

STAINED GLASS GEMS: Artist returns for 25th anniversary of stained glass landmarks. Page 5

The Almanac

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

Home & Garden Design

Inside
this
issue

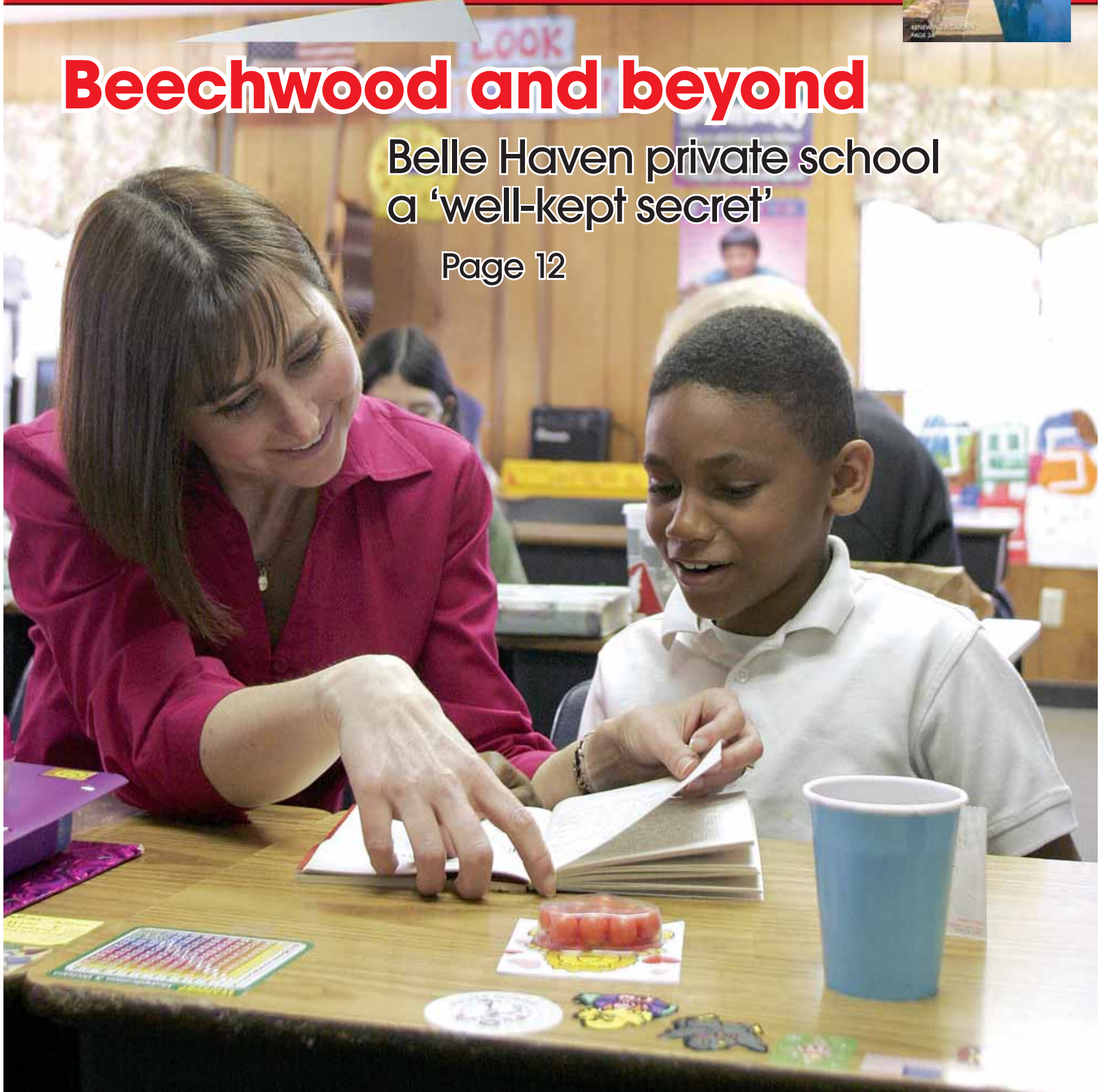


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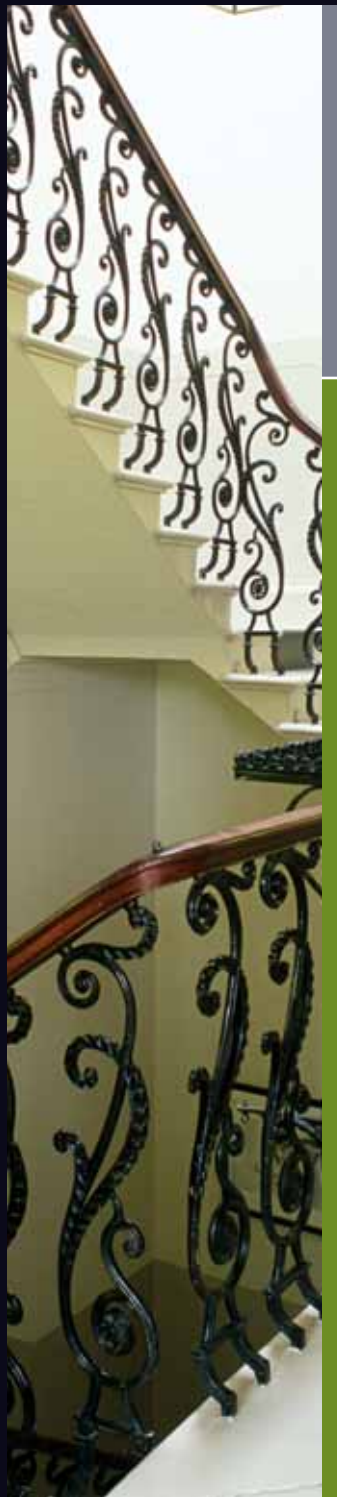
Beechwood and beyond

Belle Haven private school
a 'well-kept secret'

Page 12



It's a Matter of Perspective



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* *Source:* DataQuick 1997-2007

** *Source:* Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation
30-year Fixed Conventional Rates

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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Photo by Otak Jump

Musical tale of mischief

West Bay Opera cast members, from left, Brian Thorsett, Sascha Joggerst, Meghan Dibble and Teresa Byrne perform in Mozart's "Cosi fan tutte," at the Lucie Stern Theatre in Palo Alto through Feb. 24. See a review of the production on **Page 15**.

Menlo Park

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On the cover

Third-grader Quinnton Allen reads with volunteer Diana Peterson at Beechwood, a small private school in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood. For 20 years, Beechwood has been quietly providing an alternative to public schools in the Ravenswood School District. Now, school officials plan to build a permanent campus. Photo by Veronica Weber. **Story begins on Page 12.**

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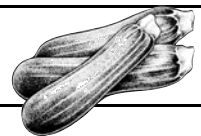
Asian Noodle Bowls
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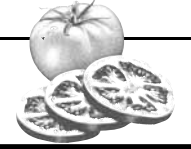
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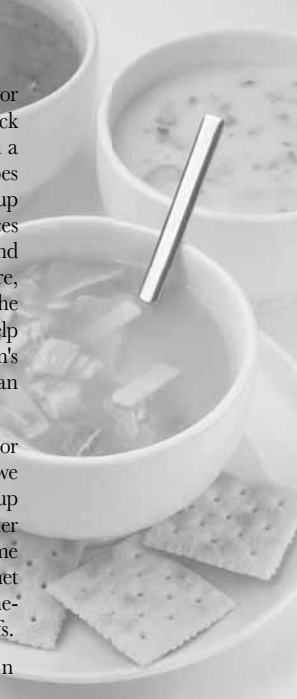
JEAN - "SOUP TIME"

Soup Stock

A soup is only as good as its stock, which can enhance flavor while creating a tantalizing texture. To make a stock with fewer calories, use puréed vegetables – forced through a ricer/strainer – instead of a flour-and-fat roux. Plum tomatoes work well as a thickener. Some excellent vegetables for soup stock include Spanish onions, celery, carrots, and leeks. Spices that boost flavor include parsley, thyme, peppercorns, and garlic. Deglazing also helps increase a stock's flavor, texture, and color. Simply add wine before any other liquids after the vegetables have been sautéed in oil. This process will help loosen any caramelized substances that have stuck to the pan's bottom. Boiling the wine for a minute will also prevent an alcohol taste.

Soup is so versatile, going well as a snack, an appetizer, or as a meal all on its own. At ROBERTS MARKET, we not only carry all the ingredients you'll need for a fine soup stock, but we have a highly educated staff that is able to further all your culinary goals. If you find yourself pressed for time visit our "hear and eat it" department for wonderful gourmet prepared foods. You can find prepared foods such as homemade hot soups, sandwiches, salads, and gourmet food stuffs.

HINT: Freeze any stock that will not be used within two or three days in quart or pint containers.



WINE

Things You Ought To Try

The Cabernet Franc grape is the third most used red grape in Bordeaux, after Caeret Sauvignon and Merlot. It typically displays dry herb aromatics and blueberry-like fruit. Cabernet Franc also adds breed, finesse and length to Bordeaux blends. Here are a few varietal bottlings that are fun and delicious.

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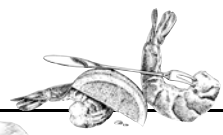
BRUMMEL + BROWN SPREAD **\$1.89**
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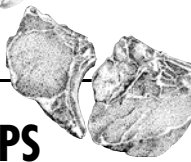
FRISKIES BUFFET CANNED CAT FOOD **45^c**
 5 oz.

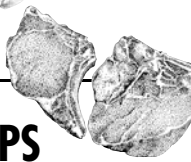
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Supes reject Stanford offer on Alpine Road trail

■ Decision cheered in Weekend Acres and Ladera communities.

By Dave Boyce
Almanac staff writer

There is an informal collection of paths that run for two miles along the south side of Alpine Road as it passes through the unincorporated communities of Stanford Weekend Acres and Ladera. This “trail” and the road’s edge are sometimes one and the same. Where the paths meander off the road, the path paving is old and cracked.

Much to the satisfaction of county residents who live in that area,

the paths are likely to keep their unique character. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors on Feb. 12 unanimously rejected an offer by Stanford University to spend \$8.4 million on transforming those paths into a bona fide continuous trail.

The trail proposal was part of an agreement between Stanford and Santa Clara County to allow the university to meet its use-permit obligations while mitigating the recreational impact of its expansion plans.

Rather than build trails on its own land on the south side of San Francisquito Creek, Stanford was willing to pay up to \$11.2 million -- \$8.4 million to San Mateo County and \$2.8 to Portola Valley -- to “improve” the trails across the county line along Alpine Road.

Santa Clara County’s master plan includes an as-yet-unrealized vision of a continuous trail at the north end of the county that connects the Bay to the foothills, said Santa Clara County Parks Department Director Lisa Killough.

Santa Clara County’s long-term vision for this trail may be a factor, San Mateo County Supervisor Rich Gordon said in an interview.

“I think that Stanford is concerned that there will continue to be pressure on them for additional trail activity on campus land,” he said. If Stanford can point to a continuous trail from Stanford Shopping Center all the way up through Portola Valley and maybe beyond, that could relieve the pressure, he said.

Plans for the San Mateo County and the Portola Valley trails are independent and were subject to approval by Santa Clara County and the local jurisdiction. Stanford’s offers are good until at least 2011.

The issue galvanized Ladera and Weekend Acres residents,

who asserted that a new trail would resemble a suburban sidewalk and draw new bicyclists and pedestrians to a heavily trafficked arterial road.

While the Ladera community is often fractious, “there’s one exception, and that’s this (issue),” community association president Rob Decker told the supervisors at their Feb. 12 meeting.

“I want to say, ‘Hooray for you,’” Weekend Acres resident Janet Davis said in anticipating a vote to reject Stanford’s offer.

“I’m very happy that San Mateo

See **ALPINE ROAD TRAIL**, page 8

Menlo Park city budget looks rosier than expected

■ Local housing market, sales tax figures aren’t as bad as statewide trends, officials say.

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

As the national and state housing markets and economic trends remain gloomy, Menlo Park officials say things are actually looking better than expected on the local economic front.

The City Council voted 5-0 on Feb. 12 to adopt a tweaked version of the budget for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30. The amended budget projects the city will end the fiscal year with a surplus of roughly \$78,000 — a much rosier situation than the \$1.59 million deficit the city was expecting heading into the year.

The sudden budget improvements are mostly thanks to revenues being about \$1.67 million higher than anticipated. The city expects to collect an additional \$705,000 in permit and license fees that rolled over from last year, and \$334,000 more than was originally projected from the city’s utility user tax, according to a report by Finance Director Carol Augustine.

Assistant City Manager Audrey Ramberg said the additional funds, coupled with the strength of the city’s housing market and steadily increasing sales tax revenue, should protect Menlo Park from slumping economic trends at the national and state levels.

“We have reason for cautious

optimism — not optimism for growth, but optimism of not being as badly impacted by whatever recession is to come,” Ms. Ramberg told council members at the Feb. 12 meeting.

Ms. Ramberg noted that the “diversity” of the city’s sales tax base should prevent the type of revenue drop experienced following the dot-com bubble burst.

In Ms. Augustine’s report, she notes that sales tax revenue — projected to be \$7.2 million for the current fiscal year — is still a far cry from the \$12 million the city garnered during the 2000-01 fiscal year, but that recent increases reflect “improving economic conditions.” She also says that green- and clean-tech technology companies moving to the area have “the potential to throw Silicon Valley’s economic growth into fast forward.”

Although the general fund balance looks to be better than expected, the city has recently pulled \$11.8 million from the unallocated reserves — \$9.2 million to cover employee retirement and medical benefits, and \$2.6 million to pay for the city’s share of the cost of constructing a new performing arts center at Menlo-Atherton High School.

Council members will start to discuss the 2008-09 budget, including how high to set the utility tax rate, at a March 11 study session. ■



Almanac photo by Veronica Weber

One of Gini McAfee’s stained glass panels on Santa Cruz Avenue in downtown Menlo Park. This one shows the Menlo Park train station.

Stained glass gems

Artist returns for 25th anniversary of stained glass landmarks

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

These days former Atherton resident Gini McAfee is into HO gauge model trains and has just completed her first novel. However, on Tuesday, Feb. 26, she is coming from her home in Lake Wildwood to mark the 25th anniversary of the stained glass panels she created for Menlo Park’s Santa Cruz Avenue.

The stained glass panels that adorn 20 redwood kiosks on

Santa Cruz Avenue were installed in the early 1980s.

Menlo Park businessman Jim Lewis says he is orchestrating the anniversary celebration because he is fond of art in public places. The stained glass panels that decorate Santa Cruz Avenue are “like having a museum on both sides of the street downtown.”

Mr. Lewis, who will lead an 11 a.m. Feb. 26 walking tour of Santa Cruz Avenue, also notes a lot of Menlo Park’s history is shown in the panels.



Gini McAfee

Gini McAfee will be the guest of honor at several events on Feb. 26: a luncheon at the Left Bank, a 2 p.m. meeting of the Menlo Park Historical Association and Menlo Art League at the

See **STAINED GLASS**, page 8



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Al Jacobs, well known teacher at Menlo College, dies at 72

Al Jacobs, a gifted teacher who taught English literature and film at Menlo College for 35 years, died Feb. 12 of pancreatic cancer. He was 72.

Mr. Jacobs also taught and performed at Little House in Menlo Park and Channing House and the Jewish Community Center in Palo Alto, as well as at UC Berkeley Extension, Stanford Continuing Studies, and Humanities West in San Francisco. He was especially dedicated to performing at the Menlo Park Library, says close friend Joan Marx.

He taught a breadth of courses, including film noir, Greek drama, American literature, script writing, Shakespeare and film, modern drama, and World War II autobiography. His doctorate concentrated on Shakespeare's day, the 1609-10 London theatrical season.

He wrote an essay on Orson Welles' "Othello" and film noir, and another on adolescent fantasies and horror films. He traveled to Egypt for the production of his own screenplay and he was writing a mystery novel when he died, says Ms. Marx.

Each month for the past three years, Mr. Jacobs presented a free program of readings at the Book Rack in Menlo Park. The programs, such as "Love Letters," "Beginnings," and "Wilde and Wilder," showed his range of styles and periods. "Love Letters" included an inscription on an Egyptian vase from 1500 B.C. and a 1762 note from John Adams to his wife, Abigail, "Miss Adorable."

Frugal for himself, he took pleasure in giving presents to others. He gave birthday presents to generations of children. When he died, he left

OBITUARY



Al Jacobs holding a grandson of a friend. He gave presents to generations of children.

four shelves of newly bought gifts in his apartment.

Generous with his time and attention, Mr. Jacobs would spend hours on student work and often went out for dinner and movies with his students. He critiqued the work of friends writing novels, poetry and screenplays, and many credit him with helping them reach their potential and publication, says Ms. Marx.

Mr. Jacobs was born in a small town, Danville, Pennsylvania, where his parents Helen and Alfred Jacobs had grown up. His older sister, Mary Anna, taught him to read.

When he was 12, the family moved to Hightstown, New Jersey, where he attended the Peddie School as a scholarship student.

At Harvard, again on a scholarship, he majored in English, acted in major productions, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1957. After receiving a master's degree from Columbia University, he entered the doctorate program at UC Berkeley and taught as an associate.

His first full-time teaching job was at Bucknell University, where he directed many theatrical productions. After teaching at a community college in Minnesota, he came to Menlo College in 1971. He completed his Berkeley doctorate in 1987.

Unassuming and congenial, Mr. Jacobs had the rare ability to discern others' interests and meet their imaginations, says Ms. Marx. In response, those around him came forward and sought the beauty and enjoyment he offered. His love of literature was overmatched only by his love of people, say his friends.

Judge sentences driver in Halberstam death

A University of California-Berkeley journalism student who was driving during a 2007 Menlo Park crash that claimed the life of Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Halberstam has been sentenced to five days in jail, which may be served through the sheriff's work program, as well as 200 hours of community service.

Kevin Lloyd Jones, 27, appeared before San Mateo Superior Court Judge Mark Forcum on Feb. 14 and read a statement apologizing for the Halberstam family's loss.

"His memory will guide my decisions ... my career as a journalist will be a tribute to his life," Mr. Jones said.

A probation report recommended that Mr. Jones be sentenced to nine months in jail for the misdemeanor, but Judge Forcum, as well as Deputy District Attorney Shin-Mee Chang,

disagreed. Because of the level of remorse Mr. Jones has shown, the district attorney's office recommended five days in jail as well as community service.

Judge Forcum specified that Mr. Jones will do his community service in schools, helping children read and write.

Mr. Halberstam's daughter Julia sent a letter to the court that said her father would not have wanted Mr. Jones to go to jail, but because of his "chronic carelessness" behind the wheel of a car he should not have a driver's license.

Mr. Jones has other infractions, including driving under the influence, being the party at fault for an accident, and speeding, according to his probation report.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said that when a defendant is as "truly inconsolable" as Mr. Jones was when he gave his initial statement to police,

a long sentence is not necessary.

Mr. Halberstam, 73, of New York City, was killed in a three-car collision near the Dumbarton Bridge last April 23. The crash occurred shortly after 10:30 a.m. on the westbound Bayfront Expressway at Willow Road, according to Menlo Park police.

Mr. Halberstam was in the passenger seat of a Toyota Camry being driven by Mr. Jones, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, Graduate School of Journalism. Mr. Halberstam was on his way to a book interview with Atherton resident and NFL Hall of Fame quarterback Y.A. Tittle.

The Camry was broadsided as it turned left from Bayfront Expressway onto Willow Road. Mr. Halberstam was pronounced dead at the scene.

— Bay City News Service

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



How Important is Pricing

Q: Dear Monica: We will be putting our house on the market in a month and want to know the best pricing strategy. What would you advise? J.D.

A: Dear J.D.,

The market for good properties in prime locations is strong right now. There are many buyers looking seriously to buy the right property. But unlike some of the very robust markets of the past, buyers are also showing some caution. They are not sure whether there will be a recession in the country that will affect this area and they don't want to pay more for property than it is worth in case

there is a downturn.

It is because of this caution that I feel it is more important than ever to price your home close to where you think it will sell. I would not advise you to price it too low because even with multiple offers, buyers are not willing to pay way above the list price. Buyers are in a more negative frame of mind because of the media reports of recession and mortgage defaults. But if they are secure in their jobs and have a long term market view, they are ready to meet your price as long as it is reasonable.

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

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Hanretty won't seek top job

■ Woodside School reorganization now uncertain.

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

Tim Hanretty, Woodside Elementary School's assistant superintendent, won't be seeking the school district's top job, he announced at the Tuesday, Feb. 12, board meeting.

Having Mr. Hanretty step into the superintendent position formed the linchpin of an administrative restructuring plan proposed by Dan Vinson, the current superintendent/principal. Now the fate of that plan is up in the air.

Mr. Vinson plans to retire in June 2009, and said he thinks the school should separate the superintendent and principal roles into two full-time jobs, while eliminating the full-time assistant principal job. If the school board immediately appointed Mr. Hanretty, it could launch a search for a new principal right away, Mr. Vinson said. "Obviously, with Tim's announcement, it changes a lot of the plan," Mr. Vinson told the board.

Mr. Hanretty, who divides his

■ SCHOOLS

time between the Woodside and Portola Valley school districts (he is assistant superintendent for both), seemed enthusiastic about the prospect of becoming superintendent when it was first discussed publicly at the board's Feb. 5 meeting. One week later, that is clearly no longer the case.

"I sent an e-mail to the five board members on Thursday, Feb. 7, to tell them I withdrew my name from consideration to replace Dan Vinson as superintendent," Mr. Hanretty said at the Feb. 12 meeting.

He offered no further explanation at the meeting. After the meeting, he told the Almanac that the school community, including the staff, didn't accept the idea of him taking over as superintendent. He declined to go into further details, saying that some of it was a personnel matter.

"It seemed like it was a done deal, that was the way I understood it, but that was not the case in real life," Mr. Hanretty said. "But my profile's a little different than that of the typical superintendent. My background is in the school office, not at the school site. I've been at the administrative level for my whole career."

In fact, at the Feb. 5 meeting where Mr. Vinson announced his plan, board members praised Mr. Hanretty's work for the school district, but said that appointing him superintendent might be a tough sell to some members of the school community.

"We need some more ammunition to be able to endorse Tim as strongly as we will need to do for this community," board President Bettina Pike said at the time.

As a result of Mr. Hanretty's announcement, the board delayed taking action on the administrative restructuring proposal. The issue will be back on the agenda at the Tuesday, Feb. 26, meeting, said Ms. Pike.

"We need to begin by taking a step back and asking what is the optimal administrative structure," Ms. Pike said. "It's a very good recommendation (for restructuring), but it's not going to go forward at this point." ■



Tim Hanretty

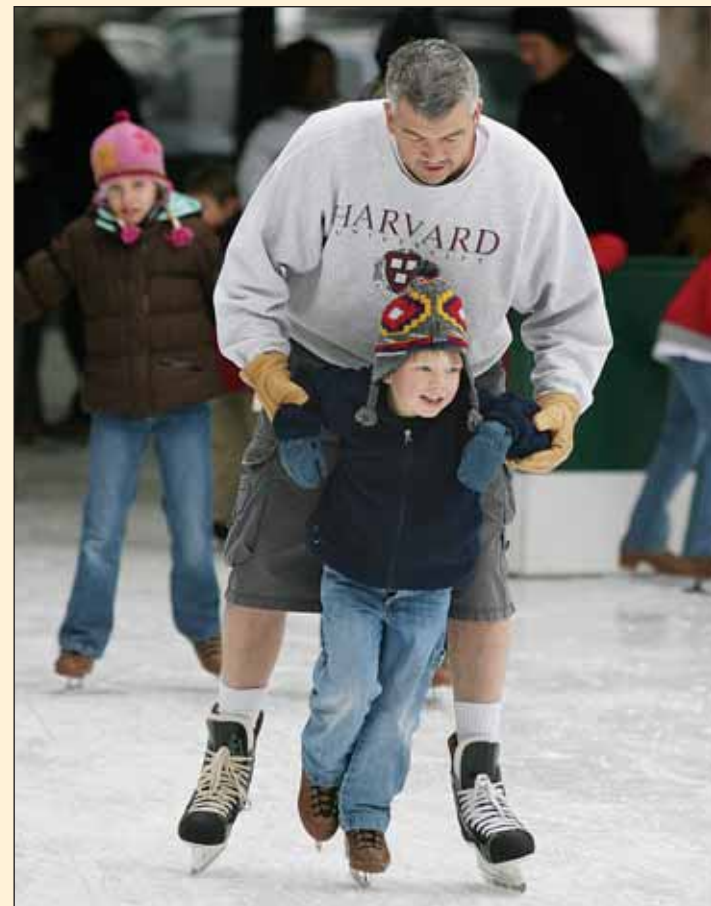


Photo by Norbert von der Groeben/Palo Alto Weekly

This is fun

Rob Foster of Menlo Park skates with his son Zach, 5, at the Winter Lodge in Palo Alto. The Winter Lodge has open skating every day from 3 to 5 p.m.

Supes reject Stanford's trail offer

ALPINE ROAD TRAIL

continued from page 5

County said "No thanks," Ladera resident and environmental activist Lennie Roberts told the Almanac. "You can't have another county mitigating your own conditions."

A trail or nothing

Portola Valley is on the verge of accepting Stanford's \$2.4 million offer, Town Administrator Angie Howard said. Changes to the existing trail include new landscaping, a rustic bridge, erosion protection for the creek bank and rerouting parts of it away from Alpine Road.

The creek bank is also an issue east of Portola Valley, but Stanford and Santa Clara County would not agree to piecemeal improvements. The trail had to be built through Weekend Acres and Ladera to connect Menlo Park to Portola Valley, Mr. Gordon said.

Over the past year, San Mateo County Manager John Maltbie worked with the Santa Clara County manager and Stanford, but got nowhere on the continuous trail requirement, Mr. Gordon said.

"We were unable to convince

them that that wasn't a starter for us," he said. "From our perspective, that's not a place where you want to encourage people to be. It's not a safe zone."

"There wasn't the level of cooperation to negotiate something that the community wants," Board of Supervisors President Adrienne Tissier said in explaining her vote. "At some point, you have to shut the door."

Stanford was flexible on the trail's design, but not on Santa Clara County's requirement for a continuous trail, Stanford spokesman Larry Horton said in an interview.

Santa Clara County's millions

Because the supervisors rejected Stanford's offer, the agreement requires Stanford to hand off the \$8.4 million to Santa Clara County to be used for further mitigation purposes.

But that hand-off likely won't happen until 2011, when the trail offer expires, Mr. Gordon said, adding that Stanford's view of this waiting period is its own interpretation of the offer and that he strongly disagrees with it.

"This is mitigation for a development agreement that was signed

in 2000," he said. "I think that's unconscionable."

Mr. Horton said Santa Clara County's terms require the offer to be on the table until 2011 and renewed once a year.

The San Mateo County supervisors also recommended that their counterparts in Santa Clara County use the money to create a regional grant program for recreational improvements for public agencies in Stanford's zone of influence, including San Mateo County, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and the cities of Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Portola Valley and Menlo Park.

Margaret Raymond, representing a Stanford campus homeowners association, told the supervisors that regional mitigation would be "a completely inappropriate use of those funds," that the \$8.4 million had to be used to address impacts on Stanford residents and users of Stanford facilities.

Gwen Mitchell, public affairs director for Santa Clara County, said the supervisors there are aware of the regional grant suggestion, but "until there is some final resolution around that (waiting period) issue, what will happen to the funds remains to be seen." ■

STAINED GLASS

continued from page 5

library, and a 6 p.m. reception at the library with members of the Menlo Park City Council and other dignitaries.

Andrew Cohen, the mayor of Menlo Park, has issued a proclamation commending the contributions of Gini McAfee to the city.

Ms. McAfee lived in Atherton when she was commissioned to create the panels by the Community Action Committee of the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce. She donated the first design: the Menlo Park gates. The panel was a replica of the gates built in 1854 at the entrance of the city that were knocked down by an automobile in 1922.

Several of Menlo Park's business leaders donated \$300 each toward

creating a stained glass panel. Old photos from the Menlo Park Recorder show donors, such as Liz Goldberg, Frank Draeger, George Hirzel, and Mrs. Dario Giovacchini (Mrs. G), who are no longer with us.

Ms. McAfee and her husband, Bob, will be driving down to Menlo Park with Marilyn and Robert Carrel, who also live at Lake Wildwood. Mr. Carrel was executive vice president of the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce when the panels were commissioned.

Fortunately, the stained glass panels remain in good shape and have not had to be replaced. A good thing, because Ms. McAfee's studio is long closed. When she and her husband moved from their Atherton home, "I used 12 of my pieces in the new house and then gave my equipment away," she says. ■

Medical center receives \$1.9 million

The San Mateo County Health Foundation will give the San Mateo Medical Center \$1.9 million to improve facilities and expand the availability of health care services, the foundation has announced.

A total of \$1.5 million is earmarked for the expansion of the Ron Robinson Senior Care Center in San Mateo, and the other \$400,000 will go to remodel the Fair Oaks Children's Clinic in

Redwood City.

The senior center will use the money to build additional treatment space to accommodate the growing number of patients at the center, according to the foundation. The children's center will use the money to build a new entryway; repair parts of the roof, walls and flooring; and paint the building.

— Bay City News Service

Arrest follows run of burglaries

By Rory Brown
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park police arrested a 15-year-old boy on Feb. 12 on suspicion of burglarizing a home in the Willows neighborhood.

The arrest came after a string of six daytime burglaries in the area, where one or more intruders broke into homes by force or through unlocked

doors and stole electronic equipment, according to police reports.

The teen was arrested in connection to a burglary where residents arrived home to find a “young Hispanic male in his teens” in their home, according to a press statement issued by Sgt. Jim Simpson.

On Feb. 12, officers saw a “young Hispanic male who appeared to be prowling in

the neighborhood,” said Sgt. Simpson. Further investigation resulted in the teen being arrested in connection with the burglary interrupted by the residents, he said.

The suspect was booked into Juvenile Hall.

Police ask that anyone with information about the burglaries in the Willows neighborhood to call the police department at 330-6300. ■

Concerns raised over ambulance service

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

As San Mateo County prepares to seek proposals for ambulance service until the year 2019, some emergency services professionals — including those in the Menlo Park Fire Protection District — say the county isn’t doing enough to ensure satisfactory care for residents who need to be taken to the hospital.

Representatives of fire and law enforcement agencies throughout the county showed up at the Feb. 12 Board of Supervisors meeting to voice concerns over the county’s vision of how ambulance service should be provided once the current contract with American Medical Response (AMR) ends in June 2009.

The key problem with that vision, they assert, is that it’s not much different from the one that’s guided ambulance service for the past 10 years, “and that’s very disappointing,” said Menlo Park fire district board president Bart Spencer.

But Barbara Pletz, the county’s administrator in the Emergency Medical Services office, said critics “are jumping to conclusions” and not understanding the multi-layered process that will result in a contract with an ambulance company that could well be much different from what’s in place now.

At the center of the discontent is a document drawn up by Ms. Pletz’s office called a Request for Proposals — or RFP. That

document, she stressed, “is not a contract,” but rather a set of criteria that includes an invitation to ambulance providers to be creative in their proposals for delivering service to the county.

The proposed RFP was on the supervisors’ agenda last week for possible approval, but the supervisors delayed action so that the board and “any affected groups can take a closer look at it” and concerns can be addressed, according to Board of Supervisors President Adrienne Tissier. The matter is tentatively scheduled to go back to the board on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

Poor response time

Menlo Park fire district officials have long complained about what they see as a flawed current contract that results in inadequate ambulance service, particularly to residents in the far ends of the county.

In the South County, response time can be as long as 30 minutes, even on critical calls, they say. District officials have strongly advocated a change in the rules that would allow a mutual-aid agreement with the Palo Alto Fire Department, which operates the city’s ambulances. Under the current contract, a Palo Alto ambulance would not be allowed to respond to a call across the county line, even if the nearest AMR ambulance is in Daly City or Half Moon Bay.

Mr. Spencer said he’s concerned the proposed RFP wouldn’t address the cross-

boundary issue, but Ms. Pletz disagreed. “In the RFP, we say, ‘Tell us how you would utilize automatic aid coming from an adjacent county,’” she said.

Other concerns

Members of the agency that represents fire districts and city fire departments countywide presented five areas of concerns at last week’s supervisors’ meeting. One hot-button item is the RFP’s invitation to companies to submit proposals that would involve them more in the dispatching of ambulances.

If such a system were ultimately adopted, “it wouldn’t be in the best interest of the public,” Menlo Park Fire Chief Harold Shapelhoumen told the Almanac. The county now has a highly efficient central dispatch system, and to allow an ambulance company to dispatch its vehicles independently would undermine the county’s oversight and increase the possibility that emergency calls would be lost, he said.

The RFP asks for proposals for the two-tiered ambulance response service that exists today, whereby firefighter/paramedic crews that almost always are able to arrive at an emergency scene well before an ambulance are dispatched and provide medical care until an ambulance arrives. But fire officials are concerned because it also invites proposals for ambulance service that would eliminate the need for “first responders,” which could lead to longer response time. ■

Sen. Simitian loses committee post over budget fight

State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, was stripped of his chairmanship of the Senate Environmental Policy Committee abruptly Feb. 14 after a disagreement over cutting education funds from the state budget, several news outlets are reporting.

State Senate President pro Tem Don Perata removed Simitian

from his committee chairmanship during what KGO-TV described as a “raucous” budget hearing Thursday night.

Neither Sen. Simitian nor his press secretary were available for comment. A member of Sen. Simitian’s staff said that the senator doesn’t comment on committee assignments.

Andrew LaMar, a spokesman for Sen. Perata, said the senator “doesn’t comment on (Democratic Party) caucus” matters.

Sen. Simitian is a former Palo Alto mayor, Palo Alto school board president, Santa Clara County supervisor and state Assemblyman.

— Don Kazak, Palo Alto Weekly



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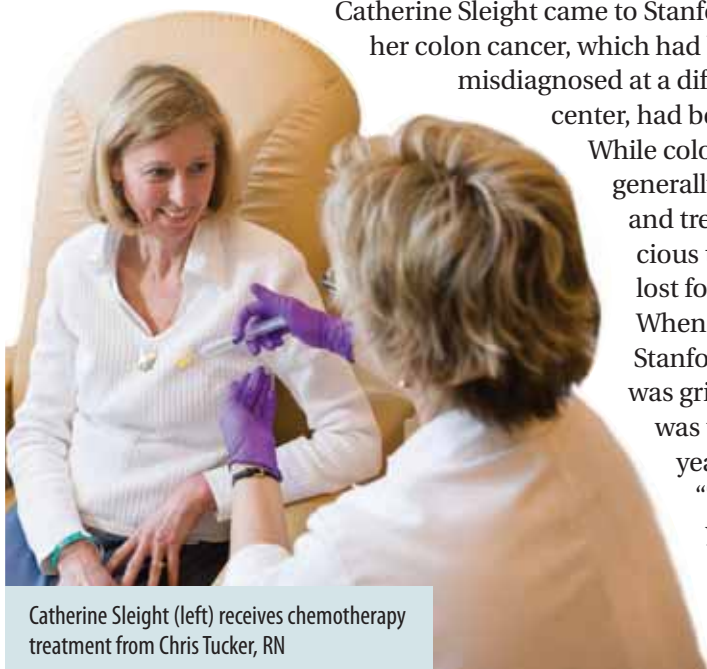
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Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Cancer Survivors Get a Helping Hand



Catherine Sleight (left) receives chemotherapy treatment from Chris Tucker, RN

Catherine Sleight came to Stanford Hospital after her colon cancer, which had been previously misdiagnosed at a different medical center, had begun to spread.

While colon cancer can generally be detected and treated early, precious time had been lost for Catherine. When she first visited Stanford, the diagnosis was grim. "Initially I was told one-to-two years," she explains. "That was six years ago."

In the face of devastating news, Catherine

did not give in to despair. Six years later, she continues to experience the benefits of a program whose emphasis on patient care and comfort goes far beyond the clinical processes that keep people with cancer physically alive. Patient navigators are always on hand to provide support, information and guidance to cancer survivors. Since the Cancer Center's opening, Catherine has researched her condition in the Health Library, taken yoga classes at the Center, and participated in support groups that have let her express herself through poetry.

"I think it's really dangerous to have anyone's life stop when you get a diagnosis of cancer. Because we don't know, any of us, how much time we have. I think it's really important to just take every day and turn it into life."

Providing Hope in Difficult Times



Catherine gets information from the Health Library's Cancer Center branch

Catherine remembers when cancer treatment at Stanford meant receiving chemotherapy in a first-floor, windowless room and attending clinic appointments underground. "We called it the bunker," recalls Catherine, a 56-year-old Palo Alto resident and patient at Stanford Hospital & Clinics. "You had to go down the escalators into this place that had no windows. It was so crowded that people were sitting on the coffee tables. Everybody was just so anxious; it was kind of dark, the ceilings were low."

On her first day of cancer treatment at Stanford Hospital in 2001, Catherine met a dedicated staff working in difficult conditions. "Morale was poor at the time, not because of who they were, but because of the circumstances,"

she explains. "The treatment room itself, too many patients, just all of it. My doctor was wonderful, she just had a way of making me feel that we were going to deal with it and that I was in good hands. So the care was wonderful, but the place was just depressing."

Creating a Center for Care

In 2004, the Stanford Cancer Center opened its doors, bringing together all of Stanford Hospital's 80 cancer specialists, who had been scattered in various locations throughout the medical center. They began working side by side in physical surroundings designed to promote healing in patients. The

"I think it's really dangerous to have anyone's life stop when you get a diagnosis of cancer. Because we don't know, any of us, how much time we have. I think it's really important to just take every day and turn it into life."

218,000 sq. ft. building was the culmination of a decade of planning that involved physicians, staff, patients and the community. Catherine has certainly noticed the difference.

"It was such a morale booster for all of the people who work here. The spaces that are available for different things like classes and support groups," she marvels. "It's all air and light, as opposed to feeling like you're down in the basement of the Hospital. It's made a huge difference."

Designed with patients' needs in mind, a soaring atrium at the Center's entrance greets and uplifts patients, who traverse the wide, bright hallways with a friendly volunteer (called patient navigators) at their side. Simple but thoughtful amenities like valet parking, an on-site pharmacy, café, health library, and Internet-connected computers help make the time spent in the Stanford Cancer Center less stressful and more efficient.

"The environment we have created to enhance patient care at the Cancer Center is an example of what will be possible for all our patients at the new Stanford Hospital now being planned," said SHC President and CEO Martha Marsh. "It shows how the opportunity to combine all that we know about healing environments with breakthroughs in 21st century medicine can significantly improve the experiences of patients, families and the dedicated staff who care for them."

"The Stanford Cancer Center shows how the opportunity to combine all that we know about healing environments with breakthroughs in 21st century medicine can significantly improve the experiences of patients, families and the dedicated staff who care for them."

Encouraging Communication

As the Cancer Center's peer navigators provide support for patients being treated at Stanford Hospital, clinicians work together across specialty areas to provide world class care. The Center's design includes space for multidisciplinary teams of clinicians, called tumor boards, to meet and discuss a patient's case. For the Gastrointestinal (GI) Oncology program, that team

Did You Know...

Colorectal cancer is the third most diagnosed cancer and second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. The good news is that screening tests can be done to discover early stage cancers when they're the most treatable—and curable.

- **There were approximately 52,000 deaths from colorectal cancer in 2007—that's 1 person every 9 minutes**
- **About 153,000 new cases of colorectal cancer were diagnosed in 2007—that's 1 case every 4 minutes**
- **Colorectal cancer found in its earliest stage is more than 90% curable**
- **Thanks to improved screening, 2,200 fewer deaths from colorectal cancer occurred in 2004 than 2003**
- **Because of disproportionate screening rates, African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in advanced stages**
- **If all Americans were screened regularly, 25,000 lives could be saved annually**

For more information about the Stanford Cancer Center's Concierge Services call (650) 723 - 4268.

Am I at Risk?

Although the exact cause of most colorectal cancers is unknown, there are some known risk factors. People at a higher risk should be screened more frequently. The earlier colorectal cancer is detected, the better the chances for cure. The following are some risk factors

Age—The chance of having colorectal cancer goes up after age 50. More than 9 out of 10 people found to have colorectal cancer are older than 50.

History—Your health history might indicate an increased risk for colorectal cancer, including

- **Having had colorectal cancer before**
- **Having a history of polyps**
- **Having a history of bowel disease**
- **A family history of colorectal cancer**

Lifestyle—Certain lifestyle factors may increase the risk of colorectal cancer, including

- **High fat diet**
- **Lack of exercise**
- **Overweight**
- **Smoking**
- **Heavy use of alcohol**

includes sub-specialists in oncologic and colorectal surgery, radiation and medical oncology, gastroenterology, pathology, diagnostic and interventional radiology, nuclear medicine and genetics. Together they focus their research and clinical skills on preventing, diagnosing and treating the complex group of cancers affecting the gastrointestinal system.

Having a team of medical oncologists, surgeons and radiation oncologists review all the data together with expert guidance from a Stanford pathologist and radiologist prevents the miscommunication that may occur in routine office referrals. Available to any patient who requests them, the

Medical assistant Lynnette Nervis-Brown (left) reviews Catherine's upcoming appointments



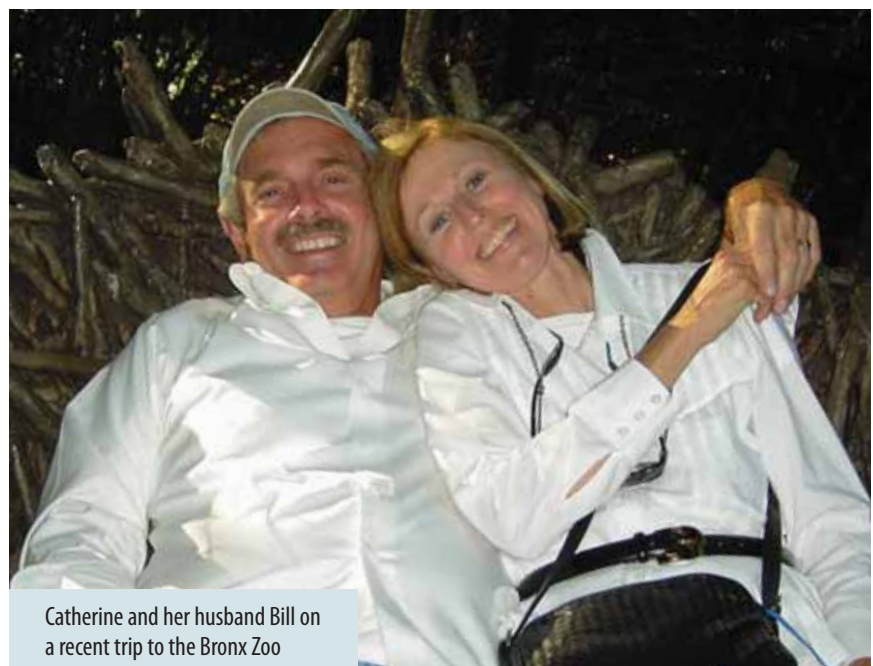
weekly conferences with the tumor board foster a continuum of care with seamless transitions from one specialist to another. The meetings also allow newly diagnosed patients and their families to ask questions of each of the relevant specialists at one time. The result is a more personal, comprehensive and expeditious treatment plan for people with GI cancer.

Turning Every Day into Life

While Catherine certainly benefits from the expertise and coordination of her doctors, it's the entire Center staff—who have been seeing her for years—that have truly made a difference in her life. From the medical assistant who checks her in with a song and a smile to the nurses who sit with her during chemotherapy, Catherine knows she has an entire team pulling for her. "I feel positive and relaxed, because there will always be support waiting for me," she says.

Catherine credits the medical care and emotional support that she receives at the Cancer Center for the time she has been able to enjoy with her loved ones. "I have an amazing, heroic husband. Just to have that would be enough for a lifetime," she confides. "But on top of that we have three really great children, they're just wonderful human beings. I mean, how lucky can one person get, to have all of that?"

Catherine's unsinkable attitude brings a smile and a hug from her clinical family as well. Lynette Nervis-Brown, a medical assistant at the Center and occasional singer, recently indulged patients in a waiting room with a soft song before Catherine headed into treatment. "Cancer is not a death sentence," Catherine says. "Life is a death sentence. We're all going to die. When you look at cancer that way it becomes a part of the life you were given. I've learned how to live with cancer."



Catherine and her husband Bill on a recent trip to the Bronx Zoo

Stanford Hospital & Clinics is known worldwide for advanced treatment of complex disorders in areas such as cardiac care, cancer treatment, neurosciences, surgery, and organ transplants. Consistently ranked among "America's Best Hospitals" by *U.S. News and World Report*, Stanford Hospital & Clinics is internationally recognized for translating medical breakthroughs into the care of patients. The Hospital is part of the Stanford University Medical Center, along with the Stanford University School of Medicine and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.



Beechwood and beyond

Belle Haven private school a 'well-kept secret'



Seventh-graders, from left, Teresa Tamayo, Eddie Cambron and Jazmin Perez run toward the football during a P.E. class at Beechwood School.

The unassuming entrance to Beechwood School is accessible only by turning right at the end of the Oneta Harris Community Center's driveway.

Outside of Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, this small private school of fewer than 170 students isn't well-known. Despite the lack of attention, it's been quietly — and successfully — educating children from the community, and neighboring East Palo Alto, for 20 years.

For families in the Ravenswood School District, Beechwood is a low-cost alternative to pricey private schools and struggling neighborhood public schools. Tuition at the kindergarten through eighth-grade Beechwood School is on a sliding scale, and is highly subsidized by the Palo Alto-based California Family Foundation. The foundation provides about 90 percent of the school's roughly \$2 million annual budget through an endowment and donations.

"Thank God for Beechwood," says Rachel Bickerstaff, a Menlo Park resident who has two daughters attending the school. "It's a better education and a better



The school tries to take a broad range of students and not just skim the best and brightest, says Principal Dave Laurance. One thing the students have in common is families that value education, he says.

atmosphere for kids than the Ravenswood School District."

Ms. Bickerstaff said she looked into private schools because she didn't think her local public school was doing a good job of preparing children for high school and college.

"In Ravenswood, children are being left behind. You hear about children in eighth grade there who can't read," she said.

On this sunny afternoon, students are

outside playing before heading back into class. They just spent nearly two hours watching a play by the Take Note Troupe and Principal Dave Laurance is beaming with pride at how well the children behaved themselves.

Kindergartners blow soap bubbles and run around as some older kids shoot hoops nearby. Planters of pansies decorate the entrances to the portable classrooms on the small, Spartan campus that borders

the train tracks just off Terminal Avenue.

When the founders of Beechwood created the school, they didn't have a model for it. "We were finding out what kind of school we needed to be to serve these families," Mr. Laurance said. "There was a lot of trial and error in the beginning."

Now the school is raising its profile a bit, reaching out to the community in its bid to purchase its leased plot of land from the city of Menlo Park, and replace its collection of portable classrooms with permanent facilities. School officials recently approached the Menlo Park City Council about their tentative plans for the campus, and got a warm reception.

Starting small

Dick Jacobsen, one of Beechwood's founders, said there was a reason for the school's low profile in its early days.

"We didn't know what we were doing when it started," he says, laughing.

The inception of Beechwood can be traced back to Mr. Jacobsen's days as a scoutmaster leading a troop of boys from Palo Alto and East Palo Alto, he said.

By Andrea Gemmet • Photos by Veronica Weber

Trying to help one of his scouts master a skill, he handed the seventh-grade boy a book. When he realized the boy couldn't read it, he began taking progressively simpler books off the shelf until he found one geared to second graders that the boy could read, he said.

Seeing the disparities in the opportunities available to boys from both sides of the freeway had a big impact on him.

"I thought something ought to be done about it," said Mr. Jacobsen, a partner in WSJ Properties in Palo Alto, along with Boyd Smith and former Palo Alto Mayor Jack Wheatley. "Eventually, my business partners and I started a foundation, the California Family Foundation, to see what we could do about housing, jobs and education, in terms of making some progress."

They started small, with a summer school program held at Belle Haven Elementary School, and then surveyed the parents to see if they would be interested in a local private school. Beechwood started with a kindergarten class and added a grade every year, he said.

"Ravenswood has a tough job," Mr. Jacobsen said. "If they could be helped with what they are trying to do, it would be great, but we didn't exactly know what to do. (We thought that) until things get better, parents ought to have some options, and it would be best if they had some local options."

Just looking at the high school graduation rates, Beechwood appears to be doing very well by its students. Beechwood has an 85 percent high school graduation rate — it's 90 percent if you count students who earn GEDs.

In the public school system, students in the Ravenswood district have a high school graduation rate of about 30 percent, said Principal Laurance.

"The goal for the school is to turn that around. It's an appalling statistic," he said.

Kathy Connolly, the school's full time alumni coordinator, makes sure that graduating eighth graders are well-placed in high school.

"Beechwood's original class was sent to the Sequoia district and we found that a lot of the work we'd done had been undone," Mr. Laurance said. "They have huge classes, and a lot of the kids who look like them were not academically oriented. There's a discomfort there."

Now, the majority of Beechwood students go on to private or charter high schools, with less than a quarter of them going to public high schools, Ms. Connolly said.

Chris Bischof, the head of private Eastside College Preparatory in East Palo Alto, has high praise for Beechwood.

"We've had a number of their students come here in the ninth grade, and it's been a great fit," he said. "They have a really positive approach and attitude at school,



Kindergarteners, from left, Victor Cunningham, Tiera Hodges, Okusi Semi and Jordan Clark play with soap bubbles during recess.

and most importantly, they're really well-prepared. They have wonderful teachers, a great organization and a great program."

Nurturing the whole child

Over the years, Beechwood has evolved into a school with a heavy emphasis on parent participation and a goal to educate the whole child, not just academically, but also socially and emotionally. It's all part of the school's goal to create successful students who are also good citizens and active community members, said Mr. Laurance.

For younger students, classes are on a full-day, year-round schedule, so that

by the time they finish fourth grade, the children have completed an extra year of instruction, he said.

Older students are on a traditional school-year schedule, but they stay for an extra hour, until 4 p.m., four days a week.

Among the enrichment classes offered are Spanish, Spanish for native speakers, and art. There is also counseling for the students.

"When you're taking on the challenge of working with a low-income families, there are always going to be family situations that are not ideal," Mr. Laurance said. "We give them someone to talk

to, and skills to deal with tough situations. We have families dealing with the deportation of a father, divorce, depression and addiction."

Beechwood students take the same standardized tests as their public-school counterparts, but the school uses the testing results in a completely different way, Mr. Laurance said.

"We use them to evaluate ourselves. We're not saying that teachers need certain scores," he said. "We evaluate our teachers on the relationships with the kids, and how they do meeting goals we set."

The school doesn't just ask parents to participate, it requires them to put in 25 hours of service every year, which includes participating in parent education classes, parent-teacher meetings and volunteer work at the school, he said.

"It's like one big family. That's what I really like about it," said Renee Butler, who has a third-grader at Beechwood.

The school tries to take a broad range of students from the community, Mr. Laurance said, and not just skim the best and brightest. One thing the students do have in common is families that value education, he said.

"We try not to become elite, but it is a self-selecting place because (parents) have to show up at all of the meetings and pay \$120 a month," Mr. Laurance said. "We're not just taking the academic elite, or the nicest, quietest kids

Continued on next page



Beechwood Principal **Dave Laurance** fills in for an absent teacher in a middle school math class. Now in his first year as principal, Mr. Laurance has taught at the school for 14 years.



EYE CARE NEWS



Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician



A MATTER OF PRESERVATION

While eyeglasses are often abused on a daily basis, treating them well will reward wearers with years of extended services. Begin by purchasing a strong eyeglass case that will protect your eyewear investment even if you mistakenly sit on them. A protective case will likely extend the two-year life expectancy of eyeglasses realized by most wearers. The benefit for sunglasses and reading glasses, which tend to endure above-average abuse, will probably be even greater. Beyond that, eyeglass owners should resist any impulse to clean their dirty lenses without

first rinsing them under running water. A soft cloth should be used to dry them. Anything containing Ammonia should not be used as they may damage an anti-reflective coating.

Following simple maintenance tips can extend the life of your eyewear. Take your glasses off with both hands, rinse lenses under warm water before cleaning, and never use paper towels to dry the lenses. When you are not wearing glasses, keep them in a protective case. At MENLO OPTICAL, we feature a wide selection of designer frames in the latest shapes, sizes and colors. We provide complete eyewear repair services to give you a peace of mind. Call us at 322-3900, or bring us your prescription at 1166 University Drive, on the corner of Oak Grove Avenue and University Drive.

P.S. If your eyeglasses' metal or plastic frames become bent, do not try to return them to their original shape yourself. Leave the job to an experienced eye care professional.

Mark Schmidt is an American Board of Optician 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.

Beechwood plans future in Belle Haven

Continued from previous page

from the neighborhood.”

Campus plans

With the city of Menlo Park's approval, Beechwood officials plan to have the school site appraised and raise money to purchase it.

“It's been a great piece of land for us, and the city of Menlo Park has been terrific,” Mr. Jacobsen said. “The environment around Onetta Harris has been a safe place, a very positive place for us.”

A capital campaign would be launched to raise money to build two, two-story classroom buildings, as well as buildings to house the science lab, library and assembly hall, Mr. Jacobsen said. The foundation is already working to expand its donor base, he said.

There are no plans to expand the school's current maximum enrollment of 170, he said.

Neil Call, a foundation board member and former assistant superintendent for the Redwood City school district, said it's time for the school to establish a per-



Priyanka Singh pauses to have her hair braided by first-grade teacher Jan Richmond.

enrolling at Beechwood.

“When there were two kindergarten groups, there were always a couple of kids who repeated (kindergarten) who would have benefited from kinder-prep,” Ms. Curtis said. “It's just not a good feeling for kids when they have to repeat. We found it so helpful to have an extra year for some of them.”

Students who graduate from Beechwood often come back, whether to fulfill their high school's community service requirement by volunteering, or to talk to eighth graders about high school life, said Ms. Connolly.

“It's a very connected, very supportive place for kids,” she said. “(Our alumni) may be having academic problems or family issues, and they pick up the phone and call us. It's a real family feel here, and I don't think that's an exaggeration.”

While school officials are proud of Beechwood alumni who have gone on to receive college diplomas — the school's first Stanford grad is now considering law school, Ms. Connolly said — they are equally proud of former students who are doing well in simpler ways, whether by attending community college, holding down full-time jobs, or raising families and volunteering in the community.

“Not everything is perfect, of course, but if you look at the statistics of the general population and



Volunteer coordinator Eric Gelter dunks the ball as Dominique Bickerstaff and James Walton look on.

manent home.

“The rooms are small, and everything is kind of crowded,” Mr. Call said. “They've made it work for 20 years, but it would be so nice to design something specific for the school.”

For Priscilla Taylor, the school's middle school math teacher and the former principal, the school has earned the right to improve its facilities.

“You get to the point where you've ironed out the knots, you've tweaked the academic progress, and now you want a facility to match the things you want to do,” she said.

It takes a community

Mr. Jacobsen describes educating the students as a true community effort.

“If the parents don't do their job, it's very, very hard for us to make the kind of difference that needs to be made in a child's life,” he said. “Parents are the star players; we try to provide support for them.”

Students' years at Beechwood are book-ended with extra support and help. Children who don't have the social or academic skills necessary for kindergarten spend a year at Beechwood's kinder-prep classroom, and the school's graduates know they can always come back for help, said Ms. Connolly.

Kinder-prep teacher Sheina Curtis said that only about half the children have been to preschool before

look at what our kids are up to, it's pretty evident that the support and foundation that Beechwood gives kids helps them have confidence and hope,” Ms. Connolly said. “Because it's all about hope. In these under-served communities, there's a lot of hopelessness, and Beechwood offers a brighter vision for the future.” ■



Seventh-graders, from left, Mark Qoro, Luis Gracian, Andrew Elias, Eddie Cambron, Jesus Lopez and Alex Vilchez take a break during an exercise drill.

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Jerry Rice Jr. shows speed, quickness in two sports

By Colin Becht
Special to The Almanac

Jerry Rice Jr., a junior at Menlo School and son of the 49er great, is a versatile athlete in both football and basketball, showing some of the same qualities of speed and quickness that his father had.

During the football season, Rice, 16 and a resident of Atherton, excelled as a running back and wide receiver in his first year at the varsity level. He was named the Palo Alto Weekly Utility Player of the Year for the Peninsula Athletic League Bay Division, and the San Francisco Chronicle named him to the All-Peninsula team as a utility player.

His success gained him interest from Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly known as Division IA) schools. According to Rice, he has received letters from Purdue University, Florida State University, the University of Louisville, the University of Oregon, and Stanford University, all expressing a preliminary interest in his abilities as a football player.

Rice says his best asset as a football player is "making people miss." His opponents, he says, "are big boys and I'm not that big so I'm not going to try and run over them. I either try and run around them or maybe give a little juke or spin."

Rice has shown he is more than a one-sport athlete. He played point guard on the Menlo School basketball team, which finished its regular season with a 19-6 record and won the PAL South Division championship with a league record of 9-1.

Rice's playing time increased as the season progressed, and he even worked himself into the starting lineup on occasion.

Head Coach Chris Weems praises Rice's "speed and quickness" and his ability to change "directions and speed."

"Jerry has some raw skills that have improved as he's gotten more game experience," says Weems.

Says Rice of his basketball play: "I'm more of a driver. I can drive and then dish, or drive and finish, just give opportunities for others to make easier scores. I'm trying to not make a lot of mistakes, but be able to create at the same time."

Though Rice has yet to receive the interest from colleges for basketball in the same way he has for football, Weems thinks that Rice will have the opportunity to play college basketball.

"I would say his future is football, but there's no reason he can't be a great basketball player as well," says Weems.

SPORTS

Check TheAlmanacOnline.com for sports updates.

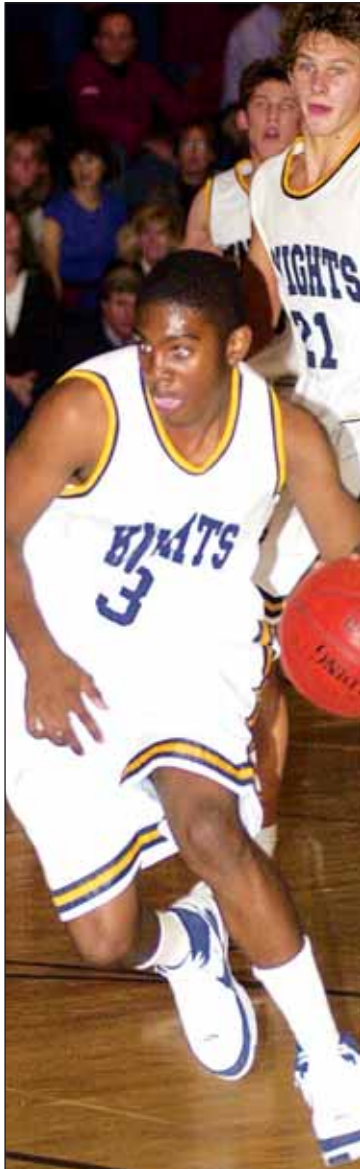


Photo by Keith Peters/Palo Alto Weekly

Jerry Rice Jr. won the praise of Menlo School's head basketball coach Chris Weems for his ability to change "directions and speed."

Rice says his father serves as a "reference source" for him. "Anything that I need help on or I need guidance on, he'll tell me things I need to work on to be successful," he says. "Also, as a model and an example, he shows hard work and dedication to what you want to do, so I try to follow that."

Rice says that others have noticed similarities in the way he and his father burst into their routes and effectively use their speed.

Weems comments that Rice and his father share "an overall love of the game and competition."

He adds: "I really believe [Jerry Rice Jr.]'s having fun and enjoying the game and I am pretty sure his dad feels the same way about his career in football." ■

About the author: Colin Becht, a junior at Menlo School in Atherton, is a freelance sports writer.

West Bay Opera's 'Cosi fan tutte' succeeds

By Mort Levine
Special to The Almanac

The magical music of Mozart coupled with almost any libretto would still be magic. The creative team at West Bay Opera, in its current offering at the Lucie Stern Community Center in Palo Alto, brings insights and sympathy with the human condition that allows "Cosi fan tutte" to be enjoyed on several levels.

This last of three masterworks that Mozart partnered with the cynical, savvy and occasionally savage librettist Lorenzo da Ponte pokes over-the-top fun at the fickleness of young lovers. The title translates as "So do they all."

In the West Bay production, director Douglas Nagel has emphasized the youth of the principals who fall in and out and then back into the arms of their original lovers. Da Ponte envisioned the two female leads, Dorabella and Fiordiligi, as 15-year-olds with the two male singers, Ferrando and Guglielmo as perhaps 18-year-olds freshly in their colorful uniforms as dashing soldiers.

In addition to this foursome, the only two other characters are Don Alfonso, an elderly friend who is amused by the men's fierce protestations of undying devotion to their respective young women. He poses a bet that within the day he can prove to them how easily the objects of desire can be switched to the other. Helping the Don with his manipulations is the housemaid Despina, who is equally cynical about true love.

The setting is an 18th century villa at a Naples beach resort. The opera's action moves quickly from a morning coffee where the three men set up the bet. When the two women arrive, the Don rushes the soldiers off to war (on a sailboat seen behind the rear curtain). The men then reappear as Albanians bewigged, mustachio'd, in turban and billowing colorful Arabian Nights garb. They immediately get on to the seduction of each other's paramour.

After swallowing poison to show how desperately in love they are, the men are "saved" by Despina dressed as a kooky Doctor Mesmer who applies a giant magnet to draw out the toxin. A quick pair of marriages is contrived with Despina now decked out as an equally kooky Notary to preside over the ceremony. When the same bright military march music is heard following the wedding, pandemonium reigns, the Albanians duck out and reappear stepping from the same sailboat in their army uniforms pretending to be angered by their fickle lovers. But the beneficent Don

REVIEW

West Bay Opera will perform Mozart's "Cosi fan tutte" Friday through Sunday, Feb. 22-24, at the Lucie Stern Community Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Curtain time is 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Order tickets through the box office (424-9999) or go to wbopera.org.

Alfonso explains all and tells the lovers to "embrace each other and say no more." All ends well.

The opera's trivial plot does, however, call upon an understanding of the human frailties, uncertainties and pressures affecting teenagers today as they did in Mozart's time. Perhaps though it's enough to simply enjoy the scintillating melodies along with the combined efforts of the remarkable group of talented singers West Bay has brought together.

Due to an early deadline, this review is based on the dress rehearsal of the cast. It features as Despina an insouciant Elisabeth Russ, a high soprano with a flair for comedy, both physical and facial. She typically dominates the stage whenever she is on it. Vet-

eran bass-baritone Peter Graham is a benign Don Alfonso.

The lovers included lyric tenor Brian Thorsett, an alumnus of the SFO Merola program, as Ferrando, and Igor Vieira, a native of Rio de Janeiro, as Guglielmo. Both provided some sublime ensembles in duets and quartets.

The role of Dorabella is sung in the West Bay debut by Meghan Dibble, who has performed widely on the East Coast and in Pocket Opera. She has a flair for zany comedy acting as a foil to her friend Fiordiligi, sung by coloratura soprano Rebecca Schuessler. Her voice has great range and volume. Her buttery high notes filled the hall.

The 24-piece West Bay orchestra was partially filled with substitutes at the dress rehearsal and it had some difficulty keeping up with the vigorous baton of Maestra Barbara Day Turner. The regular full-strength staffing is to be in the pit for all of the regular performances.

The modest but quite functional sets were done by Jean-Francois Revon with costumes of the era by Beth Gilroy. The lighting designer, Robert Ted Anderson, had most

See OPERA, page 28

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More chances to weigh in on Burgess Gym

Menlo Park city staff is still seeking public input on plans to build a new Burgess Gym, and all residents are invited to a meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 25, to have their say on the features of the new facility.

The meeting will be held in the Burgess Recreation Center at 700 Alma St. in the Civic Center.

The city has already held a series of focus group meetings on the gym for gym user groups and neighbors.

Residents can also weigh in on plans for the new gym at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. in the Onetta Harris Community Center at 100 Terminal Ave. in Menlo Park.

Black history event

Menlo Park city staff is holding a free dinner and show to honor Black History Month on Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Onetta Harris Community Center at

■ MENLO WATCH

100 Terminal Ave.

The event is scheduled for 6 to 8 p.m., and will feature local residents singing, dancing, and reciting poetry, plus African drumming by San Francisco-based artist Baba Shibambo.

A free dinner and raffle will follow the show.

Walking tour

Residents interested in walk-

ing and talking about downtown Menlo Park are encouraged to attend a walking tour of Santa Cruz Avenue starting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 23.

The idea behind the walk is to allow participants to interact with city staff, a city-hired consultant, and each other to talk about challenges and opportunities for revamping the downtown area.

To attend, meet at the Caltrain station at 10 a.m. The walking tour will last until noon.

Supes place parks tax on June ballot

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Feb. 12 to place a one-eighth cent sales tax measure on the June 3 ballot to raise money for parks and recreation programs.

The tax would provide about \$16 million a year for the operation, improvement and maintenance of city parks and recreation departments and county parks, county staff said.

The tax, which requires approval by two-thirds of the voters for passage, would cost the average person \$18 a year, staff estimated.

A handful of people praised the measure during the Board of Supervisors meeting. Julie Bott, executive director of the San Mateo County Parks Foundation, discussed how well maintained parks raise the value of homes in the area. Parks are "invaluable to the fabric of our community," she said.

A previous attempt to pass the tax in 2006 failed, but Ms. Bott said the proponents are much more organized this time.

— Bay City News Service

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PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

The City of Menlo Park invites its residents to participate in a public meeting to discuss gym & gymnastics programming and how current desires and future needs might influence conceptual plans for the Burgess Gym Renovation and Expansion Project.

The meeting will be held on Monday, February 25th at 6:30 PM in Room 118 of the Burgess Recreation Center. For more information or to subscribe to e-mail notifications regarding the project please visit the City's website:

www.menlopark.org/gym



Naeve paintings on exhibit in Woodside

Allegro Framing and Art gallery is featuring California landscapes and seascapes painted by local artist Pamela Priest Naeve at its newest location, 3056 Woodside Road in Woodside.

The gallery is hosting an artist reception on Sunday, Feb. 24, from 1 to 4 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Currently on exhibit are 15 of Ms. Naeve's oil paintings on boards and canvas, and selling at prices from \$750 to \$2,900.

Ms. Naeve lived in Woodside for 20 years before moving to Portola Valley, where she maintains a studio in her home.

She works for the Northern California Cancer Center, and paints for fun. She is largely self-taught.

"When I paint outdoors it's almost a vacation," she says. "I can paint for four or five hours and feel that I've been away for the weekend."

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OBITUARIES

Barbara Kroopf

Community volunteer

Barbara "Bobbie" Kroopf of Menlo Park died Feb. 7 at Stanford Hospital after a short illness. She was 85.



Barbara Kroopf

Ms. Kroopf, a resident of Menlo Park and Atherton since 1947, was born in Boston. She met her future husband, Dr. Stanford Kroopf, when she was a lab technician and he was an intern at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston. They were married in 1943.

After Dr. Kroopf spent two years in the military, the couple headed west, settling in Menlo Park. Ms. Kroopf was a stay-at-home mother raising her three children. Their

home life was filled with both athletic and intellectual pursuits, say family members. Ms. Kroopf instilled her love of sports in her children and particularly enjoyed playing golf.

Together with her husband, Dr. Stanford Kroopf, an internist and cardiologist, she became part of the medical community centered around Stanford Hospital and the Stanford University School of Medicine, say family members.

She was an active volunteer with Little House, Allied Arts, the Peninsula Volunteers, and many medical charities. Once the children were grown, the Kroopfs traveled throughout the world.

Ms. Kroopf is survived by her husband of 65 years, Dr. Stanford Kroopf; children Connie Chalmers, Sandy Kroopf and Scott Kroopf; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Memorial services were held Feb. 17. The family prefers memorials be made to the American

Heart Association.

Harold G. Orcutt

Director of Fish and Game Department

Harold G. Orcutt, a resident of Palo Alto and Redwood City for more than 55 years, died Feb. 10. He was 89.

A marine biologist, he was appointed in 1967 as laboratory director of Northern California Marine Investigations in Menlo Park for the Department of Fish and Game.

Mr. Orcutt had served as a fisheries officer, captain, with the 8th U.S. Army in Japan. He received a Ph.D. from Stanford University in 1949.

He was interested in genealogy, adventures, and building things, from patios to bird houses, say family members.

Surviving family members are his wife of 64 years, Anita; son Bob and daughter Linda Atwood; and four grandsons.

Memorial services have been held. Donations in his name may be made to Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.



Harold Orcutt

BIRTHS

Woodside

■ Rhonda Weiss and David Murdoch, a daughter, Jan. 5 at Sequoia Hospital.

Atherton

■ Kimberly Jacobson and Stephen

Wullschleger, a daughter, Jan. 17, at Sequoia Hospital.

Menlo Park

■ Mary and Brian Heffernan, a daughter, Mary Frances, Sept. 18, 2007, at Stanford University Medical Center.

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 reports:

- Golf cart stolen, damaged and recovered, 500 block of Middlefield Road, Feb. 8.
- Jewelry missing, first block of Tuscaloosa Ave., Feb. 11.

Fraud reports:

- Unauthorized use of credit card, first block of Catalpa Drive, Feb. 8.
- Identity theft, 100 block of Selby Lane, Feb. 9.
- Unauthorized transfer of \$92,000 from line-of-credit to checking account, Lloyd Drive, Feb. 11.

MENLO PARK

Burglary reports:

- Front and side doors of residence found open, 200 block of Robin Way, Feb. 8.
- Computer equipment stolen, 100 block of Elliott Drive, Feb. 9.
- Burglar found in closet fled on foot, 200 block of McKendry Ave., Feb. 11.
- TV stolen via unlocked door, 300 block of Chester St., Feb. 11.
- Tools stolen from locked shed, 1300 block of Carlton Ave., Feb. 12.

Robbery report: Strong arm robbery, Bayfront Park, about 4:40 p.m. on Feb. 14.

Stolen vehicle report: Vehicle found on Alameda de las Pulgas, 1100 block of Sevier Ave., Feb. 13.

Grand theft report: Debit card stolen from vehicle and used, 1400 block of Almanor Ave., Feb. 8.

Fraud report: Unauthorized credit card charges, 1200 block of Hobart St. and 1100 block of Carlton Ave., and 200 block of Hedge Road, Feb. 9, 11 and 12.

WOODSIDE

Burglary reports:

- Computer equipment and tools stolen

IN THE SERVICE

■ Coast Guard Fireman James Williams, a 2000 graduate of Woodside High School, recently graduated from the U. S. Guard Recruit Training Center in Cape May, New Jersey. The eight-week training program included water safety and survival, firefighting and marksmanship. He will join 36,000 others in the Coast Guard.

from garage, 200 block of Brookwood Road, Feb. 10.

■ Objects worth \$1,800 stolen from parked vehicle, Canada College at 4200 Farm Hill Boulevard, Feb. 11.

LADERA

Arson report: Two Molotov cocktails thrown on school grounds, Woodland School at 360 La Cuesta Drive, Feb. 11.



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
765 Portola Road
Portola Valley, CA 94028

The Town of Portola Valley is currently gathering information concerning a variety of surfaces for use on its athletic fields. As part of this information gathering process the Town Council will consider issuance of a Request for Proposals from Qualified Consultants Specializing in Analysis of Artificial Turf, Sod/Seed Grass & Native Grass Use in Athletic Field Applications at its meeting on

Wednesday, February 27, 2008
8:00 P.M.

The public is encouraged to attend.

For more information, please visit the Town's website at www.portolavalley.net or contact Janet McDougall, Assistant Town Administrator, at (650) 851-1700, ext. 18 or jmcdougall@portolavalley.net.

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Carol Carnevale, Rosemary Squires, Nicole Aron



Carol Carnevale, Rosemary Squires, Nicole Aron



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Voluntary subscriptions are available for delivery to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside at \$30 per year or \$50 for 2 years. Subscriptions by businesses or residents outside the area are \$50 for one year and \$80 for two years.



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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

Stanford stonewalls on trail

It was disappointing but not surprising to see the outcome of a year of fruitless negotiations between Stanford and San Mateo County over a recreational trail.

The university has steadfastly refused to build a trail across its land as stipulated in an agreement struck with Santa Clara County when Stanford's development plan was approved in 2000. By everyone's reckoning except Stanford's, that agreement

EDITORIAL
The opinion of The Almanac

requires that two recreational trails be built across Stanford lands so hikers could reach the foothills and connect with trails to the coast.

The route for the southern trail has been set by Santa Clara County, but Stanford has not accepted any northern route across its lands, instead insisting that an alternate along Alpine Road, in San Mateo County, be used. Residents of Stanford Weekend Acres and Ladera have fiercely opposed this option, and ultimately convinced San Mateo County supervisors to reject Stanford's take-it-or-leave-it offer.

Stanford held this position despite being offered a variety of options to run a short section of trail on its own land from West Campus Drive near the golf course to the back entrance of the Dish Trail at Piers Road. San Mateo County's frustrated negotiators, supervisors Rich Gordon and Jerry Hill, advised their colleagues last week that Stanford had been unwilling to budge on its position to build the "trail" along Alpine Road.

Mr. Gordon and Mr. Hill said in a memo that they rejected the Alpine Road option because, "This plan does not have the support of the environmental community." They added: "Implementation would probably lead to lawsuits against San Mateo County."

Incredibly, it appears that Stanford's goal in this standoff is to simply outlast trail opponents. Larry Horton, the university's point man in the effort, is not the decision-maker and obviously had no room to maneuver. The only solution acceptable was Stanford's. His only comment was that the \$8.4 million offer would remain on the table until 2011, when both Mr. Hill and Mr. Gordon will be off the board. We hope their replacements are just as firm in refusing to give in to the university's shameless demands.

It is sad to see the disconnect between Stanford's world-class faculty and the brilliant work they do, and its development arm, which in this case apparently would rather spend \$8.4 million on an unwanted paved trail rather than use an on-campus route for less than \$500,000.

Perhaps the university remains shell-shocked after seeing the popularity of the Dish Trail and the public's eagerness to claim Stanford lands as their own. Now, it appears intent on making sure the public never again gets regular access to even a tiny portion of Stanford property, even for such an innocuous purpose as a hiking trail that could be moved or even removed if it got in the way of a truly necessary development. ■

LETTERS
Our readers write

More input needed on high-speed rail decision

Editor:

So the Menlo Park and Atherton city councils had a joint study session and the majority of council members said "no way" to either grade separations or high-speed rail.

Given that our two cities have probably the least amount of clout with the California High Speed Rail Authority, their pronouncements are ill-directed and ill-timed. After all, the decision about high-speed rail does not rest with either Menlo Park or Atherton.

It would have been more neighborly to have included both Redwood City and Palo Alto in the discussions, as well as have had more input from our own residents and businesses. One of these cities could have a stop on this long distance rapid train route. Clearly their communities could benefit.

It would be prudent to ask all of our Peninsula cities to come together to discuss the impacts, both positive and negative, of grade separations and high-speed rail. By



Jac Audiffred Collection

Our Regional Heritage

The Walter Knight Stage Co. made the trip from Redwood City to San Gregorio via Woodside and La Honda in the 1920s. Here Mr. Knight is seen moving the stage by automobile, but he depended on horses to make the trip over the coastal range and back.

See **LETTERS**, next page

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

collaboratively working towards a regional, integrated approach, we would have better solutions to the negative impacts and discover new ways to maximize the positives.

As both Menlo Park and Atherton councils have declared themselves to be "green" cities, shouldn't they also be factoring in that high-speed rail is much cleaner than single-occupant car or jet travel to and from Los Angeles?

Should the voters approve the high-speed rail project, our councils should be prepared to move forward with the most positive, integrated plan possible.

Elizabeth Lasensky
Fremont Street, Menlo Park

Why not a quiet zone for Menlo Park?

Editor:

At the joint City Council study session with Atherton Jan. 29, I requested that formation of a railroad quiet zone for Menlo Park should be considered.

A federal law passed in 2005 makes it possible to establish rail-

road quiet zones and many cities are in the process of getting or have received approval for them (California alone at least 17).

In Menlo Park a quiet zone would benefit many residents and businesses. There is much talk about development along the tracks. As an example, if the Derry project is approved, 108 new homes will be constructed and all of these will be very close to the tracks. A quiet zone would certainly benefit all of those living in these new homes, as well the commercial interests in that development.

The cities of Richmond and Fremont have already established quiet zones. If they can do it, certainly we can.

At the study session, there was a claim that even if a quiet zone was approved for Menlo Park, the engineers could still blow the horns, the implication being that a quiet zone might well be ineffective. The new federal law imposes a \$7,500 fine for willfully blowing the horn. Now if a \$7,500 fine is not enough to keep the horn from sounding that will be pretty amazing.

Quiet zones are effective; we need one in Menlo Park.

Morris Brown
Stone Pine Lane, Menlo Park

A million thanks for Sen. Simitian

Editor:

It isn't every day that you find a reason to say thank you to a politician, but residents of the Menlo Park City School District have a million reasons to say thanks to our state Sen. Joe Simitian. That's how many dollars Joe saved the district's bond program when he went to bat for us against the Sacramento bureaucracy.

We applied to the state for matching funds to help finance the facilities we are building to accommodate enrollment growth. Everything was fine with our application until the state decided to develop new rules for matching funds that threatened our proposal. We explained that we had followed all the rules as they were written and it wasn't fair for the state to change the rules in the middle of the game. When these complaints fell on deaf ears we turned to Sen. Simitian for help.

His staff jumped right in and helped us to navigate our way through Sacramento. At the critical hearing on our application, Joe personally led the charge for Menlo Park and other districts in the same boat. Through the

sheer force of his intellect and political skill, he turned the tide and convinced the State Allocation Board to do the right thing and approve our request.

This critical piece of funding is now secure, and we have Joe Simitian to thank.

Bruce Ives, president
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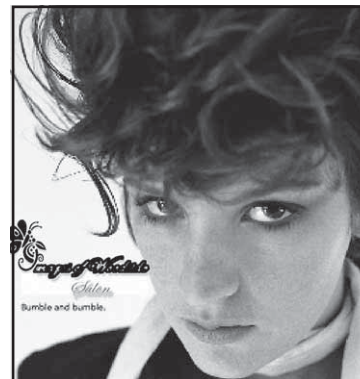
Clarification on water conflict story

Editor:

Thanks for writing about the conflict between protecting the Tuolumne River and meeting water needs in the Bay Area.

The article is misleading with respect to Environmental Defense's position. We, along with the Tuolumne River Trust and more than 100 other environmental groups, oppose additional diversions from the Tuolumne River. What we support is BAWSCA's draft plan to invest in improved agricultural conservation in the Central Valley, which would free up water supplies for the benefit of both Bay Area cities and the Tuolumne River.

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