

Menlo Park Presbyterian's "Hotel de Zink" gives the homeless shelter and respect. Cover, Section 2

The Almanac

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

NOVEMBER 28, 2007 | VOL. 43 NO. 13

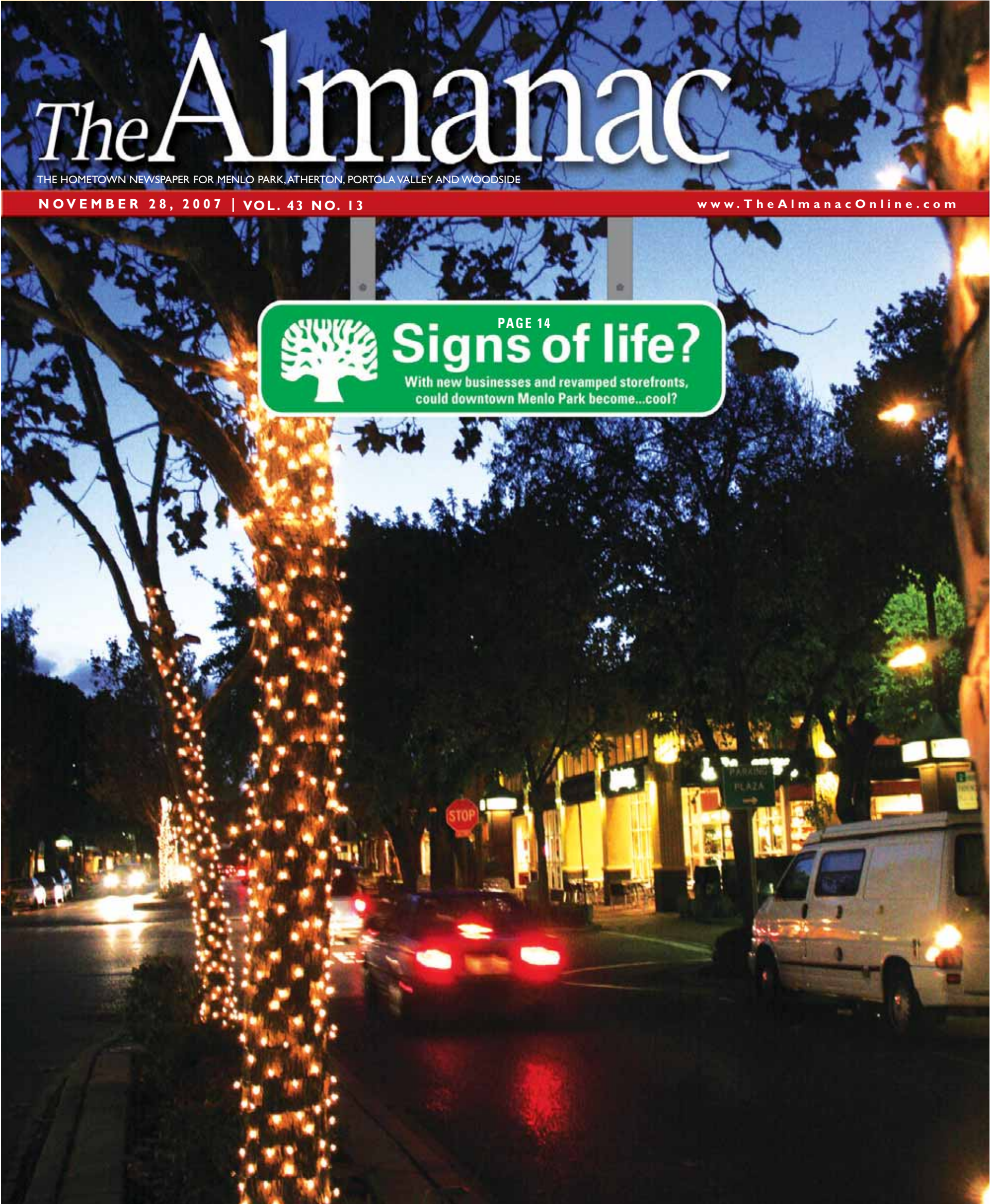
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PAGE 14

Signs of life?

With new businesses and revamped storefronts, could downtown Menlo Park become...cool?



REDEFINING QUALITY SINCE 1990

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



LOS ALTOS HILLS

6bd/6.5ba Mediterranean on 4+/- acres privately located at the end of a cul-de-sac and down an olive tree-lined driveway. Attached 4-car garage. Extensive remodeling and expansion in 1993 included enclosure of the solarium in the master suite, kitchen update and expansion, complete fencing, and new pool. Palo Alto schools.

\$7,900,000



SAN CARLOS

Pretty As A Picture! 2bd/1ba, Remodeled kitchen. The lot is completely level and features a hot tub in the back yard with lemon, apple and apricot trees. There is a partial basement for extra storage. Close to downtown San Carlos.

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REDWOOD CITY

Situated on a quiet cul-de-sac convenient to shops and schools, this private 3bd/2.5ba retreat features charming gardens and a stunning remodel with special attention to every detail.

\$1,189,000



Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

Make mine extra-crispy

Ever wonder what happens if you try to douse a grease fire with water? Menlo Park firefighter Gordon Coe put on a retina-scorching display last Tuesday, Nov. 20, using an over-filled turkey deep-fryer to demonstrate the perils of adding water to a vat of flaming oil. It was all in the name of holiday safety, of course.

Menlo Park

- Silvia Vonderlinden is leaving her post as Menlo Park city clerk to become Redwood City's clerk. **Page 13.**
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Portola Valley

- Town, residents buy scenic trail, parcel in Westridge neighborhood for open space. **Page 9**

Schools

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Regional

- Waste management district seeking proposals that are "as green as possible," for garbage, recycling services. **Page 8**

Sports

- Alpine FC Rebels win CYSA district cup in shutout. **Page 11**
- MP Striker girls take home trophy. **Page 11**

Community

- Shelter at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church gives the homeless "respect, dignity, love and compassion." **Cover, Section 2**

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On the cover

For the past decade, downtown Menlo Park has been known for empty stores and a lack of foot traffic, but local business owners say things are finally turning around as new businesses are moving in. Photo by Veronica Weber. Story starts on **Page 14.**

CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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

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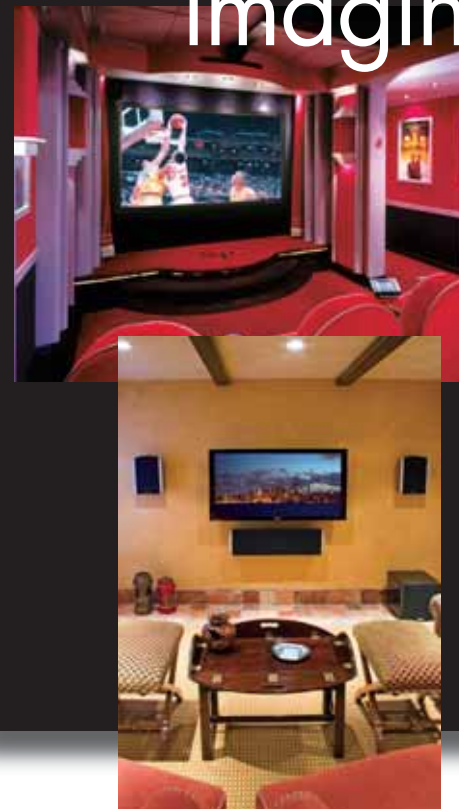
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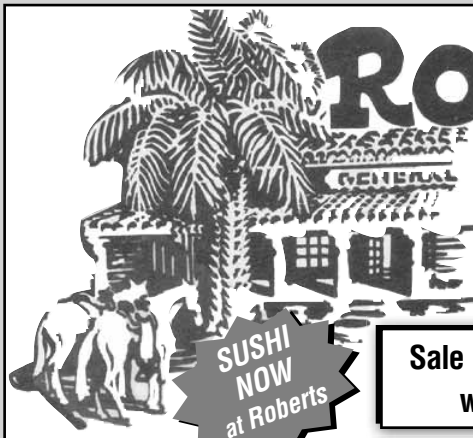


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Red-Blooded Wine

One red wine in particular is so voluptuous and perfumed that it inspires romance. Pinot Noir is a temperamental lover that makes big demands of growers. This grape is grown the world over, but is nowhere better understood than in Burgundy, where it is used to make some of the best red wines in the world. In this region of France, the climate and soil are nurturing and the wine-makers are well versed in pruning techniques and fermentation methods. The result is beautiful light to medium-bodied and rich, high in alcohol, neither acidic nor tannic, with substantial flavor and velvety texture.

Short of visiting the Burgundy region of France itself there is no better place to get Pinot Noir than ROBERTS MARKET. We carry wines from all over the world, as well as regional wines from The Americas. We also feature the finest produce, meats, poultry, and seafood available in the area, and we have a great selection of marinades which help change the taste of your favorite meats. Don't forget fresh cut flowers from our floral department to grace your table.

HINT: To best show off its delicacy and texture, the best foods to pair with Pinot Noir are salmon, plain cuts of meat, and chicken cooked in red wine (coq au vin).



DELI

A touch of Italy
Hot Panini from our press:

Toscani Salami, Proscuitto, Arugala, Virgin Olive Oil and Provelone Cheese		\$8⁰⁰ ea.
Pasta Italiano made with Rotini Pasta, fresh vegetables in a Vinaigrette dressing.		\$5⁹⁹ lb.



EMMA & MARIA - DELI

WINE

Value Reds that Deliver

The nights are getting colder. Time to break out the reds. Here are a few suggestions that offer high quality, delicious flavors, but don't break the bank. Time to stock up!

<u>2005 Stephen Vincent "Crimson" - California</u>	\$9.99
A Rhone-like blend with lush, smooth fruit.	
<u>Grey Wolf Cullars "Lone Wolf" - Paso Robles</u>	\$12.99
This is shockingly good for the price. Rich and Full.	
<u>2005 Brigaldara Valpolicella Classico</u>	\$13.49
This bold, juicy ripasso-style Valpolicella is truly a "baby" Amarone. Wow!	
<u>2006 Easton Zinfandel - Amador County</u>	\$14.49
A luscious, zippy, fruit Zin. Impossible not to like!	
<u>2005 Moniz Family "Cuvee Olivia" - Sonoma Valley</u>	\$15.99
An amazing Cab., Merlot, Petite Verdot blend. This could easily sell for double and be a good deal.	




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

GROCERY

GOLD MEDAL ALL PURPOSE FLOUR 5 lb. Bag - Also Unbleached	\$1.65
GORDON BIERSC MÄRZEN 12 oz. 6 Pack Bottles - Also Pilsner - Plus Calif. Redeem Value	\$5.49
HORIZON ORGANIC LOW FAT COTTAGE CHEESE Pint	\$2.99
MARIE CALLENDER CHICKEN POT PIE 16 oz. - Also Beef	\$2.69
COLES WILD MOUNTAIN HONEY 16 oz.	\$2.99
WINDEX GLASS AND SURFACE WIPES 25 count	\$2.49

MEAT/SEAFOOD

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THYME BUTTER, HERB STUFFED CHICKEN		\$25 ea.
Organic SCOTISH SALMON		\$18.98 lb.
Fresh SEA SCALLOPS		\$23.98 lb.



Get on board

Too busy stuffing the turkey to drop-in on one of Caltrains' public meetings last Tuesday? There's still a way to agitate for more train service. Send e-mails with your two cents' worth on the proposed timetable to add weekday train service to this address: caltraincomments@caltrain.com.

To view the proposed timetable, go to www.caltrain.com/timetable.

The center of drama

Are you an M-A booster?irate nearby resident? Drama club groupie? Architecture enthusiast? Anyone with opinions on the town of Atherton's lawsuit against the new performing arts center, currently under construction on the Menlo-Atherton High School campus, is invited to a public meeting held by Atherton Councilman Charles Marsala on Wednesday, Nov. 28, at 6 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, 94 Ashfield Road.

Torches and pitchforks are optional.

Pancakes with Santa

Bring your wish lists and your appetites — the city of Menlo Park is sponsoring a pancake breakfast with Santa Claus on Saturday, Dec. 1, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The cost is \$5 adults and \$3 children. Reservations are required; call 330-2200 or go to MenloPark.org/registration and click on "Events."

Cheap books, good cause

The Selby Lane cafeteria will be filled, not with tater-tots and Salisbury steaks, but with food for the mind over the Dec. 7-9 weekend. The annual Scholastic Books warehouse sale features half-price books for all ages, and is a fundraiser for the elementary school. PTA member Sue Harrison says the sale draws people from all over the Bay Area, from Napa to Gilroy.

The sale starts at 3 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 7, and goes until 8 p.m. On Saturday, sale hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Sunday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Selby Lane School is located at 170 Selby Lane in Atherton.

Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Younger kids to study Spanish

■ Menlo Park district adds Spanish instruction for kids in grades 3-5 next year.

By Marjorie Mader

Almanac Staff Writer

All third- through fifth-graders at Encinal and Oak Knoll schools in the Menlo Park district will study Spanish next school year as an addition to the revised enrichment program taught by specialists, a program that now includes music, art, P.E. and library studies.

Trustees unanimously adopted the proposal, presented by

Superintendent Ken Ranella, at their Nov. 19 meeting after years of discussing Spanish language instruction in the lower grades. Currently, Spanish instruction is offered only as an elective for seventh- and eighth-graders at Hillview.

The new program will extend the school day by up to 60 minutes a week.

The proposal also recommends implementing a multi-year approach to expanding a

Spanish language program to grades K-2, beginning in 2009-10.

"I can't believe it," said board President Terry Thygesen, who began advocating Spanish instruction as a parent in 1999.

Superintendent Ranella proposed creating an "enrichment block schedule" that would operate nearly identically at Encinal and Oak Knoll and be based on consistent standards. The schedule would organize classes for 40-minute sessions according to grade levels at each school.

Core academic teachers would use the morning or afternoon blocks of time allotted to the enrichment program twice a week for preparation, planning and working with colleagues. The schedule also provides an uninterrupted time during the rest of the days for them to work with their class on core academic subjects — language arts, math, science and social studies.

Specialists will be scheduled to provide instruction to one grade

See **SPANISH**, page 10



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

Installing solar panels in Menlo Park just got cheaper. Effective immediately, residents no longer have to pay permit fees associated with putting solar panels on their property.

How will Menlo Park go green?

■ Council members eliminate solar permit fees, eye other ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

By Rory Brown

Almanac Staff Writer

One "green" action down for the Menlo Park City Council, a lot more to go.

The council voted unanimously on Nov. 20 to eliminate the city's solar panel fees — a move that will cause the city to lose about \$8,000 of revenue for the remainder of the fiscal year, but an act council mem-

bers said will encourage more residents to go solar.

The council discussion was short, consensus was swift, and effective immediately, residents won't have to pay the average \$330 of fees associated with installing new solar panels on their property.

GRCC report

But if council discussion of a report issued by the

Menlo Park Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee — a citizens' greenhouse gas emissions task force — is any indicator, efforts to address global warming are likely to get tougher, and the tradeoffs will get touchier.

The report includes 130 recommendations regarding how the city can reach climate neutrality — the ability to offset the negative impacts of the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by Menlo Park homes, automobiles and businesses.

But some of the 32 top priorities listed by the committee as steps toward climate neutrality, including supporting high-speed rail and constructing multi-story, high-density homes, are controversial issues in Menlo Park.

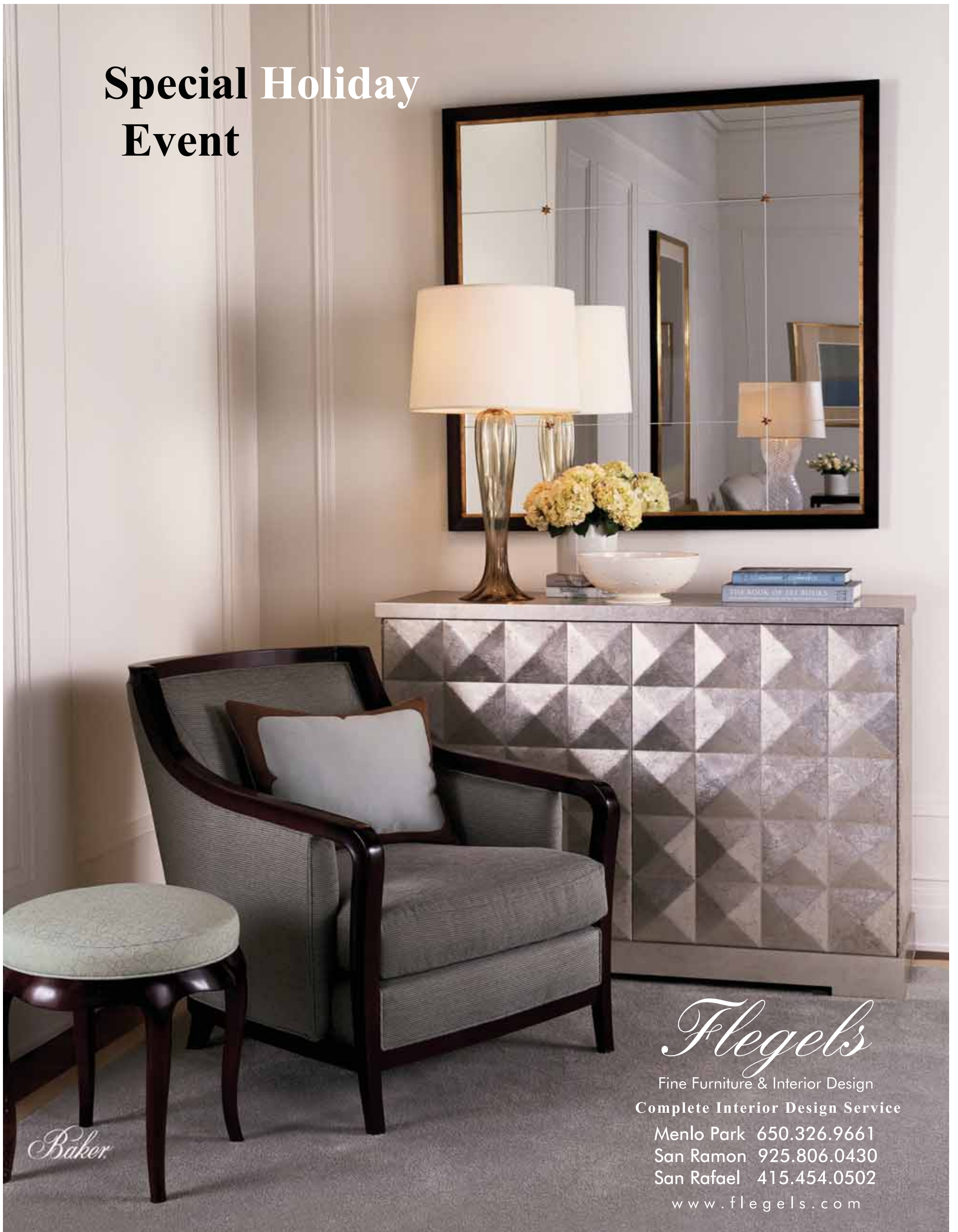
"You have some very tough policy choices in front of you," resident Elias Blawie said at the meeting.

Former councilwoman Gail Slocum, a member of the citizens' committee, urged the council to take the report seriously.

"If you had a loved one like

See **GREEN**, page 10

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Miller Design Co. returns to Woodside

Noted interior designer opens remodeled studio with new partner

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

After four years in Portola Valley, interior designer Robert W. Miller is back in Woodside with a new business partner and a new studio.

He and his new design partner, Jacob Scherer, have completely renovated the carriage house at 2934 Woodside Road, next door to Alain Pinel Realtors.

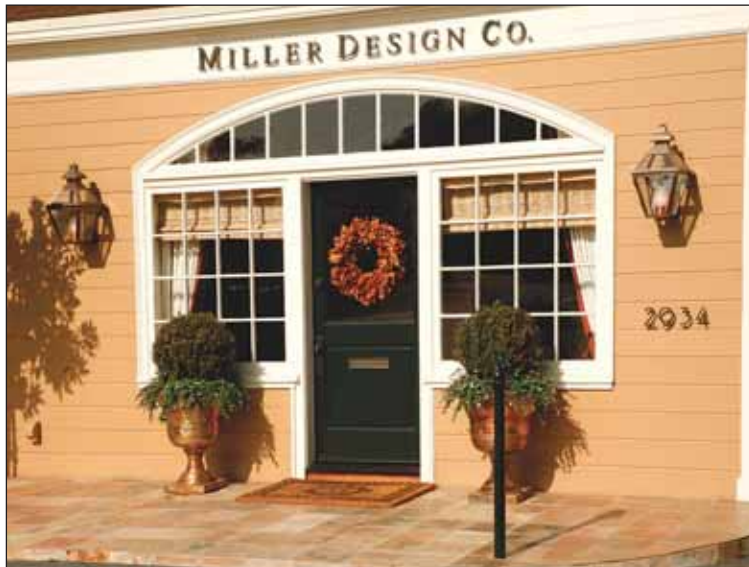
Starting with the cracked foundation, they have transformed the one-time Woodside ice house into a handsome studio painted taupe with white trim. A white awning and planter box filled with white cyclamen adorn the front window. A cupola and copper horse weathervane add to its "Woodside charm."

A wrought iron gate in the back of the building opens to stone steps leading to an outdoor garden, complete with fountain.

The carriage house adjoins Alain Pinel Realtors building, which is slated to be painted a deeper shade of taupe to coordinate with the design studio.

The carriage house that now bears the sign "Miller Design Co." is larger than it seems; there is room for four offices and a conference room. The foyer is cozy with hardwood floors, Oriental rug, and comfortable chairs. Walls are painted in a gold hue known as "Lion's Mane." An adjoining buffet station for coffee and drinks is striking with espresso walls, white counter, and hammered chrome sink.

Bob Miller is no stranger to Woodside. In 1995 he and Doug Dolezal moved their firm, Miller/Dolezal Design Group, into the little building at 1590 Canada Road, once home to the Almanac. The firm soon outgrew the Woodside location and moved into offices at 3000



Above: Miller Design Co. now occupies a former carriage house on Woodside Road, once the Woodside ice house, later home to In Any Event.
Right: Jacob Scherer joins Miller Design Co. as a new business partner.
Photos by Margot Harford

Alpine Road. No longer with the firm, Mr. Dolezal now lives in Southern California.

New partner Jacob Scherer began his design career at 17 in his native Sonoma. At 25, he worked at Wroolie & Company in the San Francisco Design Center, and started his first interior design company, Marchisi. Four years later, he founded Da Lusso Design, a home staging company. He recently decided to partner with Mr. Miller, a longtime friend.

Mr. Miller was a principal at Flegel's Home Furnishings in Menlo Park for many years before starting his own company. He has served as president

of the Peninsula chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) and as chairman for ASID Designer Show Houses for 11 years.

Mr. Miller says a majority of his clients live in Woodside; however, he works internationally. He is just starting work on a 7,000-square-foot condominium in Shanghai for a client who lives in Los Altos Hills. He has decorated many homes in Hawaii, and won an ASID Award of Excellence in 2007 for the Krause Hawaii project.

Although his studio is in Woodside, Mr. Miller goes home to San Francisco. He says he likes living in both worlds. ■

2200 or register online at www.menlopark.org/registration.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District and Menlo Park Rotary are co-sponsoring the event. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 12 and under, with \$1 off with a donation of an unwrapped toy to the Fire Fighters Toy Drive.

The Burgess Recreation Center is at 700 Alma St. in Menlo Park. For more information, visit www.menlopark.org.

a.m. at the Burgess Recreation Center. The Menlo Park Chorus will sing carols throughout the morning, and a magic show is scheduled for 9:30.

There will be three seatings for breakfast: at 8, 9 and 10 a.m. To make reservations, call 330-

Breakfast with Santa set for Dec. 1 in Menlo Park

Children and their parents will be able to visit with Santa, write letters to him, and create holiday crafts when the city of Menlo Park Community Services Department co-sponsors a pancake breakfast on Saturday, Dec. 1.

The event is set for 8 to 11

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



A Good Time to Buy

Q: I want to buy a property but few new properties have come on the market in the past few weeks. Would you advise me to actively keep looking or should I wait until early 2008 when there will likely be more new inventory?

A: It is true that inventory in this area is relatively low as the end of the year approaches. Unlike some parts of the Bay Area, property values in most Mid-Peninsula towns have been stable. Unemployment is low in this area and foreclosures are rare, although the number is slightly higher than in the past few years. The volatility in the financial markets

could have an effect but it remains to be seen what this will be.

If you are looking for a home that you want to live in for at least five to seven years, this can be one of the best times of the year to buy and I would advise you not to wait until next year. During the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas many buyers are busy with other activities and stop looking for property. Sellers are anxious that buyers are taking a break and this can be an opportunity for those who are actively looking to find a property without much competition. Stay active and you may find what you are looking for.

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

TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

PLANNING COMMISSION

December 5, 2007

7:30 PM

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **Joe Polati** MERG2007-003

522 East View Way

Review of an application to merge lots 18, 19, 20, and 21 to result in a 1.43 acre property in Suburban Residential zoning.

2. **San Mateo College District** LLA2007-002

4200 Farm Hill Blvd

Review of a request for a lot line adjustment to move 3.77 acres of land from one lot that is owned by the San Mateo College District to another lot that is owned by the San Mateo College District so as to yield one 99.4 acre parcel and one 24.8 acre parcel. Both lots are currently what is Canada College.

3. **Greg & Nancy Serrurier** MERG2007-004 thru 2007-008

503 Old La Honda

Review of an application to merge old lots 246, 247, 258, 257, and 256 in order to create a 2.78 acre property in SCP-7.5 zoning.

Review of an application to merge old lots 259, 260, 261, 262, and 263, 264, 265, and 266 in order to create a 4.80 acre property in SCP-7.5 zoning.

Review of an application to merge old lots 243, 244, and 245 in order to create a 1.85 acre property in SCP-7.5 zoning.


Review of an application to merge old lots 240, 241, and 242 in order to create a 1.92 acre property in SCP-7.5 zoning.

Review of an application to merge old lots 255, 254, 253, 253A, and a portion of Upenuf Road in order to create a 1.83 acre property in SCP-7.5 zoning.

All application materials are available for public review at the Woodside Planning and Building Counter, Woodside Town Hall, weekdays from 8:00 - 10:00 AM and 1:00 - 3:00 PM, or by appointment. For more information, contact the Woodside Planning and Building Department at (650) 851-6790.

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It takes the cake

Jan Reeves, art teacher at St. Joseph's School of the Sacred Heart in Atherton, admires her seventh-grade students' artwork, now on display at the Sugar Shack in downtown Menlo Park. This fall Ms. Reeves introduced her students to California artist Wayne Thiebaud, best known for his paintings of cakes, pies, pastries, and gumball machines. She reports the students enjoyed the project, especially dessert-tasting day, which fueled their artistic interpretations.



Who will collect our garbage in 2011?

By Marion Softky

Almanac Staff Writer

As of Jan. 1, 2011, a new set of trucks may be rumbling through Peninsula neighborhoods collecting garbage and recyclables.

Two contracts with Allied Waste of San Mateo County expire Dec. 31, 2010, and the South Bay Waste Management Authority (SBWMA) has issued a request for proposals (RFP) to companies interested in taking on the franchise.

March 4, 2008, is the deadline to submit proposals for two services: ■ to collect solid waste and recyclable materials in the areas administered by SBWMA; and ■ to operate the Shoreway Recycling and Disposal Center in San Carlos, just east of Bayshore Freeway, where waste materials are deposited to be recycled or sent to the Allied Waste landfill at Ox Mountain.

"We expect to see a lot of creative proposals," said Kevin McCarthy, executive director of SBWMA. "We have asked for proposals to be as green as possible."

SBWMA manages one of the largest municipal service areas in the country, according to Mr. McCarthy. It is made up of 12 jurisdictions: 10 cities, from East Palo Alto to Hillsborough, including Menlo Park, Atherton, and Redwood City; plus San

Mateo County and the West Bay Sanitary District, which represent unincorporated areas.

Under the current franchise, Allied Waste, which took over service from BFI in 2005, provides solid waste and recycling collection for 91,000 residences and nearly 10,000 businesses in the SBWMA service area, with estimated annual revenues of \$70 million. It also operates the Shoreway Recycling and Disposal Center, which brings in \$36 million a year.

Mr. McCarthy expects four to five proposals for the collection service from companies across the country, and six-to-eight proposals to operate the transfer and recycling station. "We will be looking for ways to reduce the carbon footprint for their operations," he said.

Allied Waste has already started going green. It began converting its entire fleet of 225 garbage trucks to biodiesel fuel to reduce emissions in September. The converted trucks are bright blue with a lively "Biodiesel" logo.

Mr. McCarthy expects a new company, being made up of Bay Area waste haulers, to submit a proposal. It may include companies like Greenwaste Recovery, which serves Woodside and Portola Valley; and South San Francisco Scavenger.

Greenwaste Recovery is notable because it composts not only

yard waste but household garbage at a site near Gilroy. Almost 80 percent of the garbage from Woodside and Portola Valley becomes mulch for gardens and golf courses, the Almanac reported in 2005.

Meanwhile, SBWMA is working on a \$20 million master plan to prepare the San Carlos facility for some 50,000 more tons of recyclables and organics when the new service rolls out in 2011. The improvements will focus on traffic, capacity, and customer satisfaction, Mr. McCarthy said.

"The end result will be the most environmentally sustainable solid waste and recycling collection and processing system in the United States," he said. ■

■ INFORMATION

A number of local agencies and companies can provide information on solid waste collection, recycling, and other matters:

■ South Bay Waste Management Authority (SBWMA): 802-3500; rethinkwaste.org

■ Allied Waste of San Mateo County: 592-2411; alliedwaste-sanmateocounty.com

■ San Mateo County Recyclingworks: 1-800-442-2666; recyclingworks.org

■ Greenwaste Recovery: 569-9900 (from Woodside and Portola Valley); greenwaste.com



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Town, residents buy scenic trail, parcel for open space

■ Portola Valley open-space advocates come through with \$1.5 million in three months.

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The future seems secure for the plants and animals that live on two and a half acres of undeveloped land near the intersection of Golden Hill and Westridge drives in Portola Valley. Local strollers and hikers may have reason to feel good, too.

The property, which includes the sun-dappled 0.8-mile Shady Lane Trail, will soon be under the town's protection as open space. The Town Council voted 4-0-1 on Nov. 14, with Councilwoman Maryann Moise Derwin abstaining, to buy the property for \$1.6 million.

The funding included \$1.5 million raised since August from residents — a total of 93 gifts, said spokeswoman Ginny Kavanaugh — and \$100,000 in utility tax revenues from the town's open space acquisition reserve, as recommended by the town's open space advisory committee.

The council also agreed to contribute another \$10,000 to handle real estate transaction costs.

The council proposed spending no more than \$110,000 because the property and trail are not along a scenic corridor, Town Administrator Angela Howard said. The

parcel is hilly and has a "long, thin entrance" and would be "difficult" to develop, she added.

Ms. Kavanaugh called it a "flag lot" because its dimensions resemble a flag on a pole. Shady Lane Trail runs just inside the property line.

In a flier, Ms. Kavanaugh described the trail as "rich biologically," and added that Paul Heiple, who chairs the town's Conservation Committee, told her of "dozens of species of native plants" and many bird species attracted to the berries there.

The list of private gifts includes one from the property owner, the Tevis Family Partnership, which lowered the price by \$163,000, Ms. Kavanaugh said.

Four "wonderful" donors gave over \$100,000 each, which encouraged others to give, she said.

The campaign raised the money in about three months; there was at least one deadline extension from the property owners. Word-of-mouth was key, as was one direct mailing, Ms. Kavanaugh said. The final \$52,000 came in just before the council was scheduled to act, she added.

Donors were persuaded by the trail's scenic charm, memories of using it over the years, and the fact that the trail is a former road

on the 1,400-acre Ormondale Farm, she said.

The hurried brevity of the campaign and the level of giving it elicited impressed Councilman Steve Toben. "It was really a knockout," he said.

Derwin abstains

Ms. Derwin, who lives a few blocks from the site, told the Almanac that she abstained out of concern that she not appear biased. She tends to vote "green," she said, and with her high profile in concurrent fundraising to open up part of Sausal Creek at Town Center, a vote for or against Shady Lane Trail might be interpreted as a quid pro quo to potential donors.

She noted that she had also heard from residents who objected to being asked to help buy open space that is not along a scenic corridor. Potential donors also disliked the use of public funds for such a purchase, and some "with great wealth" worried about the precedent-setting aspect of the deal, Ms. Derwin said.

"I can't say that I agreed with any of those who groused about the deal," she added in an e-mail. "However, it was becoming clear that however I felt about the Shady Lane issue, my vote could easily appear tainted. Hence my abstention." ■

Playing fields study headlines busy council meeting

The Menlo Park City Council will have a full plate on Tuesday, Nov. 27.

■ MENLO WATCH

On the same night council members are scheduled to discuss grade separations and the new Derry project, they're also expected to take on the issue of building more playing fields.

Council members will consider a staff recommendation to pay a consultant \$42,917 to conduct a citywide sports field study, and determine where more fields can be built.

The study would also survey spots where artificial turf fields and/or lighted fields could be built, according to a staff report. If approved, the study would start in December and conclude in April.

The playing fields study is listed as a regular business item for the council's regular meeting, which is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

Derry project returns

Menlo Park City Council members will get their first chance to publicly discuss the new Derry condo-commercial project on Nov. 27.

The project includes plans for 108 condos in a cluster of three-story buildings, a 3,500-square-foot plaza, and a payment of \$2 million from the developer, the San Mateo-based O'Brien Group, to the city.

The council will discuss the project as an information item at its regular meeting, which

is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center.

The new proposal is the result of a compromise reached by the developer and the residents group Menlo Park Tomorrow, which led a referendum against the original proposal.

The original project included plans for 135 condos in three- and four-story buildings up to 50 feet tall at a 3.4-acre site that borders Oak Grove Avenue and Derry Lane, between El Camino Real and the Caltrain tracks.

Grade separations study session

Grade separations — separating the Caltrain tracks from the roadway at key intersections — will be the focus of a Menlo Park City Council study session scheduled to start at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 27.

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.

The study session will be in the council chambers at the Civic Center.

Proponents of grade preparations say allowing traffic, bicycles and pedestrians to pass over or under more heavily used tracks would reduce congestion and improve safety, but critics say constructing grade separations will worsen congestion, and severely impact nearby homes and businesses.

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SPANISH

continued from page 5

level on each day at six different times. The music block for fourth- and fifth-graders would be from 11:20 a.m. to noon, with sections for band, orchestra and choral groups.

Maximum size of the enrich-

ment classes could vary from 24 to 32 students, depending upon the number of classes in each grade level at a school. Band and P.E. classes could serve more than 40 students within a class period.

A tentative budget for the proposed changes was not included in the proposal, but according

to Mr. Ranella the approximate cost of the Spanish program will be \$170,000, with another \$40,000 to \$50,000 to be spent for additional teachers' time.

A recent survey of parents showed 80 percent support offering Spanish language instruction, taught by specialists, at the elementary grade level. ■

GREEN

continued from page 5

planet earth that was diagnosed with a life threatening disease, you would not withhold treatment," she said.

Council action

Council members voted unanimously to accept the report and directed city staff to examine the committee's recommendations.

Mayor Kelly Fergusson and Councilman Heyward Robinson, who launched the committee in March, said they would like to see staff come

back with some aspects of the report analyzed "sooner, rather than later."

"Environmental stewardship is a council priority," Mr. Robinson said. He said the report should go directly to city commissions for review, and eventually back to the council for action on some of the recommendations.

Councilman John Boyle stressed that the city should carefully examine each recommendation before taking action, and said the council already has other goals to accomplish — a concern seconded by City Manager Glen Rojas.

"We're not getting everything done as it is," Mr. Boyle said. "In my mind, we're still in the exploring stage." ■

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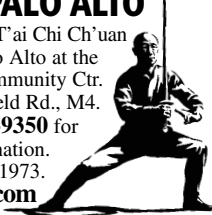
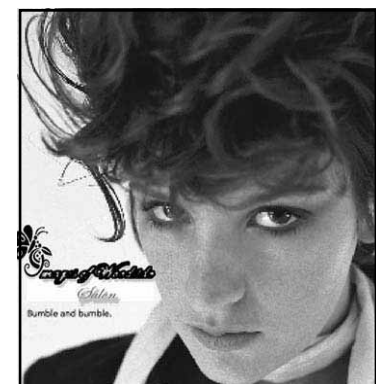
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MP Strikers parent coaches, top row, from left: Sharron Hasslen, Doug Baer, Peyman Milanfar, Tabatha Volking and Gregg von Thanden. Players are, middle row, from left: Ilana Baer, Annalisa Crowe, Leila Milanfar, Sinead Haley, Simone Hasslen and Tiffany Volking; and front row, from left, Sophie Amid-Hozour, Cameron Gordon, Lauren von Thaden, Sarah Abramowitz and Holly Pounders.

Alpine FC Rebels win CYSA district cup in shutout

The Alpine FC Rebels won the girls U13 California Youth Soccer Association District II Cup Gold Division class 3 finals in overtime beating the DeAnza Stealth 1-0.

Mikaela Waters of Woodside scored the winning goal with an assist by Maya Norman also of Woodside.

The Alpine FC Rebels scored 6 goals in four games and shut out their opponents for a tournament record of 4-0. Exceptional teamwork and a strong defense throughout the tournament earned the Alpine FC Rebels the only shutout in their division. The tournament was played in Morgan Hill.

To reach the finals the Alpine FC Rebels first beat the MP Strikers 94G White 2-0. They then went on to beat the MCFC Gale Force of Monterey 1-0.

In their last qualifying game the Alpine FC Rebels beat the DeAnza Freedom 94 of Sunnyvale 2-0.

The Alpine FC Rebels U13 are holding tryouts at Woodside High School Dec. 9 from 3 to 5 p.m. Girls born after July 31, 1994, are welcome to try out.

For more information on these tryouts and tryouts for other Alpine FC age groups, go to www.alpinefc.org.

Alpine FC is a group of about 250 soccer players, their coaches, and families, most of whom live in Woodside, Portola Valley and West Menlo Park. The club is made up of 15 boys' and girls' teams ranging in age from U9 to U16.

Teams play at two different levels — Class 3 (competitive) and Class 1 (select). Players for all teams are selected on a tryout basis.

There is also an academy for younger players who wish to hone their soccer skills prior to joining a team. All players are accepted in to the Academy.

Report submitted by Ellen Ablow

MP Striker girls take home trophy

Players on the MP Strikers 98G White team are proudly sporting a shiny first-place trophy and medals after participating in their first Norcal State Cup in Sacramento Nov. 17 and 18.

The Class 1-aspiring girls team for the Redwood Soccer League played in the Silver division in the tournament. They went undefeated in all five games with a 1-0 victory in their final match against Santa Clara Sporting.

Coaches Guillermo and Ange-

la Talancon were unable to attend the tournament because of a conflicting national tournament in Florida. Rather than have the GU09 team bow out of the NorCal tournament, five parents stepped up to handle coaching duties from the sidelines. When their final match ended with a tournament win, the girls put in a collective call to their coaches. "All the hard practice paid off. You knew what to do!" Coach Talancon report-

edly told his players.

The team trains in Menlo Park and draws most of its players from Menlo Park, Palo Alto and Redwood City. Organizers are looking to grow the team's roster through the MP Strikers CYSA tryouts on Dec. 8 and 9 at Sequoia High School in Redwood City.

For more information on the tryouts, visit www.mpstrikersfc.com.

Report submitted by parent Sheri Baer

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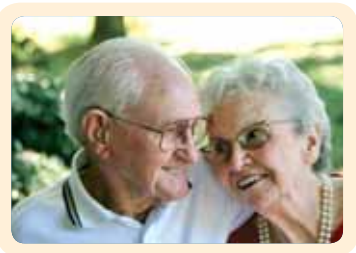
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World Affairs Council talk on humanitarian assistance

“The Changing Realities of Humanitarian Assistance: Commentary from 21 Years in the Field” will be the topic of the World Affairs Council of Northern California talk on Tuesday, Nov. 27, at 7:30 p.m., at the Los Altos Public Library, at 13 South San Antonio Road.

The free program starts with refreshments at 7 p.m. and ends by 9 p.m.

The following night, at 7 p.m., there will be a program on Iraq sponsored by Los Altos Voices for Peace, at the same location. Emad Yahya, president of the Arab-American Cultural Center of Silicon Valley, will speak on the “current state of affairs and living conditions in Iraq.”

For information, call the Los Altos Library at 948-7683.

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TOWN OF WOODSIDE INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE REVIEW BOARD

The Architectural and Site Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Director of Community Design and Development on residential, site design and commercial applications.

Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month, 4:30 p.m. Appointment is for a term expiring in February 2011.

Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 12 noon and 1:00-5:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, by telephone at (650) 851-6790, or through the Town's web site at www.woodsidetown.org. Deadline for applications is Friday, December 7, 2007, 5:00 p.m.

Published in the Country Almanac on November 21, 28, December 5, 2007.

City clerk leaves Menlo for Redwood City post

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Silvia Vonderlinden will be leaving her post as Menlo Park city clerk, but she won't be going far and she won't have to get used to a new title.

She's starting as city clerk in Redwood City on Dec. 27, a homecoming of sorts since she left there as deputy city clerk when she came to Menlo Park nearly five years ago.

"I'm leaving (Menlo Park) because it's an opportunity of a lifetime," she told the Almanac. In Redwood City, Ms. Vonderlinden will be a department head with her own office and a staff of three full-time employees and one part-time, she said. She will report to the City Council, not the city manager as she

does in Menlo Park.

"It's a great opportunity for development," she said in an interview.

The city clerk's role includes record-keeping and administrative support for the council, managing elections, and responding to the public's requests for government documents.

Ms. Vonderlinden has a master's degree in public administration and nine years of civil service behind her.

"I just really enjoy serving the public," she said. "It's basically being useful to people, getting answers, connecting the dots, being able to provide them with exceptional service."

"I couldn't be happier with all the chances I've been given here," she added. "It's hard leaving great relationships. It's very hard." ■

Caltrain seeks comments on new timetable with more trains

As Caltrain finalizes plans to add two new trains each weekday evening, it is seeking public comments on the timetable at three drop-in sessions on Tuesday, Nov. 27, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., in San Francisco, San Jose, and San Carlos.

The San Carlos meeting will take place at Caltrain headquarters, 1250 San Carlos Ave.

The new trains, one northbound and one southbound, will raise the total number of weekday trains to 98. The new trains will begin running March 3, 2008, if the Cal-

train board approves the proposed timetable at its next meeting on Thursday, Dec. 6, at 10 a.m., at the San Carlos office.

According to the proposed timetable, scheduled departures for trains leaving San Francisco or San Jose after 7 p.m. will be changed by up to 30 minutes to accommodate the new trains.

For information, or to view the proposed timetable, go to caltrain.com/timetable; or call 502-6800. Comments may be emailed to caltraincomments@caltrain.com.

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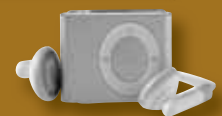
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
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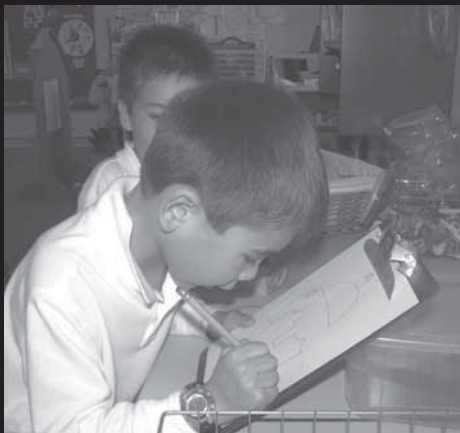
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Signs of life?

With new businesses and revamped storefronts, could downtown Menlo Park become...cool?

BY RORY BROWN • PHOTOS BY VERONICA WEBER

Allan Aldrich, who owns Menlo Florist on Santa Cruz Avenue, will readily admit that downtown Menlo Park hasn't exactly been a destination spot as of late.

"Until recently, you could fire a cannon on Santa Cruz Avenue any given weeknight and not hit anybody," said Mr. Aldrich, whose father set up shop in the area 55 years ago.

Empty stores, outdated buildings, and zero nightlife have been the story of Santa Cruz Avenue for the past decade — a far cry from the bustling breakfast-to-midnight crowd that gathers on the other side of El Camino Real at Cafe Borrone.

Although recent city efforts have focused on finding ways to revamp properties along El Camino Real, long-in-the-works efforts to bring life to Santa Cruz Avenue are slowly showing results as new buildings open, businesses move to the area, and more people stroll the sidewalks.

"Things had gotten so slow downtown that people and the city started to take more of an interest in the downtown area," Mr. Aldrich said. "The Downtown Merchants' Association encouraged stores to extend hours for the holiday and the city has been working on bringing in new businesses. The work is starting to show."

A downtown 'renaissance'

David Johnson, who was hired as the city's business development manager in 2003 in part to draw businesses downtown, said efforts are finally paying off as the downtown is on the brink of "a renaissance."

"There are plans in the works for virtually every vacant site on Santa Cruz Avenue," Mr. Johnson said. "Every property has a lease signed, or is in negotiations to fill the space."

Among the new additions to the downtown area mentioned by Mr. Johnson (for a full list, see the map):

■ Jewelry store Tom Wing and Sons has moved from Stanford Shopping Center to a new building at 888 Santa Cruz Ave., near Evelyn Street.

■ Negotiations are under way to fill the former Dal Baffo restaurant site at 878 Santa Cruz Ave.

■ Negotiations are under way to fill the new building at 773 Santa Cruz Ave., near Chestnut Street, with either a single restaurant or several retail stores.

■ Existing downtown stores such as Cheeky Monkey and Hirzel Jeweler have moved to larger downtown spaces.

■ La Sede Bella, a European fabric and furniture store, is set to move into a new building planned for the former Juice Patch site.

Emphasis on downtown

Mr. Johnson acknowledged that downtown businesses aren't huge money-makers for the city, but stressed that having a lively downtown is just as important as adding money to the city's coffers.

"Downtown isn't the leading revenue generator for the city, but that doesn't mean we should put less emphasis on creating a healthy, exciting downtown that reflects this community," Mr. Johnson said. "Downtown Menlo Park is actually in a great spot. We're not going to have a Victoria's Secret or a Gap, because those stores are in nearby malls. We're ideally located for the locally owned, independent businesses who want the spill-over traffic from those larger retailers."

Mayor Kelly Fergusson said there is a "buzz" about downtown, and credited "family friendly" businesses such as the Sugar Shack candy store, with attracting more people to the area.

"We want our downtown to be a place where a variety of businesses can thrive, because our downtown is a big part of the identity of Menlo Park," she said.

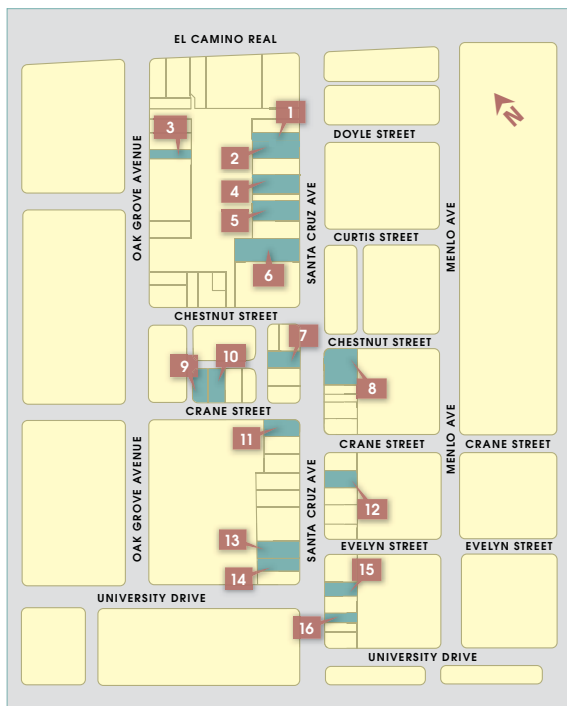
The business perspective

Local business owners, old and new to downtown Menlo Park, like the direction the city's downtown area is headed.

"We surveyed our customers and asked them where we should move, and they said downtown Menlo Park," said George Tom, president of Tom Wing and Sons.

Mr. Tom said he gave up the foot traffic of Stanford Shopping Center to move to a location with a "good sense of community."

See **SIGNS OF LIFE?**, next page



Information courtesy of the city of Menlo Park

Examples of recent business activity in downtown Menlo Park: **1.** New site of Dolma Tibetan Carpets **2.** La Sede Bella moving to former Juice Patch **3.** Building under expansion **4.** Potential site for new clothing store **5.** New Cheeky Monkey site **6.** Eichler Designs expansion **7.** New site for Hirzel Fine Jewelry **8.** New building (tenant to be determined) **9.** New jeweler **10.** New store: Peninou French Laundry **11.** New store: Sugar Shack **12.** Remodeled jZ Cool **13.** Potential business in line to fill old Dal Baffo site **14.** New business: Tom Wing and Sons **15.** New antique consignment store **16.** New store: Head Over Heels



Tom Wing and Sons president George Tom, left, and brother James Tom, talk inside their new Santa Cruz Avenue store.

Jesmeralda Zamora arranges flowers at Menlo Florist on Santa Cruz Avenue. Owner Allan Aldrich said there are more people on Santa Cruz Avenue lately, meaning more customers for local businesses.



The **remodeled jZ Cool** offers a wine bar and occasional live music. Owner Jesse Cool said she changed the downtown eatery because Santa Cruz Avenue is becoming “younger and more vibrant.”

SIGNS OF LIFE?

continued from previous page

“A lot of our customers live in this area, and we had the chance to move to a very good downtown location. It wasn’t about cost, it was about atmosphere,” he said.

Local restaurateur Jesse Cool said there’s a new “vibrancy” to the downtown area, partially thanks to the business of a younger demographic.

“Downtown is drawing this younger crowd of people, and young families looking to find a place to eat,” said Ms. Cool, who recently remodeled her downtown jZ Cool restaurant to cater to diners looking for small plates, wine, and the occasional live jazz band. (It’s now called jZ Cool Eatery and Wine Bar.)

“We’ve tripled our business since we remodeled, and I think part of that is because people are in search of something a little more hip.”

Block parties

Plans for new buildings and businesses have been in the works for several years, but existing business owners and Mr. Johnson pointed to the city-sponsored block parties held in August as a big boost for downtown Menlo Park.

At the events, restaurants offered outdoor seating, and local business owners extended their hours and organized live music to draw people.

Mayor Fergusson spearheaded the effort, with the unanimous backing of the City Council.

“The block parties were great collaborative efforts between the city and the businesses,” Mr. Johnson said. “The restaurant owners had been talking about organizing an event for a while, and I credit the council for supporting and approving funding for the event.” ■

THE FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENTS

Menlo Park nonprofit Hometown Peninsula asks residents to think and shop locally

For Kepler’s, it’s Amazon.com. For Menlo Florist, it’s 1-800-Flowers.

For Eichler Designs, it’s Home Depot. For just about everyone, it’s Wal-Mart and Target.

Name a Menlo Park business, and you can probably come up with a corresponding “big-box” store or online vendor that offers a similar, and often cheaper, product with just a quick click of the mouse, or a short drive away.

Now local businesses are fighting back, as a cluster of storeowners in Menlo Park and nearby towns have joined forces to create Hometown Peninsula, a nonprofit focused on figuring out how independent businesses can stay relevant in a world where franchises keep growing and online vendors keep getting stronger.

Leading the effort is Clark Kepler, owner of Kepler’s Books and Magazines, and someone who knows a thing or two about trying to survive in a tough business climate.

In 2005, Mr. Kepler unexpectedly closed his bookstore, citing the economic hardships following the dot-com crash and fierce competition from franchise and online booksellers.

As a result of a flood of community support, the local landmark reopened later that



Santa Cruz Avenue is still light on traffic and people in the evening hours, but local business owners think that’s changing.

See **HOMETOWN PENINSULA**, next page

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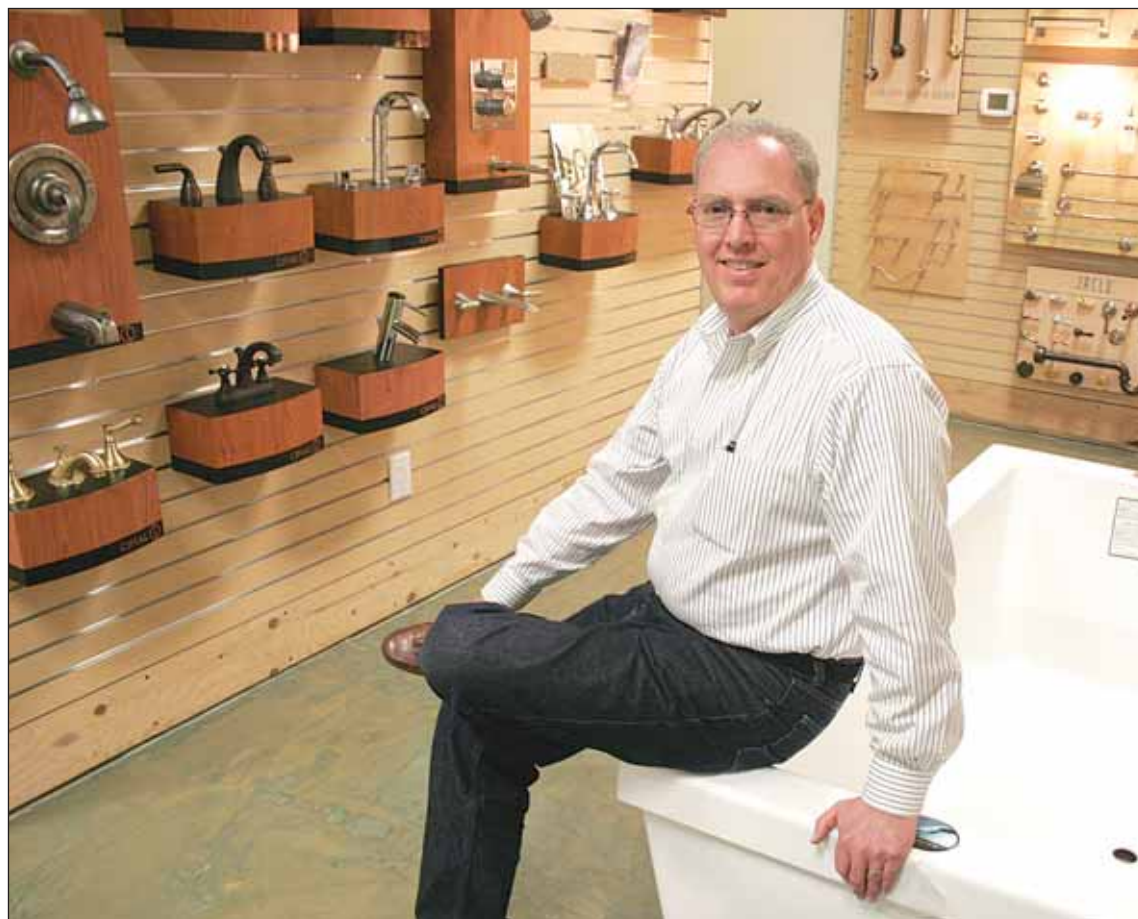
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Steven Eichler, owner of downtown kitchen and bath showroom Eichler Designs, says local business groups such as Hometown Peninsula can help shift local spending dollars to local businesses.

HOMETOWN PENINSULA

continued from previous page

year, but Mr. Kepler said it's still tough for Kepler's and other local businesses to compete against "big-box" retailers.

"After we reopened, customers kept coming up to me to say 'I didn't realize shopping for books online could put you out of business,'" Mr. Kepler said. "That awareness, and having people recognize the impact they make on the community through their shopping choices, is what [Hometown Peninsula] is all about."

With the help of the city's Downtown Merchants' Association (a Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce committee), Mr. Kepler and other business owners launched Hometown Peninsula last spring, and the nonprofit is now 43 members strong.

Local businesses such as Village Stationer, Beltramo's Wines and Spirits, and Draeger's have already signed on, and Mr. Kepler said he hopes that number will rise to 80 businesses by the end of the year. The Almanac is also a member.

"We're still trying to figure out how this will work, but a lot of small businesses are really looking for this to be successful," he said.

Thinking local

What's already figured out is Hometown Peninsula's main objective — trying to get residents to spend more of their shopping dollars at local, independent businesses.

"We're not trying to tell people to never shop online, or at the big stores ever again," said Steven Eichler, who owns Eichler Designs, a kitchen and bath showroom on Santa Cruz Avenue.

Although Mr. Eichler, who is on Hometown Peninsula's board of directors, did jokingly shudder at the words "Home Depot," he said that the nonprofit isn't trying to take down the big-box stores; it's just trying to help local shops and stores get some of their business back.

"If we can just shift a small percentage of spending back locally, we'll be in good shape," he said. "The issue here is that buying locally really does support our whole community — that's what needs to resonate loud and clear."

Spreading the word

To increase awareness, Hometown Peninsula is launching an advertising campaign to encourage residents to shop at local businesses during the holiday season, and the group is venturing outside Menlo Park city limits to

get more members on board.

Steve Rasmussen, a Menlo Park resident who owns the Milk Pail Market in Mountain View, said getting businesses all over the Peninsula to join the group is a good thing.

"It's lonely out there when you own a small business," said Mr. Rasmussen, who is also on the board of directors. "It's hard for small businesses to be visible, compared to 30, 40, 50 years ago when there were mostly small businesses out there. ... With groups like this, you can share ideas, and talk to like-minded people to make your business better."

"Our objective is to be open to all qualified members up and down the Peninsula and make this group as strong as possible," Mr. Kepler said.

He noted that locally owned franchises are not eligible for membership, because the decision-making for those businesses often happens at the corporate headquarters level, rather than at the local level.

"Independent businesses often buy supplies locally, and invest time and money back into the community, and chain stores don't always do that," Mr. Kepler said.

For more information about Hometown Peninsula, go to HometownPeninsula.org. ▀

Free senior health screening

The city of Menlo Park presents a "Wise and Well Health Screening" Thursday, Nov. 29, 9:30 to 11 a.m. at the Menlo Park Senior Center.

A pharmacist will be available to answer general questions and conduct personal consultations about medication compatibility. There will be blood pressure and glucose-level screenings offered as well.

All screenings are free for seniors. The Menlo Park Senior Center is located at 110 Terminal Ave. For more information contact Avidesh Samardar at 330-2283 or aysamardar@menlopark.org.

Holiday happenings at Little House

A tree trimming party will be held at 10 a.m. Monday, Dec. 3, in the Jane West Room at Little House, 800 Middle Ave. in Menlo Park. There will be complimentary coffee and cookies.

The annual "Snowflake Ball" will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6, in the Little House auditorium. Cost is \$7 per person.

For more information, call 326-2025.

AROUND TOWN

Gift fair at Menlo Presbyterian

Menlo Park Presbyterian Church will hold a gift fair, in partnership with Heavenly Treasures, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9, in fellowship hall and the garden court at 950 Santa Cruz Ave.

The fair will feature textiles, ceramics, jewelry, and home and fashion items from developing countries such as Ethiopia.

Heavenly Treasures is a micro-enterprise network that invests in developing countries. Proceeds from the sale of fair items are reinvested in the artisans' businesses, "thus providing basic health-care needs, education for their children, and adequate food and housing," according to a church spokesperson.

"Last year's fair was our first and it was a huge success," said Bennie Ingraham, international mission director. "We learned that one artisan who has AIDS in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

received enough proceeds from the sale of her candles in last year's Menlo Park fair to keep her housed and fed for over a year as she is too ill to work."

For more information, call Mr. Ingraham at 323-8619, bingraham@mppc.org.

Christmas Creche exhibit

More than 500 creches from around the world will be on display from Saturday through Wednesday, Dec. 1-5, from noon to 9 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 3865 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

This is 20th annual Christmas creche exhibit, which is sponsored by the Menlo Park Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The exhibit will also include a 17-by-8-foot oil painting, "Nativity," by Brian Kershnik, a Utah artist. Mr. Kershnik is giving a talk about his painting at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 4.

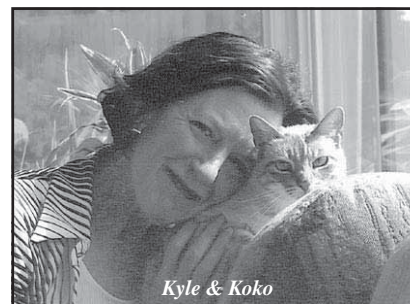
The children's room will have craft activities, nativity costumes and marionette shows.

Admission is free. For more information, call 856-3781.

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Teddy Bear Tea

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\$15 Children (10 & under)

Christmas Buffet

December 25 • 11:00am to 4:00pm
\$70 Adults, \$30 Children (5-12 years)
Children under 4 are complimentary

New Year's Eve Dinner

December 31 • 5:30pm to 10:00pm
\$70 per person

For reservations please phone
650-322-1234

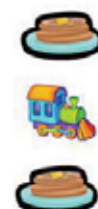


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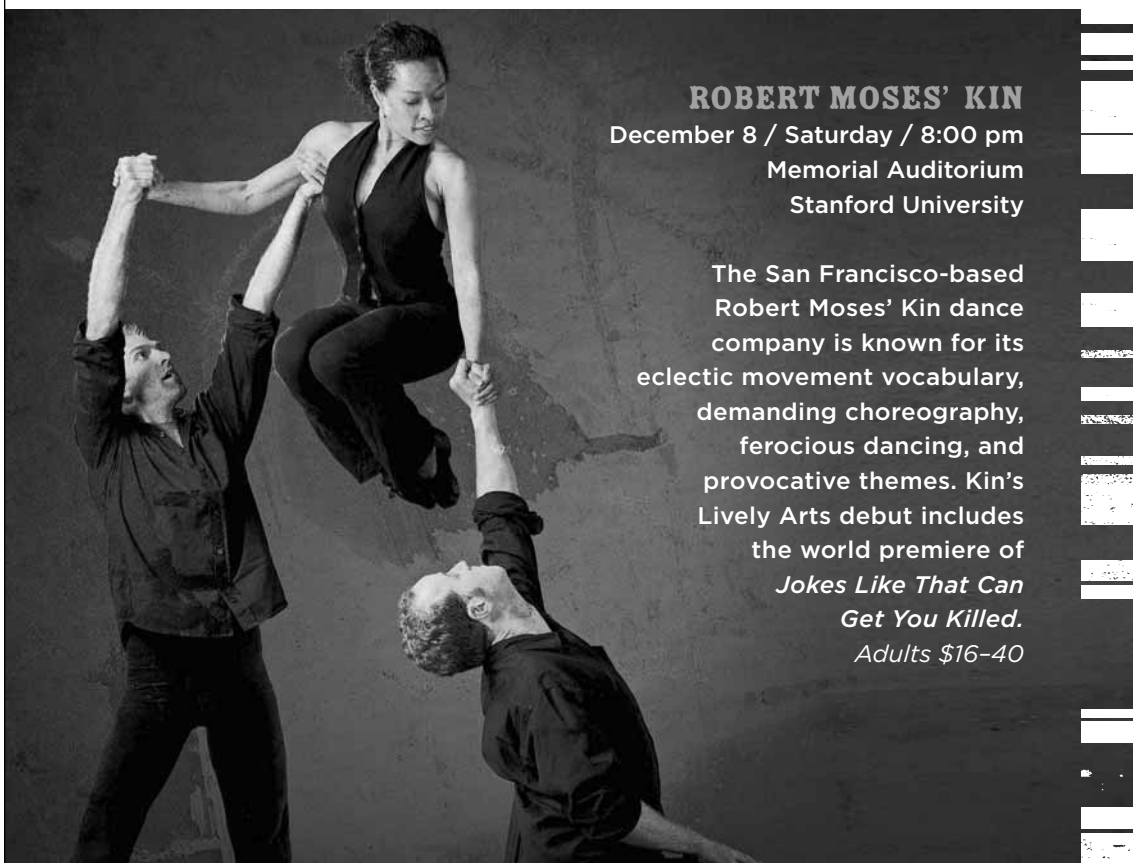
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Maya Kelley of Menlo Park is Clara in "The Nutcracker."

Local girl stars in 'Nutcracker'

Maya Kelley, a sophomore at Menlo-Atherton High School, is no stranger to the Peninsula Youth Ballet's yearly production of "The Nutcracker."

Over the past 11 years, she has danced nearly all of the roles in the production, including "little Clara." This year she will dance as the older Clara in the dream scenes. When she first appeared in the Almanac, in connection with "The Nutcracker," she was a kindergarten student at Laurel School.

Maya will dance the role in the Dec. 1 production at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center. At other performances she will perform as soloist in the snow scene, lead dancer in "Spanish Coffee," and queen of flowers in "The Waltz of the Flowers."

"The Nutcracker" will be performed at 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 1 and 2, at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center, 600 North Delaware St., San Mateo. For tickets, call 800-595-4849. For information, call 631-3767.

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Stanford University

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Dec. 15th & 16th -
1:30pm and 4:00pm

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Tickets available online at www.twasthenight.org or by calling 650-323-5292

Reserved Seating

Poulenc's 'Gloria' is concert highlight

The Peninsula Symphony is pairing up with the Stanford Symphonic Chorus for its annual holiday concert at Stanford's Memorial Church on Friday, Nov. 30, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 2, at 1:30 p.m.

The highlight of the program is "Gloria," a 25-minute tour de force by French composer Francis Poulenc.

Commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation of America in 1959, "Gloria" is probably

the most celebrated of Poulenc's works as well as one of the most dynamic. In it, Francis Poulenc sets a Latin Mass to six movements of emotional and energetic music, a feat that was seen as flirting with blasphemy.

It was written for full orchestra and chorus, with a soaring solo soprano part that will be sung in this performance by Vivian Krich-Brinton.

Mitchell Sardou Klein, the symphony's conductor, will also

present four modern pieces that reflect the celebration and joy of the season: "Fantasia on Green-sleeves," by Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Brook Green Suite," by Gustav Holst, and two works by Maurice Ravel, "Pavane for a Dead Princess" and "Mother Goose Suite."

Tickets are \$20 and available online at www.peninsulasymphony.org. Stanford Memorial Church is located at 450 Serra Mall on campus.

Menlo community chorus performs holiday music

The Menlo Park Chorus will perform a sampling of its winter concert program Saturday, Dec. 1, at 11 a.m. at the Menlo Park Library.

The free event will take place in the library's meeting room, at 800 Alma St. in Menlo Park.

The program will include "Baby it's Cold Outside," "Chanukah Song" and "Nutcracker March."

The Menlo Park Chorus is led by music director and conductor April Mc Neely, a voice teacher at Santa Clara University and an alumna of the San Francisco Bay Area Chamber Choir. The performance will be accompanied by pianist John Isofa.

The performance is part of the library's Saturday Series, which presents speakers, authors and performers the first Saturday of every month. The chorus is sponsored by the city of Menlo Park Community Services Department, Bay Area Music Foundation and the Performing Arts Alliance at Foothill College.

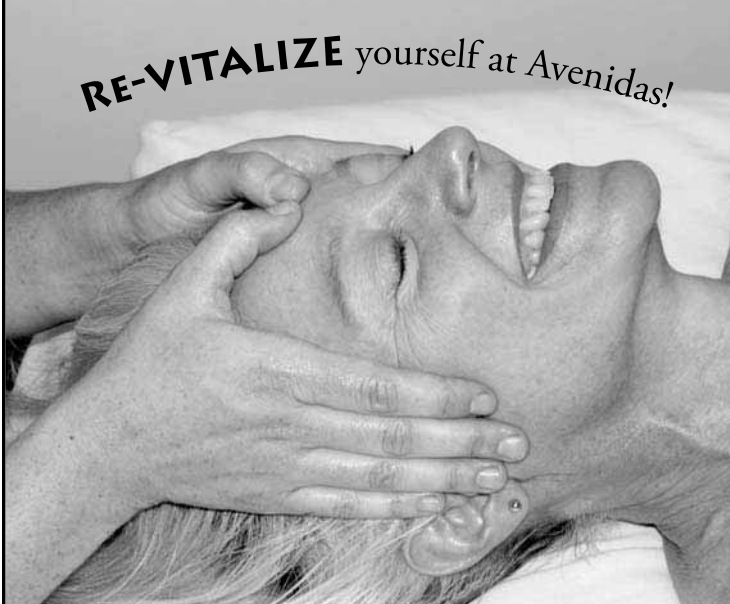
The library will provide free van service to the event for Menlo Park seniors and people with disabilities. For more information or to schedule transportation, call librarian Roberta Roth at 330-2512., or e-mail her at rlroth@menlopark.org.

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- Tuesday, December 18
- ✱ **HEART TO HEART SEMINAR ON GROWING UP**

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- For Boys: Thursdays, January 10 & 17, 2008
- For Girls: Saturdays, January 12 & 19, 2008
- ✱ **MOTHERS OF SONS: THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF ADOLESCENCE**

Dr. Robert Lehman, adolescent medicine specialist, explores the challenges that moms face in raising adolescent boys and offers ideas on how to strengthen the relationship between mothers and their sons as they transition from childhood to adulthood.


- Wednesday, January 16, 2008
- ✱ **PEDIATRIC WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAM**

This family-based, behavioral and educational weight management program promotes healthy eating and exercise habits for overweight children and their families. More than 80% of children achieve long-term weight loss through this program – and parents lose weight too! Call (650) 725-4424 to pre-register. Space is limited.

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

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**CITY OF MENLO PARK
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

ENGINEERING DIVISION

**NOTICE TO BIDDERS
FOR
MONTE ROSA DRIVE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT**

1. **BID OPENING.** The bidder shall complete and submit the blue copy of the Proposal to the City Council form that is inserted in the Contract Documents. No other copy of the Proposal Section will be accepted. Sealed bids, containing said blue copies of the completed Proposal Section, and subject to the conditions named herein and in the specifications for **"MONTE ROSA DRIVE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT"**, addressed to the City of Menlo Park will be received at the office of the Engineering Division up to **2:00 p.m., MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2007**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read.

2. **WORK DESCRIPTION.** The work to be done consists of installation of new asphalt concrete speed tables, pavement marking, tyre grip crosswalk material, and concrete handicap ramps; all as shown on the plans and described in the specifications with the title indicated in paragraph 1 above, and on file in the Office of the Senior Civil Engineer. Reference to said Plans and Specifications is hereby made for further particulars.

3. **WORKING DAYS.** The work under this Contract is to be completed in **twenty (20)** working days.

4. **CONTRACTOR'S LICENSE.** A Class **A** or **C-12** Contractor's License is required for this work. No bid will be accepted from a Contractor who has not been licensed according to Chapter 9, Division 3 of the Business and Professional Code.

5. **BID DEPOSIT.** A Bid Deposit equals to at least ten percent (10%) of the total amount of the bid shall be placed in the sealed Proposal. The Bid Deposit shall be in one of the following forms: cash, cashier's check or certified check payable to the City, or bidder's bond in favor of the City executed by an authorized surety company.

6. **PERFORMANCE BONDS.** Performance guaranty bonds as set forth in Section 2-3 of the Special Provisions will be required from the successful bidder.

7. **CITY'S RIGHT TO REJECT BIDS.** The right is reserved, as the interest of the City may require, to reject any or all bids, or to waive any informality or minor irregularity in the bids.

8. **GENERAL PREVAILING WAGE RATES.** The Council has ascertained the general prevailing rate of wages applicable to the work to be done. A tabulation of the various classifications of workpersons to be employed and the prevailing rate of wages applicable thereto is on file in the Office of the Senior Civil Engineer.

9. **OBTAINING THE PROJECT PLANS AND CONTRACT BOOK.** The Project Plans and the Contract Documents may be purchased at the Engineering Division upon payment of \$40.00 for each set. Project Plans and the Contract Book will be mailed to prospective bidders upon payment of \$40.00 plus \$10.00 for postage and handling.

10. **OBTAINING THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SPECIFICATIONS.** The State of California Department of Transportation Standard Specifications and Standard Plans may be purchased at the State of California Department of Transportation Publication Distribution Unit, 1900 Royal Oaks Drive, Sacramento, CA 95819; Telephone: (916) 445-3520; Fax: (916) 324-8997.

11. **WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSALS.** Any bid may be withdrawn at any time prior to the time fixed in the public notice for the opening of bids only by written request for the withdrawal of the bid filed with the Senior Civil Engineer. The request shall be executed by the bidder or his/her duly authorized representative. The withdrawal of a bid does not prejudice the right of the bidder to file a new bid. Whether or not bids are opened exactly at the time fixed in the public notice for opening bids, a bid will not be received after that time nor may any bid be withdrawn after the time fixed in the public notice for opening of bids.

12. **RELIEF OF BIDDERS.** As stated in Public Contract Code Sections 5100 to 5108, inclusive (State Contract Act) concerning relief of bidders and in particular to the requirement therein, that if the bidder claims a mistake was made in his/her bid, the bidder shall give the Senior Civil Engineer written notice within five (5) days after the opening of the bids of the alleged mistake, specifying in the notice in detail how the mistake occurred.

13. **DISQUALIFICATION OF BIDDERS.** More than one Proposal from an individual, firm, partnership, corporation, or combination thereof under the same or different names will not be considered. Reasonable grounds for believing that any individual, firm, partnership, corporation or combination thereof is interested in more than one Proposal for the work contemplated may cause the rejection of all proposals in which such individual, firm, partnership, corporation or combination thereof is interested. If there is reason for believing that collusion exists among the bidders, any or all proposals may be rejected. Proposals in which the prices obviously are unbalanced may be rejected.

14. **PREVIOUS DISQUALIFICATION, REMOVAL OR OTHER PREVENTION OF BIDDING.** A bid may be rejected on the basis of a bidder, any officer of such bidder, or any employee of such bidder who has a proprietary interest in such bidder, having been disqualified, removed, or otherwise prevented from bidding on, or completing a federal, state, or local project because of a violation of law or a safety regulation.

15. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR VERIFYING CONTRACT ADDENDA.** All bidders shall verify if any addenda for this project have been issued by the City of Menlo Park. It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that all requirements of Contract addenda are included in the bidder's Proposal.

16. **ESCROW FOR SECURITY DEPOSIT IN OF RETENTION.** Pursuant to Public Contract Code Section 22300, for monies earned by the Contractor and withheld by the City to ensure the performance of the Contract, the Contractor, may, at its option, choose to substitute securities meeting the requirements of said Public Contract Code Section 22300.

17. **SHORING AND BRACING.** Pursuant to the provisions of California Labor Code Section 6707, each bid submitted in response to this Notice to Bidders shall contain, as a bid item, adequate sheeting, shoring, and bracing, or equivalent method, for the protection of life and limb in trenches and open excavation, which shall conform to applicable safety orders. By listing this sum, the bidder warrants that its action does not convey tort liability to the City, Engineer and their employees, agents and consultants.

18. **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION.** Each prime and subcontract bidder will be required to comply with the City of Menlo Park Affirmative Action Program as set forth in Council Resolution No. 2340. Guidelines and report forms are provided with the Contract Documents and shall be considered part of any Contract made pursuant thereto. The prime contractor and each subcontractor shall complete the City of Menlo Park Compliance Report and submit it with the bid proposal or within 48 hours of the bid opening if you are the lowest or second lowest bidder.

19. **MINORITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.** Prime contractors and subcontractors must submit their Minority Employment Program (MEP) to the Senior Civil Engineer with their bids or within 48 hours of the bid opening.

Dated: November 21, 2007

SILVIA M. VONDERLINDEN, City Clerk

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on November 28, December 5, 2007.

Chamber sponsors downtown caroling, other holiday events

The Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a celebration of the holidays beginning with caroling along Santa Cruz Avenue from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 30 and Dec. 1.

The caroling will continue at the same time each Friday and Saturday through Dec. 22, as well as on Thursday, Dec. 13.

The chamber also notes Santa Claus will be visiting Cheeky Monkey Toys, 640 Santa Cruz Ave., from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8 and 15.

Santa will arrive on the Caltrain holiday train, stopping at the Menlo Park Train Station, 1100 Merrill St., at 7:05 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 8. The train, glowing with more than 40,000 lights, will make a 20-minute stop.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will disembark to greet children. The Salvation Army brass band, accompanied by the Cisco Singers, will be on board to lead the holiday sing-along. The Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra ensemble will provide entertainment from 6:30 p.m. until the train arrives.

Toys for tots

Donation barrels for the toy and food drive co-sponsored with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District will be located at the Chamber of Commerce, 1100 Merrill St., Village Stationers, 719 Santa Cruz Ave., and Cheeky Monkey Toys, 640 Santa Cruz Ave., from Dec. 3 to 23.

There will be no enforcement of parking limits in downtown Menlo Park from Dec. 8 to Jan. 1.



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Club is helping to close the opportunity gap

By **Marjorie Mader**
Almanac Staff Writer

Silicon Valley embodies the “American Dream” that everyone should have a chance to succeed.

“But recent changes in our society have created an ‘opportunity gap’ of unprecedented size,” says Peter Fortenbaugh, executive director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula.

“We know income has skyrocketed. While some families are doing very well, others are struggling to adapt to the changing conditions and cultural challenges,” he says.

Two-thirds of the youth in some neighborhoods are not even graduating from high school, Mr. Fortenbaugh says.

Many school kids from low-income areas such as those served by the Boys & Girls Clubs go home to a situation where there’s a single mom or grandmother working long hours and they share a crowded home with three families. Their parents might be recent immigrants, have less than a ninth-grade education, and speak little or no English. The kids watch TV, take care of little sister and hang out.

Adding to the problem, a 12-year-old in eastern Menlo Park receives \$4,000 per year in instruction costs from the public school system compared with \$8,000 in instruction costs that a 12-year-old in neighboring districts receives, according to Mr. Fortenbaugh.

Only 20 percent of the kids in the peer group of the eastern Menlo Park student are proficient in math and English,

compared with 90 percent of the western Menlo Park group who are proficient.

Providing opportunities

About 1,000 students, ages 6 to 18, come each day to the Boys & Girls Clubs’ three clubhouses — in Belle Haven, East Palo Alto and Redwood City — and to four public school sites: Flood, Belle Haven, Hoover Community School and McNair. They take part in after-school activities, receive academic support, and participate in programs that build skills and confidence.

A relatively new program at the Mervin G. Morris Clubhouse in Redwood City focuses on helping middle school and high school students graduate from high school by providing academic support, and counseling them about their options for going on to two- and four-year colleges and about job-training programs.

“We work to shift their way of thinking from ‘I can skate through high school, get a little job and buy a big car with shiny rims.’ We want to help them understand what it takes to remain drivers of their lives, not passengers,” says Michael Jones, the clubhouse unit director.

The staff uses a team approach and helps the older students take personal responsibility, become economically sufficient, and take charge of their lives instead of watching their lives unfold, he says.

“These kids want real relationships that they don’t get at home or school,” Mr. Jones says. “They want to feel someone is caring about them, have a solid relationship with the staff,



Francisco Espinoza, center, high-fives a young member of the Boys and Girls Clubs at the Redwood City clubhouse, where he works.

The Almanac/Veronica Weber

and develop a strong sense of belonging.”

First in her family

Fourteen-year-old Nancy Oricio, outgoing, friendly and thoughtful, says that her biggest challenge was overcoming the language barrier as a young student. “It’s been tough being a Spanish-speaker and having to learn and speak English,” she says. Her parents, who didn’t speak English, brought her as a baby from Mexico to Redwood City.

Much later, Nancy played soccer at the Hoover School field, adjacent to the Redwood City clubhouse, and heard about the Boys & Girls Club from the

coaches, who were involved with the club.

Initially she went to the club for tutoring in math a minimum of three times a week. Staff members suggested she join the “Torch Club,” a youth leadership group, and participate in community service projects.

Nancy took advantage of new opportunities and developed leadership skills. Last summer, she participated in the SPARK apprenticeship program at Sequoia Hospital, working in the emergency room and with premature babies. This experience, she said, has sparked her interest in medicine.

See **BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**, page 23

Contributions to the Almanac’s Holiday Fund benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula, which provides after-school and academic support and activities for about 3,200 young people ages 6 to 18. For information about the organization, contact Peter Fortenbaugh, executive director, at 646-6121; or visit www.bgcp.org

Free at Last: a model recovery and rehabilitation program

By **Marion Softky**
Almanac Staff Writer

Drop in at Free at Last in East Palo Alto and you’ll find coffee, cookies, a bowl of oranges and apples, and warm, friendly people to make you feel at home — whoever you are.

“Everybody’s welcome. It’s a safe place to hang out,” says Gerardo Barragan, chief operating officer, on a tour of the East Palo Alto recovery and rehabilitation program.

Started in 1994, Free at Last now offers a spectrum of services to some 4,200 people per year in the troubled East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks

communities. Many of the staff are recovering addicts themselves, so they understand the problems people are having; they’ve been there.

Out front on Bay Road are two drop-in centers, one for adults, one for youth. No drugs are allowed, Mr. Barragan says, “But if someone comes in under the influence, we can use it as a hook” to offer treatment.

At its central offices, Free at Last offers counseling, classes, intensive outpatient treatment, and a classroom for 12-step programs and meetings. A computer room attracts kids who can play games or get help with homework.

Contributions to the Almanac’s Holiday Fund benefit Free at Last, located at 1796 Bay Road in East Palo Alto. It can be reached at 462-6999, or freetatlast.org.

Two outreach workers go out on the street to offer education and

services. These include detoxification, emergency assistance, and referral to shelters and other services. Workers collaborate with the county AIDS program and health department on HIV testing and screening for sexually transmitted diseases. Street workers also offer needle exchange for addicts.

“Whenever they’re ready, we take them,” says Mr. Barragan. “We focus on one person at a time, getting their life back.”

Free at Last also has several residential programs for recovering addicts, both men and women, and some transitional housing while they take training and look for a stable situation.

Mr. Barragan is proud of Free at Last success stories. One woman had her three children taken away from her, he says. As she recovered, “she got all three kids back.”

Model program

Free at Last has grown from a program designed to staunch drugs and crime in East Palo Alto in its darkest hour, to a model for community-based drug and addiction programs across the country and around the world.

Last month, David Lewis, co-founder and current president of Free at Last, received one of two national Jefferson Awards for Public Service from San Mateo County. The local awards recognize unsung heroes — ordinary people who perform extraordinary service, mostly without recognition, according to the county’s announcement.

Mr. Lewis, who had completed a term in San Quentin for drug dealing, came to East Palo Alto about the time in 1992 when the

See **FREE AT LAST**, page 23

Food bank's needs grow as mortgage meltdown hits

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

There's another downside to this year's mortgage meltdown: empty bellies. Bigger mortgage payments, foreclosures and higher rents all mean that there's less money to spend on food for families that are just scraping by, says Chip Huggins, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank.

"The cost of living has gone up, and obviously, a lot of that is housing," he said. "To be self-sustaining, you need to make \$72,000 (a year) for a family of four. If you're a service worker, you probably need two jobs, at minimum."

For many people, that means the grocery money runs out before the next paycheck arrives. That's where Second Harvest steps in. The food bank serves as a clearing house, providing donated food to a host of organizations, soup kitchens and distribution sites, serving 164,000 people each month.


Last year, the nonprofit organization distributed over 33 million pounds of food to needy people in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, but this year, even more is needed, Mr. Huggins said.

And it's not just canned foods. Second Harvest is boosting efforts to get fresh produce into the hands of the hungry, particularly to families with children, who make up 67 percent of the organization's clients.

"We'll get a phone call from a grower saying, 'I have a truckload of squash, come get it.' We'll try to put it into menus as quickly as possible," Mr. Huggins said.

About one-third of the food Second Harvest distributes comes from canned food drives and those ubiquitous collection bins that appear at this time of year. Another third is surplus food allocated through government programs such as the farm bill. The remaining third is purchased directly by Second Harvest to fill special needs, such as low-sodium and low-sugar foods for the elderly, Mr. Huggins said.

New programs aim to get foods out to people who don't have ready access to them. The



Contributions to the Almanac's Holiday Fund benefit Second Harvest Food Bank. For more information about the Second Harvest's programs call the donor hotline at (866) 234-3663 or go to SecondHarvestFood.org. To volunteer at the San Carlos facility, call Rita at 610-0800, ext. 415.

Mobile Pantry brings food to about 200 individual and families in the Pescadero area, most of them immigrant farm workers, Mr. Huggins said. A summer nutrition program for children allows soup kitchens to feed low-income children when they don't have access to subsidized school lunches.

"We're trying to have more variety for children," Mr. Huggins said. "The challenge is giving children nutritious food that they will eat."

Second Harvest receives only 8 percent of its funding from the government. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers who sort and repack donated foods, 96 cents out of every donated dollar go to feed people in need, he said.

"Our cash budget is \$16 million, and of that we spend \$6 million on food and the balance goes into other programs and services," Mr. Huggins said. "We're very efficient. We have 187,000 volunteer hours a year."

In fact, the food bank earned the highest ranking for efficiency from Charity Navigator, a Web site that analyzes the financial health of nonprofits.

The community can help Second Harvest not only with cash donations, but by contributing food. The food bank is hoping to receive 10,000 turkeys for the holiday season, and as of last week, had gotten about 4,100, Mr. Huggins said. Other donated items in big demand are foods in flitop cans for the homeless, and shelf stable foods that are high in protein, he said. ■

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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For more information go to 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.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

continued from page 21

Her latest challenge was navigating the application process and being admitted to Sacred Heart Prep in Atherton as a freshman this year. "I'm the first person in my large family to go to a private high school," she says. Her parents supported her decision.

"My life has drastically changed. It's awesome, and my experiences at the Boys & Girls Club have helped me to be what I want to be."

Another chance

Francisco Espinoza, 18, now goes to Foothill College and works part time at the Boys & Girls Redwood City clubhouse, and is trying to decide if his future is architecture or music.

"My love of music and the Boys & Girls Club got me off the streets," he says. He tells his story of being a shy boy who got in with the wrong guys and innocently got into trouble by testing a pepper spray container on a high school campus. That mistake landed him in jail.

He says he was given another chance by the judge, who ordered him to do community service work every weekend for three months, continue his education at a community school, and stay out of trouble for a year.

"I didn't want to lose the opportunity of going to school," says Francisco, who later graduated from Sequoia High School and went on to Foothill.

"I felt good about myself and began to see the world differently," he says. "A negative experience can push you to be better." ■

FREE AT LAST

continued from page 21

city earned the title of "murder capital" of the country.

He had had a transforming experience in San Quentin that converted him away from his old life to wanting to help others like himself. "Most major changes in people's lives follow a significant emotional event," Mr. Lewis says.

Mr. Lewis joined the group of community leaders trying to find a way to heal East Palo Alto and its problems stemming from alcohol and drugs. "In the city, the criminal lifestyle is just as addictive as alcohol or crack," he says. "I wanted to create an opportunity to address total addiction centered around crime and drugs."

Free at Last opened in January 1994.

Now, Mr. Lewis reports, about 60 percent of the people who graduate from Free at Last programs are clean and sober a year later. Many have "started or regained relationships with their children."

Mr. Lewis has also carried his

message across the country and beyond. He has appeared on Bill Moyers' "Circle of Recovery," and returned to San Quentin to speak to prisoners. Similar community-based programs have sprung up in other states in this country, and as far afield as Kenya, Tadjikistan and Kazakhstan. These are huge hubs in the international drug trade, Mr. Lewis says.

Locally, East Palo Alto now has a state grant to provide services to people coming out of state prison, and Free at Last is providing services. "In East Palo Alto, 200 people are on parole. Some are getting services; some are not," Mr. Lewis says.

Mr. Lewis notes that Free at Last is providing similar drug and alcohol services to parolees in Menlo Park and North Fair Oaks. "We have a real good relationship with Menlo Park," he says.

Mr. Lewis has one major wish, besides volunteers and money: a real computer system, not just left-overs and hand-me-downs. The last time the agency had an up-to-date system was after President Bill Clinton visited close, to 10 years ago. ■

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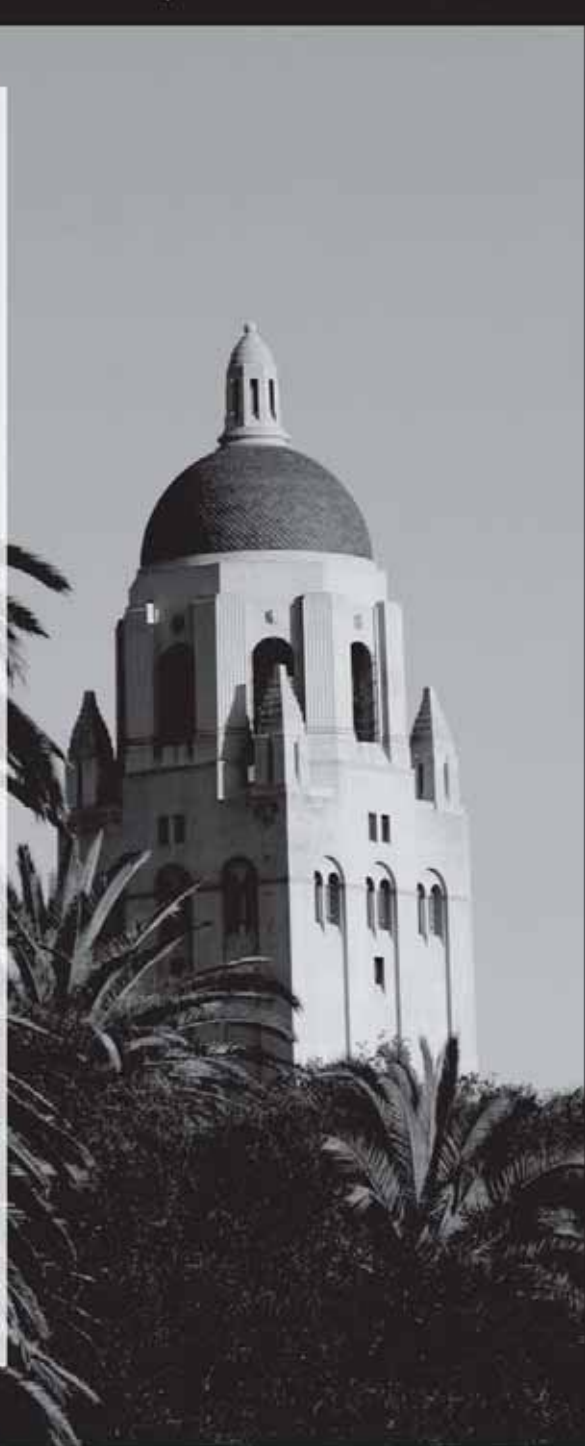
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Lowell H. Duggan

Financial expert, horseman

A celebration of the life of Lowell Harmon Duggan will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, at the San Mateo County Mounted Patrol Grounds, 521 Kings Mountain Road in Woodside.



Lowell Duggan

Mr. Duggan, a resident of Woodside for almost 44 years, died Oct. 31. He was 88.

A lifelong horseman, Mr. Duggan was honored in 1995 with the "Outstanding Horseman-Citizen Award" by the Mounted Patrol in recognition of his "professional achievements and more than 30 years of outstanding service to the citizens of San Mateo County."

He joined the Mounted Patrol in 1964 and served as captain in 1976, attending meetings until just

OBITUARIES

a few months ago. He also served as commander of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Air Squadron, putting in more than 7,000 hours as pilot-in-command.

Mr. Duggan was born in San Francisco. He traced his love of horses to spending his early childhood on his aunt and uncle's ranch in Oregon. Years later he trained an Appaloosa named "Coho Azul" for cutting, and won first place in a competition at the 1965 Cow Palace Grand National.

During World War II, Mr. Duggan served throughout Southeast Asia. He received the Bronze Star for his role in a search and rescue mission in northern Burma.

After the war he formed the Duggan Investment Company, servicing more than \$300 million annually of real estate mortgages for large banks and insurance companies. He later sold the

company and acquired Security Savings and Loan in San Jose, serving as senior vice president of the holding company, California Financial Corporation (CFC).

Following the sale of CFC, he reactivated Duggan Investment Company. He also became an independent agent for the Agency for International Development, originating large loans on a worldwide basis. He later served as a financial consultant to individuals and companies

Mr. Duggan was a former chairman of the Commonwealth Club of California, vice president of the Navy League, Alameda Air Station; Port Captain of the Alameda Sea Scouts; and life member of the Boy Scouts of America.

Mr. Duggan is survived by his three children, Shellie, Charles and Susan; and two grandchildren. His wife of 60 years, Janet, died in 2003.

For further information on the Dec. 2 services for Mr. Duggan, visit <http://lowellduggan.vox.com/library/post/lowell-duggans-celebration-of-life.html>

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Kevin Shanahan

Sports massage therapist

A celebration of the life of Kevin Shanahan of Woodside will be held from 3 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1, at the San Mateo County Mounted Patrol grounds, 521 Kings Mountain Road in Woodside. Mr. Shanahan, 51, died at Stanford Medical Center on Nov. 25 after a three-year battle with transitional cell cancer.

Mr. Shanahan was a sports massage therapist with the San

Continued on next page



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Continued from previous page

Francisco Giants.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, he graduated from Western Kentucky University with a degree in communications in 1979. After graduation he met Nancy Benson Mitchell and they were married in 1980.



Kevin Shanahan

They moved to California in 1985. After working in advertising, Mr. Shanahan changed careers and became a sports massage therapist in Menlo Park.

He was a passionate athlete and gifted musician, say family members. His favorite sports were surfing, cycling and running. He played rhythm guitar with the group Blue Monday.

Mr. Shanahan is survived by his wife of 27 years, Nancy Mitchell

Shanahan of Woodside; daughter Lily Sinclair Shanahan of Woodside; and sisters Iris Criss of Vermilion, Ohio, and Robin Ann Michel of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

For a map of the Mounted Patrol Grounds, call 851-8300 or go to www.mpsmc.org. The family prefers donations to the Lance Armstrong Foundation; or to the college fund for Lily Shanahan, payable to CollegeAmerica fbo Lily S. Shanahan, 119 Alta Mesa Drive, Woodside, CA 94062.

Roger May

Longtime stockbroker

Roger Earle May of Ladera died of a heart attack Nov. 21 in Vail, Colorado. Mr. May and his wife, Diane, were visiting their sons and families in Colorado for Thanksgiving. He was 76.

Mr. May, a resident of Ladera since 1960, was a stockbroker for more than 50 years, starting with J. Earle May and Co. He was employed at Smith Barney in Menlo Park at the

time of his death.

Mr. May was born in Los Angeles and moved to Palo Alto as a small child. He graduated from Palo Alto High School and the University of Colorado at Boulder. At the 50-year anniversary of his college graduation, he took part in commencement exercises with his graduating grandson, Ryan May.

After serving in the U.S. Navy for two years after college, Mr. May traveled to Europe. There he met his future wife, Diane Ball. They were married in Madrid, Spain, in 1955.

Mr. May was a charter member of the Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club and member of the Palo Alto Club. As a domino player, he took part in the annual Children's Health Council domino tournament for many years. He was a member of Ladera Community Church and sang in its choir for more than 40 years.

Mr. May is survived by his wife, Diane May of Portola Valley; sons Nowell May and Brice May of Colo-

rado; brother Dick May of New York; and six grandchildren.

A family service was held at the Black Mountain Ranch in McCoy, Colorado, on Nov. 24. A local memorial service will be held in January. The family prefers donations to the Ladera Community Church Endowment Fund in Portola Valley.

Brigid McDermott

Former resident of Menlo Park

Brigid Maria Sophia Graine McDermott, who lived in Menlo Park from 1965 until 1979, died Sept. 22. A burial service was held Sept. 27 at Holy Cross Cemetery in Menlo Park. She was 66.

Ms. McDermott was a longtime resident of Claremont, California. She was an artist who enjoyed ceramics, drawing, gardening, knitting and walking through Santa Ana Botanical Gardens. Her many travels included adventures through American, Africa and Europe,

including Slovenia and Albania.

She was born Sylvia Rosalie Jennifer McDermott in Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset, England. As a young woman she moved to the United States, settling in Menlo Park, where she met John Peter Holmgren. They were married in 1965.

Ms. McDermott is survived by her three daughters, Dr. Anna Holmgren, Sarah Holmgren and Susan Holmgren.

Memorials in Ms. McDermott's name may be made to Conversations International Ovarian Cancer Connection and Fund for Ovarian Cancer Research at www.ovarian-news.org; or Conversations, P.O. Box 7948, Amarillo, TX 79114-7948.

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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.

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854-2626, ext. 222.

Court should release Atherton report

Will Atherton residents be allowed to know what has been going on with one of its highest paid employees, who may have engaged in misconduct?

Maybe. But until a court hearing this Friday, Nov. 30, the conclusions reached in an investigative report commissioned by the town are sealed, locked up by a temporary restraining order obtained by former Finance

Director John Johns from the Superior Court.

Mr. Johns contends the report investigating Police Chief Bob Brennan's

charges that he created a hostile work environment is a hatchet job orchestrated by his enemies in town hall. He says they are upset by the aggressive audits he has conducted at the behest of the City Council. On the other side, the town of Atherton and its attorney believe the public is entitled to the report and were about to release it in response to a request by the Almanac when the court action was filed.

Mr. Johns has also filed a \$500,000 claim against the city for wrongful dismissal, which lays out his charges of unfair treatment during his six years at the helm of the town's finance department.

By granting Mr. Johns a restraining order, the court has waded into the murky waters of First Amendment

law that shuns virtually all cases of prior restraint. At this point, the Superior Court should bow out of this dispute, and allow Atherton to release the report. If Mr. Johns feels he is damaged, a questionable claim in our opinion, he is welcome to take the town to court.

In this case, the public has a right to all the information contained in the investigation into Atherton's top financial officer and why he was terminated. The fact that Mr. Johns has strong support from the town's independent audit committee, and has achieved high standards in the performance of his duties, raises questions about the content of the sealed report. Why was a highly performing employee terminated?

Atherton's contention that the report on Mr. Johns' conduct is a public document is supported by a Superior Court case decided recently in favor of the Palo Alto Weekly, the Almanac's sister paper. Contrary to the contention by the city of Palo Alto, the court ruled that an investigative report into malfeasance in the city's utility department was a public document, and ordered it released to the paper.

The recent turmoil in Atherton is unfortunate, and raises concerns about the continued smooth operation of the town's government. But what is needed is more, not less, transparency. The more the public understands about what is going on behind closed doors, the better off the community will be.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Another way to help mitigate climate change

Editor:

Those of us concerned about climate change hear a lot about reducing our emissions through changes in our transportation methods or our home energy use. But we may feel guilty because we are unable for whatever reasons to change our practices as much as we know we should.

A further way to help reduce emissions is to donate to organizations that are working around the globe on the huge problem of deforestation.

One does not hear about it as much, but deforestation is the second leading contributor of carbon emissions worldwide after the burning of fossil fuels. Deforestation accounts for about 20 percent of annual global emissions of carbon dioxide, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The Nature Conservancy (nature.org) and the Pacific Forest Trust (PacificForest.org) are two organizations working hard on this problem, and there are many others. Offset your own carbon footprint

Our Regional Heritage

Many families from Woodside and the surrounding communities traveled to La Honda to camp and enjoy various recreational pursuits. Here, 4th of July celebrants congregate on La Honda's Main Street in 1912.

Jac Audiffred Collection

(and that of friends and family) by donating generously to these groups that promote the retention of forests and sustainable forestry in this country and abroad. What better holiday gift.

Elaine French
Hidden Valley Lane, Woodside

No fan of Menlo Park mayor's apology

Editor:

Dan Dippery (Letters, Nov. 21) doesn't speak for me or a whole lot of other citizens of Menlo Park. I am appalled at the need for an apology from the mayor.

And am appalled that she and other members of the Menlo Park City Council wasted time and money over a tired, old and non-historic shoddy theater.

Pat White
Santa Cruz Avenue
Menlo Park



Veronica Weber

Aching over kids' backpacks

By Warren Cain

What are we doing about it?

I can hardly lift my granddaughter's backpack. It weighs 25 pounds. Seeing other kids coming from school, it's the same picture — thin 60 to 80-pound children walking bent over with heavy packs on their fragile backs. I tried to figure why? Also, who is to blame?

I hate to say it, but all of us are guilty: parents, schools and the general public. We permit it. Schools tell me they caution parents and kids not to carry heavy items, books, and so on, not to overload packs, and use lockers. Some parents tell me

it worries them, but accept the status quo. ("We are so busy.")

It's tough being a parent these days. We worry about our children's safety everywhere, the obesity or too-thin issues, saving for college, health or social problems they will face and so much more. I dislike adding to this list, but this back thing is a now situation and it has to be recognized and dealt with.

Food for thought: Did you carry a backpack to school? When did it all start and why?

Surveys, studies and reports, ranging from the American Academy of Orthopedics to the Consumer Products Safety Commission Report catalog the injuries from backpacks.

If you need more convincing, be there after school and watch these children struggle with this weight mass.

It is heart-rending. Everything we have done so far has failed. The problem is worse. We are wise, we care, let's do something about it. There are many alternatives — think, think! Not a bad solution: Can we emulate businessmen, who carry a light briefcase in one hand? Kids can do that.

Warren Cain lives in Menlo Park



GUEST OPINION

Split personality in development policy

By Phil Friedly

It is time for Menlo Park's City Council to help resolve residential development issues and confront the ready approval of grossly over-sized structures being imposed on our neighborhoods.

But a split personality still prevails between the council and the city administration. I'm prompted to comment not just because of our neighborhood's (Central Menlo Park) recent trials and tribulations but because of what I see of good and bad development that still occurs concurrently within our city.

The San Francisco Chronicle Magazine on Nov. 4 featured an inspiring mid-century modernist house being built on Ringwood Avenue in Menlo Park. It sits on a lot of appropriate dimensions to accommodate its size and it is of single-story design, like similar homes in our neighborhood, so it doesn't impose on its neighbors.

In contrast, we have rising next to us an intrusive and poorly conceived two-story design born of lengthy controversy between neighbors and the neighborhood and the owner-builders. A tear-down and massive 5,200-square-foot home of traditional design (to replace a 1,700-square-foot contemporary home on a 10,000-square-foot lot

and on a block filled with contemporary homes) was proposed originally. A use permit to build was required due to narrow lot size (otherwise no neighbor input would have been allowed).

Ultimately, the use permit was denied on neighbor appeal by a council vote of 4-1 because of significant negative privacy impacts and other damages to neighbors and to the character of the neighborhood. Three out of four, or 75 percent, of the neighbors on the entire surrounding block of homes signed two different petitions opposing this kind of development. Development alternatives were recommended to meet the owner-builder's needs for additional space, including both single- and two-story designs.

So, why is a similarly intrusive and overbearing structure now rising next to us? Well, during a recent council hearing Mayor Kelly Fergusson warned other neighbors who were appealing a massive house development that they could

fall victim to the "hasslen effect" if the council upheld their appeal and denied the use permit (as the council did in the eponymous case next door to us).

The effect refers to the Menlo Park zoning ordinance loophole allowing application for a building permit and construction within constraints that avoid applying for a use permit — but that still permits building to the full height allowed (28 feet) and equally close to neighboring properties. The result, in our case, is that we now experience complete neighbor overview of our most personal glass-walled living spaces (living room, bathrooms, master bedroom), all among key reasons that the council voted 4-1 to deny the use permit in the first place.

Menlo Park needs to establish firmer and more equitable standards for respectful residential construction by both owner-builders and developers. We need to be much more consistent in achieving those standards by coming out from under the shadow of the hasslen effect and other loopholes that frustrate the council's residential policies. Otherwise, our neighborhoods will be put at undue risk of becoming progressively less neighborly.

Phil Friedly lives on Evergreen Street in Menlo Park.



GUEST OPINION

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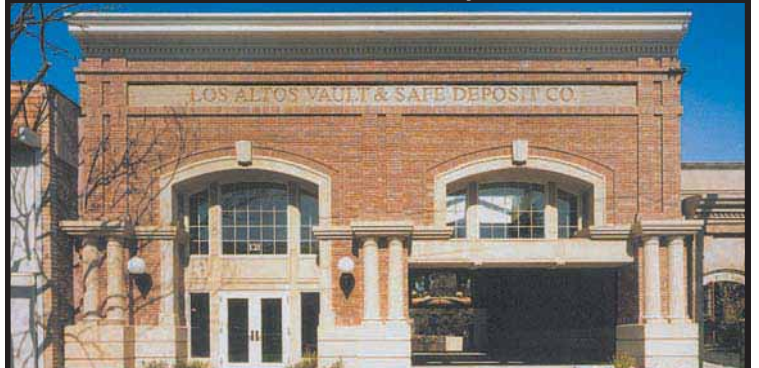
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