

**HISTORIC DAY:** Four local teams win Central Coast  
Section water polo championships Saturday. Page 8

# The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY

AND WOODSIDE

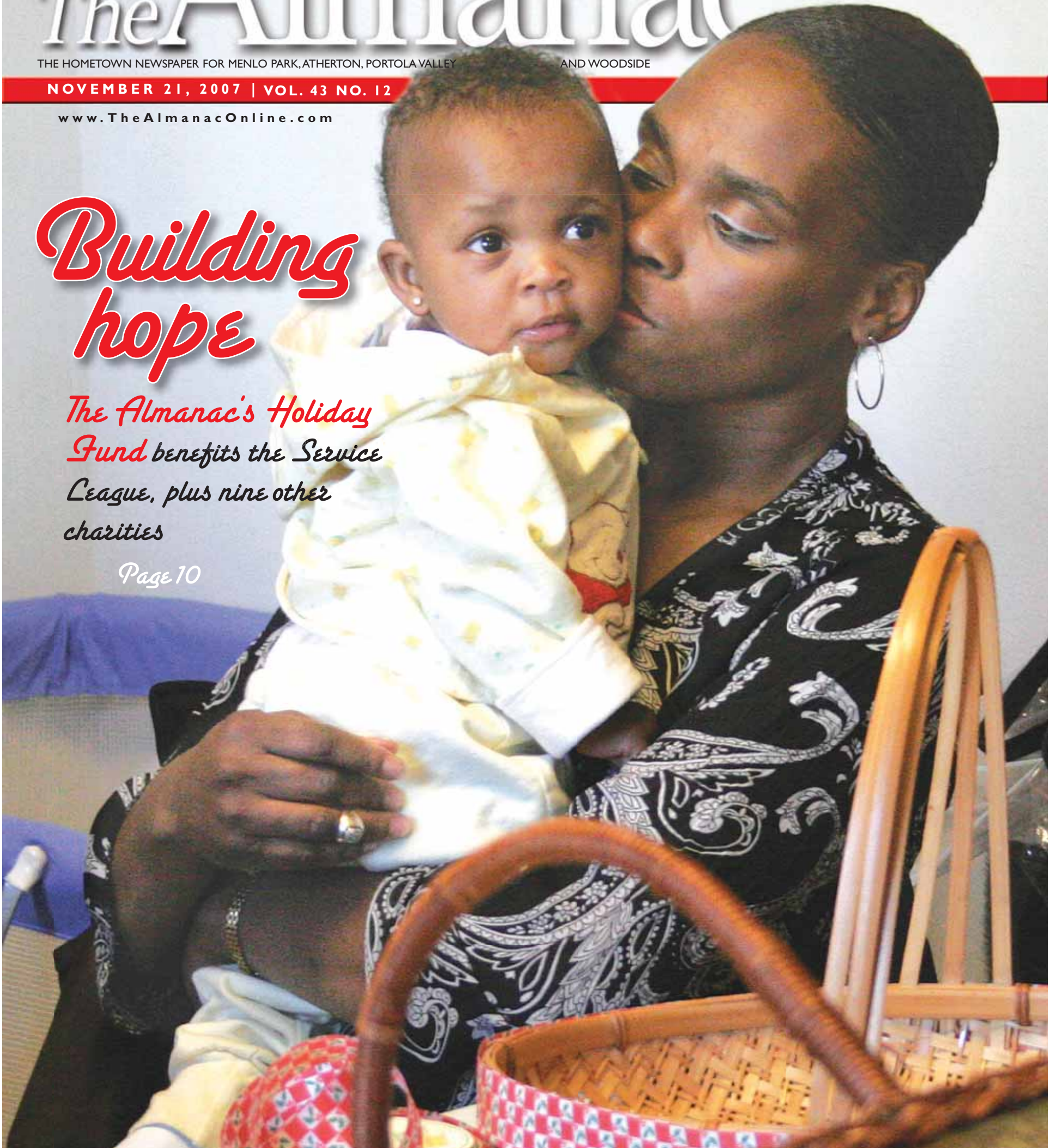
NOVEMBER 21, 2007 | VOL. 43 NO. 12

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## *Building hope*

*The Almanac's Holiday  
Fund benefits the Service  
League, plus nine other  
charities*

*Page 10*





## *Happy Thanksgiving*

Thanksgiving is the time of year to reflect and give thanks for all of our blessings. May you enjoy the spirit of the season in the loving company of family and friends.

Wishing you many happy memories on this Thanksgiving holiday.

**MENLO PARK** | 1550 El Camino Real, Suite 100 650.462.1111  
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# Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

## FIRST SHOT



Photo by Keith Peters, Palo Alto Weekly

### Way to go

Members of the Menlo-Atherton High School girls' water polo team celebrate their first Central Coast Section championship following a 10-5 win over Leland on Saturday in the Division I title game at Independence High in San Jose. Four local teams won CCS titles on Saturday. See story on **Page 8**.

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### On the cover

Trina and her baby Cy have new hope for the future thanks to the Service League and its Hope House program for recovering addicts. Almanac photo by Veronica Weber. Story starts on **Page 10**.

### CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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**THE ALMANAC** (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Wednesday by Embarcadero Publishing Co., 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-4455. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices. Adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for San Mateo County, the Almanac is delivered free to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside. Voluntary subscriptions for \$30 per year or \$50 per 2 years are welcome from residents of the above circulation area. Subscription rates for businesses and for residents of other communities is \$50 per year and \$80 for two years. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Almanac, P.O. Box 7008, Menlo Park, CA 94026-7008. Copyright ©2006 by Embarcadero Publishing Co., All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

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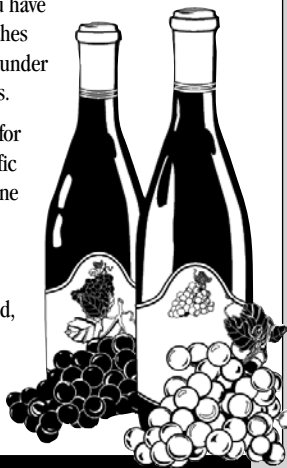
**\$1.99** ea.

## Storing Wine

Kitchen refrigerators maintain a temperature of about 38 degrees F. (plus or minus 2 degrees), which may be fine for chilling wine for tonight's dinner, but it is too cold for storing wine for more than a few days. When temperatures rise above 70 degrees F., wines age quickly. If you purchase wine by the case, therefore, a wine refrigerator can be useful. Consider how many bottles you plan to keep on hand and how large a space you have for wine storage. Wine refrigerators vary in size from 15 to 24 inches wide and from 34-inch-tall models, which hold 30 bottles and fit under the counter, to 84-inch-tall models that can hold up to 100 bottles.

At ROBERTS MARKET, we can advise you on the proper storage for wines. It may vary from wine to wine and it depends on your specific needs such as the amount of wine you wish to store. After you're done browsing the best wine selection in the area, don't hesitate to ask the best way to store it. We offer a wide variety of food from all over the world. We are your source for specialty foods, including Indian, Asian, European, and other specialties. We have everything you need, most importantly our staff is dedicated to your satisfaction.

*Hint: Because daylight can harm wine, do not select a wine refrigerator with a glass door if it will be positioned in direct sunlight.*



**TOM – WINE & GROCERY**

## WINE

### Fall Wines

*Perhaps no other meal has as many complex flavors, or aromas, as the Thanksgiving Day meal. This means that no single wine will complement all the different tastes and textures. This is a great opportunity to serve whatever wine(s) you like best. I always recommend Pinot Noirs for adaptability, but this year I'm focusing on Grenache and Pinot Gris. This year, try something different. Here are a few suggestions.*

2006	Hendry Pinot Gris, Hendry Ranch, Napa	\$18.99
2006	Palmina Pinot Grigio, Alisos Vnyd, Santa Barbara	\$18.99
2006	Willakenze Pinot Gris, Willamette Valley	\$19.99
2003	Dom. Ostertay Pinot Gris "Fronholz", Alsace	\$38.99
2004	Ethan Grenache, Vogelzang Vnyd, Santa Ynez	\$21.99
2005	Unti Grenache, Dry Creek Valley	\$27.99
2005	McPrince Myers Grenache, Santa Barbara Co.	\$31.49
2005	Broc Cellars Grenache, Dry Stack Vnyd	\$34.99
2004	Dom. La Barroche "Pure", Chateauneuf-du-Pape	\$56.99

*Beaujolais Nouveau arrives November 15th!!!*

*NOTE: The above wines assort for a 10% case discount*

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**1 OZ. AMERICAN HACKLE CAVIAR \$20.50** oz.

# Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Menlo Park urged to act on global warming

■ Green Ribbon task force releases recommendations; City Council to discuss them Tuesday.

By Renee Batti  
Almanac News Editor

Push for multi-story, high-density housing projects downtown. Streamline permit processes for commercial and residential landlords upgrading their properties with green technologies and practices.

Strengthen the Heritage Tree Ordinance to more effectively protect old, healthy trees. Establish turf limitations and water-efficient landscaping requirements.

Support high-speed rail, eliminate solar permit fees for residential and commercial properties, and require businesses with

high levels of waste to recycle.

Will the city of Menlo Park be willing and financially able to support these priorities to help reduce the community's carbon footprint? That's a question the City Council and staff will be addressing over the coming months as they review these and a lengthy list of other recommendations by a citizens' greenhouse gas emissions-reduction task force.

The Menlo Park Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee released its report and 130 recommendations last week, highlighting 32 top priorities on the list.

The council on Nov. 20 will

decide whether to direct staff to evaluate the proposals, which would continue the process that began in March with task force members rolling up their sleeves and spending hundreds of hours of volunteer time try-

**Top recommendation:**  
achieve 'climate neutrality' in the community by 2030.

ing to figure out ways for the city to address global warming at the local level.

It's likely that the council will give staff the green light to study the proposals. The task force is a result of the council's listing "environmental stewardship"

among its top nine goals last January, and council members allocated \$100,000 for this fiscal year for "green initiatives" recommended by the task force.

The 130 recommendations constitute the vehicle by which the Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee hopes to reach what the newly released report calls its top-ranked recommendation: "To adopt a goal of achieving 'climate neutrality' in our community by 2030, and develop a Climate Action Plan to ... achieve this goal."

Climate neutrality is, generally, balancing activities and behavior in a way that will offset the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions on the atmosphere.

Resident Mitch Slomiak, a key member of the green ribbon committee, said committee members arrived at three pri-

mary strategies to reach the climate neutrality goal, beginning with "reducing carbon emissions (for example, through the conservation of electricity and fuel) as much as is feasible."

"Carbon sequestration" is another method, he said, and gains in that area can be achieved by planting trees and other vegetation.

The committee identified "offset programs," such as PG&E's ClimateSmart, as another critical strategy. ClimateSmart and other such programs offer individuals and businesses the option of paying a fee that would be invested in ventures that don't contribute to — and could help alleviate — global warming. These include massive

See **WARMING**, page 8

## Huge hotel complex to open in February 2009

By Rory Brown  
Almanac Staff Writer

The Rosewood Sand Hill, the 121-room hotel being built in Menlo Park off Sand Hill Road, now has a projected completion date, and estimated room prices.

Standard rooms will run \$400 to \$450 a night at the luxury hotel, which is a joint venture between Stanford University and Dallas-based Rosewood Hotels and Resorts.

Rosewood CEO and President John Scott revealed the pricing at a Nov. 15 press event at the 22-acre site, and said the hotel, attached health spa and restaurant should be up and

running by February 2009.

Standard rooms will be about 550 square feet, Mr. Scott said.

The hotel will also offer 8,000-square-feet of meeting space, and Stanford is constructing 100,000 of office space on the site.

"This hotel is going to be spectacular, and we're very excited about it," Mr. Scott said. "It's a beautiful site, and we like where we are."

Mr. Scott said people visiting nearby venture capital firms, as well as people visiting Stanford University, will give the hotel ample customers.

"We're confident we'll have

See **HOTEL**, page 16



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

John Scott, the president and CEO of Rosewood Hotels and Resorts, said the 121-room Rosewood Sand Hill hotel, is projected to open February 2009.

## Portola Valley council approves new creek setback rules

By David Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

As new or extensively remodeled homes go up on properties along Portola Valley's three major creeks — Los Trancos, Corte Madera and Sausal — the wild corridors along the banks should become increasingly well defined after recent action by the Town Council.

The council unanimously approved a resolution establishing

minimum but flexible creek setbacks for new construction of 30 feet, 45 feet and 55 feet for parcels that are, respectively, less than one acre, between one and 2.5 acres, and greater than 2.5 acres in size.

(Councilman Richard Merk recused himself from the decision because he lives along a creek.)

The rules are the product of several years of consideration by the town's Planning Commission

and members of the public, and reflect the town's longstanding interest in healthy creeks.

The goals, as stated in the Nov. 14 resolution, include keeping new buildings safe from bank failure and flooding, allowing room for creek bank maintenance, and allowing natural plant and animal life to thrive.

"As these homes turn over, as they are replaced, the goal is to

maintain a reasonable wildlife corridor," Commissioner Ann Wengert told the council and an audience of about 20.

The setbacks allow property owners to add gentle slopes to the banks, if necessary, to slow the creeks down, added Commissioner Linda Elkind. "Some of our creek banks have slipped and been eroded 5 to 15 feet since the late 1990s," she said. "You can't get (the energy out of the

creek) if you don't have a buffer."

Before voting, Councilman Ed Davis was brief while lifting his hands in prayer: "It's been 10 years," he said. "Thank you."

"The balance of this has been exquisitely done," added Councilman Steve Toben.

### Flexibility built in

The new regulations allow a homeowner a choice of where to start counting the feet of the

See **SETBACK**, page 8



KATIE  
BEAT CANCER

CURRENTLY:  
BEATING PAR.

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For many athletes, the greatest victory lies in surpassing your own limitations. For Katie, an avid golfer, tennis player and dancer, every day is that kind of victory.

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During her stay at Packard Children's, Katie made new friends and set her sights on a future profession as an oncology nurse. And from what we've seen, she's got the drive to achieve anything she puts her mind to. Visit [www.lpch.org](http://www.lpch.org) for more information.

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## Driver pleads 'no contest' in accident that injured MP cyclist MaryAnn Levenson

A sentence of up to 16 months in state prison may be coming in January to the Hillsborough man in a pickup truck who struck and severely injured Menlo Park bicycle racer MaryAnn Levenson 11 months ago.

Walter Sorenson, 76 years old at the time of the accident, avoided a jury trial by agreeing to plead "no contest" to a conviction of felony drunken driving, said San Mateo County Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m. Jan. 25 in the Redwood City courtroom of Superior Court Judge John Grandsaert. Mr. Sorenson remains out of custody on



**MaryAnn Levenson's** severe physical trauma belied a hardy spirit: She was back up and racing less than three months later.

\$50,000 bail.

Ms. Levenson was 48 on Dec. 23, 2006, when she was

hit from behind by Mr. Sorenson's truck in the eastbound bike lane on Sand Hill Road just east of the Interstate 280 interchange.

The truck dragged her some 35 feet. Among her extensive injuries: a fractured pelvis, broken vertebrae, a shattered larynx and extensive damage to one of her feet, part of which had to be reattached.

Her severe physical trauma belied a hardy spirit: Ms. Levenson was back up and racing less than three months later.

She is now a member of Menlo Park's Bicycle Commission, which advises the City Council on existing and planned bike facilities in the city.

## Atherton mayor resigns from City Council

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

**T**hank you, everybody. It's been an interesting nine years."

With those words, Atherton Mayor Alan Carlson ended his tenure on the Atherton City Council early Thursday morning.

Mr. Carlson announced at the beginning of the Nov. 14 City Council meeting that it would be his last council meeting, and five and half hours later at 12:25 a.m. he accepted a round of applause from the handful of town staff and members of the public in the Town Council Chambers. Then he collected his name plaque and council

binder, and stepped down off the dais.

Mr. Carlson told the Almanac on Nov. 8 that he had sold his house and planned to resign with three years left on his third four-year term on the council. "There's a place we found in the

*"There's a place we found in the Carmel area, and it was a nice opportunity,"*

ATHERTON MAYOR ALAN CARLSON



Carmel area, and it was a nice opportunity," he said of his decision to move from Atherton's Lindenwood neighborhood.

Mr. Carlson is the longest-serving member of the current council.

While it will probably be a week or two before he hands in his official resignation letter, Mr. Carlson said he does not plan to participate in the council's special closed session meeting on Friday, Nov. 16, regarding the search for a new city manager.

"I don't think I should participate in that, since I won't be around," Mr. Carlson said.

Atherton's been without a permanent city manager since Jim Robinson retired at the

end of July.

Mr. Carlson said that, despite his move, he'll continue his job as an employment attorney with Littler & Mendelson in San Jose, where he's worked for the past 34 years. ■

## Chop Keenan named chairman of Menlo College board

Menlo College alumnus Charles "Chop" Keenan III of Woodside has joined the college's board of trustees and has been named chairman of the board.

Mr. Keenan is president of

Keenan Land Co., which he founded in 1968. For more than 40 years, he has been responsible for the development of major office, retail and residential projects throughout Silicon Val-

ley and the Bay Area.

He graduated from Menlo College's School of Business in 1966. He and his wife, Annette, are the parents of two adult children.

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



Should I buy a new home or an old charmer?

**Q:** Dear Gloria, We are undecided about buying a charming old Victorian in a lovely, mature neighborhood. What are your thoughts about buying older instead of newer homes?

life offered by beautifully established neighborhoods, convenient shops, prized schools, and other amenities heighten the attraction. These desirable qualities can pose a certain lure mere newness does not.

— C.W.

**A:** Certain buyers are attached to the romance and allure of buying charming older homes. Sometimes affectionately called "The Grand Old Ladies," you might recognize them better as Victorian, English Tudor, French Country, and the like.

In older, established localities, people know the values because the market is based on years of high demand. Vintage or classic homes are desirable for the same reasons certain individuals invest in prized antique furniture and automobiles - because of appreciation, quality craftsmanship, and uniqueness.

Often these "charmings" out price newer homes. But style and character alone do not explain why old is chosen over new. One of the key attractions is location. The quality of

It takes special knowledge when buying an older home; it's not for everyone. Be sure to have the home inspected by a licensed contractor before closing escrow.

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



### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD

Mid-Term Review of Las Pulgas Community Development (Redevelopment) Project Area  
Five-Year Implementation Plan

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Community Development Agency Board (Redevelopment Agency Board) of the City of Menlo Park, California is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the following item:

**Mid-Term Review of the Redevelopment Implementation Plan for the Las Pulgas Community Development Project Area (Redevelopment Project Area).**

The hearing will be held in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California on **Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.** or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place any persons wishing to comment may appear at the hearing and will be afforded an opportunity to be heard. The hearing may be continued from time to time until completed.

The hearing is being conducted to receive testimony of all interested parties for the purpose of: (1) Reviewing the Redevelopment Plan and the corresponding Five-Year Implementation Plan (fiscal years 2004-05 through 2008-09) for the Redevelopment Project Area; and (2) Evaluating the progress of the Redevelopment Project Area.

The Redevelopment Plan was originally adopted in 1981, as amended. The Redevelopment Agency's current Five-Year Implementation Plan for the Redevelopment Project Area was adopted in December 2004.

The Agency's current Five-year Implementation Plan sets forth for the five year planning period the specific goals and objectives of the Redevelopment Agency for the Redevelopment Project Area, potential programs and projects, estimated expenditures proposed to be made during the planning period, and an explanation of how the goals and objectives, programs and expenditures will eliminate blight in the Redevelopment Project Area, and implement the affordable housing requirements of the California Community Redevelopment Law (Health & safety Code Section 33000et seq.).

This hearing is being conducted pursuant to Health and Safety Code 33490 (a) and (c) and presents an opportunity for a mid-term review of the current Five-Year Implementation plan, and a progress evaluation of the Redevelopment Project Area.

Copies of the Redevelopment Plan and the current Five-Year Implementation Plan will be available prior to the public hearing for public inspection and copying at a cost not to exceed the cost of duplication at the offices of the Redevelopment Agency, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California 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. To obtain a copy of these documents, or for further information regarding this hearing, please call **Dr. Douglas Frederick, Housing Manager**, at 650-330-6724 or email at [dfrederick@menlopark.org](mailto:dfrederick@menlopark.org).

DATED: November 1, 2007

Silvia M. Vonderlinden, City Clerk

Visit our Web site for public hearing, agenda, and staff report information:

<http://www.ci.menlo-park.ca.us>

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on November 7, 14, 21, 2007.

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TheAlmanacOnline.com

# Four water polo teams capture CCS championships

By Keith Peters

Palo Alto Weekly

## SPORTS

It was a historic day for local water polo teams at the Central Coast Section championships on Saturday at Independence High in San Jose.

The top-seeded Sacred Heart Prep girls (28-1) won their first CCS title with a 6-1 victory over No. 2 St. Francis in the Division II finals.

The No. 3-seeded Menlo-Atherton girls (21-8) won their first CCS crown with a 10-5 swamping of No. 5 Leland in the Division I finale.

The No. 4-seeded Menlo-Atherton (20-10) boys won their first CCS title with a 3-2 win over No. 2 Palo Alto in the Division I championship.

And last, but certainly not

least, the No. 1 Sacred Heart Prep boys (26-3) won their second CCS title in school history and the first since 2003 by rallying past No. 2 St. Francis, 10-8, in the Division II finals.

If there was anything to tie all four matches together, it was defense and familiarity.

"Defense, defense, defense," said SHP girls' coach Jon Burke. "It was that way all season and kind of the storyline for this game, too."

The Sacred Heart Prep girls grabbed a 5-0 lead before allowing a single goal in the third period while beating St. Francis for the third time this season.

SHP seniors Pallavi Menon (four goals) and Caroline Clark (two) provided the offense while senior goalie Lindsay Dorst (11 saves) and juniors Mary Jayne Mordell and Elizabeth Carey did a solid job of shutting down the Lancers.

Until the final minutes, the Sacred Heart Prep boys never led in their game with St. Francis and trailed by 8-6 in the fourth quarter. At that point, junior Paul Rudolph scored back-to-back goals to tie the match and senior Michael Bausback scored the eventual winning goal to give the Gators their first lead of the game with 3:25 to play.

After that, it was all defense for SHP as senior goalie Michael Wishart finished with 13 saves as the Gators topped the Lancers

for a third time this season.

For the Menlo-Atherton girls, their game plan was to get Leland sophomore Kelsey Nolan out of the game. Tough defense on the Chargers' top player forced her to pick up three fouls in the first quarter and sending her to the sidelines for the rest of the game.

"We didn't want her to beat us," said M-A coach Chris Rubin, who guided the Bears to their first-ever CCS finale in 2005 in his first season.

The Bears jumped out to a 4-1 lead and led comfortably at half-time, 7-2. Sophomore Rebecca Dorst scored four goals, sophomore Vanessa Lane scored three and junior Morgan Leech added two for the youthful Bears, who

will return five field starters plus their starting goalie next season.

The last match of the day turned into a defensive struggle as M-A senior goalie Alex Popp and Paly senior goalie Will Simon dominated the action along with their defenders.

Popp and Simon each had 13 blocks while Simon also blocked two 5-meter penalty shots by M-A senior Matt Bogott, who did score twice. Fellow senior Kevin Lane provided the winning goal with 5:45 left in the fourth quarter.

"Today was truly about our defense," said M-A coach Johnny Bega, who led the Bears to CCS championship games in two straight seasons. "It was a great defensive effort. It was a great team effort." ■

## Menlo girls' volleyball team wins CCS title

The Menlo School's girls' volleyball team successfully defended its Central Coast Section Division IV title Saturday with a 3-1 victory over Harker Academy.

Menlo won the first two games 25-19, 25-17 before stumbling in game three. The Knights

recovered to take the deciding game, 25-22.

The Division IV championship match took place at Independence High School in San Jose.

Menlo, the No. 1 seeded team in the tourney, advances to the Northern California playoffs.

— Report by Menlo School

## WARMING

continued from page 5

tree-planting efforts, forest protection and alternative energy projects. The fee would be calculated to offset the payer's own greenhouse gas emissions.

"Menlo Park alone is not going to solve the global warming problem," Mr. Slomiak said. But if it's one of a significant number of cities determined to cut its emissions to address the problem, "we will put a big dent in it," he added.

More than 40 community members participated in the committee, working on subcommittees focusing on energy and waste reduction; transportation and transit; land use and building; communications, outreach and public education; and "green" business.

Mayor Kelly Fergusson and Councilman Heyward Robinson launched and were participants on the committee.

## City's "carbon footprint"

To ascertain how big the city's

"carbon footprint" is, the City Council funded a greenhouse gas emissions study by International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI).

The results of that study, which focused on emissions in 2005, were also released last week.

The analysis found that the city's transportation and commercial sectors were the largest sources of greenhouse gas, contributing 31.5 percent and 31.3 percent, respectively.

City government operations contributed 0.5 percent of total emissions if the methane gas released from the former landfill at Bayfront Park is not included in the equation. According to a staff report, local government emissions typically account for about 2 percent of a community's total.

With Bayfront Park included in the calculation, however, the city's emissions level rises to 10 percent.

Micah Lang of ICLEI noted that "Menlo Park is doing about as much as it can do to control

emissions" at the former landfill by contracting with a firm that turns much of the escaping methane into "green electricity." The gas that can't be captured and converted, however, contributes 9.5 percent of the community's greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Lang said his firm is working to develop a protocol that will allow comparisons of communities' carbon footprints, but at this point, no comparison can be made. ■

## INFORMATION

The City Council will discuss the green ribbon committee's report and the greenhouse gas emissions analysis at its meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 20. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at 701 Laurel St., in the Menlo Park Civic Center. A summary of the committee's top 32 recommendations can be found in the staff report by going to [www.menlopark.org](http://www.menlopark.org) and clicking on City Council, then the Nov. 20 agenda.

## Menlo-Atherton rolls into CCS football semifinals

By Craig Wentz

Palo Alto Weekly

The Menlo-Atherton football team got off to a slow start, but got rolling quickly after that and didn't stop until finishing off a 38-17 victory over visiting Homestead in a Central Coast Section Large School Division opener on Saturday in Atherton.

M-A will tangle with PAL Bay Division rival Aragon (9-2) in the semifinals next Friday at Foothill College at 7 p.m. Aragon advanced with a 56-7 pounding of Piedmont Hills on Saturday.

M-A defeated Aragon, 21-14 in September in a win that eventually allowed the Bears to capture their first league crown since 1992.

Homestead (8-2-1), out of the SCVAL El Camino Division, led 10-3 early in the second quarter until McCabe and the productive Bears' offense started to click. M-A led 16-10 at halftime and 31-17 after three quarters.

McCabe tossed touchdowns to four different receivers -- senior back Jamal Wilkins (79 yards), senior receiver Matt Mosher (22), junior receiver Sam Knapp (24) and senior tight end Raymond Vainikolo (20). McCabe has thrown for 21 touchdowns this



Photo by Norbert von der Groeben

M-A's Steve Disibio and Sam Knapp celebrate after Knapp scored a touchdown Saturday.

season. He completed eight passes on Saturday for 223 yards.

Senior fullback Bobby Bustos added a touchdown and Eric Stanske produced a 36-yard field goal for the Bears.

The Bears' running game was led by Will Latu, who gained 155 yards on 15 carries. Wilkins added 65 on 10 carries. ■

## SETBACK

continued from page 5

setback: the ordinary high water level or the top of the bank — a location that can be debatable if the creek bank is complex, said Town Planner George Mader.

Structures such as buildings and decks that are already inside a setback may be rebuilt to their original dimensions on the same spot if damaged by an involuntary calam-

ity such as a flood or fire, and if the town planning staff agree with the involuntary nature of the calamity.

The same rule applies if a remodel affects less than 50 percent of the floor area (or the surface area of an impervious surface such as a driveway).

The Planning Commission can adjust these setbacks as needed to "achieve better consistency" with the purposes of the town's zoning code.

"There's a lot of giving here, I

think, so that people can hopefully live within these regulations," Mr. Mader said.

New construction or a major remodel would trigger the new setbacks. Also affected are existing fences inside the setbacks, as well as non-native vegetation, grading, bridges, and trails and paths.

The resolution also specifies that all new subdivisions will use setbacks of at least 55 feet and possibly more if the

area includes sensitive habitats, floodplains and eroding banks.

## Help wanted

Given that the creeks can be cantankerous in the winter and are owned in common by residents who often aren't familiar with the ways and means of the government agencies that oversee even small waterways, creek-side dwellers Bob Bond and Bud Eisberg suggested that the town take

the next step and provide some guidance for protecting creeks.

The council seemed to like this idea. Handouts already exist at Town Hall, planning staff said. Mr. Toben, with the endorsement of Mayor Ted Driscoll, suggested that the town consider facilitating a late spring creek walk every year so that neighbors might approach the maintenance problem as a group and share their "collective wisdom." ■

# Creek restoration campaign raises \$286,000; aims for more

By David Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

## ■ PORTOLA VALLEY

Backers of a plan to uncover a 280-foot stretch of Sausal Creek in Portola Valley's Town Center have \$286,000 in donations and are hoping for more after a fundraising party attended by about 100 people was held Nov. 11 in a barn at the home of Mary Hufty and Daniel Alegria.

The campaign has an immediate goal of \$800,000, said resident Danna Breen, who is helping to coordinate the effort. "I'm guarded and I'm hopeful," she told the Almanac.

In keeping with the environmentally correct idea of freeing part of a long-buried creek from its culvert, the food at the party kept

CO2 emissions to a minimum, said Councilwoman Maryann Moise Derwin.

The apples for the pies were from Portola Valley, as were the figs, the homemade bread and pumpkins for the soup, Ms. Derwin said. Also included: baguettes from Woodside, beer and cheese from the Bay Area, and nuts from the Central Valley. Everyone left with a bag of California poppy seeds and a remittance envelope.

The creek daylighting would become an element of the largely donor-funded \$20 million project to build a new Town Hall, library and community hall, but the \$800,000 to \$1 million needed

to open the creek is being sought separately.

The Town Council voted 3-1-1 on Sept. 12 to get the ball rolling with an outlay of \$400,000 from the general fund to design a bed for the north-flowing creek after it passes from under the baseball field.

Councilman Steve Toben voted against the outlay, arguing that it wasn't prudent to assume that donors would come forward. Councilman Ed Davis liked the idea but abstained; the timing added undue risk to the overall project, he said.

Donations to the project are tax deductible, Ms. Breen said. Checks should be made payable to the town of Portola Valley with the words "for the creek" in the information line. ■

# Town shoots down M-A theater settlement

By Andrea Gemmet  
Almanac Staff Writer

## ■ ATHERTON

It's back to the drawing board for the settlement that would have ended the town of Atherton's lawsuit over the new \$28 million performing arts center being built at Menlo-Atherton High School.

After months of meetings and negotiations between the Sequoia Union High School District and the town, the Atherton City Council voted down the tentative settlement agreement at its Nov. 14 meeting. The vote was 4-1, with Charles Marsala opposed.

"I don't see a need to continue this lawsuit," said Mr. Marsala.

District Superintendent Pat Gemma told the Almanac after the meeting that he was hurt and disappointed by the council's action.

"What the school district conceded to is beyond what we legally have to do," Mr. Gemma said. "I thought it was a win-win document."

Atherton filed a lawsuit against the performing arts center project last year over concerns about noise, traffic and drainage impacts, contending that the project violated the state's Environmental Quality Act. The settlement requires drainage work, as well as various measures to address parking and traffic, pending the results of a traffic study that's under way.

Atherton residents who live near the school are not satisfied with the proposed settlement, and they gave the council an earful about it.

"The residents feel poorly served and sold out with this (settlement) agreement," said Bruce Smith, who lives on Oak Grove Avenue.

After the meeting, Mr. Marsala told the Almanac that he had been in frequent contact with neighbors about their concerns

and he had communicated them to school officials.

Residents at the meeting, however, assailed the settlement language as being vague and wishy-washy about traffic and parking mitigations, and they were especially perturbed that Atherton might have to foot the bill for extra police services at large events held by the city of Menlo Park or other non-school organizations. Carol Smith of the Lindenwood Homes Association gave the council a point-by-point critique of the settlement with recommended changes.

An undercurrent to most of

*'This is the legacy of years of neglect of the neighbors.'*

MAYOR ALAN CARLSON

the residents' comments was a deep distrust of the high school district.

"I beg you not to sign this agreement, which does not protect my rights," Corinne Zaro told the council. "I don't want my money to pay for city of Menlo Park events."

Councilman Jim Janz pointed out that while language in the settlement like "best efforts" seemed weak to non-lawyers, it really isn't.

"As a lawyer, I write lots of contracts. I know a lot of people resist agreeing to 'best efforts,'" he said. "It means that if you have to spend money (on a mitigation), then you have to spend the money."

Even Mayor Alan Carlson, said he wasn't sure that the town could get a

better settlement deal than the one on the table, but he, too, agreed to vote against the agreement.

"This is the legacy of years of neglect of the neighbors," he said. "Maybe there can be a better deal."

The next step is for the council to meet in closed session with its attorney, Holly Whatley, to reconsider the settlement. A court hearing on the settlement is set for Dec. 4.

"I'm not taking it personally, but I'm hurt that they're such distrust, and almost hatred, on the part of some Atherton residents toward the school district and toward M-A," Superintendent Gemma told the Almanac.

He said school officials have made a number of concessions to neighbors in the past five years, including dropping a plan to install lights on the football field for night games.

"In hindsight, some of the neighbor saw that and thought, 'We won. Now we can go after even more,' instead of seeing the district as being a good neighbor," Mr. Gemma said.

He said concerns about paying for additional police officers at large events is "a non-issue." The district would make financial arrangements for extra security, just as it has for events at Woodside High School's new performing arts center, Mr. Gemma said.

Construction on the 31,000-square-foot theater with seating for 483 people is going forward, with completion expected in 19 months, he said.

"Frankly, we could have just gone to court, because it's really not a viable lawsuit. Anything we agreed to is beyond what we had to do; but much of what's in the settlement we would have done anyway," Mr. Gemma said. ■

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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF DECEMBER 3, 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:

**823 College Avenue/Use Permit/Cortland Bohacek:** Request for a use permit to demolish an existing two-story, single-family residence and construct a new two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot in regard to lot width in the R-1-U (Single-Family Urban) zoning district.

**Use Permit and Variances/Frank L. Ho/671 Live Oak Avenue:** Request for a use permit to demolish an existing single-story, single-family residence and construct a new two-story, single-family residence on substandard lot with regard to lot area and lot width in the R-3 (Apartment) zoning district. In addition, a request for a variances to reduce the minimum distances between the main building on the subject lot and the main buildings on the adjacent left and right side properties to less than 20 feet.

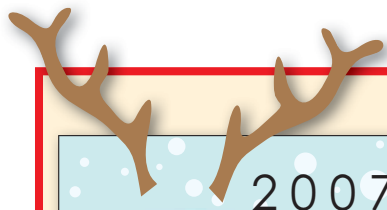
NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on Monday, December 3, 2007, 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested 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: November 15, 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](http://www.menlopark.org)

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on November 21, 2007.



2007  
HOLIDAY  
FUND  
THE ALMANAC

## Giving through the Holiday Fund 2007

For the 15th year, the Almanac offers readers the opportunity to multiply their charity dollars by giving through its annual Holiday Fund.

The Almanac has selected 10 local charities to benefit from donations to this year's Holiday Fund. These charities help the most vulnerable of our neighbors, be they homeless, hungry, sick or abused, young or old, native or immigrant.

In a series of articles over the next month, the Almanac will profile the organizations that benefit from the Holiday Fund.

For every dollar given to the Holiday Fund, the Almanac seeks matching funds from foundations and private donors. The total amount donated is then divided equally among the 10 charities.

The fund drive could not happen without the help of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and the donors who provide the matching grants for most contributions.

Since the Holiday Fund started in 1993, it has contributed \$2.5 million to a wide range of local nonprofit agencies. More than half — \$1.4 million — came from readers, who have donated an average of \$111,000 a year over 15 years.

Cover Story By Marion Softky • Photos by Veronica Weber

# Building hope



Women at Hope House enjoy the dinner they just cooked. They are living at Hope House, run by the Service League, for six months, while they take a 12-step recovery program and study in classes, ranging from cooking to computers.

"I'm ready to get my life back. I like being clean." It's hard to realize that, less than a year ago, the poised young woman who said that was a drug addict, pregnant, and in San Mateo County jail for petty theft.

Now Trina is clean and sober, and bonding with her baby daughter, Cy. They are living at Hope House, in a small tract home in Redwood City that she shares with nine other women and staff.

Hope House is a residential drug and alcohol recovery program run by the Service League of San Mateo County. Women who are addicted can spend six months taking a 12-step course and intensive classes in living skills, ranging from anger management and job skills to cooking and parenting.

Trina tells her story matter-of-factly, seated at the spotless din-

ing room table in the neat living room of Hope House, while Cy enjoys the attentions of Mike Nevin, executive director of the Service League, and some other residents.

Trina's story may be all too typical. She grew up in Oakland, took up drugs when she was 17, and became addicted to heroin and coke. She has two sons, 15 and 19, who live with their father.

In 2000, she moved to San Francisco, where she kept going by fraud, petty theft, selling drugs, and prostitution. She was arrested several times, and was assigned to an earlier drug treatment program. "I didn't complete the first one," she says.

Trina's most recent arrest landed her in county jail in January. Cy was born two weeks later on Jan. 31.

Cy was born two months premature, underweight, and addicted to methadone and crack. "She

was so small," Trina says. Cy was taken from her mother for medical treatment, and raised for her first eight months in a foster home for the medically fragile. A "kind lady" at Stanford Hospital connected Trina with Hope House, where she moved after a couple of more weeks in jail.

Hope House is a really hard program, Trina says, but she stuck with it, and the staff helped her get her baby back Oct. 30. "It was good for me," she says. "I never thought I would complete something like this and be interested in myself."

Gifts to the Almanac's Holiday Fund benefit the Service League, which provides services to jail inmates and their families. The organization is located in a historic brick laundry building at 727 Middlefield Road in Redwood City. For information, call Mike Nevin at 363-4664; e-mail [mnevin@serviceleague.org](mailto:mnevin@serviceleague.org); or go to [www.serviceleague.org](http://www.serviceleague.org).



2007  
HOLIDAY  
FUND  
THE ALMANAC

"The staff here is beautiful. Karen (Francone, the director) is like the mother I never had."

Now Trina is working toward her GED at JobTrain, formerly OICW, the Menlo Park job-training center. She hopes to get into transitional housing at First Step for Families, run by Shelter Network, while she works on the next stage of her life. "I hope to get housing, go back to school, and take nursing," she says.

### Service League

The Service League, founded in 1960, has this mission: "Helping rebuild the lives of inmates,

**Hope House**, a program of the Service League of San Mateo County, is helping 20 women and nine men, mostly former jail inmates, move into productive lives



**Top:** Sundae, left, and Vivian play with 9-month-old Cy at Hope House. A total of 130 healthy babies have been born at Hope House since it was founded in 1990. **Below:** Making cookies during a cooking class at Hope House are, from left, Maria, Christine and Rosa.

former inmates, their children and families.”

This mission translates into programs that help current inmates and their families, programs that help inmates when they leave jail, and programs such as Hope House, which helps former inmates and others who are homeless and in trouble, move toward productive lives. All taking the Hope House recovery program are addicted; most have been in jail.

“We’re trying to expand opportunities for people leaving jail,” says Mike Nevin, the new executive director for the Service League. “We want to build a seamless connection between the inmates and the outside world.”

Mr. Nevin, a former San Francisco police inspector, mayor of Daly City, and county supervisor, is leading the Service League through a major transition, following the retirement last year of Elizabeth Gheleta of Menlo Oaks, who led the

organization for 27 years.

Challenges for the Service League at all three levels are huge. Both men’s and women’s jails are severely overcrowded, with more than 1,200 prisoners crammed into facilities rated for 800, notes Sheriff Greg Munks. “The Service League is a very important partner in operating our jails,” he says. “It relieves our staff, and helps the safe operation of the jail.”

About 70 percent of the jail inmates are there temporarily, awaiting trial; the other 30 percent are non-violent offenders serving terms of less than one year, Sheriff Munks explains. Prisoners sentenced to longer terms are sent to state prisons.

Increasing numbers of gang members and people with mental illness are making the jails harder to manage; almost all the inmates have substance abuse problems,

See **SERVICE LEAGUE**, next page

# Giving to the Holiday Fund

Your gift helps children and others in need



Contributions to the Holiday Fund will go directly to the programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers contributed more than \$110,000, and with available matching grants, over \$150,000 was raised for 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched

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

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

## This year, the Almanac's Holiday Fund will support the following nonprofit organizations in the community:

- **Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula**  
Provides after-school and academic support and activities for 3,200 young people, 6 to 18, at clubhouses in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, East Palo Alto, and Redwood City and offers programs at Flood and Belle Haven schools in Menlo Park, Hoover Community School in Redwood City, and McNair School in East Palo Alto
- **Ecumenical Hunger Program**  
Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 2,000 households.
- **Free at Last**  
Provides recovery and rehabilitation programs for addicts in East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, North Fair Oaks and southern Redwood City. Founded in 1993, it serves about 4,200 people each year, predominantly African Americans, Latinos, and Pacific Islanders. Services include: street outreach; a drop-in center for youth and adults; intensive outpatient treatment programs; prevention and intervention for youth; a DUI first offender program; residential treatment programs for men and women; and transitional housing for men, women, and women with children.
- **Ravenswood Family Health Center**  
Provides primary medical and preventive health care for all ages at its clinics in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. It also operates a mobile clinic at school sites. Of the 16,500 registered patients, most are low income and uninsured from the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks area.
- **St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room**  
Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week to people in need who walk through the doors. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions, St. Anthony's is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers emergency good and clothing assistance.
- **Second Harvest Food Bank**  
The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributed 30 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to some 162,000 people each month through more than 700 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara County.
- **Service League of San Mateo County**  
Provides services to inmates in county jails and programs to help them re-enter the community successfully after release. The league aids inmates in communication with families and provides a children's waiting room at the jails, a library, religious services, counseling, and Christmas gifts. In five residential Hope Houses some 30 men and women released from jail receive six months of drug and alcohol treatment, and training in life skills.
- **Shelter Network**  
Provides short-term shelter and transitional housing services to more than 3,500 homeless people and children each year. Offers programs for families and individuals to become self-sufficient and return to permanent housing.
- **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition**  
Provides educational programs for youth and adults to help teens make healthy choices that will result in lower rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Its Teen Talk program last year served 3,650 youth at 23 public school sites in San Mateo County.
- **Youth and Family Enrichment Services**  
Provides 22 programs to help people who struggle with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, relationship and communications issues. Helps strengthen youth, families, and individuals to overcome challenges through counseling, education, and residential services.

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The foundations named below provide major matching grants to the Holiday Fund.



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The William and Flora  
Hewlett Foundation

The David and Lucile  
Packard Foundation

For more information go to [www.CommunityFoundationSiliconValley.org](http://www.CommunityFoundationSiliconValley.org). The Almanac will make every effort to publish donor names for donations received before Dec. 31, 2007, unless the donor checks the anonymous box. All donations will be acknowledged by mail.

You are invited to attend our  
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**Saturday, November 10**  
1 - 4 p.m.

OR

**Thursday, December 13**  
7 - 9 p.m.



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**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY**  
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**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON  
AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE  
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD OF  
PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR  
ADOPTION OF THESE MATTERS**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Town's Zoning Ordinance on Wednesday, December 12, 2007 at 8:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers (Historic Schoolhouse), 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. The zoning ordinance amendment is intended to clarify the definition of basements. The Town Council will consider all evidence, written and oral communications pertaining to the proposed amendment. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council to be heard at the time and place herein above mentioned,

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a proposed Negative Declaration regarding the above mentioned ordinance amendments has been prepared and is available for review. The Town Council will consider the proposed Negative Declaration at its meeting of December 12, 2007 at 8:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers (Historic Schoolhouse), 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the Town Council meeting or presented at the meeting. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council at the time and place herein above-mentioned. Copies of the proposed Negative Declaration are available at Portola Valley Town Hall, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California.

Dated; November 12, 2007

Signed: Leslie Lambert, Planning Manager

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on November 21, 2007.

# Building hope

## SERVICE LEAGUE

*Continued from previous page*

Mr. Munks says. "The Service League makes a difference in recidivism."

## Jail programs

In 2005 and 2006, a total of 556 Service League volunteers visited the jail regularly to ease the lives of prisoners, according to the organization's annual report; they spent more than 31,000 hours helping inmates and their families.

Next month, former director Elizabeth Gheleta will return to run the Christmas party for inmates' children, who will receive presents. Members of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church will bake thousands of cookies so that each of the 1,200 inmates can have a bag of goodies for Christmas. And the Service League will provide a Christmas tree for every pod in the jail.

Service League volunteers operate a message center at the jail that allows inmates to communicate with their families, lawyers and others on the outside. Volunteers provide clothing for prisoners going to trial, plus counseling and classes.

The Service League operates library services, and a room at the jail where children can stay when waiting to visit their parents in jail.

Inmates also have access to religious services and support through the Service League and some 250 religious volunteers of all faiths.

"We're bringing hope to clients, both inside and out," says Mr. Nevin.

## Re-entry: Hope Houses

It's a Wednesday morning, and parenting instructor Marsha Howard of Redwood City leads eight residents of Hope House in a lively discussion of how to raise kids. She keeps everyone laughing and joining in, as she plays a bossy — do as I say — parent, or a permissive — every home should have a big bowl of candy — mom. And finally a moderate — listen to children and respect them — mother.

Later they'll practice cooking in the kitchen that serves two adjacent Hope Houses with a joint back yard and garden — which the residents tend.

Residents of Hope House work hard as they try to re-mold themselves in six months to re-enter



**Maria**, center, speaks with her parenting teacher, Marsha Howard, following a class at Hope House.

society as contributing members. They're up at 6 a.m. for chores, exercise and grooming, before fixing breakfast at 8, says Director Karen Francone, who has been with the program since the first Hope House opened in 1990. Ed Brandle of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church was one of the original founders, and a committed volunteer.

The highly structured program sounds a bit like a boarding school, with not much freedom. The women attend classes eight hours a day — exercise, health, every aspect of life including the 12-step recovery programs, with lights out at 10 p.m.

It's not easy for the women to get over addiction; they often cry, Ms. Francone notes. "When you get clean and sober, everything you have stuffed down, does come up," she says. "I think of tears as ointment that flows over the body. Crying is healing."

Residents also find time to do community service, Ms. Francone says. They participate in cleanups of Redwood City or San Francisquito Creek. Sometimes they go to Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco to feed the homeless. "They see people there they know. It's very powerful," she says.

The Service League now operates five Hope Houses, three for women and two for men, with 30 beds. Mr. Nevin would like to open more Hope Houses, for perinatal women or for women with older children.

Ms. Francone is proud that residents of Hope House have delivered 130 non-addicted babies. Three current residents are pregnant, she says.

Mr. Nevin sees Hope House as a model to break the revolving door that leads most inmates to return to the set-

ting that got them in trouble, and then back into jail.

The people sentenced to county jail are mostly petty offenders involved with drugs and alcohol; they are not hardened or violent criminals, Mr. Nevin says. "These are people we're catching early in the game. We really have a chance to help them.

"We're talking about people who are victims themselves. They lack the things we take for granted — eating, dressing, talking," Mr. Nevin continues. "We're teaching them how to live."

And Hope House has been successful, Mr. Nevin says. The California recidivism rate is 75 to 80 percent, the highest in the country. But for Hope House it is almost the reverse. According to the last annual report, 72 percent of Hope House graduates remained clean and sober.

## What next?

As Mr. Nevin reshapes the Service League, he is focusing on re-entry, and helping inmates and their families make the transition back to being solid members of their community — rather than recycling back into jail.

Besides expanding the Hope House programs, Mr. Nevin would like to see re-entry programs start sooner. "Our biggest mistake is that we don't begin programs while inmates are still in custody," he says. "I'd like to start turning lives around while people are still in jail."

Sheriff Munks sees opportunities to strengthen drug, alcohol, and other inmate programs as the county plans for a new jail. "We need to do a better job of preparing our inmates for readjusting to the social and economic fabric of the community," he says. ■

## Dishing out hot meals to the hungry



Almanac file photo

**Juventino Vargas** tosses a debreasted turkey into a container from which volunteers will carve off the rest of the meat in preparation for Thanksgiving dinner at St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room.

By **Rory Brown**

Almanac Staff Writer

This Thanksgiving, staff and volunteers at the Padua Dining Room at St. Anthony's Church plan to cook lunch for 1,500 people who otherwise couldn't afford a full-blown holiday meal.

How do the staff and volunteers plan to celebrate that feat?

By cleaning the stoves, mopping the floors, and getting ready to cook lunch the next day.

The dining room, located at 3500 Middlefield Road in the North Fair Oaks neighborhood, serves lunch for about 550 people a day, six days a week, said operations manager Max Torres, who has worked at St. Anthony's for 26 years.

"When I started here in 1982, if we got 180 or 190 people; that would be a lot," Mr. Torres said. "Since then we've expanded the dining room, and we're getting many, many more people who need a hot meal."

St. Anthony's is the largest dining room on the Peninsula, he said. It also prepares food for the Sequoia Children's Center, Maple Street Shelter, Clare-Mateo Alliance and the St. Vincent de Paul of St. Francis Church in East Palo Alto.

"There's no better reward than the feeling of doing something good for others," Mr. Torres said, noting volunteers play a huge part of the dining room's ability to provide food to so many. "People have dedicated their lives to St. Anthony's,



Almanac file photo

**Juventino Vargas** stirring a kettle of chilibeans in preparation for Thanksgiving dinner at St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room.

and these are people who don't get a salary."

The dining room depends entirely on donations including contributions from the Second Harvest Food Bank and bread and pastries from local stores, such as Safeway and Le Boulanger.

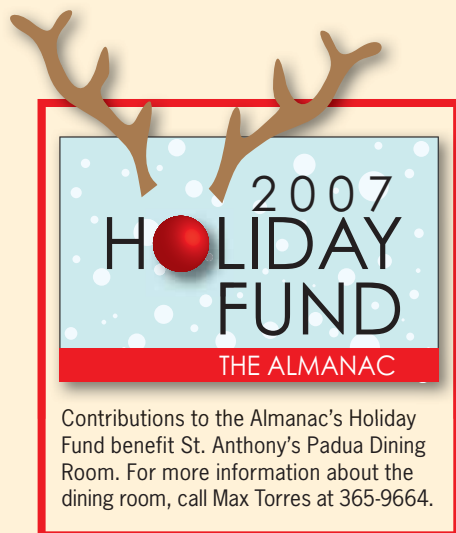
Volunteers and chef Juventino Diaz have been chopping a lot of

that bread up in order to make stuffing for the Thanksgiving lunch.

The dining room can always use more help, whether it's volunteers, monetary donations or food. St. Anthony's is particularly short on fresh yams and cranberries this year, and Mr. Torres hopes more donations will come in before the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals.

St. Anthony's also gives out clothing, provides limited health services year-round, and distributes toys to children during the holidays.

Donations may be delivered to the dining room, located at 3500 Middlefield Road, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Money donations gives St. Anthony's the flexibility to buy supplies and food needed most. Mail checks to: St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, 3500 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025. ■



Contributions to the Almanac's Holiday Fund benefit St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room. For more information about the dining room, call Max Torres at 365-9664.

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### NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT/PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD OF PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR ADOPTION OF THESE MATTERS

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on proposed Conditional Use Permit/Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment X7D-67 for proposed remodeling and expansion to existing commercial grocery store/market use, 4420 Alpine Road, Roberts of Portola Valley (formerly John's Valley Foods). The public hearing will be held on Wednesday, December 5, 2007 at 8:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers (Historic Schoolhouse), 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. The Planning Commission will consider all evidence, written and oral communications pertaining to the proposed amendment. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission to be heard at the time and place herein above mentioned.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a proposed Negative Declaration regarding the above mentioned Conditional Use Permit/Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment has been prepared and is available for review. The Planning Commission will consider the proposed Negative Declaration at its meeting of December 5, 2007 at 8:00 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers (Historic Schoolhouse), 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the Planning Commission meeting or presented at the meeting. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission at the time and place herein above mentioned at the time and place which will be noticed. Copies of the proposed Negative Declaration are available at Portola Valley Town Hall, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California.

Dated: November 13, 2007

Signed: Leslie Lambert, Planning Manager

Published in the Country Almanac on November 21, 2007.

## Portola Valley schools vote: Mendelsohn, Humphreys lead

By Marjorie Mader  
Almanac Staff Writer

With the semi-official election results reported last week, it looks like Judith Mendelsohn and Steve Humphreys have been elected to four-year terms on the five-member governing board of the Portola Valley School District.

Meanwhile, the board plans to fill a third seat left vacant by the Oct. 18 resignation of Donna Carano. The board, with the newly elected members, has set a new date to interview candidates for the appointment: Tuesday, Dec. 11, from 9 a.m. to noon at the district office, Corte Madera School, 4575 Alpine Road in Portola Valley.



The interviews will be conducted in an open session and the board may make the appointment that day. If so, all three new trustees could be seated at the board's next meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 12.

### Election

The latest vote count is Ms. Mendelsohn, 906; Mr. Humphreys, 805; and Brad Turner, 781. The San Mateo County Elections Office is going through an "official canvass" of the vote and will certify the results Nov. 28.

A total of 1,492 voters — about 30 percent of the 4,944 registered voters in the district — cast ballots in the election.

The appointment to fill the two remaining years on Ms. Carano's term is "provisional" in that registered voters can petition the county superintendent of schools to set the appointment aside and hold a special election. Only 74 valid signatures are required on the petition — just 1.5 percent of the registered voters in the last school board election.

Trustee Karen Jordan, whose term expires next month, has recused herself from all board discussions of the appointment because she may apply for it. "I'm still mulling it over and leaning toward applying," said Trustee Jordan last Friday.

Some district residents say the board should appoint whomever comes in third in the election. All three candidates, they point out, would be good board members, have a passion for education, and have contributed to the schools as volunteers.

The board decided that the appointment will be made by the newly constituted board, which includes trustees Don Collat and Ray Villareal and the two new elected trustees. They and Trustee Teresa Godfrey, whose term expires next month, will participate in interviewing candidates for the appointment.

All registered voters in the district may apply for the appointment by filling out an application, available at the district office and online at [www.pvsd.net](http://www.pvsd.net). (Scroll down the home page: under the "Heads Up" title, click on the "Posting Information Application" link.)

So far, no applications have been submitted, said Superintendent Anne Campbell on Friday.

Completed applications are due by 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, at the district office, Corte Madera School, 4575 Alpine Road, Portola Valley. ■

## Cheeky Monkey tests for lead in toys

In an effort to reduce parents' concerns about lead in their children's toys, Cheeky Monkey Toys in downtown Menlo Park is providing X-ray fluorescence lead testing from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 20.

Parents can bring up to five toys and have them tested free at the store, located at 640 Santa Cruz Ave.

The machine being used was designed by Innov-X Corp. to test for the presence of lead on the surface of toys.

"Our customers are well

informed, and are concerned about recent toy recalls," store co-owner Anna Chow said. "We want to be able to provide a highly accurate test for the presence of lead in the toys we sell."

Families that want to test more than five toys are asked to call the store and make an appointment. The store will charge for testing additional toys. All toys sold in Cheeky Monkey Toys will be tested free of charge, according to the store.

— Bay City News Service

## Menlo Park man shot in leg Saturday

Police are investigating the shooting of a 23-year-old man at around 10:20 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17, in the 1200 block of Sevier Avenue

in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood.

The victim, a Menlo Park resident, was taken to Stanford Hospital with a gunshot wound to his right leg, said Officer Steven Knopp. He's listed in stable condition, Officer Knopp said.

Police are seeking information on the shooter. Witnesses, or anyone with information, is asked to call the Menlo Park Police Department at 330-6300 or the anonymous tip hotline at 330-6395.

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# Man found guilty of murder conspiracy in Menlo Park kidnapping case

A San Mateo County Superior Court jury found a Fresno man guilty Friday of masterminding a plot to have a former female employee of his Menlo Park store kidnapped and murdered for resisting his romantic advances.

In a retrial on a conspiracy to commit murder charge, Ricardo Zambrano, 38, was found guilty for the June 10, 2005, kidnapping by gunpoint of a woman who had worked for him at his jewelry store inside the Mi Rancho market in Menlo Park.

On April 13, a separate San Mateo County jury found Mr. Zambrano guilty of conspiracy to commit rape, kidnapping for the purpose of rape, kidnapping in the commission of a carjacking, threatening a witness and false imprisonment, but were deadlocked 11 to 1 in favor of a conspiracy to commit murder charge.

Mr. Zambrano was retried on the conspiracy to murder charge, and after eight days of trial, the second jury began deliberating Thursday.

The kidnapping was carried out by another man hired by Mr. Zambrano, Alfonso Cuevas Gonzalez, 40, also of Fresno, who was convicted by a separate jury in March of conspiracy to commit murder, conspiracy to commit rape, kidnapping and felony threats. Mr. Gonzalez was sentenced to 35 years to life in prison June 8.

The victim, a woman in her

20s from Mexico, was carjacked and driven to Fresno, but the plot dissolved when Mr. Gonzalez

couldn't find his accomplices. She eventually escaped with the help of a Fresno woman who had

foreknowledge of the plan.

Mr. Zambrano could receive a sentence of up to life in prison,

according to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

— Bay City News Service

# Thanksgiving



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## Woodside hires town engineer


The town of Woodside has tapped an experienced public official from Half Moon Bay to be the new town engineer and director of public works.

Town Manager Susan George announced recently that she hired Paul Nagengast to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Kent Dewell.

Mr. Nagengast has been with the city of Half Moon Bay since March 2003, where he has served as deputy city manager, director of parks and recreation, and director of public works/city engineer, Ms. George said.


Prior to that, he served as the director of public works and city engineer for the city of Yacaipa in Southern California, and before that as the assistant city engineer for Beverly Hills, Ms. George said.

Mr. Nagengast starts work for the town of Woodside on Dec. 3. Mr. Dewell will stay on until January to wrap up various projects, including the newly opened Barkley Fields and Park, Ms. George said.



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## MP Strikers soccer club holds tryouts

MP Strikers FC, a competitive local soccer club, is holding tryouts on Dec. 8-9 at Sequoia High School in

Redwood City for girls and boys in age groups U8-U12 who are interested in playing competitive soccer on a Class 1 or Class 3 team.

More information regarding MP Strikers, tryouts (including the tryout schedule) and online registration is posted at [www.mpstrikersfc.com](http://www.mpstrikersfc.com). Advance registration is highly recommended, said Jeanine Morgan, MP Strikers tryout coordinator.

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The Almanac

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## Study session set on grade separations

The Menlo Park City Council plans to hold a study session on Tuesday, Nov. 27, on "grade separations" — separating the Caltrain tracks from the roadway at key intersections.

The study session will start at 5:30 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

Council members are expected to discuss the costs, impacts and feasibility of separating the tracks from the road at four Menlo Park streets: Ravenswood, Oak Grove, Glenwood and Encinal avenues.

Proponents of grade separations say allowing traffic, bicy-

### ■ MENLO WATCH

cles and pedestrians to use an elevated or sunken roadway to pass over or under more heavily used tracks would reduce traffic congestion and improve safety. Critics say constructing grade separations will worsen congestion, and severely impact nearby homes and businesses.

According to Caltrain's latest estimates, grade separations could cost anywhere from \$95 million to \$447 million in Menlo Park alone. It's unclear whether they could be built unless the California High

Speed Rail Authority, which is considering using the Caltrain tracks in an effort to send high-speed trains from Los Angeles to San Francisco, paid for the project.

### Hazardous waste drop-off

Batteries, paint, pool chemicals, motor oil, and other hazardous materials can be disposed of on Saturday, Dec. 8, at a drop-off site in Redwood City.

To make an appointment to drop-off waste, and to find out the location of the drop-off site, call 363-4718, or go to [SMHealth.org/hhw](http://SMHealth.org/hhw).

### ■ 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

**Arson report:** Attempted fire set in a corridor at Selby Lane School, Nov. 13.

**Assault and battery report:** Two students reportedly assaulted by another student at Menlo-Atherton High School, Nov. 13.

#### Grand theft reports:

■ Plasma screen TV taken from guest house, first block of James Ave., Nov. 14.

■ Patio furniture and animal statues taken from garden, 100 block of Stockbridge Ave., Nov. 14.

#### MENLO PARK

#### Spousal abuse reports:

■ Resident reported physical altercation with spouse inside a vehicle, U.S. 101 at Willow Road, Nov. 16.

■ Vinesha Stephens, 27, of Menlo Park arrested on charges of injuring a family member, assault with caustic chemi-

cals, vandalism and a no-bail warrant for grand theft out of Sacramento County, 1100 block of Madera Ave., Nov. 16.

**Battery report:** Ronnie Betts, 50, of Menlo Park, arrested and booked into County Jail, 1200 block of Hollyburne Ave., Nov. 17.

#### Residential burglary reports:

■ Back doors were forced open and an Apple laptop computer, two televisions and a duffel bag taken, 100 block of Baywood Ave., Nov. 16.

■ A TV was taken from a residence, 700 block of Arnold Way, Nov. 14.

**Vehicle theft report:** 1989 gray Plymouth Voyager van taken from La Michoacana parking lot, Nov. 16.

#### Injury accident reports:

**Vehicle versus bicycle, Santa Cruz Ave. at Orange Ave., Nov. 17.**

■ Vehicle versus bicycle, Sand Hill Road at Monte Rosa Dr., Nov. 18.

#### Grand theft reports:

■ Golf clubs, antique chest and bicycle taken, 200 block of Linfield Drive, Nov. 12.

■ Copper wire taken from construction site, 1300 block of Willow Road, Nov. 16.

■ A silver Iron Horse warrior mountain bicycle taken, 300 block San Mateo Drive, Nov. 18.

**Auto burglary report:** Stereo taken, 600 block Laurel Ave., Nov. 16.

#### Fraud reports:

■ Bank reported unknown person trying to obtain resident's credit card, Willow Road, Nov. 16.

■ Former resident reports fraudulent cell phone account opened using her name and old Menlo Park address, Nov. 16.

■ Fraudulent credit card account created, 1700 block of Holly Ave., Nov. 16.

#### WOODSIDE

**Drunken minor report:** A 15-year-old student, staggering and believed to be drunk, was turned over to her mother and suspended from school, Woodside High School, 199 Churchill Ave., Nov. 9.

**Auto burglary report:** Window smashed and two purses, a backpack and gym bag taken, worth an estimated \$1,400, Raymundo Dr. at Runnymede Road, Nov. 11.

### HOTEL

*continued from page 5*

no problem filling 121 rooms," he said.

Mr. Scott said the restaurant, labeled "Madera," and partially modeled after the Village Pub in Woodside, will also be a big draw to the site. "The demand for a great restaurant is huge, because there's not a decent place to eat around here (on Sand Hill Road)," he said.

In financial studies released last year, Stanford officials projected the hotel would add about \$1.3 million to the city's coffers after being open for one year, and about \$1.9 million a year after being open for three years. The bulk of those funds would come from the city's hotel tax.

Mayor Kelly Fergusson, a member of the 2006 City Council that approved the project, said she's happy to see "Stanford University and Menlo Park working together on such a beautiful project. ■

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## OBITUARIES

More obituaries on Page 25

### Raymond Spinelli

Longtime Menlo Realtor

Services will be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 27, at St. Pius Catholic Church, 1100 Valota Road in Redwood City, for Raymond D. Spinelli. Mr. Spinelli, a Menlo Park Realtor for many years, died Nov. 15 surrounded by his family. He was 87.

A reception will follow the service. Visitation will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Monday, Nov. 26, at Crippen & Flynn Chapel, 400 Woodside Road in Redwood City.

Mr. Spinelli's real estate office was located on Alameda de las Pulgas in Menlo Park for many years. He was well known in the local real estate community, serving twice as president of the Menlo Atherton Board of Realtors. He served as president and as treasurer of the California Association of Realtors. He also was a director of the National Association of Realtors for many years.

He taught classes at the Anthony School of Real Estate, at Menlo College, in adult school programs, and for the California Association of Realtors. He loved to teach, and many of his students became successful Realtors, family members say.

Mr. Spinelli attended San Francisco schools and earned his bachelor's degree from Golden Gate University. He served in the U.S. Navy.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Lorraine; daughters D'Ann Burns and Debra Spinelli; sister Gloria Schussel; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Memorials in his name may be made to the Children's Home

Society, Salvation Army, Boys' Town, Redwood City Kaiser Hospice, or a favorite charity.

### Marian Eldridge

Retired children's librarian

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, Nov. 26, at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church for Marian Edgar Eldridge of Menlo Park.

Ms. Eldridge, who retired from the Menlo Park and Mountain View public libraries after 20 years as a children's librarian and professional storyteller, died Nov. 17 at Stanford Medical Center after a 10-year struggle with Alzheimer's disease. A 52-year resident of Menlo Park, she was 86.

Ms. Eldridge, known as the "story lady," was a founding member of the Peninsula Storytellers Guild. She was a graduate of the University of Michigan and earned a master's degree from San Jose State University. She was a 52-year member of the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church choir.

She is survived by her husband, Colin Charles Eldridge of Menlo Park; children Mary Joy Parker, Carol Root, Marjorie Eldridge, David Eldridge and John Eldridge; 13 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her eldest daughter, Wendy Gansereit.

The family prefers that memorials be made to Kainos Home and Training Center, 3631 Jefferson Ave., Redwood City, CA 94062.

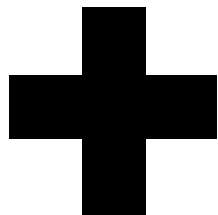
## Sustainable San Mateo County seeks nominations for sustainability awards

Now is the time to submit nominations for the 2008 Sustainability Awards to be given by Sustainable San Mateo County next spring. The deadline is Wednesday, Nov. 28, and you can nominate yourself or your organization.

The awards recognize businesses, government programs, community groups, and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to sustainability.

Their actions should support the three key elements: social equity; economic vitality; and a healthy environment.

The awards will be presented at a banquet March 13, 2008. One of the 2007 awards went locally to the Zero Waste Lunch Program at Laurel School in Atherton. For information or applications, go to [sustainable-sanmateo.org](http://sustainable-sanmateo.org); or call 638-2323.



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## HERBERT MILES CHISHOLM



Herbert Miles Chisholm was born in San Francisco, CA to Walter Scott Chisholm and Carrie Davee Chisholm on October 31, 1913. He passed away in La Quinta, CA on November 11, 2007 at the age of 94.

Herb graduated from Lowell High School in San Francisco in 1931 and the University of California, Berkeley, in 1935. He also attended the Boalt Hall School of Law. Herb worked his entire business career as an executive with paper and forest products companies, including Blake, Moffitt & Towne, Kimberly-Clark and Saxon Industries. He was a Director of the Greater San Francisco Ad Club from 1953-1954.

A lifelong passion for music was born when Herb played the clarinet in the Cal Marching Band. He spent his college summers playing in dance bands at the Ahwahnee Hotel and Wawona Lodge in Yosemite National Park. During the school year he played in Bay Area dance bands on the weekends. Even in his late seventies, he would regularly entertain friends at private parties.

His civic activities included serving as President of the San Francisco Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1948 and Chairman of the Board of Managers of the Park Presidio Branch of the YMCA of San Francisco in 1955, where he co-founded the first YMCA Indian Guide Program in San Francisco. He is also a past Chairman of the Republican Party County Central Committee, County of San Francisco.

After moving to Atherton, CA in 1958, Herb served as President of the Holbrook Palmer Park Foundation and the Atherton Civic Interest League. He was an active golf and tennis player, a member of the Menlo Circus Club and a charter member of Palo Alto Hills Golf and Country Club. He made several trips to Europe, Asia and South America representing the United States through People-to-People Tennis. He was a 50-year member of the Masonic Order.

Herb was fiercely proud of his Scottish heritage and wore the Chisholm plaid with great pride. He was a descendent of Capt. Miles Hollister, prominent Civil War commander of a regiment of the Union Army 23rd Corps, who moved from Minnesota to Northern California around 1890. Hollister once led a posse seeking to capture the legendary Jesse James.

An avid sports fan, Herb actively supported both Cal football and the Cal Marching Band for over 70 years. Until turning 80, he vigorously competed at both tennis and golf, but also enjoyed swimming, skiing, and road biking. He was an accomplished photographer and gardener and a collector of Asian and Native American art.

Always ready to greet his guests with a big handshake and a warm smile, Herb will be remembered for his unbridled spirit, optimism and keen sense of humor.

Herb is survived by his wife of 24 years, Monte Wilson Chisholm, as well as his son, Richard Walter Chisholm, daughter-in-law, Marsha Glasgall Chisholm, and granddaughter, Annie Hollister Chisholm, all of San Francisco. He was pre-deceased by his (first) wife, Nancy Hartter Chisholm of Atherton, Ca.

Interment and graveside services will be held at Madrona Cemetery in Saratoga, where family members have been buried since the late 1800's. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be sent to the University of California, Berkeley, or the Cal Marching Band.

PAID OBITUARY

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Tom Gibboney

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McMullin, Katie Blankenberg

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Published every Wednesday at

3525 Alameda de las Pulgas,

Menlo Park, CA 94025

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FAX (650) 854-0677

e-mail news (no photos please) to:

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e-mail photos with captions to:

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e-mail letters to:

letters@AlmanacNews.com

The Almanac, established in September, 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County.

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 Decree No. 147530, issued November 9, 1969.

Voluntary subscriptions are available for delivery to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside at \$30 per year or \$50 for 2 years.

Subscriptions by businesses or residents outside the 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

### EMAIL

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.

## Give locally through the Holiday Fund

For many families, life in Silicon Valley means good jobs, good schools and a warm home to return to every night. But for too many local residents, that rosy scenario does not apply. They may be down on their luck and often are forced to seek help from the small safety net of local nonprofit agencies that offer food, shelter and other assistance to those in need.

These people are our neighbors who may have been laid off unexpectedly, who might have had a catastrophic illness, or who suffer from addiction or mental health problems. They deserve our help.

One of the best ways for Almanac readers to pitch in is by contributing to the Holiday Fund, which provides grants to 10 local nonprofit agencies. These are organizations that can offer a family a temporary home, arrange health care, or provide counseling to bring an end to the substance abuse that can cripple families and young children.

Last year, through the Holiday Fund, the Almanac and its partners — the Rotary Club of Menlo Park, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation — raised more than \$150,000 for 10 local agencies. About \$110,000 of the contributions came from Almanac readers, and the remaining \$40,000-

plus from the foundations. Each nonprofit organization received about \$16,000.

This is the 15th year that the Almanac has supported the Holiday Fund drive. Over the last 14 years, Almanac readers and the supporting foundations have contributed more than \$2.4 million to local social service agencies. More than half, \$1.32 million, came from Almanac readers, and the rest from generous individuals and foundations.

This year the Silicon Valley Community Foundation will hold and distribute the money. No administrative costs or fees are deducted from Holiday Fund gifts, so 100 percent of all donations will be received by the nonprofit agencies.

The Almanac's Holiday Fund this year will support the following nonprofit organizations in the community:

### Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula

Provides after-school and academic support and activities for 3,200 young people, 6 to 18, at clubhouses in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, East Palo Alto, and Redwood City; and offers programs at Flood and Belle Haven schools in Menlo Park, Hoover Community School in Redwood City, and McNair School in East Palo Alto

### Ecumenical Hunger Program

Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 2,000 households.

### Free at Last

Provides recovery and rehabilitation programs for addicts in East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, North Fair Oaks and southern Redwood City. Founded in 1993, it serves about 4,200 people each year, predominantly Afri-

can Americans, Latinos, and Pacific Islanders. Services include: street outreach; a drop-in center for youth and adults; intensive outpatient treatment programs; prevention and intervention for youth; a DUI first-offender program; residential treatment programs for men and women; and transitional housing for men, women, and women with children.

### Ravenswood Family Health Center

Provides primary medical and preventive health care for all ages at its clinics in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. It also operates a mobile clinic at school sites. Of the 16,500 registered patients, most are low income and uninsured from the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks areas.

### St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room

Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week to people in need who walk through the doors. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions, St. Anthony's is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers emergency goods and clothing assistance.

### Second Harvest Food Bank

The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributed 30 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to some 162,000 people each month through more than 700 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

### Service League of San Mateo County

Provides services to inmates in county jails and programs to help them re-enter the community successfully after release. The league aids inmates in communication with families and provides a children's waiting room at the jails, a library, religious services, counseling, and Christmas gifts. In five residential "Hope Houses" some 30 men and women released from jail receive six months of drug and alcohol treatment, and training in life skills.

### Shelter Network

Provides short-term shelter and transitional housing services to more than 3,500 homeless people and children each year. Offers programs for families and individuals to become self-sufficient and return to permanent housing.

### Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition

Provides educational programs for youth and adults to help teens make healthy choices that will result in lower rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Its "Teen Talk" program last year served 3,650 youth at 23 public school sites in San Mateo County.

### Youth and Family Enrichment Services

Provides 22 programs to help people who struggle with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, relationship and communications issues. Helps strengthen youth, families, and individuals to overcome challenges through counseling, education, and residential services.

## EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

## LETTERS

Our readers write

### Stanford has every right to use its land

Editor:

The spin of the Almanac's Nov. 7 article "Stanford pursues its massive campus expansion" is remarkable.

For the record, Stanford's growth has been severely limited (so not massive) by the 2000 GUP (General Use Permit) imposed on the university by Santa Clara County in flagrant disregard of property laws. The property and environ-

See **LETTERS**, next page

## Our Regional Heritage

Portola School stood by the side of Portola Road in Portola Valley from 1894 until 1950, when it was demolished to make way for the modern Portola Valley School. That school is also gone, and the property is now part of Portola Valley's Town Center.

Portola Valley Archives



## PRO &amp; CON

# City, parents share opinions on Belle Haven child care

## Action being taken to clear up concerns

By Barbara Santos George

The following letter was addressed to the parents with children in the Belle Haven child care program:

I would like to take this opportunity to address the issues that were printed in the Menlo Park Almanac Nov. 14 regarding the licensed after school program that your child is enrolled in.

First, I would like to say that the City of Menlo Park, and I personally, take the safety and welfare of your children very seriously. I am very sorry that my quote in the Almanac article gave the impression that I was minimizing the issues at Belle Haven, or that the children should receive less than the best quality care we can give them.

That is not the case, and in my over 30 years of working with children, I have always been committed to quality care and training of staff who work with them. I would like to share with you the following steps we are taking, and will continue to take in order to have the highest quality of care.

The city has taken steps to address and correct issues that occurred this summer from June through August. Rest assured all of the issues identified by state licensing, including the knife incident, have been thoroughly reviewed by the city. We have taken steps to prevent any similar situations as well as any perceptions of a lack of supervision.

Prior to the state Department of Social Services reports, steps were already being taken to enhance staff development. In the coming weeks, we will conduct a licensing workshop to

go over rules and regulations. We will bring in a consultant who will review all of the licensed programs in the City of Menlo Park in order to assist with any changes that may need to occur. We will also implement training for the staff in classroom management, and how to interact with children in a positive, supportive manner. There was also a concern regarding staff that was not fingerprinted. All Community Services staff are fingerprinted as required by law.

Two weeks ago, the city manager and I met with five parents from the program, including Marcia Dore-Perez, to discuss their areas of concern and how we plan to move forward. We have scheduled a follow-up meeting to continue the dialogue. We want to be able to hear from all of you. Starting in January, we will add a second parent meeting to accommodate as many of you as possible in order for you to share your ideas, and your concerns. You will be receiving more information on the parent meetings in a separate letter.

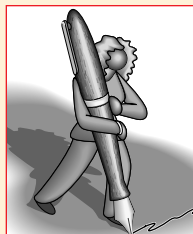
I want to thank you for your continuing support. Trusting us with the care of your children is a responsibility that we do not take lightly. If I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or E-mail.

*Barbara Santos George is director of the Menlo Park Community Services Department, which oversees the Burgess and Belle Haven child care and after school programs.*

## Belle Haven parents blast day care program

By Marcia Dore-Perez

Many of the parents with children enrolled in the Belle Haven after-school program were disappointed in Barbara George's comments published in the Nov. 7 Almanac about the multiple violations at the Belle Haven Children's Center being "less a reflection of the program, and more a result of parents being overly critical in an effort to get Ms. Carlisle back to Belle Haven."



GUEST  
OPINION

Blaming the parents detracts focus from the low performance of the center under her direction and distracts from the fact that the city has permitted unsafe conditions and lax standards to become the norm at the Belle Haven program. Ms. George "shoots the messenger" and ignores that her department failed to comply with California licensing requirements.

There are laws to protect our children. Parents have an absolute and unequivocal right to report licensing violations to ensure protection of their children. The violations are not the fault of the parents but were committed by the city. These issues were raised by parents but ignored by Ms. George.

Children getting hurt and bruised, a knife and death threat, lack of qualified staff watching children after 4:30 (more than half their daily stay), plus many incidents never reported to licensing authorities but raised with the city, such as sexually explicit adult-themed music being played and a 6-year-old child being left at a bus stop for over 30 minutes, with even Ms. George agreeing to retrieve the child. All of this does not even meet the minimal standards of care and safety.

The parents had clearly stated that the

meetings with the city were not about Vanessa Carlisle but the descending quality of care, including the lack of standards and the absence of comprehensive policies.

The key issues are: How does the city translate policy into a reality regarding the care of our children? What assurances do parents have that our concerns will be properly addressed and not just swept under the rug as past incidents have been? There appears to be an atmosphere within the Community Services Department that "anything goes at Belle Haven" and that coordinators and supervisors are permitted to violate licensing requirements without any consequences. Where is the accountability?

Ms. George has squandered an opportunity to work with the parents and has betrayed our trust. She failed to state to the Almanac that state licensing authorities have been investigating the center on their own accord. The parents never knew background checks were not conducted or that the care of our children was left to under-age staff.

To blame the parents is deceptive. Ms. George is telling the community that the Belle Haven parents' concerns are not legitimate and the knife incident, death threat, lack of proper ratios, inadequate background checks for child predators/molesters and lack of adequate supervision should be of no concern because violations are everywhere? These are not minor violations.

There were six violations in four months, some of them Class A violations — the most severe by state standards. An apology to the parents is in order.

*This article was submitted by Belle Haven Child Care parents Marcia Dore-Perez, Dawn Platt, Jackie White-Thomas, Consuela Clark and Carmelite Souffront, and written by Ms. Dore-Perez.*

## LETTERS

Continued from previous page

mental activists who would like to keep Stanford's lands to walk their dogs and children.

Some of us at Stanford think the GUP strangles the university insofar as it prevents building much-needed labs, classrooms, dorms, and faculty housing. It is a big problem, and hopefully the university will use its muscle, not only to dump dirt on its own land, but also to revisit, in the proper courts of law, this damaging hindrance to its needs and its property rights.

I am not speaking as a Stanford University official but as a member of the faculty since 1990.

**Philippe Buc**  
Professor, medieval history  
Stanford University

### Clarification from Valley school board member

Editor:

I was out of town when the Nov. 7 edition of the Almanac came out. I have only recently received several phone calls about an article in that edition related to the Portola Valley school board vacancy.

There is a sentence in the article attributed to me that the board has become more political. This is not what I said when I spoke with Almanac reporter Marjorie Mader about my resignation and seems to indirectly slight the incredible people who I have had the pleasure of serving with on the board.

The board itself is not at all political and during my entire six years of service I never found any of its members to act with any political agenda. My com-

ment instead was regarding the increased backdoor politics on the part of some members of the community. I hope that your misrepresentation was not misunderstood by your readers or by the outstanding members of the Portola Valley school board.

**Donna Carano**  
Former member  
Portola Valley school board

### Don't complain; run for office

Editor:

I spent an interesting hour recently listening to angry Lindenwood neighbors addressing the Atherton Town Council about the Sequoia Union High School District's failure to listen to the concerns of this neighborhood.

Yet when there was an opportunity for standing for recent

election to this school board no one from this neighborhood filed as a candidate. As a result the three open seats were uncontested and there was no election and no public discussion of the issues of concern to these residents.

If you want a voice then you have to get involved. A well-organized neighborhood could guarantee itself a seat on this board.

**Peter Carpenter**  
Larch Drive, Atherton

### A refreshing apology

Editor:

How refreshing to have a leader apologize.

Menlo Park Mayor Kelly Ferguson's mea culpa to the chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission in last week's Almanac speaks volumes about

her and about the possibility that Menlo Park can look forward to positive change.

After six years of the previous council's stonewalling and stubbornness, I like many others voted in most of this current council with high hopes.

So let's hope we can move past eyesore, broken-down theaters and on with making Menlo Park the city that all of us want.

**Dan Dippery**  
Santa Rita Avenue,  
Menlo Park

**TownSquare**

Join the conversation on  
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Click on links under the  
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# Ed Kahl presents the tranquility of country estates in Woodside and Portola Valley.



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