

SCHOOLS: Major changes ahead for Hillview
Middle School. Key meeting set for this week. Page 5

The Almanac

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



See Page 24

DECEMBER 6, 2006

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VOL. 42 NO. 14

AFRICAN ENTERPRISE

A Menlo Park businesswoman taps
nascent entrepreneurial spirits of
Kenyan women and girls
Page 16





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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Artful peace

St. Joseph seventh-graders carefully folded 1,000 origami paper cranes as an art project and prayer for peace. The hands of students Brooke Hobbs, Rachel Henry and Shawn Cho are shown working with colorful origami paper to make the tiny birds. A photo of the completed project is on **Page 5**.

Atherton

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Menlo Park

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Portola Valley

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Holiday Fund

■ Opportunity Center: new focus for homeless services. **Page 24**

Food & Drink

■ Super-chef Michael Mina comes to Kepler's to talk about his new cookbook and "trio concept" cooking. **Cover, Section 2**

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On the cover

Menlo Park resident and independent businesswoman Gwen Books finds her way to Kenya occasionally to offer business advice to entrepreneurial young women there. She is a board member and fundraiser for Project Baobab, which aims to empower girls and women by teaching them to start and manage small businesses. Photo by Marjan Sadoughi. The story begins on **Page 16**.

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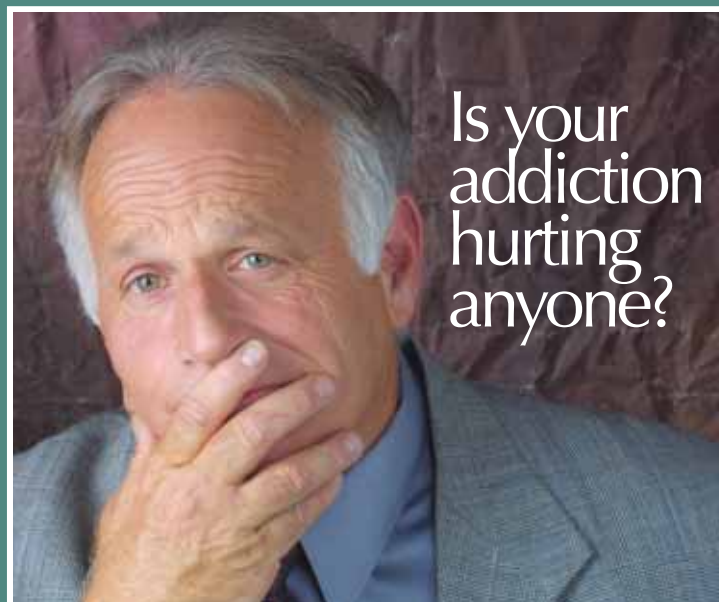
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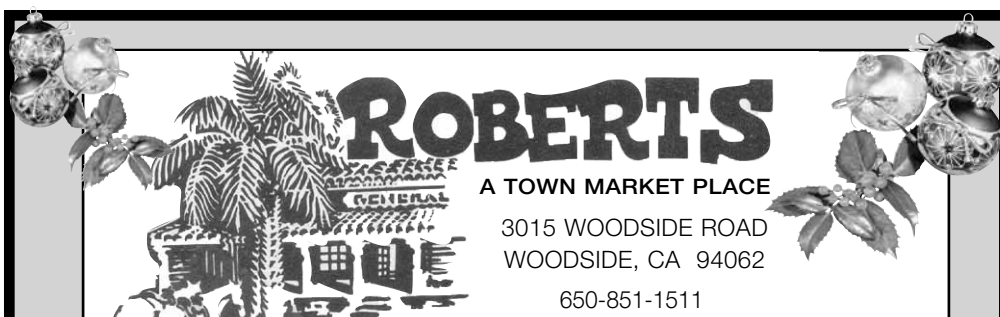
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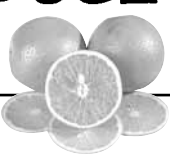
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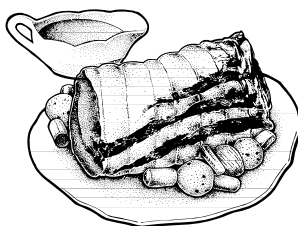
California		LARGE NAVEL ORANGES	99¢ lb.
Large		FUJI APPLES	79¢ lb.
Frost Kissed for Flavor		ARTICHOKES	99¢ ea.
Fresh Cut		BROCCOLI CROWNS	79¢ lb.

Roasting Basics

Dressing up your holiday dinner with a succulent roast is a great way to celebrate the season. Be sure you have a heavy metal roasting pan with a rack that fits it and a working meat thermometer. Remember that the internal temperature of a roast continues to rise after it comes out of the oven. Working with a fresh chicken or turkey is best, and also try to get a "roaster" instead of a "broiler" bird as the meat will be more tender. Cook it within two or three days of buying it. Rubbing spices under the skin, as opposed to on top of it, will cause the flavor to permeate into the meat.

At ROBERTS MARKET, we are excited about the upcoming holiday season. We want to help you make everything come out fantastic, including your holiday meal. If you're thinking of roasting chicken or turkey over the holidays, please see us. We can get you the perfect bird to roast, and provide you with all the know how to cook it. We feature the finest produce, meats, poultry, and seafood available in the area, and we have a great selection of marinades which help change the taste of your favorite meats.

Hint: Be sure to cook your roast to the proper recommended temperature for healthy eating.



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DELI

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SIDE DISHES

 **POTATO AU GRATIN** — *baked with cheese, garlic, spices and cream ~*

	Serves 12 to 16	\$28.00
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 **SAUTÉED BRUSSELS SPROUTS** — *with pine nuts and pancetta ~*

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Pint \$5.00	Quart \$10.00
-------------	---------------

 **TRADITIONAL STUFFING** — *with mushrooms, celery, onions, and water chestnuts ~*

Pint \$5.00	Quart \$10.00
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 **FRESHMADE CRANBERRY SAUCE** — *with a touch of orange ~*

Pint \$4.50	Quart \$9.00
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 **PORCINI MUSHROOM GRAVY** Pint \$5.50 Quart \$11.00

 **BEEF AU JUS** Pint \$5.50 Quart \$11.00

DESSERTS

 **UPPER CRUST BAKERY** ~ **8" Pies:** *Apple, Apple Streusel, Berry Supreme, Pumpkin, Pumpkin Amaretto, Cranapple and Pecan*

	Serves 6 to 8	\$14.99
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 **RUBICON BAKERY** ~ **8" Tarts:** *Apple Almond, Apple Cranberry, Caramel Nut, Lemon*

	Serves 6	\$14.99
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6" Cakes: *Pumpkin Cheesecake, Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Turtle, Carrot Spice Cake*

	Serves 6	\$14.99
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Buche De Noël: *Chocolate Log Cake with Mocha Butter Cream Filling*

	Serves 6 to 8	\$15.99
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Happy Holidays from Roberts Market

WINE

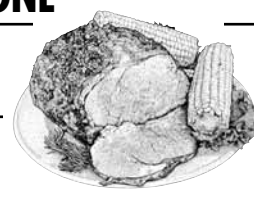
Reds for Roasts

Roast meats tend to favor heartier red wines. Whether you are hosting a holiday party, or a family dinner, you'll want delicious, yet affordable, wines. Here are a few excellent examples, sale priced.

2005 Goats do Roam Red, South Africa —	Reg. \$9.00	Sale \$7.99
A juicy, flavorful red made from Rhone varietals. Fun!		
2004 Steltzner Claret, Napa Valley —	Reg. \$16.00	Sale \$13.99
A beautiful, precise Boudeaux blend of Cabernet and Merlot.		
2003 Martolla "Hammer" Syrah, California —	Reg. \$20.00	Sale \$14.99
Here's a hearty red filled with pepper and spice.		
2004 Mas de Gourgonnier, Les Baux de Provence —	Reg. \$18.00	Sale \$15.99
The essence of Grenache with bright cherry/strawberry fruit and cracked black pepper hints.		
2002 Mario Perelli-Minetti Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa —	Reg. \$20.00	Sale \$17.99
A classic from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. You won't find a better Cab. under \$20.		
2003 Honig Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley —	Reg. \$33.00	Sale \$29.99
From the heart of Oakville, this is a rich, balanced, sophisticated Cab.		

MEAT/POULTRY

PRIME RIB WITH BONE	\$11.98 lb.
FRESH BRISKET	\$4.98 lb.
CROSS RIB ROAST	\$4.49 lb.
FULTON VALLEY ORGANIC CHICKEN	\$2.99 lb.





Hank's for the memories

As the Menlo Park City Council majority leaves office on Tuesday, one of their most vocal — and entertaining — supporters is also leaving the political limelight.

Hank Lawrence, who backs council members Lee Duboc, Nicholas Jellins and Mickie Winkler week in and week out at council meetings, is moving to Maryland for a new job.

Mr. Lawrence has addressed the council three or four times in the same meeting, and has used that time to poke fun at council members Andy Cohen and Kelly Ferguson and slam local unions.

Mr. Lawrence announced his imminent departure and resignation from the city's Transportation Commission at the Nov. 28 council meeting.

Runs with cameras

Jamie MacNiven of Buck's restaurant in Woodside reports his son Tyler has thrown himself into another unusual adventure. Tyler, a Woodside high alum, recent winner of the CBS-TV reality show *The Amazing Race*, and chip off the ol' block, has found a new country to hoof it across.

Tyler made a documentary about walking across Japan, and is now in the midst of documenting himself running across another far-off land. Stay tuned for more details ...

Reality bites Atherton

Atherton is a posh Peninsula town, a Podunk city in Australia, the last name of an oft-quoted ex-cricket player named Mike, and now, apparently ... a Podunk band.

Atherton is featured on the soundtrack of MTV's reality-ish series *Laguna Beach* with an emo-pop ballad called *California*. Track 19, "Atherton — California," caused a few double-takes in the newsroom. If anyone can discover a local connection between Atherton-the-band and Atherton-the-town, be sure to give the Short Takes editor a holla at agemmet@almanacnews.com.

Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Big changes ahead for Hillview school

■ Enrollment at middle school projected to grow from 660 students to 911 in 2014.

By Marjorie Mader

Almanac Staff Writer

Major changes are ahead for Hillview Middle School as the Menlo Park City School District confronts a projected 38 percent leap in enrollment by 2014.

The school district board will hold the first of three meetings

on Hillview's future at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6, in the school library at 1100 Elder Ave. in Menlo Park.

The two additional meetings are set for Jan. 30 and March 6. At the last meeting, the board is expected to approve a plan from among options that could include razing the existing buildings, except the multi-pur-

■ INFORMATION

- The Menlo Park City School District board meets Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 7 p.m. in the Hillview school library, 1100 Elder Ave., Menlo Park, to discuss facilities expansion at Hillview Middle School. Information: 321-7140.
- For updates on the facility development process for all schools, go to www.mpcsd.org and click on "Facility Link."
- People may contact board members and the superintendent by sending an e-mail to board@mpcsd.org.

pose building, and constructing new facilities on a reconfigured campus.

The public will be given the

chance at all three meetings to weigh in on options for the district's only middle school, which is projected to grow in enrollment from the current 660 students to 911 in 2014.

"We want as many people — parents, Hillview neighbors and community members — to participate in the meetings prior to the board's taking action," Superintendent Ken Ranella said.

A prior modernization project at the middle school campus, bordered on the south by Santa Cruz Avenue, had drawn fire from a number of neighbors, whose concerns included traffic, parking and noise.

Decisions on the Hillview building program are important elements of the master plan on expanding and upgrading facilities at all district schools, using funds from a \$91-million bond measure passed by voters last June.

The district faces a substantial projected growth in enrollment from 2,248 students this year to 2,642 in 2016. In the past two years, more kindergartners and primary students have entered district schools.

The board on Oct. 25 voted to alter grade configurations at the district's three elementary

See **HILLVIEW**, page 8

Hanging out for peace

Seventh-graders at St. Joseph's School in Atherton admire their mobile made of 1,000 paper cranes. Art teacher Jan Reeves led the students in making the origami birds and asked students to write or say a prayer for peace as they worked. Ms. Reeves says the project was inspired by "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes," the famous book about a young Hiroshima survivor. Another photo is on **Page 3**.

The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi



Will it be a fight to the bitter end?

■ Bickering over agenda may lead to run-in at final council meeting.

By Rory Brown

Almanac Staff Writer

A new Menlo Park City Council is poised to take office on Dec. 5, but even as the new leaders promise a renewal of consensus and civility in the council chambers, current council members may have one last fight left in them.

The first council meeting in December of an election year is usually a ceremonial gathering,

when new council members take office, outgoing members are recognized for their service, and a new mayor is named.

But with the council majority of Lee Duboc, Nicholas Jellins and Mickie Winkler leaving office, Councilman Andy Cohen broke with tradition, pushing for a Dec. 5 reconsideration — after the new council is seated — of several decisions backed by the majority at the

■ MENLO PARK

Nov. 28 meeting.

Mr. Cohen officially requested that the council reconsider, among other matters, the vote to allow the conversion of an office building at 321 Middlefield Rd. to medical offices. He voted for the project on Nov. 28, he said, in order to be able to put it on the table later for reconsideration.

A council member can ask for such a reconsideration only if he or she previously voted in the majority, and the vote is changed at the next meeting, said Dan Sie-

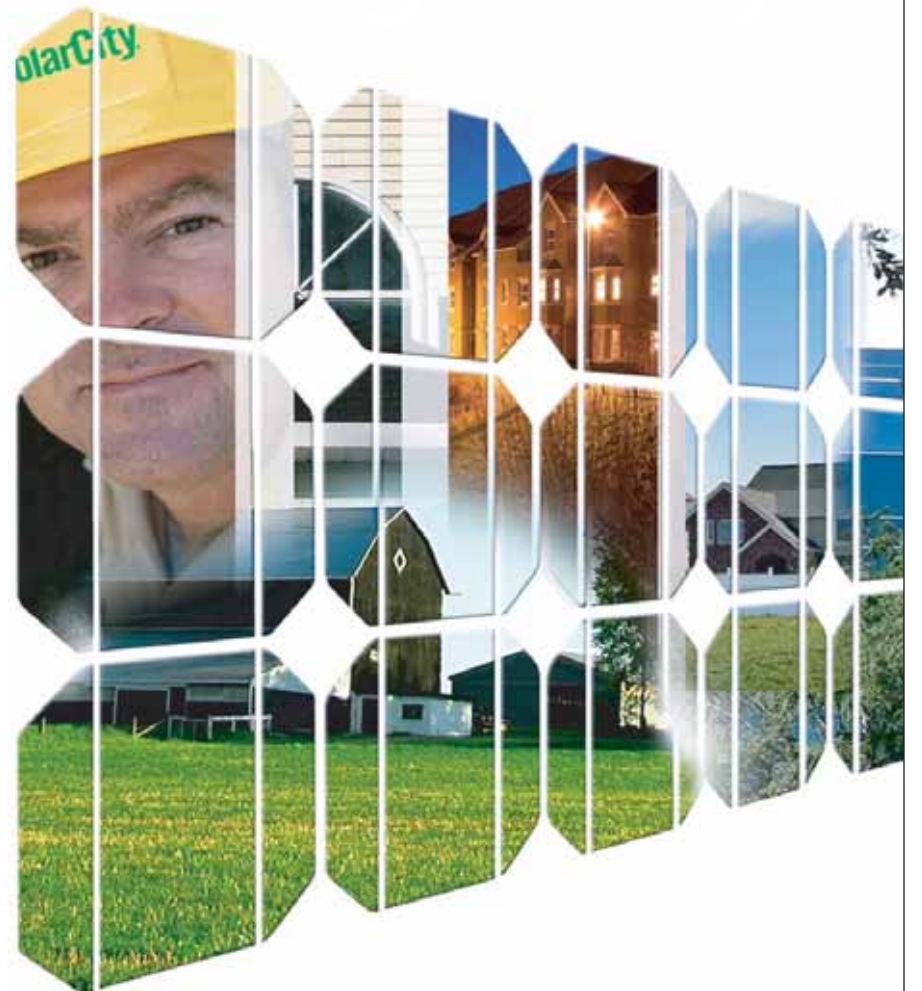
gel, the city's acting city attorney.

But outgoing council member Jellins, who as mayor sets the agenda for each meeting with City Manager David Boesch, rejected Mr. Cohen's request, instead scheduling the reconsideration of the votes before, rather than after, the swearing-in of the new council members.

The council is set for a political shift, and may have the votes to overturn some decisions when the new members are seated. Mr. Cohen and Councilwoman

See **COUNCIL MEETING**, page 8

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Green enough? Atherton won't sign global warming pledge

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

Atherton is No. 1 ... in energy consumption per household, that is.

Atherton households consume three to four times more energy than the average San Mateo County household, according to Jill Boone, the county's resource conservation program manager.

In light of that dubious distinction, Atherton officials are contemplating ways to encourage residents to design big beautiful houses that suck up less gas and electricity. They're also looking at ways to make town facilities more energy efficient.

"This is something we don't want to be No. 1 at," said Mayor Charles Marsala at the City Council's Nov. 15 meeting.

However, don't expect Atherton to join the ranks of towns like Portola Valley in pledging to reduce greenhouse gases by signing the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, at least not anytime soon. Mr. Marsala, who

passed around a copy of Al Gore's book on global warming, "An Inconvenient Truth," couldn't get a majority of his council colleagues to agree to sign onto the pledge to reduce the town's greenhouse gas emissions.

Councilman Jim Janz supported the pledge. However, it failed on a 2-2 vote with Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen absent.

"I want to be sure we don't adopt window-dressing kinds of measures without practical applications," said Councilman Jerry Carlson.

Councilman Alan Carlson said that the town already has put environmentally friendly regulations in place. Atherton is one of the biggest recyclers of green waste, and it was the first city in California to enact a demolition-recycling program, he said.

"Just because we sign it, it makes us feel good about ourselves? I don't see the point of it," Mr. Carlson said.

Ms. Boone said the Mayors' Agreement was being considered by a number of cities in the county; Portola Valley has already

signed on. The county has passed a resolution to reduce emissions and energy consumption at its own facilities by 2010, she said.

Several residents at the meeting spoke in favor of Atherton's signing the agreement, saying that global warming is a serious concern, and one spoke against it.

The council voted 4-0 to send the matter to its Environmental Programs Committee, the newly renamed advisory body formerly known as the Waste Reduction Committee. The committee is charged with making Atherton-specific recommendations.

The council did decide to pursue joining PG&E's Energy Watch program, which offers a free energy-use analysis and creation of a priority list of energy-saving retrofit projects to local government agencies.

"Whatever we do tonight, it should not be construed that we aren't concerned (about global warming)," said Councilman Jerry Carlson, adding that anything the town ultimately passes would need to be "Athertonized." ■

Vehicles targeted in local crime wave

An overnight crime wave struck Friday, Dec. 1, at several residences of the Suburban Park, Lorelei Manor and Flood Park Triangle neighborhoods in Menlo Park.

Thieves got away with a black 1997 Honda Accord from Greenwood Place and a white 1997 Ford F-150 pickup from Dunsmuir Way. Police also recovered a gold 2002 Volvo Cross-Country that had been stolen from Lorelei Lane and crashed in East Palo Alto, said spokeswoman Nicole Acker of the Menlo Park Police Department.

On the same night, stereos were discovered missing from vehicles on Dunsmuir Way and Lorelei Lane, along with an iPod player, shoes, a backpack, sunglasses, gym clothes, cash and music CDs. Two of the three vehicles were unlocked, police said.

Police also noted reports of tampering with three other vehicles in the neighborhood.

Police seek suspects in armed robbery

Three people leaving their vehicle were held up at gunpoint at about 8:15 p.m. on Nov. 28 in the 1200 block of Sevier Avenue in the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park. The robbers demanded wallets and money, and the victims handed over \$50 in cash, Menlo Park police reported.

The two armed men were in a group of five, police said. One was carrying a black handgun, and wore a black baseball cap and a brown long sleeved shirt. The other held a long-barreled black gun, and wore a black T-shirt.

The suspects were described as black, in their early 20s, and approximately 5 foot 7 inches to 5 foot 11 inches tall with average to husky builds. Anyone with information is asked to call investigation unit at 330-6300 or the anonymous tip line at 330-6395

■ CRIME BRIEFS

Fixing Dumbarton Bridge traffic jams

■ Public comment sought at meeting Thursday.

Anyone who lives or works near the streets that feed cars onto the Dumbarton Bridge is probably painfully aware of the traffic that frequently jams the area.

For those who'd like to do more than just complain, there's a meeting this Thursday to get citizen input on long-term traffic solutions. The first Menlo Park meeting of the "Dumbarton Dialogue Project" is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 7, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

at the Onetta Harris Community Center at 100 Terminal Ave.

The meeting will focus on "managing the traffic impacts" in areas adjacent to Dumbarton Bridge and along U.S. 101, according to a press release issued by the East Palo Alto-based project.

The project is intended to complement efforts by the City/County Association of Governments — San Mateo County's official traffic-congestion management

agency — to develop a 20-year traffic plan along the Peninsula, according to the release. The project seeks to involve residents of six Peninsula cities, including Menlo Park and Atherton.

The project is not associated with scoping sessions and meetings related to the planned Dumbarton Rail project to add a train line to the East Bay along the Dumbarton rail spur.

For more information, go to DumbartonDialogue.org or call (510) 352-7826.



LOOK FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS WITH JOY

A JOURNEY THROUGH ADVENT AT LADERA COMMUNITY CHURCH

DEC. 3	9:30 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00 A.M. ADVENT FESTIVAL WITH SOUP LUNCH & HANGING OF THE GREENS (RSVP: 854-5481)
DEC. 10	9:30 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00 A.M. HOLIDAY CONCERT BY MTN. VIEW HIGH SCHOOL'S MADRIGALS 12:30 P.M. MEAL-SERVING TO THE HOMELESS (SIGN UP WITH LINDA AT 851-1787)
DEC. 17	9:30 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE FEATURING VIVALDI'S <i>GLORIA</i> . CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA DIRECTED BY MARK HANSON
DEC. 24	9:30 A.M. SCRIPTURE & HOLIDAY CAROLS 5:00 P.M. CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 9:00 P.M. COMMUNION SERVICE

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The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Taking shape

Rick Young uses a band saw to shape a piece of oak at the Barn Woodshop at Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park — a step on the way to creating a coffee table for a client.

HILLVIEW

continued from page 5

schools. Encinal, now a grade 3-5 school, will become a K-5. Laurel will add a third grade and become a K-3 school. Oak Knoll will continue as a K-5 school.

The Dec. 6 meeting on Hillview, which serves students in grades 6-8, will focus on how the district can provide additional facilities to house more students on the small, eight-acre campus. Hillview has 11 portable classrooms, and its multi-purpose room was built for about 500 students.

Board members this week will consider design criteria and give direction to the district architect and facility committee for developing design options. They also intend to address the impacts of parking and traffic.

At the Jan. 30 meeting, the architect and facility committee are scheduled to present “optional conceptual designs” for the school. The board is expected to choose options for further study.

Before the bond election in June, two options were put forth for providing more facilities at Hillview. One scenario was to expand the middle school by additions such as two-story

classroom buildings and an auditorium.

The other was to construct a new school on the playing field area of the existing campus and to tear down the existing school buildings, except the multi-purpose room, after completing the new buildings.

Mr. Ranella said he expects to present a recommendation for the Hillview facilities project at the March 6 meeting. His presentation will include architectural site plans and renderings, and the projected budget for the project. The board is expected to take action at the same meeting. ■

COUNCIL MEETING

continued from page 5

Kelly Fergusson often opposed the majority’s decisions, and supported two of the three councilmen-elect — Richard Cline and Heyward Robinson — leading up to the election.

If the agenda stands, Mr. Cohen and Ms. Fergusson won’t have a majority of votes to change any decisions.

Not willing to give up the fight, Mr. Cohen on Monday asked that his request to reconsider the previous decisions be moved from a “regular business item” to a “written communication” item

on the council’s agenda.

Such a change would allow the new council to take on the matter at a future meeting, Mr. Cohen said, basing his statement on a conversation he had with Mr. Siegel.

Mayor Jellins said the council will stick with the current agenda.

“The [item] will be called on the agenda as it is listed,” he said on Monday.

Mr. Jellins said he scheduled the item to be considered by the current rather than the incoming council, because he “[does] not presume to manage the business agenda of any council [he is] not a part of.” ■

Morrow murder trial delayed again

Inaction by the Court of Appeals has postponed the trial of Joseph Morrow, the Menlo Park man accused of murdering his wife Donna in 1991 and burying her in a 10-foot-deep hole in Los Gatos.

It has been nearly four months since the state Supreme Court directed the Court of Appeals to provide a detailed explanation as to why it denied a motion by Mr. Morrow’s defense attorneys. The attorneys want Judge Craig Parsons removed from the trial because a conflict of interest could occur if a colleague is called

■ BRIEFS

as a witness for the prosecution.

Mr. Morrow’s next court appearance in San Mateo County Superior Court is set for 9 a.m. Jan. 5, when Judge Parsons is scheduled to set a new jury trial date.

Hayman sentencing reset for January

Sentencing has been rescheduled to Jan. 10 for Guy Delmar Hayman, the former coach of the Woodside High School girls’ varsity basketball team who is accused

of molesting a 14- or 15-year-old girl not associated with the team.

Mr. Hayman pleaded no contest to one felony count of lewd and lascivious conduct with the girl, and one misdemeanor count of annoying or molesting her, the San Mateo County District Attorney’s Office reported.

Mr. Hayman coached at Woodside for seven or eight years, said Woodside High Principal Linda Common.

He is out on a \$500,000 bail. He faces a sentence of up to three years in prison, said prosecutor Greg Devitt.

Fergusson: ‘I’m optimistic we can come together’

By Rory Brown

Almanac Staff Writer

The stage may be set for a contentious Menlo Park City Council meeting, but Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson said she hopes two upcoming events — a “One Menlo Park” reception and a special “brainstorming session” — will help heal the city’s political divisions.

■ MENLO PARK

Ms. Fergusson and Councilman Andy Cohen, who have been outnumbered by the outgoing council majority of Lee Duboc, Nicholas Jellins and Mickie Winkler for two years, are the driving forces behind both events.

“I’m optimistic we can come together as a council, and as a city,” said Ms. Fergusson, who is likely to be named mayor at the council’s meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 5.

Following the meeting, the city will hold a reception open to the public labeled “One Menlo Park.” The reception is tentatively scheduled for 8 p.m. at the Gatehouse, near the intersection of Laurel Street and Ravenswood Avenue.

Ms. Fergusson said the goal of the reception is to get residents together, and erase the city’s political divide. She said she personally invited residents who are often her most-outspoken political opponents, such as Lorie Sinnott, Dick Poe and Mary Gilles.

‘Brainstorming session’

One of the first things the new council will do is hold a special meeting, labeled a “brainstorming session,” on Saturday, Dec. 9, to hear what the public has to say about the city’s future.

The council majority of Lee Duboc, Nicholas Jellins and Mickie Winkler were criticized for making some decisions without enough public input. Mr. Cohen said the meeting is “an example of how the new council will listen to the public.”

The meeting is scheduled for 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the main community room of the Burgess Recreation Center at 700 Alma St.

Child care, refreshments, and Spanish language interpretation will be provided. ■

Cameras to catch red-light runners

■ Menlo Park plans to install up to 20 cameras at busy intersections.

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park plans to install up to 20 cameras at busy intersections to catch violators, and the new system could generate \$1 million a year in ticket fines — up to \$500,000 of which the city would get to keep.

The Menlo Park City Council unanimously approved the new system at its Nov. 28 meeting.

The cameras, which may be operational by July, will enable police to check — via photographs and video footage — the license plates of red-light runners. Tickets will be mailed to violators.

Although Police Chief Bruce Goitia said the purpose of the program is to decrease accidents, he acknowledged it could be a substantial money-maker, netting the city as much as \$500,000 a year after paying off \$533,000 a year in costs.

Among the new costs for the city will be \$6,350 a month per camera, paid to a private com-



Marjan Sadoughi/The Almanac

Cameras to catch red-light runners — like this one at an intersection in San Mateo — could net the city up to \$500,000 a year in new revenues, officials estimate.

pany to maintain the cameras; and adding staff to view violations, administer tickets and prosecute violators in court.

The typical fine for a red-light

■ MENLO PARK

violation is about \$320, and about \$180 of that goes into the city's coffers, Chief Goitia said.

In approving the cameras, the city entered into a five-year deal with Los Angeles-based Redflex Traffic Systems, which will install up to 20 cameras at no cost to the city.

Chief Goitia said cameras are planned for the following intersections:

■ Northbound Bayfront Expressway at Willow Road.

■ Eastbound Marsh Road at Bayfront Expressway.

■ Both sides of El Camino Real at Ravenswood Avenue.

■ Both sides of El Camino Real at Valparaiso Avenue.

■ Westbound Ravenswood Avenue at El Camino Real.

The city currently has no Menlo Park officers whose primary assignment is traffic enforcement, Chief Goitia said.

From January 1999 to December 2005, 194 collisions and 119 injuries have been caused by red-light violations, he said in a staff report. ■

Woodside jockey sets all-time win record

Russell Baze rode into history Dec. 1 as the all-time winningest jockey in thoroughbred horse racing, notching his 9,531st victory at Bay Meadows Racetrack in San Mateo.

In the fourth race of the day, Baze rode 4-year-old filly Butterfly Belle triumphantly past the finish line at 2:19 p.m., officially surpassing Laffit Pincay Jr., whose mark of 9,530 career wins had lasted for the past seven years.

Baze, who was born in Vancouver, British Columbia and now lives in Woodside, began racing in 1974 in Washington, and has spent most of his career racing in Northern California at Bay Meadows and Golden Gate Fields in Berkeley, according to the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA).

Tallying more than 400 wins in 11 of the past 13 years, Baze also won the National Turf Writers Association's Isaac Murphy Award as the jockey with the top winning percentage nationally for the first nine years the award was given, the streak ending in 2004, according to the NTRA.

In 1999, Baze was inducted into the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

"He's an extremely durable guy," said museum spokesman Mike Kane. "It was not a question of if he was going to break the record, it was a question of when he was



At age 48, Russell Baze is 'an extremely durable guy.'

going to break the record."

Kane said that with no debilitating injuries holding Baze back for extended periods of time, such as those that often hinder or end the careers of other jockeys, Baze has been methodically winning races for years and now

stands at the top of the industry. "It's a testament to his ability, and also to his durability," Kane said.

Kane added that Baze is well-liked by his peers and has not allowed his success in the industry to diminish his work ethic. Unlike many jockeys of Baze's age and accomplishment, Baze is known to show up early in the morning at the racetrack to train the horses before the afternoon races, according to Kane.

Now 48 years old and with no plans for retirement, Baze could be considered thoroughbred racing's Iron Man. "He'll crack 10,000 in a few years, you'd have to think," Kane said.

With the next closest active rider in his late 50s and about 3,000 wins behind, Kane estimated Baze's record could stand for quite a while. "We're going to be mentioning the name of Russell Baze for a long time," Kane said.

— Bay City News Service



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Derry referendum: Negotiations may influence project's fate

■ Council decides to check legality of referendum petitions.

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

More than 2,500 Menlo Park voters signed petitions to put the "Derry" condo-commercial project on the ballot, but voters may not get a

say in the fate of the project.

Instead, Morris Brown, spokesperson for the residents' group that led the petition drive against the project, is using the signatures as ammunition to negotiate a smaller, less-dense

project with the developer.

Mr. Brown and Jim Pollart of the O'Brien Group, the San Mateo-based developer of the project, have been trying to hammer out a compromise in private since Nov. 14, with Mr. Brown effectively speak-

ing on behalf of the people who signed the referendum petitions.

Because Mr. Brown submitted the petition signatures to the city clerk, he is permitted to negotiate on behalf of the referendum proponents, said City Attorney Bill McClure.

Mr. Brown and members of Menlo Park Tomorrow, the residents' group that led the petition drive, said the project has too many housing units per acre, the four-story buildings are too tall, and the project would significantly impact traffic and schools.

The group led the petition drive on the pitch: "Give Menlo Park a vote." But that goal has changed, as Mr. Brown and Mr. Pollart have agreed to try to negotiate a new project—a move some council members criticize.

"I have a big problem that a self-appointed ambassador is negotiating with the developer," said Councilwoman Mickie Winkler at the Nov. 28 council meeting. She said that the project should go to a vote, because that's what the

Continued on next page

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Continued from previous page

referendum petitions called for. Councilwoman Lee Duboc said the negotiations between Mr. Brown and Mr. Pollart “should be a more public matter,” and said she is “troubled” that the fate of the project could be influenced behind closed doors.

Mr. Brown acknowledged that there is “some pressure” on the referendum organizers to negotiate a deal that satisfies referendum supporters, but noted that a new project would be publicly reviewed by the Planning Commission and council.

“We’re not doing anything behind closed doors that’s binding,” he said. “If we can’t reach an agreement, we’ll turn it over to the council. We’re just trying to work out a deal if we can.”

Both parties addressed the council on Nov. 28 and asked council members not to rescind two ordinances adopted in the approval of the project, or put the ordinances on the ballot for voters to decide, so the two sides can keep trying to hammer out a deal.

The two ordinances were endorsed by the council in September, when it approved the project to build 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 — land owned by the Derry family.

Petitions legal?

Instead of putting the project

to the voters, the council voted 4-1 on Nov. 28 to file a declaratory relief action in court to determine whether the referendum petitions are legal.

Councilman Andy Cohen

opposed the move, and said, “no action is the best action” to encourage the two parties to negotiate a deal.

The O’Brien Group has argued that the petitions are invalid for

two reasons:

■ Referendum proponents didn’t include a specific notice that is required by the state elections code to be printed on the petitions.

■ The ordinances challenged aren’t subject to the referendum process because the petitioners didn’t challenge the general plan amendment that made adoption of the ordinances possible. ■

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Stabbing victims are released

Two people who were left lying on a sidewalk with critical stab wounds Nov. 16 have been released from the hospital and are recovering, said Sgt. Jim Simpson of the Menlo Park Police Department.

The victims, a man and a woman in their early 40s, were each stabbed multiple times, mainly in the torso, in the 1400 block of Plumas Avenue at about 6:40 p.m. Police said an argument had escalated into violence.

“The investigation is progressing,” said Sgt. Simpson. Police are not releasing the names of the victims.

Anyone with information is asked to call the department’s detective unit at 330-6345.

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Another \$1 million gift to Town Center complex

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

The fund to build a new Town Center complex in Portola Valley grew by \$1 million recently in a single anonymous gift from a married couple residing in town.

The gift to the Portola Valley Community Fund is to be spent on the emergency response facility in the new Town Hall, the library, the community hall and sports facilities, said fund co-chair Sally Ann Reiss.

For the project, estimated to cost \$20 million, the building fund now totals \$13.1 million in gifts, pledges and public money, she said. The remaining \$6.9 million is to be raised in a public campaign that begins this month. Ms. Reiss said she hopes to raise \$3 million more by February.

The recent anonymous donor of \$1 million wants to ensure that the part of Town Hall set to serve as an emergency response center is a "walk-out-safe" facility, Ms. Reiss said.

To date, a semi-public solicitation of major donors has raised \$10.1 million in 60 private gifts and pledges, including five of at least \$1 million and 10 of at least \$100,000.

If the \$20 million goal is not met, Town Council members have said they might consider a bond measure, a parcel tax, or shrinking the project to fit available funding.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for the spring, after the current

deconstruction and future demolition of the old Portola Valley School complex, which served for 30 years as Town Hall, library and community hall.

Major donors

The following "major donors" are individuals and organizations that have given or pledged at least \$50,000 to the new Portola Valley Town Center complex. Donors are grouped by animal names created by the fundraiser — mountain lion, bobcat, etc. — based on the size of the gift. Source: Portola Valley Community Fund, Dec. 4, 2006.

■ **Mountain lion (\$1 million or more):** John Arrillaga, Derry and Charlene Kabcenell, Bill and Jean Lane, TOSA Foundation, Anonymous.

■ **Bobcat (\$500,000-\$999,999):** Fogarty Family Foundation, Gordon Russell.

■ **Coyote (\$250,000-\$499,999):** John and Sylvia Hughes.

■ **Fox (\$100,000-\$249,999):** Ed and Lynne Davis, Len Shustek and Donna Dubinsky, Chong-Moon and Reiko Lee, Tor and Nancy Lund, Dave and Laure Kastanis, Chip and Kay McIntosh, Anonymous.

■ **Deer (\$50,000-\$99,999):** Steve Fabbro, Stewart and Megan Koch, Jim and Guila Pollock, Sand Hill Foundation, Ron and Sharon Walter, Anonymous. ■

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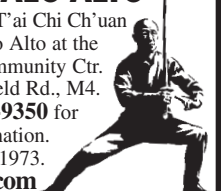
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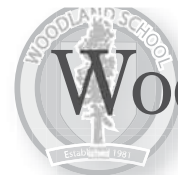
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AFRICAN ENTERPRISE

Cover Story
by David Boyce



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

A Menlo Park businesswoman taps nascent entrepreneurial spirits of Kenyan women and girls

If you were an ambitious and impoverished girl or young woman growing up in Kenya, the odds, over and above your poverty, would be stacked against you. Boys get to go to high school for free while you would have to pay several hundred dollars a year; your father would be allowed to marry you off in exchange for cattle; as a young mother struggling to keep a roof overhead and food on the table, if you were to be caught stealing or were to have an abortion, you could spend years in prison.

'As a woman, I know how difficult it is to succeed.'

GWEN BOOKS



Such are the realities in this part of East Africa, says Menlo Park resident Gwen Books, a board member and fundraiser for Palo Alto-based Project Baobab. The five-year-old nonprofit conducts classes for poor but enterprising young Kenyan women to teach them how to plan and start a small business.

"Women have so little going for them in a country that is really run by men," says Ms. Books in a recent interview with the Almanac. "What we're trying to do is teach them not to be so demure. It's kind of become my life's work. I can't afford not to work (in Silicon Valley), but I'm wildly passionate about this."

"As a woman, I know how difficult it is to succeed."

Ms. Books, 57, began her career as an executive assistant and now occupies a niche she created: she is a concierge for venture capitalists, for whom she handles schedules, vacations and other "lifestyle management" matters.

She grew up in a "very close, loving family" in Ojai, about 80 miles north of Los Angeles, and has lived on the Peninsula for 37 years. "I've had a privileged, lucky life, but I can identify with (Kenyan women) not knowing how to start a busi-

ness," she says. "Their challenges are daunting by our standards."

Poverty and AIDS are endemic in Kenya. About 20 million people — 58 percent of the population — live on less than \$2 a day, and about 2.6 million are HIV positive, according to World Bank estimates. Among the victims are parents, who can pick up the disease unknowingly if they or their spouses philander or use prostitution to supplement the family income. When they die, their children often go to orphanages, where they may get just one meal a day, Ms. Books says.

She recalls talking with a young mother on a beach where she was gutting and drying fish brought ashore by fishermen. The woman said she agreed to have unprotected sex with one of the fishermen, perhaps to keep her job, Ms. Books says. "I need to feed my children today," she recalls the woman telling her. "If I get AIDS in two years, at least I can feed my children."

Project Baobab — named after the all-purpose tree common to equatorial Africa — can change the odds. With about 200 hours of instruction on how to run a business and write a business plan, plus the chance to win a micro-grant of \$100, a Kenyan woman can go places, Ms. Books says.

It's enough to start a roadside fruit-and-vegetable stand, or a little sewing shop to repair used clothing, or a design shop for indigenous jewelry or a one-cow dairy, she says.

Tabitha, a 44-year-old mother of four, won a Baobab grant and started a dairy. The Kenyan woman later greeted her with, "You've saved my life," Ms. Books says. "I've never met

The equatorial sun warms Menlo Park resident Gwen Books, right, as she chats with Tabitha, a Kenyan mother of four whose business plan for a dairy won a \$100 competitive micro-grant from Project Baobab. Ms. Books is a Baobab board member.

Photo courtesy of Gwen Books

more grateful, kind people.”

A certain resonance

Africa has worked its magic on Gwen Books. “Once you visit, you come back and you want to do something,” she says. “Something in Africa resonated with me on my first trip.”

By habit, she wasn’t looking for tourist spots. “I want layers and layers of culture,” she says. “It’s important to me to know more about the people and to meet the people, if I can.”

Her first encounter came at Cape Flats, a low-income section of Cape Town in South Africa. Her tour guides — three “very edgy” apartheid-era activists who had once been jailed on notorious Robben Island — picked her up at her hotel. “Initially, I was very afraid,” she says, but also respectful.

“I’m not going to take my American brashness and assume that it’s OK to be me,” she adds. “That land is their home.”

She relaxed, she says, once inside a Cape Flats restaurant measuring about 5 feet by 5 feet, with a dirt floor and a roof of corrugated steel. “I was very impressed that they ran a business in these conditions,” she says. “Yet, these people are always happy. They’re always smiling.”

An encounter with three girls in Kenya who made and sold jewelry led her to bring some of it back, sell it, pay the girls what they asked for and donate the rest to Project Baobab.

Back in this country, where she does all her fundraising, Ms.



Photo courtesy of Gwen Books

Ann Kuraru, a graduate of Project Baobab’s business management classes in Kenya, launched her own business making and selling jewelry, including the bracelets she is wearing.

Books does her share of smiling, too, and raised about \$5,000 in 2005 and \$6,000 so far this year, she says.

“I just want to share my enthusiasm with everyone I know,” she says. It’s a circle of giving. “My clients ask me for donations for their pet projects, their loves,” she says. “I give and they give back.”

Some 65 percent of Baobab’s revenues comes from individual American donors, she says. Even caterers have been cajoled into donating to her fundraising parties. “I’m not afraid to ask anybody for anything,” she says.

Most of Project Baobab’s revenue goes for teacher training and salaries for the three in-country staff, says program founder Gee Gee Williams of Palo Alto.

A recent budget included about \$70,000 in spending, said Baobab board member Jack McLaughlin. Institutional donors include the Global Fund for Women, the Nike Foundation in partnership with Washington D.C.-based Technoserve, and the Juniper Networks Foundation Fund, based in Sunnyvale.

The program

“If women are successfully contributing to society, then perhaps the old ways of how women are recognized — subservient and under tutelage — can change,” says Ms. Williams.

Her efforts in Kenya appear to

have struck a nerve. Each new Project Baobab class is heavily oversubscribed: 125 applicants for 25 available slots, she says.

The Baobab program trains Kenyan teachers and offers elective classes at six schools in or around the capital, Nairobi, plus a program inside Nairobi’s Lan’gata Women’s Prison.

The life-skills part of the curriculum includes classes in gender empowerment, decision making, assertiveness, communication skills and AIDS

See **KENYA**, page 18

Cobras and lizards and lumps in the bed — Oh my!

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park resident Gwen Books says she loves being with animals.

That sentiment has been tested in Africa, where she’s had occasion to travel on the job as an independent concierge for her clientele of Silicon Valley venture capitalists. Her purpose: to scope out vacation spots and suitable accommodations for her executive clients.

One night found her and her niece just arrived at “a five-star tree house” in a Kenyan wilderness camp, she says. Under the exposed floorboards, they heard a scuttling of animal footsteps, and they were getting closer.

With the footsteps setting the mood — “We were terrified,” Ms. Books says — they put a suitcase in front of the door and looked to their beds, where they saw a lump under the covers of one of them.

“Auntie Gwen,” her niece cried, “there’s something in my bed!”

Ms. Books got a stick and whaled away at the lump, then pulled the covers back. “I killed the hot water bottle,” she says.

On another occasion, when she and her niece were staying in a two-person lodge, they happened across “a wee little viper,” as a British man passing by called it.

He asked them for a pair of sunglasses and an empty tote bag and, with a stick, picked up the spitting cobra — said to be extremely good at shooting venom into one’s eyes from as much as 10 feet away — and dropped it into the tote bag. He then emptied the bag in the vicinity of their lodge.

“You know, you didn’t have to put it by our lodge,” Ms. Books recalls saying to the man, who then replied: “Oh, it’s scared to death. It will go away.”

On another evening in a two-story thatched platform with no walls and overlooking the Great Rift Valley, they were lounging in their beds when they discovered a black lizard on the floor. “Imagine a black pickle with a stump tail,” Ms. Books says.

They jumped up and zipped down their mosquito nets. “We lay down and complimented ourselves on our ingenuity,” she recalls. But then: “Our luggage is out there. We’re going to have lizards in our shorts!” ■



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Three African bracelets show the creativity of ambitious young Kenyan women.



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

‘If women are successfully contributing to society, then perhaps the old ways of how women are recognized can change.’

GE E GE WILLIAMS,
PROJECT BAOBAB FOUNDER



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Digitized photos recall memories of Kenya for Gwen Books, who raises money to spur Kenyan women to realize their entrepreneurial potential.

KENYA

continued from page 17

awareness and prevention.

The entrepreneurial section addresses planning, starting and managing a small local business, including lessons in budgeting, marketing, inventory control, risk management, legal issues and business ethics.

The program awards about 32 competitive \$100 micro-grants per year, with four going to each of the six schools and several more going to women imprisoned for nonviolent offenses, Ms. Williams says. To be eligible, applicants must make a presentation before a committee of program and institution officials. The grants go to the business plans with the most potential.

Since its inception in 2001, Baobab has enrolled 500 women and awarded about 170 grants, Ms. Williams says.

Last year, Baobab began assigning Kenyan women to mentor and track the progress of women receiving the grants. The periodic oversight provides support and reminds them of the need to be accountable to the program, says Ms. Williams.

Weighing the risks

Traveling entails risk; traveling to an equatorial country raises the stakes a bit, with threats of food-, water- and insect-borne diseases.

The World Factbook, published by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, labels the risk of illness in Kenya as "very high." The U.S. State Department warns travelers to be wary of terror attacks and violent crime, especially after dark.

For Ms. Books, such risks are manageable. "My life is not a dress rehearsal," she says. "I'm not going to stay home if I hear somebody's going to bomb an embassy (and) I have absolutely no fear of getting sick. I'm a very positive person in general. I don't worry about things."

That said, she is up-to-date on her shots, travels with a full medical kit, and, most importantly to her, she always carries a flashlight at night.

She says she is never without a Kenyan companion while in Nairobi — a sprawling megacity of high-rise offices, tree-lined residential neighborhoods and teeming slums of dirt-floored, tin-roofed shacks.

Ms. Books says she loved poring over maps and globes as a child. "I just have an intense curiosity about the world and what's out there and about other people." ■

INFORMATION

To learn more about Project Baobab, go to projectbaobab.org or call 328-9332.

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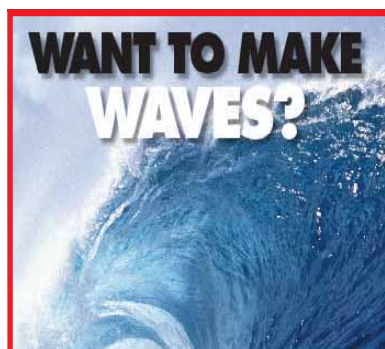


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Election results become official

■ Menlo Park's utility tax passes by slim margin.

Semi-official results of the Nov. 7 election will be entered into the official record this week when the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meets Dec. 5.

The supervisors will certify the final results, issued Nov. 21 after a prolonged count by county elections official.

On the local front, the nail-biter ballot measure, Menlo Park's Measure K, passed by 65 votes. That will allow the City Council to enact a utility tax of up to 3.5 percent on water, gas and electric bills, and up to 2.5 percent on cable TV, Internet, landline telephone and cell phone bills.

Although the measure was losing in the first days after the election, that changed with the final

count, including absentee votes dropped off on election day. The vote was 5,418 yes (50.3 percent), and 5,353 no. Approval by only a simple majority of measures was required for passage.

Other results of races and ballot measures of local interest (the * indicates winners):

■ **Menlo Park City Council.** Three open seats. *Heyward Robinson, 5,959 (19.93 percent); *Richard Cline, 5,744 (19.21 percent); *John Boyle, 4,952 (16.56 percent); Vincent Bressler, 4,839 (16.18 percent); Lee Duboc, 4,432 (14.82 percent); Mickie Winkler, 3,980 (13.31 percent).

■ **Sequoia Healthcare District.** Three open seats. *Don Horsley, 30,627 (25.89 percent); *Art Faro, 29,475 (24.92 percent);

*Jack Hickey, 29,232 (24.71 percent); John Oblak, 28,960 (24.48 percent).

■ **Menlo Park City School District.** Three open seats. *Laura Linkletter Rich, 5,891 (31.40 percent); *Jeffrey Child, 5,644 (30.08 percent); *Deborah Fitz, 5,190 (27.66 percent); Noria Zasslow, 2,038 (10.86 percent).

■ **Measure J.** Menlo Park advisory vote on playfields in Bayfront Park. *No, 6,675 (60.97 percent); Yes, 4,273 (39.03 percent).

■ **Measure F.** Portola Valley utility tax decrease. *Yes, 1,944 (86.25 percent); No, 310 (13.75 percent).

■ **Measure O.** Menlo Park Fire Protection District, maintaining appropriations limit. *Yes, 15,805 (79.51 percent); No, 4,074 (20.49 percent).

MP council OKs tax-sharing deal with GM

■ GM will decide by Jan. 15 whether to build auto mall on Bayfront Expressway.

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

The Menlo Park City Council supports the idea of an auto mall in east Menlo Park and sharing tax dollars generated from the auto mall with General Motors. Now it's the automaker's turn to decide if the project is worthwhile.

The council voted 5-0 on Nov. 28 to approve an agreement with GM that would evenly split sales tax revenue generated from GM auto sales at the proposed auto mall, which would be built on a 22-acre Tyco Electronics site at the intersection of Bayfront Expressway and Willow Road.

GM plans to decide by Jan. 15 whether to buy the site from Tyco and move ahead with the project, GM spokesman Jim Gentry said. The tax-sharing agreement is an essential part of the plan, GM said.

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

If all goes according to plan, the GM dealerships could be up and running in 18 to 24 months, Mr. Gentry said.

The sales tax agreement is

proposed to last 15 years, or until GM receives \$10 million. GM estimates first-year sales tax revenue from its dealerships at \$1.5 million, meaning the city would get \$750,000.

The city does not currently share sales tax revenue with any other business, but the council said the agreement was worthwhile to boost the city's slumping sales tax revenue.

Mayor Nicholas Jellins cautioned the future council (three new members will be seated Dec. 5, replacing Mr. Jellins and Councilwomen Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc) to "be careful not to let this fish get away."

GM is requesting the agreement to offset the high cost of the land, estimated to be more than \$20 million, said David Johnson, the city's business development manager.

Although the council approved the tax sharing-agreement, the auto mall itself would require separate review and council approval.

"Auto Mall Expressway"?

GM has a slew of other requests, including changing the name of Bayfront Expressway to something along the lines of "Auto Mall Expressway" to draw

consumers.

Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson said the proposed name change gave her "a gag reflex," and she insisted the word "Bayfront" stay in the expressway's name.

Mr. Gentry said GM is flexible concerning the renaming of the expressway, but said adding "auto mall" to roadways is effective in increasing the visibility of auto malls.

Other requests by GM include adding signs on U.S. 101 alerting drivers to the auto mall, and providing increased police patrol of the car lots. ■




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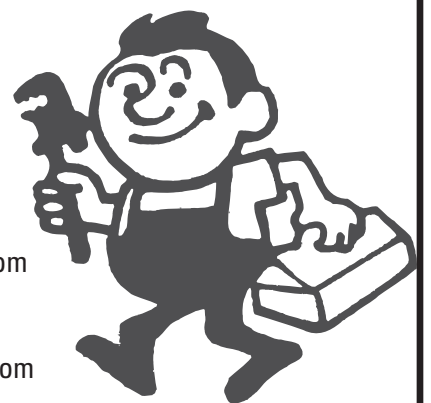
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Holiday storytelling

Storyteller Carolyn Power will spin holiday tales about Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa for children of all ages in a free program at the Atherton library at 4 p.m. Monday, Dec. 11. Ms. Power's energetic delivery entrances audiences and engages children in the stories, says retired children's

librarian Marcia Elias. The Atherton library is located at 2 Dinkelspiel Lane, behind the Town Council Chambers; call 328-2422 x225 or go to www.smcl.org.



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New fire station to be unveiled at open house

Santa's coming to a new fire-house this year.

On Wednesday, December 13, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., the Woodside Fire Protection District is set to hold its annual holiday open house at all three fire stations, as usual. What's new is that the just-completed station 19 on Jefferson Avenue in Emerald Hills will be open, and the special guest is Chief Mike Fuge, who recently retired after a 42-year career as a Woodside firefighter.

Cookies, hot cocoa, a visit from Santa and shiny red fire engines will be featured at all three stations.

Station 7 is located at 3111 Woodside Road in Woodside; station 8 is at 135 Portola Road in Portola Valley; and the new station 19 is at 4091 Jefferson Ave.

For information, call 851-1594.

PV meet on dogs

The Portola Valley Town Council will consider on Dec. 13 a way to foster community discussion on whether dogs should be allowed on the trail system in the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood. The meeting starts at its 8 p.m. in the Historic Schoolhouse.

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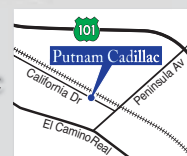


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Kepler's launches in-store movies-by-mail venture

■ Test collaboration with Peninsula video store to showcase eclectic movie collection.

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

An experiment involving Kepler's Bookstore and a nearby video store could create a new subscription model for mail-order movies: rent them from a network of mom-and-pop video stores.

During the current trial run, MovieCrazy.com, a startup based in Palo Alto, has enlisted a video store in Mountain View to rent movies and TV shows through a computer kiosk located in Kepler's, or online.

The set-up is intended to attract customers loyal to independent bookstores and video stores — and anyone with eclectic tastes — by providing them a way to find both mainstream and rare items while patronizing their preferred type of merchant.

"It's a perfect combination," said Mr. Nguyen in an interview with the Almanac. "Everyone wins. The store wins, the customer wins, the community wins."

Underlying this scheme is a concern for the commons. Mr. Kepler said he sees local merchants as vital to a community's character. Chain stores and malls, he said, threaten local charm with volume pricing and huge inventories, but they also extract money from within the community.

This concern is common to small businesses, whether in Menlo Park or Kansas, said Mr. Nguyen. With MovieCrazy, people will find the online convenience of a big rental company and the personal service of a small business, whether it's

down the street or in the next state, he said.

Given the uproar when Kepler's closed its doors last year, it's clear, Mr. Kepler said, that local residents value the city's character. "I think the only challenge that Menlo Park has is how to take that desire and create a downtown that people want to come and shop in."

The MovieCrazy collaboration "is an opportunity for us, as a community and the merchants in the community, to do something different," he added.

A Kepler's kiosk would be just the beginning. The goal at MovieCrazy is to enlarge its network to include video stores from across the nation, said Mr. Nguyen.

The Internet Movie Data Base states that 363,000 movies have been theatrically released. Not enough of them are widely accessible, Mr. Nguyen said.

As independent bookstores have acquired an online presence through Book Sense, so might small video stores, run on a shoestring, leverage the network of MovieCrazy, he added.

MovieCrazy may have an edge in its discounts. The regular monthly rate for three DVD movies is \$16.99, but a year's subscription lowers it to \$13.75.

Mr. Nguyen, 44, has bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering from Brown University, and a master's in business from Cornell University. His career in product marketing and sales includes a stint at IBM and Massachusetts-based medical database



The Almanac/David Boyce

Tan Nguyen, president of MovieCrazy.com, exercises a rent-movies-by-mail kiosk in Kepler's Bookstore.

company PhaseForward, which he helped take public.

Eclectic collection

In the 1960s, Albert and David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin directed "Salesman," a documen-

tary about the real-life experiences of a group of door-to-door Bible salesmen in the Mid-West. Reviewers praise the movie's wit and the anecdotes exchanged when the salesmen meet.

Netflix offers five of the 35

films by the Maysles brothers, but "Salesman" is not among them. It's not available from Blockbuster, either. It is in the collection at MovieCrazy.com.

For more information, go to moviecrazy.com/gift/keplers. ■

Doll Project drawing aids local hunger program

Three "dream dolls" await the winners of the annual Doll Project drawing to benefit the Ecumenical Hunger Program.

Each doll comes with a trunk and complete handmade wardrobe, including a bridal gown, party dresses, sports outfits, ethnic outfits, coats, sweaters and nightwear. Each outfit also comes with accessories. For example, the ice skating costume comes with skates; the bride's gown has satin shoes trimmed with pearls. Clothing was sewn by volunteers Bridget Morgan, Gail Reed, Chris Kurtz, and Nancy Hughes.

Dolls from past years have become collector items, says project founder Luanne Malk-

mus of Woodside.

Tickets for the drawing at \$5 each, or five for \$20, are available at Calla in Menlo Park, where one of the dolls is on display. The drawing will be held Saturday, Dec. 23.

The doll project was started seven years ago by Ms. Malkmus, a volunteer for the East Palo Alto-based Ecumenical Hunger Program. She got the idea for a doll drawing from growing up in Stockton where a local charity raffled off a doll, complete with fabulous wardrobe, every year.

Over seven years, the drawing has raised more than \$100,000 for the Ecumenical Hunger Program. For more information, call Ms. Malkmus at 851-7879.

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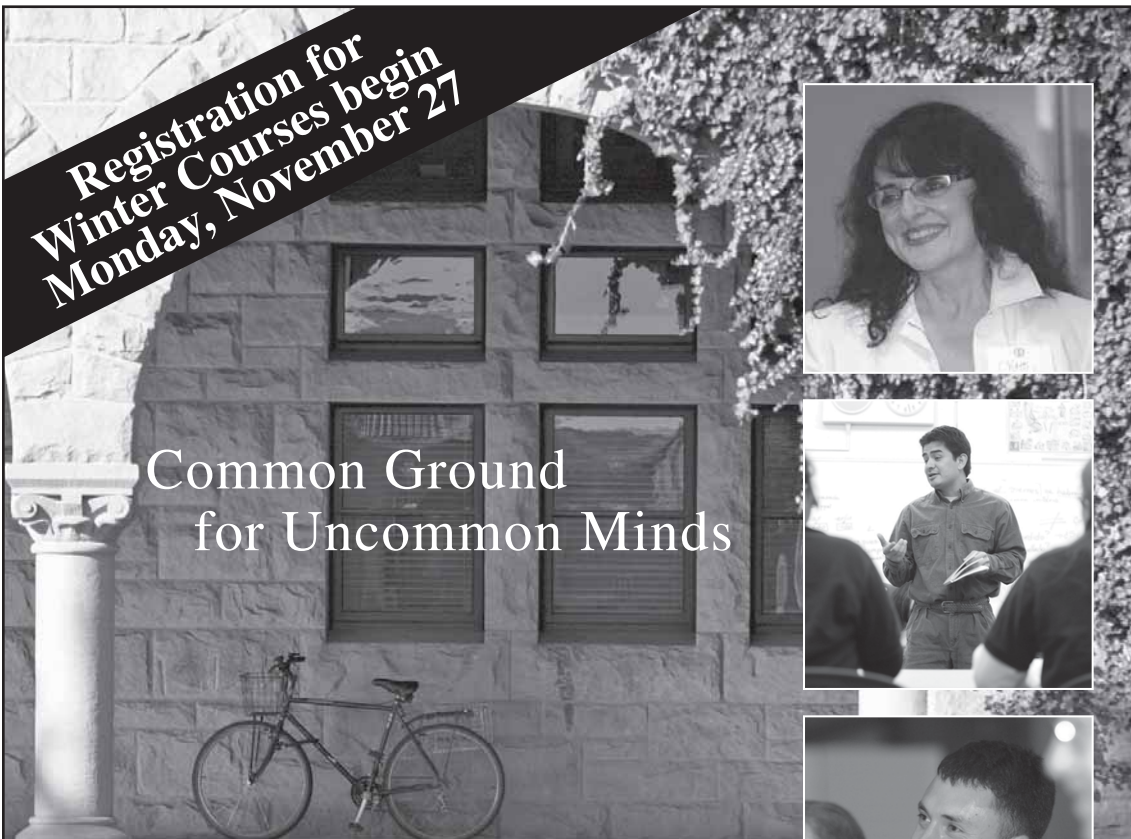
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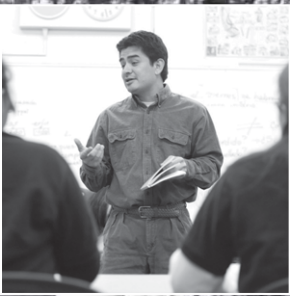
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FOR THE RECORD

Josetta Walsh, co-founder, Child and Family Institute

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Dec. 16, in Santa Clara for Josetta Walsh, who died Nov. 10 in Menlo Park, where she had lived for more than 20 years. She was 77.

The service will start at 2 p.m. at Mission Santa Clara de Assi at 500 El Camino Real. A reception will follow the service.

Josetta Walsh and Kris Goodrich founded the Child

■ OBITUARY

and Family Institute in Menlo Park in 1986. The institute conducts programs that explore the richness of family life and community. Today about 400 families take part in the institute's programs.

Ms. Walsh, whose teaching career spanned 59 years, was born in New York City. As a former member of the Sisters of the Holy Names, she taught primary grades for 20 years. After earning a master's degree in education from the College of Notre Dame in Belmont, she founded the Casa Maria Montessori School on the grounds of the Holy Names Convent in Los Gatos.

In 1980 she founded a Child and Family Institute at Santa Clara University to serve alumnae families. During her career, she taught and lectured throughout the United States;



Josetta Walsh's teaching career spanned 59 years.

she delivered a speech at the first conference on education sponsored by the World Future Society at the University of Houston.

Her final vision was creating the World Peace Village, honoring the common thread of the Golden Rule in each faith. The village is a learning tool that includes six centers representing different faiths: Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Native American, Muslim and Jewish.

Memorial donations may be made to the Child and Family Institute, 330 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

■ OBITUARY POLICY

The Almanac publishes obituaries about people who lived in Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside, or played a prominent role in one of these communities. These obituaries are news stories, written by Almanac staff writers, based on information provided by mortuaries and family members. There is no charge. Due to space limits and other reasons, these stories may not include all the information a family wishes. Some families choose to write their own memorial announcements, and purchase space to publish them in the Almanac. For information about that, e-mail Blanca Yoc in the Advertising Department at byoc@paweb.com, or call 326-8210, ext. 239.

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■ WEDDING

Page-Goslee

Tovis Erika Page and George Fisher Goslee Jr. were married Sept. 3 at the historic Castle in the Clouds estate in central New Hampshire, overlooking Lake Winnepesaukee.

The bride is the daughter of Martha and Robert Page of Woodside. She is a graduate of Woodside Elementary and Woodside High Schools and Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York. A doctoral student at Harvard University, she is writing her dissertation in San Francisco.

The bridegroom is the son of Nancy and George Goslee of Chagrin Falls, Ohio. He is a graduate of the Hawken School in Cleveland, Skidmore College, and the Fisher School of Business at Ohio State University in Columbus. He is a manager and financial analyst at Network Appliance in Redwood Shores.

Although they knew each other at Skidmore, the couple renewed their acquaintance at their 10th college reunion.

Instead of bridesmaids and



Tovis Page and George Goslee Jr.

groomsmen, Tovis and George asked close friends, including Christy Cowman, a Woodside High School classmate, and Ben Page, the bride's brother, to take part in the actual wedding ceremony.

Additional festivities were held at the Page's lakeside summer cottage near Melvin Village, New Hampshire.

The newlyweds are living in San Francisco.

■ POLICE CALLS

ATHERTON

Domestic violence report: Ashfield Road, Nov. 28.

Juvenile problem report: Student found on campus with a blow torch and a locking-blade knife, Menlo-Atherton High School at 555 Middlefield Road, Nov. 30.

MENLO PARK

Stolen vehicle reports:

■ Gray 1991 Honda Accord, 200 block of Bay Road, Nov. 24.

■ Brown 1986 Toyota Camry, 1400 block of Hill Avenue, Nov. 25.

■ Gray 1994 Honda Civic, 400 block of Pope Street, Nov. 29.

Auto burglary reports:

■ Rims, tires and window stolen from Ford Explorer, 100 block of Baywood Avenue, Nov. 30.

Burglary reports:

■ Box containing \$50 stolen, 200 block of Oak Grove Avenue, Nov. 24.

■ Storage lockers burglarized, 800 block of Coleman Avenue, Nov. 25.

■ Camping items stolen from storage locker, 800 block of Coleman Avenue, Nov. 26.

■ TVs stolen, 1100 block of Hamilton Court, Nov. 30.

Grand theft report: Tree stolen from property, first block of Palm Court, Nov. 30.

Fraud reports:

■ ID theft, 1300 block of Hollyburne Avenue, Nov. 30.

Spousal abuse reports:

■ 300 block of Terminal Avenue, Nov. 29.

■ 1300 block of Willow Road, Nov. 30.

WOODSIDE

Theft report: Industrial steam-cleaning machine worth \$700 stolen from driveway, 2000 block of Woodside Road, Nov. 24.

WEST MENLO PARK

Stolen vehicle report: Silver 2001 Toyota 4 Runner stolen with keys in ignition and doors unlocked, 3000 block of Alameda de las Pulgas, Nov. 28.

■ BIRTHS

Menlo Park

■ Julie Yang and Asoka De Saram, a daughter, Oct. 25, at Sequoia Hospital.

■ Lisa and Timothy Kerns, a daughter, Nov. 13, at Sequoia Hospital.

Portola Valley's Bill Lane talks of 'California Dream'

Portola Valley's Ambassador Bill Lane will lead off a discussion of "Living the California Dream" at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, at the San Mateo County History Museum, 2200 Broadway in Redwood City.

The old-fashioned Chautauqua will highlight the opening of a new exhibit exploring the growth of suburban living in San Mateo County as part of its 150th anniversary celebration.

Mr. Lane, former publisher of Sunset Magazine, will talk about how Sunset has molded the ideas of western living in San Mateo County and throughout

the West, since it opened its Menlo Park offices in 1951.

Mr. Lane will be joined by T. Jack Foster, Jr., who helped develop Foster City as one of the first new planned communities in California. Jerry Hill, president of the Board of Supervisors, will talk about the future of suburban San Mateo County.

Admission to the museum is \$4 for adults, \$2 for seniors, and free for museum members and children under six.

For information, call 299-0104, or check out the Sesqui-centennial Web site at www.smc150.org.



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The new Family and Friends Infant CPR program is a two-hour interactive class conducted by a certified instructor. The information in this class is specific for babies up to one year of age and includes presentation, video, text, practice on infant models and a certificate of completion.

- Thursday, December 7

✱ **MULTIPLES BREASTFEEDING SEMINAR**

If you're expecting twins or more, this seminar can help you plan for the challenges of breastfeeding multiples. A certified lactation consultant will lead the discussion and answer questions. This seminar is only offered every 2-3 months, so sign up today!

- Thursday, December 14

✱ **BECOMING GRANDPARENTS**

Designed for new and expectant grandparents, this class examines the changes in labor and delivery practices, the latest recommendations for infant care and the unique role of grandparents in today's society.

- Wednesday, December 20

✱ **NEW FAMILY PROGRAM**

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Opportunity Center: new focus for homeless services

By Marion Softky

Almanac Staff Writer

Privacy. Dignity. Hope. These simple words gain meaning as Winston describes his desperate journey through drugs, alcohol and living in the bushes, to his own apartment in the new Opportunity Center, which opened in September in Palo Alto.

"I feel hopeful," he says. "I'm out of a shelter. I've got my first apartment in 10 years."

Winston now lives in one of 88 apartments — 70 for singles; 18 for families — being rented to very-low income people in the five-story red building at 33 Encina Ave., off El Camino Real between Town and Country Village and the Palo Alto Medical Foundation.

The Opportunity Center is the focus of years of dreams and efforts by local groups to help the destitute and impoverished on the Midpeninsula. In 2002, the Urban Ministry, which for years helped the homeless under the ministry of the Rev. Jim Burklo, merged with InnVision, a major provider of services to the homeless in San Jose and Santa Clara County. In 2004, InnVision added the Clara-Mateo Alliance, which operates a homeless shelter, transitional housing, and the Elsa Segovia drop-in center for women and families on the campus of the Veterans Affairs

medical center in Menlo Park.

When the floods of 1998 washed out the Urban Ministry's outdoor drop-in center at the Red Cross near the Palo Alto train station, a group of local community leaders established the Community Working Group to serve these vulnerable people.

Eight years and \$24 million later, the Opportunity Center provides these services and more on the ground floor, while the new apartments provide at least some housing for

those who need it. With 270 applications for 88 apartments, "we'll make a dent, but we still need a lot more affordable housing," says Anne Ehresman, senior vice president of InnVision.

Most of the apartments rent for \$371 to \$835 per month, depending on size. Rent is subsidized for

about 20 percent of the apartments thanks to an endowment raised by the Community Working Group.

The ground floor of the Opportunity Center is an amazing place. Toward the railroad tracks is a drop-in center for singles with a wide range of services from laundry and lockers, to computers and counseling.

Toward El Camino is a new family drop-in center with a separate entrance, where residents and people from the community, and their kids,



Gifts to the Holiday Fund benefit InnVision, a provider of services to homeless people. For more information, call 853-8672 or go to innvision.org. To see poems by a resident of the Opportunity Center, go to AlmanacNews.com. Under Town Square, click on "View all Town Square postings" and then the "Around Town" category.



Veronica Weber/Palo Alto Weekly

Mary Ann Morgan, left, and Beth Keating share a laugh while reading the paper at the Opportunity Center.

can gather, and tap into social services and computers. "We have tutoring, cooking, a game night, and a movie night," says case manager Kristin Chandler. "It's open to the community and people who live here."

Plus, there's a clothes closet and a medical clinic.

Urban Ministry and Clara-Mateo programs in other locations are still operating under InnVision Peninsula Programs. The Urban Ministry's Palo Alto food closet is celebrating its 30th year. Hotel de Zink is still providing shelter, rotating among Palo Alto churches. And hot meals are served every day at area churches, including Sunday dinners at Holy Trinity Church in Menlo Park.

Over in Building 323D at the Veterans Affairs medical center in Menlo Park, the Clara-Mateo Alliance still

provides 141 beds for families, singles and couples, along with counseling, help with jobs, and programs for children. The Elsa Segovia Center offers drop-in services for women and families, including three

'To date we've served close to 400 people this year.'

EMMA CALDERON,
DIRECTOR OF FAMILY SHELTERS

days a week of pre-school from Family Connections.

Like the Opportunity Center, the shelter at Clara-Mateo separates families from singles, with different entrances. For both families and singles, there is a 90-day emergency shelter program, as well as six-months of transitional housing for

people who have stabilized, says Emma Calderon, director of the family shelters. Residents live in dormitory-style rooms with shared bathrooms.

"To date we've served close to 400 people this year," says Ms. Calderon. Eighty percent of shelter residents move to stable housing, and 100 percent from the transitional housing, she notes.

Some lucky residents, including Winston and seven families, got to move from Clara-Mateo to the new apartments in the Opportunity Center.

For Winston the move has been inspiring. Once an agricultural inspector for the state, and a teacher of people with disabilities, he descended into drugs and alcohol. "I lost my apartment. I lived from friend to friend, and soon I had no friends," he says in an interview at the Opportunity Center. "Like most of us, I was my own worst enemy."

He lived on the street and in the bushes, and did the hardest thing. He asked for help.

Winston spent the last seven months at Clara-Mateo. Now he's working with the volunteer Downtown Streets team of homeless who clean the streets of Palo Alto, and get vouchers, transit tickets and goodies in return. The center staff is trying to arrange for him to receive Social Security for a disability so he can pay the rent.

And now that he has privacy, Winston is trying to catch up on his reading and his writing. "I write mostly poems and short stories," he says. "My pain seems to be in my muse." ■

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This project is sponsored in part by the Dept of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Program, the NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program (NOAA-CRP), the Institute for Fisheries Resources—NOAA CRP Partnership, and the San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program—a program of C/CAG

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Gimme shelter: Teens in trouble find refuge at Your House South

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

When things are said that can't be unsaid, when tempers flare and fists are raised, there's a safe haven for troubled teens in San Mateo County.

Located in a nondescript three-bedroom house off West Selby Lane, Your House South is a refuge for runaway teens while they and their families work on reuniting.

It's one of 20 programs, ranging from a 24-hour suicide prevention hotline to transitional housing for foster care wards, that are offered by Youth and Family Enrichment Services, a San Carlos-based nonprofit agency serving San Mateo County residents.

Whether they're brought in by the police, or are referred by a school counselor or a friend, most teens at Your House South are only 14 or 15 years old, says program coordinator Rina Abrams.

Some leave home because of abuse — parents who use fists or phone cords to inflict corporal punishment. Some are escaping parents who abuse drugs and alcohol, she said. Quite a few are first-generation Americans rebelling against their very traditional parents, she says.

"Right now, we have two kids in the house who speak Tagalog, one who speaks Burmese and one who speaks Hindi," Ms. Abrams says. "We have a diverse staff, and we have diverse kids."

On an annual budget of \$550,000, Your House South provides crisis interventions, counseling sessions, homework help and 24-hour-a-day supervision. It costs about \$148 a day per child, says Ms. Abrams.

Placement is voluntary, and kids who stay at Your House South must agree to abide by house rules. They receive individual and family counseling, attend group sessions and do chores, all while attending school and doing homework.

Although it's hard to believe, the teens thrive when rules are clear and consistent, following them brings rewards, and breaking rules brings consequences, says Bob Rybicki, the executive director of Youth and Family Enrichment Services.

"The counselors try to teach



Gifts to the Holiday Fund benefit Youth and Family Enrichment Services.

age-appropriate parenting skills," says Mr. Rybicki. "Basically, we're modeling parenting skills for the parents while they're there. A lot of the time, parents drop off the kid, and say, 'Now fix my kid.' But it's not (about) fixing the kids, it's fixing the family system."

About 90 percent of the time it works, he says. Usually it takes a few sessions for the staff to uncover the real source of the problems, though, he says.

"People say they are in crisis because of their child is failing out of the ninth grade, but the reason he's failing is usually much more loaded," says Ms. Abrams. "There are other issues in the home that aren't as easy to talk about, but they tell us, 'This is happening because he's failing,' or 'Everything was

fine until she got her lip pierced and shaved her head.'"

But in some families, there are problems that the staff can't solve, particularly when

it comes to serious drug and alcohol addiction, says Ms. Abrams. "It's heartbreaking," she says.

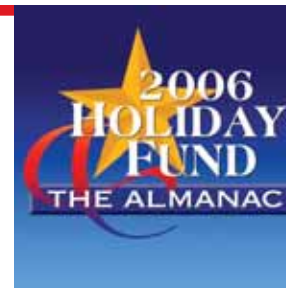
When that happens, the staff makes referrals and connects families to a range of services, including academic help, outpatient counseling and after-school programs. If the teen's safety is at risk, the Child Protective Services steps in.

"Because there are such poor outcomes for kids in the foster care system, we try really hard to reunite the family," Mr. Rybicki says.

Youth and Family Enrichment Services relies on private donations for about \$1.2 million of its \$8.6 million annual budget, as Mr. Rybicki. The Almanac's Holiday Fund is a major source of private donations for the agency, he says. ■

Giving to the Holiday Fund

Your gift helps children and others in need



Contributions to the Holiday Fund will go directly to the programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers contributed more than \$100,000, and with available matching grants, over \$150,000 was raised for 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be

matched to the extent possible by generous community corporations, foundations and individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies.

This year, the following agencies will be supported by the Almanac's Holiday Fund:

- **Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula**
Provides after-school academic support and activities for 2,600 young people, 6 to 18, at clubhouses in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, East Palo Alto and Redwood City and offers programs at Flood and Belle Haven schools in Menlo Park and McNair School in East Palo Alto.
- **Ecumenical Hunger Program**
Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 2,000 households.
- **Family Connections**
Provides free pre-school programs for children from low-income families in Belle Haven, parts of Redwood City and East Palo Alto. Parents must be involved in the education program, which operates on the Belle Haven School campus and the Clara-Mateo Homeless Shelter in Menlo Park Monday-Saturday mornings.
- **Ravenswood Family Health Center**
Provides primary medical and preventive health care for all ages at its clinics in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. It also operates a mobile clinic at school sites. Of the 16,500 registered patients, most are low income and uninsured from the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks area.
- **InnVision Peninsula Programs**
Works with homeless and at-risk families and individuals to reach self-sufficient living. Services reach 6,000 via Opportunity Center of the Midpeninsula, Palo Alto Food Closet, Hotel de Zink Rotating Church Shelter, Breaking Bread Hot Meals, Clara-Mateo Alliance Shelter, and Elsa Segovia Center.
- **St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room**
Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week to people in need who walk through the doors. St. Anthony's, funded entirely by voluntary contributions, is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers emergency food and clothing assistance.
- **Second Harvest Food Bank**
The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributed 30 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to some 162,000 people each month through more than 700 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.
- **Shelter Network**
Provides short-term shelter and transitional housing and services to more than 3,100 homeless people and children each year. Offers five programs for families and individuals to become self-sufficient and return to permanent housing.
- **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition**
Provides educational programs for youth and adults to help teens make healthy choices that will result in lower rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Its "Teen Talk" program last year served 3,650 youth at 23 public school sites in the county.
- **Youth and Family Enrichment Services**
Provides over 20 programs to help people who struggle with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, relationship and communications issues. The mission of YFES is to strengthen communities by empowering youth, families, and individuals to overcome challenges through counseling, education, and residential services.

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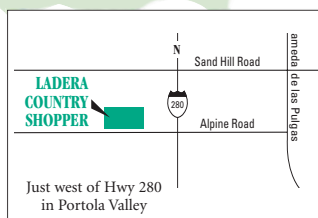
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HOLIDAY EVENTS

Peninsula Women's Chorus "Carols, Lullabies, Landscapes," a concert exploring the moods of winter. Dec. 9, 8pm and Dec. 10, 4pm. \$15-\$20. St. Patrick's Seminary, 320 Middlefield Rd, Menlo Park. 650.327.3095. Also Dec. 17, 3pm. \$15-\$20. Mission Santa Clara, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara. 650.327.3095.

Schola Cantorum "Now Is the Time." A holiday concert with Menlo Brass Quintet. Dec. 10, 4pm. \$18-\$22. Los Altos United Methodist Church, 655 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos. 650.254.1700.

Kepler's Holiday Party with a chocolate fountain, cookies and holiday gift wrapping. Dec. 7, 6 p.m. Presentation by John Scharffenberger, chocolatier. 7:30 p.m. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. 650.324.4321.

The West Bay Model Railroad Association will hold its holiday show Dec. 8-10 at the former baggage/freight building for the Menlo Park train station near the intersection of Ravenswood Ave. and Merrill Street. Kids and adults are invited. Many models of passenger and freight trains that operated during the steam and diesel eras will be on display and running. There will be special appearances by Thomas the Tank Engine and James the Red Engine. Railroad artifacts, photos and other memorabilia will be on display. The show will be open to the public on Friday, Dec. 8, from 7 to 10 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 9, from noon to 6 p.m.; and Sunday Dec. 10, from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated. Raffle tickets for a new train set will be on sale at the door. The drawing will be held at the end of the show Sunday. All donations will be used to maintain and improve the layout. For more information, call 650-322-9335.

The Community Service Club students at La Entrada School will collect new, unwrapped toys for children in the community. Bring toys for kids of all ages to the front of La Entrada Middle School, 2200 Sharon Road, Menlo Park, between 7:40 and 8 a.m. during the week of Dec. 4-8. (If you're not an early riser, you can bring them into the office.) The toys can be for any age child. Especially needed are toys for kids ages 12-18 who are often overlooked. Good ideas for this age group are basketballs, soccer balls, footballs and gift cards.

Santa comes to the fire station!

The Woodside Fire Protection District is holding its annual holiday open house on Wednesday, Dec. 13, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at all three of its stations: 3111 Woodside Road in Woodside, 135 Portola Road in Portola Valley, and 4091 Jefferson Ave. in Emerald Hills. Santa is scheduled to visit each of the stations during the open house. Firefighters will collect new, unwrapped toys for their "Toys for Tots" drive. Call 851-1594 for information.

"'Twas the Night Before Christmas"

Based on Clement Moore's poem and presented by Dancers Repertory Theatre and Menlo Park Academy of Dance. A cast of 100 dancers perform classical and traditional holiday music. Dec. 9-10. \$16 adults /\$12 seniors and children. Woodside High School Theater, Woodside Road, Redwood City. Call 323-5292. www.twasthenight.org

Woodside Village Band 20th Annual Christmas Concert Sat., Dec. 9, 3 p.m.

Program includes seasonal works by Holst, Irving Berlin, Leroy Anderson, and others. Free. Woodside Village Church, 3154 Woodside Road, Woodside. Call 851-1642. www.windband.org/woodside/

Farmhouse Christmas Tea Lunches

Dec. 7-10, noon. A hot meal including appetizer, entrée choice and Yuletide dessert with a Christmas Blend Tea. Guests age 12 and up. Reservations required. \$40 pre-paid. Yerba Buena Nursery, 19500 Skyline Blvd., Woodside. Call 851-1668. www.yerba-buenanursery.com

"Winter Salon" 30 artists present contemporary art and fine crafts for Holiday shopping. Wall art, jewelry, sculpture and ceramics created by local artists. Through Dec. 24. Gallery 9 Hours: Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Gallery 9, 143 Main St., Los Altos. www.gallery9losaltos.com

A Musical Solstice A candlelit, participatory winter solstice ritual. Choral music by Joan McMillen, sung by Voices of the Coming Tribe. Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. Free; donations accepted. Unitarian Universalist Church, 505 E. Charleston Road, Palo Alto. Call 858-2436.

GIFTS FROM THE KITCHEN

Instead of braving the mall, why not take an afternoon and make some simple homemade goodies in your own kitchen?

Gifts of food are one-size-fits-all. Goodies are rarely the wrong color. And since they can't be returned, they are sure to be eaten.

Here are some sure-fire suggestions:

No-fail mocha nut fudge

1 jar (7-1/2 ounce) marshmallow creme
1 cup sugar
2/3 cup evaporated milk
1/2 stick butter
3 tablespoons instant coffee powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 package (12 ounce) semisweet chocolate bits
1 cup chopped walnuts

Combine marshmallow creme, sugar, evaporated milk, butter, coffee powder and salt in medium-size saucepan. Bring to a full boil. Boil five minutes over medium heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

Add chocolate bits, stirring until chocolate is melted and smooth. Stir in 1/2 cup nuts. Pour into foil-lined 9-inch square baking pan. Top with remaining nuts.

Chill for at least two hours or until firm. Cut into squares. Cover tightly and store in refrigerator.

Toffee bars

1 cup butter
1 cup brown sugar
1 egg yolk
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups sifted flour
1 cup semisweet chocolate bits
1 cup chopped walnuts

Cream butter, sugar, egg and vanilla. Add flour, mix well. Stir in chocolate bits and nuts. Pat into ungreased 9-inch by 12-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 18 to 20 minutes. Cut into bars while warm. Cool.

Nuts and bolts

There are many variations on "nuts and bolts." The mixture can include snack crackers, potato sticks, pretzels, pumpkin seeds, even popped corn.

7 cups Chex cereal
1 cup mixed nuts
1 cup pretzel bites
3 tablespoons butter melted
1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
1/4 teaspoon onion salt
2 teaspoons lemon juice
4 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce.

Combine Chex, nuts and pretzels in a large shallow baking pan. Set aside. Stir together remaining ingredients. Gently stir spices and butter into cereal mixture until evenly coated.

Bake at 250 degrees for about 45 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes. Spread on paper towels to cool. Store in airtight container.



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**WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?**

All views must include a home address and contact phone number. Published letters will also appear on the Almanac Web site, www.AlmanacNews.com, and occasionally on the Almanac's Town Square forum.

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Derry project negotiations raise questions

The secret negotiations going on now to decide the size and scope of the Derry Lane commercial-condominium project in downtown Menlo Park raise questions about how well the public — specifically, residents who signed a petition to force a referendum vote on the matter — will fare if the two sides reach an agreement.

In the arcane world of referendum law, it isn't always easy to determine where the power lies and how to proceed. Here is where we are:

■ After the City Council approved the Derry Project, resident Morris Brown filed a petition and with the help of many friends and supporters, was able to gather some 2,500 signatures ordering the council to either rescind (throw out) the project approvals or place the matter before the voters for an up or down decision. The city clerk subsequently announced that the petitions had the required number of valid signatures and the issue was returned to the City Council for action.

■ Referendum law says that if the council does not rescind the project, it can call for an election to be held after an 88-day period from the time the petitions are turned in. But there is nothing in the law that says the city MUST hold an election.

■ During this time, Morris Brown, who filed the petitions, and representatives of the O'Brien Group, which proposed the project, began secret talks that they hope will resolve the issue without a referendum vote. No one in the city, including council members and the news media, is apprised of the status of the talks.

■ For now, unless the council wants to take unilateral action to rescind the ordinances or set an election date, the project is in limbo, waiting for results of the secret negotiations between the parties.

■ Some residents, including outgoing council members Mickie

Winkler and Lee Duboc, are questioning whether Mr. Brown, the petition filer, has the right to bargain for the 2,500 petition signers, some of whom simply want a chance to vote the project up or down.

■ Adding even more complexity was action taken by the council last week to examine further whether the actual petitions used in the effort meet all state requirements. If not, the drive is invalid and an election is a moot point.

Mr. Brown and the O'Brien Group should be commended for attempting to find a way to make the Derry project acceptable to all parties, without going to a costly referendum election. But even though any changes would have to be approved by the Planning Commission and the new City Council, will all of the petition signers be satisfied if an alternative design is chosen?

Mr. Brown assumes that he has the right to bargain for 2,500 petition signers, an assumption that at least raises some questions. The acting city attorney, Dan Siegel, told the Almanac last week that Mr. Brown does have some limited ability to forge a compromise with the project developer. But ultimately, the council will have to approve any deal and decide at that time whether a referendum vote is needed.

We urge the new council to be very careful if they consider a compromise on the Derry project. It would be a terrible mistake to assume a settlement would be acceptable to everyone, only to have the issue fall apart under the weight of a lawsuit from petition signers who sought only to have an up or down vote on the issue.

The only way the council can protect the city from that outcome is to make sure the next Derry hearings, if they come, are open wide to public comment, and that the council acknowledges testimony from all sides. It will be a good test to see if the new council truly is ready to move away from the divisive tactics of the past and bring the often contentious factions in the community together.



Our Regional Heritage

This fountain in Atherton's Holbrook-Palmer Park is from the original estate of Charles Holbrook, who left his estate to the city. The fountain will soon be removed for restoration, using money left over from the recent campaign supporting Measure W, the city's parcel tax initiative.

Atherton Heritage Association

LETTERS

Our readers write

Cheers for retiring council members

Editor:

Before too much time passes, I would like to enthusiastically thank the three Menlo Park City Council members who are stepping down in December.

In my opinion, council members Lee Duboc, Nicholas Jellins and Mickie Winkler have served the community well during very contentious times.

I am sure of one thing: Anyone who serves on the council wishes to improve or maintain the quality of life here as best as they know how. Honest disagreement is bound to occur, but past council members deserve all of our thanks for their time and hard work.

Incidentally, while Mickie Winkler may have come in last in the recent elections, I don't know of any past incumbent who worked more diligently or creatively for the city.

So, onward and upward everyone. And may all factions work together to improve

See **LETTERS**, next page

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

our city, starting with the El Camino corridor. Somehow we need to improve traffic flow and, at the same time, adopt the regional "Grand Boulevard" concept for El Camino in Menlo Park. I truly wish the new council success in this and all other matters.

Reg Rice
Tioga Drive, Menlo Park

Divided council in eye of beholder

Editor:

For some time the editorial page of your newspaper has been exclaiming how much the Menlo Park City Council has been divided as though that is a bad thing. And you have chosen sides. That is your prerogative.

In my view, it is natural for council members to vote the way their constituents favor. Menlo Park is a divided town. A large portion of its residents want very little change. Another large portion supports controlled change. This past election will not change their views. Fortunately, both groups will still be represented on the new council.

However, the pendulum swings and it is clear that our residents feel there has been too much change, too fast. Even so, after the dust settles, I suspect that the 3 to 2 voting that your newspaper has been touting as bad will still show up as frequently as before. Common sense and logic will

Atherton explains position on arts center

By the Atherton City Council

The Almanac's Nov. 29 editorial misperceives both the facts as well as the motivation of the Atherton City Council with respect to construction of the new performing arts center at Menlo-Atherton High School.

Atherton is not opposed to construction of the performing arts center but will welcome it as an asset to the community. Atherton's only interest is that it be designed and built in accordance with applicable laws and operated with respect for the legitimate interests of the community surrounding it.

The center represents a major construction project and redesign of the M-A campus. It will have community impacts during construction and thereafter, potentially affecting traffic patterns, parking, drainage, noise and need for Atherton police services.

While the Sequoia Union High School District has engaged in several years of planning, including discussions with Menlo Park, the district chose not to involve Atherton until late in the process. It was not the district, but the Atherton City Council, that proposed

three-way discussions involving representatives of the school district, Menlo Park, and Atherton. Atherton tasked two of its council members to directly participate in those discussions to expedite the City Council's consideration of the project. It was Atherton that sought the dialogue, and Atherton has participated in numerous meetings to resolve arising issues.

The district took the position in discussions with Atherton that it was above any local oversight of the operation on the performing arts center under the California Civic Center Act and was exempt from any environmental regulation and requirements. Atherton disagreed; and when it sought legal counsel on the issue, the district revoked a prior agreement that would have avoided legal action during ongoing discussions between the parties.

The district thereby forced Atherton to file a lawsuit within 15 days or waive the rights of its residents. Atherton did not want to file a lawsuit against the district. The lawsuit is the direct result of the district's action, not that of Atherton. And contrary to the opinion of the Almanac and district, Atherton has been

counseled that the district's legal position is simply incorrect.

Menlo Park has committed \$2.6 million to the construction of the performing arts center. The district has approved the agreement for Menlo Park's participation. At its Nov. 28 meeting, while the Menlo Park City Council voted to reaffirm its monetary commitment to the performing arts center, it did not approve the proposed agreement with the district, citing some of the same issues, such as traffic impacts, of concern to Atherton. The Menlo Park City Council also recommitted itself to the three-party discussions with the district and Atherton to resolve these issues.

Atherton seeks no "gesture of respect" as characterized by the Almanac, but only to fulfill its responsibility to protect the legitimate interests of the community. And Atherton is confident that, given the most recent commitment of Menlo Park to the process, remaining issues will be quickly resolved and the performing arts center constructed according to the district's schedule.

Charles Marsala, mayor, Alan Carlson, vice mayor and James Janz, Kathleen McKeithen, and Jerry Carlson, council members.



prevail. The world is gray, not black or white.

I hope you will permit me to publicly express my appreciation to Nicholas Jellins, Mickie Winkler, and Lee Duboc for their years of devoted service to Menlo Park. They have participated in hundreds of meetings, spending thousands of hours serving our city unselfishly. I am proud to have worked with them and the other council members.

Finally, I also wish to congratulate the new members of council

and wish them success and good judgment as they serve their terms of office. I am confident that our new council will be just as devoted to Menlo Park's residents as the previous council.

John A. O'Malley
Planning Commissioner
Hidden Oaks Drive, Menlo Park

Signal not the answer at Menlo Avenue

Editor:

Like others I am dismayed to

hear of another traffic accident at University Drive and Menlo Avenue. Clearly the intersection is still in need of safety improvements.

However, introducing traffic lights will not necessarily improve safety.

For example, if the light is a typical "green/go, red/stop" that means drivers can make turns into the intersection without stopping while pedestrians are in a crosswalk. At least now all drivers have to come to a complete stop.

Even without pedestrians in the crosswalk, cars will be able to move through the intersection at driving speed, while now all cars always have to stop. That would mean more car mass traveling at greater velocity more of the time.

That's not the way to increase safety. And unless the entire intersection is reconfigured, the crosswalks will still be "offset," as they are now. If the offset design is the root problem for drivers, introducing lights may not be the solution.

John Kadvany
College Avenue, Menlo Park

In defense of Thanksgiving turkey

Editor:

Malcolm Davidson's vegan overkill, "The power to pardon a turkey," (Almanac, Nov. 22) added an extra bit of aromatic spice to our Thanksgiving feast.

I'm not sure about pardoning a frozen turkey, but the modest \$7.99 ours cost at Safeway gave a parasite-free, predator-free,

and hunger-free (if short) life to a bird that otherwise wouldn't have existed at all. I doubt if our domestic bird would have traded its life for that of its wild cousin, destined eventually to be torn apart by a pack of coyotes, or perhaps teased to death by cougar kittens.

Our turkey being roughly the 70th Thanksgiving bird I have celebrated since I was weaned in the mid-1930s, I don't spend a lot of time worrying about the purported toxic effects of eating it and its ilk. Rather, I can rest assured that I have partaken of complete protein with a good selection of vitamins, something difficult though not impossible to achieve with a vegan diet.

And, best of all, I enjoy real turkey and don't have to indulge in Mr. Davidson's self-deceptive "mock turkey." To put the shoe on the other foot, I have never had the desire to deceive myself by making believe that a turkey is actually a mock "soy, lentil or nut roast." (Our turkey, however, was stuffed with nuts as well as apples, sausage, giblets, onions, and croutons.)

Mr. Davidson is more than welcome to choose his own poison but should preach to the unconverted in a more restrained fashion.

Lawrence S. Lerner
Stadler Drive, Woodside

TOWN SQUARE

Post your views and comments on TownSquare:
www.AlmanacNews.com

Cyclist's errant water bottle leaves pedestrian injured, angry

By Nancy Baglietto

Here's to you, the Tuesday/Thursday morning bicyclists from Palo Alto. Because of you I experienced how efficiently the (Woodside/Portola Valley) fire department responds, the emergency room at Sequoia Hospital and an unexpected visit to the dentist for a broken tooth. Let's not mention the three days of work I missed.

Let me refresh your mind. On Thursday, Nov. 16, I was walking down Portola Road near Willowbrook Road — not even in your path — when a cyclist at the front of your pack launched a bottle of water. It hit me in the face with enough force to send me to the ground head first on the trail.

You kept going. Had this happened from a vehicle you would have been identifiable from your car license. All I have to go on is the Alto Velo Jersey — sponsored by Webcor Builders. In fact, the bottle was imprinted with Alto Velo.

My friend, Sylvia, ran into the road and stopped a few of the cyclists at the end of the pack to help until someone arrived. Fortunately, Dr. Jeffrey

Saal stopped to give some assistance until the paramedics arrived.

I confronted the cyclists on Tuesday morning on Portola Road, my face still swollen and distorted, and told them they needed to find the person who launched the bottle and encourage him to take responsibility for his actions. On Wednesday, the person did call and said he was aiming the bottle at a passing car. Just think if the bottle had hit a child on his way to school.

Do you wonder why bicyclists are not well liked? You travel in herds, you are hostile, inconsiderate, and negligent.

You torment others by riding five to six abreast and purposely prevent anyone from passing.

It is too bad stupid actions of a few ruin the sport for others. Your behavior is unacceptable.

You are not welcome in Portola Valley. Go somewhere else to ride. Our town is small and not safe from your marauders.

Nancy Baglietto lives on Brookside Drive in Portola Valley.

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