

MENLO PARK SCHOOL BOUNDARIES still in flux,
with kindergarten signups only weeks away. Page 9

The Almanac

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



See
Home &
Garden
Design
Inside

JANUARY 16, 2008

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| VOL. 43 NO. 20

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— Story begins on Page 10 —

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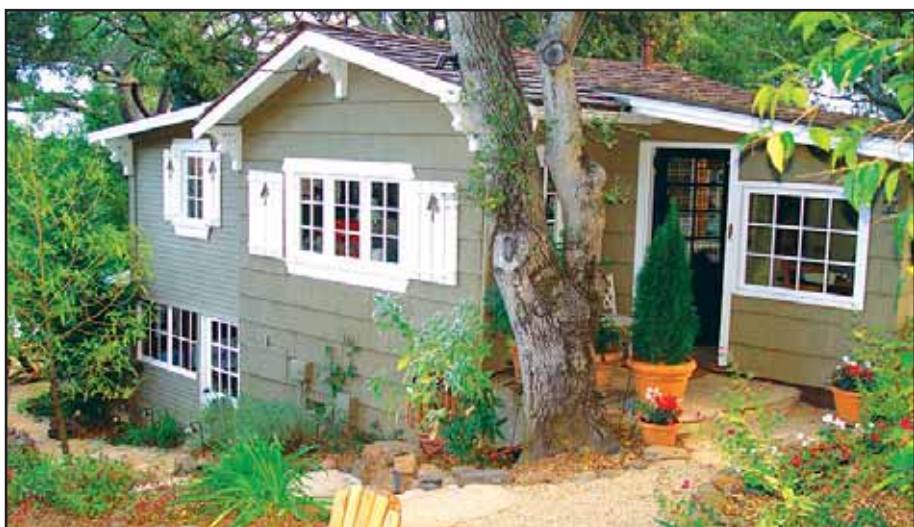
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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Almanac photo by Veronica Weber

High flyer

Skateboarding is not a crime at the Burgess skate park in Menlo Park, where Anthony Hatfield does a heel-side grab while he gets some air on a sunny winter day.

Menlo Park

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Family Almanac

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On the cover

With the 2008 presidential race still wide open, and the Feb. 5 California primary election approaching, local residents are drumming up support for their favorite candidates. Story starts on **Page 10.**

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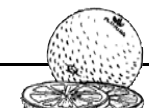

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Special Food and Drink Pairings Catching On

Take a look at the top shelf behind many of today's upscale restaurant bars, and you will see that it's getting kind of crowded. Diners' appetites for top-shelf liquor seem to be growing at a rapid pace. With all the new premium alcohol, restaurants are getting creative with drinks. While gin and tonics have their place, no doubt, current cocktail trends are leaning toward citrus drinks, such as the Mojito with fresh lime and basil. Bartenders are even pairing up with chefs to create culinary and mixed drink pairs. Perhaps your beef tenderloin would go well with a pomegranate martini. If creativity in the glass is not for you, stick to your old stand-bys, which bartenders will never forget!



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PS: Although general alcohol consumption is declining, sales of top-shelf alcohol are increasing.

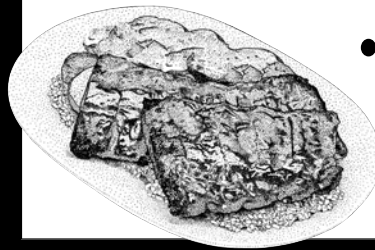
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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Bilingual magnet school at O'Connor site?

■ Menlo Park school district plans new Spanish immersion program at Encinal this fall.

By **Andrea Gemmet**
Almanac Staff Writer

The Encinal school campus appears set to be the home of a new Spanish immersion kindergarten class starting this fall, but that could change in a few years.

As part of a wide-ranging study session meeting held Jan. 9, the board of the Menlo Park City School District also considered a brand new possibility for the future of bilingual education: transplanting the immersion program into a bilingual magnet school at the O'Connor site in the Willows neighborhood.

"I think it would be an incredible thing

to do, to create a magnet school," said District Superintendent Ken Ranella.

Currently, the district leases the O'Connor school site to the private German-American School for about \$300,000 a year, he said. If the fledgling Spanish immersion program takes off, in three or four years it might make sense to move the program to its own campus and create an alternative magnet school for the district, Mr. Ranella told the board. "It's what most school districts (with bilingual programs) are doing," he said.

Details about the curriculum and how the program will be run are still wide open, and the board will need to decide on basic guidelines, he said.

In the early grades, immersion classes are conducted primarily in the foreign language, and eventually increase the amount of English instruction time,

School board plans to act Wednesday on changing school boundaries. **Page 9**

Mr. Ranella said. The focus is on oral language skills, while the district's current kindergarten curriculum focuses on written language skills, he said.

The 20-student kindergarten immersion class could be made up of half English speakers and half Spanish speakers, or be entirely English-speaking children. The Spanish-speaking children would likely be transfers from the Ravenswood District as part of the Tinsley program, Mr. Ranella said.

"I'm not prepared for immersion. It's going to be a learning curve for me," said Mr. Ranella as he briefed the board on a laundry list of long-term implications sur-

rounding its decision to launch a Spanish immersion program. Kindergarten registration starts in February, and district officials don't know how many parents will actually sign their children up for the Spanish immersion class, he said.

While they took no official action, in their comments the five board members agreed that Encinal, a grade 3-5 school, is the most sensible place for the new Spanish program. Encinal is launching its first kindergarten classes in the next school year as part of its three-year transition to a K-5 school, and it's easier to hire a new bilingual teacher there than to displace an existing kindergarten teacher at Laurel or Oak Knoll schools, Mr. Ranella said.

A group of parents has been lobbying for bilingual education, and said that as

See **SPANISH**, page 14

Portola Valley sidelines basement size limits

■ Residents complain from standing-room-only council chambers.

By **David Boyce**
Almanac Staff Writer

Resorting to a committee to find consensus and direction is often derided as unwieldy and disappointing. One exception may be in Portola Valley, where the Town Council regularly draws advice from among 14 regular committees and the occasional ad hoc group.

Ad hoc committees there have helped design a new community complex, wrestled with whether to allow dogs on environmentally protected hiking trails, and studied the idea of opening to the air a stretch of creek that has run through a culvert for decades.

The next likely ad-hoc-committee topic is the question of how to regulate the size of basements in town. The council, at its Jan. 9 meeting, agreed to have a committee look at the issue after hearing from a standing-room-only and very civil group of residents, most of whom were unhappy with a new ordinance that would have banned full basements for homes larger than 4,000 square feet above ground

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

in a one-acre zoning district.

The ordinance, crafted by the Planning Commission over several years and some 11 public meetings at which the public was rarely present, reflects two important issues, said Planning Commissioner Leah Zafaroni from the audience. The ordinance would put brakes on a trend of extensive development of below-ground spaces, and it would emphasize reducing greenhouse gas emissions in town, consistent with Town Council intentions.

The council had scheduled a second and final vote on the ordinance for the meeting, which would have followed a unanimous vote in support of it on Dec. 12. Councilman Richard Merk had been absent.

But a popular online petition demanding that the council reverse its position, plus the absence of Councilman Steve Toben, led Mayor Maryann Moise Derwin to put off a vote and hold a lengthy public hearing instead.

During the hearing, residents argued that the ordinance would

The ordinance would put brakes on a trend toward large basements, and would emphasize reducing greenhouse gas emissions in town.

See **BASEMENT**, page 8



Almanac photo by Veronica Weber
Carrying their Olive Smart Sacks, creators Kerri Stenson, left, and Stephanie Ashworth bag the goods at Robert's market in Woodside.

Getting a handle on 'green' shopping

Woodside entrepreneurs make saying 'no' to plastic convenient

By **Megan Rawlins**
Special to the Almanac

The "green revolution" has taken hold of Silicon Valley in a large, high-tech way. From Google's new renewable energy initiative to Adobe Systems' green buildings in San Jose, green is this year's black.

How, in a world of large corporations with high-tech gadgets, do two Woodside mothers with a low-tech idea fit in?

According to the women in question — Kerri Stenson and Stephanie Ashworth — quite eas-

ily, thank you very much.

Both former professionals, Ms. Stenson and Ms. Ashworth are full-time mothers with five children between them and a shared interest in all things stylish and sustainable.

While watching their children play over the years, they would discuss how to protect the world for their children's future, they recall. In 2006, their discussions took a turn, and Olive Smart was born.

The name is meant to suggest the phrase "all live smart," and the enterprise, which will specialize in "green" consumer products, is

See **OLIVE**, page 8

Man arrested in assault on WHS teacher

San Mateo County sheriff's deputies arrested a San Mateo man on Jan. 8 in connection with a November attack on a Woodside High School teacher.

Lamarr Timmons, 19, was arrested for allegedly punching the teacher on Nov. 5 near Alameda De Las Pulgas and Hull Avenue, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

The incident happened just after school let out as the teacher, whose name is being withheld for

his safety, was walking home from school. He came upon a group of teenagers, one of whom was "acting aggressively and swearing at everyone who walked by," according to a Sheriff's Office report.

The teacher attempted to calm the young man but the man punched the teacher in the mouth and knocked him to the ground, the report said. The teacher required oral surgery to correct the damage, which included one tooth knocked out and another

loosened, the report said.

The arrest of Mr. Timmons came after a two-month investigation involving several witness interviews and cooperation from the Woodside High School community.

Mr. Timmons was already in custody at the Maguire Correctional Facility on unrelated charges, deputies said. He was re-booked today on a variety of felony assault charges.

— *The Almanac and Bay City News Service*

Fight over historic urns spawns Internet site

■ Council to weigh revised rules Wednesday.

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

An Atherton couple is taking the fight against the town's historic preservation ordinance online, with a Web site and petition asking that the regulations be rescinded.

On Wednesday, Jan. 16, the City Council plans to consider revisions to its historic artifacts ordinance.

Local developers Randy and Lisa Lamb lost a battle with the town to move a pair of large urns from the Lindenwood neighborhood to their new house in another part of Atherton, after a contingent of residents objected vociferously.

However, the Lambs won their subsequent lawsuit against the town. A San Mateo County Superior Court judge ruled that the Atherton City Council acted "capriciously" in denying the Lambs permission to move their urns. The court ordered the town to clarify its regulations regarding historic artifacts, and then revisit the Lambs' request to move the

■ ATHERTON

urns, which are currently located in the backyard of their former house in Lindenwood.

Atherton, unlike many other communities, doesn't have rules in place to protect historic buildings. However, in 2006, the City Council enacted preservation rules for historic artifacts — the urns, streetlights, statues, and other remnants of the former Flood estate that dot the Lindenwood subdivision.

Under the ordinance, property owners need the town's permission to remove, demolish or alter historic artifacts.

The Lambs are asking Atherton residents to petition the council to do away with the ordinance entirely, and they have outlined their arguments on a new Web site, athertonpropertyrights.com.

Revised ordinance

Town staff's proposed changes to the ordinance include defining the boundaries of the "Lindenwood Historic Artifacts District," and clarifying that while property owners can petition to keep an artifact off of the publicly available inventory list, the ordinance won't circumvent the town's ability to regulate the objects.

Information about the proposed amendments to the ordinance are on the town of Atherton's Web site at www.ci.atherton.ca.us.

The City Council meeting begins at 7 p.m. and is held in the council chambers at 94 Ashfield Road. ▀

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Dr. Sangani has a strong background in preventive medicine and promoting **wellness** and education among her patients. In addition, she has extensive experience in **women's health** and chronic disease management.

With her years of practice, Dr. Sangani has cultivated strong relationships among the physician and patient community in the Bay Area. She was also named one of "America's Top Physicians" in 2006 by the Consumers Research Council of America. Please give The Village Doctor a call to schedule your introductory meeting: 650.851.4747.



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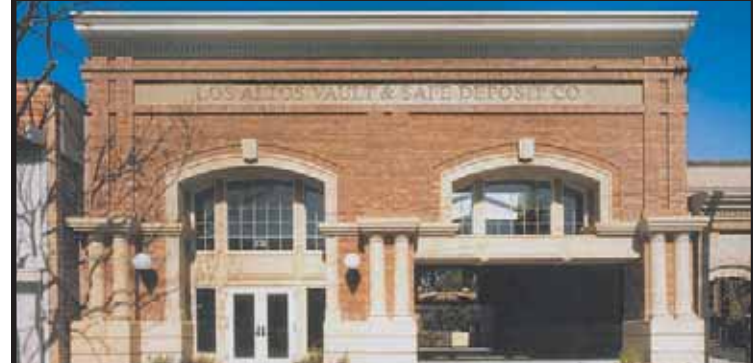
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PEOPLE

Visionary Roy Amara founded, ran Institute for the Future

Roy C. Amara, a longtime resident of Ladera who founded and ran the Institute for the Future to help companies, agencies and foundations steer through a murky future, died peacefully Dec. 31 at The Sequoias in Portola Valley. He was 82.

Mr. Amara was known as a brilliant, gentle, orderly man who was able to organize the Institute for the Future into a major think tank that helps clients analyze what's coming in the future and make intelligent choices.

"We got him on board as president (in 1971); it was just what the place needed," said Internet pioneer Paul Baran of Atherton. "He was able to run it stably. He was good at the care and feeding of prima donnas — an art form in itself."

In a 1977 interview at the institute on Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park, Mr. Amara told *The Almanac*: "It is not enough to look at trends. The important

question a problem or issue raises is: What choices do you have? What are the consequences of these choices?"

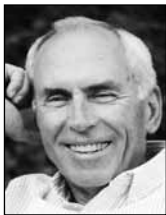
Roy Amara was raised in Boston and attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology between 1942 and 1948, with time out to serve in the Navy during World War II. With the help of a high school scholarship and the GI Bill, he graduated from MIT in business and engineering administration. Then he went on to Harvard where he earned a master's degree in teaching science in 1949.

Meanwhile, he had met Margaret Terestre. They married in July 1949, and headed to California. The newlyweds lived in an early Eichler house off Woodside Road while Roy worked at Sequoia High School teaching physics, algebra

OBITUARY

and geometry for three years. In 1959, they moved to Ladera.

In 1952, Mr. Amara began an 18-year career at Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International) in Menlo Park. He worked on an early SRI computer called ERMA, and rose to be a vice president of institute programs. He established and worked on research programs on interactive computing, futures studies, and decision analysis. He also earned a Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Stanford University in 1958.



Roy C. Amara

'We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run.'

ROY AMARA, QUOTED BY DAVID PESCOVITZ IN THE BLOG, BOINGBOING.

In 1970, Mr. Amara left SRI and became president and CEO of a new think tank that aspired to help companies, government agencies and foundations analyze technical and cultural trends and make intelligent decisions.

"He was a sense maker," said Bob Johansen, who was hired by Mr. Amara, served as president, and is still on the board of directors. "He could look at a complicated future and make sense out of it for people who have to make decisions."

Under Mr. Amara's leadership, the Institute for the Future explored emerging technologies, global business trends, and the future of health care. He led one of the first studies of global climate change in 1977. He initiated the institute's annual 10-year

forecast 35 years ago.

"This is idea central," said Mr. Johansen. "He created the institute in a practical way. He established us as a viable think tank dedicated to the long term future."

"He was a very orderly person facing a disorderly world."

Mr. Amara headed the Institute for the Future until 1990. After retiring in 1992, he continued mentoring the staff and participating in research until 1997. During the same period, he worked with the International Strategic Decisions Group. In 2004, the Amaras moved to The Sequoias retirement community

in Portola Valley.

Mr. Amara was not all business and science. Family and friends remember him as an enthusiastic outdoorsman, and caring father and family man, with a wonderful warm smile. He loved hiking the

Peninsula hills and the High Sierra camps. He climbed Half Dome when he was 70. He also enjoyed tennis, swimming, attending the symphony, and national and international travel.

Mr. Amara is survived by Margaret, his wife of almost 59 years; sons Mark of Moses Lake, Washington, and Dirk of Auburn, California; a daughter Christine of Redwood City; and four grandchildren.

The family plans a memorial service for Mr. Amara on Saturday, Feb. 2, from 3 to 5 p.m., at The Sequoias, 501 Portola Road in Portola Valley.

The family suggests donations in his name to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, 330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, CA 94022.

Judge rules in favor of preschool

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

A San Mateo County Superior Court judge has ruled against east Menlo Park business owners and landlords in their lawsuit to stop the opening of a preschool in the city's industrial zone.

In a tentative decision filed Jan. 10, Judge Marie Weiner sided with the Menlo Park City Council's 4-1 vote last March to

allow Casa dei Bambini School, a Montessori school, to occupy an empty building east of U.S. 101 at 1215 O'Brien Drive.

Local landlords, led by Jon Tarlton, owner of Menlo Business Park, sued the city following the council's decision, arguing that a preschool in the largely industrial area would raise health concerns and lead to strict safety regulations for nearby businesses. Chief Harold Schapelhouman of the Menlo Park Fire Protection Dis-

trict and Councilman John Boyle echoed concerns about safety.

Mr. Tarlton asked the court to suspend the project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, but Judge Weiner labeled the suit "backwards logic" in her tentative ruling. She said "it is the businesses which potentially pose an environmental hazard or potential CEQA problem, not the childcare facility."

The school will serve up to 72 children, ages 2 to 6. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



What is really going on?

Q: Dear Gloria, As is often suggested, we have interviewed two realtors to discuss listing our home. We are getting two different takes on the market, however. One of the agents said that we remain quite insulated from the downturn in the market while the other told us that we were in for challenging times and that it would require a different kind of marketing strategy. What is the real story?

— Karen C.

A: Dear Karen, There is some truth in what both agents have told you. I would say thus far, we haven't felt the impact of what some are calling the worse housing crisis since 1929. But I think we need to proceed with caution and to not have the expectations that we have had for the past five years. The statistics for our general area show that we did see about a 4.5% increase in prices last year with

the number of sales and listings both down. This is still a bit above the rate of inflation but what is difficult to calibrate for the coming year is the balance of supply and demand, number of listings versus the number of buyers. As last year ended, we still had a dearth of good (meaning appropriately-priced homes that show well) properties available for serious buyers. The question will be whether or not those buyers are still there or if they are going to sit on the sidelines to see what is going to happen. That is the big unknown. It feels a bit like in the fall of 2001 after the stock market fell and 9/11 when several buyers backed out of contracts, walked away from deposits and were convinced the time was not right to buy. Prices are WAAAAY up since then! But as for selling, the same guidelines as always are in play; price the house right for today's market conditions, paint and stage and it will sell.

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

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MENLO PARK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT CITIZENS' BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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The Menlo Park City School District is seeking potential candidates to fill open positions on the Bond Oversight Committee. In June 2006, voters within the Menlo Park City School District boundaries approved the Measure U Bond to modernize and provide new school facilities. The Bond was passed per Proposition 39, which requires the creation of a Bond Oversight Committee. This volunteer committee was created in September 2006 and is responsible for performing oversight activities such as review of bond expenditures and preparation of annual reports as set forth by Proposition 39. The Committee meets at minimum on a quarterly basis. The Committee is comprised of seven people from different segments of the Community. The District is currently seeking to fill two vacant positions. One position is for a person active in a senior citizens' organization and the other position is for a person active in a bona fide tax payers' organization. The person must be at least 18 years old and a resident of the School District. For any further questions, please call Ahmad Sheikholeslami at 650-321-7140. If you are interested in this position, please submit a Letter of Interest as well as background information about yourself and the organization in which you are active to: ahmad@mpcsd.org or to:

Menlo Park City School District

Attn: Ahmad Sheikholeslami
181 Encinal Ave.
Atherton, CA 94027

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Town Hall fundraising reaches \$18.5 million

By David Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

The two-and-a-half-year fundraising campaign to pay for a new library, Town Hall and community hall in Portola Valley is over, and there is now a formal plan to recognize project donors.

A successful \$500,000 matching grant put the fundraising total at \$18.5 million, campaign co-chair SallyAnn Reiss said at a Jan. 9 Town Council meeting. The total includes \$15.5 million in gifts and \$3 million from the town's general fund.

The \$1.5 million gap for the \$20 million project could be covered by a loan from the county, which has a standing offer of a \$4 million line of credit for the town.

The council also took its first look at a plan that showcases project donor names at various locations in the complex, using either mounted or engraved letters.

The entrances to Town Hall, the library and the community hall would bear the names, respectively, of Bill and Jean Lane, the John Arrillaga family, and the Hasso Plattner Foundation. Each of these

donors gave at least \$2 million.

Names would also appear inside the library near the town's history room, the reading room and a wall-mounted electronic monitor that will track energy efficiency in the environmentally designed complex. Outdoors, donor names will appear on plaques, lampposts and the back of a long bench.

Benches for town trails

Benches may begin showing up on hiking trails in Portola Valley, though probably not more often than every mile or so.

The Town Council at its Jan. 9 meeting sounded agreeable to providing places to sit and enjoy views.

Meanwhile, vandals have been repeatedly defacing and cutting down signs that prohibit dogs on trails along Coalmine Ridge, an environmentally protected area where dog-walking is banned.

Council members advised making the signs tougher, even to the point of using cast iron. ■

BASEMENT

continued from page 5

reduce property values, fly in the face of the town's energy efficiency goals — given a basement's tendency to act as a reservoir of coolness in the summer and warmth in the winter — and overstep property rights.

"I find it a shame that this ordinance is focusing on basements when there are so many other things a person could be doing" to save energy, said Karen Wick. "I guess I'm wondering why you're picking on basements. It doesn't make sense to me."

One man saw it as taking away a little bit of freedom in the name of saving the Earth. What's next, he asked: regulations on pools and windows?

"Frankly, I'd rather you restrict our living room. We don't use it and we heat it all the time," said Bill Youstra to the amusement of all.

"We're an imperfect body," Councilman Ted Driscoll said.

Stanford: Blood donations needed

Every two seconds, a patient needs blood, but, according to the Sanford Blood Center, less than 5 percent of the population actually donates blood.

Currently, the Stanford Blood Center is suffering an acute shortage of blood types O negative, A negative, B negative and AB negative, but all blood types

are needed throughout the year, says Michele Hyndman, spokeswoman for the center.

Many eligible donors don't donate, because, as Ms Hyndman puts it, "they believe someone else is doing it, which just isn't the case."

For more information, go to bloodcenter.stanford.edu or call 723-7831.

Buelteman photo exhibit opens Jan. 17

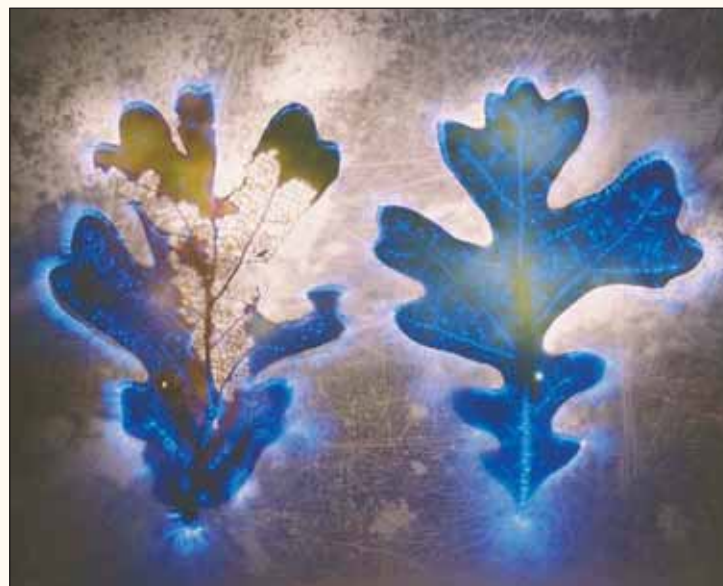
A Jan. 17 reception kicks off a new exhibit of camera-less photography at SPUR Projects gallery in Portola Valley.

Artist Robert Buelteman's exhibit, titled "A Matter of Scale," "explores the impact of scale on the viewer's perception of imagery," according to gallery owner Jessica Lonergan.

In 1999, Mr. Buelteman put down the camera and began refining a technique to create photographic images without the use of cameras lenses or computers. He starts with a sheet of film, a metal plate and plant specimen, then applies an electrical charge to the plant, "producing brilliantly lit portraits in an otherworldly blaze of color," Ms. Lonergan says in a statement.

Mr. Buelteman's Web site anchors his love of nature and the landscape of his childhood in Woodside. His home, it says, looked out on the mountains, "whose deep canyons, redwood groves, and daily tides of ocean-borne fog inspired the veneration of life and light that appear in his work today."

"A Matter of Scale" will feature new works as well as selections from the series "Through the Green Fuse,"



"Russian River Oak, 2007, a chromogenic development print by Robert Buelteman.

Mr. Buelteman's first portfolio of camera-less images, and "Sangre de Christo," a portfolio compiled while he

was artist-in-residence at the Santa Fe Institute from 2003 to 2007.

SPUR Projects was founded by Jessica and Frank Lonergan. They represent artists who work in all media, including painting, sculpture, photography and installation art, according to the SPUR Web site.

More information about the gallery and Mr. Buelteman's photographs is available at www.spurprojects.com.

■ INFORMATION

"A Matter of Scale" is on display Jan. 17 to Feb. 23 at SPUR Projects gallery, 888 Portola Road, Portola Valley. The opening reception will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 17, at the gallery.

OLIVE

continued from page 5

dedicated to leading people to a more sustainable existence, the co-founders say. And they add a bit of chic and a dash of style to make the medicine go down.

"We are committed to creating quality products that encourage a more environmentally conscientious lifestyle, but we also want them to be stylish and fun," says Ms. Ashworth. "We can make changing behavior easier by making it more fun."

Their first product, the Olive Smart Sack, was born out of the "paper or plastic" debate that is back in the news after San Francisco's ban of plastic shopping bags took full effect last November. The sack holds six nylon shopping bags, and fits snugly into a car's cup holder, a handbag or a briefcase.

It can be extraordinarily difficult to change people's behavior, but the goal of the Olive Smart Sack, the two women say, is to address one of the last-standing barriers to change: inconvenience.

"How often do you get to the check-out stand, and your canvas

bags are in the trunk of your car?" asks Ms. Stenson. "Canvas bags are bulky and hard to remember; we wanted to create reusable bags that are strong, durable and stylish that could easily be kept in the front of the car."

The Olive Smart Sack is currently being marketed only locally, but Ms. Stenson sees that more as an asset than a liability.

"People have a heightened awareness in the Bay Area for healthier, more conscientious living," she says. "San Francisco has banned plastic bags, and now other cities are following suit. We live on the cutting edge, and people here are willing to embrace new ideas."

No matter what the location, starting a small business is challenging, and these two entrepreneurs are tackling most of it themselves.

"The key thing is planning," says Ms. Stenson, "having your ducks in a row, and being sure of your vision. We knew plastic bags were a problem that could be easily addressed. We researched the market and our competitors and found our place to break in."

They say they are committed to

maintaining a balance between working and being moms, and they bring their environmental values to both. Ms. Ashworth makes deliveries in her hybrid, Ms. Stenson is remodeling her house to make it green, Olive Smart Sacks are shipped without extra packaging, and they have a paperless office.

As participants in the "green revolution," Ms. Stenson and Ms. Ashworth say they are satisfied tackling the issue of personal consumption and behavior, and leaving the huge, sweeping changes to large corporations.

"It is a long-range goal," says Ms. Ashworth, "but my vision is that someday my kids will look at me with the same disbelief we ascribe to smoking and say, 'I can't believe you ever used plastic bags.'" ■

■ INFORMATION

Olive Smart Sacks are sold at Bianchini's in Portola Valley, Roberts in Woodside, and Kepler's bookstore and Draeger's in Menlo Park. They are also sold online at www.olivesmart.com for \$39 for a sack containing six reusable bags.

School boundaries still in flux, with kindergarten sign-ups weeks away

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Figuring out how to redraw school district boundary lines takes the skills of a demographer, the tact of a diplomat, the eye of a cartographer and the forecasting abilities of a psychic.

So, it's no wonder that the Menlo Park City School District board is still struggling with plans to shift the attendance boundaries for its three elementary schools: Laurel, Encinal and Oak Knoll. The clock is ticking, however. Kindergarten registration starts next month, and parents are getting anxious to find out where their children will be going.

"It's going to be one heck of a kindergarten registration packet this year," predicted board president Bruce Ives.

The board is expected to make a final decision this week, at the Tuesday, Jan. 15, meeting.

If anyone is happy with the current set of proposed boundaries, he didn't speak up at the board's study session meeting on Jan. 9. About 100 people braved the chill in the unheated multipurpose room of Encinal school, many of them to lobby for changes to the plan to shift children away from the crowded Oak Knoll and Laurel campuses and send them to new primary grade classrooms at Encinal.

The district's demographic projections show a substantial increase in enrollment, from 1,658 students this year to 1,804 in 2010.

Oak Knoll

Parents of current Oak Knoll students breathed a sigh of relief when Superintendent Ken Ranella said he could see no reason not to allow the children to continue at Oak Knoll, even if their homes get shifted into the new Encinal boundaries.

Board members also expressed support for a plan to allow incoming students to attend Oak Knoll with their older siblings. Parents weren't thrilled about the prospect of dropping off older kids at Oak Knoll and then driving younger kids across town to Encinal.

"I'm incredibly happy that we can grandfather (students) at Oak Knoll," said board member Laura Rich.

However, Mr. Ranella said that the "grandfathering" would only apply to concurrently enrolled students; incoming siblings of older children who have already

graduated out of Oak Knoll won't get grandfathered in.

"It's not a birthright," declared Mr. Ranella.

Lindenwood united

At least 20 people from Atherton's Lindenwood neighborhood showed up, wearing stickers that said, "Please unite us, don't divide us," to lobby against a plan to split the area between Laurel and Encinal schools. The neighborhood, on the east side of Middlefield Road, borders both schools.

Lindenwood residents argued that dividing up their close-knit neighborhood would reduce opportunities for carpooling and would separate children who had become friends through the community's Young Lindenwood Families play group.

Lindenwood resident Patty Pflaging said that while dividing the neighborhood to send residents to the nearest of the two schools appeared to make sense on paper, in reality it doesn't work. Lindenwood might be within a one-mile radius of either school, but in fact the winding streets, blind curves, heavy traffic and lack of sidewalks make walking or biking to school too dangerous, she said.

"The reality is, I'm driving. If you cut Lindenwood up, you limit the opportunities to carpool," Ms. Pflaging said. "I know it's very counterintuitive, but it actually increases traffic."

Other Lindenwood residents argued that the small number of incoming kindergartners could be accommodated by either Laurel or Encinal without causing a big problem.

Mr. Ranella said he would look at an option to send all of Lindenwood to Laurel school and bring it back to the board at the Tuesday, Jan. 15, meeting.

Kenwood/Morey area

The board also expressed interest in keeping the homes on Kenwood and Morey drives — behind the Safeway in Menlo Park — in the Oak Knoll district, after parents pointed out that it's a relatively safe and easy bike ride up Middle Avenue to the school. The two streets would otherwise be shifted over to Encinal.

Complicating matters is the new Spanish immersion kindergarten class, likely to be housed at Encinal, but expected to draw transfer students from Laurel

■ INFORMATION

The Menlo Park district school board is expected to make a final decision on school boundaries at its meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 15, in the boardroom of the district office at 181 Encinal Ave. in Atherton. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. and the school boundary discussion is set to start at 7:30 p.m. For information, call 321-7140.

and Oak Knoll. Over-enrolling Laurel with Lindenwood children might be mitigated by other Laurel students transferring to the Spanish class, the reasoning goes.

However, once classes get filled, there's the possibility that any extra children will be bumped out of their home district and forced to transfer to a school that has room for them, Mr. Ranella said.

"I'm uncomfortable with the idea of oversubscribing Laurel," said Ms. Rich. "Not knowing is what really stresses out people, and every year we're going to have people stressed out, not knowing if they're going to be bumped."

"No matter what we do, we know we're going to upset somebody," she added.

For years, El Camino Real has been the dividing line, with children on the west side going to Oak Knoll, and children on the east side attending Laurel for kindergarten through second grades, and Encinal for grades 3-5. Under the current proposal, Laurel will add third-grade classrooms, Encinal will become K-5, and children living in some areas west of El Camino will be sent to Encinal. Laurel students will be sent to Encinal for fourth and fifth grades.

The proposed Encinal boundary would include homes in Atherton north of Marsh Road, between Middlefield Road and El Camino, and between Elena and El Camino, and Menlo Park homes in an area bounded by Valparaiso Avenue, University Drive and Middle Road — excluding the Kenwood Morey subdivision.

The Menlo Park neighborhoods of Flood Triangle, the Willows, Menlo Oaks, Vintage Oaks, and incorporated areas south of Ringwood and east of Middlefield Road would be sent to Laurel School.

Despite any boundary changes, all children in the district will continue to attend Hillview Middle School for grades 6-8. ■

TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 94062

INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING COMMISSION Districts 1, 5 and 7

The Planning Commission participates in the administration of the planning laws and policies of the Town. It is responsible for recommending to the Town Council ordinances and resolutions necessary to implement the General Plan and adopted development policy. The Commission also conducts necessary public hearings to administer the planning laws and policies of the Town and acts upon applications for zoning amendments, conditional use permits, variances, subdivisions and other related functions as may be assigned by the Council.

The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.; Commissioners are appointed for a four-year term; one member is appointed from each Council district. A listing of district addresses is provided on the Town's web site at www.woodsidetown.org, Employment and Volunteer Opportunities.

Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. -12 noon and 1:00-5:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, at the Town's web site, www.woodsidetown.org, or telephone the Town Clerk at (650) 851-6790. Deadline for applications is Friday, January 19, 2008, 5:00 p.m.

Published in THE COUNTRY ALMANAC on January 2, 9, 16, 2008.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

MENLO PARK ASSESSES SENIOR HOUSING NEEDS

The City of Menlo Park invites Menlo Park Baby Boomers and seniors to participate in a Menlo Park Senior Housing Needs Assessment. A Senior Housing Needs Assessment Survey (English and Spanish) is available at various community locations and online at www.menlopark.org (look for the link under Public Involvement). All Menlo Park Baby Boomers and seniors are encouraged to complete this brief and anonymous survey.

The City will also be hosting the following Community Forums:

- 1/23/08 from 4:00-5:30 PM at the Menlo Park Senior Center, 110 Terminal Avenue in Belle Haven. *Note: Spanish interpretation will be available.*
- 1/24/08 from 6:00-7:30 PM in the Fireside Room at Burgess Recreation Center, 700 Alma Street.
- 1/29/08 from 2:00-3:30 PM in the Fireside Room at Burgess Recreation Center, 700 Alma Street.
- 1/30/08 from 10:00-11:30 AM at Peninsula Volunteers Little House, 800 Middle Avenue.

Persons interested in attending a community forum are encouraged to RSVP to Megan Nee with the City of Menlo Park Housing Division by calling (650) 330-6728 or emailing mnee@menlopark.org.

DATED: January 10, 2008
Doug Frederick, Housing Manager

Published in THE ALMANAC on January 16, 2008.

Choosing their candidates...



Photo courtesy of Bob Wickers

Republican candidate Mike Huckabee, left; media adviser and Portola Valley resident Bob Wickers (center); and campaign director Chip Saltsman talk strategy during the filming of Mr. Huckabee's Christmas commercial. "We've definitely been able to do more with less," said Mr. Wickers.



Almanac photo by Veronica Weber

Former senator and Democratic candidate John Edwards talks with Wendy Li and her son Brandon at Stacks' restaurant in Menlo Park in May.

VOTER INFORMATION

Some important tips and information for voters:

- The deadline to register to vote in the Feb. 5 election is Tuesday, Jan. 22.
- The deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot is Tuesday, Jan. 29.
- People registered as "Decline to State" (also known as nonpartisan) voters who plan to vote by mail and want to vote for a presidential candidate, must request a partisan ballot by Tuesday, Jan. 29. In this election, only two political parties permit decline-to-state voters to participate in their primaries: the American Independent Party and the Democratic Party.
- Decline-to-state voters who go to the polls on Feb. 5 can request one of the two partisan ballots at the polls.
- To vote in the Republican primary (by mail or at the polls), you must be registered as a Republican.

For more information, go to San Mateo County's election Web site, ShapeTheFuture.org.

With the **CALIFORNIA PRIMARY** approaching, local residents mobilize support for their **FAVORITE PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS**

By **Rory Brown**

Almanac Staff Writer

The name Bob Wickers probably doesn't ring a bell, but if you've turned on the television, listened to the radio, opened a newspaper or news Web site in the past month, you're familiar with the Portola Valley resident's work.

That's because Mr. Wickers is the top media adviser for Mike Huckabee, the surging Republican candidate whose low-budget, high-publicity presidential campaign has been turning heads ever since the former Arkansas governor stormed on the national scene late last year.

"We've definitely been able to do more with less," Mr. Wickers said from Michigan last week, accompanying Mr. Huckabee from a morning visit to the Detroit Economic Club to another campaign event at the Motown Historical Museum. "Piece by piece, the campaign has gained momentum, and that's momentum we carry on to other states."

Mr. Wickers is a principal at Dresner, Wickers and Associates, a San Francisco-based political consulting firm he co-founded in 1993 that helps Republican candidates, ranging from state senators to former Soviet Union President Boris Yeltsin, win elections.

He worked with Mr. Huckabee during his first campaign for governor in 1997, and the two have worked together since.

Taking action

Not every resident is a top campaign adviser, but a lot of local people have traveled far distances and worked long hours to woo voters and keep candidates' campaigns going.

"I knocked on doors, got out and talked to people and got on the phones," said Patricia Williams, a former Portola Valley councilwoman who went to the New Hampshire primary last week to

campaign for Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-New York.

Ms. Williams isn't directly tied to the Clinton campaign, but is supporting Ms. Clinton through EMILY's List, a political action committee that supports pro-choice Democratic women who run for office, including Ms. Clinton in her bid for the White House.

"Clinton campaign representatives contact me to tell me where they're going to have a local fundraiser or event, and through our group, I get people to the event," Ms. Williams said.

Another former councilwoman, Gail Slocum of Menlo Park, has played a role in Democratic candidate John Edwards' campaign.

"I played an instrumental role in [Mr. Edwards] winning the recent San Mateo Democratic Straw Poll ... mobilizing voters and going to the phone banks," Ms. Slocum said.

She said she was also part of a team of green-tech and clean-tech industry leaders who helped refine the climate change plan of the former North Carolina senator, who stopped by Menlo Park in May.

Coming to town

Various candidates have swept through local towns as part of early campaigning and fundraising efforts. With California now part of the Feb. 5 "Super Tuesday" — when upward of 20 states will hold primaries — local supporters are searching for financial and political reinforcement for their favorite presidential hopefuls.

"The Rudy [Giuliani] campaign isn't about the early primaries, it's about winning 'Super Tuesday,'" said Charles Marsala, an Atherton city councilman and Congressional District 14 co-chair for the former New York mayor's presidential campaign.

As co-chair, Mr. Marsala solicits political support from



Marina Jenkins of Menlo Park works at candidate Barack Obama's Palo Alto campaign headquarters during the Jan. 9 New Hampshire primary.

Almanac photo by Veronica Weber

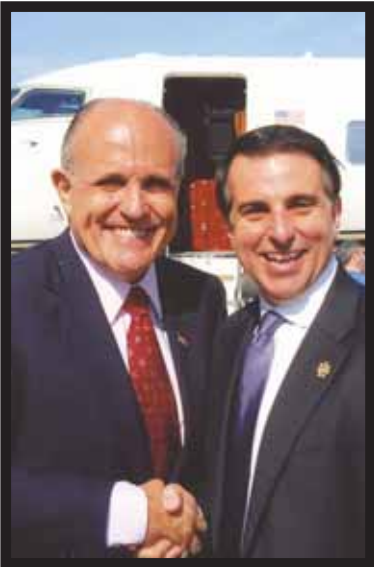
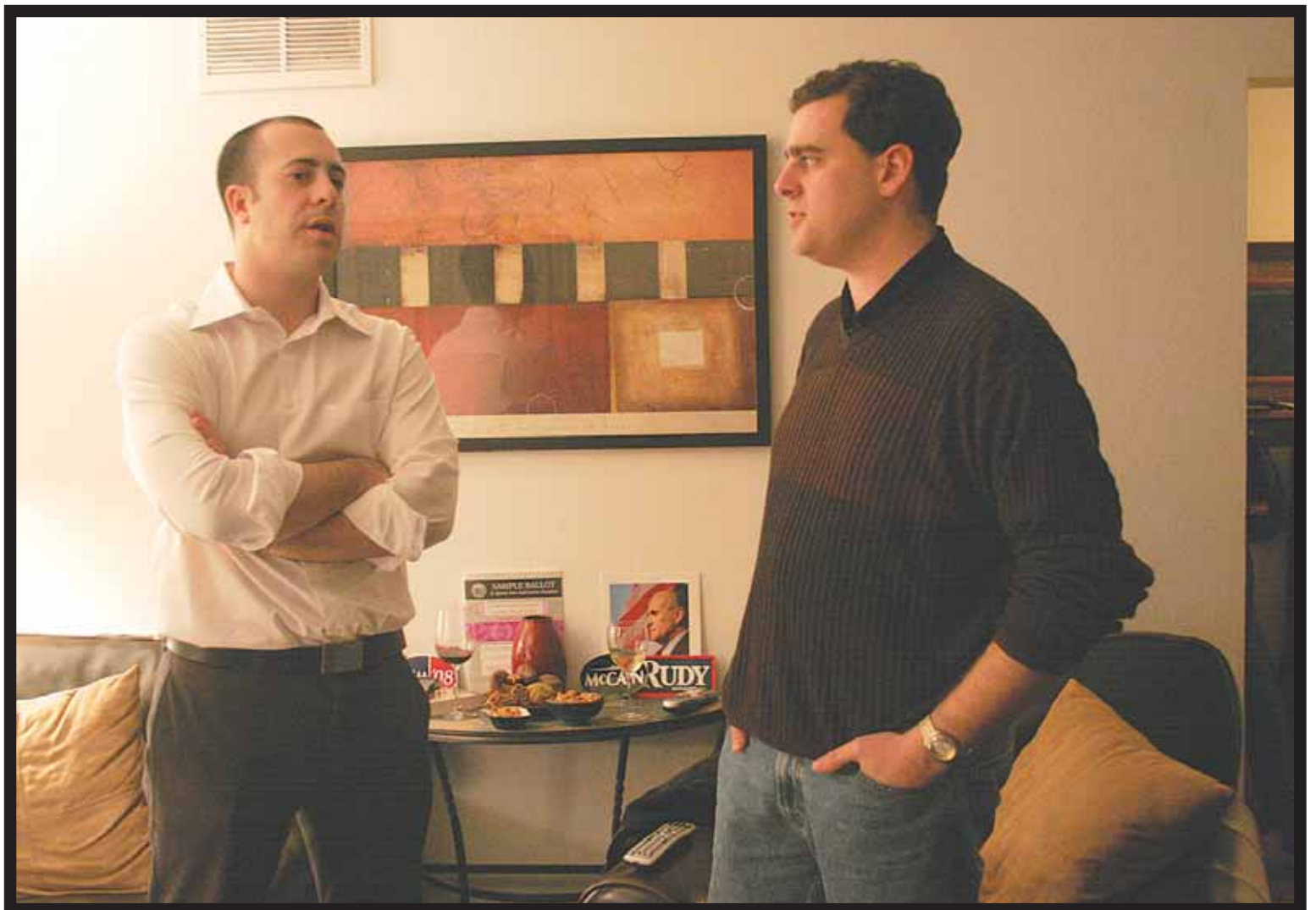


Photo courtesy Charles Marsala

Atherton Councilman Charles Marsala poses with Republican candidate Rudy Giuliani.

local groups and organizations. He said he also picked up Mr. Giuliani at the airport when he came to the Bay Area last spring, and drove him around the Peninsula.

Mr. Marsala isn't the only council member to meet a candidate — Menlo Park Councilman Richard Cline said he met Ms. Clinton last summer at a fundraiser and the two talked about Menlo Park issues.



At a primary party in Menlo Park, Joseph Sanchis, left, and Dan Trimble discuss results of the New Hampshire primary.

Almanac photo by Veronica Weber

Continued on page 12

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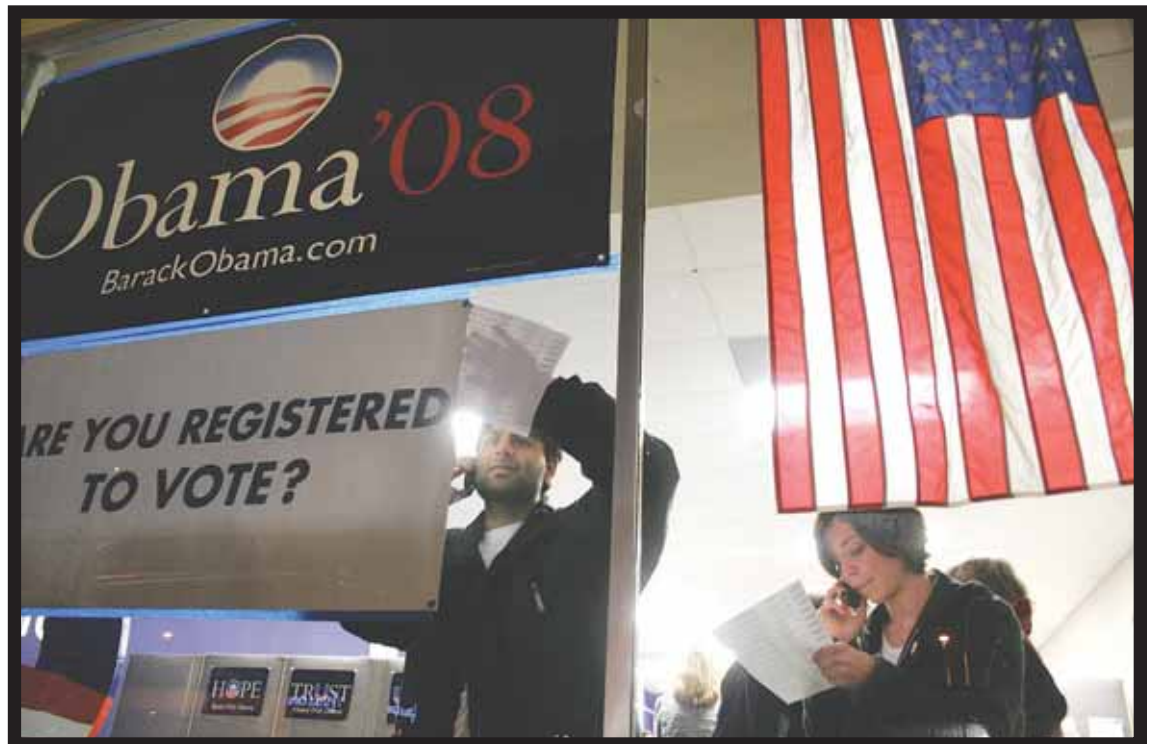
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Almanac photo by Veronica Weber

Volunteers Patrick Sharma and Bitta Jansma of Menlo Park call voters from the Obama Palo Alto office.

Some locals knew candidates before the race

continued from page 11

"We talked about how to handle growth, green initiatives, and some other local topics," said Mr. Cline, adding that he plans to vote for her. "I had assumed she was kind of a robotic politician, but then I met her, and found out she was really accessible."

Local connections

Other local residents have been fans of candidates well before they entered the presidential race.

Portola Valley resident Dick Boyce worked under Republican candidate Mitt Romney at the Menlo Park office of the Boston-based consulting firm Bain & Company, where he was offered a job by Mr. Romney after graduating from Stanford Business School in 1978.

Mr. Boyce said he was impressed with Mr. Romney's ability, as a partner in the firm, to recruit a staff of talented people.

"The first thing I noticed about Mitt is that he was smarter than heck," said Mr. Boyce, a member of the Romney campaign's Northern California finance committee. "In my mind he's the first real businessman to have a real shot at winning [the presidential election]."

For Eileen Chamberlain-Donahoe, another Portola Valley

resident, Sen. Barack Obama, D-Illinois, prompted her to get more involved in politics with his keynote speech to the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

"It was one of those moments when everyone just stared, and their jaws dropped," said Ms. Chamberlain-Donahoe. "Since that day, I've been hoping that he'd jump in the race."

Through Democratic Party events, Ms. Chamberlain-Donahoe kept in contact with Mr. Obama, noting she got a call from the Illinois senator the day he decided to enter the race. She hosted a fundraiser for Mr. Obama on Feb. 19, reportedly raising \$453,000 for his presidential campaign.

Ms. Chamberlain-Donahoe and Atherton resident and former governor candidate Steve Westly are among the co-hosts for a sold-out breakfast fundraiser in Atherton that Mr. Obama will attend Jan. 17. Mr. Westly is co-chair for Mr. Obama's California campaign.

Still undecided

With the early California primary election, and a crowded list of candidates, there's still local voters who haven't made up their minds just yet.

Duncan Matteson, a Menlo Park resident and founder of the Matteson Companies, said he's torn between three Republican candidates — Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, Mr. Giuliani and Mr. Romney — and he's contributed equally to all three campaigns.

"I know John McCain personally, and he's a wonderful man and I could not think

more highly of him," Mr. Matteson said, noting his company owns several properties in Arizona, where Mr. McCain has been a longtime senator. "But six months is an eternity in politics, and here we are still 10 to 11 months from actually voting. A lot can happen before then."

Menlo Park Councilman Heyward Robinson said he's still waiting for a candidate to take a stronger stance toward climate change before committing to one campaign.

"Global warming is the issue of the times, and I want to support a candidate who clearly thinks the same thing," he said. "For me, none of the candidates have done that, so I guess I'm still undecided."

Mailing it in

Feb. 5 may be election day in California, but if recent history serves as an indicator, a good chunk of votes will be cast before that date thanks to mail-in ballots.

"We're projecting at least half will vote by mail," said David Tom, elections manager with San Mateo County.

He noted that about 40 percent of the county's 352,000 registered voters — about 140,800 people — have requested absentee ballots. In last November's election, 63 percent of the ballots cast in the county were done via mail, he said.

"We've found that 80 to 85 percent of people who sign up for mail ballots actually send one in," Mr. Tom said. "If people are at home and already have their ballot in hand, they're much more likely to vote." ■

COUNTY CONSUMER

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Medical office complex approved by MP council

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

Although Menlo Park City Council members don't like plans to build a medical office complex at the site of the closed Acorn restaurant, they still decided to approve the oft-delayed project at their Jan. 8 meeting.

The council voted 4-1 to deny an appeal of the Planning Commission's decision to approve the two-story, 9,825-square-foot complex at 1906 El Camino Real, between Watkins Avenue and Spruce Avenue. By denying the appeal, the council allowed the project to proceed.

The project has been the subject of many, and sometimes contentious, public meetings spanning 14 months.

Neighbors said building a medical complex would increase traffic to the already dangerous intersection of El Camino Real and Watkins Avenue, where a 28-year-old woman from Alameda was seriously injured July 14 when a van struck the car she was driving.

Council members agreed with neighbors that the intersection

should be safer, but rather than reject the project and leave nothing but an abandoned restaurant at the site, they required the developer to deposit \$100,000 into an account for future traffic mitigations.

"We were stuck between the choice of this project or perpetual blight at the site," said Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson after the meeting.

Councilman John Boyle voted in opposition, but said he supported the project. He said he couldn't support the vote because the council was imposing too many restrictions on the developer.

Making the intersection safer, even with \$100,000 from the developer, may still prove complicated.

Although the Acorn site is in Menlo Park, that segment of El Camino Real is under the jurisdiction of Atherton and Caltrans, meaning future traffic mitigations, such as installing a traffic light, or restricting left turns onto El Camino Real from Watkins Avenue, would need both parties' approval. ■



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For more information or to pre-register for the workshop call (650) 230-2900 ■ Class fee is \$20 per household with pre-registration, or \$25 at the door ■ No credit cards accepted ■ Refreshments will be provided

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Tissier faces tough year as supes president

By Marion Softky
Almanac Staff Writer

Supervisor Adrienne Tissier faces multiple challenges as she heads the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors in 2008.

Besides steering a county with a \$1.7 billion budget and more than 5,000 employees, she needs to address at least two deficits:

- A structural deficit that bleeds \$25 million a year from the county's \$1.7 billion budget and threatens its long-term financial health.

- The fallout from California's \$14 billion shortfall, which is likely to slash the state funds that pay for many county services.

"The wolf is at the door, but we'll pull out the wolf traps," said Supervisor Tissier, whom the Board of Supervisors elected its president for 2008.

A former mayor and councilwoman in Daly City, Ms.

Tissier spoke at a ceremony Jan. 8 in Daly City, where she was installed as board president.

She succeeds Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson of East Palo Alto in heading the five-member board.

"As a county we have a lot of challenges ahead, but within these challenges are some great opportunities," she said. She suggested "enhancing transit to support more affordable housing along the El Camino, and pro-active economic development to help increase county revenues."

To increase revenues and tackle the deficit, Ms. Tissier suggested the county act more like a city, and support revenue-producing development in unin-

corporated areas that it governs. Not in open spaces or on the coast, she said, but in urbanized areas. "We must increase our revenues."

Ms. Tissier listed other challenges the county needs to continue addressing:

- Affordable housing, particularly along transportation corridors.

- Transportation and electrifying Caltrain.

- Health care and finding a way "to insure qualified adults without placing an unfair burden on the business community."

- Dealing with global warming, by reducing people's addiction to oil, increasing recycling, and using less Styrofoam and non-recyclable plastics.

To help county and city parks, Supervisor Tissier promised to revisit the "effort to find and create a permanent funding source for these islands of open space, these oases of escape from the pavement." A proposed 1/8-cent sales tax measure for county and city parks narrowly failed in 2006.

Ms. Tissier also promised to join the rebuilding of the county's overcrowded jails with programs that help inmates return to stable lives, rather than back to jail. "Unless we address that so-called 'revolving door,' no matter how big a jail you build, it won't matter," she said. ■



Tissier

Koko calendars at Roberts market

Koko, the female lowland gorilla who learned sign language and lives at the Gorilla Foundation on Skyline Boulevard (south of Skyland), is pictured in a free calendar still available at Roberts market at 3015 Woodside Road in Woodside.

Koko, who turns 38 this year, is the focus of the Gorilla Language Project, a decades-long inquiry into inter-species communication. She has a signing vocabulary of 1,000 words and

can understand 2,000 words in spoken English, according to Penny Patterson, president of the foundation.

The language project may also be a window into animal intelligence. With each of her conversations visually recorded for further study, Koko's gestures may show evidence of her ability to coin new words, talk to herself, exhibit a sense of humor, and make moral judgments, according to the foundation's Web site, www.Koko.org.


SPANISH

continued from page 5

much as 40 percent of incoming kindergarten families are interested in placing their kids in a Spanish immersion class.

Mr. Ranella recommended against beginning the immersion program so soon, saying that with the major school construction projects and redrawing of attendance boundary lines, the district had too much on its plate. However, a majority of school board members did not agree and voted 3-2 last month to start sooner, rather than later.

The next board meeting is set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15, at Encinal School. ■



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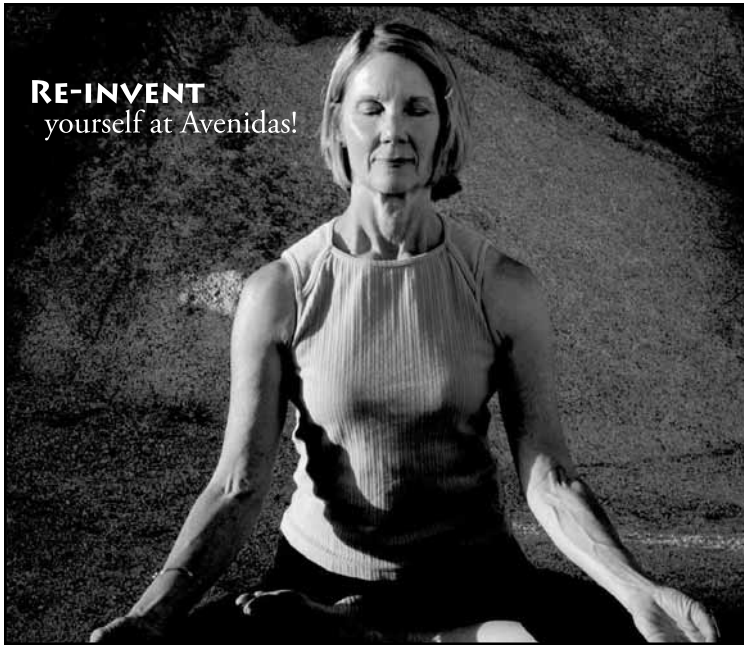
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Talk on M-A class of 1956

Dave Newhouse, a longtime sportswriter and columnist for the Oakland Tribune, will talk about his book, "Old Bears," about what happened to his classmates from the Menlo-Atherton High School class of 1956. The talk will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 22, at Little House activity center at 800 Middle Ave. in Menlo Park. Admission is free.

AROUND TOWN

The play is based on an actual event: a secret meeting in Denmark in 1941 between two Nobel laureates: Jewish physicist Niels Bohr and German physicist Werner Heisenberg. The friends met to discuss the race for the nuclear bomb.

The play runs through Feb. 3, with performances Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call 329-0891 or visit www.paplayers.org.

Golden age of radio

A cast of 13 and a crew of three will reprise the "golden age of radio" from the 1930s through the 1950s in a performance at 7:15 p.m. Friday, Jan. 25, at Valley Presbyterian Church, 945 Portola Road in Portola Valley.

Members of the Bay Area Broadcast Legends will re-create radio newscasts, kids' shows, soap operas and commercials. Free and open to the public, the program is sponsored by The Sequoias retirement community in Portola Valley.

Palo Alto Players

The Palo Alto Players' production of Michael Frayn's Tony award-winning play "Copenhagen" opens Saturday, Jan. 19, at the Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.

Project Read tutors

The first of three training sessions for Project Read volunteer tutors, who help local adults improve reading and writing skills, will be held Tuesday, Jan. 22, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Menlo Park Library.

The others sessions will held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 26, and from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 4. Tutors must participate in all sessions, either in person or by viewing videotape.

The library is at 800 Alma St. For more information, call Project Read-Menlo Park at the library at 330-2525.



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- Saturdays, February 2-23

* SIBLING PREPARATION

Designed for children two years of age and older, this class prepares siblings for the emotional and physical realities of the arrival of a newborn.

- Saturday, February 9

* BECOMING GRANDPARENTS

Designed for new and expectant grandparents, this class examines the change in labor and delivery practices, the latest recommendations for infant care and the unique role of grandparents in today's society.

- Thursday, February 21

* CHILDBIRTH CLASS IN THE CITY

Come learn about childbirth preparation in a retreat-like setting at the Hotel Monaco in San Francisco. This course includes breakfast and lunch for two at the hotel, as well as participation in breastfeeding and cesarean birth classes.

- Saturday, February 23

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



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■ OBITUARIES

Marcelle Kauffman

Longtime Menlo Park resident

Marcelle Saxton Kauffman, a resident of Menlo Park for more than 50 years, died Dec. 29. She was 89.

Ms. Kauffman, one of six children, was born in Walla Walla, Washington. For 62 years she was married to Leon Daniel Kauffman, who died in 2006. They were charter and longtime members of Ladera Oaks Swim and Tennis Club.

Ms. Kauffman's favorite pastimes were her stained glass and upholstery projects and spending time with her many friends, say family members. The Kauffmans traveled extensively in this country and to other parts of the world.

Ms. Kauffman is survived by her sons, Arthur Daniel Kauffman of Foster City and James

Eugene Kauffman of Menlo Park; two grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

David C. Brecker

Maintenance mechanic for school district

A memorial service for David C. Brecker of Menlo Park will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 19. Mr. Brecker died peacefully in his Menlo Park home on Dec. 30 after a three-year battle with congestive heart disease. He was 80 years old.

Born on a dairy farm in Owen, Wisconsin, Mr. Brecker married his childhood sweetheart just out of high school. He and his wife soon operated the family farm.

The Breckers moved to Menlo Park in 1946, and Mr. Brecker was soon hired by PG&E to help construct substations in Northern California. The family moved around with the job, but made Menlo Park their permanent home in 1951, when Mr. Brecker began his tenure at the Menlo Park City School District. He used his engineering skills and his love for fixing things as the district's maintenance mechanic for 38 years until retirement.

Mr. Brecker was a passionate cyclist and an avid Mr. Fix-It, his family said. He and his neighbor would actively look for things they could tinker with, rejuvenate or fix. More than anything, though, he will be remembered as a family man, through and through, said his wife, Lucille Brecker.

In addition to his wife of 63 years, Lucille, Mr. Brecker is survived by three children, Diana Hirzel of Livermore, Audrey Jenkins of Kenai, Alaska, and Wendy Clarke of San Jose; his sister Elaine Holmes of Neillsville, Wisconsin; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes memorial donations to Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael, California, or to Bethany Lutheran Church, where Mr. Brecker was a member for 50 years.

The Saturday memorial service for Mr. Brecker begins at 1 p.m. at the church, 1095 Cloud Ave. in Menlo Park.

Marguerite Joyce

Former Menlo Park resident

Marguerite "Marge" Joyce, a former Menlo Park resident who moved to Minnesota in 2004, died Jan. 4. Ms. Joyce had broken her hip in a fall and contracted pneumonia while in a nursing home to recover. She was 79.

Ms. Joyce was active in St. Raymond parish while living in Menlo Park and had many friends in the area before moving to Minnesota to be near her son Roger and his family, say family members.

She is survived by her sons, Roger and Bill; a daughter, Alison; and three grandchildren. A memorial gathering was held Jan. 11 at Holbrook-Palmer Park in Atherton. Interment was at Alta Mesa Cemetery in Palo Alto.

Leah Chodorow

Former resident of Ladera

Leah Turitz Chodorow, 98, formerly of Ladera, died Dec. 2. She and her husband Marvin were early residents of Ladera and active members of the community. They lived in Ladera until after Mr. Chodorow retired, and then moved to Stanford where they lived on campus in senior housing for faculty.

Born in New York City, she attended Radcliffe College and the Smith School of Social Work.

She was married for 68 years to Stanford applied physics professor and Silicon Valley electronics pioneer Marvin Chodorow, who died in 2005.

She worked as a social worker in New York and Boston, where she met her husband while he was a graduate student at MIT.

Ms. Chodorow was a founder and first president of the parent board of the Stanford Village Nursery School (now the Bing

Continued on next page



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TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF LITTLE PEOPLE'S PARK IN PORTOLA VALLEY

Little People's Park at the Town Center in Portola Valley will be closed temporarily beginning Monday, February 11th to allow for modifications to playground equipment within the park. It is anticipated the park will reopen on Saturday, February 23, 2008, unless inclement weather forces delay of completion of the work.

Please check the Town's website at www.portolavalley.net for up to date information concerning this closure.

The Town regrets any inconvenience to our citizens, particularly our very special "little people."

For more information, please feel free to contact Janet McDougall at (650) 851-1700, ext. 18.

Published in the Almanac on January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2008.

■ POLICE CALLS

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

ATHERTON

Grand theft report: Pants, cell phone, money stolen from high school locker room, 500 block of Middlefield Road, Jan. 10.

Burglary report: Broken kitchen window; unknown if items were taken, 100 block of Selby Lane, Jan. 4.

Misc. reports: Two possible gunshots heard, first block of Sutherland Drive, Jan. 7.

MENLO PARK

Burglary reports:

■ Vehicle broken into, stereo taken and dash damaged, 100 block of Oak Ave., Jan. 6.

■ Vehicle window broken, GPS device stolen, 300 block of Sharon Park Drive, Jan. 6.

■ Rear garage broken into during day, 100 block of Henderson Place, Jan. 8.

■ Residence broken into, 1100 block of Windermere Ave., Jan. 8.

■ Copper wire stolen, Homewood Place at Linfield Drive, Jan. 10.

Stolen vehicle reports:

■ Six vehicles stolen, 100 block of Constitution Drive, Jan. 5.

■ Tan 1995 Honda Accord reported stolen, 800 block of Roble Ave., Jan. 7.

Fraud reports:

■ Stolen credit cards charged \$200 in the 300 block of Grayson Court, Jan. 5.

■ Unauthorized use of credit cards online, 400 block of Claremont Way, Jan. 6.

■ Credit card fraud reported, 500 block of Sandalwood St., Jan. 8.

Robbery report: Cell phone and vehicle registration stolen, Madera Ave. at Bay Road, Jan. 10.

Grand theft reports:

■ Backpack with laptop taken from porch, 1100 block of Madera Ave., Jan. 6.

■ Suspect purchased several thousand dollars of merchandise, billing to company he is not associated with, 4000 block of Campbell Ave., Jan. 7.

Spousal abuse report: Spousal abuse

reported, husband arrested, 1700 block of Stonepine Lane, Jan. 8.

WOODSIDE

Vandalism report: Vehicle window smashed after argument, 100 block of Stadler Road, Jan. 5.

Fraud report: Victim's identity fraudulently used to lease a car in Europe, 600 block of Glen Crag Way, Jan. 8.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Burglary report:

■ Four vehicles broken into, windows smashed, purses, wallets, iPod stolen, Windy Hill Open Space Preserve parking lot at Alpine Road and Willowbrook Drive, Jan. 5.

■ Vehicle window smashed, \$700 worth of items stolen, Windy Hill Open Space Preserve parking lot on Skyline Boulevard, Jan. 6.

Theft report: Gasoline stolen from car via siphon, 100 block of Corte Madera Road, Jan. 6.

Continued from previous page

Nursery School at Stanford); served for 10 years as chairwoman of the board of the Peninsula Children's Center (now AchieveKids); and was program chair of the Palo Alto Youth Concerts.

She was a major fundraiser for the Stanford Center for Research on Women (now the Clayman Institute for Gender Research), helped organize and served as

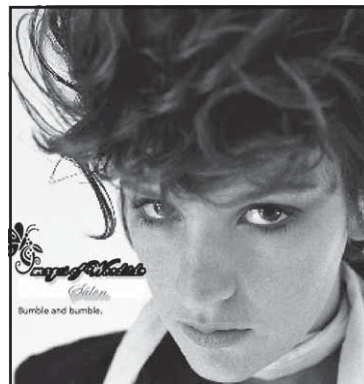
president of the Radcliffe Club of the Peninsula, and was on the board of the San Francisco Symphony. In 1972 she was a recipient of the Radcliffe Alumnae Award for her volunteer activities.

Ms. Chodorow enjoyed travel, gardening, skiing, tennis and badminton, family member said.

Her volunteer and home activities were honored in articles in local newspapers from the 1950s through the 1990s.

She is survived by her daughters, Nancy J. Chodorow of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Joan E. Chodorow of Venice, California; sister Sonya Schopick of Bridgeport, Connecticut; and two grandchildren.

A memorial service is being planned. Donations may be made to the Leah T. Chodorow Scholarship Fund, Eastside College Preparatory School, 1041 Myrtle St., East Palo Alto, CA 94303.



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The **Almanac**



WHERE WE STAND

February 5, 2008 Election

PROP 91 Transportation Funds **OPPOSE**

The League supports stable funding for transportation projects, but Prop 91 is not the way to provide it. Measures like this remove the flexibility that our representatives need in crafting state budgets, especially in difficult times. Even the proponents of Prop 91 urge a NO vote on this measure, recognizing that its aims were accomplished by Prop 1A of 2006.

PROP 92 Community Colleges: Funding, Governance, Fees **OPPOSE**

Prop 92 locks in new constitutional provisions that would mandate increased spending on K-14 education without regard to the overall state budget situation. It provides no new revenues. The League respects supporters' desire for adequate, stable funding and improved governance in the community college system but can't support further restrictions on the state's ability to fund all the programs that serve Californian especially in tight budget times.

PROP 93 Limits on Legislators' Terms in Office **NEUTRAL**

This initiative, by itself, makes relatively minor changes to the structure of legislative term limits. Without a package that includes reform of the redistricting process, it does not achieve meaningful improvement of the function of our state legislature.

PROP 94 through 97 on amendments to Indian Gaming Compacts

Because League positions do not cover these issues, the League of Women Voters of California is taking no stand.

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Readers shore up Holiday Fund

Showing once again that they are willing to support those who need a helping hand, Almanac readers contributed \$116,000 to the Holiday Fund this year. With available matching grants, it is expected that about \$150,000 will be shared by 10 nonprofit organizations that serve the local community, when the final tally is released next month.

This year, 208 individuals and families donated to the fund, which supports agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need. The Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation provide the matching grants, and several more came from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

The Holiday Fund is a partnership of the Almanac, the matching donors, and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, which processes all contributions. No fees or other charges are assessed to any Holiday Fund donations; 100 percent of all funds raised go directly to the participating nonprofits. Each of the following agencies will receive identical checks for about \$15,000 in the coming weeks.

■ **Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula:** Provides after-school 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 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; residential treatment programs for men and women, and transitional hous-

ing for men, women and children.

■ **Ravenswood Family Health Center:** Provides primary medical and preventative 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 areas of East Palo Alto, Belle Haven and North Fair Oaks.

■ **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 distributed more than 30 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to some 162,000 people each month through more than 700 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

■ **Service League of San Mateo County:** Provides services to inmates in county jails and programs to help them re-enter the community successfully after release. The league helps inmates communicate 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 the county.

■ **Youth and Family Enrichment Services:** Provides more than 20 programs to help people who struggle with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, relationship and communications issues.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Not wise to tempt thieves at trail lots

Editor:

As I pulled into the parking lot at Alpine Road and Willowbrook this past Saturday, a young couple was very upset that their car had been burglarized. Upon further inspection, we noticed that the entire line of seven cars had their side windows smashed and valuables stolen.

This is such a common experience, yet many people seem unaware of the dangers of leaving valuables at a hiker's parking lot. Locking your car is absolutely worthless. I always leave my car unlocked, and a window open (in good weather) at these places. That way the crooks can inspect my empty car without doing damage to it. Leave your valuables at home, or carry them



Portola Valley Archives

Our Regional Heritage

In 1980, Lulu Kiesling, Joan Targ and Russell Targ examine plans for a subdivision they were planning for Portola Valley. Today, that subdivision, called The Hayfields, is on Hayfields Road off of Portola Road and extends into the western hills of Portola Valley.

See **LETTERS**, next page

Mayor sets ambitious course for Atherton

By James R. Janz

Atherton has had more than its share of discord off and on over the last 10 years. But while the town has received a lot of unfortunate press attention, the fact remains that the staff, and the City Council, have continued to deal with the day-to-day operations and the issues facing the town.

As I start my year as mayor, I would like to see us address the long-term issues facing Atherton. We will start fresh with a new city manager, Jerry Gruber, who is a competent, strong leader with no local baggage. In our form of government, the city manager is in charge of running the town, with oversight from the council.

He will be assisted by Wende Protzman, our current interim city manager, who has done a great job, and who will provide the local knowledge to help get Jerry up to speed.

But it then becomes incumbent upon the City Council members to do our job, which is to address the policy issues that will determine what kind of town we will have tomorrow and thereafter.

There is a plethora of issues to deal with. Space prevents me from listing them all, or from elaborating on any, but just to name a few:

Infrastructure and transportation

■ Drainage is a problem we've had for a long time and which has regional implications.

■ Train service to Atherton, possible railroad grade separations, repair of the depot, and the implications of high-speed rail.

■ Does Atherton have a role in the "Grand Boulevard" redevelopment of El Camino Real being undertaken by San Mateo and Santa Clara counties?

■ Interconnection of the Dumbarton Bridge to the Bayshore Freeway with possible implications for Marsh and Middlefield roads.

■ Provide a modern and safe building for all our staff, which would increase productivity.

Community

■ Continue to ensure our security by maintaining our own police force, cooperating with the fire district, and preparing for emergencies.

■ Develop and enhance productive working relationships with the schools in our town.

■ Cooperate with organizations that provide support services for the elderly.

Planning

■ Rewrite the zoning code to eliminate inconsistencies and provide greater clarity.

■ Consider possible changes to the relatively new historic artifact code.

■ Reduce our overall environmental impact.

■ Provide and promote "green" development.

Housing

■ Update the general plan and work with our neighbors to meet state guidelines for housing.

■ Consider ways to accommodate retiring residents who want to stay in town but want to downsize. Should we encourage in-law units? Should we consider designating an area for condominiums in our general plan?

Finance and administration

■ Before the parcel tax expires in 2010, consider thinking outside of the box, maybe even outside of our borders. Tax support from some commercial development might be a way to replace the parcel tax. Should we look into the possibility of incorporating some of the county areas adjacent to our town?

■ Examine the relationship between the council and staff to streamline administration, while maintaining adequate public oversight.

This handful of topics suggests that we have serious issues on our plate. I'm hopeful that we can now move forward with a positive attitude to start the new year. As we begin, I will be asking the council to participate in a retreat/workshop to address the operational issues.

I also will expect the General Plan Committee, the Planning Commission, and other public committees to look at some of the larger land use, zoning, and financial issues. These are long-term problems and it will take a long time to review, analyze, and achieve solutions. But I am confident that we have the resources, the ability, and the commitment to achieve our goals on the issues that we really should be addressing, so that Atherton can look to a promising future.

James R. Janz is mayor of Atherton



Holiday Fund donors

As of Jan 10, 2008

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TOTALS: As of Jan. 10, a total of 208 donors have given \$116,200 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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LETTERS

Continued from previous page

with you.

Perhaps the new Portola Valley Town Council can use some of the money appropriated for

patrolling the trails to apprehend hikers walking their dogs, and use it instead for surveillance cameras or other deterrents for a real crime problem.

Marty Mackowski
 Los Charros Lane,
 Portola Valley



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LOS ALTOS

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