

**PRIVATE FUNDS** versus public oversight: City considers \$8 million anonymous gift to build new gym. Page 5

# The Almanac

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



APRIL 30, 2008 [www.TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://www.TheAlmanacOnline.com)

VOL. 43 NO. 35



## *Giving* Back

2,600 volunteers help local communities through Menlo Park Presbyterian Church's Compassion Weekend Page 14

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# Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

## FIRST SHOT



Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac

### May Day royalty

Woodside Elementary School's kindergarten court will preside over the 88th May Day Parade on Saturday, May 3. This year's crop of randomly selected royals is, from top left, king Rishi Kesavath and princess Elizabeth Piro, and from bottom left, princess Ava Pollioni, queen Ava Schumacher, prince Henry Baldwin and prince Max Gerhardt. The parade starts at 10 a.m. on Woodside Road, and runs from the school to Cañada Road and back again.

### Atherton

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### Menlo Park

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- Ex-councilman Kinney fears Trees for Menlo campaign may get the "kiss of death." **Page 9**

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### Schools

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- District continues search for Corte Madera School principal. **Page 16**

### Destinations

- One Mexico for Woodside couple, another for daughters. **Cover, Section 2**

### On the cover

Sue Anne Yarbrough (center) of SpiritCare Ministry listens to Ruth W. (right), a senior at the Nazareth Classic Care Community in Menlo Park, on Sunday during Compassion Weekend. Members of the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church worked with the SpiritCare Ministry to help beautify the senior center and spend time visiting the residents. Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac. See story and additional photos on **Page 14**.

### CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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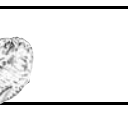
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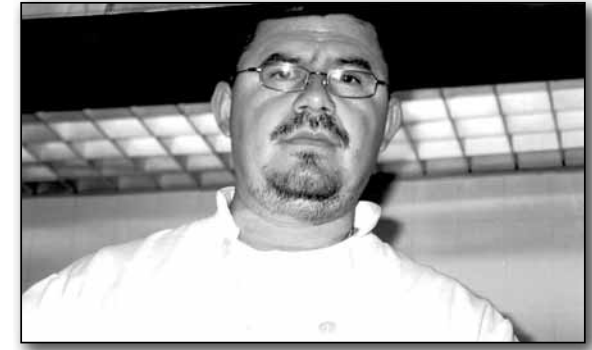
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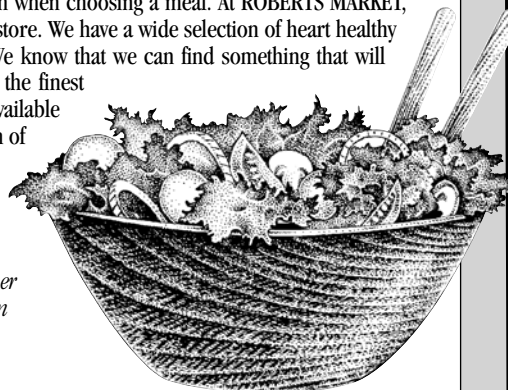
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### Dine Out Heart Healthy

For people struggling with heart issues, and those who are trying to prevent them, restaurants offer lots of delicious, heart-healthy choices. When dining out, stay away from dishes that have a lot of cheese, sour cream, or mayonnaise. If fried food is a favorite, consider ordering food flavored with lots of spices as an alternative. Instead of ordering fried oysters, fish, or chicken, try grilled fish or chicken, or some boiled spiced shrimp. Eat pita pockets or bread instead of buttery croissants. Salads are a great way to get vegetable servings and lots of fiber, but be sure to ask about the different dressing options. Avoid creamy soups, and instead choose soup with a broth base.

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*Hint: If steak is your favorite, opt for leaner cuts of meat such as filet mignon, London broil, or round or flank steak.*



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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Private funds versus public oversight

■ Council considers \$8 million anonymous gift to build new gym. Donor would pick contractor, have say in design.

By **Rory Brown**  
Almanac Staff Writer

For \$8 million, should Menlo Park sacrifice part of what's supposed to be an entirely public process?

That's the big question facing City Council members heading into their meeting on Tuesday, April 29, when they are expected to discuss a proposal by an anonymous would-be donor to contribute \$8 million or more to build a new Burgess Gym.

The meeting is set to start at 7 p.m. in

the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets. Check [TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://TheAlmanacOnline.com) for a news update.

Rising construction costs have pushed the estimated cost of building a new gym and gymnastics center from \$9 million to upwards of \$20 million, meaning an \$8 million donation would provide a big boost toward getting the project built.

But the gift is contingent on several conditions that would circumvent the guidelines of ensuring city decisions are properly vetted by the public:

■ Council members already know the identity of the donor, but he/she would remain anonymous to the public until the gym is built.

■ The donor would hand-select the construction contractor rather than having the city conduct an open-bid process.

■ The donor would have an "active role" in managing construction, including dictating the total square footage of the gym.

City Attorney Bill McClure said there is no precedent for a private donor playing this type of role in the construction of a Menlo Park public facility, but council members didn't express any concerns to *The Almanac*. They were also careful not to give hints of the donor's identity.

"It's not like the donor would be anonymous forever," said Councilman Heyward Robinson. "There's a lot of legitimate questions we need answers to, but hopefully we can move this thing forward."

When asked if he had reservations about keeping the identity of the donor from the public, Mayor Andy Cohen replied, "I don't think it's a concern, but I can't tell you why."

City Manager Glen Rojas stressed that the donor has "no intent to make this process controversial" and the top priority, from his standpoint, "is to make sure to protect the interests of the city."

The gym plans, once finished, would

See **GYM**, page 8

## PV schools receive \$200,000 anonymous gift for technology

By **Marjorie Mader**  
Almanac Staff Writer

The Portola Valley School District has received a huge boost: An anonymous person has donated \$200,000 to be used to help the district implement its technology plan.

The gift comes at an opportune time. The district faces a \$1 million budget shortfall for the coming year and no growth in property tax revenue.

The district was unexpectedly hit recently with the loss of \$250,000 in revenue, a result of the downward reassessment of billionaire Larry Ellison's Woodside estate. His property is within the Portola Valley school district.

Quelling rumors, Assistant Superintendent Tim Hanretty confirmed April 24 that the \$200,000 gift is *not* from Mr. Ellison. "Although we

would welcome a donation from him," added Mr. Hanretty.

The anonymous gift conforms to the district's policy on targeted and directed giving that was originally adopted in May 2000 and revised last October, said Mr. Hanretty.

"It's a textbook situation," he said. The gift identifies a need in the district's strategic plan. The donor wants to support the technology plan, and the gift is aligned with the district need, he said.

The school board unanimously accepted the targeted gift with thanks to "the incredible generosity of the donor" at its April 9 meeting.

The technology plan is part of the district's strategic plan, now in its second year.

The projected cost of the technology equipment acquisition plan —

See **GIFT**, page 21



Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac

### Going up

The massive framework undergirding the new \$32 million performing arts center at Menlo-Atherton High School is but a prelude to a roofline that is both high and swooping and likely to stamp an impression in the memory of anyone passing the intersection of Ravenswood Avenue and Middlefield Road in Atherton when it is finished in late 2009.

## Cal Fire decision could bring fire-protection mandates to Portola Valley

By **Dave Boyce**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Wildfire is a hazard in Portola Valley, but just how serious a hazard is it?

It's an important question in towns that, like Portola Valley, have forested areas close to homes — a wildland-urban interface, in firefighter lingo.

According to a map prepared by Ray Moritz, a consultant in mapping fire-prone vegetation, threats rated "very high" exist in some Portola Valley neigh-

borhoods, and threats deemed only "high" exist in many others, based on the proximity and topography of fire-prone forested areas.

The Woodside Fire Protection District agrees with Mr. Moritz on the threat posed by vegetation, but sees more very high threats in developed areas of town than the Moritz map, said Deputy Town Planner Tom Vlastic.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has another opinion, based on its current map: The risk is high,

but not very high.

Cal Fire, which will have the last word, is open to other points of view as it asks towns and fire districts for comments in its efforts to update its own maps that rank an area's trees, shrubs and grasslands, and the fire hazards they present.

The agency has received comments from the Woodside fire district, and that has town officials and residents concerned about more stringent fire safety rules and higher fire insurance rates.

The outcome of the debate on

which hazard assessment should be used will be significant. Both the fire district map and the Moritz map label vegetation in some areas of Portola Valley as a "very high" fire risk. In areas so labeled, new homes will be required to use fire-resistant materials and designs.

Existing homes, remodels and additions will not be affected. The fire code already requires structures to be surrounded by a fire-inhibiting "defensible space," said Wayne Mitchell, a fire prevention official with Cal Fire. Realtors must also disclose

the fire-risk designation to buyers, he said.

### Council cautious

The Town Council addressed the issue at an April 23 meeting in the Historic Schoolhouse. Also present: the fire marshal and fire chief from the Woodside Fire Protection District, members of the town's Planning Commission, and a capacity crowd of residents, some of whom live in areas labeled on the Moritz map as presenting a

See **FIRE**, page 7

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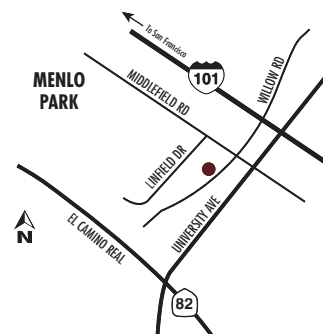
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## Correction: No parks meeting Sunday

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) did not hold a planning meeting in San Mateo on Sunday, April 27, nor does it plan to hold a meeting in Half Moon Bay on May 16.

In a story by staff writer Marion Softky in the April 23 issue, The Almanac mistakenly reported that the Golden Gate National Recreation Area planned "scoping" meetings, including one in San Mateo on April 27, for a new general management plan for the Bay Area's national park lands.

The information was based on a National Park Service Web site that showed these scoping sessions were planned, but this was old data — from 2006. The reporter did not read the listing carefully, and the park staff had not updated the posting since 2006.

The Almanac regrets the error and any inconvenience this may

have caused.

### Open houses

Now, in a later phase of its planning process, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area is planning a series of five open houses in June to gain public input on planning alternatives for its lands in the Bay Area, including the Phleger estate, north of Woodside, and Rancho Corral de Tierra, 4,200 acres of open space on the Coastsides north of Highway 92.

Rancho Corral de Tierra is currently owned by the Peninsula Open Space Trust. It is within the authorized boundaries of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and will be transferred after the federal government comes up with the \$15 million purchase price.

The June meetings will seek public comment on alternative concepts for planning future uses of the

land. These range from connecting people with the park, to protecting ecosystems.

The closest open houses scheduled for June will be held in:

■ Half Moon Bay, on Wednesday, June 4, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., at the Harbor House Conference Center, at 346 Princeton Ave. in Princeton-by-the-Sea.

■ Woodside, Tuesday, June 17, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., at Independence Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, behind the Pioneer Saloon.

Information relating to the planning concepts will be included in a newsletter to be released in May. To get the newsletter, go to [nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt/planning.htm](http://nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt/planning.htm) and click on the link, "Join our mailing list."

For other information, call 415-561-4965, or go to [nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt](http://nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt), or e-mail [goga\\_gmp@nps.gov](mailto:goga_gmp@nps.gov).

### FIRE

continued from page 5

very high threat.

The council voted unanimously to keep the more critical Moritz map out of the state's hands for the time being and advise Cal Fire to leave its map unchanged.

Residents, many of whom spoke out against the Moritz map because they fear it could raise their insurance rates, or even cause their policies to be canceled, greeted the decision with approval.

Cal Fire must make a decision by July. If the state moves toward a more serious threat assessment, the town could bring out the Moritz map as a compromise between the benign view of the Cal Fire map and the tougher view of the fire district.

Among the issues now facing Portola Valley:

■ Who has more clout with Cal Fire in deciding the hazard: the Town Council, the fire district or the consultant?

■ Mr. Moritz has advised town officials on how to lower the risk in threatened neighborhoods. If the council acts on his advice as it has said it would, would that carry weight with Cal Fire and insurers?

■ Are insurers going to use the state maps to re-evaluate fire coverage for homes?

After two hours of testimony and before the council voted to recommend that the state stick with its original map, Mayor Maryann Moise Derwin asked her colleagues, "OK, so where are we?"

"I think we're all very uncomfortable," replied Councilwoman Ann Wengert.

### Where is the risk?

If Cal Fire ends up using the

fire district's comments or the Moritz map, some very high risk areas will find their way on to the final map, including parts of the Woodside Highlands, Portola Valley Ranch and Alpine Hills neighborhoods.

In the Ranch, the affected homes could include those along Franciscan Ridge and Hawkview Street. They're too close to a heavy fuel load in an oak forest, Mr. Moritz said.

A similar situation exists in Woodside Highlands, he said, adding that "fire could move very rapidly and intensely through that area."

As for the vegetation in Alpine Hills along Minoca Road and Golden Oak Drive, "it needs a lot of work to get it cleaned up, but it's certainly possible to do."

Will insurance companies use these maps? "The public perception is that, yes, that's the thing that's lurking out there," Mr. Mitchell of Cal Fire said. But the state maps focus on vegetation's potential as fuel.

Insurance companies take a broader view and have their own "fairly sophisticated systems," he added.

In making its decision, Cal Fire will "bounce (the maps) against the science to see which one fits," he said.

### Playing with fire

Reducing wildfire risks is mainly a matter of removing vegetation, or "fuel," from below tree canopies and creating a clean, park-like scene, Mr. Moritz told the council.

Considering the components that affect a fire's behavior — climate, topography, wind and fuel — fuel is the one element under human control, he said.

With a cleaned-up ground

story, fire in a fire-prone urban forest will travel at about 264 feet per hour with flames usually no higher than 3 or 4 feet, he said.

Contrast that with fire in a forest with a heavy lower-story fuel load, as exists now in parts of Portola Valley, he said. That kind of fire can generate flames 20 to 45 feet long and move at 2,300 feet per hour, he said.

"That's a very serious fuel architecture and one of the types that creates a very high hazard," Mr. Moritz said.

All it takes is embers from a grass fire thought to be extinguished, Fire Marshal Denise Enea noted. The 1991 fire in Oakland started that way, she said. "It rekindled, and it was the Oakland Hills fire."

Perception is a problem, she added. Residents see a wooded slope with a few nestling homes as serene and peaceful, whereas firefighters "think of it as an impossible task to fight a fire safely."

"We probably won't fight (such a) fire," Fire Chief Armando Muela said to the audience. "We're going to get you out first."

Getting out can have its own complications. Fire-prone vegetation bordering a road or driveway, for example, is particularly dangerous, Mr. Moritz said. If both sides of the road are alight, the temperature in the middle can reach 1,400 degrees, starve the area of oxygen, and stop dead any vehicle trying to pass through, he said. ■

### ■ INFORMATION

To see the fire maps at the Portola Valley Town Hall, 765 Portola Road, ask for Planning Manager Leslie Lambert.

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### A Buyers Market

**Q: I am planning to sell my house next month and want to know how the market is at the present time. Who is in control: buyers or sellers?**

**A:** There has been a definite shift away from the sellers' market that prevailed in this area for most of the past few years to being much more of a buyers' market. There are exceptions to this but generally buyers control the market more than sellers do. Pricing and presentation are key to selling a property in a reasonable period of time. There are still multiple offers on some properties but overbids are not too high. Buyers and sellers are negoti-

ating price and terms much more than they have in the recent past.

Much of this change can be attributed to tight financial markets. Interest rates have gone down but liquidity problems have kept mortgage loan rates from going down as much as you would expect. Also, some lenders are spending so much time and effort dealing with bad loans that they keep their interest rates higher to discourage new business.

It is very important that you be sure the buyer for your property has a strong lender behind them. You don't want to find that at the last minute the lender can't fund the loan.

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### WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

#### GENERAL REGULATION NO. 125

\*\*\*\*\*

#### A REGULATION AMENDING GENERAL REGULATION NO. 58 "A GENERAL REGULATION ADOPTING CODE OF GENERAL REGULATIONS"

\*\*\*\*\*

BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE District Board of West Bay Sanitary District that General Regulation No. 58, "A General Regulation Adopting Code of General Regulations", passed and approved on November 27, 1982, as heretofore amended, is further amended as follows:

#### SECTION 209. Board Members Compensation

Effective 60 days from the date of approval of this Regulation, members of the District Board shall be compensated in the amount of \$149.12 \$155.00 per day for each day's attendance at meetings of the District Board, attendance at California Association of Sanitation Agencies' conferences and for each day's service rendered as a Member of the District Board by request of the District Board. Compensation shall not exceed a total of \$894.72 \$930.00 (six days service) in any calendar month.

Compensation to Board Members attending conferences of the California Association of Sanitation Agencies shall be limited to two days' compensation regardless of the number of days attended.

Passed and approved by the District Board of the West Bay Sanitary District on April 9, 2008 by the following vote:

Ayes:	Shepherd, Walker, Lomax, Knight, Harrison
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

Ronald Shepherd  
President of the District Board  
of the West Bay Sanitary District  
County of San Mateo, State of California

Attest:  
David Walker  
Secretary of the District Board  
of the West Bay Sanitary District,  
County of San Mateo, State of California

Published in THE ALMANAC on April 23, 30, 2008

## Sheriff's detainment could prompt new county policies

■ Supervisors to rethink how to discipline Munks, other elected officials, in case of misconduct.

By Rory Brown  
Almanac Staff Writer

San Mateo County Sheriff Greg Munks says he's moved on from an incident in which he was caught in a Las Vegas brothel bust a year ago, but it's clear the issue won't be going away anytime soon.

As early as May 6, the Board of Supervisors is expected to discuss how to hold elected officials, such as Sheriff Munks, more accountable for any misconduct they may commit outside the workplace.

Initial ideas floated by supervisors include forming a court-appointed ethics commission, or putting a charter amendment on the November ballot that would give supervisors the power to investigate or remove other elected officials.

Whatever action supervisors take in the coming months, it would be likely not to apply to Sheriff Munks' brief detainment in April 2007. But it's no secret that the sheriff's actions are at the root of the board's sudden interest in the accountability issue.

In recent stories in the San Mateo County Times and San Mateo Daily News, Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Hillsborough, and Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park — both former county supervisors — blasted the sheriff's unwillingness to answer questions about his detainment, and criticized supervisors for their reluctance to investigate the matter.

Sheriff Munks and Undersheriff Carlos Bolanos were detained on April 21, 2007, after being caught in a brothel in an unmarked house several miles off the main strip of hotels and casinos in Las Vegas. The officers, who were not charged with any crime, said they thought the brothel was a legitimate massage parlor.

Other than a short statement issued by Sheriff Munks several days after incident, the officers have refused to comment on their detainment.

### Changing the system

Because the top officers were off duty and outside San Mateo County, supervisors had argued that they weren't authorized to further investigate the matter.

But after the flurry of newspaper reports and calls for action from two congresswomen, that tune has changed.

Supervisor Adrienne Tissier suggested at the board's April 22 meeting that the county consider creating an ethics commission appointed by the courts. The commission would operate independently from the supervisors to avoid the possibility of "one elected official attacking another," said Bill Chiang, an aide to Supervisor Tissier.

Supervisor Jerry Hill floated the idea of putting a charter amendment on the November ballot that would allow the Board of Supervisors to investigate or discipline elected officials.

The charter amendment "is just a suggestion as a way for our Board of Supervisors to take a more active role," Mr. Hill told the Almanac. He said a similar system is currently used in San Bernardino County.

Supervisor Hill, who is also running for state Assembly, has announced that he will return all political contributions — totaling about \$4,700 in monetary and non-monetary donations — he has received from the Sheriff Munks and his wife.

### No new comment

In an e-mail to The Almanac, Sheriff Munks reiterated that he will not discuss his detainment in Las Vegas.

"I am not giving interviews on last year's incident," he said in the e-mail. "I hope that you can understand that I made my statement over a year ago and have moved on to address the significant public safety issues that face our community." ■



Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac

### Now with skylight

It was not the kind of "open house" that real estate agent Joe Parsons was anticipating when an elderly oak tree fell over and crashed through the roof of this Atherton house April 21, a day before he planned to show it to the public. Mr. Parsons was inside when it happened and thought the house had been hit by a plane. "It was a devastatingly loud noise," he said. "It went on for what seemed like an eternity."

## Coroner identifies woman killed on tracks

A woman seen lying on the Caltrain tracks just north of the Atherton station Sunday night was struck and killed by southbound train No. 442, a Caltrain spokesperson reported.

The woman was identified by San Mateo County Coroner Robert Foucrault as 63-year-old Zenith Freedman. Her city of residence was not available at The Almanac's press time.

As the train engineer approached the station around 7 p.m., he thought he saw something on the tracks, but was unable to avoid the woman despite attempting an emergency stop, Caltrain spokeswoman Christine Dunn said.

"The woman was lying on the tracks and the engineer couldn't stop the train in time," Ms. Dunn said.

The weight of the train, and the stopping distance required, made it impossible for the train to stop in time, she said.

Passengers were taken off the train and picked up by train No. 444. The northbound track opened around 7:40 p.m. and tracks in both directions were opened by around 9 p.m., Ms. Dunn said.

"We had another (train fatality) last weekend so it's been rough," Ms. Dunn said, referring to the death of 15-year-old Anthony Rea of San Mateo on April 19 at the

San Bruno Caltrain station.

On April 7, a Menlo Park man, Stephen Lehane, 66, was killed by a train in Menlo Park. He reportedly stepped out of a grove of trees onto the train tracks between Encinal and Glenwood avenues in Menlo Park. The death was ruled a suicide by the coroner.

The death of Ms. Freedman is the seventh Caltrain-related fatality this year. The coroner's office expects to make a ruling on whether the death was a suicide at the end of this week, Mr. Foucrault said.

*Bay City News Service contributed to this report*

## 80th birthday for Shirley Temple Black

Hollywood icon Shirley Temple Black had to cancel more elaborate celebrations planned for her 80th birthday on April 23 after breaking her arm in a fall at her home in Woodside, the Associated Press reported.

The former child actress, who ruled the box office in the 1930s, is recovering at home.

Mrs. Black, considered the most popular child star of all time, started her acting career at age 3 and starred in such hits as "Stand Up and Cheer" and "The Little Colonel." She's lived in Atherton and Woodside for much of her life after marrying in 1950 and leaving her Hollywood career behind.

### GYM

*continued from page 5*

still have to go before the council for final approval.

### Public process

As long as the city doesn't have a contract, memorandum or any other form of paperwork with the donor's name on it, the information isn't public record, according to First Amendment and public records experts interviewed by The Almanac.

But if council members and city staff are serious about protecting the interests of the city, they shouldn't keep information from the public, they said.

"Without knowing who the donor is, there's no way the public could determine if this is some sweetheart deal [the donor] is shoving down the city's throat," said Jim Ewert, legal counsel for the California Newspaper Pub-

lishers Association. "If the city is going to go to such lengths to keep the identity of this donor a secret, this city is going to have huge political issues."

Several sets of designs for the gym have been vetted publicly, but the donor has requested increasing the square footage of the gym, and other changes could be in store.

Letting an outside party manage the construction of a public facility doesn't sit right with Terry Francke, a general counsel for CalAware, a state group that advocates open government.

"As a matter of policy, I think people would find it hard to swallow the city's use of its own money to contribute to a project over which the city would not have exclusive control," he said.

The gym would cost about \$14.2 million to design and build, using current estimates, but under the proposal, the city would pay

just \$6.2 million, and the donor would cover the rest.

City Attorney McClure said in order to keep the identity of the donor a secret, the city would sign its own \$6.2 million contract with the donor's hand-selected contractor, and the contractor would agree to a separate deal with the donor.

The anonymous donation would go toward the construction of a gym of at least 20,800 square feet. The gym would be built between the city's existing Burgess Recreation Center and Alma Street.

The city would renovate the existing gym, which is adjacent to the Burgess Aquatics Center on Laurel Street, into a 17,400-square-foot gymnastics facility. That building would cost about \$11.5 million to build, and the costs would be covered by the city.

The city has approximately \$15.8 million available to design and build the new facilities. ■

# Chuck Kinney pleads for trees

■ Ex-councilman fears Trees for Menlo campaign may get the “kiss of death.”

By Rory Brown  
Almanac Staff Writer

A book that will be presented to the Menlo Park Library this week chronicles the efforts of Trees for Menlo Inc., the nonprofit that has worked with the city to plant more than 250 trees along El Camino Real.

Former councilman Chuck Kinney hopes there will be more to the story.

Mr. Kinney, who helped launch Trees for Menlo in 1999, is pushing council members to approve funding to plant another 150 trees on El Camino, which would complete the nonprofit's goal of planting London plane trees from border to border along the city's main thoroughfare. Trees for Menlo would pay 20 percent of the project's costs with funds donated by local residents and businesses.

A big hurdle facing the project

## ■ MENLO PARK

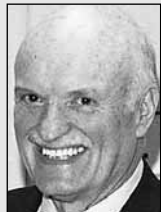
is the cost to the city: an estimated \$700,000, according to city staff, which says the city doesn't have the funds to take on the project in the fiscal year that starts July 1.

Council members also hesitate to add costs to the city's budget.

“I'm sure there's not a council member up there that wouldn't want to see the Trees for Menlo project finished,” said Councilman Heyward Robinson. “But we have to look at the project in terms of our budget.”

Mr. Kinney said the project should be a priority.

“The way the economy is right now, people are scared of spending any funds,” he said. “But as we get farther away from when projects start, people lose interest. ... If this project doesn't get finished, our generation will miss out



Chuck Kinney

on seeing it through.”

At the April 1 meeting, a disgruntled Mr. Kinney said if the council denied the project city funding, the Trees for Menlo campaign would likely receive “the kiss of death.”

He suggested the city phase the project, planting a smaller number of trees each year to ease the impact on the city's budget. Public Works Director Kent Steffens said the city is considering this strategy, but he hasn't decided whether to recommend that plan to the council.

The council may consider how and if to fund the last leg of the project as early as May 6 at its regular meeting, Mr. Steffens said. ■

## ■ INFORMATION

Trees for Menlo Inc. will donate the book “Trees for Menlo” to the Menlo Park Library at a ceremony on Thursday, May 1, at the library at 800 Alma St. The book chronicles the nonprofit's efforts to plant trees in Menlo Park, and lists the donors who have contributed to the campaign.



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# Final workshop on downtown revitalization

By Rory Brown  
Almanac Staff Writer

A city-hired consultant will unveil rough plans to improve parking, traffic flow, and the overall vitality of Menlo Park's downtown area at the last in a series of community workshops on Thursday, May 1, in the Burgess Recreation Center at 700 Alma St. in the Civic Center.

At the workshop, set to run from 7 to 9 p.m., participants

will break into groups and weigh in on the various plans for revitalizing El Camino Real and the downtown area.

The workshop is one of three major planning meetings to be held in Menlo Park this week. (On Tuesday, April 29, the City Council will hold a study session on building a new Burgess Gym. The next night, on April 30, there will be a neighborhood meeting on plans to demolish the former Gaylord restaurant at 1706 El Camino Real and build a

10,000-square-foot office building. See separate stories on these meetings.)

The consultant for the downtown visioning process is expected to head to the Planning Commission on May 16 with more detailed plans for how the city could renew El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue.

For more information on the El Camino Real and downtown visioning process, go to MenloPark.org and click on “El Camino Real/Downtown Visioning.” ■

# Developer seeks public comment on office complex

By Rory Brown  
Almanac Staff Writer

Members of the public are invited to weigh in on a proposal to demolish Gaylord India restaurant in Menlo Park and build a 10,900-square-foot office complex at the 1706 El Camino Real site.

The meeting, which is being hosted by the developer and moderated by San Mateo-based Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, April 30, in the Burgess Recreation Center.

Phil Giurliani, who is representing the limited liability

corporation of developers proposing the project — 1706 ECR LLC — said the meeting is part of efforts to get public input early in the planning process.

“Instead of saying, ‘Here's our plan, what do you think,’ to the community, we want to hear what the neighbors have to say about design, parking and other aspects of the project,” Mr. Giurliani said.

Mr. Giurliani's firm, Infiniti Partners Inc., represented the same group of developers — then known as 1906 ECR LLC — that proposed demolishing the former Acorn restaurant at 1906 El Camino Real to make

way for a 9,825-square-foot medical office project.

That project was approved Jan. 8 by the City Council, but not without a lot of controversy. Neighbors said the medical complex would increase traffic to the already dangerous intersection, and the developer did not adhere to parking and traffic study regulations. Neighbor Michael Brady appealed the Planning Commission's approval of the project, but the council grudgingly approved it.

The former Gaylord site is located just two blocks from the Acorn site at the intersection of El Camino Real and Buckthorn Way. ■



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

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing at the stated time and place to consider the following matters:

Adoption of the California Building Code, (with modifications), which includes;

- 2007 California Building Code (Part 2 of Title 24),
- 2007 California Electrical Code (Part 3 of Title 24),
- 2007 California Mechanical Code (Part 4 of Title 24),
- 2007 California Plumbing Code (Part 5 of Title 24),
- 2007 California Energy Code (Part 6 of Title 24),
- California Elevator Safety Code (Part 7 of Title 24),
- 2007 California Historical Building Code,
- 2007 California Fire Code (Part 9 of Title 24),
- 2007 California Existing Building Code (Part 10 of Title 24),
- 2007 California Referenced Standards Code (Part 12 of Title 24)

**Date & Time:** Wednesday, May 14, 2008, 8:00 p.m.

**Place:** Historic Schoolhouse - Portola Valley Town Center

The Town periodically amends Chapter 15.04 of the Municipal Code to incorporate the most recent edition of the model building code that has been adopted by the California Building Standards Commission and Chapter 15.16 of the Municipal Code to ratify amendments to the Uniform Fire Code that have been adopted by the Woodside Fire Protection District.

The Codes that are being considered for adoption are on file with the Town Clerk and are open to public inspection.

For further information, please call Gary Fitzer, Deputy Building Official, Town Hall 851-1700 ext. 13.

Published in THE ALMANAC on April 30, May 7, 2008.

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*Filoli is a National Trust for Historic Preservation site.*

Tuesdays-Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sundays 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
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## Beltramos win extension on development permit

By Rory Brown

Almanac Staff Writer

■ MENLO WATCH

Plans by Daniel and John Beltramo to build a 26,800-square-foot commercial building and 16 two-story townhouses in Menlo Park haven't gotten off the ground since being approved by the City Council in 2006. It turns out the delay is due to what's in the ground at the project site at 1460 El Camino Real, city officials say.

The Beltramos are waiting on the San Mateo County Health Department to clear construction at the site after traces of motor oil and dry cleaning chemicals were discovered in the groundwater at the 1.5-acre site near Valparaiso Avenue.

The Beltramos' development permit is set to expire, so the City Council voted 4-0 at its April 22 meeting to extend the permit for two years. Mayor Andy Cohen did not vote on the extension because he lives within 500 feet of the project site.

Under the project, the townhouses — three of which will be below-market-rate homes — will front San Antonio Street.

The Beltramos are also principal owners of the nearby Bel-

tramo's Wines & Spirits.

### Youth summit on April 30

The third annual Tri-City Youth Summit, where local students can find summer jobs, will be held on Wednesday, April 30, at the Menlo Park Senior Center at 100 Terminal Ave. in the city's Belle Haven neighborhood.

Organized by Menlo Park, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, and the cities' respective chambers of commerce, the summit is intended to provide teens of all three cities a forum to talk to local businesses representatives and a chance to find employment. The event runs from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

### Meet the mayor

Menlo Park Mayor Andy Cohen is holding open office hours on Saturday, May 3, from 10 a.m. to noon. He will be available to answer questions and talk about city issues in the Burgess Recreation Center at 700 Laurel St.

Mayor Cohen also can be reached by phone at 327-5332, or by e-mail at [amcohen@menlopark.org](mailto:amcohen@menlopark.org). ■

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2:00 pm	Welcome
2:05 pm	Medical Interventions for Fertility Enhancement - Amin Milki, MD
2:25 pm	Other Options - Beyond Conventional IVF - Lynn Westphal, MD
2:45 pm	What are My Chances for Pregnancy Success - Valerie Baker, MD
3:05 pm	Window into the In Vitro Fertilization Lab - Barry Behr, PhD
3:25 pm	Recurrent Pregnancy Loss - Ruth Lathi, MD
4:00 pm	Acupuncture and Infertility - Deming Huang, O.M.D., L.Ac., PhD
4:15 pm	Emotions and Fertility - Penny Donnelly, RN, MFM
4:30 pm	Panel Discussion

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## Maltbie sets retirement date; Boesch may succeed him

After 19 years on the job, San Mateo County Manager John Maltbie will step down at the end of this year.

Mr. Maltbie announced his retirement to the Board of Supervisors April 22 in order to "to give the board sufficient time to recruit and select a successor."

A prime candidate to succeed Mr. Maltbie is likely to be former Menlo Park City Manager David Boesch, who has served as assistant county manager since early 2007. Mr. Boesch was city manager from 2000 until taking his post with the county.

The county manager is appointed by the Board of Supervisors following a broad recruitment process,

laid out in the county charter.

In leaving, Mr. Maltbie said, "I will always treasure the memories I will take with me of my years of service to the community."

Since 1989, Mr. Maltbie has been responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of a county that now has a budget of \$1.7 billion and 5,500 employees.

Mr. Maltbie, 61, began his career in public service after serving as a first lieutenant in the Army. He was city man-



John Maltbie

ager in Milpitas, city manager in Glendale, Arizona, and then assistant county manager in Santa Clara County.

During Mr. Maltbie's tenure, the county has implemented a variety of changes in strategic planning and fiscal management, including a budgeting system that measures program performance.

Other accomplishments were school-based children and family services, a MediCal managed care system, and a work-first model for the welfare program. The county also rebuilt its hospital (the San Mateo Medical Center) and a new \$125 million Youth Services Center.

Before he leaves, Mr. Maltbie still has to guide the county through one more budget cycle as it faces a structural deficit of \$25 million — and growing.

## Council to hear update on fundraising for creek daylighting

The campaign to raise \$17 million for a new Portola Valley Town Center may be over, but the fundraising is not.

Also needed: \$1.2 million to \$1.4 million to free from a buried culvert about 280 feet of Sausal Creek. About \$527,000 has been raised, said resident Steve Dunne, who maintains the campaign's Web site.

The Town Council is set to hear an update on creek fundraising at 8 p.m. Wednesday, April 30, in the Historic Schoolhouse. The council may decide to award contracts that would include Phase 1 of the creek "daylighting" project.

Estimated at \$613,000, Phase 1 would include grading; building several concrete supporting walls; building a vehicular bridge; and

rerouting Town Center utility lines under that bridge.

Phase 2 would include constructing the creek bed, stabilizing it with vegetation, opening it to water flow, and installing a pedestrian bridge.

The council will also discuss elements of the emergency operations center at Town Center, including a plan for storing supplies of drinking water.

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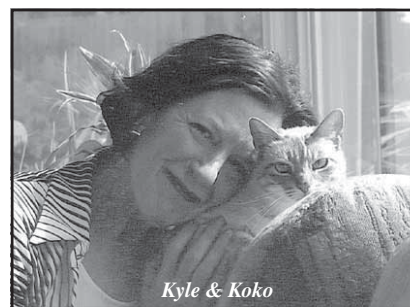
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FROM THE DESK OF  
**ALAN CARLSON**

Dear Atherton Residents,

Last December after finishing my term as Mayor and nine years on the City Council, I moved from Atherton after two decades of living in the Town. It is my unexpired term and seat on the City Council that will be filled by the June 3 election. After considering both current candidates for the City Council, **I must wholeheartedly endorse Elizabeth Lewis and urge you to vote for her in the June election.**

Elizabeth Lewis has unique experience and qualities that fully qualify her for the City Council. Elizabeth has had a successful business career, and will bring that experience of success to the Council. However, **Elizabeth Lewis' qualifications do not merely rest upon a successful business career. Elizabeth has a record of community service, energy, and involvement spanning more than twenty years** – a record her opponent in the election cannot match.

While on the City Council, I voted to appoint to the Town's General Plan Committee both Elizabeth and her opponent in the election. I also served and worked with them on that committee, as well as observed them as they appeared before the City Council on various matters. **The views and solutions expressed and advocated by Elizabeth have not represented narrow interests,** or those of one neighborhood over another, but were broadly thought out and stated with the greater community good in mind.

Whether a business, community or governmental enterprise, Elizabeth Lewis knows that people must be inclusively brought together, all points of view listened to and considered, and common ground and agreement found, in order to move forward to achieve success for the benefit of all. That is why **I am able to endorse her candidacy without qualification or reservation,** and urge the residents of Atherton to support and vote for Elizabeth in the June 3 election.

*Alan Carlson*

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Graphics courtesy of The Almanac



# Giving Back

Photos and story by Veronica Weber

Helping build a Habitat for Humanity home are, from left, Bob Currie, and first-time construction workers Brett Lotz and Christina Legaspi. Some 190 volunteers worked on eight homes being built in Redwood City for lower-income families.

## 2,600 volunteers help their local communities through Menlo Park Presbyterian Church's Compassion Weekend

Last Saturday and Sunday, in between Little League games, having brunch with friends, or catching up on spring cleaning, members of the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church and others found time to give back to their communities during Compassion Weekend.

Some donned hard hats and applied elbow grease to help build some of the eight homes for Habitat for Humanity in Redwood City, others wore sweats and T-shirts to help refurbish the Cityteam East Palo Alto youth center, and some just came in their regular clothes to help assemble one of about 7,000 AIDS caregiver kits to be sent to Africa.

Now in its third year, Compassion Weekend drew an estimated 2,600 volunteers who lent their help at 21 projects, from San Francisco to San Jose, aimed at improving “education, health care and humanity” in the community, according to

Mission Director Bennie Ingraham of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church. The annual event was also created to “touch the lives of thousands of people in the process,” said Pastor Mark Swanner.

Some of the projects were done in conjunction with Rebuilding Together Peninsula, which held its annual volunteer day Saturday to rehabilitate 55 homes and 19 community facilities on the Peninsula, including eight homes and three community facilities in Menlo Park.

The church canceled its regular weekend services so parishioners would have more time to participate in Compassion Weekend projects.

“There’s a real hunger to get involved with this weekend, and it becomes contagious,” said volunteer Emily Fox. “What I love about (Compassion Weekend) is that race, gender, age, doesn’t matter. It’s all about coming together and giving your heart to other people.” ▀





**Top, left:** Rosa Gill, left, listens to Florence at Nazareth Classic Care Community in Menlo Park. **Top, right:** Roger Witte plays old-time favorites for Lorene and other residents.

**Below:** Grant Audet, left, and Brett Hamilton work on a patio at the CityTeam Youth Center in East Palo Alto. **Right:** Darayn Hickingbotham paints walls at the youth center while Tessa Payne keeps an eye on other volunteers.



**Left:** Tammy De Marco and daughter Natalie assemble one of 7,000 AIDS caregiver kits for Africa. **Above:** Volunteer Charles McLure unloads flashlights on the kit's assembly line.

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## PV voters urged to mail ballots this week

Elections officials urge voters in the Portola Valley School District to mail their ballots this week in the election to pick a new member of the school board.

Although the ballots don't specify this, voters should vote for one candidate only among the two running for the board seat: David Morris, a physician and researcher, and Bill Yousstra, an Internet production and media consultant.

To be counted, ballots must

### ■ SCHOOLS

be received by the San Mateo County elections office by 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 6.

Ballots may be dropped off at a locked box at Portola Valley Town Hall, 765 Portola Road, on or before 5 p.m. on May 6.

The two candidates are vying to fill the remaining term of Donna Carano, who resigned from the board last October. The term ends in December 2009.

The candidates have participated in two forums, submitted

ballot statements, and mailed letters to community members.

A total of 1,070 ballots had been received by the elections office as of the close of business on April 24, election officials said. Ballots were mailed April 7 to the 4,982 registered voters in the district.

Voters may check to see that their ballots have been received by calling the elections office at 312-5222 and pressing zero; or by going to [www.shapethefuture.org](http://www.shapethefuture.org) and clicking the "Track" button in the area devoted to the Portola Valley School District election.

## Search continues for CMS principal

By Marjorie Mader

Almanac Staff Writer

The search continues for a new Corte Madera School principal because the initial search did not find the right person for Portola Valley district's middle school, said Superintendent Anne Campbell.

"We're looking for a principal that has real middle school experience, both in teaching and administration, and is a good fit for Corte Madera and the district," Ms. Campbell said in an interview April 24.

The four finalists, narrowed from 22 applicants in the initial search, were all good candidates, but not the right match, said Ms. Campbell. She interviewed the finalists and visited their school districts during spring vacation.

Ms. Campbell decided to

broaden the search and hire a firm that specializes in recruiting school administrators, Professional Assistance Team from Palo Alto. The consulting fee is not to exceed \$5,000.

Pat Einfalt, now associated with the Professional Assistance Team and helping with the Corte Madera search, was a former assistant superintendent of the Palo Alto Unified School District in charge of human resources.

"Ahead is a solid month of recruiting and we won't rush into the decision," said Superintendent Campbell. She plans to involve the community in the selection process.

The new principal will take over from current Principal Joel Willen, who is retiring in June after a 42-year career in education, including the past four at Corte Madera. ■

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### \* 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL AUTISM UPDATE

This one-day conference provides parents, teachers, psychologists and care providers of autistic children with information on current evidence-based therapies. Experts will also give an overview of clinical and basic science research in autism being undertaken at Packard Children's Hospital and Stanford University. For more information or to register, call (650) 724-5050 or visit <http://childpsychiatry.stanford.edu>.

- Saturday, May 31

### \* 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, May 31

### \* 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, June 5

### \* PREPARING FOR MULTIPLES

Are you expecting twins, triplets or more? With the potential for early delivery, expectant parents of multiples are encouraged to learn everything there is to know about carrying and delivering multiple infants.

- Sunday, June 8

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



CALL TODAY TO SIGN UP FOR CLASSES (650) 723-4600



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

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**When:** 8:00 PM, Wednesday, May 14, 2008

**Where:** Historic Schoolhouse, Portola Valley Town Center 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA

**Topic:** The Portola Valley Town Council will hold a public hearing and consider adoption of a new Construction Traffic Road fee schedule. The public is invited to make oral and written presentations at that meeting.

A staff report and information relating to the proposal will be available for review at Town Hall. Please contact Town Hall at 851-1700, extension 18 should you have any questions.

**Dated:** April 29, 2008

Published in THE ALMANAC on April 30, May 7, 2008

## Atherton officer resigns during probe

An Atherton police officer resigned his position recently, following a citizen complaint against him, said Police Chief Bob Brennan.

"He was placed on administrative leave pending the results of an investigation, and during the course of that investigation, he resigned his position with the town of Atherton," Chief Brennan said.

The officer had been placed on administrative leave in January. Chief Brennan would not disclose the officer's name, or the nature of the complaint.

"It's a personnel matter, and it's not at the level of a department head, so it's all confidential," Chief Brennan told the Almanac in January.

Recent court cases have affirmed that high-ranking public employees such as department heads have less of a right to privacy than rank-and-file public employees when it comes to personnel issues.

Chief Brennan said that officers are routinely placed on leave for anything ranging from a criminal allegation to a citizen's complaint of rude behavior. Last year, only one complaint was lodged against an Atherton police officer, he said.

## Menlo Park artist shows her works

Joyce Savre-Hutt of Menlo Park will be showing collages and watercolors in her show called "Handwriting, after Tranströmer's 'Allegro'" May 1-31 at the Elizabeth Norton Gallery upstairs at the Pacific Art League, 688 Ramona St. in Palo Alto.

"Tranströmer's poem refers to music as a glass house at which rocks are hurled but every pane of glass remains whole," Ms. Savre says.

A reception will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday, May 2, at the gallery. To contact the Pacific Art League, call 321-3891.

**THE ALMANAC ONLINE DELIVERS 24/7.**

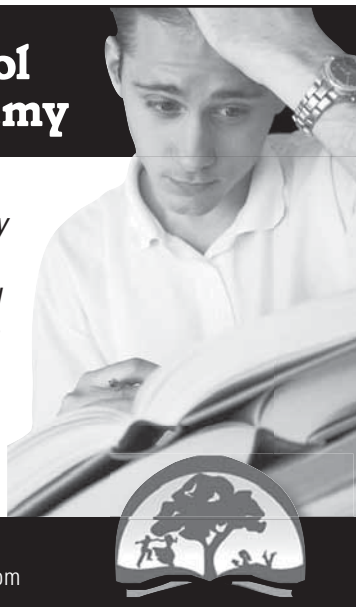
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## Summer School at Lydian Academy

*"The quality of my writing really improved. I came to Lydian writing low quality papers, and now I am able to write a paper I'd be proud to turn in."*  
 — M-A Student

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## SPRING RUMMAGE SALE WOODSIDE VILLAGE CHURCH

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**May 9, Friday 9 a.m.-noon (Outside only 8 a.m.)**  
 Everything ½ price - "Dollar-a-Bag" Sale 11 a.m.-noon

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Carol Carnevale Rosemary Squires Nicole Aron

Carol Carnevale, Rosemary Squires, Nicole Aron



TheAlmanac

## Public invited to talk online about future of housing

An upcoming public conversation will deal with the future of housing in San Mateo County. The venue: cyberspace, starting Mon-

day, May 5, and ending Friday, May 16, at [www.threshold2008.org](http://www.threshold2008.org).

The idea, according to the Web site, is to ask participants

for practical answers to questions such as who should have an opportunity to live in the county, who decides where and what

kind of housing is built, and what is the public's role.

Results will go to city and county officials, housing advocates and business leaders concerned with these issues, as well as to the

media and the public at large.

The online dialogue follows up a mid-March meeting at Canada College where some 238 people met for a Countywide Assembly on Housing Choices.

## CALLING ALL DOGS!!!

(Volunteers Needed for Pet Visitation Program)



Do you have an owner who could volunteer to bring you to hospitals or other health care facilities to visit patients and cheer them up? If you think you would be able to demonstrate how you follow basic obedience commands, have the desire and aptitude to be around strangers and other animals, are comfortable in new environments, and would pass a health screening by your veterinarian, then you may be the animal we're looking for! Your owner will also have to meet volunteer guidelines for the facility you visit.

Stanford Hospital, in conjunction with Peninsula Pet Assisted Therapy and Delta Society, is holding a **Free** Orientation (about one hour) on Saturday, May 10 at 3 p.m. at Planet Pooch in Redwood City. Humans only, no pets please.

For more information and directions please contact either Lyn Belingheri [labsite@sbcglobal.net](mailto:labsite@sbcglobal.net) or Cathy Bones [cbones@shrinenet.org](mailto:cbones@shrinenet.org) RSVP required for the orientation.



## Project Read volunteers, learners honored

Volunteers and students will be the guests of honor when Project Read-Menlo Park hosts an appreciation event on Sunday, May 4, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Menlo Park Senior Center.

Menlo Park City Councilman John Boyle, a Project Read advocate, will be guest speaker.

There will be testimonials from tutors and learners, and the presentation of the first Lee Romashko Tutor Legacy Award. Ms. Romashko tutored Project Read students from 1986 until the day before she died at age 84 last August.

The event will be a potluck, and those attending are asked to bring a salad, side dish or dessert.

Established in 1985, Project Read-Menlo Park matches volunteer tutors with adults with limited reading skills. Tutors work one-on-one with local residents to help them achieve their goals and function more effectively at home, in the community and at work.

There are currently more than 80 students and 70 tutors, according to Roberta Roth of Project Read.

For more information or to RSVP, call Ms. Roth at 330-2525 or e-mail her at [rlroth@menlopark.org](mailto:rlroth@menlopark.org). Reservations are requested by Friday, May 2. The Menlo Park Senior Center is at 100 Terminal Ave.

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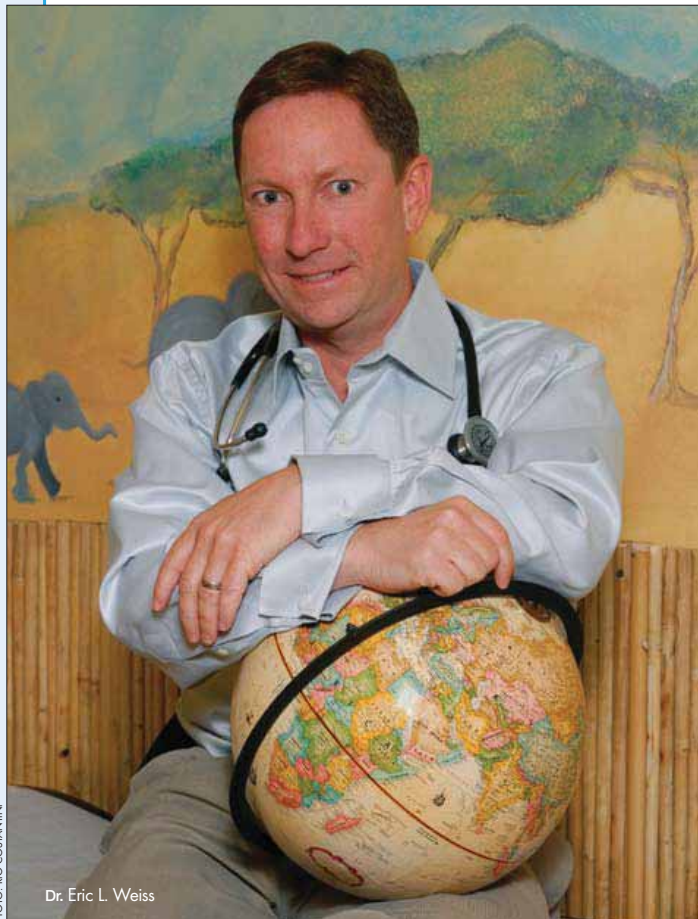


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- Thomas Campbell
- Betsy Colby
- Russell Collier
- Herman Christensen  
Planning Commissioner
- Isobel Christensen
- Mark Daschbach
- Elizabeth Daschbach
- Howard Daschbach
- Leonore Daschbach
- Dr A Dellaporta
- Penelope Dellaporta
- Bill Draper
- Malcolm Dudley  
Ex Mayor of Atherton  
Atherton rail committee
- Donald Dunn
- Jane Dunn
- Gene Elsbree
- Marcy Elsbree
- Steve Englert
- Anne Englert
- Ellen Rose Goddard
- Patrick Goodenough
- Pam Goodenough
- Dr Sam Goodman  
Chairman Audit  
Committee  
Board Member ACIL
- Jim Greene
- Patty Greene
- Jack Hafner
- Helena Hafner
- Dr Robert Hass
- Carolan Hass
- Dave Heppberger
- Lynn Heppberger
- Steve Herrick
- Sally Herrick
- Tom Hill
- Marian Hill
- Harvey Hinman
- Robert Huber  
Ex Council Member
- Christina Isenberg
- Jeremy Isenberg
- Bill Johnson
- Sandy Kaye  
Ex General Plan  
Member
- Francis Kaye
- Kris Klint
- Henry Kuechler
- Alice Kuechler
- Marjo Lachman
- Janet Landauer
- Joan Lane
- Susan Legallett
- Sydney Liebes
- Linda Liebes  
Ex General Plan  
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- Phil Lively  
Planning Commission  
Atherton Rail  
Committee
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- Charles Lynch
- Tony Meier
- Linda Meier
- Lincoln Mitchell
- Jackie Mitchell
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- Judy Wong
- Paul Woolomes
- Martha Woolomes
- Paul Wythes
- Marcia Wythes

# JIM DOBBIE ✓

## Atherton Council

**VOTE FOR JIM DOBBIE ON JUNE 3**

**JIM** is focused on the most important and complex issues facing Atherton. *Here's where Jim stands:*

Issues	Jim's Position
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	Residents' Rights Over Builder-Developer Profit\$
<b>COMMUNICATION TO RESIDENTS</b>	Improve and Increase
<b>TOWN GOVERNANCE</b>	Closer Council Oversight of Town Management
<b>TOWN FINANCES</b>	Continue Improvement since 2002
<b>LITIGATION</b>	Only When Absolutely Essential
<b>DRAINAGE</b>	Retain as Much as Possible on Site: Channel Overflow into an Improved Atherton Drainage System
<b>SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS</b>	Town Manager and School Superintendent to Negotiate Terms and Settlement
<b>MENLO PARK FIRE DISTRICT</b>	Continued and Improved Collaboration and Cooperation
<b>HIGH SPEED RAIL</b>	Very Few Benefits for Athertonians at Enormous Cost



**JIM DOBBIE** has the business management and financial experience, love of Atherton, familiarity with Town activities and in-depth understanding of the issues to ensure that Atherton's quality of life is enjoyed now and preserved for future generations.

### JIM DOBBIE

*is qualified, objective, involved and accessible.*

**JIM DOBBIE**  
ATHERTON COUNCIL ✓

**VOTE FOR JIM DOBBIE ON JUNE 3**

[jim\\_dobbie@yahoo.com](mailto:jim_dobbie@yahoo.com)

## Business forum tackles greenhouse gas

Tuesday, April 29, is the last day to sign up for a business forum on climate change and greenhouse gas sponsored by the SAMCEDA (San Mateo County Economic Development Association) on Friday, May 2, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Oracle Conference Center, 350 Oracle Parkway in Redwood Shores.

“Confronting Climate Change: Using Markets to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions” aims to update the local business community on Assembly Bill 32, California’s “Global Warming Solutions Act,” which sets out new rules and methods for reducing carbon emissions by 2020.

David Crane, an adviser to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on climate change, will join four other speakers to guide business leaders through the fine points of a “cap and trade” system for carbon dioxide.

Speakers are:

■ Jerry Hill, San Mateo County supervisor, chair of the Bay Area Air Quality Maintenance District, and member of the California Air Resources Board.

■ Lawrence H. Goulder, vice chair of the California Market Advisory Committee for AB 32, and professor of environmental and resource economics at Stanford.

■ Winston Hickox, chair of the California Market Advisory Committee, and former secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

■ Josh Margolis, CEO of CantorCO2e.

Tickets to the event are \$30 each. For information or tickets, call

### AROUND TOWN

413-5600 or go to [samceda.org](http://samceda.org) and click on “Using Markets to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions.”

### Go back to logging days at Woodside Store

Every year, Old Woodside Store Day is a great opportunity to take the family back in time to the days when logging was king in the hills above Woodside.

On Sunday, May 4, from noon to 4 p.m., kids and their grownups can ride in a horse-drawn wagon, cut redwood shingles, make rag dolls, twine rope, churn butter, and immerse themselves in a bygone era, at the 1854 Woodside Store, at the corner of Kings Mountain and Tripp roads.

Sponsored by the San Mateo County Historical Association, the event is free and open to the public.

### JobTrain holds Breakfast of Champions May 9

Celebrities, politicians, sports stars, and Silicon Valley business leaders will join some 800 guests in honoring graduates of JobTrain’s many job-training programs, at the Breakfast of Champions on Friday, May 9, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., at the Hyatt Regency Santa Clara, 5101, Great America Parkway.

JobTrain, which recently changed its name from OICW, has trained more than 120,000 people for productive jobs over 43 years. On April 24, it graduated 18 people from its newest

program, which trains people to install solar equipment.

Co-chairs of the event, which always features mystery guests — such as Joan Baez or Danny Glover, or Tiger Woods — are Susan Ford Dorsey, president of the Sand Hill Foundation; Ronnie Lott of the NFL Hall of Fame; and Paul Cook, founder of Raychem.

Tickets may still be available at \$60 each by calling Holly Hansen at 330-6419 or sending an e-mail to [hhansen@jobtrainworks.org](mailto:hhansen@jobtrainworks.org).

For information, got to [jobtrainworks.org](http://jobtrainworks.org).

### League of Women Voters meets May 12

Linda Craig of Menlo Park, advocacy director for the League of Women Voters of California, will be the speaker at the annual meeting of the League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County, on Monday, May 12, from 6 to 9 p.m., at the Trelis Restaurant, 1077 El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

Ms. Craig will speak at 8:30 p.m. on “How the League Takes Action.” She will discuss League actions at the state level, including its support of efforts to reform the way that California establishes legislative districts.

Tickets at \$30 each should be reserved by Wednesday, May 7. Guests are encouraged; the meeting alone is free.

For information or reservations, call 325-5780; or go to [lwvssmc.org](http://lwvssmc.org).

### Three MP agents among top Realtors

Realtors Erika Demma, Keri Nicholas and Maya Sewald of Coldwell Banker’s Santa Cruz Avenue office in Menlo Park ranked among the top 1 percent of the 4,300 Coldwell Banker agents in Northern California, based on 2007 sales volume.

They have been invited to attend the company’s Top One Percent Retreat at the Sanctuary Camelback Mountain Resort and Spa in Scottsdale, Arizona, in October.

“They set the bar for excellence in our industry,” said Dave Hobson, managing broker of the Coldwell Banker office at 930 Santa Cruz Ave. in Menlo Park.



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■ OBITUARY

Obituaries are based on information provided by families and funeral homes.

**Douglas Kent Winton**

Lifelong love of golf

Services will be held at 1 p.m. Thursday, May 1, at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church for Douglas Kent Winton of Atherton, who died April 25 after a year-long battle with cancer. He was 69.

Born in San Francisco, he was the son of Assemblyman Gordon Winton Jr. and Agnes Mattson Winton. He grew up in Merced, and since about age 10 he had a strong affinity for golf, his family says. "His passion for the game was so strong that he often rode his bike or hitchhiked the seven miles from

his home to the local golf course," the family says.

At Merced High School, he led the golf team, was first chair trumpet in the school band, and achieved the Eagle Scout rank. He spent his summers packing fruit at the local cannery, leading mules up the Yosemite trails, and tarring roofs, the family says.

Mr. Winton won a golf scholarship at Stanford University, where he became a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, an All American golfer, and graduated with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in 1961 and a master's in business



Douglas Kent Winton

administration in 1963.

He went on to a career in information technology and continued to work as an IT consultant until his death.

"Smart, witty and cheerfully loud, Kent traveled the globe developing friendships everywhere he went," the family says. His "love, humor and strong opinions will be greatly missed."

He is survived by his wife of 36 years, Nancy; his sister, Salli Sue Sammut; his children, Kelly, Canda, Kevin and Carter; and six grandchildren.

The family prefers memorial donations to Stanford Men's Golf Team (641 East Campus Drive, Stanford, CA, 94305); or Pathways Hospice Foundation (585 North Mary Ave., Sunnyvale, CA, 94085; 408-773-4101).

■ POLICE CALLS

**ATHERTON**

**Burglary reports:**

- Vehicle window smashed in parking lot, 500 block of Middlefield Road, April 18.
- Costume jewelry and cufflinks stolen from residence, 200 block of Alameda de las Pulgas, April 21.

**MENLO PARK**

**Burglary reports:**

- Door of residence pried open and electronic entertainment equipment stolen plus two antique "lock boxes," 900 block of Creek Drive, April 18.
- Car radio stolen, 600 block of Monte Rosa Drive, April 20.
- GPS units and car stereo stolen from vehicle, 900 block of Continental Drive, April 21.
- CDs, sunglasses, checkbook and stereo stolen, 200 block of El Camino Real, April 21.
- Stereo and CDs stolen from vehicle, 300 block of Sharon Park Drive, April 22.
- Jewelry stolen from residence, 1800 block of Doris Drive, April 22.
- Laptop computers stolen from residence, 700 block of Coleman Ave., April 22.
- Computer stolen from vehicle, 2900 block of Sand Hill Road, April 23.
- Electronic entertainment equipment, watches and drill set stolen from residence, 200 block of Encinal Ave., April 23.
- Tires stolen, 1100 block of Del Norte Ave., April 24.

**WOODSIDE**

**Theft reports:**

- Tax return stolen from resident's mailbox, 500 block of Summit Springs Road, April 16.
- Two-year old transaction with supposed owner of art galleries nationwide included promise to buy, display and sell art purchased with resident's \$160,000 in cash, now believed to be stolen.

**Assault reports:**

- Student punched in face, Woodside High

**GIFT**

continued from page 5

which includes funds for teacher training and installation of equipment — is about \$287,600 for the 2007-08 school year.

With the targeted gift and a \$7,950 Microsoft class action settlement, the district's cost is reduced to about \$79,650.

Tom Keating, the district's educational technology director, will develop and present a specific list of proposed equipment purchases and priorities at the board's next meeting on Wednesday, May 7. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. in Room 2001 at Corte Madera School. ■

School at 199 Churchill Ave., April 18.

- Fight between two students, Woodside High School at 199 Churchill Ave., April 21.
- Gang-related attack on student affiliated with rival gang, Woodside High School at 199 Churchill Ave., April 22.

**Burglary reports:**

- Cafeteria office burglarized, Canada College at 4200 Farm Hill Boulevard, April 21.
- Five rifles and three Samurai swords stolen from residence, 100 block of Marva Oaks Drive, April 22.

**PORTOLA VALLEY**

**Assault report:** High school party turned violent as five youths were assaulted by

20 to 30 others, with one knocked unconscious by kick to head and one struck with liquor bottle and two taken to hospital, 100 block of Westridge Drive, April 19.

**Burglary report:** Several computers stolen from business after windows broken, 400 block of Alpine Road, April 20.

**WEST MENLO PARK**

**Burglary report:** Vehicles broken into and briefcase valued at \$325 stolen, 200 block of Harkins Ave., April 17.

**Theft report:** Television vandalized and surveillance cameras stolen, Dutch Goose restaurant at 3567 Alameda de las Pulgas, April 21.

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**WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?**

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

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## \$8 million for gym, with strings

The disclosure last week that an anonymous donor has offered the city of Menlo Park \$8 million or more toward building a new gym — provided he or she can choose the contractor and help manage the project — is an interesting proposition, but one that is loaded with potential pitfalls.

Certainly the city should do everything it can to take advantage of this generous offer. But at the same time, there should be a full-court press to bring the donor's name into the open, due to the serious questions raised by turning over a substantial portion of the city's business to an anonymous person whose motives are completely unknown.

In his description of the offer disclosed in a staff report last week, senior engineer Larry Johmann said the donor would have an "active role" in managing construction, including choosing the construction contractor. "The donor has a successful history of philanthropic endeavors in the region," Mr. Johmann said.

Despite City Attorney Bill McClure's belief that the city could work with such a donor without revealing his or her identity, experts on the state's Public Records Act say there is simply no exemption in the act that would enable the city to protect the donor's identity if there is a contract between the city and the donor. All such city contracts are public record.

In addition, if the donor pulled out of the contract for any reason, the city could find itself on the hook to build a gym, even if it did not

have the resources to do so.

Even if, as some have speculated, the city sets up two entities, — one between the donor and the contractor and the other between the contractor and the city — there are plenty of pitfalls that could prove concerning later in the process. For example:

- The donor has made very clear which of three gym plans he or she will support, and how much money the city will need to contribute. In the design that appears to fit the donor's criteria, the city would pay just \$6.2 million of the gym's \$14.2 million total cost. The donor promises to pay the rest, some \$8 million or more, depending on cost overruns. But unless some contractual tricks are used, we cannot see how the city can enter a relationship with a contractor without making the donor's name public.

- All members of the City Council know the donor's identity, and if that name was communicated in any way, it is public record. Also, could the council keep such a secret for a year or more?

- The donor could have a secret motive — such as seeking city approval for a large construction project of his or her own — that would be revealed only after the gym project was completed. By contributing such a large sum to build a city project, the donor could be likely to receive favored treatment from a grateful City Council.

There has to be some middle ground here. We believe the city should challenge the potential donor to go public now with this magnificent gift. By making the offer contingent on the donor remaining anonymous until the project is completed has to raise questions about the person's motives. What will change after the new gym is completed?

**EDITORIAL**

The opinion of The Almanac

**LETTERS**

Our readers write

### City right in supporting Climate Smart

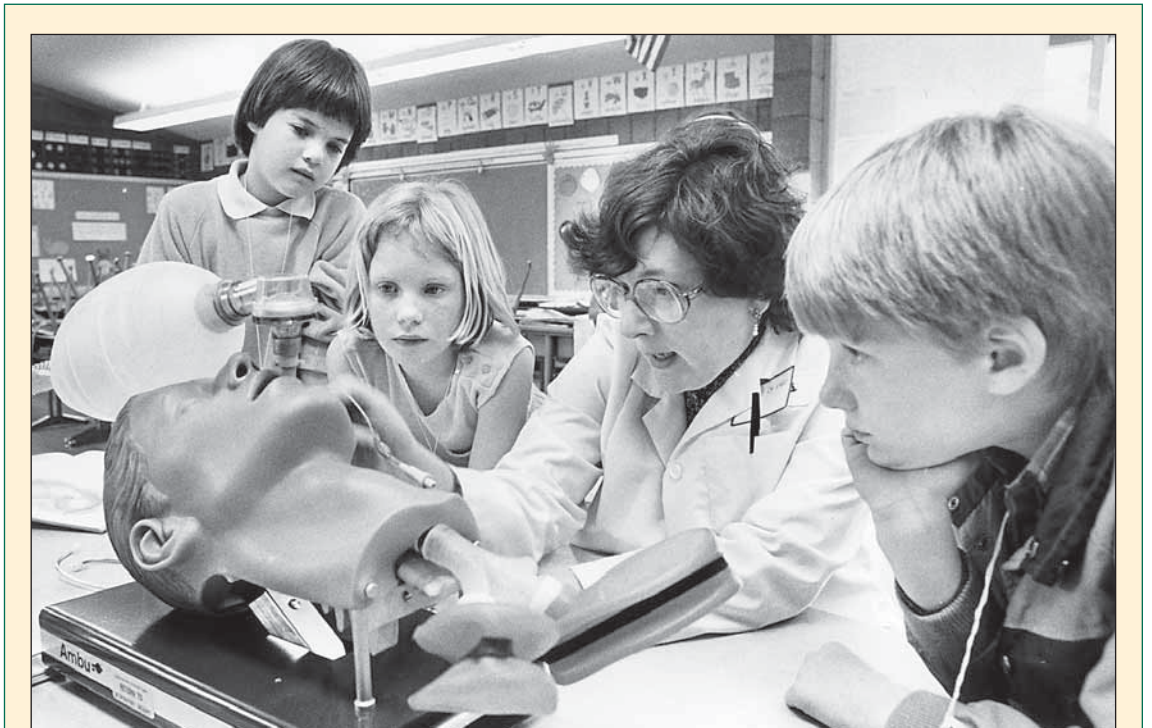
Editor:

Recent letters and anonymous comments on the Almanac's Town Square Web page have been critical of Menlo Park's decision to join PG&E's Climate Smart program.

The primary criticism is that city funds should be spent locally rather than going to purchase carbon offsets outside the city. While I agree that we should be doing all that we can locally to offset our greenhouse gas emissions, joining Climate Smart is the right thing to do for the following reasons:

The city has limited options for offsetting emissions locally. Planting urban trees provides many benefits to the community, including improving aesthetics and increasing property values. But planting trees in an urban environment is expensive, costing between \$800 to \$7,000 per tree. (The latter figure is taken from the estimate of \$700,000 to complete the planting of the last 100 trees on El Camino as part of the "Trees for Menlo" project.)

Estimating the amount of carbon offset by a tree is imprecise, but a generous estimate is 800 pounds per year for a mature Douglas fir. Climate Smart will



Atherton Heritage Association

### Our Regional Heritage

Students at Laurel School in Atherton are all eyes as Dr. Julia Wall demonstrates the power of human lungs during a workshop in 1986. The students watching are, from left, Jodi Brown, Rebecca Morgan and Sean Ballard.

offset approximately 1,200 to 2,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.

Menlo Park is just beginning the process of developing a climate action plan. Hopefully that plan will include recommendations for local investments that will lead to significant reductions in our carbon footprint.

But the climate crisis is already upon us. Climate scientists have

very clearly stated that the earlier we begin lowering our greenhouse emissions, the less we will have to mitigate future negative impacts. By participating in Climate Smart, our city leaders are helping the city begin to take responsibility for its carbon footprint now.

I'm proud that our city is an early adopter of Climate Smart and is

working on a plan to bring us to carbon neutrality. I look forward to working with residents, staff, and our elected leaders to help create and implement this plan.

**John Nash**  
Commissioner,  
Environmental Quality  
City of Menlo Park

See **LETTERS**, next page

# More views on plans for Oak Knoll School

## Neighbors were not included in expansion project planning

By Kristin Duriseti

Thank you for providing a public forum to discuss the plans to remodel Oak Knoll School. I commend Maddie Napel for her courage to express her opinions, and I appreciate the time volunteered by Kim Guthrie and other members of the Oak Knoll Site Committee.

However, I take issue with the claim that the process has included neighbors. Site committee members were handpicked and met for several months without neighbors' being told that we even had a "representative." Subsequent requests for meaningful inclusion in the process were ignored or outright rejected.

The original proposal presented to the community prior to the June 2006 bond vote indicated that all new construction would be at the rear of the campus. The decision to completely reverse direction on all accounts was made **prior to the first public meeting** in March 2007; the plan has not varied from this basic design, other than for marginal changes.

Direct mailings and public meetings **after** revisions to the design are moot do not constitute legitimate community involvement.

Despite assertions to the contrary, alternatives exist for a "win-win" solution that meets the stated operational and educational objectives of the school board and the interests of the community. We do not expect the school board "to design the school site according to [our] precise wishes."

Let me be very clear — our concerns do not reflect the mere "preference" of neighbors. Ms. Napel's eloquent appeal and the questions raised by Menlo Park city staff lend credence to our claims. The school board should realize that we raise legitimate concerns that affect our community and environment, not simply the immediate neighbors.

Kristin Duriseti lives on Oak Knoll Lane

## Principal says plan will address traffic problems, safety issues

By David Ackerman

As principal of Oak Knoll School for the last six years, the most problematic issue I have confronted with respect to school operations, community relations, and the safety of Oak Knoll's children as they come and go from our campus on foot and by bicycle, has been the inefficient movement of automobile traffic.

Nearly every day I receive complaints from neighbors about illegal parking, complaints from community members about the amount of time that cars spend idling in drop-off and pick-up lines, and reports from all constituents of speeding, U-turns, drop-offs in the middle of the

street, drivers ignoring the right of way, and any number of other unsafe practices. As a school we have published rules, appealed to the better nature and common sense of our patrons, and solicited and received help from the Menlo Park police. We have conducted studies, implemented parking and turn restrictions, and increased supervision.

It is apparent that the current infrastructure at Oak Knoll is inadequate to handle the volume of pedestrians, bicyclists and automobile traffic coming into the neighborhood each school day. If we are going to ensure the safety of our children, the renovation plan for Oak Knoll School, which includes a greatly improved drop-off and pick-up lane, must move forward expeditiously.

The Menlo Park City School District contracted with DKS and Associates, the same firm used by the city of Menlo Park for its traffic analysis, to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed new drop-off and pick-up configuration. The firm's 152-page report on Oak Knoll includes data and simulations that support the design of the new drop-off and pick-up lane.

The new configuration will have an immediate and positive impact on the entire Oak Knoll community. The long traffic lines with idling cars, as well as the number of cars parked along the neighborhood streets, will be significantly reduced. The efficiency of drop-off and pick-up will dramatically improve. Most importantly, I am confident that the end result of all these improvements will be the increased safety of our children. Therefore, it is in the best interests of our community to move forward with the renovations at Oak Knoll School as planned.

David Ackerman is principal of Oak Knoll School

## District has few choices with 750 students on the way in August

By Jennifer Bestor

The recent Viewpoint article by Maddie Napel, a Hillview student, was profoundly sad. So many of us are grieving over the loss of the Oak Knoll School. It is so tempting to think that opposing the new plans will change reality.

As the parent of a third-grader, I'm reminded that Oak Knoll was a spacious school of 400-plus when my husband and I bought our home here. When our son arrived, it held just over 500 students. When he began kindergarten, the number had crawled over 600. Now, over 750 children are registered for next fall — 100 more than when Maddie graduated two years ago — more, in fact, than her entire graduating class.

The school groans under this load. We have "class-and-

a-halves" of 30 students in music, PE, and other specialties. Children spend not one year but three in portable classrooms. On the upper playground, the supervisors have drawn four-square courts in chalk because the queues for the painted ones are too long. On the lower playground, ever more balls fly over the neighbor's fence because so many children mean that multiple games must be played simultaneously on the tiny field. At pick-up time, parents and nannies increasingly park willy-nilly in no-parking zones because the closest legal parking is blocks away and they've already been held up by traffic.

The Oak Knoll of just two years ago — of 650 students — is now a memory. For the sake of the 750 children who will show up next August, we need to get through the denial, the bargaining, the anger — and move forward.

Yes, trees will have to come down to make room for these children to get the education Maddie got. What is the alternative? Fill up the last remaining play space with more portables? Can a child absorb an education without recess and exercise?

Yes, there may be more traffic on Oak Avenue. But that added traffic will be either there or on Oakdell whether the school is updated or not. What has Maddie been told about how staff and students get to school now? This is a public school, and all schools in the district are at capacity.

Yes, some children may feel they'll lose the "friendly neighborhood feel of the school." But Oak Knoll is not a shrine for neighborhood children — it is the only elementary school for 750 Menlo Park and Atherton kids it must educate.

We all grieve over trees, traffic and crowding. But even a quick look at the plans shows that what is being built at Oak Knoll is a permanent campus that provides the capacity to service the educational and physical needs of the real children who are there now. Today's children. Not memories. Permanent classrooms for the fourth and fifth grades, storage facilities, a gymnasium, a music room, a soccer field large enough to kick a ball across. Today's kids deserve the same educational opportunities yesterday's kids got.

It is time to get through the denial that these children exist, the illusion that we can bargain their needs away with false claims like, "it's just about a 30-foot multi," and the anger that there is almost no public space in central Menlo Park (for schools, parks, or playing fields). We must accept our grief and go on to build the school we need.

The public overwhelmingly supports moving forward quickly to take care of our kids — with grief, yes, at the losses that moving forward entails. But also with hope that, in fact, the efforts to spread out parking; to buffer the neighbors' views with berms, bushes and trees; to increase bike spaces by 50 percent; to address concerns about trees and building bulk by splitting the new buildings; to build a clever, functional wing for fourth- and fifth-graders; to build adequate kitchen facilities, will result in a functional school that creates fond memories for tomorrow's children, not just yesterday's.

Jennifer Bestor lives on Yale Road in Menlo Park



## LETTERS

Continued from previous page

### City needs plan when signals go down

Editor:

Based on Menlo Park's inability to respond to a simple unanticipated disruption of traffic Wednesday evening, April 16, the city's emergency planning needs work; lots of work.

A breakdown in the traffic signal at 3300-3400 Sand Hill Road created a traffic clogging four-way

stop sign right at the peak of the evening commute.

No Menlo Park police officer was available to direct traffic while the signal was repaired. No reserve was on standby to be dispatched to the scene. No mutual aid agreement was apparently in effect. Nada.

As a result, traffic backed up and travel from the Santa Cruz intersection to Interstate 280 required 45 minutes on the clock instead of the usual three or four. Needless gas was consumed, extra emissions fouled the air and countless cell phone calls undoubtedly were made to find out what was going on and

to advise destinations of delayed arrivals. Some tempers may even have been frayed, but fortunately, so far as I could tell, none were lost.

Hopefully the city staff learned a lesson and the needed additional planning will be done before we face a more significant contingency.

James R. Madison  
Holly Avenue, Menlo Park

### Youstra is best choice for school board

Editor:

With only a few days left, I urge everyone to mail in their ballot for

the open seat on the Portola Valley school board.

Our school board will be grappling with serious issues in the upcoming months. A budget shortfall, coupled with the on-going real estate downturn, will make the next few years a very difficult financial challenge. We need to elect someone who has experience in the system and will fully appreciate what impact programmatic decisions will have on each child.

I believe only one candidate comes with the requisite knowledge to get the job done. Please join me in supporting Bill Youstra for the

Portola Valley school board.

Teresa Godfrey  
Former school board member

## Corrections

Maddie Napel's name was misspelled in an opinion article about Oak Knoll School published last week.

Also, Kim Guthrie lives in Atherton, not Menlo Park, as stated in her signature on an opinion article. The Almanac regrets the errors.



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