller, Katrina Kleck, Keighley Lane, Grace Marshall, Allison May, Elitah Petty, Taylor Jones, and Corinn Small.

Viking grads makes waves at prep level

By Jim Gallagher

Vikings Boosters

Is Pop Warner football an effective conduit to high school competition? It cer-

tainly seems to be for Menlo-Atherton Vikings alumni. Recent Vikings are thriving in prep programs throughout the Peninsula, with conspicuous representa-

tion on Menlo-Atherton High's undefeated varsity and junior varsity teams.

Among ex-Vikings at the high school level:

■ Menlo-Atherton Varsity: Sam Jenkins, Greg Kalin, Troy

McCabe, Drew Hagman, John Margolis, Matt Mosher, David Blank, Chris Calverese.

■ Menlo-Atherton Junior Varsity: Rod Nash, Turner Baty, Yu Kambe, Frankie O'Hare.

■ Sacred Heart Varsity: Ryan

Sakowski.

■ Sacred Heart Junior Varsity: Ian Ritchie, Chris Gaertner, Ty Cobb.

■ St. Francis Junior Varsity: Anthony Andrighetto, Johnny McDowell.

■ St. Francis Freshmen: Chris Barrett.

■ Menlo School Junior Varsity: Malik James.

■ Maria Carrillo (Santa Rosa) Junior Varsity: Ted Williams.

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Photo by Tom Upton

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Locals compete in fun run

Faultline Track Club began its fall 2006 cross country season with a two-mile race at the Almaden Times Classic Fun Run at Leland High School in San Jose on Sept. 24.

Hillview Middle School student Jake Lindquist placed second in his age division, with teammates Danny O'Neel placing 11th, and Connor Lindquist placing 15th in their divisions.

Woodside Elementary School student Will Patch placed second in his division, with Kevin Stine placing 12th and Brian Ngo placing 31st in their divisions.

All runners logged their personal best times in this first race of the season, said club spokesperson Louise Patch.

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The Almanac

Calendar

MEETINGS, MUSIC, THEATER, FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Benefits

Galloping Gala. Benefiting the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy, the largest hippotherapy program in the United States. Featuring a reception, a demonstration of hippotherapy, dinner and dancing. Cocktail attire. Oct. 21, 5:30-10:30 p.m. \$175. Menlo Circus Club, 190 Park Lane, Atherton. Call 851-2271.

"Anything Goes." Presented by TheatreWorks. Costume fundraiser features cocktails and dinner by McCall Associates, dancing to David Martin's Houseparty, and a live auction featuring arts items. Oct. 21, 6 p.m. TheatreWorks Scene Shop, 1110 Hamilton Ct., Menlo Park. Call 463-7125. www.theatreworks.org.

Above and Beyond Gala. The Hiller Aviation Museum is celebrating Innovation in Aviation with a benefit gala to support the museum's educational programs including school group tours, labs, camp programs, special programs for Gifted and Talented Education and development of new science and math curriculum. Oct. 21, 3:30 p.m. Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Road, San Carlos. Call 654-0200 ext.215. www.hiller.org

3rd Annual True Colors Luncheon. Presented by Achievekids, a school for students with developmental and/or emotional disabilities. Oct. 18. Free; reservations required. Crowne Cabana Hotel, 4290 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. Call 494-1200 ext. 160. www.achievekids.org/

Artistry in Fashion. 15th annual professional designer sale; Oct. 21, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; student fashion show 1 p.m. in Main Theatre; \$8 donation benefits students with scholarships; free parking and refreshments available; wheelchair accessible. Canada College, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., Woodside. Call 306-3370. www.artistryinfashion.com

Fifth Annual Theater Arts Department Fundraiser. French wine, hors d'oeuvres, raffle prizes and entertainment by Canada College Theater Arts students. Supports the Canada College to purchase equipment and services that support student actors. Oct. 19, 5:30-7:30 p.m. \$20. Redwood City Women's Club, 149 Clinton St., Redwood City. Call 362-2700. www.canadacollege.edu

On Stage

"Long Day's Journey into Night." A play by Eugene O'Neill. Thu.-Sat., through Oct. 22. See website for details. \$10-\$25. Pear Avenue Theatre, 1220 Pear Ave. Unit K, Mountain View. www.thepear.org

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." PYT will open its 10th Stories on Stage season Oct. 20-21 with Kathryn Schultz Miller's dramatization of the spooky Washington Irving story. Fri., Oct. 20, 9:30 and 11 a.m.; Sat., Oct. 21, 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Tickets \$5-\$7. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 903-6000. www.pyt.net.org

Anna Deavere Smith "Let Me Down Easy." A workshop performance of Anna Deavere Smith's newest work in progress. "Let Me Down Easy," a play about the resilience and fragility of the human body. Tickets available. Thu., Oct. 26, 7-9 p.m. \$20. Roble Gym, 351 Santa Teresa St., Stanford. Call 725-2787.

Dessa Rose. Presented by TheatreWorks. Directed by Robert Kelly. A tale of pride and perseverance from the creators of Ragtime. Through Oct. 29; \$20-\$60; Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.; Wednesdays-Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 and 7 p.m. Mountain View Center for Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View.

Hillbarn Theatre presents "Inherit the Wind." Written by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. Oct. 19-Nov. 12. Tue.-Thu., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. \$17-\$30. Hillbarn Theatre, 1285 E. Hillsdale Blvd., Foster City. Call 349-6411. www.hillbarntheatre.org

Talks/Authors

"Financing California Schools." California State Senator Joe Simitian, in conversation with Professor Emeritus of Education Michael Kirst, will discuss the problems plaguing the financing of California's K-12 schools and possible school finance reform strategies. Oct. 18, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. Cub-

berley Auditorium, 485 Lasuen Mall, Stanford. Call 723-9250. <http://ed.stanford.edu/suse/events/Financing-California-Schools.pdf>

"Russia and Putin." Lecture by Richard Starr, former intelligence researcher with State Department, present Hoover Institute Fellow, on economic impact of recent discovery of vast petroleum resources. Oct. 19, 10 a.m. Free. Sequoias, Hanson Hall, 501 Portola Road, Portola Valley. Call 424-4204.

"The Barber of Seville" Opera Preview Lecture. Erie Mills, coloratura soprano and member of the Voice faculty at San Jose State University, speaks. Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. \$8 for chapter members/\$10 for non-members. Tickets available at the door. 7:30-9 p.m. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 329-1374. www.sfopera.com

Alex Kershaw: "The Few." The story of the American pilots, idealists, adventurers and romantics who joined the RAF before America entered the war in order to fight Hitler and save Britain. Sat., Oct. 21, 7:30 p.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

Captains of Peninsula Industry. Peninsula historian Michael Svanevik examines the personalities and discusses the industrial contributions and singular lifestyles of the men of power. Series tickets: \$30 mem-

bers/\$40 non-members. Single tickets: \$15 members/\$20 non-members. Wednesdays, through Oct. 18, 2-3 p.m. Filoli, 86 Canada Road, Woodside. www.filoli.org

Carly Fiorina: "Tough Choices." Reveals confrontations, including her firing by HP's board of directors. Fri., Oct. 20, 7:30 p.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

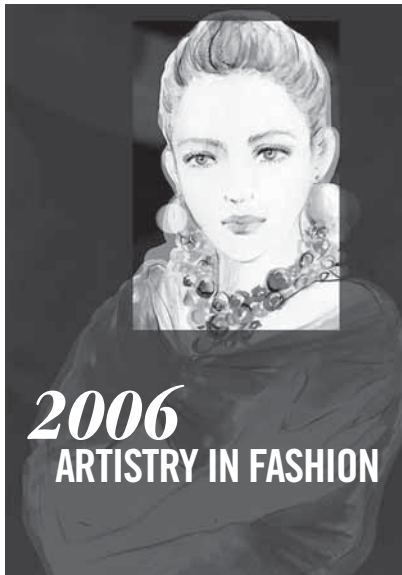
Go to the Opera. The Opera Guild presents Eric Mills discussing Rossini's "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" Oct. 24. \$10. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

Immigration: Rights and Wrongs. To understand the complex social, political, and economic forces that instigate the contemporary immigration debate, the faculty leadership of the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity has organized a lecture series to explore U.S. immigration history, politics and culture. Oct. 23, 7-9:30 p.m. Free. Braun Hall, Main Quad, Bldg 320, room 105, 450 Serra Mall, Stanford. Call 725-8332. <http://ccsre.stanford.edu>

Jim Newton: "Justice for All: Earl Warren and the Nation He Made." Newton brings a biography of a complicated

See CALENDAR, page 22

Cañada College Fashion Design Department



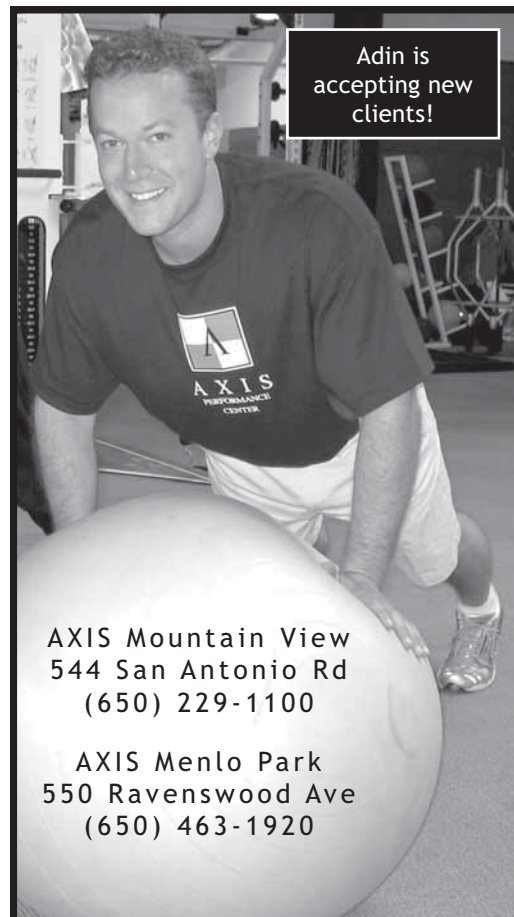
15th Annual Designer Sale & Fashion Show

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10 A.M. TO 5 P.M.

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Submitting your information

Information for Calendar listings must be submitted online. Please go to www.PaloAltoOnline.com, click on "Master Community Calendar," and then click on "Submit a listing." If you have questions, call Renee Meil at the Almanac, 854-2626. After hours, press zero and leave a message for Renee. For more Calendar listings, go to PaloAltoOnline.com, and click on "Master Community Calendar."

At Kepler's

Keith Thompson, author of "Leaving the Left: Moments in the News That Made Me Ashamed to be a Liberal," will speak at Kepler's Books in Menlo Park at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 19.



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CALENDAR

continued from page 21

and principled figure. Sat., Oct. 21, 2 p.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

Keith Thompson: "Leaving the Left." One man's personal story of his conversion from lockstep liberal to free-thinking conservative. Thu., Oct. 19, 7:30 p.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

Leading Strategy Execution. Rich Golberg, VP Corporate Quality, Cisco and Jonathan Becker, Trium Group discuss how to set strategy at the functional level with a compelling vision. Thu., Oct. 19, 7:30-10:30 a.m. \$25 members/students/affiliates; \$35 non-members. \$40 at the door for all. SRI-Stanford Research Institute, 333 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park. Call (415) 609-6464. www.strategyplus.org

Mystery and Mayhem: Three Authors. Wed., Oct. 18, 7:30 p.m. Mark Coggins "Candy from Strangers"; John Billheimer "Stonewall Jackson's Elbow"; Hailey Lind "Shooting Gallery: An Annie Kincaid Mystery." Co-hosted by Sisters in Crime. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

NASA Ames Lecture. Oct. 25, 7-9 p.m. NASA Research Park Exploration Lecture Series will present "The View from the Center of the Universe" by Cosmologist Dr. Joel Primack and writer Nancy Abrams. Free. NASA Ames Research Center, Bldg. 943, Eagle Room, Mof-

fett Field. www.researchpark.arc.nasa.gov

National Chemistry Week Celebration. Presented by the Santa Clara Valley, American Chemical Society. Oct. 26, 6:30-9 p.m. Dinner, followed by a talk on "Your Home: It's All Built on Chemistry" by Bruce King, expert on green building principles and founder of the Ecological Business Network. See website for reservations and details. \$20. Mitchell Community Center, 3800 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call (209) 640-2005. www.scvacs.org

Reza Aslan, author of "No god but God." Lectures on Islam entitled "Welcome to the Islamic Reformation!" Booksigning following the lecture. Oct. 24, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Free. Kresge Auditorium, 555 Nathan Abbott Way, Stanford. Call 736 8169. www.stanford.edu/dept/islamic_studies/

Tina Cassidy: "Birth." From evolution to the epidural and beyond, Tina Cassidy presents a history of how and why we are born the way we are. Tue., Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

Art Galleries

"Peninsula Scenes" Acrylics by Robinson. Through Oct. 28, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Paintings of local landscapes. Free. Portola Art Gallery, 75 Arbor Road, Menlo Park. www.portolaartgallery.com

Group Exhibition and Open Studios. Exploration: "The depths of the soul or the ends of the universe" group exhibition, through Nov. 12; Open Studios: Nov. 3-5.

Fri., 5:30-8:30 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 1-5 p.m. 27 artists, painters, potters, sculpture, print-makers, art clothing, photography. Free. 1870 Art Center Gallery, 1870 Ralston Ave., Belmont. Call 261-1086.

High and Outside. Painters David Ivan Clark, Ashlee Ferlito, and Ann Hogle and video artist Melissa Day. Work reveals that the landscape remains an abiding, magnetic presence in our lives, inspiring a variety of art. Tue.-Sat., Oct. 19-Nov. 22. Free. Spur Projects, 888 Portola Road, Portola Valley. Call 529-2040. www.SpurProjects.com

Auditions

"The Foreigner" by Larry Shue. Auditions Nov. 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Nov. 5, 1-6 p.m. Audition by appointment. Prepare one two-minute comedic monologue. Allow time for possible cold read from script. Bring conflict calendar, resume and headshot. Call for an appointment. Hillbarn Theatre, 1285 E. Hillsdale Blvd., Foster City. www.hillbarntheatre.org

Peninsula Pops Orchestra Openings. For advanced players of all instruments. Rehearsals Tuesdays, through Dec. 31, 7-10 p.m. Call for appointment. Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Road Room M1, Palo Alto. Call 856-8432. www.peninsulapops.org

Classes/ Workshops

Artist Access. 3rd Thursdays through Oct., 3:30-6:30 p.m. Artists and photographers have

access to the gardens after hours. Limited to artists who work with watercolor, pen, pencil, charcoal, pastels and photography. No oils or acrylics. Pre-registration recommended. \$15 members/\$20 non-members. Filoli, 86 Canada Road, Woodside. www.filoli.org

Tying it All Together: Tools and Fiber of California Indians. Students will explore native plants, such as dogbane and elderberry that were used by California's native people for tools and fiber. Look at samples of different tools and make a sample of cordage to take home. Oct. 21, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. \$25 for members/\$30 for non-members. Filoli, 86 Canada Road, Woodside. www.filoli.org

Clubs/Meetings

Toastmasters Speaking and Leadership Workshops. Wednesdays, through Dec. 6, 7:05 p.m. Opportunities for improving speaking and presentation skills. Mentors available to assist professionals individually. Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, 1177 University Dr., room C-12, Menlo Park. Call 440-0320. www.menloparktm.org

Community Events

"50 Years of Style." Stanford Shopping Center Anniversary Celebration to honor the people and events that have shaped the center over the past 50 years. Includes a fashion show, silent auction, art and wine exhibit, live music, free giveaways and more. Oct. 21-22, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Free. Stanford Shopping Cen-

ter, 680 Stanford Shopping Center, Palo Alto. Call 617-8591. www.stanfordshop.com

"Going Places" Menlo-Atherton H.S. Senior Fashion Show. Oct. 21, noon, 4 and 7:30 p.m. More than 200 seniors model fashions from more than 30 local merchants. Noon tickets \$50; 4 and 7:30 p.m. Adults \$15/students \$10. Menlo-Atherton High School, 555 Middlefield Road, Atherton. Call 814-0411. www.mabears.org

Concerts

Badi Assad, Guitarist, Singer and Percussionist. Blends her native Brazilian style with a multitude of ethnic sounds. Her voice is often accompanied by mouth and rhythmic body percussion. Oct. 25, 8 p.m. \$40/\$36. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 471 Lagunita Dr., Stanford. Call 725-2787. lively.arts.stanford.edu

Master Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra Concert. Maestro David Ramadanoff, guest conductor Pamela Martin, and soloist Paul Schrage for MSCO's first concert of the season. Program highlights Mozart's Overture to Marriage of Figaro and Symphony No. 35, as well as Copland's Quiet City and Robert Shumann's Piano Concerto in A minor. Oct. 21, 8-10 p.m. \$18 at the door. Valley Presbyterian Church, 945 Portola Road, Portola Valley. Call 348-1270. www.mastersinfonia.org

Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra's 41st Season. Program includes works by Corelli, Boccherini, Mendelssohn, and contemporary composer Hilary Tann. Guest soloist on the Boccherini Concerto will be Bay Area cellist Dana Putnam Fonteneau. Oct. 21, 8-10 p.m. \$12 adults/\$10 seniors/\$6 students. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 471 Lagunita Dr., Stanford. Call 856-3848. www.pacomusic.org

Palo Alto Philharmonic Orchestra Concert I. Sat., Oct. 21, 8 p.m. Faure: Suite from PellEas et MElisande, Op. 80 Lalo: Cello Concerto in D minor; Thomas Shoebotham, soloist Dvo'k: Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88. \$16/\$14/\$7 Cubberley Theatre, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

Peninsula Pops "Gotta Dance" Season Premiere. Oct. 22, 3 p.m. The Pops presents dance music from Latin to swing performed with dancers. Music from Santana, Glenn Miller, Gene Kelly, Judy Garland. Tickets available online. Students \$10/seniors \$16/adults \$20/ kids under10 free. Spangenberg Theater, 780 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto. Call 856-8432. www.peninsulapops.org

The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Chamber Ensemble. Eight artists from London's Academy of St. Martin in the Fields will perform a collection of chamber works that includes Martinu's Sextet for Strings, Dvorak's Sextet for Strings in A Major and Enesco's Octet for Strings C Major. Oct. 18, 8 p.m. \$48/\$44/half-price for ages 15 and under. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 471 Lagunita Dr., Stanford. Call 725-2587. livelyarts.stanford.edu

Exhibits

"Classic and Timeless Toys." Palo Alto Sport Shop and Toy world and the Museum of American Heritage present "Classic and Timeless Toys," an exhibit featuring over 75 classic toys of the 20th century. Learn the history of toys and the story behind their inventions. Fridays-Sundays, through Jan. 28, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. Call 321-1004. www.moah.org

"From the Land." A survey of assemblages by Bay Area artist Werner Glinka on display through Nov. 17. Flea Street Cafe, 3607 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park. Call 854-1226. www.cooleatz.com/flea-st-cafe

Autumn Captured. An exhibition of fine art photography, the photographs capture the cycles of nature, the mystery of transformation and the beauty of the living world. Through Oct. 29. Free with paid \$12. Filoli, 86 Canada Road, Woodside. www.filoli.org

Chasing History: Art and Provenance. Exhibition highlights the research conducted on several paintings and the results of the investigation. Wed.-Sun., through Nov. 26, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Cantor Arts Center, Museum Way and Lomita Dr., Palo Alto. museum.stanford.edu

Photographs from Nepal & India. "Mystical Places: Photographs from the Rooftop of the World and Beyond," portraits by Mary Bartnikowski. Oct. 15-31, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Free. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

Continued on next page

HALLOWEEN HOODPLA!

Saturday October, 28th, 2006

Halloween Costume Parade - 11:45 a.m.

Come in costume and participate in the annual parade from Burgess Recreation Center to Fremont Park. Receive a free trick or treat bag.

Trick or Treat - 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

After the parade, trick or treat in downtown Menlo Park stores that display trick or treat signs on their door.

Halloween Carnival - 1:30-3:00 p.m.

All children ages 12 and under are invited to participate in festive activities at the Burgess Recreation Center, 700 Alma Street. \$3 for kids, adults free! Hot dogs & beverages will be sold.

Halloween activities are sponsored by the City of Menlo Park Community Services and Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce.

TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE:
Free Shuttle Service from Onetta Harris Community Center, 100 Terminal Ave, to Burgess Recreation Center.
Departure times from OHCC: 11:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00
Departure times from Burgess Rec Center: 1:15, 1:45, 2:15, 2:45, 3:15, 3:45

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
CITY OF MENLO PARK COMMUNITY SERVICES
650.330.2200
www.menlopark.org

EYE CARE NEWS

Presented by **Mark Schmidt** Licensed Optician

COMPUTER SCREEN EYESTRAIN

The average American child spends up to three hours a day in front of a computer screen, according to a recent Roper Starch survey, which places him or her at increased risk for developing nearsightedness (myopia). Parents should bear these facts in mind and remain watchful for symptoms of computer-related eyestrain in their children. These symptoms include complaints of headaches and/or itchy, burning, red, and tearing eyes, which are all signs of eye fatigue. Performance at school may also be an issue as children with eyestrain either routinely take too long to finish their homework or fail to finish it at all. Any of these symptoms should prompt a visit for a comprehensive eye examination.

Although there is no evidence that using a computer causes permanent vision problems, it can lead to eyestrain, eye fatigue, and glare-related headaches - in both adults and children. If your child is complaining about his or her eyes or has headaches, schedule an eye exam. Bring your prescription to MENLO OPTICAL at 1166 University Drive, on the corner of Oak Grove Avenue and University Drive. We prescribe for computer, athletic, and occupational eyewear. Call us at 322-3900

PS. Because eyestrain can begin well before symptoms appear, it pays to take the preventive measure of getting regular eye exams.

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

Inspirations

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Continued from previous page

Kids & Families

Family Fun with Flowers: Holiday Arrangements. Participants will make holiday arrangements to take home. Price includes one adult and child. Recommended for children ages 5-12. Oct. 28, 10:30 a.m.-noon. \$50 members/\$60 non-members. Filoli, 86 Canada Road, Woodside. www.filoli.org

Infant Storytime. For infants ages 0-18 months. Wednesdays, 10 a.m. Music, fingerplays, and puppets. Woodside Library, 3140 Woodside Road, Woodside.

Magic Show. Trick and treats magic show with Brian Scott for Halloween. Oct. 19, 4-5 p.m. Old Historic Schoolhouse, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley. Call 851-0560. www.smcl.org/libraries/pvl/events/child.html

Nature Hikes. Covers 3 miles of trails. Nature Docents describe wildlife, plants, endangered species, and the historical background of the area. Visitors may not hike without a Docent. Saturdays, through Oct. 27, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. Filoli, 86 Canada Road, Woodside. Call 364-8300 ext. 507. www.filoli.org

Pre-school Storytime with Crafts. Extended pre-school storytime and crafts. Making windsocks in celebration of "The Kite Runner" book. Oct. 18, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Portola Valley Library, 4575 Alpine Road, Portola Valley. Call 851-0560. www.smcl.org/libraries/pvl/events/child.html

Stop In and Explore. Saturdays and Sundays, through Oct. 22, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Visit the David C. Daniels Nature Center and view displays about natural communities, larger-than-life pond strata mobiles, take a pond prow. Free. Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve, Park at Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

Storytime. For children ages 3-6 Tuesdays through Dec. 12, 3:30-4 p.m. Free. Atherton Library, 2 Dinkelspiel Station Lane, Atherton. Call 328-2422. www.smcl.org/libraries/ath/index.html

Toddler Storytime. For ages 18 months and up. Wednesdays, 11 a.m. Music, singing, and fingerplays. Woodside Library, 3140 Woodside Road, Woodside.

Health

Falls Prevention Workshop. Learn strategies for avoiding falls indoors and outdoors in a workshop for the elderly. Identify common risk factors and identify individual problems. Thursdays, Oct. 19-Nov. 16, 12:30-2 p.m. Free. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

Walking Group. Explore local streets. Walk about 3-4 miles. Call Hal Makin 948-2310 for weekly location. Free. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

Et Alia

An Evening with Gypsy Soul. Oct. 19, 8 p.m. \$15 advance/\$17 at the door. Little Fox Theatre, 2215 Broadway St., Redwood City. www.foxdream.com

An Easy Hike. Hike through chaparral to Schilling Lake. 3.5-mile, leisurely-paced excursion with docent Paul Vadopalas. Oct. 22, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. Thornewood Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

Taize Prayer. Sacred song, prayer and meditation third Fridays monthly, Oct. 20-Nov. 17, 8-9 p.m. Woodside Priory Chapel, 302 Portola Road, Portola Valley. Call 851-8221.

"Conversations with God." Oct. 20-21, 8 p.m. Unity Movie Night. Film adapted from the books by Neal Donald Walsh. The film chronicles the dramatic journey of a down-and-out man who inadvertently becomes a spiritual messenger and best-selling author. \$10. Unity Palo Alto Community Church, 3391 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 494-7222. www.unitypaloalto.org

History of Early Christianity. Video lectures by Prof. Bart Ehrman, Chair, Dept. of Religious Studies at UNC, Chapel Hill. Discussion following video. Sundays, through Nov. 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Pre-registration preferred. Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, 505 E. Charleston Road, Palo Alto. www.uucpa.org

Retirement Living. Speakers from 4 local retirement homes will discuss offerings and services. Oct. 18: "Palo Alto Commons"; Oct. 25 "Sunrise Assisted Living," 11 a.m.-noon. Free. Little House, 800 Middle

Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

10th Annual Menlo Park Fine Arts Festival. Oct. 20-22, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sponsored by the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce. Free. Downtown Menlo Park, Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park. Call (209) 296-1195. www.pacificfinearts.com

60th Anniversary Candy Making Tours. Oct. 20-21 10 a.m.-4 p.m. See behind the scenes candy making in the candy kitchen, chocolate enrobing and chocolate heaven. Anniversary Celebration Oct. 21, noon. City Proclamation and JewelTones' 40's and 50's songs. Free. Preston's Candy & Ice Cream, 1170 Broadway Ave., Burlingame. Call 344-3254. www.prestonscandy.com

Artistry in Fashion. Designer sale and fashion by upcoming local designers. Proceeds support Canada College design students. Oct. 21, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. \$8 admission. Canada College, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., Woodside. Call 306-3370. www.artistryinfashion.com

Biomedical Computation. Learn about the ongoing revolution in biology. Over 60 Stanford students and postdocs present the latest in biocomputation research at Stanford University. Keynotes by the Director of National Center for Biotechnology Information, Founder of Mathworks Inc. and the Chair of Bioengineering at UCSD. Oct. 21, 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Stanford University, 370 Serra Mall, Stanford. <http://bcats.stanford.edu>

Sally Ride Science Festival. For girls in grades 5-8 featuring a street fair with

experiments, food, music, and fun; a chance to meet and listen to astronaut Janice Voss; and workshops given by women ranging from veterinarians to aerospace engineers. Parents and teachers welcome to attend. Oct. 21, 11 a.m.-4:15 p.m. \$18 advance registration required. NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, Mountain View. Call (800) 561-5161. www.SallyRideFestivals.com

Spring Down Equestrian Center Horse Show. All levels of horse and rider welcome. Free to watch. Call for details. Oct. 22, 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Spring Down Equestrian Center, 725 Portola Road, Portola Valley.

Winter Farmhouse Teas. Sat., Oct. 28, noon. Yerba Buena Nursery offers traditional Tea Service including sandwiches, scones, pastry and hot tea, served in the Farmhouse Great Room. Vegetarian option with advance notice. For ages 12 and up. Reservations required, close 2 days in advance. \$25. Yerba Buena Nursery, 19500 Skyline Blvd., Woodside. Call 851-1668. www.yerba-buena-nursery.com

Food Addicts In Recovery. A program for individuals recovering from addictive eating and anorexia based on the 12 steps of AA. No dues, fees or weigh-ins. Call for information (415) 248-9347. Wednesdays, 7 p.m. First Congregational Church, Euclid Ave., Redwood City.

Huddart Park Docents. Huddart Park's Friends program is in need of docents to lead young children on short hikes within Huddart Park a few weekday mornings during Fall and Spring. Training is provided. Through May 15. Huddart Park, 1100 Kings Mountain Road, Woodside. Call 529-0305.



Town of Portola Valley

Special Town Council Meeting
Wednesday, October 25, 2006, 7:30 p.m.

The Sequoias, Hanson Hall

501 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028

Town Council Meeting to be held at The Sequoias

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a Special Town Council Meeting on Wednesday, October 25, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.

The Sequoias, Hanson Hall

501 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA.

A copy of the agenda can be viewed on our website at www.portolavalley.net or by calling (650) 851-1700 ext. 10.

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Menlo Park household is scene of alleged molestation of three girls

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Two of the three young women who recently accused their older male cousin of sexually molesting them in the 1990s while living in the same Menlo Park house say they complained once to their grandmother about it, but that she refused to believe their story, according to a report from the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

The male cousin, 28-year-old Tyrone Darnell Williams, is now in county jail and charged with 55 counts of sexual molestation, including rape and sodomy. His bail is set at \$1 million.

Mr. Williams, a former employee of the city of Menlo

Park recreation department, was arrested Sept. 14 in Oak Grove, Kentucky, after a stake-out involving local police and Menlo Park police detectives, who had been tipped off to his whereabouts.

The molestation incidents are alleged to have occurred when Mr. Williams was between the ages of 13 and 21 and the victims were ages 6, 9 and 14. The two older girls were assaulted between 1997 and 1999, and the younger girl between 1992 and 1999, said Steve Wagstaffe, the chief deputy district attorney, in a report.

The girls' mother, informed of the alleged incidents by her daughters about two years ago, assumed it was too late to do anything, the report said.

It wasn't until one of the girls told a high-school counselor that the police learned of the allegations and informed the district attorney's office, which issued a warrant for Mr. Williams' arrest, the report said.

Mr. Williams once worked at the Onetta Harris Community Center in Belle Haven, but none of the crimes he is accused of occurred in the context of his work at the community center, said Deputy District Attorney Melissa McKowan.

The statute of limitations for child molestation offenses is 10 years after the victims turn 21, Ms. McKowan added.

A preliminary hearing is set for 2 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, in San Mateo County Superior Court in Redwood City. ■

Because the charges involve several victims, a conviction could mean a prison sentence of 25 years to life for Mr. Williams, who is scheduled to appear in San Mateo County

Superior Court on Nov. 21 at 2 p.m. before Judge Joseph Scott in Department 25.

-- Bay City News contributed to this report

Trial date set in triple fatality

A trial date of Nov. 27 has been set for Edith Delgado, charged with causing a Menlo Park car crash that killed three people, including two members of the Tongan royal family.

Ms. Delgado, 18, of Redwood City, allegedly was speeding on U.S. 101 north of the Willow Road exit on July 5, when her Ford Mustang struck a 1998 Ford Explorer, causing the SUV to roll over several times and land on its roof. The accident killed Prince Tu'ipelehake, 54, Princess Kaimana Tu'ipelehake, 45, and their driver, Vinisia Hefa

of East Palo Alto.

Ms. Delgado pleaded not guilty to three counts of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence at her arraignment.

A jury trial is scheduled to begin Nov. 27 at 8:45 a.m. in San Mateo County Superior Court, said Steve Wagstaffe, San Mateo County's chief deputy district attorney.

If convicted, Ms. Delgado could be imprisoned for up to eight years. She is in custody on \$1 million bail.

-- Bay City News contributed to this report.

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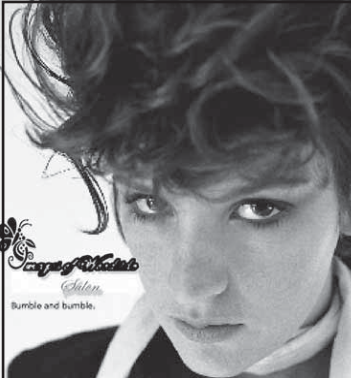


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'Galloping Gala' benefits equine therapy center

Bill Walsh of 49er and Stanford football fame will give the opening toast at the second annual "Galloping Gala" to be held Saturday, Oct. 21, at the Menlo Circus Club, 190 Park Lane, Atherton.

The benefit for the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy (NCEFT) begins with a demonstration of hippotherapy (medical application of a horse's movement) and interactive vaulting (a recreational activity for those with disabilities) on the club's polo field at 5:30 p.m. Dinner follows at 7 p.m. There will be an evening program and live music after dinner. Cocktail attire is suggested.

The gala is a celebration of the 35th anniversary for NCEFT, which operates out of Somers Field in Woodside. Tickets are \$175 per person. For more information, call Susan Kaver at 851-2271, ext. 3#.

Blessings on horses and hounds

Mounted members of the Los Altos Hounds and masters in full regalia will be seen flying over jumps following the hounds before stopping to receive the traditional blessing of the animals at 11 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 22, at Junipero Ridge Ranch in Portola Valley. Call 831-662-8963 for the exact location.

The Rev. Sally Bingham, former member of the riding club, extends the blessing to include "all creatures great and small."

There will also be a champagne tea, a hunt horn blowing contest, bagpipe music, Celtic dancing, and pony and puppy petting. Cost is \$25; children under 5 are free.

Los Altos Hounds is a riding club founded in Los Altos Hills in 1953. The club continues to ride today in the Woodside-Portola Valley area.

For more information, call 831-663-8963.

Rhododendron expert

Vireya rhododendrons will be the topic Wednesday, Oct. 18, when the DeAnza chapter of the American Rhododendron Society meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Hillview Community Center, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos.

The public is invited to hear vireya rhododendron expert E. White Smith, publisher of the Vireya Vine newsletter. Mr. Smith operates Bovees Nursery in Portland, Oregon, which has the largest collection of vireya rhododendrons in North America.

For more information, call

AROUND TOWN

Alma Fletcher, 851-1334.

Businesses support breast health project

Three women-owned businesses in Town and Country Village will hold a weekend of events to support the Community Breast Health Project.

Each business — Lyons Ltd., Nature Gallery and Prestige, Inc. — plan evening receptions and open houses on Friday, Oct. 20, from 6 to 9 p.m.

The free events will take place at Town and Country Village, 855 El Camino Real at Embarcadero. To reserve a space for the Friday event, e-mail RSVP@LyonsLtd.com or call 325-9010.

Fire drill in PV Ranch on Saturday

A wildfire drill and home evacuation exercise is set for Saturday, Oct. 21, in the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood. Residents should get in their vehicles at 9 a.m. and drive to the Los Trancos Road exit gate, said Dudley Carlson, co-leader of the emergency preparedness team.

Sheriff's Office deputies and street-based team leaders will be on hand to encourage orderly departures, she said, adding that the drill matters because Californians rank near the bottom nationally in knowing what to do in an emergency.

For information, see the October neighborhood newsletter or call Ms. Carlson at the number listed in the Ranch directory.

Candidates forum at children's center

A Menlo Park City Council candidate forum organized by

parents with children in Menlo Park's Burgess child care programs is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 17, at 5:30 p.m.

The forum will be held in the Menlo Children's Center, at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

Union takes shot at Duboc, Winkler

Union officials vowed to campaign against Menlo Park City Council members Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler in their bid for reelection, and they're fulfilling that promise.

A flier mailed to residents last week by the San Mateo County Central Labor Council says Ms. Duboc and Ms. Winkler went "off the deep end" in privatizing the city's \$6.8 million publicly funded aquatics center

BRIEFS

Representatives from the labor council and the Service Employees International Union Local 715 — the union that represents most of the city's non-safety employees — have criticized efforts by Ms. Duboc and Ms. Winkler to privatize city services.

Both unions have endorsed candidates Richard Cline and Heyward Robinson.

The two union groups are working together in distributing campaign literature, said Jonathan Wright, a worksite organizer for SEIU.

The incumbents and candidate John Boyle are running as a slate to win three open seats on the council. All three candidates maintain that the privatization of the aquatics center will save the city more than \$400,000.

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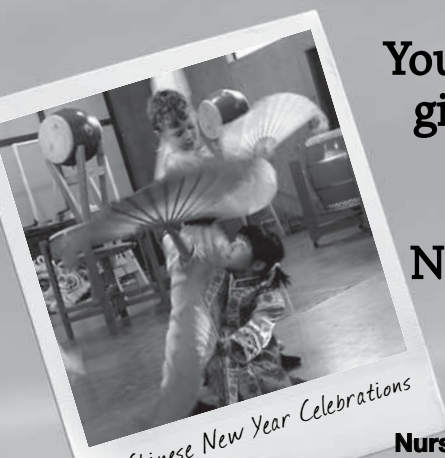
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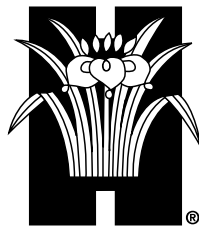
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OBITUARIES

Lorraine Thackery

Retired real estate agent

Lorraine Murray Thackery, a resident of The Sequoias in Portola Valley for the past three years, died Oct. 7 at Stanford Medical Center.

Ms. Thackery was born in Los Angeles in 1921. She graduated from the Marlborough School for Girls and attended Stanford University, class of 1943, where she was a member of Delta Gamma sorority.

Ms. Thackery was a real estate agent for more than 25 years while living in the Menlo Park-Woodside area. She was a founding member of the Committee for Art at Stanford. She and her late husband, Don, moved to Carmel, returning to Menlo Park seven years ago.

Ms. Thackery's father, Feg Murray, was a well-known cartoonist. She shared his talents in the arts and painted up until the final days of her life. Her other passions were for her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and her travel, say family members.

She is survived by daughters

Holly Carlin of Monterey and Carolyn Jereczek of Belmont; brother Dr. John Murray of San Francisco and Paris; four grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Donald K. Thackery, and son Chris Dennis.

Memorials are preferred to any local Planned Parenthood or a favorite charity.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Arrangements were under the direction of Spangler Mortuaries.

Marilyn Burn

Woodside resident

Marilyn Todd Burn died at her home in Woodside on Oct. 1 after a three-and-a-half year battle against cancer.

Originally from Chicago, Ms. Burn lived in Woodside with her family for the past 29 years. A private gathering of the family was held at her home.

She is survived by her husband, Robert, of Woodside; son Robert of Chicago and son Charles of Nottingham, Maryland.

POLICE CALLS

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

ATHERTON

Grand theft report: Stolen credit card used, first block of Gresham Lane, October 12.

MENLO PARK

Burglary report: Four wooden doors damaged in forced-entry attempt, 300 block of Middlefield Road, October 11.

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Fraud reports:

■ Bad check for \$3,000 received for \$300 item sold online with seller then asked to refund \$2,700, 700 block of Laurel Street, October 10.

■ Resident's credit card information used in attempted unauthorized purchase, 1400 block of Mills Court, October 10.

■ Personal information used to open credit card account, 1100 block of Willow Road, October 11.

■ Personal information used to open phone account, 1100 block of Willow Road, October 11.

■ Social Security number used to open account with later involvement by collection agency, 200 block of Willow Road, October 12.

■ Check fraud reported, 400 block of El Camino Real, October 12.

Battery reports:

■ Sexual harassment alleged between two employees at a business, 4500 block of Bohannon Drive, October 6.

■ Battery reported, 1300 block of Crane Street, October 10.

■ Battery reported, 600 block of Willow Road, October 12.

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Global film festival at Stanford University

Films ranging from "Baghdad ER" to "Rights on the Line: Vigilantes at the Border" are among 31 documentaries from 30 countries that will be shown at the United Nations Association Film Festival at Stanford University Oct. 25-29.

Marjane Mogimi, a filmmaker and resident of Menlo Park, produced "Pilgrimage," about Shiite Muslims from Iran who risk their lives to visit the holy city of Karbala, about 50 miles south of Baghdad.

The festival, which UNAFF at Stanford University sponsors, promotes documentary filmmaking as a tool for social and political understanding.

For more information about screening times and places, and admission prices, go to www.unaff.org or call 724-5544.

Shop for charity

Family Service Agency of San Mateo County is one of seven Peninsula charities that will benefit from Bloomingdale's annual day of shopping for charity from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26, at Bloomingdale's in Stanford Shopping Center. Other charities are: Avenidas, Kara, Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA, Ronald McDonald House at Stanford, TheatreWorks, and Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Shoppers will receive 15 percent off on almost every item purchased. The day will also include entertainment and a noon fashion show in the "New View" department, where mem-

bers of Family Service's Hillsborough Auxiliary will model the latest fashions.

Tickets are \$10 at the door.

Proceeds will be divided evenly among participating charities. For more information, call Bloomingdale's at 463-2201.

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LETTERS

Continued from page 31

must the approach of Alpine Little League and others be deplored. Please urge Mark Greenstein (mark@dfj.com), Alpine West Menlo Little League president, and all other offending leagues to allow the maligned candidates to issue a response — one that should rightfully be distributed to the same membership. Refusing to do so will reflect poorly on the board and its leadership.

Catherine McMillan
San Mateo Drive, Menlo Park

Sports fields measure a reasonable idea

Editor:

I think it's very reasonable to ask the Menlo Park City Council to **further investigate** building sports fields on only 10 percent of Bayfront Park, which is what Measure J allows.

Those who point to alternatives such as putting grass over parking lots at Kelly Field in Belle Haven have apparently never tried to park there on a busy soccer Saturday. The other suggestion for upgrading and reconfiguring fields at Menlo Park schools to increase supply shows a lack of awareness that we are about to embark on a complete reconfiguring and classroom/facility expansion at our schools (funded by voter-approved Measure U bonds).

The likelihood of extra field space emerging on our limited school campuses given our high enrollment growth is wishful thinking. If opponents to Measure J had a real plan for how to expand field space in Menlo Park, why haven't we seen it?

I urge my fellow citizens to educate themselves and rise above the fear tactics used by opponents of Measure J. The project, if feasible, would comply with all safety and environmental regulations.

Please, put our children's needs first — vote yes on Measure J.

Sheri Simmons
Lemon Street, Menlo Park

Watch source of campaign donations

Editor:

Menlo Park voters should be aware of the special interests pouring money into the Boyle, Duboc and Winkler campaign.

To date, almost 50 percent of this slate's donations have come from the real estate and development community. Donors include the California Real Estate PAC, which contributed \$2,500 to each candidate for a total of \$7,500. Howard Crittenden, who owns the Park Theater, contributed \$1,000 each to Boyle, Duboc and

Winkler for a total of \$3,000.

This is big money in a city council campaign. Council members Duboc and Winkler have a consistent track record of voting for development projects that greatly benefit real estate and development interests at the expense of Menlo Park residents. If this slate is elected we will have more of the same.

Jennifer Fisher
Hermosa Way, Menlo Park

Correcting 'misstatements' in El Camino letter

Editor:

I want to correct the misstatements made by Hank Lawrence in a letter last week regarding the affiliation of the candidates challenging the incumbents for the Menlo Park City Council seats.

I do agree with Mr. Lawrence that the El Camino Corridor has been deteriorating for a long time. This was one of the situations which prompted the formation of the Vision 2020 group. The group was formed around creating a vision for Menlo Park and ending the bipolar, divisive politics that have led to the deterioration of the Menlo Park economy and quality of life.

Since the current council has not provided adequate leadership or a long-term plan, the Vision 2020 group thinks it is time to give Menlo Park residents an opportunity to elect qualified, independent council candidates who can present a vision for the city. We invited any potential non-incumbent council candidate to address the group.

The only potential challenger who chose not to participate was John Boyle. Candidates Vince Bressler, Rich Cline, Heyward Robinson, as well as a number of other potential candidates, did participate. At the end of the process (Jack Morris was the only prior or current council member who participated), most members of the Vision 2020 group felt they could individually support Rich Cline and Vince Bressler as independent candidates with vision and plans.

In fact, both Rich Cline and Vince Bressler supported both incumbent candidates, Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler, in their 2002 council race. I encourage all the voters to meet the individual candidates and make their own assessment.

J. Michael Gullard
Vision 2020 Group
Bay Laurel Drive, Menlo Park

Playing fields measure only advisory

Editor:

The very vocal opponents of the Menlo Park playing field Measure J either have not read the measure or they are being unprincipled.

Take two examples. The opponents claim Measure J will cost

the city \$17 million. Measure J is only advisory. Passing the measure asks the city to determine a cost. In any case, if the opponents are correct, the 17 acres of Measure J fields are a pretty good deal with Menlo Park property now costing about \$4 million an acre.

The opponents claim the Bayfront site has environmental problems and will unearth hazardous waste. Passing the measure asks the city to investigate these issues. Maybe the opponents, including council candidates Heyward Robinson, Vince Bressler and Rich Cline, are against having this investigation because they fear the results will show their claims are overblown.

Menlo Park desperately needs soccer, lacrosse, baseball, football and softball playing fields. The fields being discussed would cover only 10 percent of Bayfront Park. All other options have major difficulties. Council candidates Lee Duboc, Mickie Winkler and John Boyle favor investigating fields at Bayfront. I urge anyone who wants a fair evaluation of playing field solutions to vote for these candidates.

Dave Gildea
Hermosa Way, Menlo Park

Referendum is direct democracy at work

Editor:

Last week, for the second time in two years, thousands of Menlo Park voters added their signatures to petitions calling for a vote to overturn actions of the City Council.

These dramatic exercises in direct democracy, unprecedented in living memory, belie the promise made four years ago by the slate of Mickie Winkler, Nicholas Jellins and Lee Duboc to "listen to the voters." On Nov. 7 we have an opportunity to elect a new council that will.

Peter Hart
Arbor Road, Menlo Park

Article did not mention Derry BMR units

Editor:

In the Almanac's Fall Real Estate 2006 section covering condominium developments, there was an omission of the fact that 21 of the 135 proposed Menlo Park units were below market rate.

This information is important because there are 500 qualified applicants who either live or work in Menlo Park on the city's waiting list for affordable housing. Approximately half of those on the list are waiting for a one- or two-bedroom unit. These smaller units are rarely available. Many of those on the list have been waiting over five years for an opportunity to purchase a home.

The Derry project would provide

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LETTERS

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an opportunity for 21 people on the waiting list to qualify as first-time home buyers for below market rate units. With a market rate entry price of around \$630,000, it still offers a choice for those seeking an affordable option. (The median market rate for condominiums in Menlo Park is around \$710,000.) For those who may have difficulty qualifying, Menlo Park has a purchase assistance loan program that offers second loans to those on the housing waiting list. Due to a shortage of available units, few people are able to utilize this well conceived program.

As the business climate changes along the El Camino, there's an opportunity to be more creative in the use of space while responding to multiple community needs. The Glenwood Retirement Inn, located on the corner of Garwood and Glenwood, is an excellent example of a more dense project adjacent to shopping and transportation which meets the needs of senior residents. Likewise, the Derry Project would be an attractive mixed-use addition to the same area. We would hope there's space in Menlo Park for a variety of housing options to meet the needs of those who live and work in our community.

Patricia Boyle
Sand Hill Circle, Menlo Park

Hazards of reopening closed landfill

Editor:

Blithe assertions regarding the feasibility of playing fields at Bayfront Park fail to recognize the costly realities of reopening the closed landfill.

The Marsh Road landfill was not operated under today's strict standards. The South County Garbage and Refuse District allowed many hazardous materials—household hazardous waste, industrial waste, municipal waste, old appliances, sewage sludge, even dead animals—to be buried there.

Terracing Bayfront's hillsides to create level ball fields will trigger new regulatory agency requirements to control methane gas, storm water runoff, and toxic leachate (liquid landfill waste), and to monitor pollution of the Bay and the underground aquifer.

Each year, the city must extract over 6 million gallons of leachate that collects in an underground lake where the ball fields are proposed. The leachate is then pumped several miles to the sewage treatment plant in Redwood Shores.

After the El Nino storms of 1997-98, there was a major release of leachate in the vicinity of the proposed sports fields. Regulatory agencies will almost certainly

Strong rebuttal from former mayor

By Gail Slocum

Hank Lawrence's Oct. 10 letter smears me as a "no growth" Wizard of Oz who single-handedly caused the recent blight on El Camino Real (ECR), even though I've been off the City Council since 1994.

I've always stood for sustainable growth policies, and under them Menlo Park grew mightily during the 1990s. By 1997, Menlo Park had reached a build-out level not projected until 2010 under our general plan. My council passed many projects, including: huge Addison Wesley and Sun Microsystems facilities (with special sales tax arrangements); expanded Civic Center library and new senior center in Belle Haven; more Santa Cruz Avenue retail space; improved downtown parking and the addition of beautiful trees.

I personally took heat for proposing R-4 zoning, which allows 40 units per acre projects near transit hubs. By securing its passage, I ushered in increased affordable

housing. I'm particularly proud of spearheading our Farmer's Market, which regularly brings more customers downtown on weekends than anything else.

And my leadership working with East Palo Alto resulted in many large development projects that have brought much-needed jobs and sales tax revenue. Thus, in 1994, developer Duncan Matteson—who had opposed my 1990 candidacy, fearing my "measured growth" approach might "shut the city down"—strongly urged me to run again. This is hardly consistent with the "no-growth" fiction Mr. Lawrence now desperately pushes (to distract from the current council majority's shortcomings).

Mr. Lawrence claims that a 1994 ordinance that can trigger environmental impact reports for projects with significant traffic impacts hampered revitalization efforts on El Camino Real. But an EIR doesn't mean "no project." It merely ensures that expected impacts (part of sustainability) are publicly documented. And many projects have happened since 1994 (e.g., 1600 ECR,

Menlo Square, Beltramo's project, etc.). I'll proudly continue advocating sustainable growth, "green" building, and positive candidates who take such approaches.

But Mr. Lawrence's fantasy goes on. He paints me as "puppetmaster" for council candidates Heyward Robinson, Rich Cline, and Vince Bressler, like some small town shadow dictator. If so, I would not only need much more free time than a working mom ever has, but also a split personality. Each of these three independent candidates holds different views on several key issues, and where their positions seem similar, their reasons often vary significantly. It's insultingly ridiculous to imply that any candidate could really be "controlled" by a single supporter.

We need to elevate Menlo Park politics, focus on the issues, and stop pushing such fictions and divisive paranoia. We deserve better, and the voters know better. Otherwise, one day we might wake up in a town that's not vibrant and welcoming like Oz's Emerald City, but one that's far less livable and friendly.

Gail Slocum is a former mayor of Menlo Park who lives on Pope Street.



require the city to increase the leachate pumping in order to protect players using the sports fields.

The city's estimates of \$17 million for 17 acres of a sports complex would be just a down payment.

Voters should reject Measure J. Bayfront's modern-day Pandora's Box should not be re-opened.

Lennie Roberts,
legislative advocate
Committee for Green Foothills
La Cuesta Drive, Portola Valley

Maintain momentum in Menlo Park

Editor:

Voters in this fall's City Council election can choose between two slates of candidates, representing two very different visions of the future.

One slate, Vince Bressler, Rich Cline and Heyward Robinson, claim that they are not allied with each other, but as reported in the Almanac on Aug. 16, they are in fact the anointed candidates of the vocal "residentialist" faction in town.

You only have to read their campaign hit pieces and Web sites to realize that their entire campaign is based on their dislike of the incumbent candidates, and that they present only vague ideas of how they would do a better job of leading the city.

At a recent candidate forum, I was astounded at how insubstantial their responses were to citizens' questions about their plans.

Alternatively, we can re-elect council members Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler and elect Transportation Commissioner John Boyle to the council, and maintain the

positive momentum that the city has achieved over the last four years.

They have specific and well-articulated plans for the city's economic future, revitalization of our downtown and commercial areas, maintenance of the city's infrastructure and provision of long-delayed sports fields for our youth. Go to their Web site, at www.mp4wr.com, and you will find details on these projects including real numbers, not the vague and inflammatory hyperbole of their opponents.

Vote for Boyle, Duboc and Winkler to maintain Menlo Park's forward progress.

Frank Tucker
Politzer Drive, Menlo Park

Flawed bargaining on Derry project

Editor:

Recent letters reflect serious misrepresentation concerning the Derry project referendum.

Simply put, the referendum is the result of a derelict negotiating process by Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler.

How many give-aways can Menlo Park support when we have already been mismanaged into a \$2 million annual budget hole?

The Derry referendum will simply ensure that Menlo Park receives fair consideration for giving the project a .75-acre right-of-way and allowing it a 2.5 times housing density boost above the zoning limit. Any council member should be aware that cities normally receive consideration of at least 2 percent of construction costs when significant

zoning changes are involved.

In the Derry case, that means about \$1 million for Menlo Park. At this point, the Derry referendum is the only redress available for our city to receive its due consideration.

I am pleased that there are three City Council candidates with extensive business experience: Heyward Robinson, Vince Bressler and Rich Cline. Even more refreshing is that these three believe in open government and transparent processes. As for Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler, rather than crying about the referendum, they need to explain their attempt to give away another \$1 million of Menlo Park's money.

Craig Lewis
Palm Court, Menlo Park

Stirring it up in election season

Editor:

It's election season and that means politics 24-7. Admit it, we love it.

Promises are made. Blame is spread around in large quantities. The Almanac archives are searched for evidence of wrongdoing in years past. The insult de jour is that candidates or their supporters are behaving in ways that are labeled "political."

At the League of Women Voter's forum candidate Lee Duboc called the referendum on the Derry project a "political" move, presumably to stir up emotions during the campaign season. The legal window of opportunity to file an application for a referendum is specific and

time sensitive. What would be the "political" advantage for taking on this arduous task at this time?

On the other hand, the Duboc/Boyle/Winkler Slate has placed on our November ballot Measure J that is absolutely unnecessary and presumably for the purpose of rousting their supporters and exploiting parents who are searching for additional playing fields.

The language on the ballot asks the voter if the city should have the option to put playing fields at Bayfront Park. What nonsense to ask such a question. The city has always had the option and the Slate had four years to conduct an environmental review to determine if such a proposal is even possible.

Talk about a cynical "political" ploy! This campaign strategy is costing taxpayers money, a clever subsidy to the Slate's election campaign. Candidate Duboc had over a decade while on the Parks and Recreation Commission to produce playing fields and she just didn't get to it. In 1992, the city had an opportunity to gain a field at St. Patrick's Seminary as part of the development permit and Ms. Duboc could have lent her voice to the chorus of parents then asking the council to include a field in the 150-home deal.

Recently the Rosewood Hotel got the Slate's vote but no field. Ms. Duboc had her chance and the Slate let us down. We need new leadership.

Measure J should be defeated. Vote no on J.

Brielle Johnck
Central Avenue, Menlo Park

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The Almanac Endorses Menlo Park City Council

As Menlo Park enters one of the most critical periods in the town's history, strong and innovative leaders are needed on its City Council.

The new members will make tough decisions that could change the look and feel of downtown, and cope with major financial issues, including the loss of substantial sales tax revenues, and an employee pension obligation that is growing exponentially every year.

Just last week, the polarization of the current council and the community was underscored: It appears that enough signatures were obtained for a successful referendum drive

against the Derry project, a complex of commercial space and 135 condominiums proposed at Oak Grove Avenue downtown that was approved by the present council.

And this year's election for three seats on the council does not bode well for ending slate politics, a Menlo Park phenomenon that continues to divide the community. The six candidates for three open seats are split into two camps that reflect the interests of their supporters. The two incumbents in the race, Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler, are joined by John Boyle to form a slate that is generally backed by business and real estate interests. The three challengers, Heyward Robinson, Rich Cline and Vince Bressler, say they are running individual campaigns, but are united in their opposition to candidates Boyle, Duboc and Winkler.

Whoever wins will have to work with council members Kelly Fergusson and Andy Cohen, who do not vote in lockstep but tend to oppose the current council majority. All five members last week voted to support a tax break for General Motors if the firm starts up new dealerships at Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road.

In this politically charged environment, and with so much at stake as the city examines major options for development downtown and in other areas, we believe it is critically important for new council members to be willing and able to work collaboratively with their colleagues on the council. It may be wishful thinking, given Menlo Park's long history of divisive city politics, but we believe there is hope.

The three new council members should have superior negotiating skills with their colleagues, prospective developers and the general public. They should be willing to examine specific elements of the city's general plan as it applies to downtown development, and during the discussion, bring representatives of various factions to the table and at least attempt to resolve their differences. The city cannot continue to be ruled by referendums.

The new members should understand the city's financial situation and the rough years ahead when employee retiree health care costs are to be carried on the books. By the same token, we don't think there is an urgency to privatize every facet of the city in order to escape employee costs or other financial setbacks.

The three candidates who we believe fit this mold and can bring the city together are Heyward Robinson, Rich Cline and John Boyle. All three have put in time on city commissions and are successful in their private lives. We believe the three could put aside slate politics and move the city toward more collaborative decision-making with all parts of the community, an attitude we believe has been missing for the last four years.

Heyward Robinson is an SRI executive who serves on the Parks and Recreation Commission. He believes the city could achieve multiple goals as it selects and approves downtown development

projects. He backed the referendum on the Derry project, but did so in order for a new council to obtain more concessions in return for the project's high density. He said he would seek ideas from the community's business leaders to improve city revenues. And, he said the city could add more playing fields by better utilizing land that it owns without building expensive fields on the shaky landfill at Bayfront Park.

Rich Cline is an independent business owner who believes the city's current political process is broken and needs repair. As a former journalist, Mr. Cline is a strong supporter of open government. He also supports adding housing near transit and would like to re-examine development guidelines for the entire El Camino Real corridor. He backed the Derry project referendum, but said his main interest is to gain more concessions from the developer while keeping the project alive. He says developing fields at Bayfront is too costly, but he is willing to study the matter if Measure J passes.

John Boyle is taking time off from work in venture capital industry to devote time to public service. His work experience, as well as his strong negotiation skills and support from the business community, would bring another dimension to the council. He says his style is to find compromise, to try to see both sides, and to listen. And although he is a strong supporter of the present council majority, he says there were decisions made that could have been handled better.

During the last four years, incumbents Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc have said their goal has been to restore the city's fiscal health. But in the course of that effort, the majority has failed to unite all factions of the community behind a vision Menlo Park in the next 10 to 20 years. We believe Heyward Robinson, Rich Cline and John Boyle, all relatively new faces in local government, can get a fresh start on a path that we hope will bring the community together.

Slippery slope on Measure J; vote no

Measure J asks Menlo Park voters if the city should investigate building playing fields at Bayfront Park, a 160-acre tract atop a capped landfill.

While this measure is not binding on the City Council, it would set in motion more study of the idea, which we think is foolhardy and should not be pursued. There are several good reasons:

■ Bayfront Park was designed and built in the 1970s for passive recreational uses. If its uneven landscape is developed as playing fields, the park would have to be leveled, temporarily exposing the garbage and leachate collection system. Even when leveled, fields built on a decaying landfill would continue to subside, presenting a serious maintenance problem, even if artificial turf were used.

■ At an estimated cost of up to \$1 million an acre (an estimated total of \$10 million to \$17 million depending on how many fields are built), the high cost of fields

may prevent other recreation programs from moving forward.

■ Bayfront Park, which is adjacent to the Bay and the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge, should remain in passive open space. It offers sweeping views of the Bay and is home to many species of birds and other wildlife. Lighted playing fields, and all the associated impacts of multiple sports teams and spectators, would not be compatible with the current use.

■ If the city is sincere in its desire to add playing fields, and if a new council is willing to commit funds, why not partner with sports league officials to purchase playing time at private schools or other venues? In addition, the recent study by the Parks and Recreation Commission showed that more field space can be squeezed from sites already owned by the city.

It is a shame that the council majority continues to push for

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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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LETTERS

Our readers write

Keep sports leagues out of politics

Editor:

I was astonished to receive an e-mail from Alpine Little League containing both a questionable description of Menlo Park's sports fields issue and a patent endorsement of three City Council candidates.

Beyond the obvious inappropriateness of using sports leagues' e-mail lists for political purposes, the e-mail puts the Alpine West Menlo chapter of Little League in the reprehensible position of serving as a mouthpiece for candidates John Boyle, Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler.

Other sports leagues are following suit and ratcheting the whisper campaign up a few notches. Commissioners sympathetic to Winkler, Duboc and Boyle are using our sports leagues as publicity vehicles for their pet candidates. And these are the people teaching our kids about sportsmanship?

It is improper for sports leagues, school boards, churches, and the like to allow use of their e-mail distribution lists for political

Derry referendum a bad deal for city

By Rick Ciardella

It looks like the signature drive against the Derry project has secured enough signatures to call for a referendum. After three years of open, public process, 11 public hearings, and multiple commission and council approvals, the Derry project has been derailed, which represents a huge setback for our city.

In addition to the cost we taxpayers will have to bear for a special election (expected to be over \$60,000), the benefits which had been agreed to are now at risk.

The city stands to lose \$5.7 million in public benefits, including developer-paid fees for parks, roads, and schools.

An additional loss of nearly \$500,000 annually in property taxes, which would have gone to our schools through the expected increase of \$100 million in assessed taxable valuation.

Also, new vibrancy to downtown and downtown merchants would be lost.

And of course, this unusual referendum will have a chilling effect on new business all over Menlo Park. Who will want to invest in our town with this type of unpredictable and endless process?

The signature drive to call a referendum on this project was organized by the same people supporting the opponents of Lee Duboc, Mickie Winkler and John Boyle and was endorsed, not only by them, but also by sitting council members Andy Cohen and Kelly Fergusson.

They say they just want the public to be able to vote on this project. But this drive was clearly about politics. The backers have put their political ambitions above the interests of Menlo Park, using paid signature collectors, scare-tactics, and misrepresentations to succeed.

What's next? Assuming they have, in fact, collected the low threshold number of valid signatures (just 10 percent of reg-

istered voters), the project permit will be suspended and our City Council will have to choose between restarting the whole project approval process or calling for a special, city-wide election to vote on the terms of the project.

The opponents would love nothing more than to win at least one of the council seats up for election so that they can unite with Fergusson and Cohen. They claim that they will somehow be able to "get a better deal" for the city. Meanwhile, we the taxpayers will pay the tab for this obvious effort to dramatically change or block this mixed-use retail/office/housing project. We risk losing the project, and all the benefits to our city, for good.

Should a referendum be called every time someone doesn't like a city decision? Should we hold up progress indefinitely every time? Is this how you want your city to be run?

Rick Ciardella lives on Rose Avenue and is the former board chairman of



GUEST OPINION

advantage favoring any one side. Candidates Vince Bressler, Rich Cline and Heyward Robinson have signed a pledge of ethics and are living and campaigning by it. The harm intentionally caused to them is unknown; but far more damning is the stain on the name

of the individuals who shamelessly perpetuate insinuations without regard for the truth, and to that of candidates who allow their name to be associated with those unsavory practices.

That systematic disinformation, combined with brass-knuckle

tactics, is at the root of the lingering divisiveness pitting neighbor against neighbor in our town.

The AYSO, which was asked by slate fans to disseminate a similar e-mail, declined on ethical grounds, and suggested instead an e-mail referring their member-

ship to non-partisan sources. (For candidates' factual positions, visit www.smartvoter.org.)

As the course of action of David Teichmann, AYSO regional commissioner, must be applauded, so

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any type of development at Bayfront Park, raising false hopes that it is simply open space ready for development. (Remember the failed golf course proposal?) In reality, this is a former landfill that is decaying and subsiding every day. The sooner playing field proponents realize that this is a losing proposition, the sooner they will devote their considerable energy to finding other, viable solutions. We recommend a "no" vote on Measure J.

Utility tax deserves support

On Election Day, Menlo Park voters will be asked to tax themselves to keep the wheels of government turning. They should vote yes.

Measure K would levy a 3.5 percent tax on water, gas and electric bills and 2.5 percent on telephone, cell phone and cable television bills. No single commercial or residential user would pay more than \$12,000 a year.

This is a perfectly reasonable price to pay during the tough budget times currently faced by the city, which has seen a \$6.5 million drop in sales tax revenue from the heady days before the dot-com bust. And despite significant reductions in staff, the city expects to pull \$1.85 million

from its \$21 million of reserves in the current fiscal year.

The tax has won the support of virtually all interest groups in the city, and has no organized opposition. The City Council would review the tax no later than June 2008, and then every two years thereafter. It would take four council votes — two-thirds of the council — to continue the tax, or it would expire at the end of that year.

This tax is needed to support a wide range of city services, including police, emergency preparedness, street and storm drain maintenance, libraries, and youth and senior services. It is a small price to pay for keeping local government operating at a high level.

We recommend a yes vote on Measure K.

Menlo Park City School District

Although there are four candidates on the ballot for three board seats, there really is no contest in this important election. That is because only three candidates are actively taking part. All voters should be advised that Noria Zasslow has not responded to repeated contact efforts (phone, email and regular mail) by the Almanac, and she did not appear for a scheduled candidate interview.

Without Ms. Zasslow's false interest in this race, incumbent

and board president Laura Rich, and candidates Deborah Fitz and Jeff Child would be appointed to the board, saving the district thousands of dollars.

But regardless, residents of the district can rest assured that Ms. Rich, Ms. Fitz and Mr. Child have excellent credentials and experience to cope with the major challenge facing the district — reconfiguring the four campuses and deciding how to allocate the \$91 million in Measure U bonds approved by voters in June.

All three active candidates played major roles in passage of Measure U, and during that time became intimately familiar with the work that needs to be done over the next four years.

Laura Rich, Deborah Fitz and Jeff Child are the best and only choices for the Menlo Park City School District board. Voters should skip Noria Zasslow, who is not a serious candidate.

A bookkeeping measure for Fire District

Voters will be asked on this ballot to approve Measure O, continuation of a \$25 million limit on expenditures by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. This gives the district authority to continue to spend the taxes it takes in, and contains no tax increase.

We recommend a yes vote on this measure.

Support the Portola Valley utility tax cut

We doubt if there will be much opposition to Portola Valley's Measure F, which would lower the town's utility tax from 5.5 to 4.5 percent.

The measure was put on the ballot by the Town Council after the county admitted not sharing the correct amount of property tax revenues with Portola Valley and several other communities in recent years. The change means more than \$400,000 a year in additional revenue for the town, obviating the need for the higher utility tax.

Support for this measure is a no-brainer for Portola Valley residents. We urge a yes vote on Measure F.

Measure A will benefit all parks in county

We hope county voters give a resounding vote of approval to the Measure A, which will levy a tiny, one-eighth-cent sales tax whose proceeds will go to support city, county and regional parks.

If approved by the required two-thirds vote, the tax would provide more than \$300,000 a year to Menlo Park, and just over \$200,000 each to Portola Valley, Atherton and Woodside. Even Ladera would receive \$90,000 for its small recreation district.

This important measure would put all parks in the county on a solid financial footing. We recommend a yes vote on the county's Measure A, which will keep all parks healthy and in good repair.

Sequoia Healthcare District board

Three seats are up in this four-candidate race for the board that helps oversee Sequoia Hospital in partnership with Catholic Healthcare West. The board also presides over funds derived from a small portion of property taxes that have been used for health-related grants to the hospital and other nonprofits in the district.

Our choices in this race are incumbents John Oblak and Arthur Faro, and newcomer Don Horsley, who is retiring as San Mateo County sheriff and seeking to unseat Jack Hickey. Mr. Horsley, a Redwood City resident and experienced administrator, has pledged to work hard on the hospital's seismic retrofitting project, and continue the grant-giving program.

In our view, Mr. Hickey is an obstructionist who has never supported the district, often saying that it should be dissolved. He has been a nuisance to serious board members who are working to support the hospital, and should not be returned to office. ■

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