

**Arson suspect arrested following four
Portola Valley brush fires** Page 5

The Almanac

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



AUGUST 8, 2007

www.AlmanacNews.com | VOL. 42 NO. 49

**Which
grass is
greener?**

Communities
debate merits of
synthetic versus
natural grass

page 12

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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

Dancing in the street

Julia Dickerson, 2, dances to the tunes of Big Dog and the Bite, one of several bands that played at the Aug. 1 downtown Menlo Park block party on Santa Cruz Avenue. The next block party is Wednesday, Aug. 15. See story on **Page 18**.

Atherton

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Menlo Park

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■ Nice turnout for first downtown block party. **Page 18**

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■ Coach honored for integrating Globetrotters basketball team. **Page 7**

Schools

■ Rich Dioli named director of Sacred Heart Schools. **Page 17**

Health & Fitness

■ Proper office ergonomics can help make the workday a little less painful. **Section 2**

On the cover

Growing demand for playing fields and a reputation for low maintenance are helping synthetic grass gain a foothold in local communities despite parents' preferences for real grass, at least for youngsters. Darius Thomas of Menlo Park seems to be having fun on the false grass at Woodside High School as he prepares to tackle his brother Skyler in this file photo from Thanksgiving day 2005. Photo by David Boyce; photo illustration by Raul Perez. Story begins on **Page 12**.

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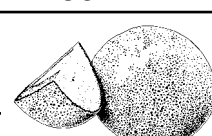


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Taken in Context

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HINT: If the upholstery or draperies in your home have a floral design, try to copy its color, form, and texture in a flower arrangement that will be displayed in the same room.

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WINE



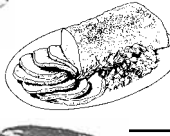

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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Tesla Motors set to zoom into town

■ The maker of a much-anticipated electric sports car plans a sales and service operation at the former Anderson Chevrolet site.

By **Rory Brown**
Almanac Staff Writer

One abandoned auto lot down, four more to go. Despite the steady fall of auto dealerships along El Camino Real in Menlo Park in the last few years, it was announced last week that electric car manufacturer Tesla Motors is setting up shop in Menlo Park.

Tesla is the company behind the anticipated high-end electric sports car, the Tesla Roadster, expected to hit the market late this year or early next year, and sell for around \$100,000.

In a wave of new alternative energy cars, buzz has been building around San Carlos-based Tesla and its Roadster. The sports car can accelerate from zero to 60 miles per hour in under four seconds, and can run for more than 200 miles on a single charge, according to Tesla spokesmen.

The automaker hopes to have a dealership and service center up and running by the end of the year at the former Anderson Chevrolet dealership at 300 El

Camino Real, said Darryl Siry, vice president of marketing, sales and service for Tesla.

The site, adjacent to the Stanford Park Hotel, is one of five abandoned auto lots along El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

Unlike the other, now-closed, dealerships, Mr. Siry said, Tesla will do just fine in Menlo Park. He said the automaker favored being near a city's downtown, away from other dealerships — an approach that ruled out auto malls, including the auto mall planned near U.S. 101 and Willow Road in Menlo Park.

"We think Menlo Park is an ideal place for us," Mr. Siry said, noting that residents of the immediate area are in Tesla's "target market." He noted the site will serve as a hub for Tesla sales and service for all of Northern California.

"The location has great visibility with the types of people who are likely to consider buying a Tesla," said Mike Harrigan, the company's vice president of customer service and support, in a press release.

Mayor Kelly Fergusson said Tesla is a good fit for the city.



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

The **Tesla Roadster**, an electric sports car that is expected to sell for around \$100,000, was on display at the Menlo Park downtown block party Aug. 1. The city announced last week that Tesla Motors will open a showroom and service center in Menlo Park.

"Tesla's vehicles and corporate philosophy are consistent with Menlo Park's history and culture of innovation, high-tech investment, and emphasis on green

technology," she said.

Short-term deal?

The buzz surrounding Tesla and the trendy Roadster is big, but the

automaker may not be a permanent fixture in Menlo Park.

Steve Elliot, a spokesman for

See **TESLA MOTORS**, page 8

Arson suspect in custody for four local grass fires

By **Andrea Gemmet**
Almanac Staff Writer

An East Palo Alto man is being accused of arson for allegedly setting four grass fires along Alpine and Arastradero roads in Portola Valley near Ladera on Saturday, Aug. 4.

Donald Williams, 45, was arrested by San Mateo County sheriff's deputies after five people called in and reported seeing a man acting suspiciously near the fires, said Lt. Ken Jones.

Mr. Williams was originally arrested on parole violations related to a theft conviction, but was later charged with four counts of arson, Lt. Jones said. How the fires were set is still under investigation, he said.

No one was injured, and no property was lost as a result of the grass fires, which burned a total of about an acre of land, said Battalion Chief Dan Ghiorso of the Woodside Fire Protec-

tion District.

"Our investigators were out there, and they're calling it arson for sure," he said.

All four fires were controlled by around 3 p.m., Mr. Ghiorso said.

Firefighters dispatched to a small brush fire near Arastradero and Alpine roads at around 1:30 p.m. were soon notified of a second fire burning about half a mile south, he said.

Additional firefighters en route to the first fire apparently stopped to fight the second fire, not realizing it was not the blaze they were originally dispatched to, Mr. Ghiorso said.

Around 20 minutes after the second fire was reported, a third fire was called in about a mile south when a woman reported seeing flames headed toward her home at 9 Arastadero Road, Mr. Ghiorso said.

See **ARSON**, page 18

Sunset's Mel Lane helped save coastlines and open spaces

By **Marion Softky**
Almanac Staff Writer

Of Mel Lane's many legacies, the greatest may have been reviving San Francisco Bay as a scenic and environmental treasure, and preserving California's incomparable coastline from the onslaughts of urban creep.

As the first chairman of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission and then the California Coastal Commission, Mel Lane pioneered a totally new government format aimed at balancing preservation and development of two precious natural resources.

Against all odds, he got opposing interests to work together toward a common goal, and set a model for coastal protection in the nation and world.

Melvin B. Lane, who died at

OBITUARY

A memorial service for Melvin B. Lane will be held 4 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 11, at Stanford Memorial Church. The balconies, which he helped raise funds to restore after the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, will all be open. There will be a reception at the Arrillaga Alumni Center following the service.

age 85 on July 28 at his Atherton home of complications from Parkinson's disease, also left his mark on many other facets of western life and landscape.

As co-owner of Lane Publishing Co. with his brother Bill Lane of Portola Valley, and publisher of Sunset Books, Mel Lane helped define western living for millions.

He was an enthusiastic sup-

porter of Stanford University and a trustee from 1981 to 1991. He was a co-founder of the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), which has preserved close to 60,000 Peninsula acres for open space, habitat, farming and ranching. He supported many other conservation, health and historical causes in California and around the world.

The California League of Conservation Voters gave Mel Lane a special award in 1998, saying, "If you take a look around California, you would be hard pressed to find a place of beauty that Mel hasn't played a part in preserving."

Sunrise to Sunset

Born in 1922 in Des Moines, Iowa, Mel Lane moved with his family to San Francisco in 1928 when his father, Lawrence W.

See **MEL LANE**, page 8



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The Globetrotters honored Daniel Serafine, right, shown with his son Frank at a Globetrotters game in San Jose.

Photo courtesy, Daniel Serafine

Coach honored for integrating Globetrotters basketball team

■ Daniel Serafine, 93, isn't done making a difference just yet.

By **Rory Brown**
Almanac Staff Writer

Daniel Serafine isn't someone who conforms to the status quo, and recently he was honored by the Menlo Park City Council for a big instance of thinking outside the box.

Mr. Serafine, 93, a resident of Menlo Park, received a proclamation on July 17 from Mayor Kelly Fergusson honoring his efforts as coach of the Globetrotters basketball team during World War II — a tenure that included making the team one of the first integrated professional sports teams.

"If a man or a woman can play a sport, I think they belong in the sport," Mr. Serafine said in an interview with the Almanac. "Color should not be a barrier."

While Mr. Serafine's views aren't radical today, they were 66 years ago, when he stumbled upon six members of the Harlem Globetrotters working at a Studebaker Corp. factory in Chicago making plane engines.

Although racial segregation was still in full swing, he convinced the company to allow the six Globetrotters (all black) and four other Studebaker employees (all white) to band together as the Studebaker Globetrotters to travel the Midwest, play games, and sell war bonds.

With the blessing of Harlem Globetrotters owner Abe Saperstein, the team was permitted to use the Globetrotters name until the war ended.

Dealing with race

From 1941 to 1945, Mr. Serafine and the team — with their \$1-per-hour wages and handfuls of food stamps and gas coupons — toured Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, challenging a mix of amateur, professional, and collegiate teams.

Mr. Serafine said the Studebaker players became friends, but crowds flat-out rejected the concept of an integrated team.

"Spectators would spit on my players," he said. "There were a lot of fights, and people in the crowd would pull at the players' shirts and shorts

when they were near the sidelines."

He said that during one game in Wisconsin, children in the audience used rubber bands to shoot paper clips at the throats of the players when they were within range.

"People didn't want to see the color change, but I was determined, and the team was determined," Mr. Serafine said. "Before each game, I told my players the same thing: 'When you walk in the stadium, look straight ahead. Don't look right, don't look left, and when you get out on the floor, play like gentlemen.'"

To help remedy the problem, Mr. Serafine said he hired a 280-pound 6-foot-6-inch trainer, and asked him to be the first person to walk into the stadium.

"People saw him, and they backed off," he said with a laugh.

Moving to the Peninsula

After working as a contractor in Chicago after the war, Mr. Serafine moved to Atherton in 1968, building houses on the Peninsula and letting go of his Globetrotters days. He now lives in Menlo Park's Sharon Heights neighborhood.

"It was hard to just stop being part of the Globetrotters, especially since we all lost touch," he said.

Last year, Mr. Serafine opted to re-establish a connection with the Globetrotters, and was honored by the team at a game in San Jose in January. He can often be found signing autographs at McDonald's in Menlo Park.

After his wife died in 1998, Mr. Serafine said he worked 13-hour days, seven days a week, as a volunteer at Menlo Park's University Convalescent Hospital until it closed its doors in 2003.

"I like to keep busy, and that was a place I could help," he said.

Staying young

The best place to find Mr. Serafine these days is on Menlo Park roads — he regularly cruises the city's bike lanes in his four-wheeled electric scooter, with a tall orange flag on the back.

He said he searches the city looking for damaged sidewalks that need to be fixed.

"To stay young, you have to keep occupied, and most importantly, you have to think young," he said. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Good Landscaping Adds Value

Q: I am remodeling my home and plan to install new landscaping when it is complete. The cost estimates for this are very high and I am wondering if it is worth the expense. What is your opinion?

A: Homeowners are often surprised to realize how expensive landscaping their property can be. Most people think that grass, a few plants and some sprinklers shouldn't be all that expensive but the design and installation of hardscape (walkways, patios, etc.) and plantings is usually a costly project. This is particularly true if it is done well.

But beautiful landscaping can add quite a bit to the value of your home. Creatively designed outdoor spaces can enrich the way you use your property. Space for entertaining as well as quiet garden areas can be as important as any indoor space. As you plan your garden, it would be wise to include plants that are drought tolerant and don't require much maintenance. This will keep your on-going maintenance costs down.

In the Mid-Peninsula area where one can use outdoor space five or six months of the year, it is definitely worth investing in good landscaping.

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



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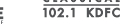
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Sunset's Mel Lane helped save coastlines, open spaces

MEL LANE

continued from page 5

Lane, bought the fledgling travel magazine, *Sunset*, to give a new voice to the fast-growing West.

As kids, Mel and Bill helped out at *Sunset*, selling subscriptions door to door, and working in the San Francisco office on Saturdays. Mel recalled helping their mother, Ruth Lane, test new recipes at home. "I don't know if we did a lot of testing, but we did a lot of tasting," he told the *Almanac* in a 1998 interview honoring *Sunset*'s 100th anniversary.

Mel Lane attended Palo Alto High School and Pomona College, and graduated from Stanford in 1944. He served in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific during World War II.

After the war, the Lane brothers went to work for the family as *Sunset* recovered from the Depression. Mel settled into the company's management, building up the book division as Bill focused on the magazine.

In 1951, *Sunset* moved from San Francisco to its landmark campus in Menlo Park. Bill and Mel took over company operations from their father in 1952. They sold it to Time Warner in 1990.

For those 38 years, *Sunset* magazine and books came to define western living — building, gardening, travel, cooking, and conservation. *Sunset* Books, appearing in hardware stores and nurseries, boosted the home do-it-yourself wave across the country. The "Sunset Western Garden Book" became a bible for anyone who wanted to raise plants in 24 western climate zones.

Bill and Mel Lane ran *Sunset* magazine and books very much as a team, Bill recalled. "We didn't always agree. But we shared core values."

Friends and colleagues remember Mel for his strategic business sense and his constant support of company employees. They apply many adjectives to him: soft-spoken, bright, unassuming, low-key, humble, elegant, thoughtful, visionary — and often funny.

"He was a humble man," said Fred Rea of Portola Valley, a travel editor at *Sunset* and author of *Sunset* travel books. "He was never overcome with the fame he had as a publisher and a doer of good deeds."

There was also fun and mischief. *Sunset* colleague Martin Litton of Portola Valley, who started running dories down the Grand Canyon and helped establish Redwood National Park, gleefully recalled rafting San Francisquito Creek with Mel during one of its occasional floods.

Mel said of the episode: "It was fun. All of us got dumped out."

Miracle on the coast

"The Bay would not look the way it does today if it were not for Mel Lane," said David Lewis, president of Save the Bay, a membership organization devoted to protecting and restoring San Francisco Bay. "He was a miracle worker."

When Gov. Pat Brown appointed Mel Lane to head the Bay Conservation and Development Commission in 1965, it seemed doomed to fail. One-third of the Bay had already disappeared under salt ponds, farms, pavement and building. Big companies with ambitious plans and lots of money laid claim to the remaining shallow waters, as early environmentalists demanded that the Bay be preserved and restored rather than filled.

There were no environmental laws, no regulations, no models for managing this political morass involving multiple interests, cities, counties and government agencies.



Elizabeth Fall Photography

Mel Lane was honored by the Peninsula Open Space Trust in 2005 at the dedication of Mel's Lane, overlooking Whaler's Cove beside Pigeon Point Lighthouse. Mr. Lane chaired the original Coastal Commission, which has controlled growth along California's 1,100-mile coast.

The state Legislature concocted the BCDC to resolve the issues and come up with a plan that would balance the competing interests. It had 27 members with drastically different, often conflicting, agendas.

These were the people whom Mel Lane convened in 1965. By 1969, they had produced a plan and process that works to this day, when the Bay is actually enlarging.

So why did it succeed? Mr. Lewis attributes the success of the commission to Mel Lane's skills as a chairman, backed up with strong support by the staff headed by Executive Director Joseph Bodovitz. "It was [Mel Lane's] incredible patience, persistence and vision," he said.

When similar battles heated up to save the coast from runaway development, the Bay commission stood as a model to handle growth. In 1972, California voters approved Proposition 20, which established a Coastal Commission, similar to BCDC, to guide growth along California's 1,100 miles of Pacific coast, from Mexico to Oregon.

Gov. Ronald Reagan appointed

Mr. Lane chairman, and he moved over with Mr. Bodovitz to do for the California coast what he had done for San Francisco Bay.

In 2005, POST dedicated a monument to Mr. Lane to honor his contributions to open space and the coast. "Mel's Lane" is a quarter-mile of the Coastal Trail next to Pigeon Point Lighthouse overlooking Whaler's Cove.

"I view Mel as a California and national treasure," said Susan Hansch, chief deputy director of the Coastal Commission. He was able to get conflicting people and interests to work together, she said. "It was how he led meetings, how he pulled the public in. He made people feel welcome."

Open space and more

Closer to home, Mel Lane has been a major supporter of many good causes, most prominently POST and Stanford.

He helped found POST in 1977 and served actively on its board for 21 years.

POST President Audrey Rust was one of his admirers. He had no ego, no desire to take credit, she said. "He cared. He wanted to work things out. He knew how to compromise without losing his core."

"It was never us and them with Mel. It was the us without the them."

Bob Augsburger of Portola Valley, former vice president of Stanford and first executive director of POST, recalled that Mr. Lane used to say, "Remember, you only need to win 51 percent of the time."

"Mel was always low-key; he was never dogmatic or authoritarian," Mr. Augsburger said. "He let other people express their views. That's how he got things done."

"And when he agreed with you, he'd say, 'You bet!'"

Stanford is also counting its blessings from Mr. Lane's contributions.

University President John Hennessy said in a prepared statement, "From helping to restore our beloved Memorial Church after the Loma Prieta earthquake, to supporting the humanities and creative writing,

to lifelong support for our environmental research and teaching, Mel has touched virtually every corner of Stanford."

Mel Lane initiated the campaign to raise funds to restore

Memorial Church after the 1989 earthquake. The campaign was so successful that Stanford was able to restore balconies damaged in the 1906 earthquake. He also led numerous development efforts, including the long-range land use plan, Stanford Athletics, the Center for International Security and Cooperation, and the Woods Institute for the Environment.

Mr. Lane was involved with a breathtaking range of business, environmental and social groups. He served for a period on close to 20 boards of directors and commissions. Besides Stanford and POST, these included Pacific Gas & Electric Co., Monterey Bay Aquarium, California Environmental Trust, the Nature Conservancy/California, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Filoli, the California Commission on Campaign Financing, World Wildlife Fund, Lucky Stores, and the Children's Health Council.

Mr. Lane is survived by Joan Fletcher Lane, his wife of 54 years; his brother, Bill; daughters Whitney Miller of Port Townsend, Washington, and Julie Lane Gay of Vancouver, British Columbia; and four grandchildren.

The family suggests donations to the Peninsula Open Space Trust, the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford, or the World Wildlife Fund. ■

'If you take a look around California, you would be hard pressed to find a place of beauty that Mel hasn't played a part in preserving.'

CALIFORNIA LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

'He knew how to compromise without losing his core. It was never us and them with Mel. It was the us without the them.'

POST PRESIDENT AUDREY RUST

Tesla Motors to open shop in Menlo Park this year

TESLA MOTORS

continued from page 5

the property's owner, the Stanford Real Estate company, would not disclose the length or details of the lease. He said the company still has the "flexibility to redevelop" the site, along with other former dealership properties it owns along El Camino Real: the former Lincoln Mercury and University Ford sites at 444 and 450 El Camino Real, respectively.

"The strategy is to still do a comprehensive redevelopment of our sites," Mr. Elliot said. "Tesla could be a part of that — it's just too early to say at this point."

Planning El Camino

The new Tesla site is one of several properties likely to be discussed during the City Council's Aug. 7 meeting, when council members are scheduled to continue the ongoing debate of how to revamp the city's El Camino

Real and downtown areas.

The council is scheduled to consider applying for planning help through a program called "Focusing Our Vision" — a planning initiative spearheaded by regional bodies to help cities plan for urban growth while still preserving wildlife and open space.

The council meeting is set to start at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets. ■

Fisher acquires German firm

Woodside-based Fisher Investments announced that it is extending its reach into Europe with a 50 percent acquisition of Thomas Gruner Vermögensmanagement GmbH.

The new company will be called Gruener Fisher Investments. The deal's financial terms were not disclosed.

Fisher Investments is a money management firm with over \$42 billion in assets under management.

"Germany is the second-biggest market outside the United States for high net worth individuals, and Fisher Investments is delighted to be entering this market with such a strong partner," said founder and CEO Ken Fisher in a statement.

Founded in 1986, Fisher Investments began offering global equity management in 1995 and expanded operations into Canada and the United Kingdom. Mr. Fisher is also a columnist for *Forbes* Magazine.

Jeweler George Hirzel dies at 93

George Hirzel, who founded Hirzel Fine Jewelry in downtown Menlo Park in 1952 and ran it for 42 years until his retirement in 1993, died July 25, two days before his 94th birthday.

A celebration of his life will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 25, at Bethany Lutheran Church, 1095 Cloud Ave. in Menlo Park.

Mr. Hirzel opened George Hirzel's Jewelry on Santa Cruz Ave upon moving to Menlo Park. Family members recall that he loved his work, once saying, "My business is my hobby."

In 1993, he sold the business to a six-year employee, Carl Weimer, who still owns the store and in June doubled its size by moving into the adjacent space at 730 Santa Cruz Ave., formerly occupied by the Dressed Room.

"It would be very difficult to find a finer man," said Mr.

Weimer. "He was very generous and very kind."

In 1996, the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce awarded Mr. Hirzel the Gary T. Williams Award for his service to the chamber. For years, Mr. Hirzel was active with downtown merchants, collecting money for holiday donations and making sure the downtown area was clean and attractive.

Born in Konstanz, Germany, Mr. Hirzel immigrated to America with his mother in 1923, following his father settling in San Francisco. In 1936, he married Doris, the daughter of his boss at a San Francisco watch repairshop. They were married for 63



George Hirzel

years. She died in 1999.

Before moving his family to Menlo Park, Mr. Hirzel spent three years stationed at the Alameda Naval Air Station and at Hunters Point Naval Yard as a foreman of the instrument shops.

When he retired from the jewelry business, Mr. Hirzel enjoyed yearly family campouts and water skiing trips, as well as a road trip to Alaska, and a vacation back to his native Germany after being away for 79 years, family members said.

He is survived by his son Don Hirzel in Livermore, California; daughter Carolyn Packer in Belmont; five grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

Memorial donations can be made to Pathways Hospice, Bethany Lutheran Church in Menlo Park, or a charity of the donor's choice.

Hydrogen shuttle headed to Menlo Park

By Rory Brown

Almanac Staff Writer

Tesla Roadsters aren't the only new alternative energy vehicles coming to Menlo Park.

An eight-passenger hydrogen-powered shuttle bus will hit local streets in several weeks to transport people from the Belle Haven neighborhood and East Palo Alto to the University Avenue Caltrain station in Palo Alto.

The shuttle is part of a state test program, being promoted for use on the Peninsula by the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County. It's manufactured by Ford, runs on an internal combustion engine, and creates "clean emissions," said Rich Napier, executive director of C/CAG, San Mateo County.

He said the shuttle service will start in early September, although he didn't know how long it would operate on the Peninsula, or where it would stop in Belle Haven.

Similar shuttles are being tested throughout the state as



Courtesy, City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County

This hydrogen-fueled bus will be used to shuttle passengers from Belle Haven to Caltrain's University Avenue station.

part of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Hydrogen Highway" initiative to devote state funds to research, develop and test alternative-fuel vehicles.

The service doesn't cost anything, and it gives residents a chance to see and use alternative-energy vehicles as public transportation, Mr. Napier said.

"The plan is to do our part for

the Hydrogen Highway in San Mateo County," he said. "We'll see how it endures."

He noted the shuttle can refuel at two hydrogen fueling stations — an existing station in Milpitas, and a station being built in San Carlos.

The shuttle can accommodate two wheelchairs as well as eight passengers, he said. ■

Public memorial service Friday for Bill Walsh

A public memorial service for former Stanford and San Francisco 49ers coach Bill Walsh will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Aug. 10, at Monster Park in San Francisco, the 49ers organization announced.

Mr. Walsh, 75, died at his Woodside home July 30 following a nine-month battle with leukemia.

Monster Park, then known as Candlestick Park, was the home field for the 49ers during the 10 seasons, 1979-88, that Mr. Walsh coached the team. The team won the Super Bowls at the conclusion of three of those seasons: 1981, 1984 and 1988.

The memorial program will include a video tribute prepared by NFL Films as well as memo-

ries about Mr. Walsh from players and coaches he was associated with. Parking will be free at the service.

A private service will be held a day earlier at Stanford.

The Walsh family is asking that in lieu of flowers, a donation be made in Mr. Walsh's name to a charity of the donor's choice.

— Bay City News Service



NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND NOTICE OF SCOPING SESSION FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE 1300 EL CAMINO REAL PROJECT

CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF AUGUST 20, 2007

Notice is hereby given that the Planning Division of the City of Menlo Park, California received an application on July 9, 2007, as described below.

Rezoning, Planned Development Permit, Minor Subdivision, and Environmental Review/Sand Hill Property Company/1300 El Camino Real:

1) Rezoning the property from the C-4 (ECR) zoning district (General Commercial Applicable to El Camino Real) to the P-D zoning district (Planned Development);

2) Planned Development Permit to establish specific development regulations and architectural designs for the demolition of existing commercial structures associated with the former car dealership and the construction of:

- Approximately 50,850 square feet of grocery store/market space and 58,000 square feet of non-medical office, with an option for up to 30,000 square feet of the office space to be a private recreation use (health/fitness club), for a total of 108,850 square feet;
- An approximate commercial FAR of 74 percent where 75 percent is the maximum FAR permitted;
- Two-story building elements with a maximum building height of approximately 40 feet where 30 feet is the maximum building height permitted by the pre-existing zoning designation; and
- 412 parking spaces in an at-grade and below-grade parking structure where 654 parking spaces would be required by the pre-existing zoning designation.

3) Lot Merger and Minor Subdivision to merge six existing lots and create up to four commercial condominium units;

4) BMR Agreement for the payment of in-lieu fees associated with the City's Below Market Rate Housing Program;

5) Heritage Tree Removal Permit to remove three onsite and four offsite heritage trees from the project site; and

6) Environmental Impact Report to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposal.

The applications and associated environmental documents will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and reviewed and acted on by the City Council at subsequent public hearings.

Furthermore, notice is hereby given that the Planning Division of the City of Menlo Park, California has scheduled a scoping meeting. At this meeting, members of the public will have an opportunity to comment on the issues to be analyzed in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project. The scoping session will be held at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on Monday, August 20, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

The Planning Division is also accepting written comments on items to be included in the EIR. Please send written comments to Megan Fisher, Associate Planner, City of Menlo Park Community Development Department, Planning Division, 701 Laurel Street Menlo Park, CA, 94025. Please submit your comments by September 10, 2007.

Documents related to this project, including the **Notice of Preparation of the Environmental Impact Report**, 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 Megan Fisher, Associate Planner, at (650) 330-6737 or email at mefisher@menlopark.org if you have any questions or comments. In addition, you can receive periodic updates regarding this project by subscribing to the project page on the City's website at: http://www.menlopark.org/projects/comdev_1300ecr.htm

DATED: August 2, 2007
Deanna Chow, Senior Planner

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on August 8, 2007.

City Council holds off on forming finance committees

Menlo Park City Council members want to make the city's finances more transparent, but not to the point where the city can't get anything done without holding a public meeting.

That was the message from council members at their July 31 meeting as they put on hold a plan to form two committees devoted to city finances.

Although the council had originally intended to appoint two council members to an audit committee, and discuss forming a volunteer finance committee of

■ MENLO WATCH

residents, council members balked after hearing that the two groups would be subject to the Brown Act, the state's open meeting law.

Under the original plan, the audit committee was to work with the city's auditor to ensure that the city's financial reporting is accurate, and the finance committee was to work with city staff to do the same.

But City Attorney Bill McClure said that both groups would likely be subject to the Brown Act, meaning all meetings would be open to the public, and require advance notice and staff assistance.

Instead of forming the committees, the council appointed councilmen John Boyle and Richard Cline to work with city staff to rethink how the committees would work, and what staff resources are available to hold consistent public meetings.

Meetings canceled

The Menlo Park City Council will not hold meetings on Aug. 14 and 21. Regular meetings will resume Aug. 28.

Injured Atherton dispatcher wins appeals court victory

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Even though former Atherton police dispatcher Anita Blick already served 90 days of jail time, she's still fighting her conviction on worker's compensation fraud.

The California Court of Appeal on July 24 sided with the injured dispatcher and published a decision overturning her conviction for concealing an improvement in her medical condition, saying that the trial court didn't give accurate instructions to the jury.

Ms. Blick could still face another trial on the same charge if the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office decides to re-prosecute the case.

The jurors weren't told that they had to find evidence that Ms. Blick intended to defraud the insurance company by withholding information from her doctor, according to the court of appeal's decision.

"Unless jurors have a clear understanding of what the law is, they can't very well apply the

facts to what the law requires," said Courtney Shevelson, Ms. Blick's attorney. "That's what went wrong here, they weren't given appropriate guidance."

Ms. Blick fell and injured her knee in January 1994 while at work in Atherton's police station, causing her pain and episodes when her knee would suddenly buckle, according to court records.

She was unable to go back to work because the dispatcher job required to her get up out of her chair repeatedly throughout her shift, something she could no longer do, Mr. Shevelson said.

"This is not a situation where there was some doubt as to whether or not she'd been injured, like the classic 'My back is hurt' worker's comp case," Mr. Shevelson said. "She had two surgeries, and after four or five years of rehab, she got better. She told her doctor that she improved."

The town of Atherton's insurance carrier, Cities Group, hired private investigators to secretly videotape Ms. Blick in 2000 and

2001. The tapes show her working in her garden, walking without crutches and driving her truck, court records show. In 2005, Ms. Blick was prosecuted on three charges of insurance fraud and found guilty on one of them.

Around the time of her prosecution, her husband Glenn Blick, also an Atherton police dispatcher, died shortly after being diagnosed with cancer, said Atherton police Chief Bob Brennan.

"The first time I met her was in the hospital. We helped her out with some of the arrangements," said Chief Brennan, who has been with the Atherton Police Department since 2000.

The appeals court decision becomes official at the end of the month. The state Attorney General's office could have sought to overturn it by petitioning the state Supreme Court, but the Attorney General's office will not be pursuing the case any further, said spokesman Gareth Lacy.

"I think the court of appeal made the right decision," Mr. Shevelson said. ■

So, you want to be a news hound?

If you like seeking out news and finding facts, and you have good writing skills, you could be a candidate for a news reporting internship at the Almanac, the hometown newspaper of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside.

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To apply, e-mail cover letter and resume to: rbatti@AlmanacNews.com, or fax this information to Renee Batti at (650) 854-0677.



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Which grass is greener?

As drought threatens California and global warming is expected to shrink the natural reservoirs in the Sierra snow-packs, the future of local team sports played on traditional but thirsty grass fields may be in question. Synthetic grass is increasingly poised as a substitute.

The Wildcats of Woodside High and the Bears of Menlo-Atherton High have been playing football and soccer on synthetic grass for five years. A synthetic soccer field is now in the works for middle-school students at Woodside Elementary School. And in Portola Valley, a local leader in official environmental consciousness, the town is planning to look at synthetic surfaces for soccer at Rossotti Field and baseball at Ford Field.

Grass fields still have aesthetic appeal but keeping them healthy means closing them when wet and resting them during off-seasons. Closed fields can be vexing to athletes of all ages seeking places to play year-round. This higher demand is raising the profile of synthetic grass.

■ Rain or shine, synthetic grass is ready for action, though on hot days it can raise shoe temperatures and create a chemical smell of rubber tires. (To make the fields soft, recycled tires are frozen, shattered into tiny black pellets, and spread at the base of the “grass” blades.)

■ The fields can improve traction and athletic performance, but falls can be harder than on grass and slides can inflict nasty rug burns, though some brands claim to be less prone to burning.

■ Synthetic grass is durable and does not need irrigation or recovery periods, but the surface can tear and require attention to keep it soft.

How does synthetic grass measure up? What is lost and what is gained? Are real grass fields already artifacts? How does this trend fit with local concerns about the environment?

Grass has class

Professional sports are worlds apart from the merits of this or that surface for a local soccer field, but for what it's worth, pro football players are not sold on synthetic grass.

While it is used in 12 of the 31 stadiums in the National Football League, real grass is planted at the other 19. Stanford University chose real grass for the 2006 remodel of the football stadium.

The NFL Players Association in 2006 surveyed 1,511 players, representing all NFL teams, ask-



Brittany Glessman, center, coaches Woodside High School's varsity cheerleaders during practice on artificial grass.



Stephanie Terpening dribbles a ball across the grass of Rossotti Field during CYSA soccer practice in Portola Valley.

Synthetic or natural? Key points for each

Synthetic grass

- Ready for play year-round, rain or shine.
- Irrigation with water not required.
- Kids like how it improves their athletic performance.

Natural grass

- A nonabrasive and traditional playing surface that's in tune with nature.
- Cool on hot summer days; the aroma of cut grass.
- Generates oxygen and stores carbon dioxide in an era of concern about global warming.

ing for their thoughts on the differences between playing on the two categories of surface.

Substantial majorities of players say synthetic grass is more likely to contribute to injuries, cause soreness and fatigue, and shorten their careers.

Under “additional comments,” the players endorsed artificial grass only in cities with inclement weather. Real grass “prevents injuries” if the fields are well-maintained and closed to non-football uses, they say.

“Nothing can replace grass,” says M-A varsity football Head

Coach Bob Sykes. Given a choice between “picture perfect” grass and a synthetic field, he says, he would always choose grass. The catch, he says, is the expense, including the groundskeeper team the pros use to keep a grass

field perfect.

A third way

The sand-channel field is a natural-grass option that doesn't require a groundskeeper team. With grass planted over sand, irrigation water

drains quickly and the field is available for play more often.

Portola Valley spent \$400,000 — including \$110,000 in donations from residents and two soccer groups — to rebuild Rossotti Field as a sand-channel field.

A typical storm may put clay-based Russ Miller soccer field at Town Center out of action for two days, but

Rossotti is ready for play in about eight hours, says Recreation Facilities Coordinator Tony Macias.

That convenience has a cost relevant to Californians in a time of water scarcity: water use goes up. Between May 2006 and April

Communities debate merits of synthetic versus natural grass

Cover Story by David Boyce • Photographs by Veronica Weber



Above: Woodside Elementary School awaits a new artificial grass field.



Right: Alpine-Menlo Pumas player Emily Colvin, left, aims to kick the ball past Alpine-Menlo Sting player Lauren Espeseth during soccer practice at Rossotti Field in Portola Valley.



2007, the 86,000 square feet of Rossotti Field required 2.8 million gallons of water, or 33 gallons per square foot.

By contrast, the soccer and baseball fields at Town Center needed 2.3 million gallons to irrigate 133,750 square feet, or 17 gallons per square foot.

Rossotti Field needs watering daily or a “dry grass” look sets in, Mr. Macias says. “I would say that Russ Miller (field) is like a camel. Rossotti Field needs a lot more attention.”

Town staff did not have figures for expenses such as fertilizer, equipment upkeep, pest control and monthly seeding.

Keeping the carpet clean

Given the ongoing battle over

facts between the synthetic and real grass industries, a neutral source of information is hard to find to compare annual maintenance costs.

During football season, Bruce Rollin, the Sequoia Union High School District’s director of

maintenance and operations, says synthetic fields need to be fluffed up monthly using a \$60,000 ride-around sweeper. The bristles agitate the rubber pellets nestled at the base of the “grass” blades.

“The misconception (about

synthetic fields) is that you don’t have to work on them,” he says. “Imagine people running around in your living room with cleats on.”

The carpet, meant to last from seven to 10 years, shreds and wears out, he says. Occasionally cleats tear up seams that then need to be re-glued.

Mr. Rollin did not have available the annual maintenance costs for the fields.

The 2006 Guide to Synthetic and Natural Turfgrass for Sports Fields cites annual costs of \$5,000 to \$25,000, including labor, solvents to remove tough stains, and replacement rubber pellets. The upper end of that range would apply to fields that are “frequently televised” or

“used for multiple sports,” the guide says.

Performance boost

Regardless of rain or heavy usage, artificial grass offers a level surface and reliable traction. School-age athletes prefer it, Coach Sykes says.

“The (artificial) turf is better,” says M-A junior Danny Jimenez, a varsity lineman for the Bears and a Menlo Park resident. “It doesn’t get muddy. It’s always dependable. ... Our cleats get a better grip on the turf.”

M-A freshman and strong safety Alofanga Sakalia of East Palo Alto says he particularly likes synthetic grass in the fall and winter, when there’s no mud and no slipping and sliding as there is on natural grass.

“Kids love what they can do on artificial (grass),” says Coach Sykes. “You’re able to explode off the cut,” he adds, referring to the sudden changes of direction made by a player running with the ball as he attempts to evade defenders. The artificial grass lets kids play closer to their potential, he says.

When the Bears have a grass-field game coming up, they practice on grass at M-A to adjust their timing for a slower game, Coach Sykes says.

M-A’s synthetic field is in near-continuous use, says Athletic Director Pam Wimberly. “It’s become a way of life here at M-A. You go out there and you just play on it.”

NFL players complain of the potential for getting hurt. Are there more injuries? Ms. Wimberly says injuries at M-A have lessened since the synthetic-grass era began there.

NFL players’ opinions notwithstanding, a 2007 study of American college soccer teams by the British Journal of Sports Medicine, using 2005 data from the National Collegiate Athletic Association Injury Surveillance System, concluded that play on natural and artificial surfaces showed no “major differences between the incidence, severity, nature or cause” of injuries for men or women.

Feeling the burn

One problem, at least on older synthetic fields, seems persistent.

“You burn,” strong safety Alofanga says, referring to the skin abrasions that accompany a slide. “It hurts! It, like, takes your skin off!”

“If you fall, you better, like, hope you land on your pads or something,” says lineman Danny Jimenez. One three-foot slide gave

See **GRASS**, next page

Local parents see no upside to synthetic grass for young kids

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Results were the same but the reasoning somewhat different recently when parents in two school districts — in Menlo Park and Woodside — successfully derailed plans by the school boards to install synthetic grass soccer fields meant for young children.

At Encinal School in Atherton, a grade 3-5 school in the Menlo Park City School District, parents complained about the tendency of artificial grass to get uncomfortably warm on hot days. Compared to real grass, the synthetic stuff also feels hard when fallen

upon and is unfriendly to life given its hydrocarbon origins, they added.

Plans for the field fell apart April 3 when the City Council, citing neighbors' opposition and environmental concerns, voted 3-2 against contributing \$600,000 to the school district for a shared use of the field.

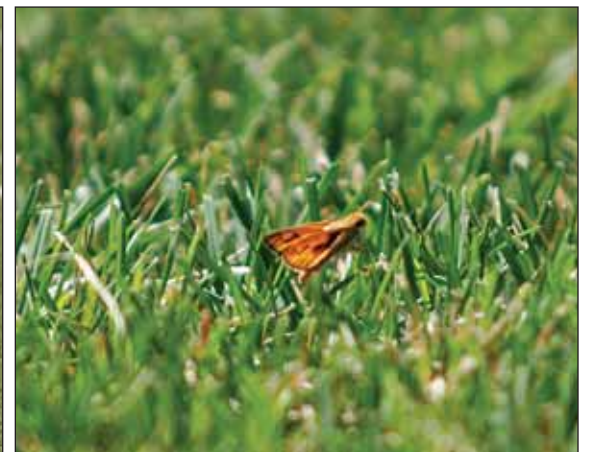
In the one-school K-8 district in Woodside, which is building one soccer field for middle-schoolers and another for K-3 kids, the school board voted 4-1 on June 18 to scrap a plan to use synthetic grass for both fields.

In that case, parents said they simply preferred grass for the K-3 field, considered a "green

plastic carpet" an anti-ecological message to kids and other living creatures, and believed such a field to be inconsistent with Woodside values.

"I just have memories of when I walk in cut grass. It brings back memories of childhood," said Susan Doherty, a parent of twins headed for pre-school in September. "It is what childhood is about if you're lucky enough to live in a place where grass will grow."

The K-3 field is also "a village green" not infrequently used during non-school hours for picnics, she said. "My children's life is a picnic. When you have children, you always have a cooler (strap) on your shoulder." ■



A football rests on Woodside High's artificial grass football field, while a butterfly rests on Rossotti Field in Portola Valley.

GRASS

continued from previous page

him what he thinks will be a permanent scar on his elbow.

"It will tear your skin right off," Coach Sykes says. "It's kind of a small price for what you really get out of the surface."

The Woodside Elementary School District is spending \$510,000 for a 48,000-square-foot synthetic field, says Assistant Superintendent Tim Hanretty. This "grass" will be FieldTurf, a product that "when tested, performs like grass" with respect to burns, according to a paper prepared by a committee of Woodside community members.

(The district is spending another \$450,000 to put in a sand-channel grass soccer field of the same size for the K-3 students.)

There is concern about what happens when wounds and synthetic fields get together. "There's warmth. There's moisture. Bacteria can thrive in there. There's sweat, spit and blood," says Brad Fresenburg, a natural-grass specialist at the University of Missouri, in the November 2005 issue of Applied Turfgrass Science.

Before the season starts this

year, the M-A and Woodside fields will be treated with a disinfectant. "What's come to light is, because it's not grass, we don't have the microbial (cleansing) action," Mr. Rollin says.

"I think my biggest complaint," says M-A's Ms. Wimberly, "is the disrespect that some people have, in the public, toward that facility." She was referring to people who drop chewing gum on M-A's fields and exercise their dogs there without cleaning up after them.

A recent study of six types of false grass and three of natural grass concluded that worries over microbes are not well founded.

The study, begun in 2002 by the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at Pennsylvania State University, used swab tests on natural and synthetic grass. *Staphylococcus aureus*, a common cause of skin infections, tested positive on weight equipment, stretching tables, and human hands and faces, but not on natural or synthetic grass fields.

Storing carbon dioxide

The ability to photosynthesize — to use the sun's energy to generate oxygen and sequester

carbon dioxide — is the exclusive province of living plant material, including grass.

If the Portola Valley Town Council were to decide to replace real grass at Rossotti Field with synthetic grass, a 2006 study shows that the town could make up for the lost CO₂ sequestration ability by planting 1,638 conifer trees over 10 years.

The study was by the Athena Institute, an Ontario-based nonprofit that provides consulting services to factor in the environmental costs of capital improvement projects.

A common shortcut to planting trees is paying someone else to either plant them or engage in other greenhouse-gas reducing projects such as building windmills. For about \$118 a year over 10 years, the town could "offset" the environmental cost of a synthetic soccer field, says David Coale, a manager at the Palo Alto-based environmental group Acterra.

Such an offset would be equivalent to taking 10 cars off the road, Mr. Coale says. "(It's) not very much, but it is good to start to put these things in context of what we will have to think about more and more in the future." ■



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MP antique store owner jailed for molesting girl

An 88-year-old Menlo Park antique shop owner was ordered to jail for four months Aug. 2 in San Mateo County Superior Court for molesting a young girl in his store last July.

With credit for jail time already served, Demeter Antiques Ltd. owner Bela Joseph Demeter now faces about two more months in county jail for kissing and fondling a 14-year-old girl who was shopping alone in his store July 11, 2006.

Mr. Demeter reportedly cornered the girl in his store, and then French-kissed the girl and touched her breasts while she tried to get away, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

The girl reported the incident to Menlo Park police, and a week later, a decoy undercover officer was sent to Mr. Demeter's store, the district attorney's office reported. On two separate days, the female officer was also groped and kissed by Mr. Demeter, according to prosecutors.

On April 27, Mr. Demeter pleaded no contest to one count of felony child molestation.

In court Aug. 2, Mr. Demeter's attorney George Eshoo pleaded that his client merely be ordered to undergo grief counseling, arguing he had been severely affected by his wife's death.

"I suspect this is more than just grief issues," Deputy District Attorney Elizabeth Raffaelli volunteered. His behavior was "not just inappropriate ... but criminal," she added.

Judge John Grandsaert ordered Mr. Demeter to 120 days in county jail, with credit for time served, and noted that he will recommend Mr. Demeter be placed in the Sheriff's Office work program to fulfill his sentence. Grief counseling can be part of his treatment, the judge said.

He will also be required to register as a sex offender and has been ordered to have no contact with the victim.

— Bay City News Service

County recorder warns of homeowner scam

Homeowners who get an offer from National Deed Service Inc. soliciting a chance to obtain a copy of their deed for the low, low price of \$59.50 should be wary, said San Mateo County Recorder Warren Slocum.

The county offers copies of property deeds to homeowners

for an average price of \$3, and there's no reason to pay 20 times more than that, he said.

"Some of my employees even received this very solicitation in the mail and brought in the notice. You can imagine how appalled they were," Mr. Slocum said.

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Community

NEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Rich Dioli named director of Sacred Heart Schools

Richard A. Dioli, principal of Sacred Heart Preparatory High School for 14 years, is the new director of Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton, it was announced Aug. 2.

In this position he will oversee the three Roman Catholic schools on the campus off Valparaiso Avenue — Sacred Heart Preparatory High School, St. Joseph's School of the Sacred Heart with grades 1-8, and the Montessori preschool and kindergarten. Each of the schools has its own principal.

Mr. Dioli succeeds Joseph J. Ciancaglino, who will move to New York City as head of the Convent of the Sacred Heart, a

sister school.

"Rich is a strong, experienced leader with an outstanding track record of success," said Mindy Rogers, board chair of Sacred Heart Schools.

He built a team that "materially improved the high school on every dimension," she said. He is committed "at a very personal level" to the schools' success, she added.

Prior to coming to Sacred Heart, Mr. Dioli was dean of students at Woodside Priory School.



Rich Dioli

A really big show

Some 750 horses are expected to compete in the six-day Menlo Charity Horse Show in Atherton this week. The hunter/jumper show runs Aug. 7-12 at the Menlo Circus Club, 190 Park Lane. In the picture, a rider and his horse clear the Flury/Bryant jump especially designed for the 2006 Menlo Charity Horse Show. For more information, call 701-0543 or go to www.menlohorseshow.com.



Five youths reach Eagle Scout rank

Rob Doyle, son of Terry and Judy Doyle, recently received his Eagle Scout Award. Rob, 17, is a member of Boy Scout Troop 64 in Portola Valley. He graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School in June.

For his Eagle project, Rob built several wooden tables and donated them to the town of Portola Valley. Family, friends and fellow scouts helped him with his project.

Troop 991

Four members of Boy Scouts of America Troop 991 have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in scouting, and were honored at an Eagle Scout ceremony July 7 at the Belmont Sports Complex.

Only about 5 percent of all Boys Scouts achieve the Eagle rank, which requires advancing through the previous ranks, earning 21 merit badges, holding one or more youth positions of responsibility in his troop and completing a service project, said spokesperson Mary Manders.

The honorees are:

■ Shawn Housholder, 17, who just graduated from Woodside High School, completed a gravesite improvement project at the historic Union Cemetery in Redwood City. He is the son of Candy Housholder of San Jose and Rick Housholder of Redwood City.

■ Kevin Irish, another recent Woodside High graduate, completed an improvement project at the historic Union Cemetery in Redwood City. He is the son of Peggy and Wesley Irish of Emerald Hills in Redwood City.

■ Blake Manders, 17, who will be a senior at Woodside High in the fall, completed a landscaping project at a San Carlos church. He is the son of Kenneth and Mary Manders of Emerald Hills in Redwood City.

■ Cameron McEwen, who graduated from Carlmont High School, completed a landscape project in the student parking lot at Carlmont. He is the son of Robert and Karen McEwen of Belmont.

Of the 21 merit badges necessary to qualify for Eagle Scout

rank, 12 badges are required, including first aid, citizenship in the community, citizenship in the nation, citizenship in the world, communications, environmental science, personal fitness, personal management, camping and family life.

NOTES

Charlotte Dean in Italy for 11th grade

Charlotte Meyer Dean, who graduated from St. Joseph's School of the Sacred Heart in 2005 and is now a student at St. Paul's School, a boarding school in Concord, New Hampshire, will spend her entire 11th grade in the School Year Abroad's program in Viterbo, Italy.

Charlotte, the daughter of Marianne Quarre and Jay Dean of Menlo Park, will study with some 70 other students in an academically rigorous high school program while living with an Italian family. She will not only become immersed in the Italian language and culture but will study ancient history, Latin and Greek, her mother reports.

Adam Rak named to Yes Reading board

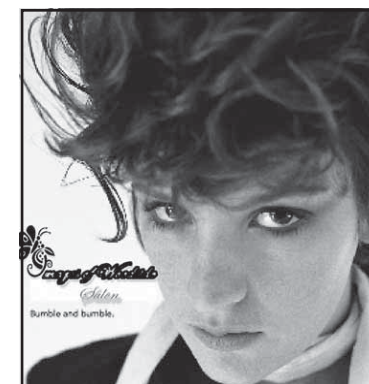
Adam Rak, a senior director of corporate affairs for Symantec Corp., is joining the YES Reading board of directors. YES reading, a nonprofit literacy program founded in Menlo Park, partners directly with schools to provide struggling students with reading support.

The organization says it will expand to 13 program sites by the fall. For more information, go to www.yesreading.org.

COLLEGE GRADUATES

■ **Alden Connor** of Atherton received a bachelor of arts degree, cum laude, in biology from Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. She is the daughter of Sam and Kelly Brofman.

■ **Michelle Kim** of Woodside received a bachelor of arts degree in mathematics from Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. She is the daughter of Yong and Mischen Kim.



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Nice turnout for first block party

■ Second event set for Aug. 15.

By **Rory Brown**
Almanac Staff Writer

Downtown Menlo Park got a much-needed shot in the arm Wednesday, Aug. 1, as hundreds of people strolled Santa Cruz Avenue to check out the city's downtown block party. Usually a desolate place after 7 p.m., Santa Cruz Avenue was closed to traffic and filled with music, food, and most important, people, as part of an effort by Mayor Kelly Fergusson and the City Council to inject life into the downtown area.

The Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce and the city co-sponsored the event.

From couples dining at downtown restaurants to children getting their faces painted, there were a lot of smiles on Santa Cruz Avenue, and a second block party has been scheduled for Aug. 15.

Local businesses, especially restaurants that set up tables on the sidewalks and street to accommodate the crowds, were delighted with the good turnout.



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

Amanda Foster, 5, of Menlo Park checks out her new look at the face-painting booth at Menlo Park's Aug. 1 block party.

"It's been great for business, and it's fun to see the local community come out," said Talia Vardi, the manager for the newly renovated eatery jZ Cool.

Terrell Brunet, an assistant general manager for the popular Left Bank restaurant, said he'd "like to see something like [the block party] once a week."

Mayor Fergusson, who floated the block party concept by council members several months ago, was also happy with the turnout.

"I'm thrilled with the job our volunteers have done, and I'm thrilled with the participation of

our downtown merchants," she said. "People are having a great time."

Due to a recent death in the family, Mayor Fergusson wasn't up to participating in a "dunk the mayor" challenge, where participants could have paid \$100 to try and hit a target and drop the mayor into a tank of water.

She said the dunk tank will be at the Aug. 15 block party, and other council members may be willing to participate in the event, which will benefit the Boys & Girls Club. ■

ARSON

continued from page 5

The pilot of a Calfire helicopter, dispatched to respond to the first two fires, then reported a fourth fire about 100 yards south of the third, he said.

"Our biggest fear was when a call came in as a fire headed toward a house, but (it turned out) it wasn't," he said.

Mr. Ghiorso encouraged residents to maintain 100 feet of "defensible space" around their homes, cleared of dry brush and weeds. Information is available on the fire district's Web site, WoodsideFire.org, or by calling 851-1594.

"Be sure to keep that 100-foot clearance around your house so we have a chance to get in there and save it," he said.

In all, 50 fire personnel responded to the blazes, which straddled the border between Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Besides Woodside firefighters, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, the Redwood City Fire Department, the Palo Alto Fire Department and the Belmont/San Carlos Fire Department responded, Mr. Ghiorso said, as did the Sheriff's Office and the Palo Alto Police Department.

Bay City News Service contributed to this report.

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OBITUARIES

Virginia 'Ginny' Taylor

Longtime Portola Valley resident

Virginia "Ginny" Taylor, former Portola Valley resident for 48 years, died suddenly on May 30, her 81st birthday, due to a stroke.

She was living in Tacoma, Washington, with her husband of 57 years, Bob Taylor. The Taylors moved to Tacoma from Portola Valley in 2003 after Mr. Taylor suffered a stroke.

"Ginny was known for her wit and her generosity," said her son, Curt Taylor of Portola Valley. "Her greatest service was to her family, as wife, mother and grandmother. Her smile and humor will glow in our hearts forever."

One of the founding members of the Ladera Community Church, Ms. Taylor served many roles there over the years.

She was active in the American Field Service organization as president of the local chapter. She helped sponsor foreign exchange students to study at local high schools. One such student would one day become her daughter-in-law.

Ms. Taylor also enjoyed participating in other organizations such as the Stanford Mothers Club and the Children's Health Council.

Virginia Ann Mays was born in Bronxville, New York, in 1926. She was a graduate of DePauw University and a member of the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority.

She met her future husband while he was working for McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. in New York City. After their marriage in 1950, the couple moved to Trona in the Southern California desert, and then to Burbank.

In 1955, the Taylors bought a home in Ladera, where they lived for 48 years and raised three children.

She is survived by her husband, Bob; her three children, Curt Taylor of Portola Valley; Dr. James Taylor, M.D., of Tacoma, Washington; and Carol Taylor-Clay of Eugene, Oregon; and six grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in her name to the Ladera Community Church to create a picnic area in her honor. Address donations to: Ladera Community Church, 3300 Alpine Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028. Specify "Taylor Memorial Project" on the check's memo line.

Services will be held at a later date in this area.

Erma Catherine Gossard

Portola Valley resident for nearly 50 years

Longtime Portola Valley resident Erma Catherine Gossard died on July 18. She was 92.

Born and raised in Iowa,

Ms. Gossard graduated from Thompson's Rudemar School of Beauty Culture in Des Moines and the College of San Mateo. She and her husband Myron lived in Portola Valley for almost 50 years before she moved to

Oakmont Gardens in Sonoma County three years ago.

Ms. Gossard and her husband traveled in their trailer throughout the United States. Her favorite places were Peggy's Cove in Nova Scotia and the

New England states, family members said. She also loved to garden, sew, and study a variety of subjects.

She is survived by her sons, Tom Gossard of Oakmont, California, and Harry Gossard of

Chatsworth, California; daughters Nancy Buckner of Seattle and Judy Gossard of Redwood City; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Myron, and daughter, Mary.

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More candidates running for office

ELECTION 2007

In the last two weeks, more candidates have announced their intentions to run for public office in the November election.

Registration closes Friday, Aug. 10, at 5 p.m. unless an incumbent chooses not to run, in which case the filing deadline for that race is extended to Wednesday, Aug. 15, at 5 p.m.

Woodside

Two new faces could join the Woodside Town Council after November. Architect Peter Mason has taken out candidate papers for District 7, said Woodside Town Clerk Janet Koelsch. The incumbent in that district, Pete Sinclair, told the Almanac he is still undecided.

Mr. Mason is a principal with Hill Glazier Architects, and specializes in designing high-end hotels and resorts. He's been a member of the town's Architectural and Site Review Board since 2004.

Another newcomer, Dave Burow, the CEO of Palo Alto-based Catalytic Inc., has taken out papers for the open seat in District 5, where incumbent Paul Goeld told the Almanac he won't be running again.

Incumbent Ron Romines of the Woodside Glens neighborhood is set to run again for District 1, said Ms. Koelsch. Mayor Sue Boynton, who holds the District 3 seat, has stated her intention to run for a third term.

In the Woodside school district, incumbent Ellen Ablow has not yet announced whether she will run for re-election.

Virginia Bamford, a Woodside parent with executive experience in the PTA and on the site council, has taken out candidacy papers, per the San Mateo County Registrar of Voters. The deadline is extended for the two seats since incumbent Kimberley McMorrow said she will not seek re-election.

As for the board of the Woodside Fire Protection District, incumbent John Gardner of Portola Valley has filed papers to run for re-election. So far, he and incumbent Patrick Cain of Ladera are the only two candidates who have filed for the two seats.

Portola Valley

Two candidates are seeking two seats on the Portola Valley Town Council: incumbent

Steve Toben and current Planning Commission Chair Ann Wengert, said Assistant Town Clerk Sharon Hanlon.

At the Portola Valley school district, residents Judith Ann Mendelsohn and Steven Humphreys have declared their intentions to seek the two open seats.

Other races

Incumbent Bart Spencer of Menlo Park is running for re-election to one of two seats on the board of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. He is joined by John Osmer, also of Menlo Park.

No one has yet challenged the three incumbents running for re-election to three seats on the board of the Sequoia Union High School District: Lorraine Rumley and Don Gibson of Redwood City, and board President Olivia G. Martinez of Menlo Park.

Three seats are open on the board of the West Bay Sanitary District, and two incumbents have filed their papers with the county: Ronald W. Shepherd of Menlo Park and David Alexander Walker, also of Menlo Park.

The boards of the Los Trancos and Skyline water districts had no candidates as of press time.

Specialty grocery stores planned for former Cadillac site on El Camino, Page 1

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OBITUARY

Leona "Lee" M. Romashko

Community volunteer, activist

Longtime community activist and volunteer Leona "Lee" M. Romashko died on Friday, Aug. 3, at the age of 84.

In 1997, Ms. Romashko was recognized by the city of East Palo Alto for her work in teaching English as a Second Language for the Families in Transition Program.

She was an active member of the community right up to her death, working with the adult literacy program Project Read, and privately tutoring students in need.

She served in the WAVES, the women's component of the Navy, during World War II, and later was a partner in Bowers Office Center, a Santa Clara-based company that provides executive suites and secretarial services.

During her many years as a Menlo Park resident, she devoted much

time to issues affecting this and nearby communities, especially through her work with the League of Women Voters.

She is survived by her lifelong friend and companion, Jean Nelson of Menlo Park; and several nieces and nephews.

At her request, no services will be held. She asked that memorial donations be made to charities for the poor and disadvantaged. Condolences may be made at her Web site: lee-romashko.memory-of.com.

POLICE CALLS

ATHERTON

Theft report: Two computers stolen (one recovered) from a classroom, Encinal School at 181 Encinal Ave., July 27.

Fraud reports:

- Unauthorized charges of \$1,800 on resident's credit card, Reservoir Road, July 30.
- Work on \$20,000 home theater system never completed, Selby Lane, July 31.

MENLO PARK

Auto theft reports:

- 2002 blue Honda Accord stolen, 600 block of Sharon Park Drive, July 28.
- 2005 black Toyota Corolla stolen, Alma

St. and Ravenswood Ave., July 30.

Auto burglary report: Report taken, 1600 block of Bayfront Expressway, July 28.

Burglary report: Report taken, 600 block of Sharon Park Drive, August 1.

Theft reports

- Report taken, 700 block of Roble Ave., July 28.
- Copper wiring stolen from business, 300 block of El Camino Real, July 31.
- Report taken, 500 block of El Camino Real, August 2.

Spousal abuse report: Arrest made, 1000 block of Windermere Ave., August 1.

Fraud reports:

- Embezzlement, 100 block of Santa Mar-

garita Ave., July 30.

■ Unfulfilled working agreement, 300 block of Pierce Road, July 30.

■ Identity theft, 800 block of Oak Grove Ave., July 31.

■ Unauthorized charges to an account, 700 block of Elizabeth Lane, August 2.

LADERA

Fraud reports:

- Unauthorized account opened, 200 block of S. Balsamina Way, July 27.
- Unauthorized withdrawal from Pay-Pal account, 200 block of Gabarda Way, July 27.

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M. JEAN NISBET ~ HOMEMAKER



Jean Nisbet died on July 26th. She was 81. Jean was a native of Great Britain and long-time resident of Menlo Park.

Jean loved to work in the garden and her hobbies included hiking and singing in chorus groups. She was a modest and a very caring person and took pride in the accomplishments of others. Throughout her lifetime she touched many lives.

Survivors include her daughter Barbara Berk of Seattle, Washington; son Jim Nisbet of Menlo Park; and grandchildren Christopher Berk, Gregory Nisbet and Andrew Nisbet. Her husband of 51 years, Ron Nisbet, preceded her in death.

Memorial services were held at Roller Hapgood & Tinney in Palo Alto on August 1st.

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MELVIN B. LANE

Melvin B. Lane, former Co-owner and Publisher of Lane Publishing Company and *Sunset* Magazine and Books, and first chairman of both the California Coastal Commission and Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), passed away at his home on Saturday, July 28, 2007, in Atherton, California. He was 85. He died of complications from Parkinson's disease.

Born in 1922 in Des Moines, Iowa, Lane moved with his parents in 1928 to San Francisco when his father bought the fledgling travel magazine, *Sunset*. He attended Palo Alto High School, Pomona College and graduated from Stanford University in 1944. He served in the U.S. Navy in World War II. Upon his return from naval service in WWII, he began work for his family, as it carried *Sunset* out of the Depression. Lane settled into the company's business management and the new book division, shepherding the book division as it became the pioneer of the home do-it-yourself movement and an extraordinary success. He was respected not only for his strategic business acumen, but for his unending support and the high value he placed on employees. The Lane family sold Lane Publishing Company in 1990 to Time Warner. After the sale, Lane, who drove around Atherton in his 1971 Chevrolet convertible, told a reporter, "I don't plan to do anything different as far as the money goes. I told some friends that I might afford a new car." At the time of the sale, *Sunset* was the premier regional magazine in the United States.

In 1965, Lane was appointed by then Governor Edmund G. Brown to be the first chairman of the newly-created San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). The San Francisco Bay Plan developed by the Commission in the late 1960s, in large part approved by the legislature in 1969, still governs protection of the Bay and development of its shoreline. In 1972, Lane was appointed by then Governor Ronald Reagan to be the first chairman of the statewide California Coastal Commission, which was created by the passage of Proposition 20 in the 1972 election. The Commission's plan for the coast is likewise still the primary constitution for conservation and development of the 1100-mile California coastline. Along with Joseph Bodovitz, Executive Director for both the BCDC and the Coastal Commission, Lane is credited with developing plans and proposals enacted by the governor and legislature that have achieved major successes in protecting two of California's most valuable natural resources.

With his quiet manner, ability to hear and respect all points of view, and subtle — and often crucial — humor, many felt

Mel Lane accomplished the impossible. Both environmentalists and developers acknowledged that his leadership of the Commission was fair and committed to carrying out exactly what the law provided. Lane recognized earlier than many people that a sound economy and a healthy environment go together. As early as 1974 he commented, "as soon as business tightens up, not only do we drop environmental controls, but as a shot to the economy, we drill for more oil and cut down trees. These are a rip-off of the environment that can't be done indefinitely, so it's poor business." After resigning from the Coastal Commission in 1977, Lane continued to use his skills and credibility to protect fragile areas within the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), to provide leadership for the World Wildlife Fund, to establish the California Environmental Trust, and to create the Stanford Environmental Institute. He will be remembered as the finest of wise, gracious, and effective environmentalists.

Lane was also a passionate enthusiast of Stanford University. A trustee from 1981-1991, he gave leadership to numerous efforts including the long-range-land-use plan, Stanford Athletics, the Center for International Security and Arms Control, and the Woods Environmental Institute. He received numerous awards and accolades not only for his accomplishments, generosity and successful fund-raising but also for his low-key, trustworthy leadership style. Lane instigated the campaign to raise the funds to restore Memorial Church after the earthquake of 1989. Lane's efforts to create support for the restoration were so inspiring that he was also able to repair the damage from the 1906 earthquake. Many of Memorial Church's elegant balconies had been closed from 1906 until 1990, when Lane oversaw their restoration and re-opening.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Joan Fletcher Lane, daughters Whitney Miller and Julie Lane Gay, sons-in-law Richard Miller and Craig Gay and four grandchildren, Andrew, Elsa, Owen and Nicholas. He also leaves his brother, L. W. "Bill" Lane, with whom he ran Lane Publishing for nearly 40 years. He clearly brought as much integrity and kindness to his family and friends as to all his other endeavors.

A memorial service will be held in Stanford Memorial Church at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 11, 2007. All balconies will be open. A reception following the ceremony will be at Arrillaga Alumni Center, Stanford Campus. In lieu of flowers, gifts in Mel's memory would be welcome at Peninsula Open Space Trust, The Woods Environmental Institute at Stanford or the World Wildlife Fund.

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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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The greening of Menlo Park

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

Last week's news that Tesla, the new electric sports car company, would take over an abandoned Menlo Park auto dealership was a shocker and a testament to the idea that conventional wisdom isn't always right.

With Mayor Kelly Fergusson and the City Council struggling to inject some life into the blighted sections of El Camino Real, the idea that an auto dealer, and a green one at that, would sign up to lease the hulk of the Anderson Chevrolet site opens up a host of development possibilities for this highly visible downtown area.

The Tesla announcement, and the plan already made public to build a commercial complex, including a grocery store, at the former Cadillac dealership on El Camino near Glenwood Avenue, shows that there continues to be interest in adding commercial activity downtown that does not involve housing.

And now, with the initial but gratifying convergence of the city's effort to adopt green technology and attract green-oriented businesses, it appears that, at least initially, the strategy is working. Could there be more green, Tesla-type businesses out

there looking for a simpatico home?

We hope so. Somehow, the idea of turning El Camino into a monolithic corridor of four-story condominium projects does not seem right for

Menlo Park. Without a doubt, the city must pay its dues and approve some significant and dense housing, similar to the proposed Derry project on Oak Grove Avenue.

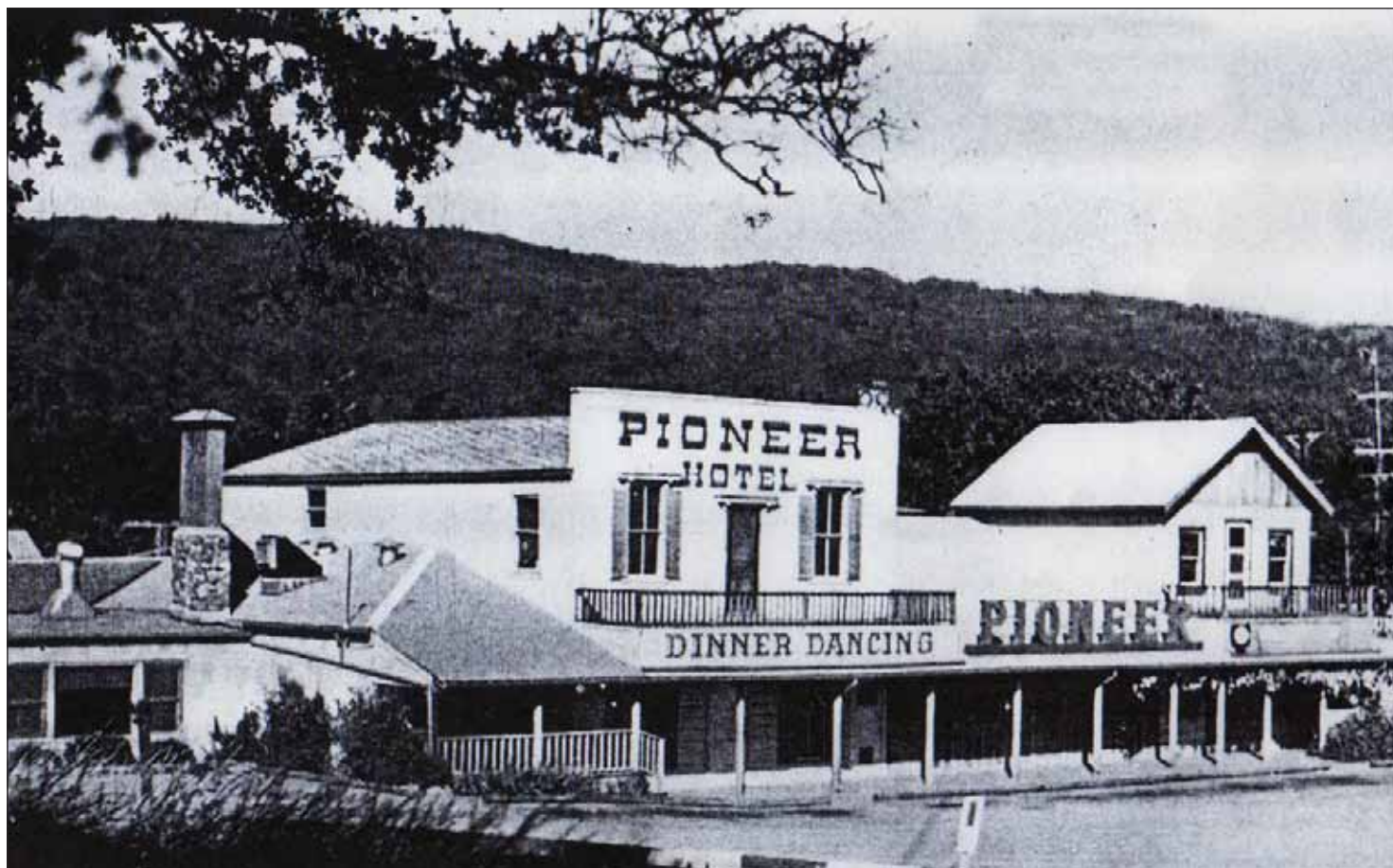
But we hope the ultimate design for El Camino includes a varied mix of retail stores. Tesla is not exactly a typical retail outlet, but it might attract a lot of window shoppers who are interested in learning about cutting-edge electric automobiles. Other green entrepreneurs might set up shop in the neighborhood, which could make the city a destination for green-oriented businesses.

When the Stanford Shopping Center opened in the 1950s, the giant retail mall was a huge threat to Menlo Park's downtown merchants. But rather than give up, the city's retailers focused on home furnishings, ala Flegels and others. The strategy worked and saved the downtown. The vacancies on El Camino could be a perfect opening for a repeat performance.



Courtesy, Tesla Motors

Tesla Motors, maker of the Tesla Roadster, plans to set up a sales and service center in Menlo Park this year.



Jac Audiffred's Woodside collection

Our Regional Heritage

The Pioneer Hotel, shown here in the 1960s, was purchased by Aldo Cominoli in 1941 and reopened in 1946 as a new property. In its prime, the hotel served breakfast, lunch and dinner and handled banquet parties of up to 300.

Not in my Menlo Park

By Martin Engel

The more I read, the more I see the pejorative term "NIMBY," short for "Not In My Back Yard."

Often you can find it as an accusation in Almanac letters, editorials, "Town Square" and other print and electronic media. NIMBYs like us are accused of opposing development such as the Derry project, Dumbarton Rail, or other projects in Menlo Park, because the negative impact of these would be felt directly in our immediate surroundings. Mea culpa.

It's time to deal with this term and concept head-on. For instance, I don't want a glue factory built on the lot next to my home. Therefore, I'm a NIMBY. Presumably, if you don't object to that glue factory as your neighbor, you would not be a NIMBY.

Crazy, yes, but a NIMBY, no. Even though the glue factory next door would drive down my property values, it is somehow wrong, selfish or immoral for me to care about or protest that. Indeed, because said glue factory would employ people, it behooves me to be willing to sacrifice our family home to this cause, or be accused of being a NIMBY.

There is an entirely different and positive way to look at this. Being a NIMBY is my responsibility and my job, which is to protect the value of my home and the quality of life that my family and I choose. "A man's home is his castle," and it is his (or her) obligation to defend it. Therefore, we all are, or should be, NIMBYs.

Let me expand this premise further. The community in which I live is part of my "backyard." Menlo Park is my "backyard." It is my civic duty and constitutional right to protect the quality of life of my neighborhood, community and



town. What I oppose is what I believe will be harmful to the community in which I live. What I oppose may not be bad only for me; it may be bad for my neighbors and fellow town residents as well. I therefore oppose it because it's a bad idea, period.

Many of us tried to elect council members last fall who represent these basic beliefs, that is, our right to protect and preserve the quality of life we chose when we moved to Menlo Park. The basis for our political "activism"

is exactly that, the preservation and perpetuation of those characteristics in Menlo Park that we have found so attractive and that compel us to live here rather than elsewhere. We oppose those deleterious projects and developments because we don't want them in our or your backyard, or in anyone's backyard for that matter. And, it is our right to do so.

Does my opposing a bad idea (such as the California high-speed train, or high-density housing in downtown Menlo Park) make me a NIMBY? I can live with that.

Interestingly, in addition to NIMBY, Wikipedia offers two other terms: NIABY and NOTE. NIABY stands for: Not In Anyone's Back Yard. NOTE stands for: Not Over There Either.

These latter acronyms are far more descriptive of those of us who object to a project or development because it is basically a bad idea.

Finally, it's a form of "ad hominem" argument, or personal attack. I think most people use the term NIMBY against someone because they disagree with his or her position but haven't done their homework to discuss the issue on its factual substance or merits.

Martin Engel lives on Stone Pine Lane in Menlo Park.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Public-land memorials shouldn't be permanent

Editor:

Last May 25, Rodney Smith was killed in a tragic cycling accident on Sand Hill Road. A memorial complete with religious symbol and flowers was placed near the site on the roadside public right-of-way. More than two months have elapsed, and the memorial seems to be taking on a questionable permanence.

To my knowledge there have been at least three accidental deaths in the past year or two along Sand Hill/Portola Road. In the other two cases, temporary memorials were erected and removed within a month. The present memorial seems to be assuming a permanence that, I feel, is setting an

unfortunate precedent.

Legal issues aside, it seems inappropriate for individuals to unilaterally utilize public property for private purposes, no matter how honorable or benign the intent.

Any of us who have ever lost a loved one can sympathize with the friends and family of the accident victims. Many might even wish to contribute to a suitable memorial, but in a proper place — not on a public thoroughfare on public land.

John Hessel
Santa Maria Avenue,
Portola Valley

Time to speak up to save Allied Arts Guild

Editor:

Allied Arts is a treasure for Menlo Park. A few neighbors are making it impossible for Allied Arts to operate profitably for the

benefit of the hospital as well as the broader Menlo Park and surrounding communities.

It is time for citizens and the government of Menlo Park to speak up against this group of extremely selfish and short-sighted neighbors. How can so few do so much damage to so many?

Where is their sense of civic responsibility? I'm sure they bought their houses after Allied Arts was already there. And NOW they don't want the traffic associated with a viable business operation.

I live near Rinconada Park in Palo Alto. We bought our home when the pool and park were already there. We often have to deal with heavy traffic on weekends or when there is a meet at the pool. This is a small price to pay for the lovely facility at our doorstep for ourselves and for our community.

Jo Killen
Palo Alto

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EYE CARE NEWS

Presented by Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician



MORE COMFORTABLE CONTACTS

Some people who wear contact lenses report that they experience so much discomfort that they discontinue their use. If you have experienced this problem in the past, you should know that today's contact lenses are safer and more comfortable than they were even a decade ago. During that time, lens manufacturers have introduced silicone hydrogel lenses, which are an improved version of the soft lenses introduced during the early 1970s. The major advantage of silicone hydrogels

is that they allow up to six times more oxygen to reach the eye. This is important since oxygen-starved eyes are vulnerable to corneal swelling and infection. Silicon hydrogels are healthier and more comfortable because they breathe better and dehydrate less.

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P.S. Some silicone hydrogels are so breathable they are the only contacts approved by the FDA for 30-day wear.

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

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