

**New state building codes** may dramatically change the look of much of Woodside and Portola Valley. Page 5

# The Almanac

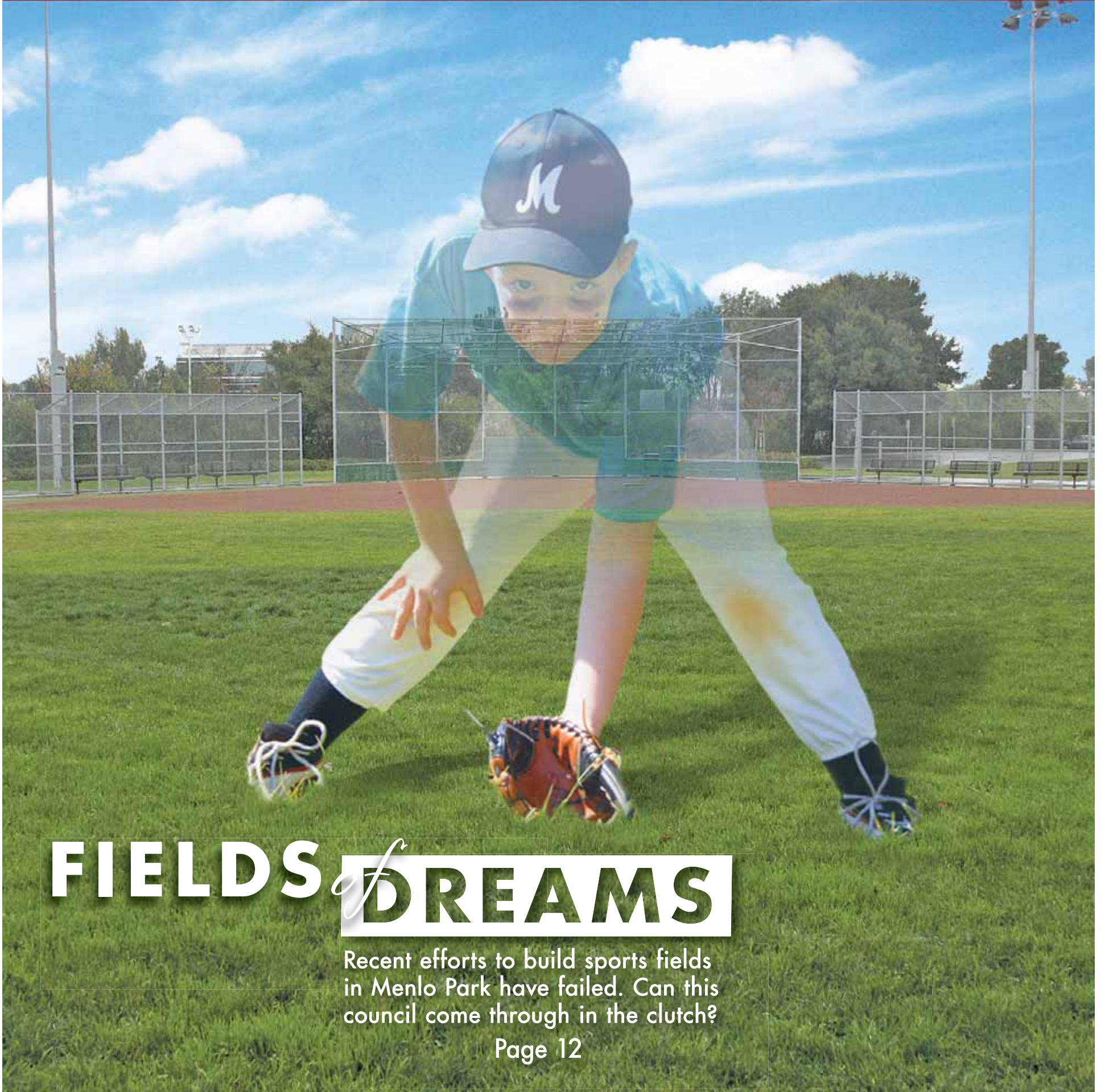
THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, AHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

DECEMBER 12, 2007 | VOL. 43 NO. 15

[www.TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://www.TheAlmanacOnline.com)



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## FIELDS *of* DREAMS

Recent efforts to build sports fields in Menlo Park have failed. Can this council come through in the clutch?

Page 12

REDEFINING QUALITY SINCE 1990

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



## WOODSIDE

7bd/7+ba magnificent French chateau, Le Soleil, built in the 1920's on 5 exquisitely landscaped, private hilltop acres. Old world charm with modern amenities. Pool, spa, tennis court, vineyard

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## REDWOOD CITY

Situated in the sought after Mt. Carmel neighborhood, this delightful 3bd/2ba home has been practically updated maintaining its original, intrinsic charm. Beautiful oak hardwood floors enhance the home throughout. There is an additional, separate studio guest unit with a full bath and kitchenette.

**\$1,250,000**



## PORTOLA VALLEY

This charming country cottage has been beautifully updated and refined with designer touches. A private deck and hot tub, professional landscaping and bonus room are just a few of the amenities that provide a relaxing escape.

**\$995,000**



# Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

## FIRST SHOT



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

### En garde!

Fencers, from left, Jin Kim, Evan Borrás, Karthic Bala and Alex Bainbridge practice between matches during the U. S. Fencing Association Regional Youth Circuit and California School Open Cup. The event was held Dec. 8 at the Onetta Harris Community Center in Menlo Park.

### Atherton

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### Traffic

■ Commuters get green light on Alameda de las Pulgas. **Page 5**

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■ Man robs bank in downtown Menlo Park on Monday. **Page 9**

### On the cover

Kelly Park is an example of Menlo Park's failed attempts to get the most out of plans for more sports fields. Now, the City Council is figuring where, if anywhere, more fields can be built. Photo illustration by Laura Don. Story on **Page 12**.

### CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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

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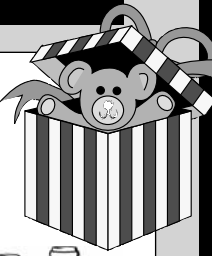
Sweet and Crisp <b>LARGE FUJI APPLES</b>		<b>\$1.49</b> lb.
Large <b>NAVEL ORANGES</b>		<b>79¢</b> lb.
Haas <b>AVOCADOS</b>		<b>\$1.99</b> ea.
All purpose <b>RUSSET POTATOES</b>		<b>3 lbs for 99¢</b>

### Enjoy An Elegant After-Dinner Drink

Perhaps no after-dinner digestive captures the elegance and sophistication of Southern Italy the way the lemon liqueur known as Limoncello does. Produced from lemon zest, sugar, water, and alcohol, Limoncello evokes the sun, sea, and summers of Italy's Isle de Capri, where this refreshing liqueur calls home. This region, which is famous for its citrus farms, produces the famous "Oval of Sorrento." This special line of citrus can grow to the size of grapefruits and remain as fragrant as their citrus blossoms. Served straight or on ice, this after-dinner drink refreshes the palate and aids digestion. It is sweet and lemony, without a trace of sourness. No wonder Limoncello is the most popular liqueur throughout most of Italy!

At ROBERTS MARKET, we carry a good variety of liqueurs for you to enjoy. Our helpful staff can help you find exactly what you need. We can help you have the perfect wines or spirits for a formal dinner, or just a quiet meal with friends. Our wine department is the most extensive in the area, more than most liquor stores. We also offer a wide variety of foods from all over the world. We are your source for specialty foods, including Indian, Asian, European, and other specialties.

*HINT: Along the Amalfi coast, where Limoncello is produced, the liqueur is served in chilled ceramic glasses.*



## DELI Roberts Market Hoilday Menu 2007

**MAIN DISHES**

### DIESTEL RANCH ALL NATURAL FREE-RANGE TURKEYS

Large 16 - 18lbs. ~ Serves 14 to 16 people	<b>\$59.00</b>
Small 10 - 12lbs. ~ Serves 8 to 10 people	<b>\$49.00</b>

*\* The Diestel turkeys are pre-roasted and will need approximately 2 hours to reheat at 300° in your oven.*

### PRIME RIB - Seasoned and Roasted to Medium Rare

Whole ~ Serves 16 to 20 people	<b>\$190.00</b>
Half ~ Serves 10 to 12 people	<b>\$99.00</b>

### CARANDO SPIRAL SLICED HAM - Baked with a honey mustard glaze

~ Serves 10 to 12 people **\$60.00**

**SIDE DISHES**

### POTATO AU GRATIN - baked with cheese, garlic, spices and cream

~ Serves 12 to 16 people **\$29.00**

### SAUTEED BRUSSEL SPROUTS - with pine nuts and pancetta

Pint \$5.75      Quart \$11.50

### MOLASSES BAKED YAMS - with spicy orange butter

Pint \$5.75      Quart \$11.50

### CLASSIC WHIPPED POTATOES - traditional potatoes with butter & cream

Pint \$5.25      Quart \$10.50

### TRADITIONAL STUFFING - with mushrooms, celery, onions & water chestnuts

Pint \$5.25      Quart \$10.50

### FRESHMADE CRANBERRY SAUCE - with a touch of orange

Pint \$4.75      Quart \$9.50

### PORCINI MUSHROOM GRAVY

Pint \$6.00      Quart \$12.00

### BEEF AU JUS

Pint \$6.00      Quart \$12.00

**DESSERT**

### RUBICON BAKERY - 8" TARTS

Apple Almond, Apple Cranberry, Carmel Nut, Lemon  
~ Serves 6 **\$16.99**

### RUBICON BAKERY - 6" TARTS

Pumpkin Cheesecake, Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Turtle, Carrot Spice Cake  
~ Serves 6 **\$14.99**

### UPPER CRUST BAKERY - 8" PIES

Apple, Apple Streusel, Berry Supreme, Pumpkin, Pumpkin Amaretto, Cranapple and Pecan  
~ Serves 6 to 8 people **\$17.99**

## WINE

### Châteauneuf-du-Pape

*Châteauneuf-du-Pape produces hearty, prodigious, lusty reds that pair with roasts and stews. The most recent releases are from the 2005 vintage, consider a great year for these special wines. In fact, two of the top three wines on the Wine Spectator's Top 100 list are Chateauneufs. Great gifts!*

2005 Dom. La Milliere - Vieilles Vignes (91-94 WA #169)	<b>\$36.99</b>
2005 Bosquet des Papes Cuvée Tradition	<b>\$36.99</b>
2005 Vieux Telegraphe "La Crau" (95+WA #173)	<b>\$59.99</b>
2005 Dom. Pierre Usseglio Duree de mon Aicul (95+WA #173)	<b>\$99.99</b>

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

## GROCERY

<b>CLOVER ORGANIC FAT FREE MILK</b> ½ Gallon. - Also Whole - 2% - Reduced - 1%	<b>\$2.69</b>
<b>WOLFGANG PUCK CHICKEN WILD RICE SOUP</b> 14 oz. - Also Chicken Noodle - Old World Minestrone	<b>\$1.99</b>
<b>MARIE CALLENDER'S ORIGINAL CORN BREAD MIX</b> 16 oz.	<b>\$1.79</b>
<b>HOT POCKET CROISSANT CRUST PEPPERONI PIZZA</b> 9 oz. - Also Hot Pocket Original	<b>\$2.29</b>
<b>SOBE LIGHT WATER</b> 20 oz. - Plus Calif. Redeem Value	<b>79¢</b>
<b>PRESTO TRASH COMPACTOR BAGS</b> 5 Count	<b>\$1.99</b>

## MEAT/SEAFOOD

*Special This Week at Roberts*

<b>T-BONE STEAK</b>	<b>\$10.98</b> lb.
<b>PORTERHOUSE STEAKS</b>	<b>\$12.98</b> lb.
<b>TOP SIRLOIN STEAK</b>	<b>\$6.98</b> lb.
<b>BEEF STIR FRY</b>	<b>\$8.98</b> lb.



### Room to swing

Woodside Tennis is moving to bigger digs. Owners Hope and Bill Schneider will be leapfrogging to the other side of the Woodside Bakery and leasing about two-thirds of the former Woodside Village Pharmacy site on Woodside Road.

Going from 630 square feet of store space to 1,100 square feet will allow Woodside Tennis to expand all of its stock — from rackets to shoes — and to add new clothing lines including yoga, running and workout togs. The Schneiders are clearly looking forward to having some elbow room.

“It’s like sardines in here. It’s pretty tight,” Mr. Schneider says about the store’s current site.

Mr. Schneider says he expects to make a new start in the new year by moving on Jan. 1.

### Stocking up for Christmas

Doug Dolezal, former partner in Miller/Dolezal Designs in Portola Valley, is known for the treat-filled Christmas stockings he sends to friends every year. Now Doug, who has relocated to Rancho Santa Fe, is marketing custom-filled Christmas stockings for women.

The stockings are the first launch of his new company, Blue Pony, A Wish Fulfillment Corporation, with business partner Annie Downs.

“Too many women suffer from ‘empty-stockings’ syndrome on Christmas morning,” he says. “This is a way for men to show their love and appreciation.”

Doug says the stockings are ideal for guys who don’t like shopping. Available through [www.WhosUrSanta.com](http://www.WhosUrSanta.com).

### Jolly time at firehouses

The Woodside Fire Protection District is hosting its annual holiday open house and Toys for Tots drive on Dec. 12 from 7 to 9 p.m. There will be holiday refreshments and a visit from Santa Claus at all three fire stations.

Firefighters will be collecting new, unwrapped toys at these locations: 3111 Woodside Road in Woodside; 135 Portola Road in Portola Valley; and 4091 Jefferson Ave. in Redwood City.

## Big changes for new homes here

■ No more wood siding under new state building code.

By Andrea Gemmet  
Almanac Staff Writer

Under new state building rules, those charmingly rustic, wood-sided houses tucked into leafy groves of trees soon will no longer be built in parts of Woodside and Portola Valley.

Looking to reduce fire danger in “very high risk” areas, the California building code is poised to introduce strict new rules for new construction and major remodels in those areas, beginning July 1.

### Commuters get green light on Alameda

By David Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

The avenue of the fleas — the Alameda de las Pulgas — may be becoming more of a royal road for commuters through West Menlo Park as they acclimate to the new traffic-light timing.

Since October, Alameda traffic from 7:30 to 9 a.m. and 4:30 to 6 p.m. has been treated to longer green lights between Santa Cruz and Valparaiso avenues. The county acted in response to residents’ complaints of cut-through traffic on parallel arterials such as Altschul and Cloud avenues.

Meanwhile, drivers entering the Alameda from side streets may find themselves queuing more often.

With the new timing, a passage uninterrupted by crossing pedestrians or slow traffic would allow a platoon of vehicles traveling at the speed limit to see four green lights, said Lisa Ekers, the road operations manager for the San Mateo County Public Works Division.

“Things have to reset as the drivers relearn their timing and speed,” Ms. Ekers said. “People will eventually learn the pace that gets them through all the greens.”

The impact, so far, on cut-through traffic? “None whatsoever,” said Mike Maletic, a Cloud Avenue resident who represents the Val Avy Group, a loose collection of about 40 households between Valparaiso and Avy avenues who complained to the county.

“We’re never been really sold on the idea that improving the flow

See **TRAFFIC**, page 8

According to Woodside planning staff, the stricter regulations will create significant changes in landscaping and the building materials allowed in many parts of town.

A visible difference will come from the ban on wood siding and wood-shake roofs, and stricter rules about keeping the area surrounding a house free of fire-fuel, such as trees and shrubbery. The most significant changes fall under Chapter 7A of the 2007 California Building Standards Code.

However, there is a lot of uncertainty about exactly what the new rules will mean, and exactly who will be affected by Chapter 7A.

A map showing the state’s “very high” fire risk areas is being created by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and it should be done in March, said Denise Enea, the fire marshal for the Woodside Fire Protection District. The Woodside fire district includes the towns of Woodside and Portola Valley, as well as nearby unincorporated areas including Vista Verde and Los Trancos Woods.

**Neighborhoods at risk:** The latest draft of the Cal Fire map identifies the following neighborhoods as very high fire risk: the Woodside Glens, Old La Honda Road, Emerald Hills, Portola Valley Ranch, Woodside Highlands, parts of the Alpine hills, and central Woodside west of Miramontes Road.

According to Ms. Enea, the latest draft of the Cal Fire map identifies the following neighborhoods as very high fire risk: the Woodside Glens, Old La Honda Road, Emerald Hills, Portola Valley Ranch,

See **BUILDING CODE**, page 8



The Almanac/Veronica Weber

### Feeding the hungry

Lina Prasad and other Menlo-Atherton High School students from the leadership class take a break from their studies Thursday to prepare boxes of holiday food for some 535 less fortunate families in the school community. The Dec. 7 and 8 deliveries to the families concluded a month of solicitations for food items by M-A students out on sidewalks at markets in Menlo Park and Redwood City.

## Jordan, Turner apply for PV school board vacancy

The suspense is almost over. Karen Jordan and Brad Turner have filed as candidates for the appointment to fill the remaining two years of Donna Carano’s term on the board of the Portola Valley School District.

Interviews with the candidates will take place during a public session of the school board on Tuesday, Dec. 11, from 9 a.m. to noon in Room 1001 at Corte Madera School, 4575 Alpine Road in Portola Valley.

### ■ PORTOLA VALLEY

The decision on who will be the fifth board member will be made by trustees Don Collat and Ray Villareal plus recently elected board members Judith Mendelsohn and Steve Humphreys.

Trustee Teresa Godfrey, who goes off the board this month, will participate only in the interviews.

Ms. Jordan is a former board president whose four-year term on the board ends this month. Since

she is a candidate for the appointment, she has recused herself from all board discussions regarding the appointment process.

Mr. Turner came in a close second after all votes were counted and certified in the Nov. 6 election.

The annual reorganization meeting of the school board is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 12, at 5:30 p.m. in Room 1001 at Corte Madera School. After a closed session at 6:15 p.m., the board’s regular meeting begins at 7:15 p.m.

**FINAL WEEK**

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*Baker*

# Roberts market permit delayed but town approval looks likely

■ Fine-tuning may address concerns of nearby neighbors.

By David Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

Its ponderous tread went undetected, but an elephant was undoubtedly in the room during the Portola Valley Planning Commission's recent discussion of a conditional use permit for Roberts market.

"Ninety-nine percent of the community is thrilled that Roberts is coming," Commissioner Chip McIntosh said to a commission generally in favor of the market and an audience of about 15, including market owner George Roberts and his architect Mike Brown.

The commission is expected to vote on the permit on Dec. 13.

Mr. Roberts, owner of the popular Roberts market in Woodside, plans to open his second grocery store this spring near the corner of Alpine and Portola roads. Portola Valley has been without a market since July 2006, when John's Valley Foods closed.

Less than thrilled with the market's daily schedule were three neighbors who support a grocery there, but not its potential as a source of noise in the early morning and a source of light after it shuts down at night.

"The neighbors' concerns are very legitimate and we need to have a balance, (but) there's one market" in town, Mr. McIntosh said. "There's not going to be two. Markets are a very busy activity. ...

## ■ PORTOLA VALLEY

It's part of the territory."

Under the current plan, commissioners would review the market's neighborhood impact in a year, but they seemed open to earlier and more frequent reviews and to the possibility of having early arriving employees park so as to minimize noise.

The five-member commission meets again to vote on the permit at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 13, in the Historic Schoolhouse. The public comment period on the environmental report for the remodeled market ends at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12. For information on how to comment on the report, call Town Hall at 851-1700.

### A typical day

A weekday at the Roberts Portola Valley market would begin at 6 a.m. with the arrival of some 15 employees to begin baking, making soups, roasting chickens and otherwise preparing for the day ahead.

The doors would open half an hour later for regular shopping as well as carry-out breakfasts, Mr. Roberts said. (Breakfast is big at Roberts in Woodside, which has to have two cashiers on duty then, he said.)

At 7 a.m. — 8 a.m. on Saturdays — delivery trucks would be allowed access to the store's loading dock, which includes a seal around the truck to reduce noise. Peak delivery hours would be between 7 and 8 a.m. and 1 and 2 p.m., Mr. Roberts said.

The store would close at 8 p.m., with the last employee leaving by 8:30, Mr. Roberts said. The lights were chosen to minimize impacts on the prevailing darkness.

The market would have a fully enclosed trash compactor and require truck drivers to shut down engines and refrigerators, a "significant improvement" over the John's Valley Foods era, store architect Mike Brown said.

Nearby Nathhorst Avenue residents urged the commission to move employee arrival to 7:30 and the opening to 8 a.m., citing past problems with noise when John's was there.

The commission is favoring "a single retailer with pecuniary interests" over the interests of homeowners, said resident Bill Russell, an admitted fan of Roberts market's "extremely high quality" of service and food.

The neighbor's concerns, given the steps Mr. Roberts had already taken, show an unseemly presumption of guilt, said commission chair Ann Wengert.

### A gathering place

In anticipation of the market's potential for chance encounters and chats, Mr. Brown, the architect, plans to include outside seating for 18 on the sunny west side of the store near the entrance and just opposite the newspaper racks.

A rack for six bicycles is set to be away from the benches and on the opposite side of the store so as not to take up a parking space or otherwise interfere with traffic circulation, Mr. Brown said. ■

than 20 percent, but at a cost. Once it exceeds the 20 percent limit, each 2 square feet of basement would reduce the allowed above-ground floor area by 1 square foot, according to the proposed ordinance.

Likewise, for a section of basement with a ceiling higher than 12 feet, the commission is recommending that the square footage calculation be doubled. For example, under this formula a 100-square-foot area with a ceiling of 15 feet would be

counted as 200 square feet.

The proposed regulations reflect environmental concerns on the part of planning commissioners since at least 2003. Among them: the impact on traffic and vegetation from the extra grading and off-hauling of dirt, the higher intensity of use of homes with basements, and excavation outside the basement's footprint so as to allow light to enter during the day — and shine out at night — the proposed ordinance says.

## Rainfall ahead of last year's total

Menlo Park rainfall during the recent storm was 0.75 inches, said Bill Russ, who has a rain gauge in his backyard on Cotton Street. The total for 2007-08 rainfall season is 2.75

inches, compared to 2.45 inches last year at this time. The season runs from July 1 to June 30. A normal season's rainfall in Menlo Park is 16 inches to 18 inches.

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### Many Loans Will Adjust in 2008

**Q: I have an interest-only, low-rate loan that is fixed for five years but will adjust in 2008. There must be many homeowners like me who will pay more next year for the same loan. How do you think this will affect the economy?**

**A:** There are many homeowners with low rate loans that will readjust in the next two years. These are not sub-prime loans and most of these borrowers have the ability to pay even at the higher rate. However, their costs will rise significantly enough that they may feel pinched and be more cautious in their spending. This could have an effect on the

economy in general. There may be less consumer spending on goods and entertainment. Higher energy costs and a weak dollar may also cause spending to decline.

If you have a loan that is going to re-adjust next year, you should track interest rates and if the rates go down to a point at which the payments on a new loan would be very manageable, you should refinance. It does not seem that interest rates will rise in the next few months unless inflation is a threat. Money may be tight, however, and this may keep borrowing costs somewhat high. Talk to your lender and get ready to refinance when the time is right.

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



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\*Annual Percentage Rate (APR) is based on the Prime Rate published in The Wall Street Journal. APR is subject to change monthly. For lines of credit with a maximum combined loan to value of 80% or less, the rate will be prime minus .75%. For lines of credit with a maximum combined loan to value of 80.1% to 90%, the rate will be prime plus .25%. As of November 1, 2007, the Prime Rate is 7.50% and the following rates would apply: 7.50% APR for credit lines of 80% or less maximum combined loan to value and 8.50% APR for credit lines 80.1% to 90% maximum combined loan to value. The maximum APR is 18%. The minimum line amount is \$5,000. There is no annual fee. An early termination charge of \$495 is assessed if paid off and closed within 24 months of loan date. Subject to credit approval and property valuation. Program terms and conditions are subject to change any time without notice. Property insurance is required and flood insurance may be required. Available to owner occupied 1-4 family residential or condominium properties. Offer is for new HELOC customers of Pacific National Bank.

# All eyes on Cohen as new mayor

■ Councilman chairs first meeting Tuesday.

By **Rory Brown**

Almanac Staff Writer

As Menlo Park's new mayor, Andy Cohen says he will focus on compromise.

He wants to figure out how to limit neighborhood disputes over developments, get the community at large to help create a plan to revamp El Camino Real properties, and have council members reach consensus on major issues.

But if past councils are any indication, finding common ground is no easy feat in Menlo Park — especially during an election year.

Mr. Cohen was elected mayor by a unanimous vote of his fellow council members on Dec. 4. He was the only person nominated to the one-year mayoral term.

"Nobody's luckier than me right now," Mr. Cohen said after outgoing mayor Kelly Fergusson handed him the gavel.

As mayor, Mr. Cohen will chair council meetings, serve as the ceremonial head of the city, and set council meeting agendas.

Councilman Heyward Robinson was elected vice mayor by a 3-2 vote, with the support of council members Cohen and Fergusson, as well as Robinson. Councilmen John Boyle and Richard Cline cast votes for Mr. Cline.

## Election year

Mayor Cohen is filling the mayoral chair in a year when both his and Ms. Fergusson's four-year council terms expire.

Past election years have proven contentious, with the city's two political camps focusing their efforts on gaining a majority of seats on the five-person council.

Although council members have not voted in lockstep, Mayor Cohen and Ms. Fergusson supported council members Cline and Robinson in the 2006 election. John Boyle is often considered to

## ■ MENLO PARK

be in the council minority.

Mayor Cohen said his stint as mayor will focus on city issues, rather than politics, and observers from both political camps think he'll live up to that promise.

"I can see how it could be hard to separate governing from politics ... during an election year," said Councilman Boyle. "But Andy's not an especially political person, and he's very conscious of ethics and improving communication."

"He's a natural for the role of mayor," said Stu Soffer, a political supporter of Mr. Cohen, pointing to the new mayor's experience as a judge. "All he has to do is show up and run the meeting, just like being in the courtroom and running a trial or hearing."

Even past critics of Mr. Cohen are optimistic he'll fit the new role nicely.

"My sense is that [Mr. Cohen] has picked up on a lot of the subtleties, and he'll be a very good mayor," said Henry Riggs, a planning commissioner who has been critical of Mr. Cohen's past decisions. "I had reservations two or three years ago, but now I'm optimistic."

## Shorter meetings?

First up on the agenda for Mr. Cohen — shortening council meetings.

For the past year, meetings have dragged on up to six hours, and Mr. Cohen has argued that if meetings were shorter, more people would attend.

"Shorter meetings mean we have more time to listen to the public, and I think that's a good thing," Mr. Cohen told the Almanac. ■



Andy Cohen

# Commuters get green light on Alameda

## TRAFFIC

continued from page 5

on Alameda would solve our problem," he added.

Asked to comment, Ms. Ekers replied that people's views may differ and that she has heard the opposite, that traffic is down on Altschul and Cloud.

Give it six months, she added. Public works will evaluate traffic volume and speeds then and make adjustments as necessary.

## School impacted

Discontent with the new timing is evident at La Entrada middle school on Sharon Road a fifth of a mile west of the Alameda.

PTA member Kristin Smith, in a recent letter to Supervisor Rich Gordon (reprinted in the Dec. 5 Almanac), described vehicle queues backed up to the school while waiting for the light to change; pedestrians, including children, crossing against red lights; and impatient drivers giving up and driving through extended red lights when the Alameda is empty.

"My biggest concern is for the students trying to get to school," she said. "My son has seen students crossing the Alameda on red lights, and I have seen many pedestrians cross on red lights since the timing was changed."

Assistant Principal Pattie Dullea said the school continually advises students to cross the street safely. The morning vehicle queues on Sharon Road are complicating student drop-offs, including for the buses, she said.



The Almanac/David Boyce

**New timing** shows a queue on Sharon Road at Alameda de las Pulgas, one of four Alameda intersections between Valparaiso and Santa Cruz avenues where traffic signals were retimed to favor commuters between 7:30 and 9 a.m. and 4:30 and 6 p.m. weekdays.

In her letter, Ms. Smith asks Mr. Gordon to change the timing back to what it was before.

Mr. Gordon, in an interview, described the matter as a cost-benefit analysis seeking the greatest good for the greatest number of people. "We will try to fully understand what is the impact on Sharon (Road) and if there is any way to tweak that to make it better," he said.

## Rush hour

Cloud Avenue, by Mr. Maletic's back-of-the-envelope calculations, should have 200 trips a day but endures 1,400 according to a county estimate, he said.

Inappropriate speed and belligerence from cut-through drivers is a common problem, he said. He sometimes cruises his street at 18 to 20 mph to set an

example, but drivers try to pass him. "I feel we have the right to have neighborhood traffic, not 35 to 40 mph traffic," he said. "We really want a safe place for our kids to be in the street without being hit."

The 3-foot-high plastic yellow and green men sticking their warning flags into traffic have been tried, but they are stolen or run down, he said, adding: "I'd need to have about 15,000 of those."

Some commuters even avoid traffic counters. He said he has seen people drive up onto his lawn or even turn around to avoid tripping one.

Ideally, the residents would like their roads closed to commuters or maybe made into one-way streets, but "we're not really sure which way," he said. ■

## BUILDING CODE

continued from page 5

Woodside Highlands, parts of the Alpine hills, and central Woodside west of Miramontes Road.

"If you go through Portola Valley and Woodside, the favorite type of house is cedar-sided," Ms. Enea said. "The shingles are not even fire-rated like roofs are. It's like stapling kindling to the side of your house."

Architectural review boards like the way it looks, but it's time to start thinking differently, she said.

## Insurance woes

The new building codes are a way for the state to help manage the financial losses it faces from catastrophic fires, she said. In recent months, Ms. Enea said, she's gotten numerous calls from residents faced with losing their homeowners insurance if they don't replace their homes' wood-shake roofs with something more fire resistant.

She's not surprised that insurance companies are tightening up their standards, especially in light of the recent wildfires in Southern California, she said.

"Our potential dollar loss in Woodside and Portola Valley is really unbelievable. Our housing is so expensive," Ms. Enea said. "We have to do something proactive, because we can't afford to have that kind of disaster."

Woodside resident Thalia Lubin is one of the homeowners threatened with insurance cancellation over the summer. She and her husband replaced a perfectly sound wood roof with a steel roof in order to keep their homeowners' insurance, she told the Woodside Town Council at its Nov. 27 meeting.

At the meeting, the council voted to introduce the updated state building codes on a 7-0 vote, although council members didn't have much choice in the matter. The bulk of the changes to building codes go into effect

Jan. 1, followed by the changes to Chapter 7A in July, regardless of whether local councils vote to adopt them.

Council members reasoned that making a formal vote would be one way to start informing the public about the changes on the horizon, and it allows the town to add its own tweaks to the rules.

Planning Director Hope Sullivan promised, "The public outreach is going to be huge on this," as town officials, homeowners and local building professionals try to learn how to work within the new set of rules.

The Woodside council is also contemplating the creation of a Woodside fire hazard map, similar to what the town of Portola Valley is doing.

The new state building codes are on the agenda of the next Woodside council meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 11. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. in Independence Hall, 2955 Woodside Road. The agenda is online at [www.WoodsideTown.org](http://www.WoodsideTown.org). ■

# Creek JPA turns to local funds

Federal funds aren't likely to reach the massive flood control and habitat restoration project this year, so the partners in the San Francisco Creek Joint Powers Authority (JPA) agreed last week to use \$100,000 of Santa Clara Valley Water District money to finish a hydraulic study.

The study, and ongoing mapping projects, are critical preliminary steps needed to design even smaller flood control projects, Executive Director Cynthia D'Agosta has said.

The mapping will be completed next summer. Ms. D'Agosta said she plans to know more about the JPA's direction, and alternative sources of funds, in January, after she meets with U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park.

The JPA is also considering hiring consultants independent of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has been orchestrating the project, Ms. D'Agosta said.

— Palo Alto Weekly

# Reports on former town officials may be released to public Tuesday

Atherton may release to the public on Tuesday, Dec. 11, investigators' reports on former finance director John Johns and former building official Mike Hood.

For more than a month, the Almanac has asked the town to release the reports on Mr. Johns, who was fired Oct. 29, and Mr. Johns, who retired in June 2006. The newspaper filed state Public Records Act requests on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1.

The investigation of Mr. Johns was triggered by a hostile-workplace complaint made by Police Chief Bob Brennan.

## ATHERTON

Mr. Hood was investigated last year, along with other building department employees, because of "irregularities" reported in an audit conducted by Mr. Johns. Mr. Hood retired in the midst of audits and a grand jury investigation into the building department's operations.

Mr. Johns sought to block the release of the report on him, but on Nov. 30, a San Mateo County Superior Court judge ruled that the public's interest in the conduct of a town official

outweighed his right to privacy.

Unless Mr. Johns appeals the judge's decision on Monday, Dec. 10, a redacted version of the report by investigator Mary Topliff will be available to the public. As of the Almanac's press deadline Monday afternoon, no appeal had been filed.

Mr. Johns has repeatedly said that he is blameless and that the investigator's report contains false information. He has filed a wrongful termination claim against the town over his firing.

Check [www.TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://www.TheAlmanacOnline.com) for updates on this story.

# Man robs downtown bank Monday

The Provident Credit Union branch on Santa Cruz Avenue appears to be the latest target of a man suspected of robbing banks up and down the state, said Menlo Park police.

On Monday, Dec. 10, at around 1:35 p.m. a man handed a bank teller a note demanding money, and escaped with an undisclosed sum of cash, said Nicole Acker, spokesperson for the Menlo Park Police Department.

The suspect is described as a white man with gray hair and a moustache, wearing aviator glasses and a black leather jacket. His description matches that of a suspect in other bank robberies across California, from Santa Barbara to Petaluma, Ms. Acker said.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the police at 330-6300 or use the anonymous tip line at 330-6395.

## NEWS BRIEFS

Menlo Park, Mr. Pena said.

### MP girl accosted on way to school

Menlo Park police are investigating a report by a 14-year-old girl who said she was accosted while walking to school on Santa Cruz Avenue on Dec. 4.

In the 1000 block of Santa Cruz Avenue at approximately 7:15 a.m., a man exited his white pickup truck, entered some bushes and made obscene gestures at the girl with his hands, according to Menlo Park officer Ron Venzon.

As the girl turned onto Arbor Road, the man drove by her, again exited his truck, entered some bushes and made obscene gestures, police said.

The teenager said the man did not speak to or approach her, and described him as a 25- to 35-year-old Hispanic man approximately 5 foot 6 inches tall. At the time of the incident, he was wearing a gray jacket, dark-colored pants and work boots, police reported.



Police sketch

Anyone with information is asked to call Menlo Park police at 330-6300 or leave an anonymous tip at 330-6395.

### Developer may take deal on lawsuit

Developer Chop Keenan is reportedly eyeing a land-for-cash deal with the city of Half Moon Bay. Mr. Keenan, a Woodside resident, recently won a \$36.8 million legal judgment against Half Moon Bay, successfully arguing that the city improperly took his Beachwood property.

Mr. Keenan told the Half Moon Bay Review newspaper that he would consider taking a 30-acre parcel known as the Podesta property in exchange for partial payment of the city's massive debt to him.

Mr. Keenan is president of Keenan Land Co., which he founded in 1968.

On November 28, U.S. District Court Chief Judge Vaughn Walker found that the city damaged Mr. Keenan's coastal property where he planned to build a subdivision. The development project petered out when the property was determined to be protected wetlands, but Mr. Keenan's lawyer successfully argued that drainage work by the city of Half Moon Bay created the wetlands.

## Woodside carriage ride Sunday

There's no sleigh, but the horse knows the way when members of the Peninsula Carriage Driving Club gather for their annual Christmas ride through Woodside on Saturday, Dec. 16. The procession will start at Laning Drive and Canada Road at 11 a.m., then proceed to Roberts market and Buck's restaurant for Christmas caroling about 11:45 a.m.

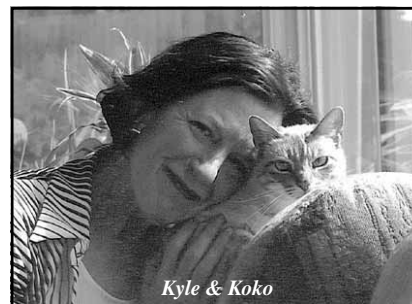
The procession usually includes 10 to 15 carriages festively decorated with garlands and jingle bells. This year's special attraction is a "six up" (six-in-hand) of Clydesdales.

After leaving Buck's, the ride will wind through back roads and head back to Laning and Canada.

The drive will be canceled in the event of heavy rain.

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## Where to build new sidewalks topic of Dec. 13 meeting

### ■ MENLO WATCH

As a first step to make it easier, and safer to walk in Menlo Park, city staff is hosting a meeting on Thursday, Dec. 13, to ask the public where the city should build new sidewalks.

The meeting marks the beginning of the formation of the city's sidewalk master plan — a project approved unanimously by the City Council in May.

The meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

### Architect picked for new Burgess Gym

Field Paoli Architects, the San Francisco-based architecture firm that designed the Draeger's store in San Mateo, and renovated the Stanford Shopping Center and the San Francisco Zoo, has been tapped to design Menlo Park's new Burgess Gym.

City staff is recommending the council approve a contract for \$155,000 for the firm to design the new gym, which is planned for the Civic Center.

The council will consider the item at its meeting which starts at 7

p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11, in the council chambers at the Civic Center.

Field Paoli has also designed several civic buildings, including a community center in Mill Valley, and public libraries in Belmont, Saratoga and Millbrae.

### Downtown speaker

Menlo Park will continue its downtown speaker series on Wednesday, Dec. 12, when real estate consultant Denise Conley is scheduled to give a presentation on the economics of mixed-use development.

Ms. Conley, who owns her own Oakland-based firm, is scheduled to speak from 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets.

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# Supervisors seek ways to cut structural deficit

■ County's \$25 million structural deficit could rise to \$86 million in five years.

By Marion Softky  
Almanac Staff Writer

San Mateo County supervisors want to get a head start on solving a structural deficit that, unchecked, could grow from \$25 million in the current fiscal year to \$86 million by 2013.

In a Dec. 4 study session, the board considered a range of measures to cut increasing operating expenses for county departments, which are outpacing discretionary revenues from such sources as property taxes and sales taxes. Important, but not included in the structural deficit, are the ups and downs of the economy and funding from the state and federal governments.

Possible measures discussed ranged from a hiring freeze, to renegotiating some of the employee benefits that are driving up expenditures, to ways of controlling spending on indigent health care — including reducing the annual subsidy from the county's general fund to the San Mateo Medical Center. That sub-

sidy is \$72 million this year.

The supervisors were open to possible new sources of revenue from a parking tax at San Francisco International Airport, and/or raising the transient occupancy tax for hotels and motels in unincorporated areas.

The board instructed the staff to come up with a plan to eliminate the structural deficit by fiscal year 2013. This should include measures to cut costs, control the growth of costs, and raise revenues.

Actually, San Mateo County is doing better than many of its neighbors; San Francisco and Santa Clara counties are facing deficits well over \$200,000 million, said County Manager John Maltbie.

The county budget is also extremely sensitive to changes in state and federal revenues, which provide more than 60 percent of its \$1.2 billion general fund budget. The state, which is facing its own \$10 billion deficit, has a history of mandating certain county programs, and then not fully funding them.

"When Sacramento sneezes,

we catch cold," Mr. Maltbie commented.

## Costs growing

The single largest contributor to the structural deficit has been the growth of salaries and benefits, said Mr. Maltbie. These have grown by \$32.8 million, or 8.4 percent per year, over the last five years. The increases are due to negotiated increases, more retirement benefits, additional positions, and double-digit increases in health benefits.

Supervisor Adrienne Tissier suggested offering another health plan option to county employees through the Health Plan of San Mateo, the county's master health plan. "That could be a tremendous savings for us here," she said.

County unions were well-represented at the study session. Two representatives asked to be included in negotiations.

The supervisors agreed. "We will be served very well by having community-based organizations and labor involved in the dialogue," said board President Rose Jacobs Gibson.

Other costs contributing to the structural deficit include: opening a new Youth Services Center; cre-

ating a relief pool for the Sheriff's Office; planning alcohol and drug programs required by Proposition 36; cost-of-business increases for community-based organizations supported by the county; and ongoing deficits in the Structural Fire and Solid Waste funds.

Ironically, the Solid Waste Fund, which is supposed to support the Children's Health Initiative and some green programs, is shrinking because less waste is going to the Ox Mountain Landfill, leading to a drop in fees generated. "People are recycling more," said Budget Director Jim Saco.

The supervisors generally supported staff proposals to elimi-

nate the structural deficit in phases over five years.

The transition could be cushioned by using the county's substantial reserves over the first years. Under that scenario, the reserves would drop from 23 percent to 16 percent of net appropriations, Mr. Saco said.

Board members suggested taking a slow and careful approach to cutting costs. They suggested freezing hiring rather than layoffs; examining productivity of individual departments rather than across-the-board cuts; and seeking better solutions to the costs of providing indigent health care. ■

## Talk: 50 years of exploring Antarctica

Antarctica — from satellite images to what lies below the ice — will be the topic of the U.S. Geological Survey monthly public lecture Thursday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m. in Building 3 of the USGS campus at 345 Middlefield Road in Menlo Park.

Jerry L. Mullins, coordinator of the USGS Antarctic, Arctic, and Canadian Programs, and polar geophysicist John C. Beh-

rendt will discuss "Exploring Antarctica's Frozen Frontier: The USGS Antarctica Program from the 1957 International Geophysical Year to the 2007 International Polar Year."

Research during the current Polar Year is studying changes in conditions near the South Pole and analyzing their impacts on the global climate system. For information, call 329-5000.



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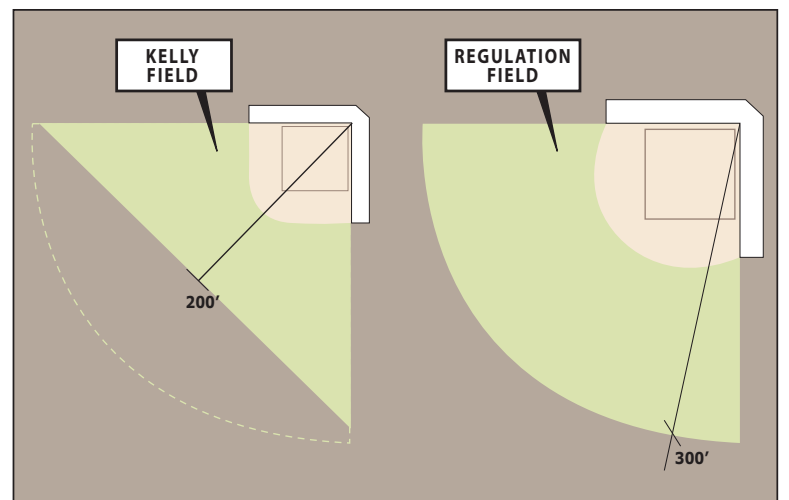
# FIELDS *of* D

Players on the MP Strikers, a branch of the California Youth Soccer Association, practice at Burgess Park in Menlo Park.

## Recent efforts to build sports fields in Menlo Park *have failed*. Can this council come through *in the clutch*?



Adding field space to Burgess, Flood and Kelly parks are several options to be considered in sports field studies unanimously approved by the Menlo Park City Council.



Center field at Kelly Park is just 200 feet from home plate, making the baseball field too small for most players. Most regulation outfields are at least 300 feet deep.

**K**elly Park in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood has its fair share of problems.

The soccer field is noticeably slanted, the baseball diamond has no pitching mound, and the center field home run fence, usually the deepest part of a baseball park, is about 200 feet from home plate.

There's no such thing as a routine fly ball at the undersized, oddly shaped baseball diamond, as anything hit hard enough to center field sails over the fence and into traffic on U.S. 101.

The most surprising characteristic of Kelly Park's quirky, sparsely used fields: They're brand new.

Remodeled by the city in 2002 for \$1 million, Kelly Park is one of several examples of Menlo Park's unsuccessful attempts to get the most — or anything at all — out of plans to increase the city's sports field space.

Whether it's the poor design of Kelly Field, the failure to put a full-size soccer field at the remodeled Burgess Field, or the drawn-out, unsuccessful campaign to build fields atop a landfill at Bayfront Park, recent efforts to add fields haven't alleviated the city's ongoing sports fields shortage.

But the current City Council has pledged to buck that trend, promising to take action to accommodate the growing number of athletes competing for limited field space.

Now it's time to see if council members will live up to that promise.

### A 'broad view'

Council members voted unanimously on Nov. 27 to tackle the city's sports fields shortage, greenlighting studies to address two key questions:

- What can be done in the short term to get more use out of existing fields at Kelly and Burgess parks (including potential installation of artificial turf and lights)?

- Are there any sites where the city can realistically build more fields?

The council has hired a consultant to work with city staff and a subcommittee of Parks and Recreation commissioners to come back in the spring with a report addressing those issues.

"In the past we've had these ideas for sports fields sites that come up — Bayfront Park, the V.A. Hospital, O'Connor School, the list goes on," said Councilman Richard Cline, a parks commissioner for six years. "Everyone rushes to these [ideas], and when they don't work out, we're right back where we started. We're trying to step back, take a broad view at all of the areas in our city, and get an inventory of potential places where we can fit more fields."

Although the council has just started to address the fields shortage, it's clear council members are willing to get creative: Pulling from the city's reserves and asking for private donations have been floated as ideas to cover the cost of buying land for more playing fields.

### Burgess and Kelly parks

First up for the city is to evaluate the feasibility of installing artificial turf or lights at Burgess or Kelly parks to make those fields more available.

Both sites have grass fields, and although Kelly Park's baseball field has lights, they need to be altered to be put into use.

"Turf seems to be popping up in a number of locations," said Councilman Heyward Robinson, also a former parks commissioner. "I'm not saying it's necessarily appropriate for Kelly, Burgess, or any other site, but it's something for us to consider."

Councilman John Boyle said any consideration of artificial turf or lights at either site "could be tricky," as both options would be expensive, and impact nearby homes. He noted the strong opposition from Encinal School parents and neighbors when the city considered collaborating

# DREAMS

STORY BY RORY BROWN  
PHOTOS BY VERONICA WEBER

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COVER STORY



**Burgess Park** has one of Menlo Park's most heavily used soccer fields, but the field is slightly smaller than was originally planned.

**FIELDS OF DREAMS**

*continued from page 13*

with the Menlo Park City School District to build and maintain an artificial turf field at the Atherton elementary school.

Whatever changes are made to Burgess and Kelly parks, council members said the city should try to do something to compensate for design flaws at both sites.

When renovating Burgess Park in 2004, the late addition of a basketball court and the skate park to the plan led to less room for a soccer field, said Ruben Nino, the city's engineering services director.

When renovating Kelly Park, Mr. Nino said, the city was forced to significantly crown the soccer field for drainage purposes, and the need for an additional parking lot limited the size of the soccer and baseball fields.

"We've spent a lot of money on fields, but we haven't added a single square foot [of field space]," Councilman Robinson said. "In fact, we may have lost some space, including at Burgess where we didn't get as big a field as was once envisioned

out there. ... We've continually short-changed our field space."

**What the city needs**

Mark Nuckolls, the city's youth and adult sports coordinator, said the city is in need of at least one more full-sized (220 feet by 360 feet) soccer field that doesn't share space with an adjacent baseball field.

He said a full-size field is big enough to be used by teenagers and adults, and can be divided into smaller fields for younger athletes.

The additional field would make it easier to schedule games for all age groups, and limit damage to the fields themselves, Mr. Nuckolls said. He noted that many of the fields currently scheduled by the city are on elementary and middle school campuses, and are too small to be used by teenagers and adults.

Mr. Nuckolls also said that city's field shortage will likely get worse before it gets better, as the sports field at Encinal School, used by Menlo-Atherton Little League, is being redone, and will not be available in the spring.

**Flood Park**

Even though the city's field

studies are just getting under way, council members are cautiously optimistic that Flood Park, a 21-acre park off Bay Road owned by San Mateo County, could help alleviate the city's field shortage.

Public Works Director Kent Steffens said the city is in "very preliminary" discussions with county officials to renovate the park to allow for more field space. The park currently has a baseball field, and additional open space.

Mr. Steffens noted that the Hetch Hetchy water pipeline runs through the park, and the San Francisco Public Utility Commission plans on digging up a portion of the park to replace the water main sometime in the near future.

"The county is willing to talk to us, and we may look at some concepts to better utilize the park space, but we want to coordinate any changes to the park so we don't have to do anything twice," Mr. Steffens said. ■

**Fields scheduled through city of Menlo Park**

When local sports groups want to use fields at the following parks and schools, they have to schedule use of the fields through Menlo Park city staff.

- Belle Haven School
- Burgess Park
- Hillview School
- Kelly Park
- La Entrada School
- Lyle Park
- Nealon Park
- Oak Knoll School
- Willow Oaks Park

*Note: Fields at Encinal School, Holbrook-Palmer Park, and Las Lomas School are often used by Menlo Park sports organizations, but not scheduled through the city.*

Information courtesy city of Menlo Park



The **soccer field** at Kelly Park is noticeably slanted to allow for better drainage, but the sloped terrain is tough to play on.

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## Caltrain will add two trains each weekday evening

Starting March 3, two more trains will run between San Francisco and San Jose on weekday evenings.

The Caltrain Board of Directors voted unanimously Dec. 5 to add one northbound and one southbound train Monday through Friday evenings. This addition raises the number of trains per day from 96 to 98.

Under the new schedule, evening trains will leave San Francisco and San Jose every hour on the half hour starting at 7:30 p.m., and ending at 10:30 p.m. All evening trains will stop at all regular stations along the route — except Atherton and Broadway/Burlingame, which were dropped two years ago. For late nighters, a final southbound train will still leave San Francisco at 12:01 a.m.

“This is a great example of collaboration between communities and a public agency,” said San Mateo County supervisor and Caltrain board member Jerry Hill. He and the staff have been working with an organization called Citizens for Expanded Transit Service (CETS) to improve service.

In a statement, CETS welcomed the schedule change as an “incremental positive step toward improving area-wide transit.”

But the organization, which includes present and ex-council members from several Peninsula cities, still wants additional trains and renewed service for Atherton and Burlingame.

“More train stops are crucial to adding jobs and housing without worsening traffic congestion,” said Menlo Park City Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson. “As of this week, we have several hundred new jobs in Menlo Park that are an easy walk from the train station. We need more stops in more cities during peak commute hours.”

Even though Caltrain continues to wrestle with budget deficits, the additional service has been made possible by efficiencies in operating costs connected with the opening of a new maintenance facility in San Jose, according to a Caltrain press release.

For the new schedule, go to [www.Caltrain.com](http://www.Caltrain.com).



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## EYE CARE NEWS



Presented by  
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Licensed Optician



### INSIGHTS FOR MOTHERS-TO-BE

Pregnant women are well aware that their bodies are undergoing changes that warrant monitoring. As far as their eyes are concerned, pregnant women should understand that hormonal changes may affect the strength of their eyeglass or contact lens prescriptions. Slight changes are not usually cause for concern, but they should still be discussed with the eye care professional. In addition, pregnant women may experience "dry eye," which is usually temporary, persisting only up until delivery. Fortunately, lubricating eye drops

can be prescribed to alleviate the discomfort of the "gritty" feeling that accompanies dry eye. However, if a pregnant woman wears contact lenses and experiences dry eye, she may want to discuss a temporary switch to eyeglasses.

Moms-to-be may experience some vision changes or dry eyes that are typically temporary. Should you require eyewear, bring your eyewear prescription to Menlo Optical at 1166 University Drive, on the corner of Oak Grove Avenue and University Drive. We fill prescriptions with lightweight, scratch-resistant lenses and carry a wide selection of designer frames in the latest shapes, sizes, and colors. You will find our prices to be most competitive to others in our community. Please call us at 322-3900. Best wishes for a happy and healthy Holiday Season!

P.S. One-day disposable contacts are a good choice for late in a pregnancy and after delivery as the eyes and body recover.

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

## Menlo College professor killed in car crash

Laura Marschall, 44, associate professor of biological sciences at Menlo College in Atherton, was killed Dec. 1 in a head-on collision on Highway 92, just west of the state Highway 35 divide.

Ms. Marschall, 44, a resident of Half Moon Bay, was a passenger in a 1994 Subaru traveling east on Highway 92 at around 3 p.m. when a 2006 Honda traveling west swerved into the eastbound lane and struck the Subaru head on, the California Highway Patrol reported.

The drivers and Ms. Marschall were taken to Stanford University Medical Center, where Ms. Marschall died, according to a Santa Clara County medical examiner investigator. The driver of the Honda, an Antioch woman, received moderate injuries, according to the CHP.

Ms. Marschall's daughter, Sarah, 16, the driver of the Subaru, sustained a serious ankle fracture, according to Robert Nagler Miller, a spokesperson for Menlo College.

Dr. Marschall was just completing her first semester as a faculty member at Menlo College, where she taught biology and genetics. Previously, she was a faculty member at California State University, East Bay, from 1998 to 2005. She also served as a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University from 1994 to 1998.

"Dr. Marschall was an outstanding researcher and a dedicated teacher, and she clearly was beloved by her students at Men-

lo," said Menlo College President Dr. G. Timothy Haight.

A close friend of Dr. Marschall, fellow microbiologist Dr. Traci Yerby, said: "Laura was passionate about biology and genetics, and she was very successful in passing along her love of her field to her students. After classes, she would spend a lot of time with those students who wanted extra instruction."

Ms. Marschall grew up in the Bay Area and graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she received bachelor's and master's degrees, as well as her doctorate in biochemistry and molecular biology.

She is survived by her husband, Joe; daughter Sarah; son Evan, 10; her mother and father; and three sisters. Funeral services are pending.



Laura Marschall

### OBITUARIES

#### Kathleen Gogarty

Native of Ireland

Kathleen Corbally Gogarty of Menlo Park died Nov. 25, two days after suffering a heart attack. She was 87.

Ms. Gogarty was born in County Meath, Ireland, and moved to the United States in 1950. She moved from New York City to the Peninsula in 1979.

In New York City she worked for the Irish Consulate and, later, at the Children's Day Treatment Center. After marrying Tom Gogarty, a boy from her home town in Ireland, she helped operate a grocery store

they owned. After his death, she ran the business alone, then moved to California to be near her daughter, Triona.

She worked in public relations for Hewlett-Packard for several years before retiring.

Ms. Gogarty volunteered for many years at TheatreWorks and Avenidas Senior Day Health Center. She also served as a classroom aide, helping youngsters learn to read.

She is survived by her daughter, Triona Gogarty of Menlo Park, sons Ken Gogarty of Dobb's Ferry, New York, and Tom Gogarty of Virginia Beach, Virginia; her sister, Sister Mary Corbally of Ireland; and six grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Nov. 27 at St. Raymond Church in Menlo Park. Donations in her memory may be made to the St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, 3500 Middle field Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

#### Jane Wilson

Community volunteer

Jane Anderson Wilson, a longtime resident of Woodside and Menlo Park, died Nov. 23 at the age of 87.

Ms. Wilson was born in Oakland and grew up in San Francisco. An avid bridge player and gardener, Ms. Wilson was active for many years with the Woodside-Atherton Garden Club. She was also a member of the Valley Auxiliary of the Family Service Agency of San Mateo County, the Junior League of Palo Alto/MidPeninsula, Friends of Filoli, and the Menlo Country Club.

She is survived by her daughters, Margaret Graham of Santa Barbara and Carol Green Wilson of Santa Fe, New Mexico; two grandchildren; and one great-grandson. Her husband, Waldron Wilson, died in 1966.

A memorial gathering to celebrate Ms. Wilson's life will be held in January. Donations in her name may be made to The Family Service Agency of San Mateo County, 24 Second Ave., San Mateo, CA 94401.

#### Jane James

Former local real estate agent

Jane Burke Long James died Nov. 26 at the age of 89. She suffered from dementia and, for the last nine years, lived in a Santa Cruz residential home.

Ms. James, a former Atherton resident, was known in the Menlo Park area in the 1960s and 1970s

Continued on next page

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Menlo Park police sketch of suspect.

## Armed robbery at ATM machine

A man armed with a handgun robbed another man Tuesday night, Dec. 4, near the Wells Fargo ATM in the Sharon Heights Shopping Center, Menlo Park police reported.

The suspect, described as a white male in his mid-20s, demanded cash from the man who had just withdrawn funds from the ATM, according to Menlo Park Police Sgt. Ron Prickett.

The victim threw \$40 at the suspect, and the suspect picked up the cash and fled on foot to a nearby apartment complex, Sgt. Prickett said.

Police responded at 11:09 p.m., and after searching the area, did not find the suspect.

The suspect is about 5 foot 10 inches tall, 200 pounds, and was wearing a white hooded sweatshirt with a black logo on the front, Sgt. Prickett said.

Police are urging people to exercise caution when using ATMs. Anyone with information regarding the armed robbery is asked to call Menlo Park police at 330-6300, or leave an anonymous tip at 330-6395.

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Continued from previous page

for her pink real estate sales signs for Jane James Realty, according to her daughter Joyce James.

She focused on upscale housing and did commercial work for Saga Corp. when the company moved from New York to Menlo Park. She began her real estate career with Coldwell Banker.

Before becoming a real estate agent, she worked in radio sales for a San Francisco station and commuted in her Jaguar XP coupe. "She was a sight on weekends with her four children packed in the convertible," says Joyce James.

A natural bright-redhead, she was uncommonly vivacious and extreme for her time, say family members.

The family attended the Church of Religious Science in Burlingame.

She is survived by her children, Janie James, Judi James, Gus James and Joyce James; and four grandchildren.

No services are planned.

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WEDDING  
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# Holiday Fund

## Shelter Network helps father reunite with daughter

By Megan Rawlins

Special to the Almanac

When Alan Ayers and his wife split, he found himself without custody of his daughter or a place to live.

Mr. Ayers was struggling to keep his job while living on the streets of Redwood City. He had no place to sleep or shower or eat, and he missed his 12-year-old daughter terribly. To get custody of her, he'd have to get back on track.

"It's like I ran out of gas," he explains. "And the next think I know, I'm on the side of the road and I didn't have anybody stop to give me a push."

Shelter Network, a housing provider for San Mateo County's homeless and near-homeless, stepped in and has been there at every turn to give Mr. Ayers the push he needs.

With help from the Fair Oaks Community Center, Mr. Ayers was able to secure a bed at Shelter Network's Maple Street Shelter in Redwood City; his journey was just beginning.

When the courts questioned his ability to care for and house his daughter, Shelter Network guaranteed them a place in its First Step for Families shelter. His case worker wrote letters to the court stating as much, and now Mr. Ayers and his daughter have been reunited and are on a fast track to permanent housing.

Shelter Network is a proponent of a recent nationwide shift in thinking about how to help homeless people put their lives back together: The new

### ■ HOLIDAY FUND

Gifts to the Almanac's Holiday Fund benefit Shelter Network and nine other charities. See the coupon for how to donate.

emphasis is getting individuals and families into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

To that end, Shelter Network has a program called Housing First, based on the idea of "rapid re-housing." The program provides working families with the first and last month's rent, the security deposit and subsidized rent for three months. With the arrival of his daughter, Mr. Ayers was eligible for the program.

Housing First is "more like a quick start," says Mr. Ayers. "The first thing they were trying to do was get me back into housing, get me into a place with my daughter, get me started again."

Jennifer Luciano, development director of Shelter Network, says the program gets families in and out of the shelter, "freeing up much needed space and lessening the impact of homelessness on the family."

Once in permanent housing, families retain access to a myriad of services, from year-round child care to weekly life skills workshops. There is also a mandatory savings plan, under which families save at least 50 percent of their income to ensure long-term self-sufficiency.

Each family has a case manager who provides referrals and access to resources and services. There is a six-month follow-up program and an alumni asso-



Almanac photo by Veronica Weber

Alan Ayers hugs his 12-year-old daughter Rosemary inside the common area of Shelter Network.

ciation for program graduates. This extensive support network is often cited as a key component to the success of the Housing First program.

"The goal is not just to get families into housing, but to give them the tools to become self-sufficient, and beyond self-sufficiency to the point where this won't happen again," Ms. Luciano says.

Housing First has grown steadily since its inception in 2004, serving 20 families last year. Recently, Shelter Network received a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to expand its Housing First pro-

gram to eligible individuals.

Each year, Shelter Network serves approximately 3,500 homeless adults and children, providing more than 183,500 nights of shelter in its five facilities throughout the county. It also has a motel voucher program and 40 long-term transitional apartments in the area.

In 2007, Shelter Network paired with the city of San Mateo to launch a permanent supportive housing program for the chronically homeless with the goal of expanding into other cities.

Of his decision to reunite with his daughter, and to turn to Shelter Network for help, Mr.

Ayers says: "I believe it will work out well for me and even better for my daughter."

"Shelter Network was here when I needed them. They stepped right in and said 'Here's a place for you.'" ■

### ■ INFORMATION

Shelter Network is located at 1450 Chapin Ave. in Burlingame. The three main locations in South San Mateo County are: Haven Family House, 260 Van Buren St., Menlo Park; Redwood Family House, 1160 Locust St., Redwood City; and Maple Street Shelter, 1580A Maple St., Redwood City. For more information, call 685-5880 or go to [www.shelternetwork.com](http://www.shelternetwork.com).

## Parents in need have a friend indeed in the Learning Together program

By David Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Back in 1972, the United Negro College Fund and the Ad Council launched a fundraising campaign with a slogan that has held up well and that few would argue with: "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Such a fate is unlikely for Karina Carlos, 5, of East Palo Alto and her 15-month-old brother, Juan. Their mother, Lizbeth, is in her third year participating in Learning Together, a San Mateo County program that matches case workers with parents wanting to help their young children with social

and emotional development and get ready for school.

"I've learned how to raise my kids in the right direction," says Ms. Carlos in an interview at Green Oaks Academy in East Palo Alto. "I'm a better mother."

Among her new skills: choosing more nutritional foods, helping her kids with reading, and reducing the time they spend in front of a TV.

"Karina used to watch a lot of TV, but then she got into books," Ms. Carlos says. "She picks up books and reads and reads and reads and tells you every story."

Karina, once extremely shy, is also increasingly outgoing and bilingual, her mother said. Ini-

### ■ HOLIDAY FUND

Gifts to the Almanac Holiday Fund benefits Youth and Family Enrichment Services and nine other nonprofit organizations. To donate, check the Holiday Fund coupon.

tially, she communicated only in Spanish with her mother, but began to respond in English after a home visit from Learning Together case-worker Lisa Moody.

Ms. Carlos, Ms. Moody says, is a sponge for new information. "I'm definitely learning to learn," Ms. Carlos says. "I think you never stop

learning when you're a mother."

Asked about her hopes for her children, she replies: "I hope for them to look at life differently and for them to be able to express themselves as to what they need and what they want and what they expect of people when they're older."

Learning Together, in its third year as part of Youth and Family Enrichment Services in San Mateo County, employs three case workers to work with 20 families each, Ms. Moody says. Using a defined curriculum, the case worker makes twice-monthly home visits to impart best practices to parents until the children are 6 years old.

"If we can start the kids off early, with early education and training for their parents, we can see a community transforming to a community of success for their kids," Ms. Moody says.

The harshness of low-income living can intervene. For a family short on food, the case worker can refer them to a food bank. If rent money is a problem, the case worker can start the ball rolling for rental assistance. ■

### ■ INFORMATION

Youth and Family Enrichment Services has offices at 610 Elm St., Suite 212, San Carlos, CA 94070. Call 591-9623.

# Teen parents give other teens a reality check

By Marjorie Mader

Almanac Staff Writer

When Elaine Bartolome, a single teen mom, tells her story to students in high school and middle school classrooms, the teens listen. "I felt as if my world was slowly crumbling to pieces," she says about her discovering she was pregnant at age 17.

Her relationship with the father of her child ended. Her parents were greatly disappointed and didn't know how to handle the situation.

"I was lost and ran away from home with feelings of hurt, fear and sickness, and started my journey as a single teen parent," she relates.

As a member of the Teen Parent Panel, a key part of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition program of San Mateo County, she and other teen parents share their personal stories with teens in Peninsula schools. They "tell it as it is" to encourage teens to make healthy choices that will increase their chances for a better future and lower rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Ms. Bartolome says she was forced to mature at an early age in order to support her son and herself — physically, emotionally and financially. She graduated from Redwood High School, found a job and started training to become a certified nurse assistant.

Now she is majoring in nursing at San Francisco State University and working as a medical assistant at the University of California, San Francisco Medical Center. She continues as a teen parent panelist and is a member of the coalition board.

Over the past three years, Ms. Bartolome has spoken to 2,000 students at Menlo-Atherton, Woodside and Sequoia high schools and at middle schools in Redwood City and East Palo Alto.

She tells students that she was "a normal teen" just like them, involved in lots of activities. Then, pregnancy happened. Her experience, she says, has made her realize the importance of



Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition  
**Teen mom** Elaine Bartolome overcame obstacles to make a better life for herself and son A.J.

## HOLIDAY FUND

Gifts to the Almanac's Holiday Fund benefit the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition and nine other nonprofit organizations. See the coupon for how to donate.

education and making healthy decisions early in life.

"Listening to the teen parents was kind of a smack of reality," says a middle school student. "They showed me pregnancy could happen to anyone."

Comments another teen: "What I really liked is that every question we asked you answered in detail and in your opinion, and that's what teenagers need. A lot."

Valerie Brown, the coalition's executive director, said 84 percent of the students who heard the teen panelists say they are now more likely to wait to have sexual intercourse.

While teen pregnancy rates have dropped 41 percent over the past seven years in areas served by the coalition, Ms. Brown sees significant challenges ahead.

"We're seeing an increase in the rate of chlamydia — the most common sexually transmitted disease among young people — in the last two years," she says. If someone has the disease, it's easy to treat and is curable, but if untreated, chlamydia could lead to infertility in men and women.

The Teen Pregnancy Coalition stretches its \$300,000 annual budget, raised mainly from nonprofit foundations and individual contributors, to provide its science-based, comprehensive educational program to 3,500 teens a year in public middle and high schools, alternative schools, and juvenile detention facilities. Now some local schools are providing funds for the coalition's classroom programs, said Ms. Brown.

The coalition receives no funding from the federal government, which spends millions of dollars annually on "abstinence-only" programs, despite evidence that these programs are ineffective in preventing teen births and the spread of STDs, she said.

Recent studies have shown the coalition's comprehensive approach is the most widely supported means of helping teens prevent early pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, said Ms. Brown. ■

## INFORMATION

Valerie Brown, executive director, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition, 703 Woodside Road, Suite 7, Redwood City, CA 94061; or call 367-1937.

# 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 food 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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**TOTALS: As of Dec. 6, 2007, a total of 50 donors have given \$53,000 to the Almanac's Holiday Fund.**

\* The asterisk designates that the donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.



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# No 5-home subdivision planned, owners say

By Andrea Gemmet  
Almanac Staff Writer

■ WOODSIDE

An outpouring of neighborhood angst over a Woodside lot merger — that looks like a subdivision — has put the brakes on the project.

Neighbors along Old La Honda Road rallied around fears that a five-home subdivision was in the works to replace a single home built on about 13 acres. Greg and Nancy Serrurier of Menlo Park are seeking Woodside Planning Commission approval to merge their collection of 23 quarter-acre lots near Orchard Hill Road and create five buildable lots.

Woodside planning staff recommended against the proposal, saying that constraints on the property made it more feasible for three lots instead of five.

Ceding to what the Serruriers termed “an outpouring of anger and misunderstanding” from nearby residents, the couple withdrew their lot merger from consideration three days before the Dec. 5 Planning Commission meeting.

In a letter to the commission members, Mr. and Ms. Serrurier

said they would resubmit their merger proposal along with a development plan, in order to clearly demonstrate to neighbors their plans for the property. Their intention is to build a home for themselves while retaining the property’s orchard, pasture and redwood forest, they said.

“While we will not satisfy those for whom no change is the only acceptable outcome, we are confident that seeing our plans alongside the merger application will dispel the incorrect and hurtful insinuations that we are secretly planning to significantly damage the environment and way of life on Orchard Hill Road,” they wrote. “Nothing is further from the truth.”

The unusual quarter-acre lots date to the Woodside Country Club subdivision of 1927. Current Woodside zoning for the area requires lots be at least 7.5 acres, but since the Country Club subdivision not only predates Woodside’s zoning code but also predates the town itself, the quarter-acre parcels are “grandfathered.” ■



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## WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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

## Plenty to do for new Menlo mayor

In the next few weeks we will hear Andy Cohen, Menlo Park's new mayor, share his goals for the city in 2008, which just happens to be an election year for Mr. Cohen and out-going mayor Kelly Fergusson.

What position will the new mayor take on the city's biggest issues? Will he move the needle on a game plan for El Camino Real, a process that began this year and which has to be one of the city's highest priorities and toughest issues. Can the city blend new development

with more space for pedestrians and cyclists along this thoroughfare of ever-increasing traffic?

And what about more housing on El Camino? A plan to build condominiums at the former Cadillac

dealership was shot down and now the owners say they will put up a conventional retail/office complex on the site. On the south end, the Stanford Park Hotel wants to expand and build a conference center on a portion of the old Anderson Chevrolet car lot, and Tesla Motors is set to move into what is left. But next door and just across the street from Safeway's new upscale 65,000-square-foot store, there is nothing in sight for several other abandoned auto dealerships, which are a blight on the downtown.

Other, potentially huge, decisions loom about the future of the downtown core, including oversight of the development plans for the 108-unit Derry condominium and retail project on Oak Grove Avenue at the Caltrain tracks. This would be by far the most dense housing project ever approved in Menlo Park, and its look and feel will set the tone for other development downtown.

And whether it will happen during Mr. Cohen's term or that of another mayor, the city must take a position on railroad grade crossings and pay at least some attention to what would happen if a high-

speed rail project is approved and routed through Menlo Park. It is not enough to simply pay lip service to these real possibilities. The city needs to have a clear position one way or the other.

Mayor Fergusson made a significant effort to bring the city into the green orbit, an initiative that requires considerable follow-through from the present council. Other action items on Mr. Cohen's agenda should include:

- Joining the Chamber of Commerce in attempting to add more zest to the downtown area, and continuing the block parties on Santa Cruz Avenue.

- Continuing the work of the Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee, to keep the city moving toward a greener way of life.

- Stepping up the council's commitment to assisting Police Chief Bruce Goitia to fill out his department's roster, which has been decimated by resignations.

- Continuing to seek additional playing space for area sports teams, either by better managing fields in use now, or finding ways to add new venues.

With her ubiquitous hat and commitment to be present at virtually every public event in Menlo Park and nearby communities, Kelly Fergusson managed to put a lot of subjects on the council table. Some were more successful than others, but at least the community was talking.

Mr. Cohen has said he would like shorter and more orderly meetings, an aspiration we doubt will elicit many groans from his fellow council members or the council-watching public.

We certainly support any effort to run a tighter ship, which means council members would have to relax their rhetoric to speed up the meetings. That won't be easy, and it will take some firm, clear direction from the mayor. We wish him the best of luck in what we hope will be a successful year.

## EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

## LETTERS

Our readers write

### Accuracy lacking in Atherton report

Editor:

The public deserves transparency in government and accuracy in media reporting.

Accuracy, however, is a relative term and the actions last week which took place at the hearings regarding the "investigative report" concerning Atherton Finance Director John Johns only served to emphasize the wide disparity between reporting something which may be in the public interest and the accuracy of the thing being reported upon.

Superior Court Judge John Runde ruled only on the First Amendment considerations and the public's right to know the content of the investigative report. He ruled that the report as written must be disseminated. The report, however, is incomplete and at least partially false, perhaps deliberately so.

See **LETTERS**, next page



Atherton Heritage Association

### Our Regional Heritage

The view on El Camino Real in 1938, looking south from Selby Lane in Atherton. Note the highway is three lanes wide at this location.

## LETTERS

Continued from previous page

The judge did not address the issue of whether the report was true or false, only that it must be disseminated. I know the report was at least partially false because I was one of the people supposedly interviewed for it.

There are at least three instances of deliberate falsehood in the report. One of the town employees quoted in the report stood ready outside the courtroom prepared to deny under oath that she said what was attributed to her in the report. City Council member Kathy McKeithen submitted a declaration refuting the report and the manner in which it was created.

I was interviewed but never reported upon or quoted, mainly because I told the “investigator” that Mr. Johns didn’t create a hostile work environment; he was working within a hostile environment not of his own making.

Mrs. McKeithen even berated the interim town manager for permitting such an inaccurate report to be compiled.

In short, the Almanac can play the “public right to know” card. I would expect nothing less from the media. It is their bread and butter.

But now that the report will be released, is the public any closer to the truth? The fact remains that three members of the City Council had their hands in the cookie jar of favorable treatment by the building department, didn’t want the news disseminated and therefore shot the messenger. Those are facts revealed by the audit and nothing can change that. Hopefully, a forthcoming grand jury report can discern the truth.

**Dr. Sam Goodman**  
Chairman,  
Atherton Audit Committee

### New Safeway will be neighborhood draw

Editor:

My observation is that, to a degree, the center of gathering places and visiting with your Menlo Park neighbor has just shifted from Santa Cruz Avenue to the new Safeway store on El Camino.

If one does not see this possibility, just check the store out.

**Bill Russ**  
Cotton Street, Menlo Park

**TownSquare**

Join the conversation on  
[www.TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://www.TheAlmanacOnline.com). Click on  
links under the TownSquare banner.

# The Valley’s famous watering holes

By Nancy Lund

Before the end of World War II, Portola Valley was a quiet place of horses, hayfields and strawberry patches. A few small farms, a few estates and some cottages were the main buildings.

The small number of business establishments were, for the most part, places where one could have a meal, some entertainment, and — most importantly — something to drink. Only one of these businesses has survived. Here are their stories.

The survivor, surprisingly, is the oldest. The Alpine Inn has stood at the corner of Alpine and Arastradero roads since the 1850s. It has had several different names and barkeepers through the decades, but the most famous proprietor for

modern-day generations was Enrico Rossotti, whose name is still linked to the ancient structure. The ambiance hasn’t changed much for at least 50 or 60 years.

Back in 1906, when Stanford geologist John Casper Branner toured the area to observe earthquake damage, he reported passing the Blue Goose as he traveled Alpine Road. Its location and ambiance have been lost in time unless it was another of the many names for the Alpine Inn.

In the 1870s the Corte Madera Brewery was a fixture at the corner of Georgia Lane and Portola Road where an old windmill has stood for decades. Proprietor William Tate Philpot, called the prince of good fellows and the finest of all sportsmen by an 1870 newspaper, served up the refreshments. In 1875 he had to surrender his three-acre property, including his bar, to settle a \$937.37 lawsuit.

Hallett’s occupied the building at 846 Portola Road in the early days of the 20th century. One



Portola Valley Archives

Today’s Alpine Inn has operated under many names, including the Wunder shown above. The young woman’s face in this photo was intentionally blurred, presumably so she could not be associated with such a notorious place.

could buy groceries in front and a drink in the back room. Ben Rose offered spirits there during Prohibition. More recent residents remember it as Pearl and Art’s. School kids could cross the road to buy candy; their dads could find the backroom bar that was off limits to the children. Its final name as a drinking establishment was The Portola Club. Today the aging structure houses small offices.

At the end of today’s Rossotti soccer field and just beyond the tennis club was a bar first tended by Eugene Kelly. It has been better known by later owners as Mangini’s Picnic Park. A building made of stone from a nearby quarry, an adjacent barn and open fields provided a venue for hundreds of people to gather for barbecue, dancing and imbibing. Cars would line Portola Road for blocks during company picnics. Later the Mangini’s old stone house became the first Portola Valley Town Hall. Today it is home to the Windmill Preschool.

From the 1930s until the 1950s, other members of the Mangini family held forth on Portola Road at Mangini’s Bar, originally known

as The Wayside and later as Maloney’s and finally as the Valley Inn. The various Manginis were genial hosts, and on Saturday nights, local musicians would entertain the patrons. Today Mangini’s has been rebuilt and houses the art gallery SPUR.

Long gone is the Bridge House, a smithy and bar, which stood near today’s north on-ramp from Alpine Road to Interstate 280. In the 1870s, William T. Kirkaldie was the proprietor of the favorite mid-day stop for handlers from Stanford’s horse farm. The Stanfords’ superintendent was not happy to see his workers returning to the farm under the influence after exercising the horses. Nor was the senator, whose opposition to alcohol was well known. In 1872, Stanford bought the land — either for hay, or for a site for a dam he was considering, or else to shut down the Bridge.

Whatever his reason, forever after the horse handlers had to travel two miles farther down the road to that enduring little structure at the corner of Alpine and Arastradero for their beverages.

## A choral challenge: Get out and sing!

By April McNeely

*Editor’s Note: The Menlo Park Chorus is in its ninth year and is sponsored by the city’s Community Services Department. Look for the chorus’ Holiday Concert at Burgess Recreation Center on Friday evening, Dec. 14, at 7:30.*

When Menlo Park politicians strike a positive chord, citizens work in harmony and things seem more in tune. The same goes for our community choral programs, which are doing their jobs. Singing builds civic spirit and engagement like nothing else.

Vocal ensembles engage people in a shared art, a folk art. Group singing boosts spirits, forges friendships and overcomes economic, cultural and educational barriers that tend to separate us. That’s why we need to take community choruses, choirs and vocal groups seriously. We need to support them and ensure that they prosper.

Historically, singing has been part of our nation’s lifeblood. People used to sing everywhere: by the family hearth, in the schoolhouse, at the church, in the town square. According to Harvard scholar Robert Putnam, choral singing built trust within our young nation and strengthened participatory democracy.

And today? Choruses do what they always have — foster teamwork and discipline — but they fight an uphill battle. They face the stay-at-home culture of the Internet. And they confront waning choral music in public education. Many area high schools no longer have choruses. No wonder so many people enter adulthood believing they can’t sing.



The real wonder, in our health-conscious age, is that more people don’t sing. University of California researchers have found that choral singing has a positive effect on the immune system. Studies also have linked singing with a lowered heart rate, blood pressure and level of stress. Participating in a chorus seems to benefit the elderly in particular.

A community’s chorus isn’t reserved for great voices anymore than its jogging trails are reserved for great athletes. Civic vocal groups strive for musical excellence, while encouraging participation. It’s about singing. It’s about involvement. It’s about time everyone gave it a try, whether in school chorus, church choir or civic chorale.

Awake and sing. Raise your voices. Make a joyful noise. Singing builds community.

**April McNeely directs the Menlo Park Chorus for the city’s Community Services Department**

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