

SPORTS: Woodside's Tori Anthony sets national pole vaulting record. Page 9

The Almanac

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

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FEBRUARY 14, 2007

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Where there's
SMOKE...
is there
FIRE?

The civil grand jury casts doubt on the fire safety of Atherton homes
See Page 14

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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Marjan Sadoughi

Footloose fun

Kids dance and sing along to Mary Lee Sunseri, who performed her "best of the best" musical show recently at the Atherton library. The free program, sponsored by the Atherton Arts Committee, had the young audience on its feet and bopping happily to the music.

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Shut up and sit down

The new Menlo Park City Council has stressed its willingness to listen to the public, but council members want speakers to keep their comments to less than three minutes at the weekly council meetings.

The council decided on Jan. 23 to get a buzzer that will sound once speakers have addressed the council for more than three minutes.

Councilman Heyward Robinson said the council should use the buzzer to keep meetings from going too late.

If shorter meetings are the goal, perhaps someone should look into getting a really big buzzer for council members who are — how to put this delicately? — less than concise in their own remarks.

The current council members have served together for less than two months, but have already held several meetings that have lasted more than four hours.

O Holy Blight

Some residents and employees working in the West Menlo Park area have long considered the noon-time and 5 p.m. “concerts” ringing out from loudspeakers outside Bethany Lutheran Church an unsolicited and unwelcome auditory blight of the neighborhood. But for the most part, they’ve gritted their teeth or covered their ears when the out-of-tune, tincan carillon lets loose.

But how much can the neighbors, now looking longingly toward spring, endure as they are forced to listen to “O Holy Night” and other Christmas carols — in late January? Can this carillon change its tune? Or will this faux belfry drive everyone bats?

Lost and found

Are you in dutch with the wife? Debbie Devoto, a counselor at Hillview Middle School in Menlo Park, may be able to help out.

A gold ring with stones, probably a man’s wedding band, was found on the playing field at Hillview, reports Ms. Devoto.

If you think the ring might be yours, send an e-mail to ddevoto@mpcsd.org.

Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Roberts market likely to open store in PV

■ George Roberts is looking at former site of John’s Valley Foods.

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

A new Roberts market, the popular Woodside grocery store, is likely to open in the former home of John’s Valley Foods at the corner of Alpine and Portola roads in Portola Valley. Only unforeseen problems with the building or site could derail it, said Roberts market owner George Roberts.

A Portola Valley store, which at 10,000 square feet would be about the same size as the Woodside store, would offer

many of the same amenities, Mr. Roberts said. The store would have a delicatessen, wine and liquor sales, and an upscale choice of groceries.

Mr. Roberts said he has an exclusive agreement with Valley Foods leaseholder John Meany and has begun “discovery” procedures to identify potential problems, if any, with the site. “We don’t anticipate a lot of problems,” he said.

If discovery works out as expected and the escrow agreement closes at the end of April, a remodeled store would likely open in September, Mr. Roberts said.

Developer Jim Pollock, who had announced a plan in November to build medical offices and

a convenience grocery at the site, told the Almanac last week that tenants “haven’t come forward” and he has cancelled his contract with Mr. Meany.

Looking back, Mr. Pollock said he had been confident of eventually finding physicians to relocate there, given the right timing. But retailers, he said, were skeptical of generating enough revenue to pay the rent, given competition from full-service markets nearby in Woodside and Ladera.

Asked about the viability of another full-sized grocery store like John’s at that corner, Mr. Pollock replied: “I don’t think that would work.” A formula of 50 percent medical and 50

percent commercial was best for that site, he added.

Mr. Meany opened John’s Valley Foods in 1977 and ran it for 29 years. After unsuccessfully trying to find a buyer to take over the business, he closed the store in July and retired.

Bianchini’s Market in Ladera was considered by some as another likely candidate for a store at the Valley Foods site. Kevin Bianchini, the owner, said he hasn’t spoken with Mr. Meany and wasn’t thinking of branching out there “at this time.”

“Quite a few people have asked about it,” he said in an interview, but “the timing is not good right now.” ■

John Boyle leads pack in council race spending

■ Top spender receives \$6,000 from Matteson Companies after his win.

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

The John Boyle for City Council campaign has likely set a record for spending in a Menlo Park council race.

Mr. Boyle, who was elected to one of three open seats in November, spent \$53,503 to win the post, according to final campaign finance statements.

Still, the total is nearly \$10,000 less than what was spent in the unsuccessful bid to elect Christina Angell-Atchison to the council in 2000. In that race, an unprecedented \$63,000-plus was spent on her campaign, but only about \$40,000 came from her own campaign fund. Another \$23,700 was spent to support her bid by the citizen group, Menlo Community Association.

Mr. Boyle’s candidacy didn’t receive any help from an independent committee, according to the state-mandated campaign documents, which candidates and committees were required to file in City Hall by Jan. 31. The documents report total sums on spending and contributions for the entire campaign, and breakdowns of spending and contributions from late October through Jan. 31.

Council members Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc, who ran on a slate with Mr. Boyle in their unsuccessful bids for re-election, were the next-biggest spenders: Ms. Winkler spent \$44,756; Ms. Duboc, \$44,348.

Successful candidates Heyward Robinson and Rich Cline spent \$41,295 and \$21,048, respectively. Losing candidate Vince Bressler spent \$16,487.

The election pitted the slate of incumbents and Mr. Boyle against three candidates who, though they ran independently, hoped to replace the three council members who constituted a majority in almost all of the council’s most important votes. That included Nicholas Jellins, who didn’t seek re-election.

The then-council majority was viewed as pro-development, while their council colleagues, now-Mayor Kelly Fergusson and Councilman Andy Cohen, are viewed as more cautious in their acceptance of high-impact commercial projects and more sympathetic to neighborhood concerns.

Post-election contributions

Mr. Boyle spent more than he raised, according to his spending statement. He received \$45,966 in contributions — \$6,000 of which was received on Jan. 15 from Duncan Matteson of Menlo Park and entities and individuals

See SPENDING, page 8



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

Fire starter

Smoke billows from a controlled burn at Wunderlich Park in Woodside on Feb. 7. The California Department of Forestry used one of its inmate crews to burn underbrush in order to improve access to the park’s meadow.

New preschool approved for city's industrial zone

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

Some east Menlo Park landlords and business owners may not like it, but a new preschool is headed to the industrial part of the city.

The City Council sided with parents, rather than businesses, at its Feb. 6 meeting, and voted 4-1 to grant a use permit to Palo Alto-based Casa dei Bambini preschool to set up a campus in east Menlo Park.

TOWN SQUARE

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The school will be east of U.S. 101 in the city's industrial, or "M-2" zone, at 1215 O'Brien Drive. Councilman John Boyle voted against the project.

The council's action reversed the Planning Commission's unanimous decision Nov. 27 to

deny the school a use permit. The council considered the project because Carlos Balzaretto, head of the Montessori school, appealed the commission's decision.

The school will serve up to 72 children ages 2 to 6 weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The proposal pitted parents vying for more preschool and child care services against landlords and business owners who said putting small children in an industrial zone will spark health concerns and new safety regulations.

"We Menlo moms need this school," said resident Jill Wernicke. "It's not fair that a few companies are getting in the way of educating our children."

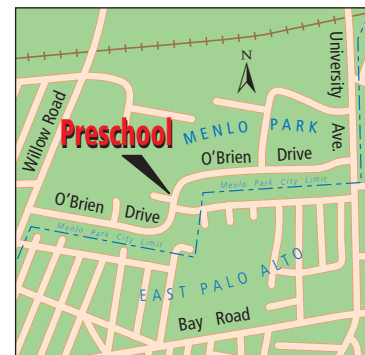
Ms. Wernicke was one of 11 people to urge the council to

approve the project, and 10 people spoke against it.

"Please protect the integrity of the industrial zone," said Nancy Noe, an attorney representing Alza Corp., an east Menlo Park pharmaceutical company. "We can't move into any other zone when child care can."

Councilman Richard Cline noted that despite safety concerns, the school would not dramatically change the area, as there are other schools and child care operations near industrial companies in the M-2 district and in nearby East Palo Alto.

"I think there's a precedent with other child care programs there," he said. "I don't believe ... [that] one child care facility is going to clean out the M-2 and scare away all the businesses."



Casa dei Bambini preschool is setting up a campus in East Menlo Park, at 1215 O'Brien Drive.

Mr. Boyle didn't agree: "I don't know how we could have heard it anymore clearly from the business community that this would be a negative thing," he said. ■

Informational Meetings

Feb. 15 - Thu.

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Meeting drags: Tax talk re-set for Feb. 13

After spending many hours discussing two other items on the Feb. 6 agenda, the Menlo Park City Council never got around to addressing the latest budget report — and whether the new utility tax needs to be set at the maximum rates starting April 1. Now, the council says it plans to deal with the budget and tax issues at its Feb. 13 meeting.

That meeting starts at 7 p.m., but it's not clear when the budget and tax discussion

will start. The meeting is in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

Some residents — including some who voted for the tax — have questioned whether the tax is necessary after the recent announcement that the city ran a \$3.7 million surplus in the fiscal year that ended last June 30.

The tax was sold to voters as a necessary tool to prevent further cuts to city services and fee increases.

City staff says despite the surplus, the tax is needed to cover long-term spending projections, including for infrastructure repairs and employee and retiree benefits.

If the council opts to go ahead with previous plans and levy the tax at the maximum rates, businesses and residences will be taxed 3.5 percent on utilities (water, gas and electric bills), and 2.5 percent on communications (landline telephone, cell phone, cable TV and Internet bills).

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While it's mostly about local activities and issues, you can comment on regional, national

and global issues, as well, in the "Other Issues" category.

In Town Square, residents may ask their neighbors about everything from great local hiking spots to tips on places to dine or watch a sporting event.

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is easy and requires no registration. Users only need to identify themselves as living in a specific neighborhood or school community and are encouraged but not required to use their full names.

While registration is not required, there are benefits to registering: You can post a picture. You can receive an e-mail alert when someone posts a comment on your topic. And you can receive e-mail bulletins on important breaking news in the community.

Readers of The Almanac Online and the newspaper are encouraged to respond to news stories, movie and restaurant reviews, editorials and opinion pieces by posting comments in Town Square.

Results of sports competitions can be quickly reported in the "Sports" category as soon as games are over.

In essence, Town Square turns everyone into citizen reporters and provides a forum for you to communicate directly with other community members.

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Valentine Romance

AT THE DUCK CLUB RESTAURANT

Sandra Ferrando honored by PVs

Sandra (Sandy) Ferrando of Atherton was presented with the Beth Kuechler Award by the Peninsula Volunteers on Feb. 2 at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton.

The Beth Kuechler Award is given periodically to a member for her "years of continuous service who has shown extraordinary dedication to the mission of the Peninsula Volunteers."

The presentation was made by Ms. Kuechler's son, Henry Kuechler. Ms. Kuechler was one of the founders of Peninsula Volunteers in 1947 and served as its first president.

Ms. Ferrando has been a member of the Peninsula Volunteers for 37 years and "chairman for just about



Sandra Ferrando receives award for her 37 years of services to Peninsula Volunteers.

everything." She has headed committees for "lots of parties, worked at Turn-About,

done runway shows. We were the girls of all seasons," she recalls.

Peninsula Volunteers continues to keep her busy. She and Nancy Greenbach will co-chair the organization's Diamond Jubilee gala to be held in November.

Ms. Ferrando is also a founding member of the Peninsula Children's Center Charter Auxiliary, and a past president of the Atherton Dames. She is heading the Dames' campaign for a new entrance to Holbrook-Palmer Park.

Ms. Ferrando and her husband, Joe, have lived in the same house in Atherton for 37 years and are the parents of three daughters and five grandchildren.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



Multiple Offers Again?

Q. Dear Gloria, Although we haven't been looking for too long, we have been involved in two multiple offers already this year. We wrote a good offer, over asking price with just an inspection contingency and didn't get it. What is going on in this market and what does it take to be the winning bid?

— Olivia D. Menlo Park

A. Dear Olivia, You are right about multiple offers in this market; however, not across the board but very selectively. What is going on in this market is that many potential buyers sat last year out. There was concern about rising interest rates, oil prices and the economy in general. Now that we realize that interest rates are probably about as good as they will be and we've become accustomed to the price of oil. The economy also looks good. It has become clear that housing prices are not going down so trying to "time the market" is a futile endeavor.

If you are involved in multiple offers the reality is that you will not be the prevailing bid with a contingency. No one wants to tell you that because agents don't want to deny you of your right to have an inspection. However, all good agents will have a presale inspection report available and you can ask that inspector to come back to the property with you and explain any of the issues which are of concern. All buyers will also have been preapproved for a loan so there should be no need to put a loan contingency period in your offer. Another attractive feature of the offer is a fast close. We had multiple offers on a house in downtown Palo Alto last week and it closed two days later! No question about who the seller wanted to work with! The offers were also all substantially above asking price. You will have to work with your agent to find the price that is reasonable for you and that might have a chance of being accepted.

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

Local girls win dance pageant titles

Two students from Menlo Park's Academy of Dance took home top awards from the Dance Masters of Northern California 2007 Pageant and they have the tiaras to prove it.

Jessica Fry, 10, of Atherton was named Petite Miss Dance of Northern California. Angelica Hardison, 11, of Redwood City was named Junior Miss Dance of Northern California. They were crowned Jan. 27 at the Santa Clara Convention Center.

The girls will compete for national titles at the Dance Masters of America Pageant in New York City in July.

Both Jessica and Angelica have studied dance since they were 4 years old. Angelica takes ballet, pointe, lyrical (free movement) and jazz, and dances "seven days a week," says her mother, Catherine Hardison.

Jessica studies ballet, lyrical and jazz. She isn't quite old enough for pointe (toe dancing), says Sylvia Duncan, co-owner



Jessica Fry, left, Petite Miss Dance of Northern California, and **Angelica Hardison**, Junior Miss Dance of Northern California, are shown with their teacher, **Leyla Boissonnade**.

of the Academy of Dance with Sarah Measnor. The women took over the dance academy, which has trained local girls for 40 years, two years ago from

Roseann Saylor.

Both Jessica and Angelica are students of Academy of Dance teacher Leyla Boissonnade of Menlo Park.

Bottle-throwing cyclist may be prosecuted

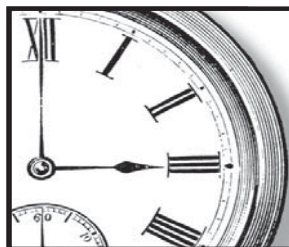
Prosecution may be ahead for a bicyclist who threw a water bottle that bounced off a car and into the face of Nancy Baglietto, 62, who was on a Nov. 16 morning walk with friends along Portola Road.

Detectives from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office have forwarded a report to the District Attorney's Office for a decision on whether to prosecute, said Lt. Ken Jones of the Sheriff's Office.

The report recommends charging bicyclist William Gordon Innes, 35, of Menlo Park with battery and throwing substances at a vehicle, Lt. Jones said.

The force of the blow knocked Ms. Baglietto down and she hit her head on the path, she said. Her injuries included a black-and-blue area on her face, a chipped tooth, a loose tooth and lost time at work. For a couple of days, she said she had to eat with a straw.

Mr. Innes kept going after the incident but called later to apologize, she said. Some cyclists in the "morning ride" group stopped — after Ms. Baglietto's friend hailed them, she said. One cyclist rode to the nearby fire station to report the incident.



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MP contracts will boost pension benefit 35%

■ New labor deal still good for city's long-term financial health, say council members.

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

The Menlo Park City Council is set to approve new labor contracts this week that will minimize short-term costs, but will likely devote — by 2009 and later — a hefty portion of the city's new utility tax revenue toward increased retirement benefits for city employees.

Two new labor contracts with local unions and pay raises for top management are listed as consent calendar items for the council's Feb. 13 meeting, meaning the new labor deals could be approved with one vote, without council discussion. The meeting is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

If the contracts are approved, employee pensions would rise 35 percent starting in March 2009, but Mayor Kelly Fergusson said the city won several concessions. Among them: minimal salary increases for the city's non-safety employees (except for executive management posts); and a delay in the start of the higher pension benefit until 2009.

"This is a very cost-effective salary and benefit package," Mayor Fergusson said. "Now we'll be able to move on to other priorities for the city."

Under the new contracts, the salaries for 193 non-safety workers will stay at their current levels this year, and then increase 1 percent in 2008 and 2 percent in 2009.

But starting in March 2009, the city will increase employees' pension levels from a "2.7 percent at 55" plan to a "2.7 percent at 55" system.

The new plan would allow a city employee to retire at age 55 with 2.7 percent of his or her top salary annually for every year of service. For example, an employee with 30 years of service could retire at age 55 and receive 81 percent (30 years x 2.7 percent) of his or her highest salary annually for life.

Win-win?

Council members said approving higher pension levels wasn't easy, but noted the contract will still limit long-term costs because it does not call for large salary increases.

"This is as close to a win-win deal as we could get," said Councilman John Boyle. "Going to a 2.7 [percent] rate was a major concession and a difficult decision. ... We could have played hardball and said 'no,' but in the long-term, it was going to happen anyway."

Nearby cities, such as Redwood City and Palo Alto, have increased their respective pension levels to "2.7 percent at 55" plans. Council members decided that in order for Menlo Park to attract and retain workers, the city must follow suit.

If the contracts are approved, the city will pay an additional \$426,000 in labor costs in the fiscal year that starts July 2007, and an additional \$1.32 million by the fiscal year that starts July 2008.

In addition to voting on the contracts at the Feb. 13 meeting, the council will also consider a pay raise up to 4 percent for the city's department heads, retroactive to Jan. 7.

Top management, except for City Manager David Boesch, who is leaving the city on Feb. 20, would also receive "2.7 percent at 55" pension plans, said Personnel Director Glen Kramer.

If the contracts are approved, employees' contributions to their pension plans would increase from 7 percent to 8 percent of their salaries.

But the city's contribution to the pensions would jump from around 10 percent of the payroll now, to an estimated 15 percent — a 50 percent increase.

Utility tax

Councilman Richard Cline said he anticipates some residents will be upset that the council approving the pension benefits less than two months before residents and business will be hit with the new utility tax on April 1.

But he affirmed that the contracts are fair, and the city has to provide competitive benefits to attract workers.

"There's no doubt that [the council] will get some pretty heavy scrutiny on this," Mr. Cline said. "But we entered into failed negotiations as a new council, and we were able to repair the relationship with a lot of the workers. ... This isn't a trade-off between a tax and employee costs — you need employees to run a city."

Before the new council took office, city officials and union negotiators held 11 bargaining sessions. Mr. Boesch declared an impasse in November and called in a mediator.

Mayor Fergusson said the city will be more likely to attract quality candidates to replace the outgoing city manager once the employee contracts are finalized.

The unions that represent the city's non-safety employees — the Service Employees International Union Local 715, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 829 — have signed off on the contracts. ■



The Almanac/David Boyce

Future site of another Roberts market?

Standing water adds to the abandoned look of the former John's Valley Foods in Portola Valley in this file photo from November. George Roberts, owner of Roberts market in Woodside, said he is close to opening a store there. See story on Page 5.

Derry developers spent \$182,000 fighting MP referendum effort

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

The O'Brien Group, the developer behind the 'Derry' condo-commercial project planned for Menlo Park, has spent \$182,404 countering efforts by a residents' group to halt the project, according to the latest campaign finance reports.

The residents' group, Menlo Park Tomorrow, reported spending less than one-tenth of that — \$16,619.

"It's scary to think about the amount of money [the O'Brien Group] is putting into this," said Morris Brown who lead a successful referendum campaign

against the Derry project last October.

Jim Pollart, spokesperson for the O'Brien Group, did not return the Almanac's phone calls.

The two parties are currently in negotiations to reach a new, compromise project. Mr. Brown and the project opponents say the original Derry project — approved by the City Council last September — includes plans for too many homes per acre, and will cause significant impacts on traffic and schools.

Although the negotiations are being held behind closed doors, Mayor Kelly Fergusson said "it's [her] understanding the

parties are seeking professional mediation."

If the two parties are unable to reach a compromise, the project will likely go to the voters.

"[Opponents of the project] are worried about what we may be up against if [the project] goes to a vote," Mr. Brown said. "The fact the developer can easily outspend us by 10 to one, or something, is scary."

The project includes plans for 135 condominiums and 22,525 square feet of commercial space on a 3.4-acre site off Oak Grove Avenue, near El Camino Real.

The finance reports track expenditures through Dec. 31. ■

SPENDING

continued from page 5

involved with the Redwood City-based Matteson Companies.

The Matteson Companies comprises a group of affiliated entities involved in real estate investment, development and management, according to its Web site.

The Matteson Companies' list of commercial properties includes 75 Willow Road, a commercial site that is set to be converted to residential, with 33 detached single-family homes. The residential project was given the green light in late November in a controversial decision by the lame-duck council.

In addition to \$750 contributions made by Duncan Matteson

and Duncan Matteson Jr., \$750 contributions came from James Blake, a vice president of Matteson Property Management, and John A. Baer Consulting. Mr. Baer is senior vice president of development for the Matteson Companies. Another \$1,000 came from Matteson Real Estate Equities, and \$500 from 900 Santa Cruz, a Matteson property.

Another \$750 each came from 75 Willow Road and Menlo Park Office Center, also Matteson properties.

Money raised.

Ms. Winkler and Mr. Robinson also spent more than they raised. Ms. Winkler raised \$41,459; Mr. Robinson, \$37,844.

Ms. Duboc raised \$53,023,

including a \$16,580 loan she made to herself. Mr. Cline raised \$24,449, and Mr. Bressler, \$17,270.

All six candidates received \$2,000 contributions from developer David Bohannon.

Committee contributions

Two "general purpose" committees submitted spending statements.

Menlo Park on Track contributed \$1,065 each to Mr. Robinson and Mr. Cline; and \$1,890 to Mr. Bressler. It raised \$10,535, and spent \$7,272.

Menlo Park Matters contributed \$7,000 each to Ms. Winkler and Ms. Duboc, and a separate \$4,476 to the Duboc/Winkler effort.

Continued on page 23

Woodside's Tori Anthony sets national pole vaulting record

By Keith Peters
Palo Alto Weekly

It was only two weeks ago that Castilleja senior Tori Anthony of Woodside said she "definitely wanted to get the national record" in the girls' indoor pole vault. Well, Anthony got her wish.

Anthony, a former gymnast who spent last fall playing goalie for the Castilleja water polo team, can now add national record-holder to her resume when she heads off to UCLA next fall.

Anthony became the No. 1 high school girls' pole vaulter of all-time, indoors or out, when she cleared 14 feet, 2 1/2 inches on Saturday during the Husky Classic indoor track and field meet in Seattle, Wash.

Anthony came into the meet with a personal best of 14-0 at the USATF National Pole Vault Summit in Reno, Nev. That tied her for No. 3 on the all-time list (indoors or out). That mark also equaled the No. 2 all-time indoor mark.



File photo by Barbara Wood

Tori Anthony is now the No. 1 high school girls' pole vaulter of all-time. She is shown competing in the June 2006 Junior National track and field championships.

Anthony took aim at the all-time mark of 14-2, set by Mary Saxer of Lancaster, N.Y., in 2005,

and surpassed Saxer with her 10th vault after passing at two heights. Anthony also surpassed the national outdoor record of 14-0, set by Tiffany Maskulinski (Iroquois High, Elma, N.Y.) in 2005.

Anthony started at 12-6, cleared 12-11 3/4 on her second try, made 13-1 3/4, 13-3 3/4 and 13-5 3/4 all on first attempts. She passed at 13-7 3/4 and cleared 13-9 3/4 on her first try. After passing at 13-11 3/4, she made 14-2 1/2 on her final attempt. She then missed three times at 14-3 1/2.

Anthony will continue her assault on the record book at the USATF National Indoor Championships in Boston in two weeks. After that will be the National Scholastic High School Indoor Championships in New York. ■

See Almanac cover story, "Reaching for the sky: Woodside teen is international pole vault competitor" in the July 19, 2006, print edition. Search Google for: Tori Anthony Almanac

Woodside Priory boys win PSAL hoop title

By Keith Peters
Palo Alto Weekly

It didn't take long for the Woodside Priory boys' basketball team to make history by winning its first Private Schools Athletic League championship.

The Panthers (14-0, 21-3) jumped out to a 22-4 first-quarter lead and coasted from there while posting a 70-55 win over visiting Redwood Christian on Feb. 8 night in Portola Valley. It was the team's 15th-straight victory.

Priory's 7-foot-1 junior center Greg Somogyi continued his season-long improvement with a team-high 19 points plus six blocks. Greg's older brother, 6-4

SPORTS

George, added 13 points while sophomore guards Nate Feldman and Kyle Berka combined for 18 points and four three-pointers.

Senior Reggie Willhite, the team's leading scorer, settled for eight points but added seven assists and four blocks.

"It was real good team balance tonight where our guys kept finding the open man," said Woodside Priory coach Al Klein.

Priory has two games remaining before heading into the Central Coast Section playoffs as the prohibitive favorite to win

its first-ever Division V crown.

Sacred Heart Prep (10-3, 13-8), meanwhile, finally ran out of time in its chasing of Woodside Priory, which twice beat the Gators this season. The Gators had to overcome yet another slow start, scoring just four points in the first quarter, and didn't take the lead until the fourth quarter while defeating host Pinewood, 44-39.

Sacred Heart Prep finally grabbed the lead when senior Mike McMahon hit a three-pointer early in the final period. McMahon finished with a team-high 15 points to go with four steals. Greg Casciaro pulled down nine rebounds. ■

New site this year for Portola Valley Town Picnic

The Portola Valley Town Picnic, a June tradition and family event, most likely will move to a new venue this year — Corte Madera School — because of ongoing construction at Town Center.

Carolyn Rodgers, chair of the town's Community Events Committee, made the request to use the school facilities for the June 9 picnic to the Portola Valley School Board at its Feb. 7 meeting.

Trustees responded favorably,

but can't take action until the request is put on the agenda for their March 7 meeting.

The committee is arranging for off-site parking to augment parking at the school, and assures trustees the site will be cleared and ready for school on Monday.

The tentative schedule begins with the "Zotts to Totts" run at 10 a.m. from Alpine Inn to Corte Madera School. The picnic from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. includes games for children, activities such as fishing for prizes, a dunk tank,

and face-painting; and simple food — burgers, soft drinks, and salad — usually sold by the Boy Scouts or provided by a vendor.

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Tools are targets in Woodside burglaries

Padlocks are no barrier to thieves with adequate time and an acetylene torch, as has been shown recently at a home construction site on Albion Road in Woodside.

Twice — on Dec. 18 and Jan. 29 — padlocks on the main gate and the tool storage trailer were cut with a torch and tools stolen, the

second time to the tune of \$12,300, said Lt. Ken Jones of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

Portable drills, a router, saws, nail guns and tool belts were part of the haul taken from a trailer situated so that the door was not visible to the street, Lt. Jones said.

Construction sites and tools

have been burglary targets in Woodside. In 2006, of the 26 Woodside burglaries reported in the Almanac, nine cases, 35 percent, involved theft of tools. The trend appears to be continuing in 2007: as of Feb. 9, tools were stolen in two of the four Woodside burglaries this year.

DAR installs new members on Feb. 19

The Daughters of the American Revolution will install five new members and honor winners in their history essay

contest on Feb. 19 at Ming's Restaurant in Palo Alto.

The new members are Catharine Baumann, Nancy Collins,

Catha Hall, Gayle Quadt and Judy Chun. The essay winners, all students at the Challenger School in Palo Alto, are: Max Goumas, Brienne Ghafourifar, Miranda Lowe and Kevin Ji.

He went thataway: Cops corner driver after chase

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The relaxed pace of a Saturday morning in suburban west Menlo Park took on a harder edge at around 10 a.m. Feb. 3. near the Starbucks coffee shop at the corner of Avy Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas.

A man in a white 2002 Mustang without license plates heading east on Avy passed a Menlo Park police car heading the other way. When the officer made a U-turn with the intention of citing the driver, the Mustang sped off in a cloud of dust, said Nicole Acker, spokeswoman for the Menlo Park Police Department.

Bystanders and pedestrians near Starbucks told the officer which way the driver went, Ms. Acker said. The driver apparently headed

into the University Heights neighborhood because the officer lost contact with the Mustang until it emerged from Palo Alto Avenue onto Santa Cruz Avenue, she said.

With patrol cars stationed nearby to block the way, the driver, Luis Herrera, 19, of Redwood City, stopped and gave up without a fight, police said. Mr. Herrera was arrested and booked into San Mateo County jail on charges that included evading a police officer by reckless driving.

One resident of Oak Hollow Way told the Almanac that she was returning home at the time of the arrest and saw nine patrol cars and a K-9 unit on Santa Cruz Avenue. Officers were out of their cars with their hands on their holsters, she said.

It was "a high-risk vehicle stop," Ms. Acker said. ■



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 26, 2007

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the City of Menlo Park, California, is scheduled to review the following items:

The following items require a Notice of Public Meeting or Public Hearing:

Use Permit and Variance/Jordan S. Gruber/205 Pope Street: Request for a use permit to construct ground-floor and second-story additions to an existing single-family, single-story residence on a substandard lot in regard to lot width, and for excavation within a required side setback for a light wells associated with a basement in the R-1-U (Single Family Urban) zoning district. The proposed work includes the demolition of an existing detached garage with Pope Street access and the construction of a new detached garage with alley access. In addition, a request for a variance to encroach one foot, nine inches into a required side yard setback.

Use Permit/Carl Hesse/129 Pope Street: Request for a use permit to demolish an existing single-story, single-family residence and construct a new two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width in the R-1-U (Single-Family Urban) zoning district, and for excavation into a required side yard setback for a light well and egress associated with a basement.

Architectural Control and Sign Review/Jeffrey's Hamburgers/888 El Camino Real: Request for architectural control to remodel the exterior of a commercial building and for sign review of new signs containing the color red for property located in the C-4 (ECR) (General Commercial - Applicable to El Camino Real) zoning district.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on these items in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on Monday, February 26, 2007, 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge these items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Documents related to these items may be inspected by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Department of Community Development, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please note that the items listed are only the agenda items that require a public hearing. Please call the Planning Division if there are any questions and/or for complete agenda information (650) 330-6702.

DATED: February 8, 2007

PUBLISHED: February 14, 2007

Deanna Chow, Senior Planner

Menlo Park Planning Commission

Visit our Web site for Planning Commission public hearing, agenda, and staff report information: www.menlopark.org

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on February 14, 2007.

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County joins program to get guns away from abusers

For the next two years, San Mateo County will partner with the California Department of Justice in a pilot program to get guns out of the hands of people under court restraining order in domestic violence cases.

Guns held illegally by perpetrators of domestic violence are often used in homicides of partners and children, statistics show. This is "an enormous danger," said Supervisor Mark Church in a hearing Feb. 6. "These guns present an enormous threat to those who are abused and to law enforcement officers."

The Board of Supervisors approved a joint "Domestic Violence

Firearms Compliance Program" that will run into 2009.

The state will contribute \$972,000 over two years to pay for a Justice Department special agent and crime analyst, and for a full-time San Mateo County sheriff's detective to work on the program. The county will contribute approximately \$387,000 for a second sheriff's detective.

While people under restraining orders for domestic violence are legally prohibited from owning guns, these people are "least likely" to turn them over to the police, Supervisor Church said, during a hearing when several victims of domestic violence and their advocates spoke.

County OK's higher antenna at Alameda fire station

As the use of cell phones soars, so too, it appears, does the need for cell phone companies to install more and higher antennas to transmit calls.

On Feb. 6, a group of neighbors of the Menlo Park fire station at 3322 Alameda de las Pulgas lost their bid to block the extension of a Cingular antenna atop the station from 59 feet eight inches to 71 feet.

The county Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to grant the permit for the higher antenna structure. This action reversed the Planning Commission, which had denied the permit approved by the zoning hearing officer almost a year ago.

Supervisor Rich Gordon not-

ed wide support for better cell phone reception. "I've received 70 e-mails requesting approval to improve service," he said.

Opponents, led by Josh Becker, questioned the need for the higher tower; they argued it would hurt their view and affect property values. "The coverage is great" said Mr. Becker. "The tower we have is high enough."

Cingular representative Mike Mangiantini said the need is growing, and the number of dropped or blocked calls is rising. "We get 2,300 hits per day, and the number is growing," he said.

Mr. Mangiantini also cited appraisals that asserted that property values would not be affected.

County to ban smoking at parks and beaches

Watch out, smokers. Starting in mid-March, San Mateo County won't even let you enjoy that cigar or cigarette in any county park. Lighting up in Flood, Huddart or Wunderlich parks, or outside the Woodside Store, for example, could get you fined \$100 the first time, \$299 the second time, or \$500 each time after that.

On Feb. 6, the Board of Supervisors introduced an ordinance banning smoking in all county beaches, parks and trails. The ordinance is to be adopted Feb.

13, and takes effect in 30 days..

Smoking is already illegal inside in any enclosed structure owned or leased by the county, and within 30 feet of any structure owned by the county.

In addition to the health effects of second-hand smoke, supervisors cited the threat of fire in the county's vast forests, and the visual and polluting effects of litter in parks, on trails, and at the Fitzgerald Marine Preserve.

"In beach cleanups, the number one source of litter is

cigarette butts," said Supervisor Rich Gordon. Instead of being a giant sand box, "our beaches are a huge ashtray."


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- Thursdays, March 8 – 29

*** SIBLING PREPARATION**

Designed for children two years of age and older, this class prepares siblings for the emotional and physical realities of the arrival of a newborn.


- Saturday, March 17

*** NEW FAMILY PROGRAM**

This program features a selection of support groups designed to help families throughout the first nine months after birth, offering something for everyone. Enrollment includes participation in Mother-Baby Mornings, Dads' Nights and Working Mothers' Groups.

- Ongoing Weekly and Monthly Sessions

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Ormondale principal to retire

■ Master teacher Linda Vlastic to retire, also.

By **Marjorie Mader**
Almanac Staff Writer

Ormondale Principal Eva Gal has decided to retire in June after guiding the Portola Valley elementary school for the past 20 years through reorganization, modernization and recognition as a California Distinguished School — four times.

“It was a hard decision,” she said. “I love my job, the staff, children and community, but the time is right for a change.”

She announced her decision — a surprise to many — at the Ormondale staff meeting Feb. 8.

During the same meeting, master teacher Linda Vlastic, who has worked closely with Ms. Gal for many years, told colleagues she also will retire in June.

Ms. Vlastic has taught 35 years in the district, beginning at Ormondale with a combination fourth- and fifth-grade class, moving to Corte Madera to teach sixth grade, and leading classes for gifted and talented students before returning to Ormondale, where she settled in to teach third grade. She is recognized for her leadership, energy and enthusiasm in bringing innovation to the classroom and district and developing grants for school-wide programs such as service learning.

“Independently, Linda and I came to the conclusion it was time to retire,” said Ms. Gal.

“Ormondale is at a point where it is positioned to move forward in the coming years “to meet the needs of students in the 21st century,” said Ms. Gal. “The teachers have done a lot of hard work this year” on initiatives to further “investigative learning.”

Teachers now use what Ms.

Gal calls “a hybrid system,” combining “best practices” from more traditional content delivery with newer approaches such as project-based learning that reflects student interests and needs.



Eva Gal

Ms. Gal came to the Portola Valley district in 1985 as dean of students at Corte Madera before being appointed principal at Ormondale, then a K-5 school, two years later. Previously, she was a counselor and vice principal of a middle school in Day City and taught high school in the East.

“I have had the unique pleasure of working with a most extraordinary group of students, teachers, parents, and community members,” she said in her letter mailed to Ormondale parents. “We have shared a commitment to excellence “ and “nothing but the highest level of teaching and learning sufficed.

“I have always felt grateful to be in a community that allowed and encouraged the pursuit of excellence and provided the means to build schools that viewed teaching and learning as a total community endeavor,” she said.

Reorganization of Ormondale 10 years ago from a K-5 to a K-3 school, Ms. Gal said, narrowed

See **PRINCIPAL**, next page

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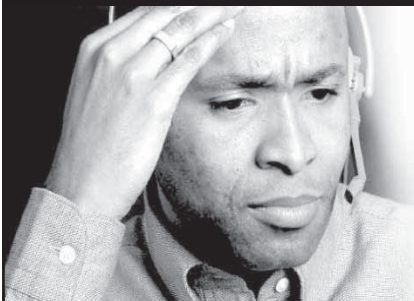
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'All About Green Remodeling' topic of environmental forum

"All About Green Remodeling" is the title of an environmental forum Tuesday, Feb. 13, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Acterra, 3921 E. Bayshore Blvd., in Palo Alto.

People facing remodeling can get tips from three local architects and builders on how green design and construction can reduce energy and maintenance costs, and increase the comfort and health of a home.

Speakers are Gail Brownell of Sustainable Spaces; David Edwards of Earth Bound Construction; and Susan Davis of Spectrum Fine Homes.

Cost of the forum is \$5 for Acterra members, and \$10 for others.

For information call Ellen Wilkinson at 962-9876, ext. 306; or go to acterra.org.

■ BRIEFS

Talk on reforming the United Nations

William H. Luers, president of the national United Nations Association, will speak on "Reform of the United Nations" on Thursday, Feb. 15, from 4:30 to 6 p.m., at the Bechtel Conference Center in Encina Hall, 232 Serra St., at Stanford.

The free public lecture at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies is co-sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Northern California and the United Nations Association-Mid Peninsula Chapter.

For information, visit the "Events" section at fsi.stanford.edu.

PRINCIPAL

continued from previous page

the age span of students and gave the opportunity to fully focus on the younger child and create a school that has the capacity to meet children's needs in "a myriad of ways."

Ms. Gal has no specific plans for the next phase of her life as a retired educator. She will finish out the school year and do the planning to make the next school year at Ormondale successful.

She looks forward to traveling and spending more time with family — husband, George Gal, a research scientist at Lockheed; daughter Andrea Gal, a teacher in Foster City; son Dr. Robert Gal of Long Island, New York; and her four "beautiful grandchildren," ages 18 months to 8 years.

Linda Vlastic

"I love teaching," said Ms. Vlastic, "but I think you have to

make a decision when it's time not to teach."

Ms. Vlastic said she has no specific plans for retirement. She intends to continue with volunteer work, take classes, spend more time with family and friends, and pursue options that she hasn't been able to devote time to during her career. She and her husband, Tom Vlastic, deputy town planner for Portola Valley, are parents of Jennifer and Eric Vlastic, now adults pursuing careers.

Superintendent Anne Campbell said she finds herself pleased for the two "models and mentors" as they embark upon new life adventures, but sad when she contemplates Ormondale without their expertise and exuberance.

"Although I find myself wishing we could just clone them, we can't, so we will begin our principal search immediately to find the best match for Ormondale," said Superintendent Campbell. ▀

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WHERE THERE'S SMOKE... IS THERE FIRE?

The civil grand jury casts doubt on the safety of Atherton homes

BY ANDREA GEMMET Almanac Staff Writer

Bob Blach, an inspector with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, shines his flashlight along the exposed ceiling of a West Atherton home under construction. He's following the path of the water pipes that feed the fire-suppression sprinklers snaking through a house of palatial proportions.

A couple of contractors, attempting to appear nonchalant, are waiting to find out if the project will pass the inspection. They are understandably anxious — construction has been held up three months because the nearby fire hydrant didn't provide enough water flow to protect the almost 12,000 square-foot house and its out buildings.

Fifteen hundred feet of new water line and \$200,000 later, the water flow has gone from an unacceptable 900 gallons per minute to the minimum requirement of 1,500 gallons per minute, but the house is still months away from completion.

Next door, construction on an equally big house is nearly done. Work on both houses started at the same time, the contractor says. The difference is that no one required the builders of the house next door to do anything about water flow from the fire hydrant, he says.

The house months from completion had its plans reviewed by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. The house that's nearly done did not. Both houses are served by the same hydrant.

"The fire district did deny the permit for (the house) and the (Atherton) building department had approved

it," says Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman. "There's no way in the world that project had adequate water flow for what we needed to have."

This type of discrepancy forms the crux of the concerns expressed in last week's report from the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury about Atherton's building department. The interim report calls for immediate action to rem-

"That's what's irritating — the implication that fire hazards were built in Atherton, and that's absolutely not the case," Mr. Carlson says.

Building department saga

Atherton's small but busy building department has been under heavy scrutiny for the past year, and not just from the civil grand jury. A private investigator conducted an eight-month personnel investigation, and the town's finance department conducted a three-phase audit of the building department's procedures and practices, including a review of permits issued and project records. Some permits were issued improperly and some projects violated the town's municipal code, according to the audit's findings.

In the midst of all the scrutiny, longtime building official Mike Hood retired.

As a result, a number of reforms have been put in place or are in the process of being instituted in the building department, at the direction of the Atherton City Council. The grand jury report supports the audit's findings and the town's reforms, but adds a new chapter to the building department saga — the possibility that fire safety standards were not met by some of the projects.

Doubts raised

Because of the problems uncovered by the finance department's audits, the civil grand jury concludes that "some projects in the town were not covered

No one knows exactly how many building projects that would be, but estimates range from several hundred to more than a thousand building plans that the grand jury wants reviewed by April 1.

by the (audits) and may violate the health and safety standards in the 2001 California Building Code and Health and Safety Code."

The key point raised in the report is that Atherton had no established procedure for having building plans reviewed by the fire protection district. "The permit applicant had been responsible for submitting the plans to the (fire district)," the report says, referring to it as a "loophole in the permitting process."

Of the list of open building permits in Atherton, fewer than half of the substantial construction and building alteration projects had been reviewed or approved by the fire district, the report says. The report says only 18 of 81 new residences and 45 of 108 accessory structures were submitted for district review.

Building department officials say they are in the midst of conducting their own tally of the open permits.

"I was most distressed to discover that many building plans were not given to the fire department and hence, did not get properly reviewed," says Peter Carpenter, an Atherton resident and a member of the fire district's elected board of directors.

"Of the building plans that were not



'The implication (is) that fire hazards were built in Atherton, and that's absolutely not the case.'

—ATHERTON MAYOR ALAN CARLSON

Photo by Bud Wendall



edy health and safety issues in the town's residential construction projects, stemming from the building department's management problems under former building official Mike Hood.

"I am very concerned for both the safety of residents of the town of Atherton and our firefighters," said Chief Schapelhouman.

While fire officials are alarmed, some Atherton officials are hot under the collar over the report and the fire district's reaction.

Mayor Alan Carlson said he didn't think the situation is serious at all.

Just because the fire district didn't review all the building plans that came through the Atherton Building Department doesn't mean that the projects weren't reviewed for health and safety issues by the town's own building department, he says.



Photos by Veronica Weber

Above: Menlo Park fire district inspector Bob Blach checks over the plans of an Atherton house that's under construction, with two of the contractors on hand to answer questions.

Left: Flashlight in hand, inspector Bob Blach follows the pipes of the fire-suppression sprinklers embedded in the ceiling of this Atherton home.

reviewed, how many have problems?" he says. "There's the possibility that of those plans that were not sent, they were put together by good architects and had all the features that are required, but you don't know until you look."

A closer look is exactly what the grand jury is recommending — that the town go through all building plans submitted during former building official Mike Hood's 11-year tenure, and send to the fire district all the projects that "were not reviewed for fire safety."

No one knows exactly how many building projects that would be, but estimates range from several hundred to more than a thousand building plans that the grand jury wants reviewed by April 1.

Both Atherton and fire district officials questioned the feasibility of reviewing so many plans in such a short amount of time.

City Manager Jim Robinson says Atherton residents can be reassured that construction projects were all reviewed for compliance with the California Building Code for life safety and other issues.

The town began working more closely with fire district officials when Mike Cully came on board as the interim building official in late fall.

As of last week, all building plans submitted to the Atherton Building Department were being sent to the fire district, according to the town's new building official, Mike Wasmann. Until a formal agreement is made with the fire officials, some time in the near future, the town will leave it up to the district's fire prevention bureau to decide which plans to review, he says.

Atherton is different

Of a survey of seven other communities in San Mateo County, including three comparable to Atherton in population and

demographics, all of them required permit applications be approved by the fire department before a building permit is issued, according to the grand jury report.

While some communities, such as Menlo Park, exempt residential construction from fire department review, Atherton presents a fairly unique set of challenges.

Atherton homes are on large lots, typically an acre or larger, and may be set back far from the road. Chief Schapelhouman said firefighters face three types of problems in Atherton: getting access to the home; proximity to fire hydrants; and having an adequate water supply.

Entrance gates and long driveways may be too narrow to accommodate fire engines in some cases, Chief Schapelhouman says. Inadequate water flow is a problem common to many Atherton neighborhoods, and houses may be set back so far from the street that it takes three fire engines' worth of hose line to reach from the hydrant to the building, he says.

For the past several years, it's become de rigueur to include a full basement underneath a new home. And of course, Atherton homes are much larger than those of a typical suburban subdivision.

"We have houses that, in some cases, are larger than commercial establishments, and in some cases, may have almost as many people going through them," says Councilwoman Kathy McK-eithen. "You want firefighters to be safe. They can get lost in one of these big houses, they can get lost in the basements. I sympathize with their concerns."

While homeowners may enjoy the bonus square footage they get from basements, firefighters generally have a less favorable view.

"The worst situation we can face is to have a fire in a substructure level," says Chief Schapelhouman, citing the danger

of collapse and the possibility of inadequate exits.

Real dangers?

Atherton's former interim building official, Mike Cully, says he does not know of any Atherton basements that lack exits or sprinklers, despite the allegations in the grand jury report.

"If they're talking about existing structures, if they were legal when they were built, then they are still legal today. Any basements built today are in compliance with the Cali-

fornia Building Code," he says.

Mr. Cully stepped down as building official on Feb. 5, when Mr. Wasmann took over the job, and he is now filling Mr. Wasmann's former post as senior building

inspector, on an interim basis. In fact, town officials say they are only aware of one property that may have run afoul of the town's two-year-old sprinkler ordinance, and that is for a guest cottage with a basement under it. Depending on how the square footage is calculated, the cottage could be considered large enough to trigger the sprinkler requirement, says City Attorney Marc Hynes.

Atherton recently clarified its rules, and prohibits basements under accessory structures.

"The houses in our town are safe, they're not falling apart, and they're not going to burst into flames on their own," says Mr. Cully.

The grand jury report cites two properties that violate the Atherton municipal code and that appear to present health and safety violations. Apart from the problematic guest cottage, Mr. Hynes says he has no idea which properties the report is referring to.

"The things that turned up were violations of the zoning code, and no one's going to die from zoning code violations," he

See **FIRE SAFETY**, page 16

'I am very concerned for both the safety of residents... and our firefighters'

—FIRE CHIEF HAROLD SCHAPELHOUMAN

Photo by Kainaz Amaria



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While homeowners may enjoy the bonus square footage they get from basements, firefighters generally have a less favorable view.

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of collapse and the possibility of inadequate exits.

Grand jury recommendations

- The San Mateo County civil grand jury recommends that the town of Atherton and its City Council:
 - Ask the fire district examine all current, substantial construction projects for potential health and safety violations.
 - Ask the fire district examine all projects "that were not reviewed for fire safety" constructed during the 11 years Mike Hood served as Atherton's building official.
 - Publish the results of these examinations by April 1, 2007.
 - Adopt an ordinance defining when fire district approval of building construction plans is required before a permit may be issued.
 - Reconsider the fire sprinkler ordinance that exempts remodeling and other building alteration projects from the sprinkler ordinance and from fire district approval.
 - Continue to implement the reforms recommended in the audits of the Atherton Building Department.

To read the civil grand jury's entire report on Atherton's building department, go to SanMateoCourt.org/grandjury and click on "Final reports" for 2006-2007.

Atherton blindsided by concerns over fire safety

FIRE SAFETY

continued from page 15

says, using the example of homes built bigger than they were supposed to be.

More questions

At the moment, it appears unlikely that the Atherton City Council will fulfill the grand jury's request for 11-years-worth of building plans to be reviewed by the fire district.

"I don't know that we need to go back over Mike Hood's entire record," says Councilwoman McKeithen. "How they're going to do it by April 1 is beyond me."

Considering the state of the Building Department's records, which are kept on an antiquated DOS system that dates back to 1985, Mr. Cully predicted that it would take a couple of IT guys at least a couple of weeks just to come up with all of the records.

Even if the fire district's busy, four-man prevention bureau could review all of the plans in time, it raises still more questions. The district charges property owners several hundred dollars to recover its costs for reviewing plans and doing inspections.

"On a normal day, we would charge a fee and offset our cost, but because these ships have already sailed, that's not possible," says Chief Schapelhouman. "We're talking about a tremendous commitment of personnel time, and obviously, of district funding for this endeavor."

The grand jury report does not indicate who would have to pay for the district's retroactive plan reviews. And, it doesn't indicate who would pay to fix any problems that might be found.

"Who would pay for it, and what would you do about it? Unless you found life safety issues, people got permits, people relied on them, and vested their rights — there's no way you could force them to do anything," says Mr. Hynes, the city attorney. "I suppose if something was so poorly constructed that it's at risk of collapse or risk of fire, you could go back (and force a remedy). But I haven't seen any examples of that."

Blindsided by report

Just when Atherton officials had thought they'd heard almost everything there was to hear about problems in the building department, out came last week's grand jury report with its focus on fire safety.

Mayor Carlson says he had absolutely no idea where the concerns about fire safety originated.

"Did I see this issue coming? No," he says. "We never had anyone come in and allege that a building did not meet health and safety and fire standards."

In fact, there's a bit of finger-pointing over the whole issue of the fire district's involvement in reviewing plans. Mr. Carlson and Mr. Hynes maintain that the town was perfectly within

its rights to bypass the fire district's review of single-family homes and delegate that authority to Atherton's building official.

Mr. Hynes says that several years ago, the town offered fire district inspectors a desk at the planning department where they could review plans, but that they declined. Rather than delay building plan reviews for several weeks by first sending them out to the fire district, the town conducted its own safety reviews, he says.

Mr. Cully, who has a background as a fire inspector, says he met with Fire Marshal Jeff Aus in October to discuss the district's concerns, and the topic of plan reviews never came up. It wasn't until December that he discovered that Atherton didn't have a formal procedure in place for getting the fire district to sign off on appropriate projects. He says he then began drafting a procedure, which was completed Feb. 5, in order to keep the district in the loop.

"The building official has tremendous power and tremendous oversight, if he wants to work with us or if he doesn't want to work with us," says Chief Schapelhouman. "This may have been solved had we approached the council as was done with the sprinkler ordinance."

Mr. Carpenter, the fire district director, points to a bigger problem the fire district faces from all three of the towns it serves — Atherton, Menlo Park and East Palo Alto.

"In my opinion, the three underlying jurisdictions have tended to view the fire department as not part of their team. The fire department is not routinely asked for input," he says. "To some degree, I think that's a very short-sighted, bureaucratic attitude."

Going forward

People with building projects shouldn't be worried that their plan reviews are going to be delayed, now that Atherton is sending plans to the fire district, says Mr. Cully.

Because of the Building Department's heavy workload, and the complexity of doing full structural reviews of building plans, the fire district has a much shorter turnaround time for its plan reviews than the building department does, he says. Plans can get reviewed by the district and get back to the town in the same amount of time they would've been waiting in the queue for the town's plan check, Mr. Cully says.

Mr. Blach, the fire district's inspector, says Menlo Park's fire prevention bureau is very customer friendly.

"In other places, you'd be waiting three months for review. We're kicking plans off in three weeks," he says.

And despite questions about who should have spoken up about fire safety plans, fire district and Atherton officials interviewed by the Almanac for the story all say that



Photos by Veronica Weber

Fire-suppression sprinklers, like the one fire inspector Bob Blach is holding, are required in new Atherton homes, but not in remodeling projects.

Fire sprinklers revisited

Menlo Park firefighters have nothing bad to say about fire-suppression sprinklers — they are a cheap and effective way to save lives and property.

Critics turned up, however, when fire officials asked the three cities in their jurisdiction — Atherton, Menlo Park and East Palo Alto — to pass an ordinance requiring the installation of fire sprinkler systems.

In September 2004, the Atherton council approved a slightly watered-down version of the district's sprinkler ordinance that exempted remodeling and other "building alteration" projects.

The ordinance passed by Atherton requires new buildings over of 1,000 square feet or more to be equipped with fire-suppression sprinkler systems. Any new basement construction over 250 square feet requires sprinkler installation throughout the entire building, whether existing or new.

What Atherton's ordinance does not include is a requirement for any remodeling projects over 2,500 square feet to include sprinklers installed throughout the building. The majority of Atherton council members balked at requiring an existing house to be retrofitted with sprinklers just because an

addition or remodeling project was taking place.

East Palo Alto and county officials passed ordinances that were as strict or stricter than what the fire district officials requested, but the Menlo Park City Council rejected it.

The fire district board can pass regulations on its own, but needs cities to adopt parallel ordinances in order for them to be enforced.

Menlo Park fire inspector Bob Blach says that in Atherton, builders spend more on a new front door than they will on sprinkler systems in new homes.

"It adds 1 or 1-1/2 percent of the cost (of building). It's nothing," he says.

The sprinklers are often the cheapest way to mitigate an inadequate water supply, and unlike what you see in the movies, only the sprinklers closest to the source of the fire will go off, Mr. Blach says.

Atherton Mayor Alan Carlson defended the council's decision, and said he was dismayed by the criticism leveled at the town.

"Like with anything, you have to balance interests," he says. "We're not going to compromise health and safety, but if you remodel, are we going to make you rip up your ceilings to put sprinklers in? We chose not to do that."

How other towns handle building plan reviews

The county civil grand jury's report criticizes the Atherton Building Department for not having a formal procedure in place for having building plans reviewed by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. Other towns in the Almanac circulation area have these procedures:

- **Menlo Park:** Multi-family and commercial projects are reviewed by the fire district, but single-family homes and remodeling projects are not.
- **Portola Valley:** Fire marshal review is required of plans for both new construction and remodels to check for water supply and access, and an inspection is required before Architecture and Site Control Commission approval of a project.
- **Woodside:** New construction over 1,000 square feet, major remodeling projects, driveways and gates are reviewed by the fire marshal.

they intend to work cooperatively from now on.

"We have a new building official and a new fire chief, and I'm confident we can work together to resolve common issues relative to plan checking and review in the town of Atherton," says

City Manager Robinson.

The town is making great strides in improving the building department, but that doesn't mean that there isn't more to do, and that the fire district isn't right about its concerns, says Ms. McKeithen. ■

Community

NEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

Owner Lisa Lovazzano is shown in The Shoppe at Menloville's new sunroom.

Now it's the Shoppe at Menloville

Gift shop and boutique on Valparaiso Avenue has a new name

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

■ BUSINESS

Lisa Lovazzano, owner of the Shoppe at Menloville, is having a Valentine party and you're all invited. From 2 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, there will be "an afternoon of treats, candies, desserts, a chocolate fountain, sparkling cider and champagne" at the shop at 1902 Valparaiso Ave. in Menlo Park.

Ms. Lovazzano is celebrating the re-opening of The Shoppe at Menloville, which has been closed for a couple of years.

"I never really closed," she says. "I've always been open by appointment for design work and 'patioscaping.'" During the past few years, Ms. Lovazzano has also studied design at the Academy of Art in San Francisco. "I want to learn the technical aspects of design," she says.

Now her shop, which features everything from margarita mix to antique furniture, is open for regular hours from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. It's closed Sunday. She's in the store even earlier in the day, baking low-fat scones or cookies. She also serves coffee drinks and has installed a yogurt machine making Honey Hills frozen yogurt. "It's a little tart and has a more natural flavor," she says.

The Shoppe at Menloville is about more than food. It is an assortment of all kinds of wares.

There is a pink electric fan painted with roses, belt buckles with lots of "bling," silver bead charm necklaces, and picture slates made by "Virgins, Saints and Sinners," a New Orleans firm. The slates were recovered from a roof destroyed

by Hurricane Katrina.

Ms. Lovazanno says she also carries "architectural relics, antiques, home and garden accessories, T-shirts, and South-western plants and planters."

"I like finding funky old things that are fun and provide

See MENLOVILLE, page 18

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The Almanac/Veronica Weber

These colorful clogs are among the wares available at the Shoppe at Menloville.

'I like finding funky old things that are fun'

MENLOVILLE

continued from page 17

an unusual mix," she says. She points to a ceramic cookie jar in the shape of a portly monk. "Thou shalt not steal" is printed on his cassock. "This costs \$25. It makes people laugh." Antiques range from a glittering sconce to a French wall clock.

Ms. Lovazzano and her hus-

band, Bruce, are living in the apartment behind the shop while building a new home on their property in Portola Valley. It's expected to take another year-and-a-half before the Italian-style farmhouse is completed.

Menloville first opened in 1999 as a boutique and grocery, replacing a "mom and pop" grocery store that had been around since the 1930s.

The shop is still a work in progress. Ms. Lovazzano hopes her old customers will return, if only to see what's new, or to stop by for coffee and a scone in her new sunroom addition. ■

The Shoppe at Menloville is located at 1902 Valparaiso Ave. in Menlo Park. It is open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Call 324-2455.

'Queen of Spades' opens at West Bay Opera

Tchaikovsky's "The Queen of Spades," an opera in three acts, will be performed by West Bay Opera for two weekends, opening Friday, Feb. 16, at the Lucie Stern Theatre in Palo Alto.

Directed by David F. Ostwald, the opera will be performed at 8 p.m. Feb. 16, 17, 23 and 24; and 2 p.m. on two Sundays, Feb. 18 and 25.

The opera tells the story of a penniless man in love with an aristocratic woman. It will be sung in

Russian, with English supertitles.

The lead singers include Daniel Cardwell and Adam Flowers, alternating as Gherman; John P. Mina-gro and Igor Vieira, alternating as Count Tomsky; Jason Detwiler and Torlef Borsting, alternating as Prince Yeletsky; Elena Yakoubovsky and Alaine Rodin, alternating as Liza; and Raekka Shehabi-Yaghmai and Kathleen Moss, alternating as Polina.

Ernest Fredric Knell conducts the orchestra. The cast includes

the children's chorus, Cantabile Youth Singers.

For ticket information and reservations, call the box office at 424-9999; or e-mail Box Office@WBOpera.org.

For more information, log on at wboopera.org.

Court won't revisit Jackling house case

The California Court of Appeal judges aren't going to change their minds. After upholding a trial court's decision to save the historic Jackling house from the wrecking ball, homeowner Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple Inc., asked the appellate court to reconsider. On Feb. 7, the court declined to revisit its ruling.

Woodside officials granted Mr. Jobs a demolition permit for the huge 1920s-era mansion, but a group of historic preservations sued to stop it, saying the town violated the state environmental quality act.

Howard Ellman, Mr. Jobs' attorney, did not respond to the Almanac's request for comment by its press deadline.

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Library donation to be disclosed Wednesday

A donation to a new Portola Valley library, which will be built at the new Town Center, will be announced at the Town Council meeting Wednesday, Feb. 14, in the Historic Schoolhouse. The meeting starts at 8 p.m.

The donation, in an amount not yet disclosed, is from the Friends of the Portola Valley Library.

Last March, the Friends gave the town \$40,000 in recognition of public funds spent in the summer of 2005 to move the old town library from the Town Center to

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

Corte Madera Middle School. Employees refused to continue working at the old library after a structural engineering report found it to be seismically unsafe.

The town spent \$120,000 to create a temporary library in two old Corte Madera kindergarten classrooms. In addition to moving library materials there, the improvements included rewiring and installing

Internet connections, removing a wall between the classrooms, and installing a modern adult bathroom.

Also on the agenda for Wednesday: a costs and schedule update from the architects designing the new \$20 million Town Center complex, a fundraising update on efforts to obtain the final \$3 million to \$4 million needed to pay for the new complex, and bid recommendations for the project's main construction phase.

Second hearing on parents' bid to transfer to MP district

■ SCHOOLS

A public hearing on a petition, signed by 25 parents seeking to transfer their property in the Ravenswood City School District to the adjacent Menlo Park City School District, will be held Tuesday, Feb. 13, in the Menlo Park district.

This second hearing — the other was held in the Ravenswood district — is scheduled from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Menlo Park district's board meeting room at 181 Encinal Ave. in Atherton. It will be held before the 11 members of the San Mateo County Committee on School District Organization.

The public is invited to comment after hearing statements by the petitioners, parents living in the Pacific Parc townhouse complex at 600 Willow Road

in Menlo Park, and by the two school districts involved.

Before the condominiums were built, the site was owned by the Ravenswood district. The district sold the land to a developer to raise funds but the site remains in the Ravenswood district.

Both districts are opposed to granting the petition. Ravenswood would lose state-funded revenue if its enrollment declines further. The Menlo Park district is involved in a major expansion of its four schools to accommodate a projected increase in its enrollment. Menlo Park would not receive any more funds if students from the proposed transfer area attend Menlo Park schools.

Valentine dinner dance at Little House

Little House members will celebrate Valentine's Day on the following day — Thursday, Feb. 15 — with a dinner dance. Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. Mike Johnson and the Sound Wizards will provide music for dancing from 7 to 9 p.m. The cost of the dinner is \$12 for members and \$17 for others. The cost for dancing is \$7 per person. Little House is located at 800 Middle Ave. in Menlo Park. For information, call 326-2925.

■ AROUND TOWN

the Valentine's Day luncheon at the Menlo Park Senior Center at 110 Terminal Ave. A traditional Louisiana meal of shrimp and sausage jambalaya will be served at noon. Cost is \$5. For information, call 330-2283.

Tax help for seniors

AARP is again providing free tax assistance for low- and moderate-income taxpayers, with special attention to those age 60 and older.

The AARP volunteers are trained in cooperation with the IRS and provide one-on-one service for preparation of personal income tax returns. The service does not cover complex or business returns.

The service is provided at most senior centers. To find the location of local service sites, call 1-888-227-7669 or go to www.aarp.org/taxaide.

Waste collection on Presidents' Day

Allied Waste Services of San Mateo County will keep its regular collection schedule on the Presidents' Day holiday, Monday, Feb. 19. There will be both waste and recycling collection.

Customer service representatives will be available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. by calling 592-2411. The San Carlos transfer station and Ox Mountain landfill will be closed for the holiday.

SLAC resumes operation after acid leak

Stanford's linear accelerator near Menlo Park was shut down for about five hours Feb. 6 after a cooling tower leaked between five to 10 gallons of diluted sulfuric acid, an accelerator official said.

The leak occurred shortly after 2 a.m. and was quickly contained by accelerator personnel, said Lee Lyon of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center.

"There was some water with some sulfuric acid in it (that leaked)," Mr. Lyon said. "Five to 10 gallons is our best estimate, no injuries, no exposure, no environmental risk."

Accelerator officials are investigating what caused the leak. Meanwhile, the accelerator has resumed normal operations, he said.

— Bay City News Service

Hearts and flowers luncheon Feb. 14

Seniors are invited to attend



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Corrections

In the Feb. 7 Almanac cover story on reusing materials from the old Portola Valley Town Center, Woodside resident and owner of Reusable Lumber Inc.

Jim Steinmetz recovered 28,000 linear feet of old wood, not 14,000 linear feet, and he was a consultant to the demolition contractor Roldan Construction Inc. of Fremont.



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Clubs honor 'Leading Citizens'

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula honored its "Leading Citizens" for 2006 at a recent celebration in the ballroom of the Crowne Plaza Cabana Hotel in Palo Alto.

The honorees are:

■ **Leading Citizen:** David House, a former Intel executive and retired president of Nortel Networks who has been a major supporter of the clubs' technology programs.

■ **Leading Philanthropists:** John and Susan Sobrato of Atherton and their family, including John Michael Sobrato, Abby Sobrato, Lisa Sobrato Sonsini and Sheri Sobrato. They are recognized for many years of philanthropy, including for youth and education. According to a press release, the family has given more than \$10 million to

various causes in the past two years and contributed countless hours to the community.

■ **Community Hero:** Les DeWitt of Atherton is the first recipient of this new award, recognizing an individual who has worked tirelessly to provide hope and opportunity for youth in the community. A long-time volunteer, he is a former president of the Boys & Girls Clubs and a founder of the Peninsula Bridge Program, which helps students succeed in high school, and the Fund for Peace Initiatives, which was key in attracting a grant of \$1.9 million from the Oracle Education Foundation to transform the clubs' academic program.

■ **Leading Volunteers:** Constance "Connie" Heldman and

Lee Kanner. Ms. Kanner volunteered as a math tutor at the clubs' Mervin G. Morris Clubhouse in Redwood City for over a decade since she retired as a college math professor. Ms. Heldman, a former Intel executive, has given thousands of hours in helping children with reading. Since 2003, she has been commuting from her Marin County home to East Palo Alto almost daily to run Reading Wizards, a literacy program she created and has helped to replicate at clubs across the nation.

■ **Leading Corporation:** Comcast Corp., for its time and resources, including "tens of thousands of dollars recently to the clubs' Peninsula's Academic Literacy program," a press release says.

Hidden Villa seminar on mountain lions

Hidden Villa will hold a free mountain lion education seminar on Tuesday, Feb. 13, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Dana Center located at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills.

Scientist and mountain lion expert Rick Hopkins, a board

member of Courgarfund.org, will speak about mountain lion behavior.

Rob and Barbara Dically of Leopards Etc will bring a mountain lion and a Canadian lynx so people can get an up close look at the animals. There will be

time for questions.

The event is free but limited to 70 attendees. Call Anna Alioto at 949-8652 to RSVP.

Hidden Villa is at 26870 Moody Road in Los Altos Hills, CA 94022. Hidden Villa uses its organic farm and 1,600-acre wilderness preserve for teaching about nature and the environment. Programs include environmental education for children, summer camp, resident intern program, community programs for families and adults, community supported agriculture, hostel, facility rentals and volunteer opportunities.

Deadline ahead for \$1,000 scholarship

Principals and faculty at local public high schools — including Woodside and Menlo-Atherton high schools — have until Friday, March 9, to nominate three exceptional seniors from the class of 2007 for a \$1,000 scholarship from the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors.

A committee that includes representatives from local businesses, high schools and colleges will choose a winner from each of the 18 participating schools.

Nomination forms are available at the school. Return completed forms to the principal or scholarship counselor.

For more information, call or write to Nina Yamaguchi at (408) 861-8822 or nyamaguchi@cbnorcal.com.

Help Restore Your Local Creek!

The San Francisquito Watershed Council needs your help restoring streamside habitat.



~All activities 9:30am to 12:30pm~

DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
MAR 3	French Broom Removal	Alpine Inn, PV
APR 7	Weeding / Maintenance	El Palo Alto Park, PA
MAY 19*	Nat'l River Cleanup Day	Manhattan Ave, PA
June 2	TBA	TBA

~9:00am to 12:00pm~

For locations and directions: see www.SanFrancisquito.org/Events

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

Volunteers are also needed at the Native Plant Nursery - Nursery@Acterra.org Ryan Navratil 650.961.1035 x310 Volunteer@SanFrancisquito.org

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PV's Rhett Ellison signs with USC

USC signed 17 high school football players Feb. 7, including Rhett Ellison of Portola Valley, a 6 foot 5 inch, 235-pound linebacker and tight end at St. Francis High School in Mountain View.

He is son of Riki Ellison, the former 49er who played in two Super Bowls, and Sheila Ellison of Portola Valley.

Among Rhett Ellison's 2006 honors, he was a Super Prep All-Far West, Prep Star All-West,

SPORTS

and San Jose Mercury News All-Area first team.

He had 49 tackles, two sacks and one interception on defense, and 31 receptions for 394 yards (12.7 avg.) with two TDs on offense in 2006.

As a junior in 2005, he made 27 tackles and four sacks, plus caught 26 passes for 301 yards (11.6 avg.) with five TDs.

His father, Riki (Gray) Ellison, lettered at linebacker for four seasons (1978-80, 1982) at USC, where he was a member of the 1978 national championship team and earned All-Conference honors in 1979, then played in the NFL with the San Francisco 49ers (1983-88), where he appeared in the 1985 and 1989 Super Bowls; and with the Los Angeles Raiders (1990-92).

The data above is from CSTV.com.

Alpine Little League seeks sponsors

This news was posted on Town Square (AlmanacNews.com) by Jim Schott of the West Menlo-Alpine Little League:

The West Menlo-Alpine Little League is looking for a few great sponsors.

Opening Day is just around the corner and 70 teams are getting ready for the 2007 season. Nearly 800 players, 200 managers and coaches, 50 youth umpires and countless fans from West Menlo, Woodside and Portola Valley are making plans for Little League ball.

Our League appreciates the support it receives from the community -- including sponsored support and donations from local business and organizations. Please join us in sponsoring a Little League team.

TOWN SQUARE

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

Sponsor benefits include: advertising (your name added to a team's jersey); sponsor's plaque in appreciation for your support; promotion and Web link to your business through the League's Web site; support for our community (in most cases your contribution is tax deductible).

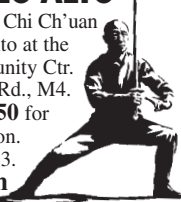
For a sponsor form, e-mail Jim Schott at jim@schottmail.com.

Members sought for water polo club

Dawn Vargas of the Stanford Water Polo Club submitted this for Town

Square: A two-week trial membership is available at no charge for new members. If you know a boy who would like to try this exciting sport, spring is a great time to start. Beginners are always welcome. More information is available at <http://www.stanfordwaterpolo-club.com>

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See bats upside down and in high-tech

This news was posted in Town Square at AlmanacNews.com:

Enter the neo-gothic portal into the new bat exhibit at Coyote Point Museum in San Mateo and you see the world as a bat does — upside down. And you'll see centuries of bat lore from different cultures — all upside down.

"Master of the Night: The True Story of Bats" debunks popular misconception of bats as blood-sucking, blind, squeaky creatures that get tangled in your hair. Instead the new exhibit draws visitors into the world of bats;

special effects and interactive exhibits illustrate the diversity, benefits and skills of bats.

"This exhibit separates fact from fiction about bats," said Michelle Martin, acting executive director at the museum. "Bats are in fact gentle animals and invaluable to our ecosystem."

The bat exhibit runs through May 6 at the Coyote Point Museum, 1651 Coyote Point Drive in San Mateo.

For information, call the museum at 342-7755, or go to coyote-pointmuseum.org.

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The Almanac



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 26, 2007 AND CITY OF MENLO PARK CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MARCH 13, 2007

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission and the City Council of the City of Menlo Park, California, are scheduled to review the following item:

Conditional Development Permit Revision/Richard Zlatunich for Safeway/525 El Camino Real:

Request for a conditional development permit revision for an approved grocery store and retail building in the C-4-X (Applicable to El Camino Real, Conditional Development District) zoning district. The revisions include minor modifications to the interior grocery store layout, an expansion of the grocery store front arcade, a reduction of nine off-street parking spaces, and changes to the exterior colors and sign plan.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on **Monday, February 26, 2007, 7:00 p.m.** or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge these items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing and;

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said City Council will hold a public hearing on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on **Tuesday, March 13, 2007, 7:00 p.m.** or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. The City Council will review the recommendation of the Planning Commission on the tentative map, variance, and use permit.

Documents related to these items may be inspected by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Department of Community Development, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call the Planning Division if there are any questions and/or for complete agenda information (650) 330-6702.

DATED: February 8, 2006 Deanna Chow, Senior Planner
PUBLISHED: February 14, 2006 Menlo Park Planning Commission
Visit our Web site for Planning Commission and City Council public hearing, agenda, and staff report information: www.menlopark.org
Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on February 14, 2007.

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■ POLICE CALLS

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

ATHERTON

Fraud reports:

- Resident suspects he responded too readily with property-related information in cold call from mortgage company, 200 block of Stockbridge Avenue, Feb. 2.
- Fraud suspected in attempt to sell car online, first block of Betty Lane, Feb. 5.

MENLO PARK

Fraud reports:

- Money withdrawn from bank account, 1100 Noel Drive, Feb. 3.

- Carlos Lucatero, 40, of Milpitas, arrested on charges that include passing a counterfeit \$50 bill, Union 76 station in 700 block of Willow Road, Feb. 4.

- Resident claimed false credit account created in his name resulting in unknown losses, reported at main police station, Feb. 6.

Elder abuse report: Referral to adult protective service, Feb. 6.

WOODSIDE

Auto burglary report: Vehicle broken into but car alarm may have scared off burglars because nothing stolen, 1000 block of Kings Mountain Road, Feb. 5.

WEST MENLO PARK

Fraud reports:

- Two forged checks totaling \$94,000

drawn on home equity line of credit, 600 block of Santa Cruz Avenue, Jan. 31.

■ Elderly person lost \$8,000 through unauthorized use of debit card, 2000 block of Sterling Avenue, Feb. 5.

Auto burglary report: Two credit cards stolen from vehicle, 100 block of North Castanya Way, Feb. 6.

Post news and views on
Town Square
www.AlmanacNews.com



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**CITY OF MENLO PARK
CITY COUNCIL
Planning Commission
Recommendation**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Menlo Park, California is scheduled to review the following item:

Use Permit, Architectural Control, and Tentative Subdivision Map/Joe Colonna/1906 El Camino Real: Request for a use permit, architectural control, and tentative subdivision map to demolish an existing one-story 5,750-square-foot commercial building and construct a new two-story 9,862-square-foot office building for medical/dental use and related site improvements in the C-4 (General Commercial applicable to El Camino Real) zoning district. The application includes a request for a tentative map to subdivide one parcel into five commercial condominium airspaces and a request to provide 49 parking spaces in accordance with the use-based guidelines instead of the 60 spaces per the zoning-district-based requirements.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said City Council will hold a public hearing on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on **Tuesday, February 27, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.** or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge these items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Documents related to these items may be inspected by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Community Development Department, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call **Lorraine Weiss**, Contract Planner, at **(415) 921-5344** or email her at **lorraine@lorraine-weiss.com** if you have any questions or comments.

DATED: February 8, 2007 Silvia M. Vonderlinden
City Clerk

PUBLISHED: February 14, 2007

Visit our Web site for public hearing, agenda, and staff report information: <http://www.ci.menlo-park.ca.us>

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on February 14, 2007.

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Money-raising, spending in MP council race

Continued from page 8

That committee raised \$20,429, and spent \$23,196. The committee's biggest single contribution this reporting period was from Palo Alto-based Keep Our Region Energized, Inc., which gave \$9,000. Virginia Chang Kiraly, a Menlo Park Republican who unsuccessfully challenged 21st District Assemblyman Ira Ruskin in the November election, is chief executive officer of Keep Our Region Energized, according to her statement on VoteCircle, a nonpartisan Web site.

The San Mateo Central Labor Council did some heavy spending in the council race in its effort to replace Ms. Winkler and Ms. Duboc with Mr. Robinson and Mr. Cline.

As of Nov. 3, the council spent \$22,180 — \$13,382 for mailers opposing the incumbents and \$8,298 in mailers supporting Mr. Robinson and Mr. Cline.

The Almanac will report on any spending by the council after Nov. 3 in next week's edition.

Contributors

Below are other donations of note from mid-October through Jan. 31. Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

■ **John Boyle:** Mitchell Tuchman, Menlo Park, commercial real estate, \$300; Menlo Business Parks, Palo Alto, real estate business, \$1,000; Bernard Magnussen, Palo Alto, car dealer, \$1,000; Bill Lane, Portola Valley, former publisher of Sunset magazine, \$200; John Anderson, Atherton, car dealer, \$333.

■ **Vincent Bressler:** Robert Ekdahl, Menlo Park, retired, \$500; Jack

Morris, Menlo Park, consultant and former mayor, \$100; Melody Pagee, Menlo Park, project manager and city planning commissioner, \$100; Elias Blawie, Menlo Park, lawyer, \$400; Chuck Kinney, Menlo Park, retired and former mayor, \$100; Michael Gullard, general partner Cornerstone Management, \$250.

■ **Rich Cline:** David Speer, Menlo Park, facilities planning and construction, former council candidate, \$250.

■ **Lee Duboc:** Danielle L. Del Carlos, Redwood City, architect, DES Architects and Engineers, \$1,000; Bernard Magnussen, Palo Alto, car dealer, \$1,000; Menlo Business Park, Palo Alto, real estate business, \$1,000.

■ **Heyward Robinson:** Don Brawner, Menlo Park, landlord and city housing commissioner, \$200; Northern California Carpenters Regional Council, Oakland, \$250; Paul Collacchi, Redwood City, systems engineer and former mayor, \$1,000; Anita Yu, Menlo Park, founder of Westly Foundation, \$500; Penelope Huang, Menlo Park, Realtor, \$200; Chuck Kinney, Menlo Park, retired, former mayor, \$100; Plumbers & Steamfitters Local No. 467, Menlo Park, \$1,000; Jack Morris, Menlo Park, retired, former mayor, \$100; Melody Pagee, Menlo Park, project manager and city planning commissioner, \$100; Susan Robinson, Menlo Park, retired, \$500; David Speer, Menlo Park, facilities planning and construction, former council candidate, \$650.

■ **Mickie Winkler:** Menlo Business Park, Palo Alto, real estate business, \$1,000; Scott L. Smithers, Atherton, principal, Lane Partners commercial real estate, \$500; John Anderson, Atherton, car dealer, \$333; Henry Riggs, Menlo Park, architect and city planning commissioner, \$500.

■ **Menlo Park on Track:** Andy

Cohen, Menlo Park, retired judge and city councilman, \$200; Morris Brown, Menlo Park, president of Moavco and head of Menlo Park Tomorrow, \$500; Don Brawner, Menlo Park, landlord and city housing commissioner, \$200; Jennifer Fisher, Menlo Park, retired, \$500; Denise Brown, Menlo Park, retired, \$500; Stu Soffer, Menlo Park, consultant and former planning commissioner, \$500; Patti Fry, Menlo Park, retired, former planning commissioner, \$250; Bressler for Menlo Park Council, \$771. ■

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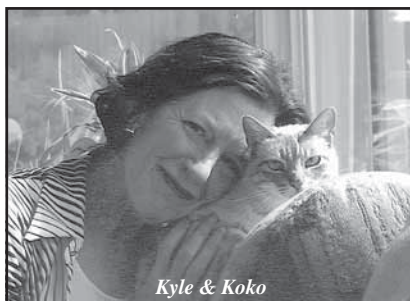
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OBITUARIES

A. Ballard Hayworth

Physician

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, March 9, at the Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Road at San Carlos Airport, for Dr. A. Ballard Hayworth, a former resident of Woodside for 36 years. He died Jan. 30 at age 87.



Hayworth

Dr. Hayworth was born in Sioux City, Iowa. He received his bachelor of science degree from Grinnell College and his medical degree from the University of Iowa. After returning from Naval service in World War II, he completed his specialty in internal medicine at the University of Wisconsin. He was recalled by the U.S. Navy to serve in the Korean War.

Dr. Hayworth married Aleta Agnes Baird in 1943 and they were the parents of four daughters. After living in various parts of the country, the family moved to Redwood City, then to Woodside to a home surrounded by redwood forest.

Dr. Hayworth practiced medicine for 40 years at Redwood Medical Clinic and Sequoia Hospital. He retired in 1984.

The Hayworths enjoyed travel, visiting Europe, Africa, China, Nepal, India and Egypt. Their favorite trips to Mexico were an easy weekend away, as he had his pilot's license and a personal aircraft at the San Carlos Airport, say family members.

Dr. Hayworth was an avid hiker, tennis player and golfer. He played the saxophone in a dance band in college and the violin in the Peninsula Symphony for several years. He was an active member of the First Congregational Church in Redwood City for many years.

He is survived by his daughters, Pamela Hunt of Capitola, Deborah Wade of San Jose, Nancy Becker of Salt Lake City, and Susan Nahmens of Redwood City; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. His wife, Aleta, preceded him in death.

Memorials in his name may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 2065 El Camino Real, Suite C, Mountain View, CA 94040.

Memorial for Lincoln Moses

A memorial service for Lincoln E. Moses of Portola Valley, emeritus

professor at Stanford who pioneered the use of statistics in medicine, is set for Saturday, Feb. 17, at 2 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 505 E. Charleston Road, between Alma St. and Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.

Dr. Moses gave most of his professional life to Stanford, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1941 and a doctorate in statistics in 1950. After joining the faculty in 1952, he became a leader for nearly 40 years in moving statistics from a purely academic discipline to a powerful tool in medicine.

Dr. Moses founded the medical school's Division of Biostatistics, whose graduates have gone on to run departments on other campuses, said Bradley Efron, Stanford professor of statistics, and of health research and policy.

"Lincoln was a big imposing man with a big white beard, and his name was Moses, and he kind of inspired that feeling in people" Dr. Efron said. "He was a very competent man."

From 1978 to 1980, Dr. Moses headed the Energy Information Administration in the Department of Energy under President Carter during the first oil crisis where he provided accurate data on oil consumption and energy usage for crafting government policy.

Dr. Moses' other interests stretched from Portola Valley to Zimbabwe, which he visited several times to provide statistical consulting services in connection with AIDS prevention programs.

As a resident of Los Trancos Woods, Dr. Moses served two terms on the Portola Valley

School Board in the 1950s. In the 1960s, he served on the Board of Directors of Peninsula School in Menlo Park. In 1968, he married Mary Lou Coale and moved to the Portola Valley home, where he lived until his death on Dec. 17 at age 84.

Dr. Moses was associated with the American Friends Service Committee for most of his adult life. He joined the Palo Alto Friends Meeting and was active in the peace movement. At Stanford, he and other faculty members organized and taught a Peace Studies class, which is still given. He also worked against the death penalty.

A true nature lover, Dr. Moses hiked the John Muir Trail and was a backpacker into middle age. He was a docent at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, and he and Mary Lou traveled the world in pursuit of birds.

Dr. Moses is survived by his second wife, Mary Lou Coale Moses; a sister, Marilyn Garren of Pasadena; five children and four stepchildren; 15 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

His children are Katherine Moses Youngmeister, Margaret Moses Schneider, and Elizabeth Moses Strain of Berkeley; Will Moses of Redwood City; and Jim Moses of Sacramento. His stepchildren are David Coale of Palo Alto, Frank Coale of West Linn, Oregon, and Kenneth and Matthew Coale of Santa Cruz.

The family suggests donations to Friends Committee on Legislation, 717 K St. Suite 500 B, Sacramento, CA 95814; American Friends Service Committee Pacific Mountain Region, 65 9th St., San Francisco, CA

94103; or Amnesty International USA, 5 Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10001.

Peter Kornfeld*Stanford clinical professor of medicine*

Dr. Peter Kornfeld of Portola Valley, a pioneer in the understanding and treatment of the auto-immune muscular disorder, myasthenia gravis, died Feb. 2 at Stanford Hospital. He was 81.

"He was a highly respected internist," says Dr. Mark Perlroth, clinical professor of medicine. "He was a very gentle individual with a nice sense of humor. He enjoyed his life in medicine."

Dr. Kornfeld was born in Vienna. At the age of 13, with Austria annexed by Nazi Germany, he engineered his family's escape by writing 100 letters to people named Kornfeld in the United States, Great Britain and Australia. He asked them to sponsor his family to emigrate although they were no relation. He received a reply from New York, which allowed the family to enter the United States.

They arrived in New York in August 1939 with only the clothes they were wearing, which for Peter were lederhosen and a winter coat.

Dr. Kornfeld enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1943 and served until 1946. He earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Buffalo, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and his medical degree at Columbia University. He completed his training at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, where he remained active in research, teaching and clinical practice for more than 30 years. He was associate chief of the Myasthenia Gravis Clinic at Mount Sinai from 1972 to 1987.

In 1992, after retiring, Dr. Kornfeld and his wife moved to the Bay Area. For the next 15 years, he volunteered as an attending physician at Stanford Hospital.

"He was a real role model of what we hope physicians have, where their love of humanity and their love of medicine is something they're able to continue throughout their life," says Dr. Kelley Skeff, George DeForest Barnett Professor of Medicine.

Dr. Kornfeld is survived by his wife of 55 years, Carol of Portola Valley; son Robert of Washington; daughter Jane Bessin of Los Altos; and four grandchildren. Donations in his memory may be made to the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, www.hias.org; or Mount Sinai Medical Center, C/O Lynn Scarpati, 1 Gustave Levy Place, Box 1049, New York, NY 10029.

Continued on next page

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Town of Portola Valley
**Notice Of Application for
Site Development Permit**

THIS IS TO NOTIFY YOU that an application for Site Development Permit has been submitted for review by the Town of Portola Valley Planning Commission. The property is owned by Tracy Lefteroff, located on vacant parcel on upper Alpine Road, and is identified as APN: 080-040-080.

Planning Commission public hearing has been scheduled to review this application on **Wednesday, February 21, 2007 at 8:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Council Chambers, Historic School House, Portola Valley Town Center, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California.

Information pertaining to the proposal may be viewed at Town Hall Building & Planning Department, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission to be heard at the time and place herein above mentioned.

Dated: February 2, 2007
Leslie A. Lambert
Planning Manager

Continued from previous page

Robert Robinson

Major donor to Menlo Charity Horse Show

Alfred Robert "Bob" Robinson of Woodside, whose company, San Jose British Motors, was the major donor to the Menlo Charity Horse Show since its inception, died Feb. 8 at Sequoia Hospital. He was 79.

Born in London, he began his life-long career in the automobile industry at the age of 14 as an apprentice motor mechanic. In 1960, he immigrated to the United States after accepting a job with San Jose British Motors. He worked his way up through the

ranks and, eventually, bought the dealership with business partner Norm Tompkins in 1967.

Known as "Sir Robert" to his friends, he had a long successful career in the industry. He had many different franchises, but "his life-blood remained with Jaguar cars," say family members. He worked six days a week up until December 2006. The only thing that contended with his enthusiasm for the automobile business was his love of family, they say.

Mr. Robinson and his wife, Nancy, traveled the world sharing a passion for their horses,

boats, and cars.

For 30 years, Mr. Robinson's company, San Jose British Motors, has been sponsor of the Menlo Charity Horse Show's Grand Prix. In 2006, the company donated \$40,000 for the event, according to Betsy Glikbarg, horse show chairman.

Mr. Robinson, who was a resident of Woodside for 28 years, is survived by his wife, Nancy, daughter Caerry, son Spencer, and sister Amy Whalesby.

Memorial services were held Feb. 12 at Woodside Village Church with burial at Skylawn Cemetery.

■ **OBITUARY POLICY**

The Almanac publishes obituaries about people who lived in Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside, or played a prominent role in 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@pawekly.com, or call 326-8210, ext. 221.

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**Reservation required. Register online at
www.bethany-mp.org or call 854-5897 by 2/22/07.**

Copies of the book "Doing School": How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students will be available for purchase and personally autographed by Dr. Pope.

PAULINE HUTCHESON

A Redwood City resident for 60 years, passed away Feb. 5, 2007 at the age of 94. Born in Lehr, North Dakota.

Loving wife of the late Archie (Hutch) Hutcheson. Also survived by her son Russell (Judy) Hutcheson. Grandchildren Kathy (Peter) Berry and Ronald Hutcheson.

Pauline worked as a food engineer. She collected treasures with a passion and lived life the same. She enjoyed being a homemaker, an avid gardener and rose fancier. Raising white doves was a special hobby.

Funeral service was held on Sat., Feb. 10th at 3:00 p.m. at the Redwood Chapel, 847 Woodside Road, Redwood City, CA. Interment: Private.

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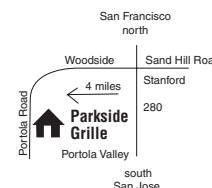
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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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

Atherton's smoldering secret

The recent revelation by the county's civil grand jury that the plans of hundreds of new homes in Atherton were not approved by the fire district once again raises questions about the town's leadership, particularly oversight of Mike Hood, the town's top building official who retired last year.

Mr. Hood left just before a three-phase audit showed that strict procedures were not being followed in the department, and that more than \$100,000 in fees were not collected. One department employee was transferred and reprimanded, and a number of new procedures have been put into place.

And so far, city officials have refused to release all the details found in its own investigation of

the matter, although the City Council finally received the report after being sworn to secrecy.

The grand jury charges are based on audits conducted by the town that were made public, although the grand jury obviously extended the investigation on its own.

The Atherton Building Department's apparent failure to submit hundreds of plans for approval by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District was by far the most startling finding of the civil grand jury report. It seems that fire district oversight of the plans was considered optional by Mr. Hood. And although it is very unlikely that any Atherton home built during this period is structurally unsound, owners whose plans were not approved by the fire district have to wonder about their safety if a fire were to occur.

It's possible that hundreds of the projects approved during Mr. Hood's 11-year tenure could be affected by the oversight. Many of the residences in Atherton are huge structures—10,000 square feet or more—and many include full basements.

Chief Harold Schapelhouman and fire district board member Peter Carpenter are understandably distressed that Atherton approved plans without requiring the fire district to sign off. For its part, Atherton says the district was invited to come to the town's offices and review the plans, but declined, due to lack of manpower. And, the town says, its inspectors did enforce the state building

code, which includes standard stipulations for fire safety.

The fire chief and Mr. Carpenter are not so sanguine. They see serious problems for the department in the homes whose plans were not inspected. For example, narrow flag lot driveways that could not accommodate wide fire trucks, or homes serviced by fire hydrants that don't meet the water pressure requirements.

Atherton Mayor Alan Carlson, an attorney, says the fire district's concerns are unfounded, and calls the lack of fire district oversight of all building plans a tempest in a teapot. "That's what's irritating—the implication that fire hazards were built in Atherton, and that's absolutely not the case," Mr. Carlson told the Almanac.

The county grand jury report calls for Atherton to submit to the fire district plans for all projects that it has not reviewed for fire safety that were constructed during Mike Hood's tenure as building official—an 11-year span that potentially includes hundreds of plan sets. The jury said the town should comply with this order by April 1, a deadline Atherton is very unlikely to meet, if it agrees to resubmit the plans at all.

Mr. Carpenter would go even farther, and put a hold on sales of affected homes until the fire district approved their plans.

But if push comes to shove, Atherton City Attorney Mark Hynes told the Almanac that neither the fire district nor the city has the power to force owners to retrofit their homes to the fire district's requirements.

If that is the case, owners of the homes in question and who are concerned about their safety should the worst occur, may have to voluntarily ask the fire district to review their plans. And if additional work needs to be done to comply with fire department standards, owners will have to foot the bill.

The entire affair is a textbook case of how lack of oversight in a city department that is responsible for millions of dollars worth of new home construction can result in potentially major problems for many owners, who did nothing wrong.

Now more than ever, Atherton residents should demand a full public accounting of the building department during the 11 years of oversight by Mike Hood, including the suppressed personnel investigation. If such information is not forthcoming, we urge the civil grand jury to continue its investigation, because there is more work to be done.

EDITORIAL
The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS
Our readers write

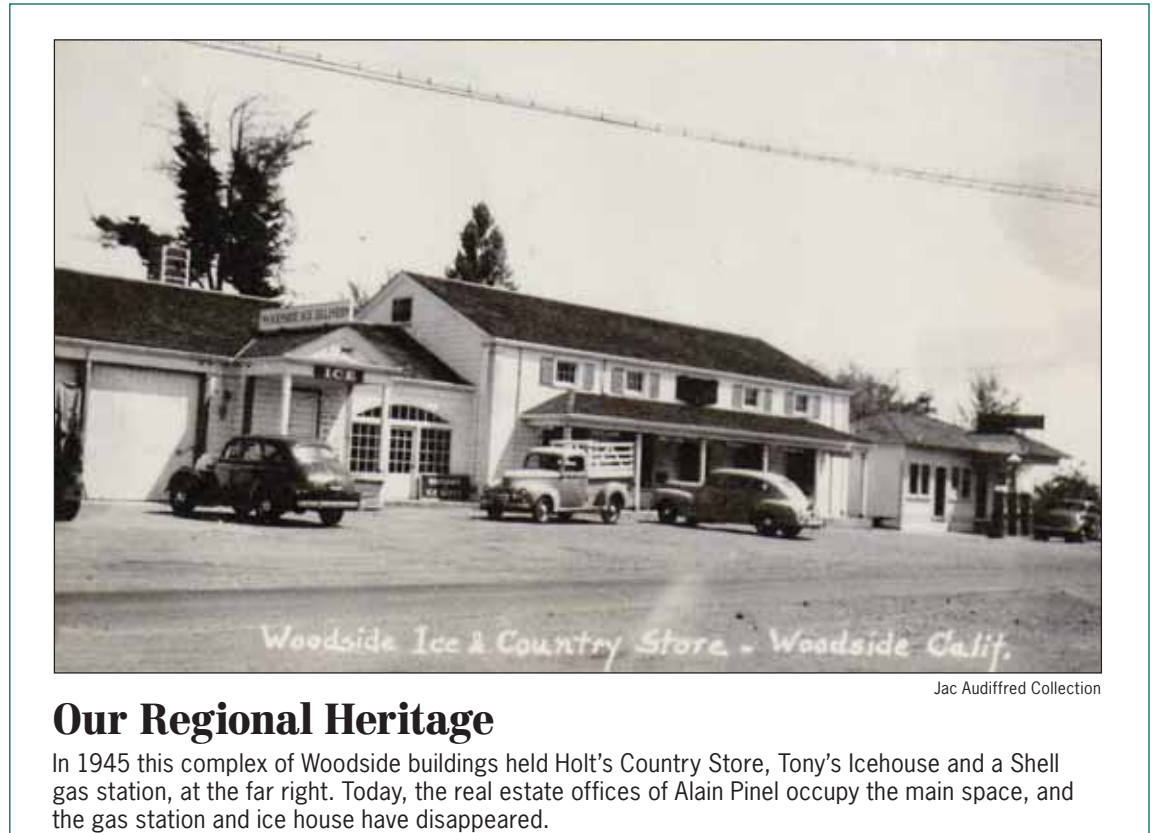
Logging plans set dangerous trend

Editor:

As concerned members of the community, we've been watching developments in the logging plan submitted to the state department of forestry by the San Francisco YMCA to log their Camp Jones Gulch property in La Honda.

We now read of a proposal by the San Jose Water Company to log over 1,000 acres of redwood forest they own near the Lexington Reservoir which was recently covered by the San Jose Mercury News. The plan bears striking and alarming similarity to the YMCA's plan, with equally devastating results to the environment and threats to local properties.

Both are non-industrial timber management plans which allow for extreme cutting of redwoods and other trees in perpetuity. Is this a new trend



Jac Audiffred Collection

Our Regional Heritage

In 1945 this complex of Woodside buildings held Holt's Country Store, Tony's Icehouse and a Shell gas station, at the far right. Today, the real estate offices of Alain Pinel occupy the main space, and the gas station and ice house have disappeared.

in aggressive timber harvest that we can expect to see more of?

With nearly all of the redwood forests gone, isn't it time to con-

sider long-range plans for stewardship of our precious coastal range as a whole?

Santa Cruz, Marin and San

Francisco counties have already banned logging in their water-

See **LETTERS**, next page

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

shed lands. We must also urge lawmakers to do the same in remaining counties. In the face of these recent permit proposals, it seems we can't afford to wait.

As Big Creek Lumber spokesman Bob Berlage said of the S.J. Water Company's plan, "This is probably going to be the most highly scrutinized timber harvest in the history of California." It should be.

Hilary Yoffe-Sharp
Woodside

Smoke signal or smoke screen?

Editor:

Will Atherton turn over a new leaf or another blind eye?

Will the City Council be able to find a fig leaf large enough to cover up the naked truth of exposed mismanagement from anywhere within Tree City USA?

Will the council ever see the urban forest through the trees when the sawdust settles only on the building department? Will triple audits, multiple independent investigations and a pending grand jury report spin anyone at all into forgetting that the town pays good money to management to prevent forest fires from ever happening?

Wouldn't a few annual performance reviews by the city manager or at least a glance at the town's zoning ordinance have been more economic and prophylactic? If our duly elected, all volunteer and extremely bright council chose to continue to use skillful but reactive containment as a governance style, then they should remember where there is smoke, there is fire.

We need Smokey the Bear in the watch tower, not Teddy.

Melinda Tevis
Tallwood Court, Atherton

If school goes, save Hillview murals

Editor:

It would be tragic if the murals at Hillview School were not protected while the school district evaluates design ideas.

Anyone who has seen those incredible, historic murals should honor and respect both the murals, and all of the students through the years who have put their hearts and souls into painting them.

I have faith in the powers that

be that they feel the same way I do about the murals and will come up with some way to either save them or duplicate them in some other form so that they will continue to be a gift to the community and Hillview students.

Cecelia Daye
Palm Court, Menlo Park

A vote against new commissioner

Editor:

I missed the recent appointment of Charles Bourne to the Menlo Park Transportation Commission. I believe that he is not qualified for the position.

While arguing for the unsafe, very expensive Santa Cruz Avenue cement furniture a few years ago, he said to the council, "What difference does two minutes make in the response time of an emergency vehicle?" I was waiting to speak and almost fell out of my chair.

Take a look at the curbs in front of his home. He has them painted red, so no one can park there. Is he taking the law into his own hands? That's not what we want from a Transportation Commissioner.

He is infamous for complaints to Hillview School about innocent noise from dances and assemblies. The school was certainly there first. If he didn't want to live next to a school, he didn't have to.

At the very least, Mr. Bourne needs to recuse himself from all decisions affecting the west side of Menlo Park.

By this appointment, the City Council has forgotten their pledge of fostering less divisive government.

Pat White
Santa Cruz Avenue, Menlo Park

Good job on Valley's fund-raising

Editor:

As residents of Portola Valley we wish to thank volunteers Sally Ann Reiss, Jocelyn Swisher and Beth Rabuczewski for their efforts in managing the donation campaign for construction of the new Town Center. As they reported in last week's letters, 70 percent of the required funds have been secured.

This accomplishment is an indication of the time and energy that has been devoted to the campaign. It is also a visible indication of the generosity of Portola Valley residents and their recognition that the new Town Center will

be an added positive attribute to Portola Valley.

We wish the Portola Valley Community Fund Committee success in reaching the \$1.8 million goal by March 28.

Bernard and Lorraine Bayuk
Paloma Road, Portola Valley

Peninsula Volunteers do a great service

Editor:

I came to the U.S. 33 years ago, and found the level of charity and volunteerism in this country amazing.

There have been many changes in these years. For example, the pace of life in our rural communities has accelerated and many more women are working. But I am still in awe of the numerous hours people donate to non-profit activities.

During the last few months I have had the opportunity to observe many examples through my involvement with Peninsula Volunteers — and this is in addition to the day-in and day-out efforts of our members.

At our annual December Tea Party for Crane Place (the Volunteers run apartments for elderly or disabled people), 14 Woodside High School students, along with some parents and teachers, pitched in to help decorate, serve and clean up. Entertainment was provided by community members, Stanford students and the Woodside Elementary School third grade class. Again, it was the personal connection, warm greetings, and so on that made it special.

Peninsula Volunteers also runs the south San Mateo County Meals on Wheels program. I can't say enough about our ongoing volunteers who ensure that five days a week elderly shut-ins receive a nutritious meal and see some one who cares about how they are doing.

On top of that, different local groups make cards or other decorations to make holiday meals special. (Woodside Elementary School children are making hearts for Valentine's Day.) Burlingame students make New Year's cards, and Maya's Mom Group made holiday wreaths.

I find it very encouraging to see the interest shown by our young people in working to make life happier for others. Their parents and teachers should be very proud of the values they are instilling in their youngest. Congratulations to all of them.

Amalia Pope
Olive Hill Lane, Woodside



Manfred Kopisch

Young cyclist on way to Laurel School squeezes around parked cars on Ringwood Avenue in this photo posted on Town Square at www.AlmanacNews.com.

Bike safety at Laurel School

By Manfred Kopisch

Along Ringwood Avenue from Middlefield Road to Laurel Elementary School, no shoulder parking is allowed until 300 feet before the school. Then, for some reason, shoulder parking is allowed. When cars are parked there, which is the case during drop-off, children biking to school are forced off the shoulder into the busy street to reach the school's guarded crosswalk.

It seems that extending the existing 0.4-mile no-parking zone by 300 feet would be a good idea, thus allowing the children to safely reach the crosswalk into the school property.

This short stretch of road is unfortunately outside the city's jurisdiction and is maintained by the county of San Mateo. The county's public works

department is unwilling to correct this problem created by allowing shoulder parking on this short stretch.

I have been working on this issue since September and have not been able to make progress with the county. Now I have published the video I provided to the county that shows my daughter navigating on her bike through these obvious safety issues. You can find the link to the video on the Almanac's Town Square site (www.almanacnews.com) in an article about bike safety at Laurel Elementary School.

As a father, I hope that our community cares enough for the safety of our children to take action on this issue.

Manfred Kopisch lives on O'Connor Street in Menlo Park.

The video and additional comments on this issue can be found in Town Square: Go to AlmanacNews.com, click on View All Posts, and find Bike Safety at Laurel Elementary School in the Schools & Kids category.



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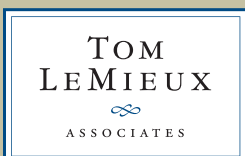
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