

Cinnabar Winery founder and former Woodside school board member Tom Mudd dies at 65. Page 12

The Almanac

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

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July 21-22

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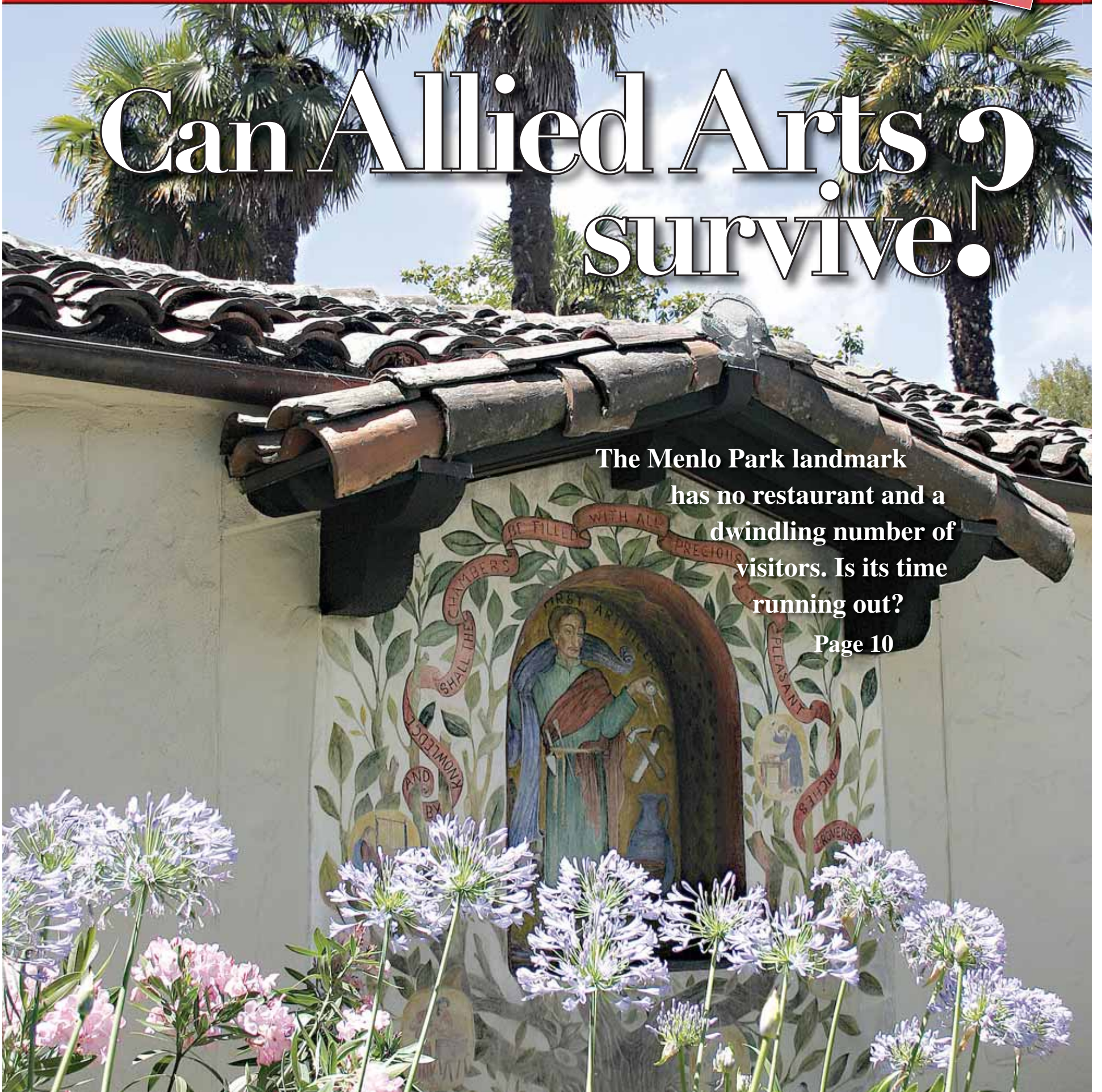
JULY 18, 2007 www.AlmanacNews.com

| VOL. 42 NO. 46

Can Allied Arts survive?

The Menlo Park landmark has no restaurant and a dwindling number of visitors. Is its time running out?

Page 10



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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

Hang on a minute

Incoming fourth-graders Samantha Calderon, right, and Shauna Sabet hang on the play structure at Encinal School in Atherton by portable classrooms recently installed as construction at the school gets under way. See story on **Page 14**.

Atherton

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- Atherton urns: Judge says town didn't follow its own rules. **Page 15**

Menlo Park

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Portola Valley

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- Sanitary district manager suspended two weeks over BB gun incident. **Page 5**

Community

- The Almanac wins the top award in the statewide "better newspaper" contest. **Page 13**

Viewpoint

- Editorial: Big agenda ahead for Menlo Park's new city manager. **Page 18**

On the cover

The Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park is known for its distinctive Spanish Colonial architecture and lush gardens, but the historic complex has few visitors, raising questions about the future of the Peninsula landmark. Almanac photo by Veronica Weber. See **Page 10**.

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Local News

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Gun incident blows over, not up; district manager suspended two weeks

By Marion Softky
Almanac staff writer

Business at the West Bay Sanitary District is back on track a month after an employee reported to the police that that District Manager Tim Clayton brandished a BB gun at employees in the office on June 1.

The San Mateo County District Attorney's Office investigated the matter, and declined to file charges. And the sanitary district board reviewed the complaint and the subsequent investigation in closed session at its meeting July 11, and reported that no action was taken. Mr. Clayton is still in charge.

Board President Ronald Shepherd declined to discuss anything about the case. "It is inappropriate to discuss any personnel issue with the paper," he told the Almanac.

The Almanac learned of the incident when someone anonymously sent the paper a copy of a June 7 letter from Mr. Shepherd to the staff, announcing an investigation by the district of Mr. Clayton's "alleged conduct," and asking for their cooperation.

The anonymous sender enclosed a copy of the Menlo Park police daily log for Sunday June 3, which said, "The reporting party came into the Menlo Park PD Lobby to report that on Friday her employer brandished an air pistol at employees. Investigation continuing."

Nicole Acker of the police department said the police report had been forwarded to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office for review.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said all the witnesses asserted that Mr. Clayton brandished the gun in a joking, non-threatening manner. To warrant charges, the brandishing must be done in a "threatening or intimidating manner," he said.

Mr. Clayton told the Almanac the incident that triggered the

complaint. "was just plain stupid. ... I apologized to the staff. I apologized to the board."

He said he had ordered a BB air pistol over the Internet to discourage the raccoons that were eating the koi fish in his pond. Because he lives alone, he had the pellet gun delivered to the district office in Menlo Park.

When the gun arrived on May 31, he said, he made a "terrible error." He unwrapped it and took it into the front office to ask if a second package — which



'It was just plain stupid. I apologized to the staff. I apologized to the board.'

TIM CLAYTON, MANAGER,
WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT
Almanac file photo, 1999

contained the BBs and the air capsule to propel them — had arrived.

"An employee claimed that I pointed it in their direction in a threatening manner," he said.

A second incident followed on the next day, Friday, June 1, Mr. Clayton said. He and three other employees, not including the complainant, drove out to Los Trancos Woods to scope out where they could have a groundbreaking celebration for new sewers.

After they realized that any party out there would be a "complete and utter disaster," Mr. Clayton said, they were joking morbidly about their failure to find a party place. He then pulled out the air pistol and pointed it at his head in a joke gesture, he said. "Everyone in the truck will tell you I never pointed it at anybody other than myself," he added.

The party for the Los Trancos sewers took place at the district office on Monday, June 4. The police appeared that afternoon, Mr. Clayton said.

After the complaint was filed, Mr. Clayton said, he was suspended for two weeks without pay, and took a training course on violence in the workplace. ■

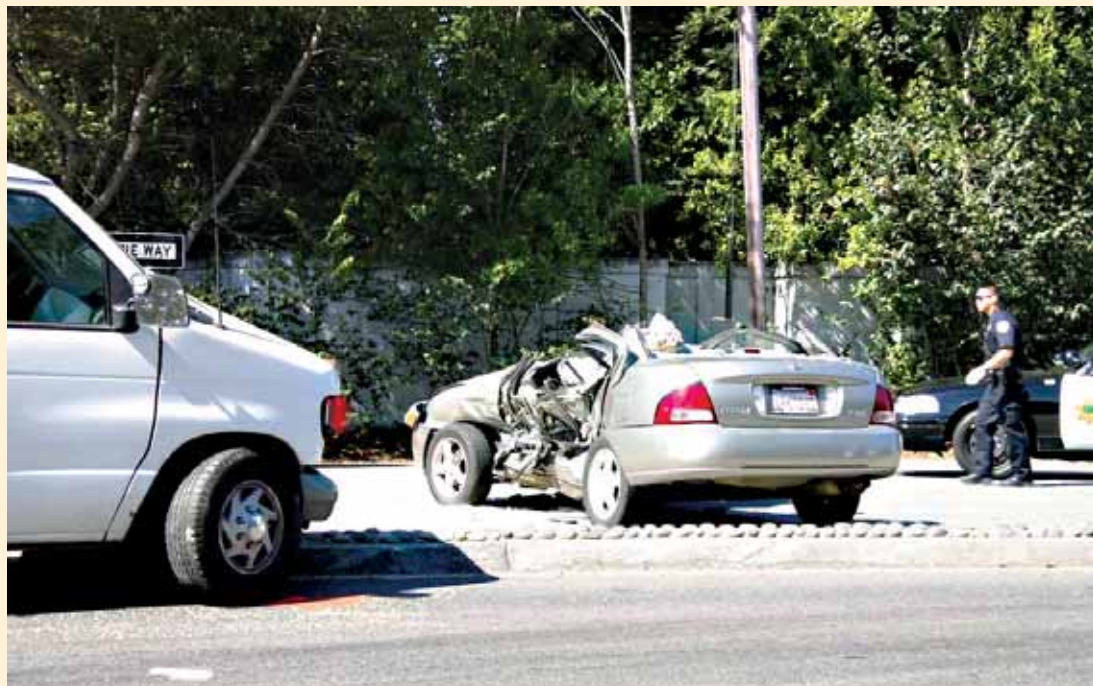


Photo courtesy of Morris Brown

The roof of the car had to be removed to extricate the woman driver, said Morris Brown, who provided this photo.

Crash on El Camino causes serious injury, traffic gridlock

■ The accident is likely to be discussed at the Menlo Park council meeting Tuesday.

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

A traffic accident left a driver severely injured Saturday morning at the intersection of Watkins Avenue and El Camino Real in Atherton.

The woman, 28, from Alameda was taken to Stanford hospital with serious injuries and is still being treated, said Sgt. Tim Lynch of the Atherton Police Department on Monday. Her passenger was treated and released, and the other two drivers involved were not injured, he said.

"El Camino was closed off from around 9:30 until about 2 p.m.," said Menlo Park resident Martin Engel in a post on Town Square (www.AlmanacNews.com). "There was traffic grid-lock the entire length of Menlo Park."

The three-car accident occurred just before 9 a.m. as the driver of a Nissan sedan apparently attempted to turn left onto southbound El Camino Real from Watkins Avenue, said Sgt. Lynch.

The collision left the driver trapped in her car, and fire-

fighters had to extricate her, Sgt. Lynch said.

"They had cut off the roof of the car and were working very hard to get her out of the car," said a witness, Menlo Park resident Morris Brown, in an e-mail. "It took at least 40 minutes to get her free."

"Over five hours later, they still did not have the accident site cleared," he said. "They closed off El Camino going north at Encinal and detoured the traffic around the site."

The accident is under investigation and police are not releasing the names of those involved, Sgt. Lynch said.

Medical office

The collision, at what residents say is a dangerous intersection, is likely to come up at the Tuesday, July 17, Menlo Park City Council meeting, when the council considers an appeal over a medical office building proposed at the vacant Acorn restaurant site at the intersection.

Opponents of the project say a traffic study should have been required.

There's no traffic signal at

the intersection, just a stop sign at the end of Watkins Avenue. "If I had my way, it would be right-turn only there," Sgt. Lynch said.

The accident may strengthen arguments against the proposed medical building project at 1906 El Camino Real, which is in Menlo Park's jurisdiction.

Menlo Park resident Mike Brady is appealing the Planning Commission's approval of a 9,825-square-foot building planned for the site.

Mr. Brady says the applicant took advantage of the city's relaxed building guidelines in getting the two-story project approved.

The council meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

When city staff considered the proposal for the Acorn site, elevator shafts and mechanical rooms weren't included in measuring the total square footage — a practice used in the past by city staff that Mr. Brady says is inexcusable.

He says the square footage calculation allowed the project to slip under a requirement for a traffic study on projects of at least 10,000 square feet. ■

Atherton mayor's roof peak piques tipster

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

An anonymous tipster is piqued about the peak of Atherton Mayor Alan Carlson's house.

A section of Mr. Carlson's roof, it seems, is 7 inches taller than the maximum height the town allows. A surveyor's letter dated March 9, 2000, detailing the over-height roof peak was copied from the Atherton building department's file on the property and anonymously sent to Planning Commissioner Jim Dobbie.

While the town recently has gone after a handful of homeowners for building projects that violate town rules, Mr. Carlson won't be receiving an abatement notice for his seven-year-old house, said City Attorney Marc Hynes.

Mr. Hynes said he looked into the roof-height matter when town officials became aware of it, and determined that it was "de minimis," a legal term signifying something that is so minor as to be insignificant.

"I'd make the same determination for anybody," said Mr. Hynes. "The town would look ridiculous going after something that's under a foot over (height). It would be different if it were under construction, but it's been built, finalized and in existence for seven years."

Mr. Carlson said he had no idea that an 8-foot length of his roof peak was too tall until last month, when City Manager Jim Robinson told him about the anonymous letter.

"If I'd known about it at the time, we could have remedied it," Mr. Carlson told the Almanac.

He said he would consider

recusing himself from council decisions about building height on a case-by-case basis. "Would it influence my decision on anything else? Unequivocally, no."

Mr. Carlson said he would not try to find out who peeked in the building file and leaked the information.

"When confronted with a situation like that, the best thing to do is disclose it and move on, which I did," Mr. Carlson said.

Mr. Dobbie said he didn't know why the information was sent to him.

"Any time there's the implication that a councilman is getting favored treatment, that's something people are going to wonder about," he said. "There's been so much trouble in the building department, having another thing like this, true or untrue, is something we don't need." ■

COLLEGE GRADS

■ Jeannie Campbell-Urban

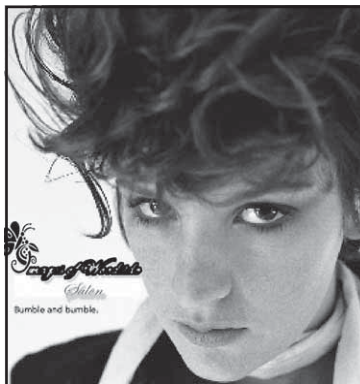
received a bachelor of arts degree, cum laude, in politics with certificates in Latin American studies and Spanish, from Princeton University. She was a four year member of the Princeton women's swim team. Jeannie is a graduate of La Entrada Middle School

and Sacred Heart Preparatory. She is the daughter of Diane Campbell and Ed Urban of Woodside.

■ **Benjamin Cooper** of Portola Valley received a bachelor of arts degree in economics from Pomona College in Claremont. He was co-captain of the Pomona-Pitzer water polo

team. Benjamin is the son of Mary and Tom Cooper.

■ **Fabrizio C. Angelo**, son of Paul and Kristine Angelo of Menlo Park, received a bachelor of science degree in economics and business administration/marketing from Saint Mary's College in Moraga, California.



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Atherton mayor on putting out fires

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

It hasn't been the most tranquil year for Atherton Mayor Alan Carlson.

The town's busy building department has been rocked with controversy over sloppy procedures, uncollected permit fees and questionable use of the building official's discretionary authority. Three audits and a personnel investigation apparently failed to turn up any criminal wrongdoing, but led to big changes in the building department.

Then in February, the civil grand jury issued a report slamming the town for not requiring fire district approval of home building plans for fire safety. A fire board official claimed the town allowed homes with dangerous basements to be built, something Mr. Carlson vehemently denied.

And then there are the lawsuits. The town's litigation budget of \$39,000 was not quite up to the task. Atherton spent almost \$280,000 in the fiscal year that ended June 30 to defend the town and to bring action against others, including the local high school district, over a planned performing arts center.

The questions and answers below have been edited for brevity and relevance.

Q. You've said that the building department troubles don't rank at the top in terms of some of the other turmoil Atherton had been through in recent years. What ranks at the top?

A. I think when the police chief (Steve Cader) was getting a Land Cruiser (in 1999), and there was just a general, total lack of confidence in the administration. And it seemed like every time the people in those (top) positions turned around, they did something that caused a problem.

Q. How are you getting along with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District since the civil grand jury report came out?

A. The relationship between the fire district and Atherton has never been adversarial, it's just been nonexistent. The grand jury report [slamming Atherton for not cooperating with the fire district], as many faults as I think it had, had one good aspect to it, and that was it is a catalyst to begin discussions between the fire district and the town.

In my mind, the problem is that the grand jury looked in the wrong place, because it wasn't Atherton that didn't have the procedures, it was the fire district that didn't have the pro-



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

'The relationship between the fire district and Atherton has never been adversarial; it's just been nonexistent.'

ATHERTON MAYOR ALAN CARLSON

cedures. This you can fault both the town and the fire district for: there was an informal relationship between the building department and the fire district, which really wasn't always clear. And that's being clarified now. I think it will be smooth sailing after that.

It's very, very clear that the district wants to cooperate with the town, and the town wants to cooperate with the district.

Q. What's going to be the highlight of your year as mayor?

A. A new and involved relationship with the fire district. As a City Council, we ought to be thinking about what the fire district is doing, what services they are providing and how they're providing them. And up until now, it's not been something that we've concerned ourselves with.

Q & A ATHERTON

An Atherton resident since 1988, Alan Carlson has served on the City Council since 1998. Now in his third, four-year term, he has the longest tenure of anyone on the council. His colleagues elected him to the largely honorary position of mayor for 2007; he previously was mayor in 2002. Mr. Carlson, who was born in Oakland and grew up in Ukiah, is an attorney specializing in employment law for Littler & Mendelson in San Jose. This interview was conducted by Almanac staff writer Andrea Gemmet.

Q. How urgent is the need for a new town hall and police department facility?

A. How urgent can it be? I've been involved with it for nine years. First of all, the town hasn't got money for it, so we're going to have to raise money for it.

I think if you look at the whole complex, you've got a building department and public works department in trailers. Then you've got a Police Department in a completely antiquated facility. We have women police officers now, and when it was designed, there really weren't women police officers. And then you've got the administrative staff just stacked on top of each other. It's not very efficient.

We've had some drawings done, and it's just a matter of moving ahead.

Q. Would there have been better oversight of the building department if it had been in the same building as the city manager?

A. I don't know. What was going on in the building department was a building department that was running fairly smoothly, but that couldn't withstand the scrutiny of modern procedures.

Q. What do you think is the biggest challenge facing Atherton?

A. All of it comes back to financial. What worries me the most is that we don't have a long-term financial solution (for funding town services). We run up to each parcel tax election and we're on the brink every time. If it doesn't pass, it's going to be financial disaster.

But by the same token, our needs are continually greater because the cost of things is continually greater. (Councilman) Bill Conwell always used to say that we are in the service industry, and he's right. And the service industry's primary cost is employees. Where is your biggest chunk of employees? It's in the police department. What do the residents really like about this town? The police department.

Q. How successful have been the attempts to find a replacement revenue source for the parcel tax?

A. They've been unsuccessful. I don't know what the solution is. I don't think there is one.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



It's all in the family

Dear Gloria, I find myself in a difficult situation. I am in the process of separating from my husband and we have listed my house with his sister, who is not a local realtor. The house has been on the market for over six months and we have had no offers. What do people do in a situation like this? I just need to get the house sold and move on.

— Lisa

Dear Lisa, Whether or not your agent is your sister-in-law, we so often see property not being properly marketed when sellers use a realtor who is not familiar with the local area. You have the added potentially sensitive situation of having this agent be family (which is also not a good idea). As I am sure you are aware, the last several months have been a robust sellers market but that has now changed. While it is still strong it is not like it was in the first part of the year.

What I would suggest you do is talk with your current agent, tell her what a bind you are in and asked to be released from the listing, if it still has not expired. Then talk to an agent who works in your area and knows the local situation. For example, what is going on with the schools; is there room in the neighborhood school? Are there bonds and assessments? What are the demographics of the neighborhood? And most importantly, does your house show well and is it priced right? I have to speculate that it is too high or with the strong conditions we have had, it would have sold in spite of the circumstances you describe. It is often difficult for an agent to tell a seller that the house is not well presented but probably even more difficult for a relative to say this. Get a realtor who will tell you what you need to do to get the house sold.

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



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See CARLSON, page 8

Anti-development residents oppose hotel-office project

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park residents who led the successful referendum drive against the Derry condo-commercial project saying the project would add too many homes to Menlo Park, are now saying David Bohannon's proposed hotel and office complex would add too many jobs to the city.

Five residents used the City Council's July 10 scoping session on the project's environmental impact report to sound off on the size and potential impacts of the project.

"Is this something Menlo Park wants?" asked Morris Brown. "In my mind, it's completely out of scale."

Although Mr. Brown and others didn't focus much criticism at the proposed eight-story, 235-room hotel, they did question the planned 700,000 square feet of office space — they said that more employees means impacts on the city's traffic, schools, and neighborhoods.

"The hotel needs to stand on

its own," said Elias Blawie, noting the project calls for much more office space than what was approved for the Rosewood Hotel/office project being built off Sand Hill Road.

Mr. Bohannon's hotel and office project is proposed for two sites totaling 15 acres on Independence and Constitution drives near the intersection of Marsh Road and U.S. 101.

The hotel and office buildings would be about 130 feet tall, and the hotel could be up and running by 2009.

Mr. Bohannon said the project would generate \$1.6 million a year in tax revenues for the city, including a \$1.37 million annual boost to the city's hotel tax revenues.

Jobs/housing ratio

The speakers said the estimated 1,800 jobs created by the offices and hotel are a negative feature of Mr. Bohannon's project, arguing that new employees would worsen the city's jobs-to-housing imbalance.

Speakers pointed to a state push for cities to increase housing to

accommodate a growing number of jobs. All five of the speakers — Mr. Brown, Mr. Blawie, Vince Bressler, Patti Fry and David Speer — previously fought to limit the number of homes per acre in the Derry project.

Mr. Bohannon said any impacts on the city, including effects on the jobs-to-housing ratio, will be studied during the environmental review process.

"The residents who spoke have a legitimate concern," said Councilman Heyward Robinson after the meeting. "For every job that's created, that's going to increase our share of housing units. ... That's not David Bohannon's problem to solve, but it's a city-wide issue to think about when we look at this project."

"Nobody wants [Menlo Park] to turn into a big metropolitan center," said Councilman John Boyle. "But I'm not in the camp that suggests everything that creates more jobs or more traffic is bad."

Mr. Bohannon's team has created a Web site devoted to the project at www.BohannonPark.com. ■

Council avoids firm stance on Dumbarton Rail

■ MENLO PARK WATCH

Menlo Park City Council members have major concerns about trains rolling along the Dumbarton rail line by Menlo Park homes, but they decided at their July 10 meeting to not send a negative message about the project — not yet, at least.

Instead, the council voted 4-0, with Richard Cline absent, to sign off on a letter of general concerns about the Dumbarton Rail project — a passenger train system that would run across the old Dumbarton rail bridge and connect Menlo Park and Redwood City to the East Bay.

The train system could be up and running by 2012. Plans call for running 12 commuter trains (six in the morning and six at night) across the rail bridge to transport East Bay commuters to the Peninsula, and back home.

Among the council's concerns are the noise, vibration, and environmental impacts caused by diesel passenger and freight trains running through the Suburban Park, Belle Haven, and Lorelei Manor neighborhoods.

Menlo Park residents have asked council members to oppose the project if it does not mitigate impacts on their homes, but council members agreed that it's too early to tell how severe those impacts

would be, and held off criticizing the project.

The council's letter will be sent to the Dumbarton Rail Corridor Project Policy Advisory Committee, a group of public officials assisting Caltrain in planning the project.

Globtrotters' coach to be honored

Daniel Serafine, coach of the Globetrotters basketball team from 1941 to 1945, will be honored with a proclamation from Menlo Park Mayor Kelly Fergusson at the City Council's July 17 meeting.

Mr. Serafine, a Sharon Heights resident, will be honored at the beginning of the meeting, which starts at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

Climate meeting

The Menlo Park Green Ribbon Citizens Committee, a task force studying how the city can address global warming at a local level, is set to meet July 18. The meeting is scheduled to start at 4 p.m. in the basement of the Menlo Park Library, at 800 Alma St.

Decision time for rebuilding Sequoia Hospital

A key meeting on the \$240 million plan to rebuild and expand Sequoia Hospital will start at 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 17, when the Redwood City Planning Commission meets to review the proposal and possibly act on it.

City staff is asking the Plan-

ning Commission to recommend the City Council approve rezoning and the environmental impact report for the plan, which involves building a 148,000-square-foot hospital building at the site; remodeling and upgrading much of the existing building; and adding a

four-and-a-half-level parking structure.

A 47,750-square-foot skilled nursing facility on the site would be demolished and a 50,000-square-foot medical office building would be constructed in its place.

The net increase in development would be 106,000 square feet for hospital use and 50,000 square feet for medical offices.

The hospital is at 170 Alameda de las Pulgas, at Whipple Avenue, in Redwood City. The meeting will be in the City Council chambers in City Hall, 1017 Middlefield Road in Redwood City.

For more information, see the Redwood City Planning Commission agenda and staff report, by clicking here: www.redwood-city.org

LGBT business group holds social event

The Golden Gate Business Association, which bills itself as the nation's first lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LCBT) chamber of commerce, is hosting a "Make Contact" event from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, July 25, at Mime's Cafe at 2050 Broadway in downtown Redwood City.

All business people from LGBT and LGBT-friendly business are

invited to attend and participate in the building of a new Peninsula chapter of the Golden Gate Business Association, said Don Diltz, a real estate broker at Coldwell Banker in Menlo Park and a founding member of the association.

"Come one and come all," he said. The event is free. For more information, call Don Diltz at 464-5555 or go to www.GGBA.com.

Koi killed after Civic Center cleanup

About a dozen koi were unintentionally killed after Menlo Park employees temporarily moved the distinct fish in order to clean the pond at the Civic Center, said Ruben Nino, the city's acting public works director.

After the koi pond was cleaned and refilled last week, the water temperature was likely too cold when the fish were put back in the pond, Mr. Nino said. He said the fish likely died shortly after they were put back in the pond on July 12.

CARLSON

continued from page 7

Q. *Neighborhood concerns led Atherton to file a lawsuit against the new performing arts center planned for Menlo-Atherton High School. What are the key issues?*

A. The amount of usage, in terms of large events and the kind of impact that would have on the neighborhood. What impact is it going to have on traffic, what impact is it going to have on drainage?

Q. *Will it be resolved out of court?*

A. I think they're close to a resolution. I think it's going to all work out. I've gotten e-mails saying, "You're trying to kill the project." That's not true. All we ever wanted is some

accountability in terms of what's happening there, and I think that's happening.

Everybody's compromising. Menlo Park's compromising, the high school's compromising, we're compromising, and I think we will be close to a resolution shortly.

Q. *Neighbors complained that school officials didn't keep them informed about their plans for the performing arts center. Is it tough to keep up with what's going on at the schools?*

A. They don't tell us what's going on. They can do what they want within the four corners of the campus, and where they really have to talk to us is (about) the impact outside the campus, and that was the dispute with the high school. ■



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Attempted kidnapping near M-A High

A 16-year-old girl walking home from Menlo-Atherton High School was the target of an attempted kidnapping on July 10, Menlo Park police said.

A man driving a white pickup truck followed the girl and reportedly tried to lure her into his vehicle near the intersection of Ringwood Avenue and Oakwood Drive at 3:15 p.m. He asked the girl how old she was, then grabbed her hands and began pulling her toward his truck, police said.

An unknown witness yelled at the man, and he released the girl, who ran home and reported the incident to the police, said Acting Sgt. Matthew Ortega.

The truck was last seen heading



Police sketch of suspect in attempted kidnapping.

north on Van Buren Avenue. The suspected kidnapper is described as a Hispanic man with bushy eyebrows between the ages of 20 and 25, about 5 feet 1 inch tall, and weighing 145 pounds.

He was driving a white truck similar to a newer model Toyota with an extended cab. It had a black lumber rack and green block letters advertising a gardening service on the doors, with a phone number or e-mail address written on the tailgate, police said.

Police are investigating the incident and increasing neighborhood patrols, said Sgt. Ortega. Anyone with information about this case is asked to call Sgt. Ortega at 330-6300 or the anonymous tip hotline at 330-6395.

Portola Valley: Hydrant work sparks grass fire

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff writer

A half-acre grass fire in the 900 block of Westridge Drive in Portola Valley was started, ironically enough, by two men who were working on a fire hydrant. The fire was reported at 3:18 p.m. Monday, July 9.

The fire climbed rapidly up an un-mowed hillside, but slowed down as it approached two houses, because the owners had trimmed back the dry weeds, said Battalion Chief Dan Ghiorso of the Woodside Fire Protection District. The fire was out by 4 p.m. and the road was expected to reopen around 5 p.m.

No homes were evacuated and there were no injuries. Fire crews will monitor the area

through the night, checking for hotspots, Ghiorso said.

A crew from West Valley Construction accidentally sparked the fire by using a torch to cut bolts on a fire hydrant that was to be upgraded for a California Water Service Co. project, said Lt. Ken Jones of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

The small blaze consumed dry grass and brush on a hillside, but didn't climb into the canopy of oak trees. Because of the high fire danger in the dry hillsides, even a small blaze gets a big response — six fire engines were called to the scene, along with two aircraft and a bulldozer from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. ■



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

Bryan Whitaker, foreground, and fellow firefighters with the California Department of Forestry remove dry brush and weeds near a grass fire close to Westridge Drive in Portola Valley.

Chamber music festival spotlights music through the ages

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

After two years of separately spotlighting the works and influence of two of history's brightest musical lights — Beethoven and Mozart — the Music@Menlo chamber music festival this year spans the centuries.

Opening Sunday, July 22, the festival will feature music ranging from the Baroque to the late 20th century. In its fifth season, the three-week festival is billed, "Bridging the Ages." It ends Aug. 10.

Festival concerts, master classes, lectures and other presentations are held primarily on the Menlo School campus in Atherton, with several concerts also performed at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Palo Alto.

This year, one concert will be performed at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church. That performance,

"Sounds of Nature," is billed as "an ideal introduction to chamber music for young listeners," and will feature the music of Debussy, Saint-Saens, Barber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber, and George Crumb.

Music@Menlo was founded in 2003 by pianist Wu Han and cellist David Finckel, who serve as the festival's artistic directors, and perform in several concerts as well.

A range of acclaimed musicians will perform, including violinists Jorja Fleezanis and Ian Swensen; violist Paul Neubauer; cellists Colin Carr and Andres Diaz; pianist Gilbert Kalish; Kenneth Cooper, harpsichord and fortepiano; Carol Wincenc, flute; William Bennett, oboe; soprano Heidi Grant Murphy; and baritone Christopheren Nomura.

The Escher String Quartet and Miami String Quartet will also perform.

In addition to the "Sounds of

Nature" concert, the programs include:

■ "Homage" — the music of Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Ravel and Alfred Schnittke.

■ "Instrumental Inspirations" — the music of Bach, Handel, Boccherini, Giovanni Bottesini and Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

■ "Death and Transfiguration" — the music of Bach, Schubert, Rachmaninov and Bruce Adolphe.

The festival includes a series of "Encounters," multi-disciplinary presentations led by musicologists, musicians and journalists. Michael Steinberg, Bruce Adolphe and Robert Winter will return to lead this year's Encounters along with newcomer Brian Newhouse.

Cost of the events range from \$10 to \$68. For details, call 330-2030 or go to www.musicatmenlo.org. ■

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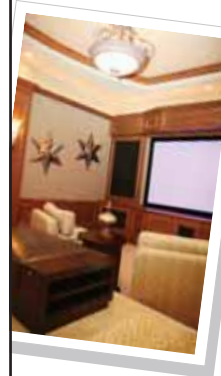
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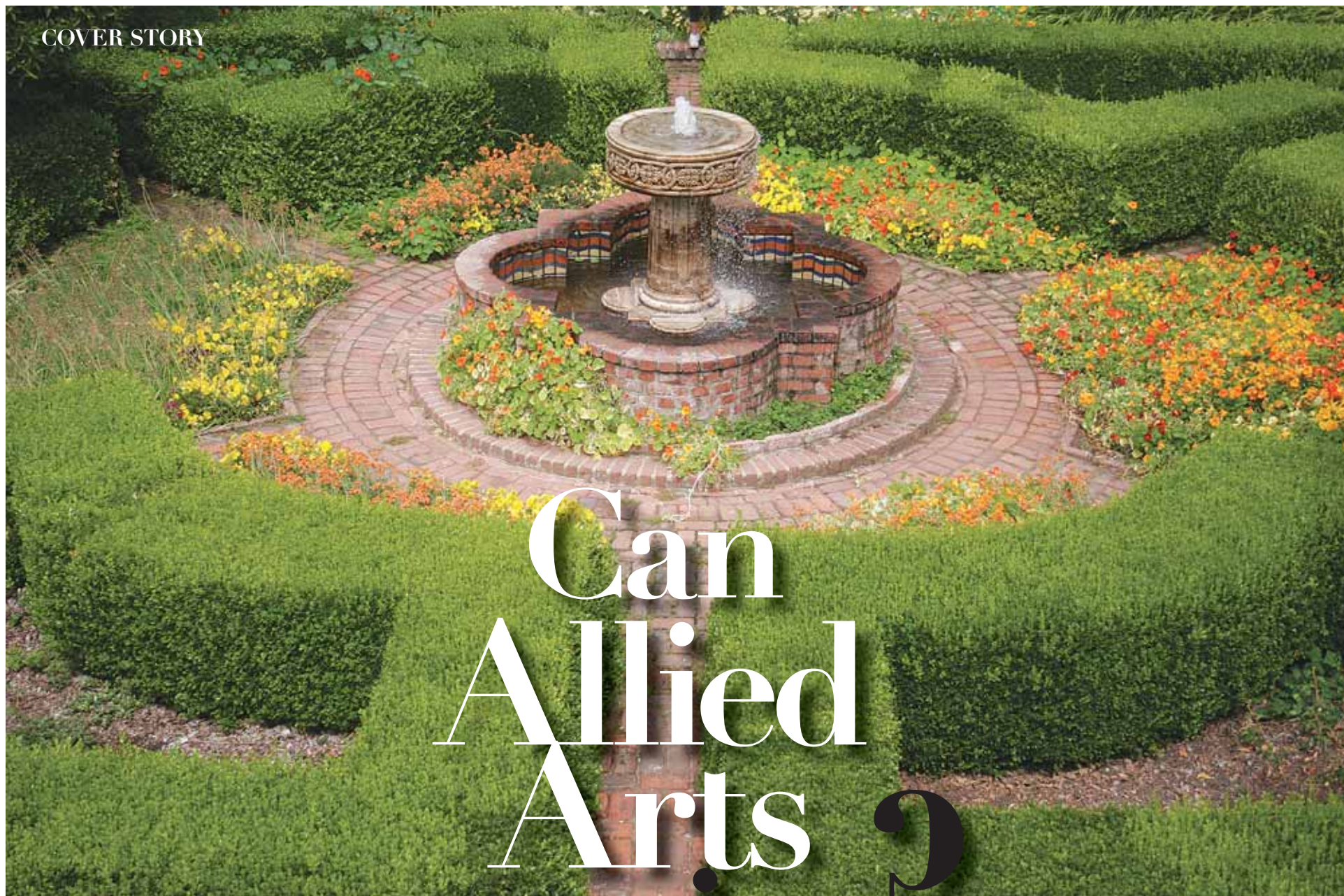
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Can Allied Arts Survive!

The Menlo Park landmark has no restaurant and a dwindling number of visitors. Is its time running out?

The Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park, with its lush gardens, Spanish Colonial architecture, and a soundtrack of trickling fountains, has been a longtime favorite spot for residents of the Peninsula to enjoy some peace and quiet.

The guild, to thousands of volunteers and patrons, has also been a favorite institution to support, as its profits go toward the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.

But lately, things are too quiet at the guild's historic complex at 75 Arbor Road — practically no one is ever there.

In February, the volunteer-operated restaurant that was based at the guild for 75 years, closed its doors — the result of a controversial decision by the guild's nonprofit owner to not renew the lease. The Traditional Shop, also run by volunteers, was closed as well.

Since the closure, the guild has been low on visitors, as tour buses and lunch-time diners no longer find their way to the historic complex, leaving the remaining artists and shop owners twiddling their thumbs, hoping customers walk through their doors.

"When the restaurant was open, I used to get any-

where from 20 to 50 people to come in a day," said Edith Schneider, a jewelry maker who runs a store at the guild. "Now, I get maybe five people a day, and three of them just come in to ask where the bathroom is."

Although Ms. Schneider and other shop owners haven't given up hope that the guild's operator will find a new restaurant to move into the vacant space, and business will pick up, members of the community are starting to ask if the historic complex — a Peninsula landmark since it was built in 1929 — may have run its course.

In addition to finding a new restaurateur, the nonprofit owner — the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary to the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital — faces other challenges: major costs due to recent erosion on part of the complex, friction among volunteers sparked by the restaurant closure, and a tense relationship with some neighbors following a four-year legal battle.

The history

The guild was founded by Garfield and Delight Merner in 1929, after the couple bought a 3.5-acre site adjacent to the San Francisquito Creek, to build a complex to provide

work space for artists and craftsmen. Tenants at the guild included photographer Ansel Adams.

In 1932, the Merners invited the Palo Alto Auxiliary to the Stanford Home for Convalescent Children (now the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital) to run a volunteer-staffed restaurant at the site, and in 1951, the hospital's Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary took over ownership and management of the entire complex.

For 54 years, the two auxiliaries operated the guild based on a simple formula — the Palo Alto Auxiliary drew people to Allied Arts with its restaurant, and the steady flow of patrons provided a customer base for small shops and artists based at the guild.

Any profits from events held at the guild, along with tips and profits from the restaurant, went to the children's hospital.

Closing the restaurant

In late 2006, members of the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary board decided the formula wasn't working, and subsequently forced out the Palo Alto Auxiliary in hopes of finding a more profitable restaurant operator.

Cover Story by Rory Brown • Photos by Veronica Weber



Artists and craftsmen have set up shop at Allied Arts Guild since the complex was built in 1929. In the photos above, Edith Schneider makes a necklace in her jewelry store; Joshua Dawson sands a table at the Barn Woodshop; and artist Julia Seelos poses in the Portola Art Gallery.

Whether that was a good decision depends on whom you ask.

Jean Coblentz, president of the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary, said the Palo Alto Auxiliary could do only so much with a restrictive three-course menu and a shortage of volunteers, and a new restaurant was needed to inject new life into the guild.

But the initial plans for a new restaurant fell through when the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary's top choice to fill the space — local restaurateur Jesse Cool — pulled out of the deal. According to Ms. Coblentz, Ms. Cool discovered the guild's use permit restricted her from moving her catering operations from her downtown eatery jZ Cool to the guild's kitchen — a crucial incentive for the deal.

Joan Heye, a five-time president of the Palo Alto Auxiliary, said the volunteer restaurant should never have been closed in the first place.

"It wasn't a four-star restaurant, but we had been doing a pretty darn good job for over 70 years," Ms. Heye said. "I don't think [the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary] realized all of the repercussions of what they were doing when they didn't renew our lease. ... Now they don't have a restaurant, and they aren't making any money — it's sad."

She noted that the volunteer-operated restaurant donated more than \$4 million to the children's hospital over its 75-year run.

Ms. Coblentz said there are "four or five" new restaurant operators that have shown interest in moving into the space. She hopes to have the restaurant up and running in about two months.

But the longer the guild goes without a restaurant, the longer businesses, and the children's hospital, feel the effects.

"Allied Arts is such a treasure, but with no restaurant, it's kind of a scary situation right now with no one here," said Julia Seelos, director of the Portola Art Gallery based at the guild. "When we moved here in September, there was a restaurant, and there was foot traffic. Now, the place looks great, but there isn't anyone here."

"We know it's really hard on the tenants, and we're very sympathetic to their problems," Ms. Coblentz said. "They know we're working as hard as we can to get a restaurant up and going."

Here to stay

Ms. Coblentz said as long as there is support in the community to keep the guild as is, it will stay

that way.

She said the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary has no intentions of selling the property, and is in the process of renaming the nonprofit the Allied Arts Auxiliary to build public awareness for the historic site.

But she acknowledged that things need to change soon, as the guild has failed to make any revenue for the children's hospital since it reopened in October 2004 following a massive \$8.5 million renovation.

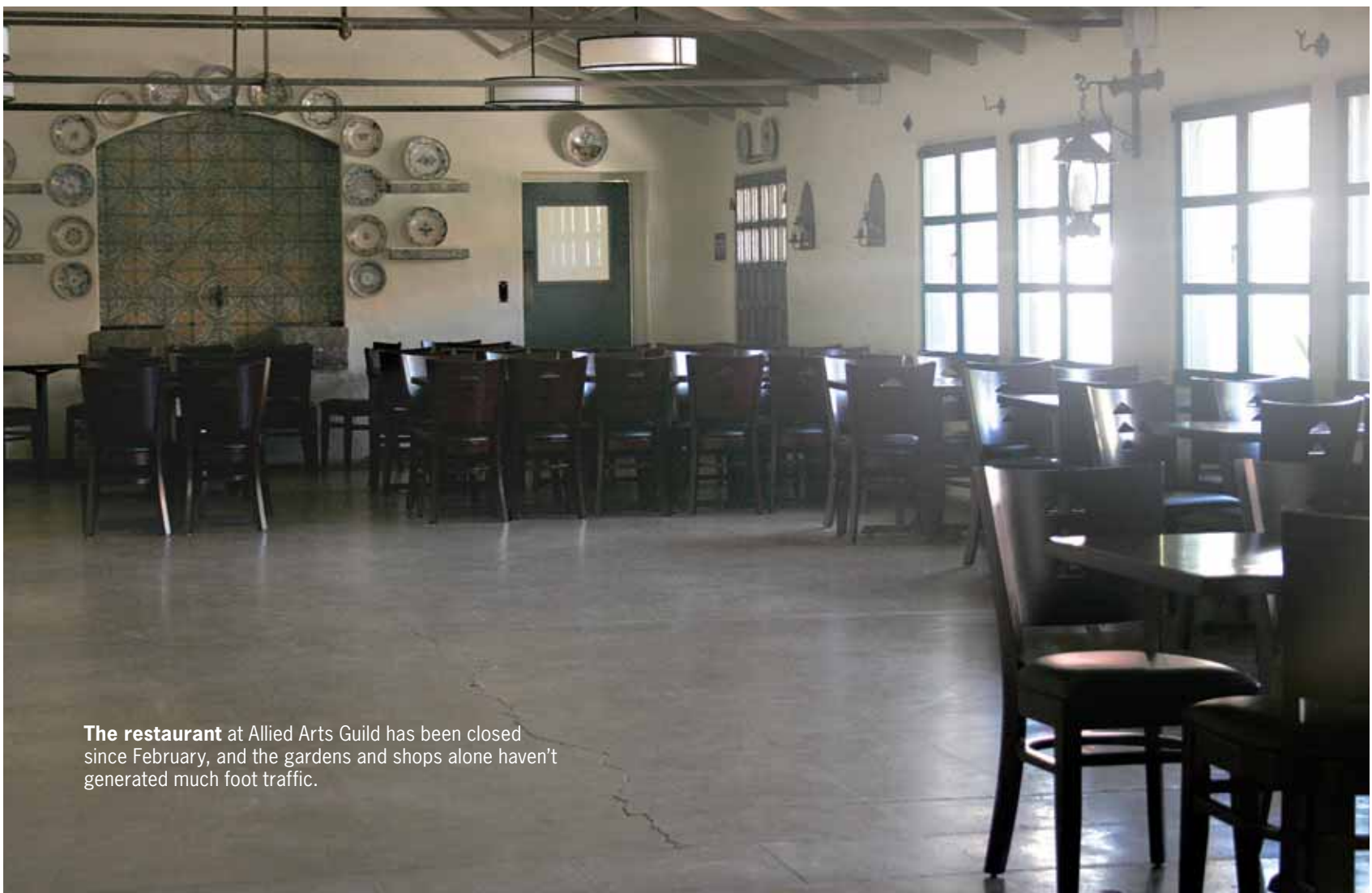
Although the auxiliary's annual Tally Ho event is still a big moneymaker for the children's hospital, no donations have stemmed from the guild in "quite a while," Ms. Coblentz said. She noted that rent paid by the guild's tenants provides only enough income to maintain the complex.

"We have no plans to make any kind of major changes to Allied Arts, but without community support, we can't make a go of it," she said. "Without support, I don't know what we would do."

Major investment

But if the auxiliary's checkbook is any indicator, it's still devoted to the guild.

See **ALLIED ARTS**, page 12



The restaurant at Allied Arts Guild has been closed since February, and the gardens and shops alone haven't generated much foot traffic.

'Without support, I don't know what we'd do'

ALLIED ARTS

continued from page 11

Less than three years removed from the restoration of the complex, the auxiliary is footing the bill for a complicated reinforcement project along the creek bank, behind the old Wick Candle Shop site.

In September, an oak tree behind the candle shop toppled into the creek, unearthing a chunk of land, and cutting some 10 feet into the property, Ms. Coblenz said.

The buildings along that portion of the creek have been closed since, as the auxiliary has worked with county and state officials to stop further erosion into the site.

In August, crews will start to reinforce the site with concrete — a project Ms. Coblenz labeled “very costly.” She declined to give an exact amount.

The neighbors

The future of Allied Arts, whatever that may be, will likely rest on the relationship between the guild's owners and volunteers and its neighbors — a relationship that has had its fair share of conflicts.

A group called Allied Arts Neighbors sued the auxiliary and the city of Menlo Park in 2003, claiming plans by the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary to revamp the guild and expand the hours and intensity of operations required a full environmental impact report.

The auxiliary had hoped to boost the amount of revenue it raised for the hospital by increasing the number of special events and conference rentals.

Although the lawsuit was initially rejected, the neighbors successfully appealed the decision in a higher court.

The two groups in July 2006 compromised on a lighter schedule of events than what was proposed by the auxiliary. The agreement allowed the auxiliary to avoid costly environmental studies.



Volunteers Lyle Wilson, left, and Eleanor Satterlee prune plants at the Allied Arts gardens.

Members of both auxiliaries and shop owners say the vast majority of the neighbors are appreciative and supportive of the guild, but assert that there are a few residents who seem set on making things more difficult.

The more difficult residents, according to guild supporters, have taken it upon themselves to police Allied Arts, taking head counts at weddings and counting cars that enter the parking lot in search of potential violations of the guild's use permit.

Jim Dickerson, a member of Allied Arts Neighbors, said neighbors, like other residents, want the guild to be successful.

“Contrary to some stated opinions, Allied Arts Neighbors has never been opposed to traditional operations at the guild and has always wanted to work together with others to find a solution that works for the guild, the neighborhood, and the city,” he wrote in an e-mail to the Almanac.

Councilman Andy Cohen said he hopes to get neighbors and auxiliary officials together to discuss the future of the guild, and what can be done to keep the complex a Menlo Park landmark.

He would not elaborate on his plan, but said, “I think if we get everyone to the table, we can come up with a solution.” ■

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Winemaker Tom Mudd of Woodside dies

A celebration of the life of Cinnabar Winery founder and longtime Woodside resident Henry Thomas “Tom” Mudd is set for 5 p.m. Saturday, July 21, at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, 4001 Sand Hill Road in Woodside.

Mr. Mudd, 65, died July 13 after struggling with complications from a lung transplant and pulmonary fibrosis, family members said.

He was a two-term member of the Woodside Elementary School District board of trustees, serving from 1997 to 2005.

A scientist and inventor who worked for SRI when it was still called Stanford Research Institute, Mr. Mudd had a range of interests

— from restoring classic cars and fly fishing to string theory and environmental conservation. He was also a pioneering bat expert and advocate for science education, his family said.

His interest in agriculture and winemaking led him to plant a backyard vineyard years ago, and eventually he established Cinnabar Winery in the hills above Saratoga.

The name Cinnabar was inspired by Mr. Mudd's fascination with alchemy; centuries ago, the mineral cinnabar was thought to be a key ingredient in alchemical transformation, Mr. Mudd told the Almanac in an interview.

The name honored the transformation of soil, sun and the vine into wine, he said.

He was Cinnabar's winemaker for many years, turning over the key duties to another winemaker in recent years but holding the title “winemaker emeritus.”

Mr. Mudd is survived by his wife, Deborah Stipek Mudd; his children, Karina and Jack Mudd; a step-daughter, Meredith Sears; and his former wife, Melissa Frank.

The family prefers that memorial donations be made to the Tom Mudd Science Education Fund, East Palo Alto Academy, P.O. Box 20524, Stanford, CA 94309.

Short plays highlight 'Growing Up Jewish'

Two short plays, presented under the title “Growing Up Jewish: The Immigrant Experience,” will be staged at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, July 21, at Little House in Menlo Park.

The program, sponsored by Little House and the Menlo Park Library, begins with “Bella's American Tale,” a musical about an 18-year-old who

comes to America with her father. It tells of the pair's experiences on Ellis Island, the tenements and sweat shops of New York City, and the rich life of Hester Street. Steve Gill, Clara Brill and Nicole Hastings, all of Menlo School, will perform.

Lynn Ruth Miller will perform a one-woman show, “Jewish, Cute,

and Single.”

Admission is \$2 for seniors and \$5 for others. Free transportation is available for Menlo Park seniors and people with disabilities. For van service, call 330-2512.

For more information about the performance, call 326-2025. Little House is at 800 Middle Ave.

Almanac wins award for 'general excellence'

The Almanac has won the top award in the annual statewide "Better Newspaper Contest," conducted by the California Newspaper Publishers Association.

The Almanac won in the category of "general excellence" among weekly newspapers with a circulation between 11,000 and 25,000.

First-place awards were given the Almanac in two other categories: public service and feature writing. A second-place prize was awarded in the "freedom of information" category, which recognizes efforts by newspapers to gain public access to information about government activities.

A certificate of merit was awarded for environmental reporting by staff writer David Boyce.

Recognizing work done during 2006, the awards were announced at the CNPA annual meeting Saturday at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco.

The public service award was given for the March 16, 2006, cover story by News Editor Renee Batti, and editorials by publisher Tom Gibboney, that focused on controversial decisions and

practices by the Menlo Park City Council when it was controlled by the majority of Nicholas Jellins, Mickie Winkler and Lee Duboc. Editorials criticized the council majority's actions, lack of openness and circumvention of the public process.

Ms. Batti's cover story on the disinfectant chloramine, which had been added to the Bay Area's drinking water in 2004, won the feature writing award. The story gave accounts of people who have suffered severe health problems since the substance was added.

The "freedom of information" award was given for stories by staff writer Andrea Gemmet on the refusal of the Atherton city attorney to disclose a report on an investigation into improprieties by the town's building department staff, which oversees home construction projects.

Atherton's city attorney Marc Hynes, claiming it was a confidential personnel matter, refused requests, even by the council, to see the report. The stories and an editorial led to a partial victory: council members were given access to the report. ■



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Construction work begins at Encinal School

By Marjorie Mader

Almanac Staff Writer

Work has started at Encinal School as the Menlo Park City School

District enters the construction and renovation phase of its \$91-million, bond-financed expansion plan for its four schools.

Construction workers and

machines are doing preliminary site work this summer at Encinal school, located at 195 Encinal Ave. in Atherton. The school will be expanded over the

next few years from a grade 3-5 school to a K-5 school.

A first step is bringing on site 12 portable buildings that will serve as interim offices and classrooms, mostly for third-graders whose five classrooms

in wing F are being vacated and will be renovated to house the first group of kindergartners in the fall of 2008. Plans call for adding a grade each year, starting with kindergarten, until Encinal is a K-5 school.

The new portable classrooms also will provide space for music classes, the technology department, and other offices. See pictures on Page 3.

that have been located in the string of old portable buildings near Middlefield Road and Prior Lane.

Ahmad Sheikholeslami, the district's bond project manager, said the old portable buildings will go away when the interim classroom and office project is completed before school starts. The new classroom complex for fourth- and fifth-graders will be built on the site of the old portables.

Long, open trenches are being dug to house the infrastructure (power, phones, other utilities) for the interim offices and classrooms and the future grade 4-5 complex near Middlefield Road.

The Encinal project is moving ahead smoothly, said Mr. Sheikholeslami. A key decision is whether to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Encinal Avenue and Middlefield Road to regulate traffic flow to and from the school.

"Data shows that current (traffic) conditions warrant a stoplight at the intersection," he said. The decision will hinge on agreement between the town of Atherton and the school district.

Preliminary site work also is going on this summer at Laurel School, the K-2 school, on Edge Road in Atherton. A site is being readied for a new modular building for the district's preschool for children with special needs. ■

Solar power meeting for Atherton, MP

An informational meeting explaining the economic advantages of solar power is set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 24, at the Pavilion in Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Ave. in Atherton.

Representatives from Foster City-based SolarCity will discuss the Go Solar Initiative for Atherton and Menlo Park, a group discount on photovoltaic systems that ends July 31.

If enough households sign up to meet the goal of 175 kilowatts — the total amount of electricity generating capacity — participants get discounts of 25 to 30 percent off the going competitive rate, said a SolarCity spokesman.

More information is online at www.AthertonGreen.net.

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Judge: Follow your own rules

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

If they really want to keep a pair of antique urns in the town's Lindenwood neighborhood, Atherton City Council members are going to have to go back to the drawing board.

A tentative court decision says the Atherton council didn't follow its own rules when it denied permission to move the urns in January to the new home of Atherton residents Randy and Lisa Lamb.

The Lambs filed a lawsuit against Atherton over the right to move the two, five-foot-tall urns from their old home in Lindenwood to their new house across town. They were denied permission under the town's historic artifacts ordinance, which aims to preserve objects associated with the Linden Towers estate, later subdivided to form the Lindenwood neighborhood.

San Mateo County Superior Court Judge Gerald Buchwald's tentative decision, issued July 11, orders the City Council to throw out its denial and reconsider the matter; he also orders the Lambs to cooperate with a historic analysis of the urns.

"The town of Atherton's decision here is unsupported (by), and on certain points contrary to, the weight of evidence in the administrative record," the judge's decision said. "In reaching its decision, the town of Atherton has not proceeded in the manner required by law, namely by its own ordinance."

Atherton officials failed to show evidence that the urns are historically significant and failed

ATHERTON

to notify the Lambs that the urns might be placed on the town's inventory of historic artifacts, denying them a chance to object to their inclusion, the judge said.

A final ruling by the judge is expected at the end of the week, said Atherton City Attorney Marc Hynes.

Mr. Hynes said town officials had only minor objections to the

tentative decision, which they aired at a hearing held July 13.

If there are no significant changes in the final decision, the City Council would have to hold another public hearing, declare Lindenwood a historic district and study the urns to determine if they could properly be included in the historic inventory, Mr. Hynes said.

A message left at Lamb Partners, the Lambs' development company, was not returned by the Almanac's press deadline on Monday. ■

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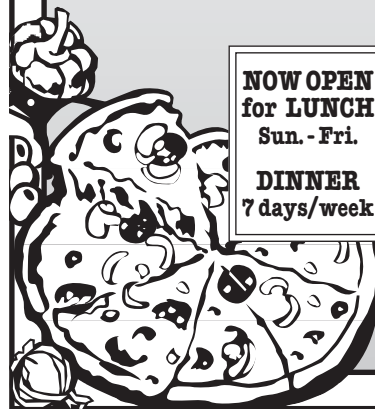
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■ OBITUARY

Joseph M. Falore

Portola Valley resident

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, July 17, at St. Denis Parish in Menlo Park for Joseph M. Falore of Portola Valley. He died July 10 at the age of 70.

Born in Chicago, Mr. Falore

began his career in the retail automotive business. After moving to Portola Valley in 1978, he established a network of car dealerships in Colma, Sunnyvale and San Jose.

He and his wife of 50 years, Barbara, shared a passion for travel, golf and skeet and trap shooting. He was an avid boater and car collector, family members said.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two children, Charles of Portola Valley and David of Redwood City; and six grandchildren.

St. Denis Parish is at 2250 Ivy Ave. in Menlo Park. Memorial donations can be made to the Stanford Comprehensive Cancer Center at 2700 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

■ 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

Theft report: Golf clubs stolen from garage of home, first block of Linden Ave., July 9.

MENLO PARK

Accident report: Rollover collision at Willow Road and Bayfront Expressway, July 9.

Theft report: \$1,500 in copper cable stolen, 1300 block of Willow Road, July 9.

Burglary report: Garage broken into,

1900 block of Santa Cruz Ave., July 8.

Fraud reports

■ Bad check received, 100 block of E. Creek Drive, Menlo Park, July 9.

■ Unauthorized use of credit card at the Willow Cove Gas Station, 500 Willow Road, July 11.

■ Embezzlement of \$10,000 in payroll advances, 700 block of Menlo Ave., July 11.

■ Unauthorized use of credit card at the Willow Cove Gas Station, 500 Willow Road, July 11.

■ Identity theft, 800 block of Partridge Ave., July 12.

Rape report: Rape reported to a doctor one month ago; report taken by police, July 9.

WOODSIDE

Theft report: Laptop stolen from a desk in the Canada College Library, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., July 5.

Auto burglary report: Cash, credit cards, wallet and a driver's license stolen outside of the Menlo Country Club, 2300 Woodside Road, July 5

Fraud report: Unauthorized credit card transactions, 2000 block of Ashton Ave., July 4

■ BIRTH

Menlo Park

■ Rinna Sanchez Baluyut and Eduardo Balurut, a daughter, June 28, at Sequoia Hospital.

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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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Big agenda for new manager

It is not our intent to cast fear into the path of Menlo Park's new city manager, Glen Rojas, who is expected to start in two weeks. But just a casual tally of the major issues facing the city in the next year or two might be enough to make most public servants do a double take and perhaps rethink their decision to settle down on the Midpeninsula. On the upside, Mr. Rojas was the unanimous pick of the council, and no doubt one of the reasons is his 10-year tenure as manager of Chino, a city of 76,000 (twice the size of Menlo Park) in the Pomona area.

But there are other reasons to list on the plus side of Mr. Rojas' ledger — for example, his experience with a massive effort to boost the economy of Chino's downtown, including luring sales-tax-generating businesses to the area. He has already said he looks forward to working with the community to revitalize Menlo Park's downtown, particularly the properties along El Camino Real.

That is welcome news for Menlo Park, which desperately needs more sales tax revenue and a take-charge city manager who can steer what is certain to be a contentious discussion about what should replace the auto dealerships that have recently closed. Mr. Rojas' arrival coincides perfectly with the council's initial discussions about the future look and feel of El Camino Real.

And there are plenty of other "biggies" coming down the pike for Mr. Rojas. He will need to:

- Preside over a city budget that is slated to spend \$1 million more than its projected revenues, although the council is betting that a surplus will make up the difference, as has happened in past

years. Nevertheless, we hope Mr. Rojas is able to bring much more vigor and transparency to managing the city's budget process, which suffers as a result of the difficulty of providing the council timely financial information when the budget is being drawn up.

- Oversee the city's response to the proposal by David Bohannon for a massive hotel-office complex off Marsh Road. In addition to a 200-plus-room hotel, the project envisions some 700,000 square feet of office space. The city will no doubt welcome the sales and occupancy taxes generated by the hotel, but traffic impact and other concerns are sure to surface about the office complex.

- Manage the planning process for a wide range of projects in the city's center, including the Derry property, the development of a retail and office complex at the former Cadillac dealership, and a tentative proposal to build a condo/commercial project on the old Anderson Chevrolet truck lot.

Other projects already approved for Mr. Rojas to oversee include several in the Linfield Oaks neighborhood, and the residential rental units owned by the Beltramo family just off El Camino Real.

- He will also have to get up to speed on the contentious community debate over the Dumbarton Rail trains that could run through neighborhoods by 2012. Another train debate focuses on whether there should grade separations over or under the Caltrain tracks.

This is a huge agenda for Menlo Park's small Planning Department, which will look to the new city manager to guide these and many other, smaller projects, through the process. It is going to be quite a challenge, and we wish Mr. Rojas the best of luck. He will need all the help he can get.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Dumbarton rail not even good mass transit

Editor:

The proposed Dumbarton rail project is a pathetic excuse for mass transit.

First of all, the cost is greatly underestimated while the rider numbers are artificially

overinflated. There are currently no plans for mitigation, such as grade separations, in the budget.

Let's picture Marsh Road during rush-hour traffic and what that will do to local traffic congestion. This project is based on using 19th century technology in the 21st century.

Heavy-rail diesel is not environmentally friendly, and is not the best choice for moving people. It would do a great job

moving freight trains through our neighborhoods.

The sole beneficiaries of Dumbarton Rail are East Bay residents, with no available transit system for Peninsula residents to commute east-bound. Is this what residents of San Mateo County thought they were voting for when renewing Measure A in 2004?

I think we can spend our transit dollars in a more efficient way that provides equal access for all

residents on both sides of the Bay. As it is currently designed, the major beneficiary of this project will be Union Pacific, which will have full right-of-way on a taxpayer-gifted rail system and bridge, making the Peninsula a major freight corridor. Is this the best way for us to use our precious transit funds?

Betsy Farzi
Peggy Lane, Menlo Park

See **LETTERS**, next page

Our Regional Heritage

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Menlo Park Historical Association



LETTERS

Continued from previous page

Shift debate to integrated traffic solution*Editor:*

It is with great interest that I am following the debate on the Dumbarton rail service.

I am glad to see that the debate is shifting towards the broader question of how to provide an integrated transit solution. Having read the guest opinions of Martin Engel and Steve Schmidt, I think there are some key points that need to be considered.

Let's look at ridership. Mr. Schmidt claims that Caltrain carries roughly 35,000 passengers per day. In June, BART reported 387,000 daily riders, 10 times the Caltrain figure, and estimates indicate that the BART extension from Fremont to San Jose will add 80,000 to 100,000 more daily riders.

How many more riders will the 12 daily Caltrain trips add? Its supporters claim somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,500. BART running every 15 minutes (as it does now) could easily attract three to four times as many riders as Caltrain's projections.

So what about the cost? Let's start with grade separations. In 2005 we heard estimates of around \$75 million total (not including eminent domain costs) for the four crossings in Menlo Park alone. I have no idea what it would cost today to provide grade separations from San Francisco to Gilroy, but if Menlo Park is typical then it could easily be \$1 billion.

There seems to be an unanswered question of whether the \$600 million to provide the Dumbarton rail service covers the cost of replacing the bridge. Further, according to an environmental impact report completed in 2004, the cost of electrification from San Francisco to Gilroy ranged from \$600 million to \$1.2 billion in 2003 dollars. All together, we're looking at around \$2 billion to \$3 billion.

When viewed on a cost-per-rider basis, Caltrain doesn't seem to be very cost-effective. We are talking about spending roughly \$2 billion to \$3 billion on a system that will serve roughly 40,000 daily riders. That amounts to an investment of \$60,000 to \$75,000 per rider, not taking into account operating deficits that Caltrain incurs each year.

Caltrain has been kept afloat for many years only through continued taxpayer subsidies. Subsidizing a failed system that

Nothing natural about global warming

By Robert Fournier

As a retired U.S. Geological Survey "supergrade" research geologist, I take exception to the July 4 letter by Bob Cohen asserting that the present global warming is mostly the result of natural processes.

As global temperatures have gone up and down over the last 400,000 years, so has CO₂. However, during that period CO₂ did not go over 300 ppm until the middle of the 20th century. It is now about 380 ppm and rising rapidly. We are moving increasingly into uncharted territory.

The record of past temperatures and atmospheric CO₂ provided by air trapped in glacial ice found at high elevations in equatorial regions is particularly important because tropospheric temperatures there are remarkably constant over seasonal and interannual timescales. In an article published in *Science* magazine in 2006, the authors concluded that the rate of melting observed there today has not happened for thousands of years and cannot be explained by any cycle of natural variability. The only good correlation is with increasing anthropogenic CO₂.

The consensus view of the scientific community about the present global warming can be determined from the published position statements of scientific organizations that have assembled committees of knowledgeable scientists to evaluate all the relevant data. In January 1999 the American Geophysical Union issued a position paper after a year of study and ample opportunity

for its members to comment on the first draft. That statement said, "Atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases have substantially increased as a consequence of fossil fuel combustion and other human activities."

It further said, "AGU believes that the present level of scientific uncertainty does not justify inaction in the mitigation of human-induced climate change and/or the adaptation to it."

In 2003 AGU issued a second position paper that started by saying, "Human activities are increasingly altering the earth's climate." In 2007 the U.S. National Academy of Science, and similar organizations in 13 other countries, issued a joint statement saying that significant global warming is occurring mostly as the result of the release of anthropogenic CO₂ into the atmosphere.

Fifteen other scientific organizations, including the American Meteorological Society, have issued statements about global climate change. All but two are in agreement that the present global warming is due mainly to the anthropogenic release of CO₂ into the atmosphere. The American Association of State Climatologists was undecided about the issue in 2003. However, some state employees might be subject to political pressure to downplay the importance of anthropogenic CO₂, particularly in those states where oil, coal, and automobile manufacturing play an important role in their economies.

The only organization denying that

there is any human involvement in climate change was the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. Perhaps this is telling us something about where much of the opposition to an anthropogenic contribution to global warming is coming from.

In a search of the scientific literature between 1993 and 2003, 928 publications were found that contained the keywords, "global climate change" (published in *Science* in 2004). None favored the position that the present global warming is mainly the result of non-anthropogenic causes. Although there is controversy about the degree to which recent specific extreme weather events can be attributed to global warming, the peer-reviewed scientific literature, and the overwhelming majority of scientific organizations and their membership, support the view that the present global warming is due mostly to the anthropogenic release of CO₂. Only a few very vocal individuals, and lobbyists for the oil, coal, and automobile industries, insist otherwise. The American Meteorological Society statement concludes by saying, "Prudence dictates extreme care in managing our relationship with the only planet known to be capable of sustaining human life."

Dr. Robert Fournier lives in Portola Valley and is currently a member of the town's geologic advisory committee. He has served as chairman of the Science Advisory Committee for the Geologic Division of the USGS and on scientific review and advisory committees for the NSF, the DOE, the USAID, NATO, the UN, and the Geological Survey of England.



serves only a small fraction of potential commuters makes little sense. Add to that the issue of safety. Sadly, there were two more fatalities in the past week on Caltrain. Loss of life along the tracks remains a serious problem. I agree with Mr. Engel. We need a comprehensive solution. Let's not assume that heavy rail is the answer here.

Mark Gilles
Hermosa Way, Menlo Park

Motorists bound by basic speed law*Editor:*

Too often we hear about crashes between motorists and bicyclists in which the cyclist is severely injured or killed.

And when that happens, we also hear residents of Woodside and Portola Valley complaining about how bicyclists on narrow roads with blind corners represent a hazard to motorists.

I am a traffic engineer and a traffic safety expert. I have testified in many traffic accident cases in which motorists have unknowingly violated the basic speed law. The California drivers manual says the basic speed law "means you may never

drive faster than is safe for current conditions." The way this law applies to narrow, winding roads is motorists must not drive so fast that they cannot stop in the distance that they can see ahead.

As you drive, imagine that just beyond the point that you can see there is a stationary obstruction in the road (perhaps a log or worse, an injured child). You cannot drive so fast that you cannot stop before reaching the obstruction. It does not matter whether the obstruction is due to a curve in the road or the crest of a hill. You must be able to stop. It also does not matter if the posted speed limit is higher or if your car can handle the road at a higher speed. You simply should not drive faster than you can see.

Those drivers who say that bicyclists in the road are a hazard because they are surprised by the cyclist and forced to take evasive action are violating the basic speed law. After all, the cyclist is legally allowed to take the lane when the lane is too narrow to share side by side with a motor vehicle. In fact, the legally riding cyclist is traveling in the same direction as the motorist, which provides even

more time and distance than would a stationary obstruction in the road.

Bicyclists depend on the good will of motorists for their very survival. Cyclists are not interested in assigning blame in the case of an accident. They want for the accident not to happen in the first place. Bicyclists need for motorists to respect their right to use the road and for motorists to share the road in a safe manner. And that includes limiting their speeds in corners and over hills so they can stop if need be, according to the basic speed law.

Bob Shanteau
Seaside, Calif.

Local service lost in dealer closure*Editor:*

The recent closure of Stanford Lincoln-Mercury, which caps the departure of car dealers from Menlo Park, means less than it would have a generation ago. The loss of sales tax revenue is less than it would have been before the decline in marketability and, correspondingly, sales of American brand automobiles.

More significant is the loss of an essential service. The auto body repair shop at Stanford Lincoln-Mercury was not only first rate and approved by most insurance companies to repair all makes and models, but also was the last local location at which Menlo Park residents could have the banged-up bodies of their vehicles restored to like-new condition.

Closure of the body shop is emblematic of the decline or disappearance of local services in recent years. The preservation of services needed by the community should have priority in efforts to renew and revive the El Camino Real, Santa Cruz Avenue and Willow Road commercial areas. It should be the central metric by which to measure the efforts both of the Chamber of Commerce and of the city's business development manager.

James R. Madison
Holly Avenue, Menlo Park

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ATHERTON ESTATE

At the end of the cul-de-sac and concealed from the road by elaborate iron gates this new home is on 1.5 +/- acres. The landscaped gardens include a fully equipped 1600 sq.ft. guest house with bedroom and an exercise room. Las Lomitas schools.

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