

A new plan for Park Theatre? Page 5

The Almanac

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



**FALL
REAL
ESTATE
IN THIS
ISSUE**

OCTOBER 10, 2007

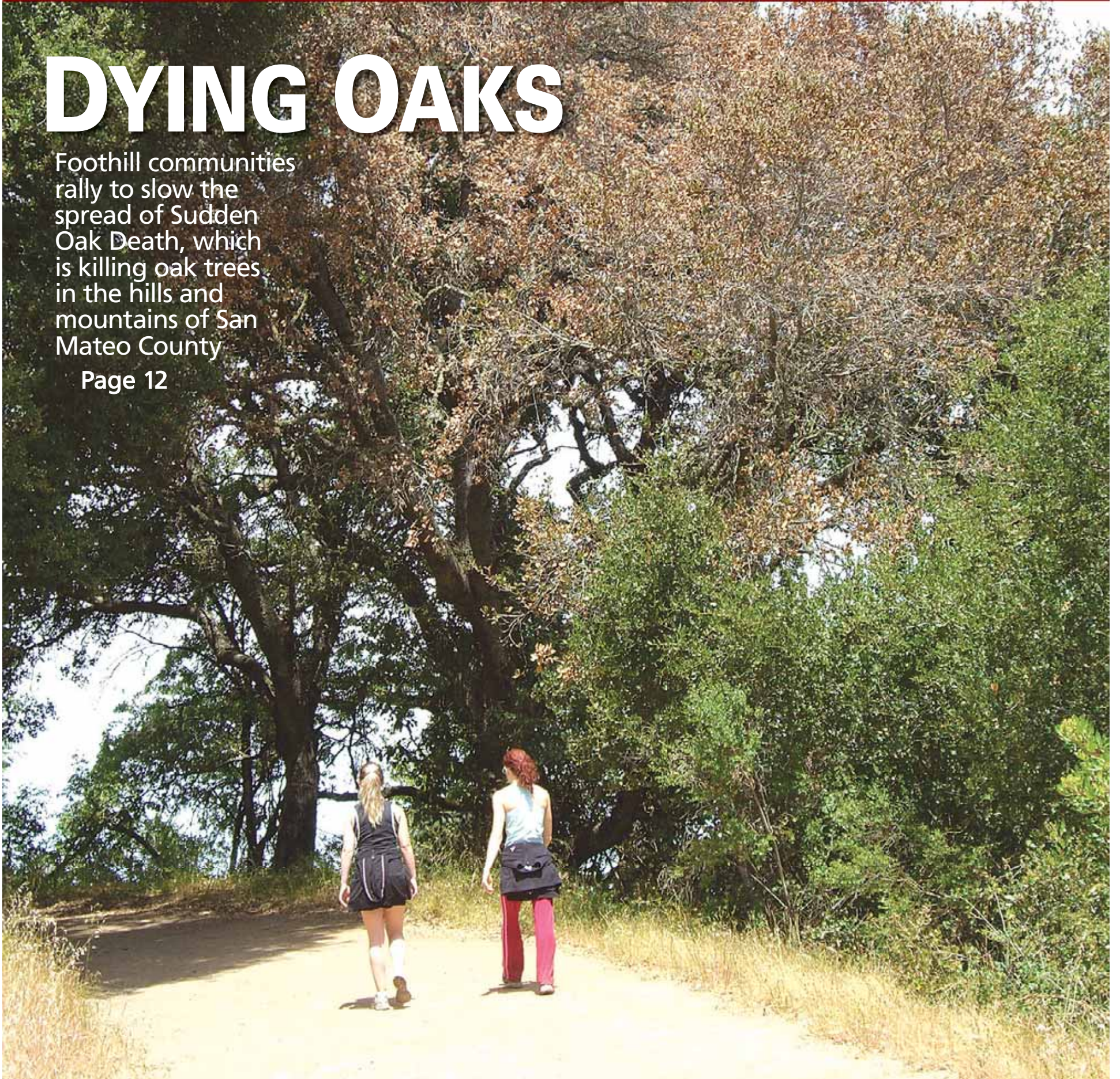
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VOL. 43 NO. 6

DYING OAKS

Foothill communities rally to slow the spread of Sudden Oak Death, which is killing oak trees in the hills and mountains of San Mateo County

Page 12



REDEFINING QUALITY SINCE 1990

Reading between the emotional line makes the difference between finding a house and a home.



ATHERTON

Recently remodeled in 2006, this one level 5bd/4bd plus 2 half bath home combines exquisite interior design with impressive grounds to create a design that rivals many larger homes. Brazilian cherry wood, limestone, granite counter tops, and mosaic glass tiles blend in harmony throughout the home. A fully equipped 1bd/1.5 guest house with full kitchen provides even more space for guests or staff.

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\$1,995,000



Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Rendering by Keller and Daseking Architects

Picture perfect

This rendering shows what the new construction at Nativity School in Menlo Park is supposed to look like when it's finished. This view of the campus, located at Oak Grove Avenue and Laurel Street, is from the kindergarten play yard. The new kindergarten building is on the right and the multi-purpose building, directly ahead. The architect is Bill Gutsell, a parent at the school.

Atherton

■ Public records request: Review of expense reports turns up some violations. **Page 9**

Menlo Park

■ A new plan for Park Theatre? **Page 5**
 ■ City could lose money for transportation planning. **Page 5**

Portola Valley

■ Deadline extended for open space plan. **Page 15**

Woodside

■ Woodside may keep its ambulance. **Page 11**

Community

■ The fourth annual le Tour de Menlo bike ride rolls out Sunday. **Page 9**

Also Inside

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Artscene..... | 28 |
| Calendar..... | 30 |
| Letters..... | 22 |
| Obituaries..... | 20 |
| Police Calls..... | 21 |

CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

The Almanac offices are at **3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.**

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To request free delivery, or stop delivery, of The Almanac in zip code 94025, 94027, 94028 and the Woodside portion of 94062, call **854-2626**.

Schools

■ Encinal named national "Blue Ribbon" school. **Page 6**
 ■ Asbestos abatement at Encinal raises concerns from some parents. **Page 9**
 ■ High school district buys East Palo Alto parcel. New bond measure needed to build charter school. **Page 19**

People

■ Dr. William Chang of Atherton: a musical and medical medley. **Page 7**
 ■ Rita Gado, lifelong resident of Menlo Park and Atherton, dies at 89. **Page 11**

Fall Real Estate 2007

■ Update on market trends and tips in this special section inside this issue.

On the cover

Hikers on the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve in Portola Valley pass under a dead live oak tree on the Spring Ridge Trail. This is one of dozens of live oaks and tanoaks on the popular preserve that have fallen victim to Sudden Oak Death. Photo by Marion Softky, taken in the spring of 2007. See story on **Page 12**.

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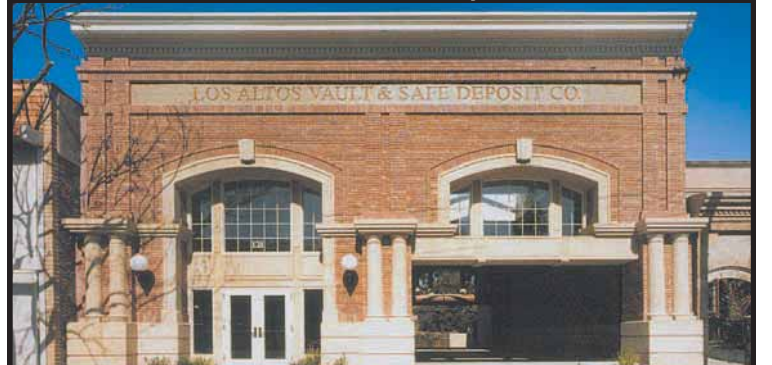
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Going Hand in Hand

Like soup and sandwich, wine and cheese are a natural complementary pairing. While most cheeses have sufficient amounts of fat and salt to neutralize most red wines, white wines have sufficient crisp acidity to stand up to cheese's strong flavors. To see for yourself, try eating a creamy cheese alternately with a Cabernet Sauvignon and a German Riesling. As powerful as the red Cabernet is, the Riesling is able to parry back and forth with the cheese. Another good white wine to pair with cheese is any California sparkling wine. Or, take a cue from the French, who prefer goat cheese and Sauvignon Blanc. Remember that there are few desserts as rewarding to share with friends as wine and cheese.



At ROBERTS MARKET, we like to think that one of the greatest pairings in all of food and drink is the pairing of wine and cheese. We pride ourselves on our knowledge and expertise in all things wine, and in our ability to share it with you! If you find yourself pressed for time visit our "heat and eat it" department for wonderful gourmet prepared foods. You can find prepared foods such as home-made hot soups, sandwiches, salads, and gourmet food stuffs.

HINT: If you must have red wine with your cheese, stick with low-tannin reds such as Pinot Noir or Sangiovese (the grape used to make Chianti).

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WINE

Recent Cabernet Arrivals

Here are a few recently released top end Cabernets. These wines are limited to stock on hand.

| | |
|---|----------|
| 2003 Silver Oak, Alexander Valley | \$59.99 |
| 2004 Duckhorn, Napa Valley | \$59.99 |
| 2004 Conn Valley Vineyards, Napa Valley | \$62.99 |
| 2004 Robert Craig, Mt. Veeder | \$68.99 |
| 2004 Robert Craig, Howell Mtn. | \$68.99 |
| 2005 Caymus, Napa Valley | \$71.99 |
| 2004 Peter Michael, L'Esprit des Pavots | \$79.99 |
| 2004 Etude, Napa Valley | \$79.99 |
| 2005 Lewis, Napa Valley | \$84.99 |
| 2004 Dominus, Napa Valley | \$134.99 |
| 2004 Ridge, Montebello | \$134.99 |

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ALASKAN HALIBUT (FRESH)  **\$18.98** lb.



How many trees must Joan Baez climb?

Annie Liebovitz drives Joan Baez up a tree and shoots her! A photo of Woodside's own folk-singer icon holding her guitar and striking a dramatic pose among the oak branches is featured in this month's Vanity Fair magazine story on folk singers. The portrait of the artist in her natural habitat can also be viewed online at www.VanityFair.com by clicking on the "Folk-Music Portfolio."

Heady events at Marche

Marche restaurant in downtown Menlo Park is offering patrons some food for thought, with a new monthly lecture series featuring artists and scientists. "Salon Marche" kicks off Oct. 12 with internationally recognized local painter Nathan Oliveira.

"Mr. Oliveira is well known as a major painter associated with a group of artists called the Bay Area Figurative School, which included Elmer Bischoff and Richard Diebenkorn," says Marche general manager Molly Fritz.

The event costs \$300 and includes dinner and a desert buffet. It's limited to 32 people; reservations are recommended. Call 324-9092.

Craig who?

Councilman Ed Davis unwittingly provided a brief break from the tone of urgency at Portola Valley's special Town Council meeting last Thursday evening. The council met with about 20 residents as part of a "national conversation" on global warming.

In a report to the council, the town's Climate Protection Task Force recommended creating a construction exchange so as to encourage in-town sharing and offloading of materials, "a Craigslist for construction projects."

"What's Craig's list?" asked Mr. Davis.

Speaking above the benign chorus of laughter that followed, Councilman Steve Toben asked if there was a "20-something" in the audience willing to describe the national online billboard that has all but replaced newspaper classified ads for housing, jobs and anything else that comes to mind.

Local News

MENLO PARK | A THERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

A new plan for Park Theatre?

By Almanac staff

A controversial plan to buy the former Park Theatre on El Camino Real for \$2.2 million in city funds and lease it to Menlo Park resident Andy Duncan for a private dance studio is off the table — at least for 30 days.

Menlo Park real estate broker Tom Hilligoss said Saturday that he is in discussions with the owner of the former movie theater, Howard Crittenden, about plans for the now-empty building.

Mr. Hilligoss said early this week that it would be "so pre-

mature" to say how the building would be used if he were to buy it, but he did say that he is interested in restoring historical aspects of the building, inside and out, including the interior ceiling and the neon marquee.

In a statement likely to please critics of the plan involving the city and Mr. Duncan, Mr. Hilligoss told the Almanac, "I'm not looking for public funding."

"My intent is to restore the theater and make it a place where my kids and I and the rest of Menlo Park and the surrounding area can enjoy in the coming years,"

he said, adding that he has fond memories of the theater, having started going there in 1966.

But "there are many hurdles to go over" before deciding whether he wants to purchase the old theater, he said, "and at any point along the way, the process can stop."

If he were to acquire the building, a feasibility study would have to take place before deciding its use, he said, noting that the possibilities could include a performing arts center that could, "in general terms, mean movies, concerts, theatrical per-

formances, dancing."

Before Mr. Hilligoss' interest in the old theater came to public light late last week, a divided City Council voted Oct. 2 to begin drafting an agreement for the city to buy the building.

Duncan steps aside

In an e-mail message sent to Menlo Park City Council members on Friday, Oct. 5, Mr. Duncan said he agreed to step aside and give Mr. Hilligoss 30 days to attempt to work out a

See **PARK THEATRE**, page 8

Up on the roof

A new roof and a mezzanine are under way at the Portola Valley branch of Woodside's celebrated Roberts market. The new market is expected to open in January near the corner of Alpine and Portola roads. The roof is part of an extensive remodel of the building that housed John's Valley Foods for 29 years.

The Almanac/David Boyce



City could lose money for transportation planning

By Marion Softky

Almanac Staff Writer

As San Mateo County's transportation agencies gear up to plan how to spend the new half-cent sales tax that will start in 2009, cities are scrambling to sort out their priorities and get in line for money.

So far Menlo Park does not seem to be among them. However, it still has some breathing space to come up with requests and possibly get money that is already allocated to it.

The Transportation Authority, which distributes money from the current Measure A, has postponed until early next year a series of four community meetings that were to start Oct.

■ MENLO PARK

1. The meetings are intended to provide information and receive public comment on the authority's strategic plan to allocate some \$1.5 billion over 25 years to transportation projects throughout the county.

In the meantime, the Transportation Authority will seek input from local city councils.

The new Measure A was passed in 2004 to kick in when the present Measure A, passed in 1988,

expires at the end of 2008.

Grade separations

The new Measure A has allocated 15 percent, about \$225 million over 25 years, to building grade separations that are increasingly needed to separate cars from trains as city traffic increases and Caltrain adds more and faster trains.

Over many years Menlo Park has sat out several opportunities to obtain money to separate one or more of its four streets from the train tracks. The City Council may take up the issue of grade

separations at a study session later this year.

Among the topics council members will likely discuss: A feasibility study of the four streets that cross the tracks — Ravenswood, Oak Grove, Glenwood, and Encinal — that has been completed; and a subsequent "Footprint Study" that is being finished.

The Transportation Authority has made \$250,000 available to Menlo Park for further studies of grade separations, Chairman Jim Bigelow told the Transportation Committee of the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce on Sept. 27.

Mr. Bigelow suggested the council first ask the transit

See **RAIL**, page 8

'If Menlo Park is not proactive, you can kiss grade separations goodbye.'

JIM BIGELOW, TRANSPORTATION EXPERT

Encinal named national 'Blue Ribbon' school

■ Award will be presented in Washington, D.C.

By Marjorie Mader
Almanac Staff Writer

Encinal School in Atherton, the smallest elementary school in the Menlo Park City School District with 406 students in grades 3-5, has won national recognition as a "Blue Ribbon School."

"The entire country now recognizes what we locally already know about the outstanding educational program at Encinal," Superintendent Ken Ranella said in announcing the award Oct. 2.

Encinal Principal Allison Liner and a teacher yet to be selected will travel to Washington, D.C., to accept the award during ceremonies Nov. 12 and 13.

Encinal is the second school in the Menlo Park district to receive

this award. Hillview Middle School won the "Blue Ribbon" distinction in 2000.

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program annually honors a select number of public and private schools based on overall academic achievement and/or dramatic gains in various student subgroups, such as ethnic, economic and language.

"Encinal won on both counts," said Mr. Ranella.

Test scores have improved dramatically during the past five years as measured by the state's STAR testing program, he said. The school's Academic Performance Index has moved higher each year, from 873 in 2002 to 918 this year.

Encinal also met the criteria for outstanding core academic pro-

grams and teacher development.

The application process involves extensive data analysis, including an examination of multi-year trends in student test results. The STAR test and a "nationally normed" writing assessment are used to show that the student body as a whole is academically superior and that various subgroups made dramatic improvements, said Mr. Ranella.

Encinal's award "reflects an incredible partnership between the teachers and the strong leadership at the school and in the community," said Deborah Fitz, an Encinal parent and trustee of the Menlo Park district.

Encinal was among 24 public schools in California and 237 public schools nationally that received the award. Another 50 private schools in the U.S. won the award.

State Superintendent Jack O'Connell recommended Encinal apply for the national award after it was named a California Distinguished School last year.

Former Encinal Principal Stacy Marshall was the primary author of the application. She completed it while on maternity leave. Many teachers, staff members and parents provided input.

Terry Thygesen, president of the school board, said the achievement was due to dedicated Encinal teachers, staff and PTO volunteers, plus financial support from parcel taxes and the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation.

Under a district-wide reconfiguration, Encinal (now for grades 3-5) will become a K-5 school, adding a grade each of the next three years, starting with kindergarten in 2008. ■

Foundation gives schools \$863,000

By Marjorie Mader
Almanac Staff Writer

Kids and teachers are the big winners of the \$863,210 donation to the Portola Valley School District from the nonprofit Portola Valley Schools Foundation.

The funds come in three buckets:

■ The foundation's annual campaign raised \$775,000 for "unrestricted use" by the district. There are no strings attached. The funds go into the district's general fund for the 2007-08 school year.

■ The foundation's endowment contributed \$66,704 for two components of the district's strategic plan: \$49,376 for the language arts program in grades K-8, and \$17,328 for the "math mastery" program in grades 4-5.

■ A \$21,506 grant from eScrip campaign proceeds — rebates from shoppers buying Scrip for purchases at area businesses — to fund classroom supplies during the school year.

The foundation donation exceeded by \$36,506 the amount budgeted by the district for the gift. Trustees and administrative staff expressed great appreciation for the donation.

Co-presidents of the Portola Valley Schools Foundation were Andy Thorson and Maria Geenen. Leading the annual campaign were Sue Jagers and Kari Rust. ■

Election forum for school board

Voters in the Portola Valley School District will have the opportunity Thursday evening, Oct. 18, to meet and ask questions of the three candidates running for two seats on the district's governing board at the Nov. 6 election.

The candidates are Steve Humphries, Judith Mendelsohn, and Brad Turner, all parents of students in the district and volunteers in the schools. They are vying for the two trustee positions, now held by Karen Jordan and Teresa Godfrey, who are not seeking re-election.

The Portola Valley PTO and League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County are sponsoring the free public forum at Corte Madera School, 4575 Alpine Road in Portola Valley.

The evening begins with an informal social time are 6:45 p.m. with the actual forum starting at 7 p.m. People will have a chance to submit questions.



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Dr. William Chang gets lost in the music of a Bach cello suite in a minor key at his Atherton home. Although he is chief of ophthalmology at Kaiser Permanente, he still devotes time to his passion for music.

The Almanac/
Veronica Weber



A musical and medical medley

Ophthalmologist Dr. William Chang from Atherton has struck a balance between his job as a doctor and his love for the cello

By **Natalie Jabbar**
Special to the Almanac

When Dr. William Chang isn't in the operating room performing eye surgery, you might find him sitting in the sunny sitting room of his Atherton home, engrossed in his other passion: playing the cello.

For the 52-year-old ophthalmologist, the dividing line between the analytical left brain and the artsy right side has always blurred, allowing him to excel in both medicine and music. Despite his busy schedule and commitment to medicine, Dr. Chang manages to maintain his musical skills at a high enough level to perform locally in a chamber music trio that includes viola player Yun Jie Liu, acting principal viola of the San Francisco Symphony, and violinist Wei He, a faculty member of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

He tries to practice every other day for at least an hour, drawing an analogy to avid runners, who feel a lack in their lives when they don't run everyday.

In his professional role, he serves as chief of ophthalmology of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Redwood City, with a specialization in challenging cataract and laser surgeries. He also sits on regional and national committees of Kaiser that work towards bringing the newest ophthalmology equipment to their patients.

Recently, Dr. Chang won Kaiser's first Cecil Cutting Award, named after one of the medical program's funding and pioneering physicians. The award recognizes Dr. Chang for his dedication as chief of ophthal-

mology and medical innovation leadership at Kaiser Permanente nationwide. According to Karl Sonkin, a spokesperson for Kaiser Permanente, Dr. Chang has helped lead his department into 21 straight quarters of top patient satisfaction scores.

Dr. Chang also returns to Stanford once a month as an assistant professor, helping students with interactive labs and teaching them surgery techniques.

A working harmony

As he sits down in his home with his instrument and begins to play, Dr. Chang closes his eyes, lost in the melancholy sounds of a Bach cello suite in a minor key. An observer of this scene might forget that the musician is also a doctor — until noticing the trademark pager hooked dutifully to Dr. Chang's side.

Medicine and music have melded in Dr. Chang's life in many ways. Years of nimbly moving his fingers across the cello's strings have fine-tuned the precision needed for executing the most difficult of eye surgeries.

His leadership style as a doctor has also been influenced by his years of playing an instrument. "Music and medicine are more similar than you might think," he explains. "In a symphony, players are led by a conductor, so you need to figure out how to lead, and how to influence people."

He notes that as a doctor, he too must play the role of conductor at times, but offers another musical metaphor for his preferred method of leadership.

"In a chamber group, there is no conductor. It's a shifting sort of leadership. I like to lead

in medicine collaboratively, to help empower people."

Serendipitous prelude

A native of Cleveland, Dr. Chang says that his longtime love of music originated from forces outside of himself, beginning with his parents. They started him on piano lessons when he was only a young boy.

"Learning how to play an instrument wasn't even my idea," he says.

His transition to the cello at the age of 9 was also somewhat serendipitous. "My school orchestra didn't have a cello player, so I kind of just fell into it," he laughs.

But the instrument struck a chord with the young boy. When college time rolled around, he even considered pursuing music professionally at a conservatory, but his father encouraged him to go to a liberal arts school instead, he recalls.

At Harvard, Dr. Chang dabbled in scientific research before realizing that the pace of research wasn't fast enough for him, turning to medicine instead.

"In medicine, the fruits of your labor are immediate," he says.

Although he was working towards becoming a doctor, Dr. Chang hadn't forgotten his love of the cello. Coincidentally, cello prodigy and now world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma was also a student at Harvard, at one point actually living in the same dorm as Dr. Chang.

The two became friends at Harvard, and it was Yo-Yo Ma who later encouraged Dr. Chang to keep up with his cello playing.

"When I went to see Yo-Yo at his San Francisco debut [years

See **DR. CHANG**, page 10

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



Retirement

Q: We will be retiring soon and we are not exactly certain where we want to go. We have several choices, can a local agent help us get information on these areas?

— M/M Greene

A: Dear Mr. & Mrs. Greene, Haven't quite figured out where you want to live when you retire? Do you find the city more convenient, or would you prefer country solitude, or perhaps the seashore? According to statistics most retirees stay in the same geographic location, often moving to a smaller home. But, many stay in the same residence.

If, however, you've always

dreamed of moving to an exciting new location, you'll have lots to do. This is where an experienced real estate agent can help. As a member of a national real estate relocation network, your agent can provide much of the information you'll need on a variety of locations. They will even provide references on experienced agents in these locations.

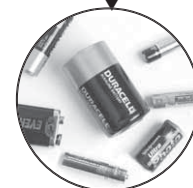
With two agents working in tandem, you'll be able to market your current residence, while looking for a home in your new city. Think of the stress and confusion this approach eliminates. Your local realtor can maximize the sale of your current residence, while the other agent finds the best homes in the location of your choice.

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How to participate:

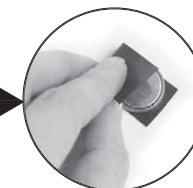
Collect all types of household batteries and cell phones.



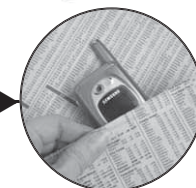
Household batteries include all rechargeable and disposable alkaline types. NO automotive batteries.



New curbside recycling service for residents starts **OCTOBER 1ST**



For safety reasons, please gather all lithium "button" batteries and place a piece of duct or electrical tape around each one.



Wrap cell phones in paper to protect them. Any kind of paper is okay.

Put loose batteries, taped lithium batteries and wrapped cell phones into a CLEAR plastic bag and seal. Zip-type bags work best.



Place the sealed bag on top of your mixed paper recycling bin, and set it out on your collection day. We'll make sure your batteries and cell phones are properly recycled.

sbwma
RethinkWaste.org

*Service available for single-family residents in Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Carlos, San Mateo, West Bay Sanitary District and some areas of unincorporated San Mateo County. For more information, contact Allied Waste at 650-592-2411.

AW
ALLIED WASTE SERVICES

Tour de Menlo rolls out Sunday

Elite cyclists who are ready to test their mettle on some of the Peninsula's steepest terrain will have an opportunity on Sunday, Oct. 14, when the fourth annual le Tour de Menlo rolls out, beginning at 7 a.m. at Menlo-Atherton High School.

The Tour offers two courses, an extreme hills version with 5,000 feet of climbing in 50 miles for hardy riders, and a tamer, 30-mile route with fewer hills that offers a challenging course for beginning and intermediate riders.

All proceeds from the event will be used to support tutoring and scholarship projects of the Rotary Club of Menlo Park.

Another important feature of the 50-miler is an opportunity for riders to be timed on two hills in the event. Prizes will be awarded to the King and Queen

of the Hill for the best combined times on the two hills.

Riders can register at www.TourdeMenlo.com through Friday, Oct. 12, or on the day of the ride from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. at Menlo-Atherton High School, 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton.

Riders will be able to start as soon as they are registered. They will head north from M-A High to Redwood City, San Carlos, Belmont and Hillsborough in a series of hills that will include the two timed climbs.

The ride will be fully supported, with a major rest stop at the half-way point in Belmont. Drinks and snacks will be available all morning, as well as SAG services. Route maps and instructions on how the climbs will be timed will be available at the start.

Sponsors of the ride are the



Photo by Marjan Sadoughi

Cyclist takes Farm Hill Road hill at last year's Tour de Menlo ride.

Rotary Club of Menlo Park and the Almanac. The ride's \$40 entry fee includes a T-shirt. Late registra-

tion will be available for \$45 on the day of the event. Students 16 and under are \$30 or \$35 on ride day.

For more information, go to www.TourdeMenlo.com or call Tom at 650-854-2626, ext. 222.

PARK THEATRE

continued from page 5

deal with Mr. Crittenden.

If Mr. Hilligoss and Mr. Crittenden can't reach an agreement, Mr. Duncan said, he would put his plan back on the table.

"My main objective is to save the Park Theatre and to see it restored," Mr. Duncan said in the e-mail. "Since Mr. Hilligoss has now stepped forward with a plan, I think the best thing for the city is to allow him to have an opportunity to be heard."

"I definitely support Mr. Hilligoss airing his idea," Mayor Kelly Fergusson said. "It's very gracious of Mr. Duncan to step aside at this time."

Ms. Ferguson said she did not have any details about options being considered by Mr. Hilligoss, but that she looked forward to hearing more about it. Mr. Hilligoss called her Friday afternoon about his plan, and said he'd contacted all the other council members as well, she said.

The Duncan plan

At the Oct. 2 City Council meeting, the council voted 3-2, with John Boyle and Andy Cohen opposed, to begin drafting an agreement for the city

to buy the building and lease it to Mr. Duncan's development entity for 55 years.

Under that plan, Mr. Duncan would restore the 60-year-old former movie theater, including the exterior, the neon signs and the lobby.

However, while the city would own the building, it would not be used for movies, theater or public use, except for customers patronizing the private Menlo Park Academy of Dance, co-owned by Mr. Duncan's mother and now housed a block away.

Under that plan, Mr. Duncan would make an initial lease payment of \$800,000 and no further payments for 25 years. Then, he would pay \$70,000 a year for the remainder of the 55-year lease.

The city could buy out the lease at several points over its life, beginning at 10 years, Mayor Fergusson noted, and the city would then be able to make it available to the public as a community theater or for other community uses.

Council members who supported the Duncan plan argued that the restoration of the former theater would be reason enough to plunk city funds into the project.

"A big public benefit here is the

historic nature of the building," said Councilman Heyward Robinson after the Oct. 2 meeting. "This can be a cornerstone business that we can work around, and it can help define the character of a revitalized El Camino Real."

"Directing the city to work through a deal is the right thing to do," Councilman Cline wrote on the Almanac's Web site, AlmanacNews.com, after the meeting. "I simply do not feel comfortable closing this issue and letting the theater go given that we have a deal worth evaluating further."

Critics have lambasted the Duncan plan as a public subsidy of a private business, and said the city's money could be better spent on other things. People posting comments on the Almanac's online Town Square forum have even threatened to initiate recall proceedings against Mayor Fergusson.

During the Oct. 2 council discussion of Mr. Duncan's plan, resident and former planning commissioner Stu Soffer said, "This is not a community theater. It's a private dance studio for a private enterprise. ... This is a turkey — don't go down that path."

Councilman Boyle noted that the city could be asked to pay for unanticipated costs Mr. Duncan encounters in his efforts to convert the theater into a dance studio, and there is no financial protection for the city in case the Academy of Dance goes out of business.

The Park Theatre has been vacant since 2002, when Mr. Crittenden evicted its tenant, Landmark Theaters. ■

Officer promoted to sergeant

Jamie Romero, a detective in the Menlo Park Police Department, has been promoted to sergeant.



Sgt. Romero

He has been with the Menlo Park force since 2005. With 18 years of police experience, he previously worked for police departments in East Palo Alto, Gilroy and Broadmoor.

In addition to being a detective, he has served as an acting watch commander and as a patrol officer.

■ MENLO WATCH

Nature walk

Menlo Park environmental biologist Linda Wagner will lead a nature walk at Bayfront Park on Saturday, Oct. 13, starting at 10 a.m. The hike, geared toward families, is sponsored by Friends for Bayfront Park.

Participants should meet in the parking lot, near the restrooms, at the park, located at the intersection of Bayfront Expressway and Marsh Road in Menlo Park.

RAIL

continued from page 5

agency for a presentation about plans and funding, and then seek the \$250,000 for the next phase of the study. "If Menlo Park is not proactive, you can kiss grade separations goodbye," he said.

Willow Road station

Mr. Bigelow also noted that Menlo Park has not taken up a \$225,000 planning grant for the area near a new Willow Road station to serve the Dumbarton Rail project. Now in the planning stages, the project to restore commuter rail across the old Dumbarton railroad bridge between Redwood City and Fremont is part of the Regional Rail Plan for 2050, approved Sept. 26 by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The planning grant has been available for two years, Mr.

Bigelow said. If Menlo Park does not show interest by mid-October, the funds could be withdrawn and put in the next cycle of regional projects.

Grand Boulevard

There is also funding available for a regional project, called Grand Boulevard, to improve El Camino Real in the 19 cities from Daly City to San Jose.

Menlo Park has applied for a grant from SamTrans for trees along El Camino, according to Corinne Goodrich of SamTrans.

The City/County Association of Governments is also beginning workshops to coordinate planning to make El Camino a Grand Boulevard through San Mateo County. It is offering cities a \$50,000 grant if they sign up and provide matching funds, said Executive Officer Rich Napier. "It's part of the El Camino Real incentive program," he said. ■

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Asbestos abatement at school raises concerns from some parents

By Marjorie Mader

Almanac Staff Writer

Several Encinal parents have raised concerns about student exposure to health hazards during the asbestos-abatement work under way at Encinal, a grade 3-5 school in Atherton.

The work relates to the Menlo Park City School District's modernization of the F classroom wing, part of the district's plan to expand the school to a K-5 school over the next three years.

Principal Allison Liner said she has talked with parents who have raised questions and, for the most part, has reassured them of their children's safety.

The parents, who asked not to be identified, question whether the district has followed sufficient safeguards in the asbestos-abatement process.

A few parents said they were considering taking their children out of school and home-

schooling them during the abatement procedures. A check with the school office Monday morning showed that attendance is normal.

Some parents said they plan to pick up their children early so there's no possible exposure.

Ahmad Sheikholeslami, the district's facility program manager/planner, said the district is going above and beyond the usual standards for this type of work. This phase is scheduled to be completed by Friday, Oct. 11.

For almost two weeks, crews have been removing asbestos floor tiles and joint compound on the walls at the school's F wing, which is under a "double containment measure," he said. This includes a plastic air-tight sealing of exterior and interior walls.

The intact asbestos materials that are being removed are not likely to fragment and won't become airborne outside of the containment, according to Mr. Sheikholeslami.

All air in the work areas is being exhausted through a HEPA filtered negative air machine. The exhaust from the filtering system is being monitored to ensure that no asbestos particles are released into the outside air, he said.

The work is confined to non-school hours from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., and the air filtration system operates 24 hour a day.

A licensed specialist has been hired as a consultant to monitor the project and air quality to ensure work is performed to federal, state and local regulations. If standards are not met, the specialist has the authority to immediately shut down the project.

A similar level of asbestos abatement was accomplished in district classrooms as part of the modernization work financed by a 1995 bond measure. A similar project will be undertaken at Oak Knoll School when one building is removed. ■

Public records request: review of expense reports turns up some violations

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Does Atherton have a problem with employee expense reports?

Last month, the town's outside auditors, tipped by Finance Director John Johns, said they found a number of minor violations of town policies in employee expense reports.

A review of expense reports from the public works and police departments showed reimbursements for disallowed items such as valet parking and alcohol, according to Steve Larson of Caporicci & Larson auditing firm. Though the expenses only amount to a couple of thousand dollars, he recommended the town audit expense reports filed during the past year and tighten up its policy.

Questions about the expense reports arose in late August, around the time Mr. Johns was placed on paid administrative leave over charges that he created a hostile work environment. According to Mr. Johns, one of the complaints against him came from the Atherton Police Department.

Mr. Johns was suspended on Aug. 27, just as Caporicci & Larson auditors arrived to conduct their annual review of Atherton's finances. An investigation into the complaint is ongoing, said City Attorney Marc Hynes.

ATHERTON

Mr. Johns has denied the charges and said that he is the one who has been threatened and intimidated in the course of doing his job.

The combination of the complaint against Mr. Johns by a police department employee, and an incident on Aug. 29 in which Atherton officers cited Mr. Johns for driving on an expired license outside of the town administrative offices, has caused speculation that there is a connection between Mr. Johns' suspension and his inquiry into police expense reports.

An Almanac examination of a year's worth of expense reports for police Chief Bob Brennan confirmed that the town's expense reimbursement policy wasn't followed to the letter in one case, when Chief Brennan attended a law enforcement conference in Boston last October. However, according to documents obtained by the Almanac through a public records request, the fault doesn't appear to lie with Chief Brennan.

It appears that then-City Manager Jim Robinson failed to get the City Council's approval of the trip, a technical violation of Atherton's expense reimbursement policy adopted in April 2006.

"I looked into that one, and Jim admits that Bob came to (him)," said Interim City Manager Wende Protzman. "I think it goes on the

(council's agenda) as a consent item, but I don't believe that step was taken."

Mr. Robinson also approved reimbursement of \$195 in valet parking fees and \$19.70 for three glasses of wine ordered with meals. Mr. Robinson retired at the end of July, and the town is currently seeking a replacement.

The Almanac acquired copies of all Atherton employee expense reports for out-of-state travel in the past year, as well as all of Chief Brennan's expense reports. His trip to the International Association of Chiefs of Police convention at the Sheraton Boston was the only out-of-state trip reimbursed by the town during that period.

The reimbursements totaled \$723 for hotel and meals, and did not include the \$275 conference registration fee prepaid by the town or airfare to Boston.

Chief Brennan could not be immediately reached for comment.

According to Mr. Hynes, the repercussions for violating the town's expense policy could range from a verbal or written reprimand "to something more severe," depending on the specific situation. Failing to get council approval for out-of-state travel is something the City Council would have to take up with the city manager, Mr. Hynes said. ■

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF OCTOBER 22, 2007

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

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

Use Permit/Richard S. Onorato/859 Oak Grove Avenue:

Request for a use permit to allow a beauty salon (personal services) to expand into vacant space on the ground floor of an existing commercial building in the C-3 (Central Commercial) zoning district.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on Monday, October 22, 2007, 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge this item in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

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

DATED: October 4, 2007

Deanna Chow, Senior Planner
Menlo Park Planning Commission

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

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on October 10, 2007.



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November election: Ballot information is in the mail

Sample ballots and voter information pamphlets are being mailed to registered voters who live where Nov. 6 elections are scheduled, about 310,000 out of 350,000 registered voters in San Mateo County, said Warren Slocum, the county's chief elections officer.

In only three local elections in the Almanac's circulation area are there more candidates than open seats: the boards of the Portola Valley School District, the Los Trancos Water District and the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, which serves Menlo Park, Atherton and East Palo Alto.

Fire district voters will also decide on whether to increase the district's appropriations limit in 2011 to \$40 million from the current \$25 mil-

lion.

There is a Town Council election in Woodside, but with four candidates running for four open seats. The two candidates for two open seats on Woodside's elementary school board were appointed.

Also appointed were candidates for the Portola Valley Town Council and the boards of the Woodside Fire Protection District, the Ladera Recreation District, the Sequoia Union High School District, the West Bay Sanitary District and the Skyline County Water District. In all cases, the number of candidates matched the number of open seats.

For more information, go to www.shapethefuture.org or contact the Elections Office at 312-5222 or registrar@smcare.org.

DR. CHANG

continued from page 7

later], he said to me, ‘You can be a doctor *and* play the cello. I can only play the cello,’” he recalls.

Dr. Chang came to Stanford in 1977 for graduate school and residency and has been living in Atherton with his wife, Leslie, and

teenaged children Colin and Dana for the past 17 years.

Dr. Chang says he has no plans of disrupting his harmonious approach to practicing both medicine and music.

“For serious musicians who have that passion, it’s almost like a spiritual thing. It’s part of your psychology, like eating.” ■

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Rita Gado dies at 89

Margherita "Rita" Gado, a lifelong resident of Menlo Park and Atherton, died Oct. 3 at age 89.

For 40 years, she was a member of the Atherton Lion's Club, serving as president three times. She was also a longtime member of the Menlo Park Historical Association, and was an active member of the Italian Catholic Federation and Atherton Tree Committee.

For more than 80 years, she was a parishioner of Nativity Church. Born in Menlo Park on Dec. 2, 1917, she attended St. Joseph's Parochial School and Sequoia High School.

In 1938 she married Amedeo Gado, a caretaker at the estate of Atherton inventor Leon Douglass, and they shared 65 years together until Mr. Gado's death in 2003 at age 99.

The couple lived together on the

Rita Gado was a member of Nativity Church for 80 years.



Douglass estate, now the campuses of Menlo College and Menlo School, and in 1943, they moved to Stockbridge Avenue, where she resided until her death.

Ms. Gado worked as a farmer, merchant, Pacific Bell telephone operator, and property manager, family members said.

She is survived by nephew Michael Benham and nieces Julie Benham, Denise Fennie and Gina Kidder.

The family prefers donations to the Lions Eye Foundation; and Nativity Capital Campaign, designated for Tree Planting, 210 Oak Grove. Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Woodside may keep its ambulance

There's a good chance that Woodside firefighters will continue running the district's ambulance service, despite a funding shortfall that threatens to end it.

The Woodside Fire Protection District appears close to inking a deal with the Joint Powers Authority for supplemental funding and other concessions that will keep the ambulance running through 2009, when the county-wide ambulance contract expires.

Woodside fire has been losing more than half a million dollars a year on the ambulance, which is staffed by the district's firefighter/paramedics. District officials say the ambulance provides faster, better service to district residents, and gives the paramedics valuable experience.

The Joint Powers Board is expected to vote on a plan to increase Woodside's reimbursement for

ambulance service at its next meeting on Nov. 14, said Woodside fire Chief Armando Muela.

Of the four fire districts offering ambulance service as subcontractors to American Medical Response, the private company that provides ambulance service to San Mateo County, only Woodside remains. Menlo Park, Half Moon Bay and Pacifica have all dropped out, because of similar funding problems.

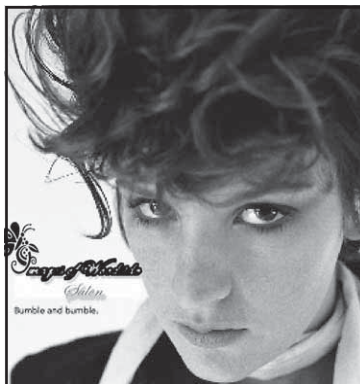
Woodside fire officials say the

district receives only a fraction of the money it takes in, and far less than it costs to run. Staffing the ambulance costs about \$750,000 a year, and the district receives less than \$200,000 a year in reimbursement, according to Woodside fire's board of directors.

TOWN SQUARE

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S U D D E N O A K D E A T H

AS OAKS ARE DYING IN OUR FOOTHILLS AND MOUNTAINS, LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE RALLYING TO SAVE THE CHERISHED TREES



Photo by Lynne Davis

By Marion Softky

Almanac Staff Writer

Last year it was the tanoaks; this year it's the live oaks. Oak trees are dying by the dozens in the woods of Woodside, Portola Valley and up across Skyline.

And in 14 California counties, from Monterey to Humboldt, more than a million oak trees have died since Sudden Oak Death

first appeared in Marin and Santa Cruz counties in 1995.

To see a glimpse of the future, just drive along Alpine Road into Portola Valley. Or meander through Woodside and up to Skyline. Or hike the trails on Windy Hill or Coal Mine Ridge.

You'll see dozens of coast live oaks and tanoaks standing totally dead, their leaves hanging dry and brown from their branches.

Look at the forested hills toward Skyline. You can pick out brown patches of dead live oaks and tanoaks splotching otherwise green hillsides.

Sudden Oak Death is here. And it's not going to go away.

"It's bad," says San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner Gail Raabe. "We're seeing levels that Sonoma and

A dead live oak tree hangs over a house on Valley Oak in Portola Valley Ranch. The woods above lower Valley Oak is just one of the "hot spots" on the ranch, with many dead trees behind the homes.

Marin counties saw several years ago. Hillsides can turn brown."

But the community is fighting back. Residents of the Peninsula love their oaks, particularly the majestic coast live oaks that are celebrated in photos and logos. These

TIPS FOR FIGHTING SUDDEN OAK DEATH

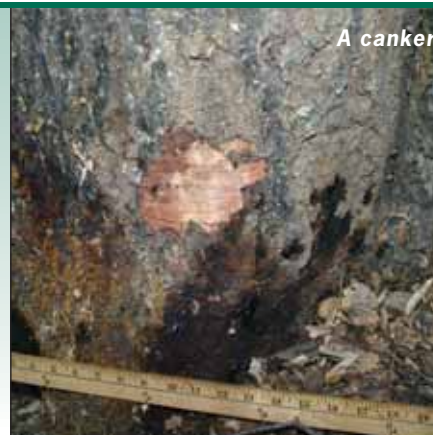
With **Sudden Oak Death** spreading to the wooded foothills – but not so far to the flatlands of Menlo Park and Atherton – here are some **tips on preventing SOD, recognizing it and dealing with it.**



Bleeding Sap

1 Symptoms of SOD are bleeding sap and cankers on the trunks of coast live oaks, tanoaks and black oaks. These tend to appear before the tree dies.

2 To prevent SOD, spray the trunks of healthy oaks with Agri-Fos and Pentra-Bark in early November or late spring, particularly if it is in a "hot spot" with other diseased or dead oaks. Keep this up about every two years for the life of the tree.



A canker

3 To prevent SOD, control bay laurel trees within 100 meters, particularly if they have spotty leaves. Remove small trees; prune lower branches of large ones.





Photo by David Boyce

The dark wound in the crotch of this Portola Valley oak is a late symptom of sudden oak death disease. The carrier may have been the nearby rhododendron, which may have acquired it from a nursery.

signature trees can live to be 250 years old.

More than 100 people crowded Woodside Town Hall on Aug. 2 for a workshop put on by Woodside and Portola Valley, the county agriculture office, and the California Oak Mortality Task Force (suddenoakdeath.org). They were primed with information on the disease, how to recognize it, and what to do about it.

"Trees don't go to see the doctor; how do you get trees to take a pill?" said Matteo Garbelotto, a forest pathologist with the University of California at Berkeley, and top researcher on SOD. "You need to treat trees before the trees are sick. By the time the trees are infected, it's usually too late."

Since that meeting, half a dozen or more neighborhoods in Woodside and Portola Valley have organized to try to slow the spread of SOD around their homes.

In Portola Valley Ranch, hard hit by dying trees on Coal Mine Ridge, the community has hired an arborist and distributed fliers to residents to help them prepare for spraying in early November, when the trees revive after the long hot dry summer.

Some trees to be sprayed are already marked with bright orange ribbons. "People pay \$24 per trunk," says Lynne Davis, chair of the Landscaping Committee. "We anticipate

spraying at least 500 trees."

"We haven't seen it east of the foothills," Ms. Raabe says. "It's pretty consistent; we see the disease at the edge of the wildlands, or in heavily wooded areas."

Apparently no one knows exactly how the pathogen, *Phytophthora ramorum* (p. ramorum), got to California. "Nobody knows where it came from," says Paul Heiple, chair of the Portola Valley Conservation Committee. "It's not native. We suspect it came from rhododendron from the Himalayas. Nobody knows."

But scientists have learned a good deal about how the pathogen works. It loves warm water and spreads by wind and water. It is carried by more than 100 hosts, including most nursery stock, bay laurel, redwoods, maples, and almost any tree in the woods. The hosts don't get the disease, but they pass on the spores by wind and water, (and sometimes by boots, wheels, paws and hoofs).

"The things swim," says Dr. Garbelotto. "Whenever you have a rainy spring, the spores follow. Infection focuses on spring and early summer, if wet."

SOD primarily attacks the tree's vascular system and girdles the tree just below the bark, according to a task force brochure. Infected trees are weakened and may be attacked by other pests. Early symptoms are bleeding of thick sap from the bark, and formation of cankers under the bleeding. "By the time you see the symptoms, the tree has been infected for two years," says Dr. Garbelotto.

The major villain in the spread of SOD is bay laurel, a common native tree that often grows along with oaks. "Bay laurel is the Typhoid Mary of Sudden Oak Death," says Ms. Raabe. "It generates spores like crazy."

Spread of a disease

Fortunately, not all oaks are susceptible to Sudden Oak Death.

Tanoaks are the worst. "The first trees you see dying are tanoak," says Ms. Raabe. "A lot of tanoaks are just kindling."

A sizable number of coast live oaks, black oaks, and canyon live oaks are resistant. Blue oaks and valley oaks are immune.

Most of the dead oaks in San Mateo County are still in the hills, many in county parks, regional open space preserves and the San Francisco watershed.

"We're seeing more trees dying in the last few months," says Cindy Roessler, resource management specialist for the Midpeninsula

Regional Open Space District. "The disease has spread farther east."

Most of this year's dead trees were probably infected two years ago when there was a warm, wet spring, Ms. Roessler notes. "Two years later the trees can't handle it. We've had such a long, hot summer."

So far infected trees have been found in Wunderlich and Memorial county parks, but not Huddart, says Superintendent Dave Moore. "Huddart is mostly redwood and Douglas fir," he says.

Oak trees can die from many different things, Mr. Moore notes. When the county runs tests, "we're getting as many negatives as positives," he says.

Ms. Raabe says that studies in Marin County show that more than half of coast live oaks resist the SOD pathogen.

As SOD spreads down the hill and infects trees in the lower woods and hills of Woodside and Portola Valley, the impact of the disease on people becomes more acute.

The open space district and county park system can afford to follow the official "best practices" to leave dead trees standing; they are only removed if they threaten the public in areas such as trails or picnic grounds, Mr. Moore says. Trees in areas hazardous to the public are cut down and left in place. "We don't want to transport the disease out of the area," he says.

But that may not work when the giant backyard oak hanging over your house dies. On private property the homeowner has to deal with dead trees that are ugly and can fall over in inconvenient or dangerous places.

"It's awful," says Amanda Lee, president of the Vista Verde Association, who has lost 10 of about 100 oaks on a four-acre property. "It's very sad. These are beautiful trees. And it's expensive."

Fighting back

A spontaneous effort is arising in the communities afflicted by dying oaks to stop the spread of the disease. Participating are the towns of Woodside and Portola Valley and their conservation committees, the Woodside Fire Protection District, the county Agriculture Department, the Oak Mortality Task Force, and residents worried about their cherished trees.

Speakers at the Aug. 2 meeting

gave the standing-room-only audience a road map to slow, if not conquer, the disease.

Among suggestion of Dr. Garbelotto of U.C. Berkeley:

- Join with other people, including those whose trees don't have the disease, and hire an arborist.

- Spray healthy trees with Agri-Fos in early November.

- Focus on bay laurel. Remove small bay trees; prune lower branches of big trees.

- Remove soil debris from tools and tires — and boots, paws and hoofs.

- Don't fertilize; "the pathogen doesn't like little weak trees."

- Identify hot spots for SOD. "These hot spots put whole neighborhoods at risk," he said.

Meanwhile, the local response has been building up; half a dozen or more neighborhoods have organized. In Portola Valley Ranch, residents got together, hired an arborist, involved residents in mapping their oaks, coordinated pruning and spraying, and are sharing the cost.

So far, 75 households in the woodsy communities of Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde have signed up to have their oak trees sprayed, says Ms. Lee, president of the Vista Verde Association. "Trim your bay trees now, before it starts raining," she warns.

Other hot spots where people are fighting the disease include Woodside Highlands and Westridge in Portola Valley, and Upper Alpine Road.

In Woodside, Stephanie MacDonald

Continued on next page



Photo by David Boyce

Brown tips on a bay laurel tree are a strong indicator of the presence of the sudden oak death attacking nearby coast live oaks. The common bay laurels are major carriers of the disease; they don't die themselves but infect certain oak trees.

Bay laurel leaf

4 For specific questions, or to analyze sample leaves, call the San Mateo County Agriculture Department at 363-4700.

5 SOD is contagious. If you have been in an infected area, clean boots, tires, paws and hooves afterward.

6 Consider leaving dead trees in place.

7 If dead trees are removed, keep them on site, or dispose of them at a certified disposal site. You can burn firewood; do not give it away.



Tree that died of SOD

8 Dead trees can be chipped, if dry, and spread on the ground. If wet, they hold the spores of SOD.

9 When working with dead or diseased trees, clean tools and boots afterwards to keep from spreading the disease. Dilute bleach and household disinfectants can be used.

'This is not going to go away'

Continued from previous page

of the Conservation Committee lists hot spots near La Honda, Old La Honda, Albion, Canada, Oak Hill, Mountain Home, Tripp, Kings Mountain and Bear Gulch roads.

The preferred spray is Agri-Fos plus Pentra-Bark. Sprayed directly on the trunk, the chemicals help prevent future infection of still-healthy trees. "This stuff is expensive," notes Woodside Fire Marshal Denise Enea.

Mr. Heiple of the Portola Valley Conservation Committee notes that Agri-Fos is not a pesticide; it's a phosphate fertilizer and fungicide. Pentra-Bark is like soap, it helps penetration.

"If you have an oak and don't want to lose it, treat it," Mr. Heiple advises. "But you'll need to treat it for the rest of its life. This is not going to go away."

Sudden Oak Death will remain spotty, and continue killing trees, especially where it's damp and there are a lot of bay trees, Mr. Heiple continues. "Oaks are more valuable than bays. Oaks are more important for wildlife; they are a keystone species."

Ms. Davis of the Portola Valley Landscaping Committee shares the worry about bay trees. "We are likely to lose most of the coast live oaks on two wooded hillsides up to Coalmine Ridge," she says. "We may end up with a bay laurel woods. There's no way we can get rid of all the bay laurels."

Mr. Heiple suggests, "If you really like oaks, plant valley oaks."

Controlling the spread

The other big issue in containing Sudden Oak Death is keeping the pathogen from spreading to new locations. "We can't control the wind and the rain," Mark Stanley, chair of the Oak Mortality Task Force, told the crowd Aug. 2.

But people can control what they do that moves Sudden Oak Death to new areas. And that involves



Photo by Linda Drey-Nightingale

Amanda Lee, president of the Vista Verde Association, dons protective gear to spray the trunk of a still-healthy live oak to prevent infection by Sudden Oak Death. Seventy-five households in the woody communities south of Portola Valley have signed up for spraying in November.

sanitation and cleanliness, he said. It involves cleaning boots and tires and paws and hooves that have been in infected areas. "Don't park in the mud. Keep your pets on a leash," he warned.

San Mateo County is one of 14 California counties that is under federal and state quarantine for Sudden Oak Death, Ms. Raabe, the county agricultural commissioner, notes. So regulations strictly control movement and handling of plant materials.

The Agriculture Department's 19 inspectors test production nurseries and Choose-and-Cut Christmas tree farms. They look at anything that is to be shipped and anything with leaf spots. "It's effective," Ms. Raabe says. "But if you see anything with leaf spots, call us."

The big problem for homeowners is what to do about dead or dying oak trees. Ms. Raabe recommends that if they can't be

left standing, they be chipped in place and left for mulch. Any material that leaves the property should go to a certified landfill. In San Mateo County, that's Ox Mountain.

While it's OK to burn the wood as firewood on the property, Ms. Raabe says: "Don't give wood away. Don't give firewood to a friend. We don't want to spread SOD unnecessarily."

Another precaution is to make sure that workers and contractors clean themselves and their tools before leaving an infected site. The official flier recommends cleaning all tools with a household disinfectant.

"I donated a can of Lysol to the tree company," says Ms. Lee. ■

Photos by David Boyce, Lynne Davis, Linda Drey-Nightingale, Marion Softky and www.sudden-oakdeath.org.

Demonstration of spraying Oct. 20

A workshop and demonstration of spraying for Sudden Oak Death will be held Saturday, Oct. 20, at 2 p.m. at the Mounted Patrol grounds, 521 Kings Mountain Road in Woodside. The event is sponsored by the Woodside Fire Protection District and the towns of Woodside and Portola Valley.

Landscape workers and do-it yourself sprayers are invited to learn how to spray Agri-Fos and Pentra-Bark to prevent Sudden Oak Death. The program will include a presentation by Matteo Garbelotto, a forest pathologist at the University of California at Berkeley and top researcher on SOD.

Since space is limited, people interested in attending should contact the towns of Woodside or Portola Valley or Fire Marshal Denise Enea. See contact information below.

■ INFORMATION

For more information on Sudden Oak Death, or to submit a sample for testing, call the San Mateo County Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measure at 353-4700; or go to www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/agwm.

Following are phone numbers for key people and Web sites.

■ California Oak Mortality Task Force, Katie Palmieri, 510-847-5482; suddenoakdeath.org.

■ Town of Portola Valley, Leslie Lambert, 861-1700, ext. 12; portolavalley.net.

■ Town of Woodside, 851-6790; woodside-town.org.

■ Woodside Fire Protection District, Fire Marshal Denise Enea, 851-6206; woodsidefire.org.

■ Matteo Garbelotto's Web site at cnr.berkeley.edu/garbelotto.



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Portola Valley: Deadline extended for open-space plan

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

A month's reprieve has been granted to the campaign to raise \$1.6 million to buy two and a half acres of open space in Portola Valley's Westridge neighborhood. A 0.8-mile wooded path known as Shady Trail is part of the property.

The owner of the property has extended to Thursday, Oct. 25, the original fundraising deadline of Sept. 25, said spokeswoman Ginny Kavanaugh.

To introduce the trail, the Committee to Protect Shady Trail is sponsoring a morning walk on Saturday, Oct. 13, beginning at 9 a.m. at the trail head near the intersection of Golden Hill and Westridge drives.

The trail is considered biologically rich. Paul Heiple, who chairs the town's Conservation Committee, has said it has "dozens of species of native plants," with berries attracting many bird species.

Shady Trail is a "mostly intact" former dirt road from long ago when the property was part of the 1,400-acre Ormondale Farm, town historian Nancy Lund said.

With pledges of about \$1 mil-

lion, the campaign is almost two-thirds to its fundraising goal, Ms. Kavanaugh said. Current pledges range from \$200 to \$400,000, she said.

Pledges from residents include \$400,000 from Bev and Peter Lipman, \$100,000 from Bill and Jean Lane intended to invite matching gifts, and "major" support from Al and Jo Schreck, Ms. Kavanaugh said. The Hufty Foundation is giving \$25,000, she added.

The Town Council, relying on a recommendation by the town's Open Space Acquisition Advisory Committee, agreed to contribute up to \$100,000 from the town's open-space acquisition fund, Ms. Kavanaugh said.

Included in the town's proposal is up to \$10,000 to cover appraisal and transaction costs. The town would be the buyer of record, which would make the donations tax deductible and require the town to shoulder site maintenance duties, Ms. Lipman said.

The Committee has an illustrated Web site at www.theshadytrail.com. For more information, contact Mr. Schreck at 415-392-8971 or chrmm@montgomery-capital.com, or Ms. Lipman at 854-9199 or bevlipman@sbcglobal.net. ■

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The Fight for Oil, Water
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Community

NEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Gourmet harvest supper at Djerassi ranch

A five-course gourmet harvest supper, created by the Village Pub's Chef Mark Sullivan and chef de cuisine Dimtry Elperin, will be the highlight of Artful Harvest, to be held from 3 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 14, at the Djerassi Ranch, 2325 Bear Gulch

Road in Woodside.

Chef Sullivan's menu will feature organic produce from the five-acre organic farm on the Djerassi property, which supplies many ingredients for both the Pub and Spruce, the new restaurant in Presidio Heights in San Francisco.

Dinner will be served in the artists' barn, which has floor-to-ceiling glass doors that open to views of the Pacific coastline.

The afternoon will feature live performances by cellist Jean Jeanrenaud and San Francisco Ballet dancer Muriel Maffre. There will also be a silent auction of artwork by Djerassi alumni.

Tickets are \$175 per person and benefit the Djerassi Resident Artists Program. For more information, call 747-1250 or go to www.djerassi.org.

Little House brims with programs

"Is Long Term Care Insurance for You?" is the topic of a talk by Ted Houston at a free community forum at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 10, in the garden room at Little House.

A Halloween greeting card workshop will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. on two Wednesdays, Oct. 10 and 17, in the Little House art studio. The cost of \$30 per session includes art materials. Printmaker Donnasue Jacobi is the teacher.

The "Tuesday Tea" from 2 to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 16, will feature guest speaker Tom Cronin, who will talk about exploring your roots and connecting to the natural wonders of this area. The tea takes place in the auditorium. Admission is free.

Little House is located at 800 Middle Ave. in Menlo Park.

Night at races benefits St. Francis

"A Night at the Races," a benefit for St. Francis Center in Redwood City, will be held Friday, Oct. 12, at Bay Meadows. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. The first race is at 7 p.m.

A \$40 donation includes admission to the club house, a continuous hot buffet, reserved table section, no-host cocktails, closed-circuit television, television football, and pari-mutuel wagering. For those over 65, the donation is \$35.

Sister Christina Heltsley is executive director of St. Francis Center.

Checks payable to St. Francis Center may be sent to Patty Hjelm, 624 Olive St., Menlo Park, CA 94025. For tickets or more information, call Patty Hjelm at 325-6072, or Jeanne Weseloh at 323-2641.

AROUND TOWN

Native plant sale at Hidden Villa


People who know and love California native plants, and those who might want to learn, should find opportunities at the twice-a-year native plant sale Saturday, Oct. 13, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the nursery at Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road in Los Altos Hills, two miles west of Interstate 280.

The sale will feature many species of hard-to-find California natives from deergrass and monkey flowers, to redbud, lilies, orchids and buckwheat. The nursery is operated by volunteers of the California Native Plant Society.

Seasoned gardeners can explain how attractive natives are less thirsty, hardier, and easier to grow than lawns and water-loving exotics. Native shrubs, wildflowers and grasses can also be selected to attract bees, birds and butterflies — or repel deer.

Proceeds of the sale benefit Santa Clara Valley Chapter activities such as field trips, conservation and education.

For information, call Arvind Kumar at 408-859-1874; or go to goingnativegardentour.org.



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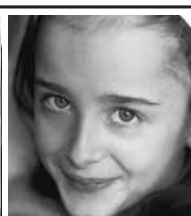

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- Wednesday, October 17
- * **SIBLING PREPARATION**
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- Sunday, October 21
- * **BECOMING GRANDPARENTS**
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- Thursday, November 1
- * **PEDIATRIC WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAM**
This family-based, behavioral and educational weight management program promotes healthy eating and exercise habits for overweight children and their families. More than 80% of children achieve long-term weight loss through this program — and parents lose weight too! The new session starts soon, so call (650) 725-4424 to pre-register. Spaces are limited.

Call (650) 723-4600 or visit www.lpch.org to register or obtain more information on the times, locations and fees for these and other courses.

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New owner for Devi Yoga

Manthi Nguyen of Woodside is the new owner of Devi Yoga at 1011 El Camino Real in Menlo Park. Ms. Nguyen, who comes from a high-tech background, acquired the business from former owner Nicole Perkins last month.

Ms. Nguyen also owns The Pilates Zone at 1800 El Camino Real, Suite C, in Menlo Park, which she took over in 2006.

Devi Yoga conducts some 30 classes a week and is open daily. Its patrons range from age 8 to 80. There is also an adjoining boutique selling men and women's yoga clothing and accessories.

Ms. Nguyen, an electrical engineer with an MBA from the University of Michigan, has a 20-year background in Internet

technology.

She began working out while in her 30s and believes exercise is essential for healthy living and graceful aging. She devotes three days a week to yoga and three days a week to Pilates.

She also believes in a healthy diet, but adds, "I eat everything under the sun."

Her goal, she says, is building her two new businesses, The Pilates Zone and Devi Yoga, into integral parts of the Menlo Park community.

TOWN SQUARE

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

Food Network's 'Hearty Boys' coming to Sultana restaurant

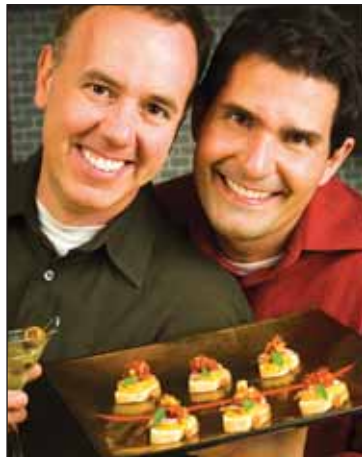
Dan Smith and Steve McDonagh, stars of the Food Network's "Party Line with the Hearty Boys," will talk about their first book, "Talk with Your Mouth Full," on Friday, Oct. 12, at Sultana Mediterranean restaurant in Menlo Park.

The event, part of Kepler's Chef/Author Series, starts at 6:30 p.m. Sultana is at 1149 El Camino Real.

The cooking duo, who never attended culinary school, built a catering business in Chicago.

The book, says Kepler's spokesperson Susan Lider, is "packed with exciting but accessible recipes, clever how-to tips, and a gaggle of tales from the catering trenches that make this a truly entertaining cookbook."

The price of the combined book and meal (includes wine,



beckermmedia.com/Steve Becker
Dan Smith and Steve McDonagh will talk about their first book.

coffee, dessert, tax and tip) is \$85 per person and \$145 per couple. To reserve a seat, call 324-4321, visit Kepler's, or order online at www.keplers.com.

High school info night on Tuesday

A high-school information night for parents of local seventh- and eighth-graders is set for Tuesday evening, Oct. 9, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Sequoia High School at 1201 Brewster Ave in Redwood City.

Parents from Menlo Park, Woodside, Atherton and Portola Valley can use the visit to talk about a range of topics, including intra-district transfers, eighth-grade registration and address

verification requirements.

On hand for the evening will be staff from Menlo-Atherton and Woodside high schools and officials from the Sequoia Union High School District, including Superintendent Pat Gemma, Trustee Lorraine Rumley and Susan Berghouse, the director of public information.

For more information, call Ms. Berghouse at 369-1411, ext. 2210.

Saltworks forum set for Saturday

Redwood City Industrial Saltworks will discuss plans to develop 1,433 acres of former salt ponds northwest of Bayfront Park at a community forum on Saturday, Oct. 13, from 1 to 3 p.m., in the Woodside High School Performing Arts Center,

199 Churchill Ave.

Planners for the development will discuss how to create a walkable, transit-oriented community with a mixture of uses and open space. For information or to RSVP, call 366-0500, or e-mail rcsaltworks.com; or go to rcsaltworks.com.

MARGHERITA "RITA" GADO



Life long resident of Menlo Park and Atherton, Born December 2, 1917, passed away October 3, 2007 at the age of 89.

Rita is preceded in death by her parents Guadenzio and Guilia Ardizzoia, her husband Amedeo Gado and her sister and brother-in-law Catherine and Robert Benham. Beloved 'Zia', is survived by nephew Michael (Brigid) Benham, nieces

Julie Benham, Denise (Francis) Fennie and Gina (Derek) Kidder; and grand nephew and nieces Clifford, Keith, Alyse and Mallory Benham, Lacie and Mitchell Watson, Zachary, Margaret and Regina Fennie, and Madeline, Katelyn and Robert Kidder, as well as her dear cousins and many friends.

Rita was born and raised in Menlo Park. She attended St. Joseph's Parochial School and Sequoia High School. She married Amedeo Gado in 1938 and they shared 65 years together. In 1943 they moved to Atherton where she resided until her death. Rita worked as a farmerette, merchant, Pacific Bell Telephone Operator and Property Manager. She was an Atherton Lion's Club three times President, and member for over 40 years. She was a long time member of the Menlo Park Historical Association. She was also an active member of the Italian Catholic Federation and Atherton Tree Committee. Rita was a parishioner of Nativity Church for over 80 years.

Menlo Park has lost one of its great historians and friends. Our family will dearly miss our beloved Zia.

Donations to the Lions Eye Foundation and Nativity Capital Campaign designated Tree Planting, 210 Oak Grove Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

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High school district buys EPA parcel

■ Fourth bond measure needed to build charter school.

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The Sequoia Union High School District will be buying 0.9 acres of land in East Palo Alto for \$1.65 million and may build a charter high school on the site.

The district's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the purchase of the Myrtle Street property at its Wednesday, Oct. 3, meeting, said Sequoia district assistant superintendent Ed LaVigne. The money will come from the district's construction bond funds, which are now all but spoken for, he added.

If voters were to approve a fourth construction bond measure since 1996 — tentatively for \$165 million and possibly going to voters in February — the parcel would go toward creating a new \$10 million home for East Palo Alto Academy High School, Mr. LaVigne said.

A public meeting at the Sequoia district office at 480 James Ave. in Redwood City is planned for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11, for district officials and interested residents to talk about spending priorities for such a bond measure.

In addition to the charter school, new bond funds would pay for a "21st-century" district program for career technical education, including biotechnology clean rooms, robotics labs and engineering classrooms, said Trustee Gordon Lewin. The district also wants to create a \$10

MEETING

A public meeting at the Sequoia district office at 480 James Ave. in Redwood City is planned for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11, for district officials and interested residents to talk about spending priorities for a new bond measure.

million endowment for continual upgrades to the district's investment in technology, he said.

Mr. LaVigne cited one inescapable priority in seeking a fourth bond measure: global competition.

Recalling New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman's 2005 bestseller "The World is Flat," Mr. LaVigne noted that a district-wide visioning exercise held last spring "concluded that we must create engaging schools so that students will be prepared to thrive in a global economy."

A fourth measure

Since 1996, the Sequoia district has gone to the voters three times — in 1996, 2001 and 2004 — and has gotten majorities of more than two-thirds each time. A 55 percent majority is required for passage of a bond measure.

The district is required to provide facilities for charter schools that serve students from the Sequoia district. About 1,050 teens who live in the Ravenswood City School District attend Sequoia district schools, including 400 at Menlo-Atherton High, 190 at Woodside High, and 450 who commute to Carlmont High in Belmont.

The district's bond indebtedness is about \$199 million, excluding interest, and is down from \$204 million in 2005, Mr. LaVigne said.

The total assessed value of commercial and residential property is \$51 billion in the Sequoia district, which has a favorable AAA bond rating and is now using about one third of its borrowing capacity, he said.

For each \$100,000 of assessed value of properties in the district, owners are paying about \$20 per year, Mr. LaVigne said. A new bond measure would raise that tax by about \$10, he said.

East Palo Alto site

The Myrtle Street site would be the new home for a four-year charter high school, formerly known as East Palo Alto High, that now occupies an elementary school campus on Pope Street in Menlo Park and is operated by Stanford University.

The Myrtle Street site is conveniently across the street from East-side Prep and a charter elementary school also run by Stanford, Mr. Lewin said. A nearby Boys & Girls Club has a gym and after-school programs.

But a parcel of 0.9 acres will not be enough for the new high school, Mr. Lewin said, adding: "We're going to have to buy more."

Mr. LaVigne acknowledged the district's ongoing search for more Peninsula property, but added that the Myrtle Street parcel could easily contain a school of 13 or 14 1,000-square-foot classrooms and 4,000 to 5,000 square feet of office space. ■

Jensen  Hauser

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**NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND
 NOTICE OF PUBLIC UPDATE AND INFORMATION ITEM
 FOR THE DERRY MIXED USE PROJECT
 CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION**

MEETING OF OCTOBER 22, 2007

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Division of the City of Menlo Park, California received an application on September 24, 2007, as described below:

Rescind Previous Approvals, General Plan Amendment, Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Rezoning, Planned Development Permit, Major Subdivision, Development Agreement, and Environmental Review/O'Brien at Derry Lane, LLC/550 to 580 Oak Grove Avenue and 540 to 570 Derry Lane:

- 1) Rescind the August 29, 2006 and September 12, 2006 approvals for a General Plan Amendment, Zoning Ordinance Amendment, Rezoning, Planned Development Permit, Major Subdivision, BMR Agreement, and Heritage Tree Removal Permit;
- 2) General Plan Amendment to modify the El Camino Real land use designation and the associated land use intensity tables to allow the density for residential uses to exceed the base density of 18.5 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and to allow the intensity to exceed the base floor area ratio (FAR) of 75 percent on this property;
- 3) Zoning Ordinance Amendment to modify Chapter 16.57 P-D District to allow the density for residential uses to exceed the base density of 18.5 du/ac and to allow intensity to exceed the overall floor area ratio (FAR) requirements of the existing C-4 General Commercial District (Applicable to El Camino Real) zoning designation on this property;
- 4) Rezoning the property from C-4 (ECR) District to P-D (Planned Development) District;
- 5) Planned Development Permit for the demolition of existing commercial structures and to establish specific development regulations and architectural designs for the construction of:
 - 108 residential units at a density of 40 du/net acre where 18.5 du/ac is the maximum density permitted by the pre-existing zoning designation;
 - Approximately 146,075 square feet of residential gross floor area;
 - Approximately 12,650 square feet of retail/restaurant (with permitted restaurant alcohol sales) space and 12,275 square feet of non-medical office space for a total commercial gross floor area of 24,925 square feet;
 - An approximate residential FAR of 124 percent and commercial FAR of 21 percent for a total FAR of 145 percent where 75 percent is the maximum FAR permitted by the pre-existing zoning designation; and
 - Three-story building elements with a maximum building height of 40 feet where 30 feet is the maximum building height permitted by the pre-existing zoning designation; and
 - 301 on-site parking spaces in a partially submerged and below-grade parking structure where 366 parking spaces would be required by the existing C-4 (ECR) zoning designation.
- 6) Major Subdivision to merge eight existing lots, to abandon right-of-way, plan lines, and easements, to dedicate right-of-way and easements, and to create eight commercial and 108 residential condominium units;
- 7) Development Agreement to guarantee development rights associated with the requested entitlements;
- 8) Below Market Rate Agreement to provide 16 BMR units in accordance with the City's BMR Housing Program;
- 9) Heritage Tree Removal Permit to remove four on-site heritage trees, and to remove six off-site heritage trees associated with the proposed Derry Lane/Garwood Way right-of-way improvements and extension; and
- 10) Environmental Impact Report Supplement to compare the potential environmental impacts of the proposal with the certified EIR.

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.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said Planning Commission will hold a public meeting on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on **Monday, October 22, 2007** at 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon.

Documents related to these items may be inspected by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Department of Community Development, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call 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_dmu.htm

DATED: October 4 2007 Deanna Chow, Senior Planner
 If there are any questions, please call the Planning Division at (650) 330-6702.
 Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on October 10, 2007.

OBITUARIES

Calvin Roper

Veterinarian

Calvin Barclay Roper, 85, who built the original Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital across from the Menlo Park train station, died Aug. 11 at the Palo Alto Veterans Affairs Hospital.



Calvin Roper

Dr. Roper built the animal hospital in 1962, shortly after he and his wife and family moved to California from Connecticut.

Dr. Roper was born in Washington, D.C., to Frank and Sarah Roper. His father died when he was two months old. He grew up on Long Island and attended Cornell University, earning a degree in veterinary medicine in 1946.

During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy.

In 1948 Dr. Roper married Kay Moreing. Their three children were born in Greenwich, Connecticut, close to where Dr. Roper built his first veterinary hospital.

In Menlo Park, Mid-Peninsula Animal Hospital included an upstairs apartment so there was always someone on the premises to help with overnight patients.

He was a honorary lifetime member of the Peninsula Veterinary Medical Association. He retired in 1980.

Dr. Roper enjoyed attending Menlo Park Rotary Club meetings, riding his bike to Stanford football and baseball games, taking part in Cornell Club events, and playing golf at Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club, say family members.

For more than 20 years, he raised a variety of oak trees, which he donated to local golf courses, parks and residences.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Kay, of Menlo Park; son Calvin Roper Jr. of Kaysville, Utah; daughters Kris Baird of Santa Rosa and Linda Roper of

Menlo Park; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Donations in his memory may be sent to: VA "Caring for Veterans-GPS 2803", 795 Willow Road 11-NH, Menlo Park, Ca 94025 or Guide Dogs for the Blind, PO Box 3950, San Rafael, CA 94912.

Janet Whittaker

Longtime Menlo Park resident

Friends and family are invited to celebrate the life of Janet Budde Whittaker, a resident of Sharon Heights since 1961. She died Sept. 24 at age 87.

The celebration will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 14, at Trellis Restaurant, 1077 El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

Ms. Whittaker was involved in the family business, the Peninsula Ad/Visor in Redwood City. A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., she started her business career at Street & Smith Publishing in New York City as an administrative assistant in the advertising department.



Janet Whittaker

While living in Menlo Park, she was a member of the Stanford University Medical Center Auxiliary, volunteering in the gift shop. She was honored for contributing more than 7,000 hours of service.

Ms. Whittaker was an avid golfer, reader and bridge player.

She is survived by her children, Rory Whittaker of Menlo Park, Wendy Whittaker of Mountain View, and John Whittaker of Belmont; sister Jeanne Budde Simmons of Smokerise, New Jersey; five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. She was the widow of the late Ralph R. Whittaker Jr. Their son, Jerry, died in February 2000.

Private funeral services will be held at Alta Mesa Cemetery in Palo Alto. Donations in Ms. Whittaker's name may be sent to the Alzheimer's Association, 1060 La Avenida St., Mountain View, CA 94043.

JAMES L. TOILLION

Born in 1922, and long-time resident of La Jolla, California, passed away peacefully on October 3, 2007. A Navy veteran of WWII, he enjoyed a long and distinguished career as an international banking executive with Bank of America.

Predeceased by his first wife, Carolyn, Mr. Toillion is survived by his second wife, Marjorie; his children, James Toillion, Meredith Toillion, Jeffrey Toillion, and Lindsay Wahlborg; and four grandchildren.

He is deeply missed by his loving family and by all who knew this kind, endearingly witty and intelligent gentleman.

PAID OBITUARY

Briefs: Fire damages home

A one-alarm fire, reported at 6:57 a.m. Monday at 1271 Carolton Ave. in Menlo Park, displaced five people Monday. Five fire engines and a ladder truck responded, and the fire was under control by 7:10 a.m., said Chief Harold Schapelhoumen of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

"It appears the fire started in the dryer, either from lint build up or an electrical malfunction," he said.

The American Red Cross has found temporary housing for the residents. Estimated damage is \$50,000 to the structure and \$20,000 to contents.

— Bay City News Service

Cops interrupt theft

Menlo Park police arrested two men Oct. 4 after interrupting an apparent theft of copper grounding wires from transmission towers at a Pacific Gas & Electric substation at 2000 Willow Road in Menlo Park.

Police arrested San Leandro residents Robert Greer, 31, and Robert Malitz, 42, on charges of grand theft, felony vandalism and interfering with power lines.

Menlo Park police officers arrived at the substation at about 10 p.m. after receiving a request for assistance from the California Highway Patrol. The

CHP had detained one of the men on stolen vehicle charges. A search of the area turned up the second man.

Police ask anyone with information to call 330-6300 or the anonymous tip line at 330-6395.

SPORTS ONLINE

■ Back on familiar Menlo-Atherton High turf after a tough North Peninsula road trip last weekend, Vikings Pop Warner football squads more

than held their own with visiting Sunnyvale teams Oct. 6-7. ■ See details on this and other sports news on www.AlmanacNews.com.

POLICE CALLS

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

ATHERTON

Burglary reports:

- Construction trailer broken into, 100 block of Atherton Ave., Oct. 1.
- Window of vehicle smashed, 100 block of Park Drive, Oct. 1.

Grand theft reports:

- Laptop computer stolen over summer, Las Lomas Elementary School at 299 Alameda de las Pulgas, Oct. 1.
- Packed boxes missing, first block of Callado Way, Oct. 4.

MENLO PARK

Burglary reports: Stereo and other items stolen from two vehicles, 600 block of San Mateo Drive and 600 block of Wallea Drive, Oct. 3.

Fraud report: Unauthorized use of credit card, 900 block of Fremont Place, Oct. 1.

WOODSIDE

Incident report: Engagement ring valued at \$20,000 missing, 3000 block of Sand Hill Road, Sept. 28.

Burglary report: Tools and equipment worth \$4,000 stolen from padlocked cargo container at construction site, 3000 block of Woodside Road, Oct. 1.

JANET BUDDE WHITTAKER

87, left us on September 24, 2007. Janet was born on March 20, 1920 in Brooklyn, New York. She was the loving wife of the late Ralph R. Jr. for 41 years. Together they raised and are survived by their 3 children, Rory (Ann), John (Kathy), & Wendy. Their late son Jerry, passed away in February 2000.

She adored her grandchildren, Jeff (Cara), Laura (Kevin), Christine, Greg & Luke. She cherished her 3 great grandchildren, Cate, Noah & Mallie. She also was the loving sister of Jeanne Budde Simmons & loving aunt of Susan Pappert & Jeffrey Malyniak.

She started her business career at Street & Smith Publishing in New York City, as an administrative assistant in the advertising department. She was also involved with the family business, The Peninsula Ad/Visor in Redwood City. She was a member of

Stanford University Medical Center Auxiliary, volunteering in the gift Shop. She was honored for contributing over 7,000 hours of service.

Janet was an avid golfer, reader, and bridge player. One of the great joys of her life was entertaining family & friends.

The family wishes to thank Corinthians of Menlo Park at 800 Roble Street, for their loving care of our Mother.

In lieu of flowers donations in memory of Janet may be sent to: Alzheimer's Association, 1060 La Avenida Street, Mt. View, CA 94043.

Private funeral services will be held for the family at Alta Mesa, Palo Alto.

We welcome family and friends to come and celebrate Janet's life on Sunday, October 14th at Trellis Restaurant at 1077 El Camino Real, Menlo Park from 3 to 6:00pm.

PAID OBITUARY



Len Tillem, Esq.

Len Tillem & Associates
Host of KGO's "Legaltalk"



Michael Gilfix, Esq.

Gilfix & La Poll Associates, LLP
Stanford Law School
34 yrs Experience

KGO's Len Tillem & Michael Gilfix

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The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior

Court of San Mateo County to publish public notices

of a governmental and legal nature, as stated in

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area are \$50 for one year and \$80 for two years.



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

All views must include a home address and contact phone number. Published letters will also appear on the web site, www.TheAlmanacOnline.com, and occasionally on the Town Square forum.

TOWN SQUARE FORUM

POST your views on the Town Square forum at www.TheAlmanacOnline.com

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your views to: letters@AlmanacNews.com. Indicate if it is a letter to be published.

MAIL

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

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

Menlo Park cops need help

Stung by internal dissension and damaged by an exodus of experienced officers — some seeking higher pay and more opportunities, some retiring, and others disgruntled over perceived problems in the department — the Menlo Park Police Department is facing some of the toughest times in its history.

The understaffed department's line officers are pulling extra patrol shifts that sometimes keep them working 12 or more hours for five days in a row. As a result, the city is paying \$1.29 million for overtime in the fiscal year that ended June 30 — 28 percent over projections.

EDITORIAL
The opinion of The Almanac

As noted in the Almanac's Sept. 26 cover story, 30 officers have left the department since 2004, and new recruits are far from making up the losses. When fully staffed, the department has 50 sworn officers, but barely 40 are available now, and 20 have fewer than two years of experience. The department should have 30 officers available for patrol, but now has only 23, which means special units such as narcotics and traffic enforcement no longer exist.

Chief Bruce Goitia said six new officers — three new recruits and three from other departments — are on the way, but expected retirements mean that the force probably won't show a net gain in numbers. And with the current pay structure, the city will be lucky to hold onto the new officers for any length of time, given today's challenging environment for police recruiting.

Beginning compensation for new Menlo Park officers is far below many others in the area, including Redwood City, which

offers a base salary of almost \$86,000 a year to start, compared with \$70,000 in Menlo Park. A Menlo Park sergeant earns less than the \$84,680 base pay of a patrolman in Redwood City.

Menlo Park needs to take aggressive action now to give Chief Goitia the tools he needs to bring his department up to its allotted strength. City Manager Glen Rojas has already named a task force to study the wage packages of surrounding police departments.

That is a good start. Given the tough recruiting environment — California faces a shortage of up to 13,000 police officers by 2010 — it is time to abandon the city's position of setting its wage standard in the mid-range of what is offered in the surrounding area. That strategy obviously is not working, and if the city is to catch up, it will have to ante up more dollars.

In addition, Chief Goitia and Mr. Rojas should take a hard look at all the department's personnel, and make sure there are no "bad apples" or morale-sapping grudges remaining from the regimes of prior chiefs. In addition, Chief Goitia soon will have to find a replacement for his second in command, Cmdr. Terri Molakides, who will retire next year after 30 years on the force. Her knowledge and stature in the department will be hard to replace.

Despite its seemingly safe reputation, Menlo Park recently has seen random shootings and other violence in areas that traditionally have been far removed from crime. And other sectors of town have plenty of demand for a well-trained and responsive police force. But right now, the MPPD is seriously understaffed. The City Council should make it a top priority to bring the force up to its full complement of personnel as soon as possible.

LETTERS

Our readers write

A theater option not pursued

Editor:

There was another option for the Park Theater in Menlo Park that was not pursued.

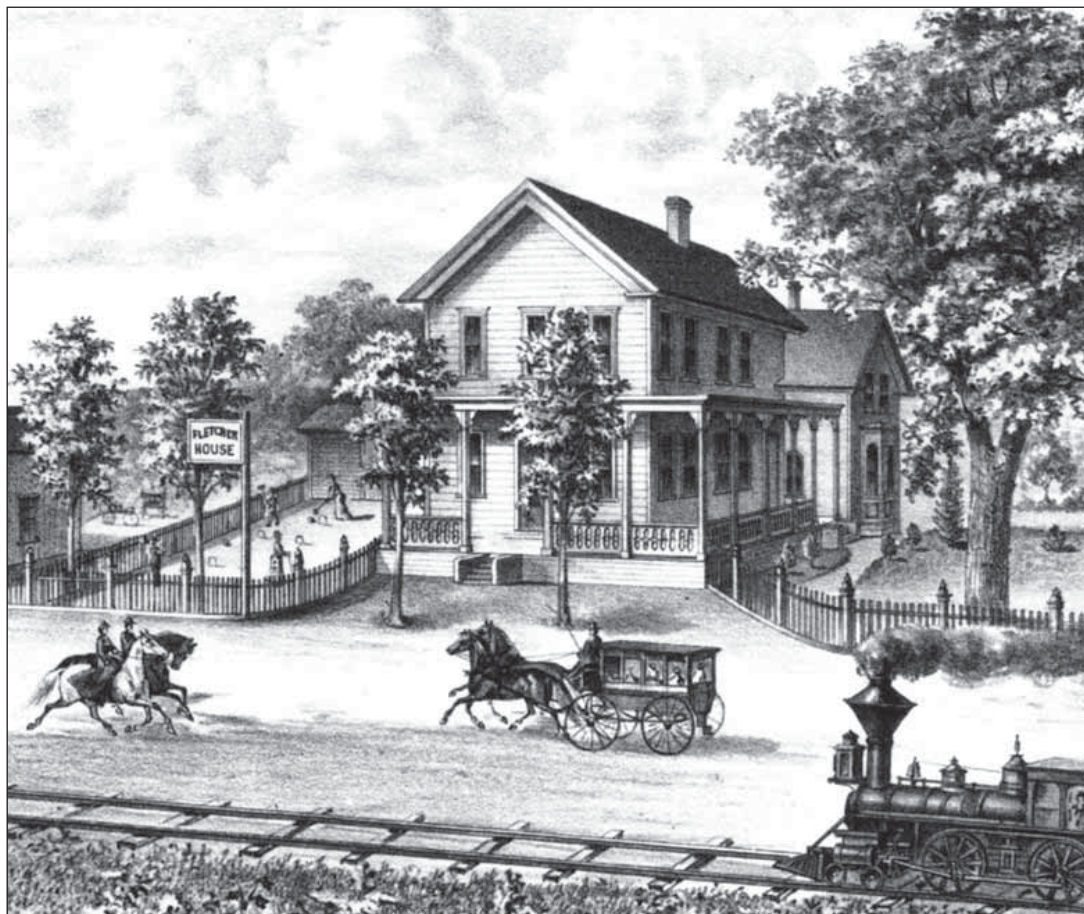
As of mid-August there was interest in purchasing, restoring and reopening the Park as a nonprofit performing arts/movie theater. Quite a bit of research by the promoter of this idea showed this was a highly viable plan. This option was well-known to Mayor Fergusson, who chose to promote the dance studio conversion.

It's a shame that the nonprofit idea wasn't fully vetted and presented to the City Council along with the dance studio proposal. The public and council could then have compared the two and made a decision based on the best interests of the theater and the community.

As it stands, the current deal is great for Mr. Duncan and his mom's dance academy. Personally, I was hoping for a beautifully restored theater that the whole community could enjoy.

Elizabeth Lasensky
Fremont Avenue, Menlo Park

See **LETTERS**, next page



Menlo Park Historical Association

Our Regional Heritage

In Menlo Park's early days, development went up around the railroad tracks in what is now downtown. The Fletcher House was one of several boarding homes in the area.

LETTERS

continued from previous page

Not a fan of buying the Park Theater

Editor:

Menlo Park Mayor Kelly Fergusson and City Council members Heyward Robinson and Rich Cline last week voted to move forward on a plan to use \$1.4 million in city funds to purchase the cinder block Park Theater building on El Camino Real.

Part of this deal is that the Menlo Academy of Dance Studio will run its business out of this building. Meanwhile, a few weeks ago, the city's police department issued a report that said the organization continues to lose officers to other cities that pay more. At that meeting, some council members suggested that perhaps the utility users tax should be reinstated to increase compensation in the police department.

I don't get it. Why should our tax dollars be used to buy a building on El Camino to be used for a private enterprise when we may be asked to pay more taxes through the UUT to fund an essential service like the police? There seems to be a disconnect with the use and prioritization of public funds.

I hope the residents follow this Park Theater issue closely. This is a wake-up call. If our city has \$1.4 million to throw around, they should put it into priorities like essential services (public safety and infrastructure). And, instead of raising the ill-gotten UUT, why don't they focus on rolling out the red carpet to bring sales tax dollars into our city so we don't need to impose more tax on the residents?

Mary Gilles
Hermosa Way, Menlo Park

A waste to spend \$200,000 on El Camino study

Editor:

The Menlo Park City Council has lost it!

Funding a \$200,000 study to tell them what to do with El Camino Real proves it. El Camino has a problem handling the volume of traffic it carries. The shrinking of El Camino from three lanes to two at Valparaiso on the north and Live Oak on the south causes this.

Opening up El Camino to three lanes, which it once was, would solve this "hour glass" problem. We then could invite the business owners and El Camino landlords into the discussion as their livelihoods are surely going to be affected by these changes. This could spur

private investment in redevelopment of the area. Common sense would save the city of Menlo Park \$200,000.

Pat White
Santa Cruz Avenue,
Menlo Park

A response to the mayor on parking

Editor's Note: The following letter is a response to Mayor Kelly Fergusson's letter in last week's Almanac:

Dear Ms. Fergusson:

First, let me express my appreciation for your response to my letter of Sept. 26 regarding parking in downtown Menlo Park. I would like to correct you though, in regard to my main point.

The parking officer who issued me a citation said he was "doing his job," perhaps rudely, but certainly and unnecessarily, aggressively. There is no doubt in my mind that he was playing games with the public with his little black box — simply because he could.

But that aside, my main concern is the "tax" that your city is imposing on people trying to use your downtown shops. You are indirectly driving paying customers away from your downtown area.

Will I try to hold another business meeting in Menlo Park with that \$37 tax hanging over my head? Of course not. I'll meet with my business associates at another venue, perhaps the Stanford Shopping Center, but there are many other viable locations outside Menlo Park.

I am well aware that you must attempt to control the use of the (currently available) parking space, but to "control" a half-

empty parking lot with an insidious black box that can time my presence to the second is nonsense; and frankly, it's offensive.

What in the world happened to common sense? Can your police department tell their officer to back off when the parking lot has space available? If that is selective enforcement, then sure, why not? Certainly, "taxing" someone \$37 for using a half-empty parking lot makes far less sense when you have local stores trying to make ends meet.

James S. Walton
Sebastopol

Disgruntled parker has taken business elsewhere

Editor:

When I read Jim Walton's letter about Menlo Park's overzealous parking enforcement employees targeting visitors, my initial reaction was, "Hey, Menlo Park is equal opportunity — it treats its residents the same way!"

A few years ago, I got a \$35 ticket on the day before Thanksgiving outside of Draeger's for parking an hour and eight minutes — yes, eight minutes over the limit on a day when just getting through the checkout lines is an ordeal. After having spent hundreds of dollars at a local establishment, my surprise and outrage were only compounded by the sense of glee I received from the city employee issuing tickets to other pre-Thanksgiving shoppers. Finding cars parked beyond an hour outside of a grocery store on that particular day is like shooting fish in a barrel.

Has the city ever heard of "latitude," and does it under-

stand the concept of pooping in one's own nest? What message is the city trying to send?

Anyway, I certainly learned my lesson. This coming Thanksgiving, I won't be easy prey for Menlo Park, because I'll be doing what I've done every year since that incident — buying my Thanksgiving meal at Robert's in Woodside.

Ian Hersey
Hillside Avenue, Menlo Park

Unfair to punish city for parking official's actions

Editor:

As a small-business owner (not based in Menlo Park) and an almost lifelong Peninsula resident, I was dismayed by Jim Walton's Sept. 26 guest opinion.

I completely agree with his objection to being ticketed under the circumstances he described. It was an extreme situation. With all due respect however, his position to avoid Menlo Park in the future, and to encourage his business associates to do the same, is equally extreme.

Punishing all Menlo Park businesses for the behavior of one city employee, and justifying it by saying, "you elected these folks," is a huge stretch. Menlo Park deserves a second chance.

And so do you, Mr. Walton. Otherwise you are depriving yourself of doing business in one of the many great Peninsula towns.

Georgia Stigall
Skyline Boulevard, La Honda

Less fat, sugar will cure childhood obesity

Editor:

As we mark the sixth anniver-

sary of the terrorist attacks on the United States, a much larger threat to our nation is rearing its ugly head.

Researchers at Atlanta's Morehouse School of Medicine have just reported a rising rate of high blood pressure among America's children. Based on surveys of nearly 30,000 children aged 8 to 17 by the National Center for Health Statistics, the report was to be published in the Sept. 25 issue of the American Heart Association journal.

More than 400,000 American children are developing high blood pressure, a chronic precursor to heart attack and stroke that has traditionally afflicted only adults. The leading cause is the childhood obesity epidemic brought on by a diet grounded in sugary foods and drinks and fat-laden meat and dairy products.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 90 percent of children consume excessive amounts of fat and only 15 percent eat the minimum daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. It's no wonder that most children are overweight and one in six is obese. Childhood dietary habits become lifelong addictions.

Parents should insist that children consume more whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and fresh fruits. They should work with their PTAs to demand healthful meals, snacks, and vending machine items in schools. Helpful resources are provided at www.choiceusa.net.

Miles Barne
Sharon Park Drive,
Menlo Park

Another plan to preserve Park Theater

Here's what people are saying on Town Square:

Posted by Hopeful, a resident of a Menlo Park neighborhood.

If Hilligoss can preserve the theater as a theater, that's great. It really was lovely inside.

I hope he isn't looking to the city for a real estate loan. He should be able to find financing on his own. This has been a waste of time, and irresponsible when other parts of the city need a lot of attention (El Camino, commercial zone east of 101, sales tax revenue-generating businesses rather than more offices for services).

Former officer says MPPD should move forward

Posted by G. Raggio, a resident of a Menlo Park neighborhood.

I was with the Menlo Park Police Department for over 13 years. I wrote for the Almanac for 10 years and offered candid opinions about my job, my city, its officers, and its citizens.

The culture in which I evolved from rookie to veteran was one that policed its own atti-

tude and the performance of its duties. There will always be those who never should have been supervisors or chiefs — they make up a small portion of the force. Yes, they are the decision-makers, and in time they either will or will not determine a better path for the departments they serve.

It's best that we begin to celebrate the brave individuals who insist on doing their job despite the controversy and clear lack of monetary competition with neighboring departments. The milk has been spilt. Have we learned that when committed officers begin to leave, we must listen, investigate the reasons, and pay attention to why?

Grateful for editorial about chloramine

Posted by Linda, a resident of another community.

Thank you for the editorial about the growing concern over serious health problems caused by chloramine. The EPA's assertion that chloramine has been safely used for

many years in other parts of the country is a 'spin' on the facts that chloramine has previously been used in much smaller doses and when dosage levels were raised high enough to be an effective disinfectant and people com-

plained, they were all told that their symptoms couldn't possibly be caused by chloramine and that no one else had complained. I have heard this from many people all across the U.S. and from Scotland.

When people find the Web site, www.chloramine.org, they are relieved to find they are not alone.

As more and more evidence comes out against chloramine (direct, immediate health effects, disintegration of plumbing, and long term effects from the newly discovered disinfection by products), why does the EPA and CDC think it is okay for us to continue to be exposed to chloramine?

Please write to your Congressional representative and Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein and ask them to look into the situation and make the EPA stop stonewalling and correct their mistake.

TownSquare

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