

**IS ATHERTON'S Civic Interest League taking on a political role in the council election? Page 6**

# The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON,

PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

MAY 28, 2008 | VOL. 43 NO. 39

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## *At the Top*

PORTOLA VALLEY NATIVE  
AND "SURGE" COMMANDER IN IRAQ MOVES  
TO KOREA TO HEAD UP THE U.S. 8TH ARMY

PAGE 12

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# Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

## FIRST SHOT



Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac

### Unions protest McCain visit

Rick Wathen, a member of the California Teachers Association, protests Republican presidential candidate John McCain's appearance at a fundraiser in Atherton on Thursday, May 22. Members of various labor unions gathered on Edge Road to greet Mr. McCain's motorcade as it arrived at a luncheon held at the home of Meg Whitman, the former CEO of eBay.

### Atherton

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### Community

- Woodside School eighth-graders stage "High School Musical" for the community. **Page 8**

### On the cover

Lt. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., shown here as a major general with two stars, received a third star in December 2007 upon his departure from Iraq, where he led the recent "surge." The Portola Valley native now commands the U.S. 8th Army in South Korea. Photo courtesy of Susie and Joe Fil Sr. Story begins on **Page 12**.

### CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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**THE ALMANAC** (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Wednesday by Embarcadero Publishing Co., 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-4455. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices. Adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for San Mateo County, the Almanac is delivered free to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside. Voluntary subscriptions for \$30 per year or \$50 per 2 years are welcome from residents of the above circulation area. Subscription rates for businesses and for residents of other communities is \$50 per year and \$80 for two years. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Almanac, P.O. Box 7008, Menlo Park, CA 94026-7008. Copyright ©2006 by Embarcadero Publishing Co., All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.



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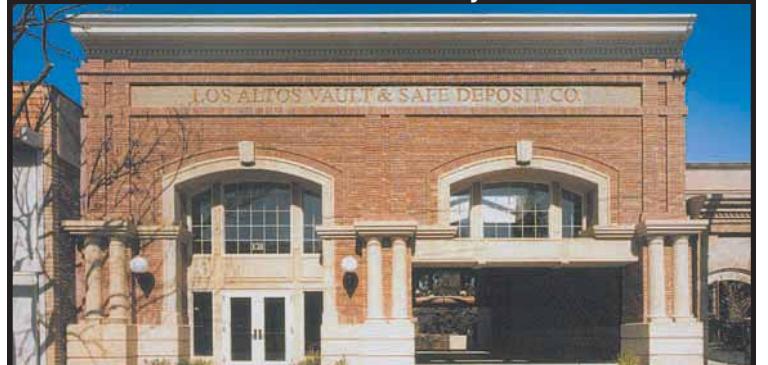
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## Roberts Tip of the Week

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Tomatoes are terrific when used in salads, sauces, and salsa. Available in America since the 1700s, tomatoes were not readily eaten until the 1800s because they were considered poisonous. Today, the tomato is known as a great-tasting, low-calorie source of vitamins A and C. It has even made recent headlines as a cancer-fighting substance. A recent study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute suggests that lycopene, an antioxidant found in tomato-based products, lowers a person's risk of developing lung, cervical, colon, prostate, and breast cancer. So now you can enjoy a burger and fries with a little less guilt, as long as you remember the ketchup! When shopping, chose well-shaped, deep red tomatoes that are slightly soft.

Tomatoes are a great ingredient, especially as the warmer weather approaches. At ROBERTS MARKET, we carry the absolute freshest produce. We have quality and juicy vine ripened tomatoes that are delicious when eaten as a snack! If you find yourself pressed for time visit our "heat and eat it" department for wonderful gourmet prepared foods. You can find prepared foods such as homemade hot soups, sandwiches, salads, and gourmet foodstuffs.

*HINT: Do not refrigerate tomatoes that are not fully red or ripened. Cold temperatures destroy flavors and stop the ripening process.*



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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Water officials: Conserve now or face rationing later

By **Marion Softky**

Almanac Staff Writer

Here we go again: Brace for drought, and hope that next winter bails us out.

San Mateo County and the Peninsula are better off than the East Bay, where the East Bay Municipal Utility District has already established water rationing.

Faced with a shortage of 200,000 acre feet of water by Oct. 1, the East Bay district board enacted a mandatory 15 percent cut in water usage for its 1.3 million customers in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

The situation is not so dire for San Francisco and the 2.4 million people in four counties that depend on its Hetch Hetchy system for water.

"We will stay in the mode of 10 percent voluntary reduction — the same as last year," said Nicole Sandkulla, a senior water resources engineer for the Bay Area Water

Supply and Conservation Agency, made up of the 27 water agencies that buy water from San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy water system.

San Francisco gets its water from a different watershed that is lower in the mountains than the East Bay sources, Ms. Sandkulla said. "Hetch Hetchy will fill this year. But it's been one of the driest springs on record."

On May 13, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission called on its customers to continue the voluntary conservation that reduced water consumption by 13 percent last year.

"Cutbacks in water usage are essential to avoid mandatory consumption limits and rationing later this year," the commission's press release said. It is targeting a 10 percent reduction overall.

After one of the driest winters on record in 2007, state hydrologists are estimating that this year's precipitation in the Sierra —

the Bay Area's primary source of water — will register at only 70 percent of normal. "March and April were among the driest in California's recorded history," the press release states.

Water agencies are urging people to conserve and use water carefully, both inside and out.

Suggestions for saving water indoors include: turning off the faucet when brushing teeth, and taking shorter showers; checking for leaks; washing full loads; replacing old washers and toilets with new low-energy, low-water units; and installing low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators on bathroom and kitchen sinks.

As temperatures rise and plants dry up, outdoor water use tends to soar on larger suburban lots. Suggestions for outdoor water savings include: reducing lawns and planting native or drought-tolerant landscaping; sweeping pavements with a broom, not a hose; washing cars only with

a hose that has an automatic shut-off; and watering early in the morning or late at night, when it's cool.

Some water agencies have free water-saving kits and educational materials. Some give rebates on new toilets or washers. ■

### ■ INFORMATION

Here are some contacts:

■ San Francisco PUC, Water Conservation Section, 415-551-4730 or go to [sfwater.org](http://sfwater.org).

■ BAWSCA, 349-3000 or [bawsca.org](http://bawsca.org) or [watersavinghero.com](http://watersavinghero.com).

■ Menlo Park Municipal Water District, 330-6763.

■ California Water Service Co., Bear Gulch District, 367-6800, or [calwater.com/conservation](http://calwater.com/conservation).

## Atherton's mayor eyes annexing the neighbors

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

Atherton mayor Jim Janz is serious about exploring the possibility of annexing unincorporated neighborhoods between the town and Redwood City.

Mr. Janz made his pitch for the potential benefits of expanding Atherton's borders at the annual meeting of the Atherton Civic Interest League on May 15. Annexation could bring the town two things it needs, according to Mr. Janz — sales tax revenues and multi-family housing.



Jim Janz

Atherton is under pressure from the state to plan for new housing affordable to a variety of income levels, he said. Town officials are also looking for a steady source of revenue that might replace the town's parcel tax, which expires in June 2010. Atherton has no

commercially zoned property, so it can't rely on sales tax revenue to fund town services.

"We're going to have to have multi-family housing, and we don't want to subdivide our lots," Mr. Janz said. "Multi-family housing and commercial (properties) are there already in the surrounding areas."

In particular, Mr. Janz said he was looking at the area along Middlefield Road, up to 5th Avenue, east of El Camino Real. The area is controlled by San Mateo County and is considered to be part of Redwood City's sphere of influence. Mr. Janz said Redwood City council members are "quite interested" in the idea, and that the two county supervisors he spoken with told him that annexation is worth pursuing.

"I came up with the idea 10 or 15 years ago, but I never thought it would get any traction," Mr. Janz said.

There are several potential

See **ANNEX**, page 8

## Family, friends celebrate life of former city manager Mike Bedwell

By **Marion Softky**

Almanac Staff Writer

Few cities have been as shaped by one man. From 1959 to 1991, Mike Bedwell's steady hand, jovial presence, and quick

quips helped grow Menlo Park from a small, progressive city to a Silicon Valley powerhouse. And through many controversies, trying times, and even danger, everyone still seemed to like Mike.

"Mike had a wonderful talent to

get along with antagonists from both sides. That amazed me," said former Councilman Doug Dupen, who served between 1972 and 1982 during the city's most tumultuous times. "He built the town."

Mr. Bedwell died March 9 in

Escondido after a long fight with heart and lung problems. He was 77.

Family friends and former colleagues will gather at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 31, at the council chambers in the Civic Center

between Laurel and Alma streets, to celebrate Mr. Bedwell's life and tenure, and to tell stories and share laughs. There will be refreshments.

See **BEDWELL**, page 8



Photo by Bud Wendell

### Whatsa matter?

Never see a goat on a bench? Bud Wendell of Menlo Park recently photographed this goat relaxing on a bench, with a protective mate nearby, at Sharon Hills Park off of Valparaiso Avenue, just west of the Alameda de las Pulgas, in Menlo Park. As it has for years, the city of Menlo Park brings in several hundred goats in the spring to eat tall weeds and grass in the parks.

# Is Atherton's ACIL taking on political role?

■ Council candidate accuses "neutral" group of supporting her opponent.

By **Andrea Gemmet**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Are the two candidates for the Atherton City Council telling the truth about each other? The nonprofit Atherton Civic Interest League is taking on that issue and on May 22 — less than two weeks before the June 3 special election — issued a press release that comes out squarely in favor of candidate Jim Dobbie and dismisses Elizabeth Lewis' assertions.

"It's shocking to me that they're being so vicious," Ms. Lewis told *The Almanac*.

The ACIL asked both Mr. Dobbie and Ms. Lewis to give factual background for several statements made in their campaign literature, and to retract any statements not supported by facts.

In its press release, the ACIL dismisses as "hearsay" Ms. Lewis' claims that Mr. Dobbie "confronted young football players during practice" and asked them to vacate

the Menlo-Atherton High School field, and that his supporters "used intimidating behavior to prevent these youths from using public fields."

The issue touches on the ongoing dispute over a town ordinance that restricts the use of public school fields for non-school activities, with Pop Warner youth football officials at odds with town officials and some Lindenwood residents.

"My statements are absolutely true, they're not hearsay," Ms. Lewis said, adding the report of the incident between Mr. Dobbie and Pop Warner football players came from the team's coach, Greg Baty.

Mr. Dobbie strongly refutes that accusation, saying he only spoke with Mr. Baty about town ordinances and then left.

"I never talked to any players, at any time, or in any way threatened any young players," Mr. Dobbie said. "I have five grandchildren in town, I go to all kinds of (youth sports) games all the time."

On the other hand, the ACIL release doesn't take issue with the supporting evidence given by Mr. Dobbie for his assertions that developers support Ms. Lewis' campaign, and that there are safety

issues for children walking to Laurel and Encinal schools.

"Have you seen her campaign finance (statement)? Fifty-five per-

cent of her contributions are from developers or people associated with the commercial real estate business," Mr. Dobbie said.

Ms. Lewis said she has been falsely characterized as someone who

See **ACIL**, page 18

## Atherton campaign spending hits \$40,000

By **Andrea Gemmet**  
Almanac Staff Writer

As the special June 3 election approaches, campaign spending by Atherton's City Council candidates, Elizabeth Lewis and Jim Dobbie, is shifting into high gear. They are running to fill the two years remaining on the term of Alan Carlson, who resigned from the council in December.

According to campaign financial statements that cover the period from March 18 to May 17, Ms. Lewis has raised — and spent — more money than Mr. Dobbie.

Ms. Lewis raised \$19,274 in cash, as well as non-monetary contributions valued at \$2,689, during the statement period, bringing her campaign total to \$22,459.

Mr. Dobbie's campaign reported raising \$12,227 during the period. With an additional \$2,000 in contributions after the financial report was filed, the total raised by his campaign is \$18,761.

Ms. Lewis was the top donor to her own campaign, with \$1,500 in cash and \$939 in non-monetary contributions. She had six \$1,000 donors to her campaign. They are listed as: James Law, partner in Law & Associates commercial real estate

firm; Charles King III, partner in Charles King & Associates commercial real estate firm; John Worthing, a real estate investor with Worthing Capital; Jillian Manus-Salzman, literary agency president of Maus & Associates; the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors through the California Real Estate Political Action Committee (CREPAC); and Steve Dostart, president of Dostart Development Co.

Mr. Dobbie's top donors are Paul Wythes, venture capitalist, and Herman Christensen, retired, who each gave \$1,800. Venture capitalist Bill Draper and his wife Phyllis donated \$1,000. The two other \$1,000 donors are Eric Roberts, a self-employed art dealer, and Robert C. Wilson, retired.

Mr. Dobbie reported spending most of his money — \$15,941 over the course of his campaign — with \$13,130 spent during the two-month financial statement period. He reported spending \$6,981 on newspaper advertisements, \$3,260 on campaign materials and printing, \$1,950 on postage, and \$675 on signs.

Ms. Lewis reported spending \$23,981 over the course of her campaign. She reported spending \$8,901 on printing services for campaign literature, \$6,664 on newspaper ads, \$2,473 on postage and \$787 on T-shirts. ■

## Sunset

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Alice @ 97.3



View from the Bay

# DA says ex-Atherton cop investigated his own crime

■ Clark Yee faces felony charges over stolen golf clubs.

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

It must have been one heck of a set of golf clubs. Former Atherton police officer Clark Yee, 29, is facing four felony charges stemming from the sale of a set of clubs stolen from an unlocked car parked in an Atherton driveway.

Mr. Yee, a Daly City resident, pleaded not guilty in Redwood City Municipal Court on May 19 on two counts of filing false police reports, one count of possessing stolen property, and one count of selling stolen property.

Mr. Yee's attorney, William Rapoport of Redwood City, did not return The Almanac's calls seeking comment. Mr. Yee is free on \$100,000 bail.

While there is no evidence that Mr. Yee took the golf clubs from the car in October, surveillance camera footage identified him as the man who brought the clubs to Golf Mart in South San Francisco and traded them in for store credit, said San Mateo County Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

"He must be a golfer," Mr. Wagstaffe said, adding that stolen property is usually sold for cash, not store credit.

The victim, who was looking to replace his 14 stolen clubs, recognized 12 of them among the used golf clubs for sale at Golf Mart, Mr. Wagstaffe said. "It's not like they were monogrammed or anything. He just recognized them right away," he said.

When the victim reported his discovery to police, Mr. Yee was one of the police officers involved in the investigation, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

"The main charges are for filing false police reports while investigating his own crime," Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Once Mr. Yee became the suspect, he told investigators that he unknowingly purchased the stolen clubs online from someone named Omar who posted them on Craigslist, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

"I can't tell you how many times crimes get blamed on some guy named Omar," Mr. Wagstaffe said. "I don't know why they pick that name."

Mr. Yee's home computers were seized and searched, and investigators concluded that the golf clubs were not purchased online, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

While the investigation was going on, Mr. Yee resigned from the Atherton Police Department. The department had placed him on paid administrative leave and been running a parallel personnel investigation, said police Chief Bob Brennan. Mr. Yee was an Atherton police officer for more than five years and had no other complaints against him, Chief Brennan said.

Mr. Wagstaffe could not give an exact value of the stolen golf clubs, but said that they were worth at least \$1,000 and possibly quite a bit more. The two other stolen golf clubs are still missing, he said.

Mr. Yee is scheduled to appear in Superior Court on June 4 for a case review conference, Mr. Wagstaffe said. ■

## ■ ATHERTON

*'I can't tell you how many times crimes get blamed on some guy named Omar.'*

STEVE WAGSTAFFE, CHIEF DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

# City Council approves bike tunnel study

By Rory Brown

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park is a small step closer to building a bike tunnel under the Caltrain tracks.

City Council members voted 4-1 at their May 20 meeting to authorize the city to pay a consultant \$41,000 to study where a bike tunnel could be built.

The tunnel is tentatively planned for somewhere between Ravenswood Avenue and San Francisquito Creek. The study would identify a specific location and determine the cost of the project.

Councilman John Boyle opposed the study, arguing the council should wait for city-led plans to revamp properties along El Camino Real to move forward before trying to pinpoint a location for a bike tunnel.

Other council members noted that the studies and planning for the bike tunnel would take several years, and the tunnel could still be built in conjunction with a

## ■ MENLO WATCH

greater plan for El Camino Real.

Menlo Park resident Sue Kayton, the one resident to speak about the issue at the May 20 meeting, urged the council to wait on the bike tunnel study. She noted that the train tracks may be raised or lowered to accommodate high-speed trains, which would make the tunnel study useless.

"Let's wait until we know what's happening with the Caltrain tracks, and we know what's happening with those businesses on El Camino Real," Ms. Kayton said.

## Plans to widen U.S. Highway 101

The environmental study associated with the California Department of Transportation's plans to widen U.S. 101 between Marsh Road in Menlo Park and Embarcadero Road in Palo Alto are available for public review.

The study, called a negative

declaration, is available at the Menlo Park Library at 800 Alma St.

Caltrans wants to widen the freeway to make room for an auxiliary lane in each direction to ease congestion.

## Candidates sought for commissions

Menlo Park is accepting applications to fill openings on six of its seven City Council-appointed commissions.

There are three openings on the Planning Commission, two on the Housing Commission, two on the Environmental Quality Commission, and one each on the Parks and Recreation, Bicycle and Library commissions.

To print out an application for any of the openings, and to view the full list of vacancies, including the start dates and lengths of each term, go to [www.MenloPark.org](http://www.MenloPark.org) and under "Latest News Releases" click on "Notice of Commission Vacancies." ■

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### Tips for Buying a Condo/Townhouse

**Q:** I am about to make an offer on a townhouse and am concerned that the home inspection includes details about the interior of the unit but very little about the exterior. I was told this is because the Homeowners Association pays for exterior repairs and maintenance but shouldn't I be concerned about the condition of the entire complex since I would be partly responsible for repairs?

**A:** Yes, you should be aware of the condition of the common area of the entire complex, not just the interior of your unit. A good home inspection will include a general assessment of the condition of the exterior walls, roof, garage, and common areas. You will

also be provided with a disclosure from the Homeowners Association that will include details about past repairs and present and future assessments. You will receive financial statements and minutes from Homeowner Association meetings held during the past year. Read all documentation carefully because you will learn a great deal from it. When you purchase a condo or townhouse you are agreeing to share responsibility with other owners for decisions and expenses shared in common. You want to be sure that the HOA members work well together and that they manage maintenance, insurance and other issues in a responsible and cooperative manner. This is the kind of complex you will want to buy into.

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

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## Family, friends celebrate life of Mike Bedwell, former city manager

### BEDWELL

continued from page 5

Looking around Menlo Park now, one can see Mr. Bedwell's legacy. For starters: Bayfront Park, created from the former Marsh Road Dump, famously called Mt. Trashmore. Ratty apartments along Willow Road were replaced with housing for 130 low-income families as part of a redevelopment agency. The old buildings from World War II Dibble General Hospital have been replaced by the modern Civic Center built around a landscaped duck pond.

These accomplishments — and others — took enormous skill at dealing with different — often conflicting — people, and managing a complex city bureaucracy. Beyond his wit, humor and genial personality, Mr. Bedwell was thoroughly rational and extremely competent, said Jack Jorgenson, a close friend and longtime city attorney, who will give the eulogy at the Saturday gathering. "I don't remember ever seeing Mike engaged in an emotional display."

Mr. Jorgenson noted another skill that Mr. Bedwell showed in dealing with wildly disagreeing members of city councils. "The first duty of a city manager is the care and feeding of city councils so they can do their jobs," Mr. Jorgenson added. "Mike was terrific at that. He did it in spades."

In a final interview after 26 years as city manager, Mr. Bedwell had this advice for his successor. "Get under your desk," he said. "Keep an open mind and a sense of humor. Be sure to laugh."

### Politics in the blood

Mike Bedwell was born in Lone Pine, California, near Death Valley, of a pioneering family from the gold mining town of Bodie, California.

He was proud of his political forebears. His maternal grandmother was the first woman to be elected as a county tax collector and assessor in California. Three of his grandmother's brothers were county supervisors. And his father was president of the Escondido school board.

In 1934, Mike's family moved to Escondido, and planted the avocado and citrus ranch where he grew up. He later retired there to maintain and preserve it for future Bedwells.

Mike graduated from Pomona College in 1952, and attended Claremont Men's College before being commissioned as a lieutenant in the Navy during the Korean War.

After leaving the Navy, Mike



### Mike Bedwell's

**advice** for his successor: "Get under your desk. Keep an open mind and a sense of humor."

earned a one-year public service scholarship with the Coro Foundation in San Francisco. There he met Carleen, another Coro fellow, whom he married in 1958.

At Coro, Mike also met another fellow, John Johnson, who went on to become city manager in Menlo Park. In 1959, Mr. Johnson hired Mr. Bedwell as his assistant city manager. In 1964, Mr. Bedwell became city manager when Mr. Johnson left for a long career at the Palo Alto Medical Clinic.

"Mike could get a hostile crowd laughing better than anyone I ever knew," Mr. Johnson said. "He used short, quick, humorous comments. And he could do it over and over and over."

### Growing Menlo Park

When Mike Bedwell came to Menlo Park in 1959, the town council sweltered in an un-air-conditioned, temporary building left over from the World War II Dibble General Hospital.

When he retired in 1991, he presided over a modern city with 188 city employees and a budget of \$13 million, from an air-conditioned office overlooking the landscaped duck pond in a modern civic center.

Some of Mr. Bedwell's greatest challenges revolved around the revolt against the Willow Freeway/Expressway, which would have slashed through the Willows residential neighborhood; near-violent protests against the Vietnam War; and the tax revolt launched by Proposition 13 in 1978.

By 1971, Willows residents fighting the proposed expressway through their neighborhood managed to elect Bob Stephens to the council. That ended the congenial "old boys" council that had run Menlo Park for generations. A 1972 advisory vote came out 3-1 against the Willow Expressway, Mr. Stephens recalled.

From then on to the present, the council has been divided over a succession of issues. "It's been that way ever since," Mr. Dupen said.

But Mr. Bedwell managed to keep the city functioning despite conflicts on the council. "He had such a pleasant personality it was hard to pick a fight with him," Mr. Stephens told *The Almanac*. "He was always looking for consensus." ■



Photo by Robina Riccitiello

**Woodside School** students rehearse for their eighth-grade operetta, Disney's "High School Musical," which will play June 4 to 7 at the school auditorium. In a scene from the popular musical, Sharpay flirts madly with Troy, as her brother and the new girl look on. The actors are, from left, John Gilhuly, Ari Lindsay, Beau Baldwin and Elayne Hovsmith. Every eighth-grade student at Woodside School is singing and dancing in the musical.

## Eighth-graders stage 'High School Musical'

By Robina Riccitiello

Special to *The Almanac*

**W**oodside School's eighth-graders are busy rehearsing for their production of "High School Musical," which will premiere June 4. The production, based on the popular

Disney movie about a high school full of singing jocks and brainiacs, will include every member of Woodside's eighth-grade class.

It's a Woodside School tradition, dating to the early 1960s, to have each graduating class stage an operetta — or musical. From kindergarten, students look forward to performing in their own operetta.

Producing the Operetta is a team effort involving hundreds of hours of rehearsal by the kids and countless hours of set building, costume and set designing, and prop collecting by the parents.

The musical's catchy anthem, "We're All in This Together," describes the behind-the-scenes operetta effort, too.

"High School Musical" tells the story of a popular basketball player, Troy, played by Beau Baldwin, and a brainiac girl, Gabriella, played by Elayne Hovsmith, who fall for each other, despite coming from different high school cliques.

When they decide to audition for the high school musical, the teens throw the school into a frenzy, especially the flamboyant leader of the drama club, played by Ari Lindsay, and her brother, played by John Gilhuly. The lively number, "Stick to the Status Quo," highlights how hard it is for kids to step out of their expected high school roles and try something new.

As the show progresses, the unofficial leader of

the brainiacs, played by Kate Riccitiello, and Troy's best basketball buddy, played by Marshall Gifford, try to keep Troy and Gabriella from auditioning for the play. But the shy teenage playwright, played by Athena Zouzounis, encourages the pair, over the objections of the drama teacher, Ali Maahs, and the basketball coach, Travis McHugh.

Other lead actors include Camille Stroe, Andrew Zaky and Scott Zimmerman.

The energetic production is directed by Elena Mori, who has spent every afternoon since early April coaching the kids. Ruthanne Smith, as musical director, has coaxed the high notes and complicated rhythms out of the teens. And Patti Michelsen has choreographed the exuberant dance steps that have every eighth-grader moving in sync.

The producers — parents Alexandra Gifford, Daran Reinholm, Jennifer Edwards and Tracy Zaky — have had to be flexible and resourceful. When one of the kids who played a "skater dude" in the show broke both ankles in May, they had to scramble to build a wheelchair-accessible ramp for the stage. That student will now be rolling around the stage in a wheelchair instead of on a skateboard. ■

### SHOW TIMES

The show will debut Wednesday, June 4, at 5:30 p.m. at the Sellman Auditorium at Woodside School, 3195 Woodside Road. A second early show will play Thursday, June 5. The Friday and Saturday night shows play at 7 p.m. For tickets, contact Deanna Tanner at 851-1571. The show usually sells out, but last-minute tickets often are available at the door.

### ANNEX

continued from page 5

pitfalls to the annexation idea. In the first place, it usually costs more to serve an annexed area than a town could expect to receive in

increased revenues, Mr. Janz said. Atherton first would need to do a cost-benefit study, and if the numbers work out, get political buy-in from the residents of Atherton and the unincorporated area.

Annexation would also require approval by the Board of Supervisors and Redwood City's City Council, as well as the Local Agency Formation Committee, he said. ■

# MP mayor to seek re-election

■ Councilman Andy Cohen is the first to throw a hat in ring for November council election.

By **Rory Brown**  
Almanac Staff Writer

“I’m ready for another four years.” With that statement, Menlo Park Mayor Andy Cohen announced his intent to run for a second term on the City Council, and kicked off the city’s 2008 campaign season.

Mayor Cohen is the first person to publicly declare candidacy for the Nov. 4 council election, choosing to do so in an interview with *The Almanac*.

“I like this job, I like serving my city, so I want to keep at it,” Mr. Cohen said. He noted that he’s working with a team of close advisers to start strategizing for the election.

Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson, whose term is also up this year, told *The Almanac* she is “not prepared to comment” on whether she will seek a second term.

Mr. Cohen and Ms. Ferguson campaigned together in 2004. They don’t vote in lockstep, but do agree on many issues, and are part of the council’s four-person majority that also includes Rich-

ard Cline and Heyward Robinson.

That majority is generally more opposed to new development and its effects, such as increased traffic, than the other side, currently represented on the council by John Boyle.

The filing period for the Nov. 4 election opens July 14. To appear on the ballot, candidates must file the appropriate paperwork with the city clerk by Aug. 8, said David Tom, San Mateo County elections manager.

## About Cohen

Mr. Cohen, a retired workers’ compensation judge, is known for displaying strong opinions behind the dais that have put him at odds with various groups.

He was the lone council member to vote against the original 135-condo Derry project. He also cast the only opposing vote to the Stanford/Rosewood Hotel and office complex being built at Sand Hill Road and Interstate 280. (Ms. Ferguson did not vote on the



Andy Cohen

hotel project due to a conflict of interest.)

In each case, Mr. Cohen said he was acting in the best interests of residents because the proposed development was too intense for Menlo Park.

“I do not have one iota of regret,” Mr. Cohen said of the votes he cast. “There’s a theme that runs through what I do — I try and speak up for the little guy.”

Mr. Cohen has also opposed plans to build housing projects in the city’s Linfield Oaks neighborhood, blasted plans for Dumbarton Rail and high-speed rail to cut through Menlo Park, and sided with neighbors who have called for more stringent environmental review of the Menlo Park City School District’s plans to remodel Oak Knoll School.

Mr. Cohen said that two of the key issues facing the city over the next four years are city-sponsored efforts to revamp properties along El Camino Real, and deciding how to develop the city’s M-2 industrial district east of U.S. 101.

He said he would like Peninsula cities to collaborate more on certain issues — something he’s stressed in organizing a May 28 forum devoted to homelessness. ■

# Menlo Park faces \$1 million budget deficit

■ City manager says city should draw from reserves, and keep utility tax rate at 1 percent.

By **Rory Brown**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park is facing a projected \$1.01 million budget deficit for the fiscal year that starts July 1, but City Manager Glen Rojas says there’s no need to panic.

Instead, he’s suggesting the city try to ride out the current storm of national and state-wide economic problems, and see if the local economy improves.

Mr. Rojas released the first copy of his proposed 2008-09 fiscal year budget on May 22.

According to the 200-page document, the city is expected to spend about \$38.24 million in the fiscal year starting July 1, and collect about \$37.23 million in revenues.

Rather than make any drastic budget cuts, or raise the utility tax rate from the current 1 percent tax on all utility bills, Mr. Rojas is suggesting the city pull the \$1.01 million needed to cover its costs from its \$24 million reserve fund. The utility tax should stay at the current level

for at least another year, Mr. Rojas said in a report attached to the budget document.

“The availability of adequate reserves provides an opportunity to take a longer term view, allowing for a more thoughtful process toward a sustainable spending plan — neither overcommitting city resources nor over-correcting for near-term conditions,” Mr. Rojas said in the report.

Council members will discuss the budget at their June 3 meeting, which will start at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets. Council members are expected to approve the final budget document at their June 17 meeting.

## Why the deficit?

The city’s expenditures are expected to rise 6.3 percent in the next fiscal year as revenues grow just 1.5 percent, and a big chunk of the rising costs are tied to personnel.

Personnel costs are projected to increase \$2.1 million, par-

tially due to two sets of salary increases for the city’s 39 line-level police officers — a 6 percent increase scheduled for July 6 and a 3 percent increase set for January 2009, both approved by the current council. For the first time in several years, the police department is expected to be fully staffed, adding to projected personnel costs.

The city has also added 4.75 full-time-equivalent positions to the payroll in the past year, including a community engagement manager, business development specialist, and computer support technician.

About \$27 million (71 percent) of the city’s costs are projected to be personnel expenditures, according to the budget.

## Could be OK

But if past budgets are any indicator, the projected deficit could turn into a surplus by year’s end.

Last June, the city was estimating that revenues would fall about \$1.59 million short of expenditures after the council reduced the utility tax rate for

# TOWN OF WOODSIDE INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR COMMITTEES

## BICYCLE COMMITTEE

Meets third Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.; appointment for a two year term.

The Committee advises and recommends to the Town council on the policies for planning, developing, maintaining, and usage of Town’s bikeways system and provides an open forum for bicycle issues.

## CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Meets fourth Monday of each month, 6:00 p.m.; appointment for a two year term.

The Committee advises and assists the Town Council, Planning Commission, and staff on conservation, open space, noise, public services and facilities as pertaining to the elements of the Town’s General Plan.

## OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Meets fourth Thursday of each month at 5:00 P.M.; appointment for a one year term.

The Committee advises and assists the Council and staff in implementing the policies and goals of the open Space and Conservation Elements of the General Plan, specifically with respect to acquisition and maintenance of conservation easements and open space preservation.

## RECREATION COMMITTEE

Meets first Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.; appointment for a one year term.

The Committee guides the activities of the community recreation programs.

## TRAILS COMMITTEE

Meets second Thursday of each month, 3:00 p.m.; appointment for a two year term.

The Committee reviews land divisions, subdivisions and conditional use permits for locations for equestrian, pedestrian and bicycle trails and makes recommendations to staff and to the Planning Commission.

*Committee appointments are volunteer positions and serve in an advisory capacity to the Town Council.*

*Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, on the web site at [www.woodsidetown.org](http://www.woodsidetown.org), or telephone (650) 851 6790. Deadline for applications is Monday, June 2, 2008, 5:00 p.m.*

Published in THE ALMANAC on May 7, 14, 21, 28 2008.

See **BUDGET**, page 18

## Threats to police officers lead to arrest of homeless woman

Menlo Park police have arrested a homeless woman after discovering language in her personal belongings and on the walls of the alley where she lives that threaten the lives of police officers.

Police booked Judith Ann Schwartz, 54, into San Mateo County jail on May 15 on charges of making terrorist threats, said Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe in a report.

Ms. Schwartz, who has been assigned an attorney from the county's private defender program, pleaded not guilty at a May 21 arraignment before Municipal Court Commissioner Stephanie Garratt. A prelimi-

nary hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m. Monday, June 2.

In her belongings, police found a trespassing citation on which she had written the words "Persecution" and "Die Mother----er" next to the name of the officer who had issued her the citation, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Ms. Schwartz repeated the threat regarding that particular officer when asked about the citation, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Officers then visited the alley where she lives and found statements "all over the wall about killing Menlo Park police officers," Mr. Wagstaffe said. Ms. Schwartz has a "long history of hating police officers," he said.

## Students arrested in Atherton burglary

Two Menlo-Atherton High School students confessed to taking about \$2,000 in cash and other items from an Atherton home May 20, police reported.

A resident, who lives near the high school on the first block of Maple Leaf Way, returned home and discovered the burglary around 12:50 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20, police said.

Canvassing the neighborhood for witnesses, Atherton police officers questioned high school staff, who identified two juvenile male students as suspects.

The two teens were arrested and booked into Hillcrest juvenile facility on burglary charges. Most of the stolen property was recovered, according to an Atherton police press release.

## Woman imprisoned for embezzlement, theft

Menlo Park resident Audrey Everson Leonard is now in state prison after pleading "no contest" in San Mateo County Superior Court to charges of embezzlement and theft.

In exchange for five years in prison, Ms. Leonard, 51, agreed in an April 30 plea bargain to one count of embezzlement and two counts of theft involving financial abuse of elders, Deputy District Attorney Karen

Guidotti said. Ms. Leonard also admitted to having stolen over \$200,000.

Police alleged in December 2006, when Ms. Leonard was arrested, that she had defrauded more than 70 people of more than \$1.4 million since 1999, partly through the use of phony charity organizations. Many of the fraud charges were dropped since they have a three-year statute of limitations.

In handing down the sentence, Judge Clifford Cretan gave Ms. Leonard credit for the 345 days she spent in San Mateo County jail, Ms. Guidotti said.

She will be eligible for parole after having served 50 percent of her five-year term, Ms. Guidotti said.

The lengthy investigation was a consequence of investigators continually finding new charges against Ms. Leonard, Ms. Guidotti said.

## Burglary probe: Police return Purple Heart to owner

By Rory Brown

Almanac Staff Writer

Just in time for Memorial Day, Menlo Park Police returned a stolen World War II-era Purple Heart medal to its owner.

The Purple Heart, which has the inscription "Patrick J. Monroe" on it, was among the items recovered by law enforcement as part of an ongoing investigation into a string of burglaries on the Midpeninsula.

Menlo Park Detective Jeff Keegan said the Purple Heart owners — who are relatives of Mr. Monroe

— saw local media reports about the medal being recovered, and contacted the police.

He said the relatives asked to remain anonymous.

Officers from Menlo Park and other Peninsula cities are still investigating the recent string of burglaries, and have identified several suspects, Mr. Keegan said.

A break in the case came on May 16, when a Palo Alto resident returned to his Ross Road home at about 12:25 p.m. and discovered an unknown pickup truck in the driveway with a number of his possessions, including a computer

and flat screen television, concealed among gardening tools in the pickup bed. He removed the keys from the truck's ignition and called police.

Officers were unable to find the burglars, and the suspects remain at large, but a follow-up investigation of the incident linked other burglaries in Palo Alto and Menlo Park to the same suspects.

Mr. Keegan said the names of the suspects will be released once police make arrests in the case. ■

—Bay City News Service contributed to this report.



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## 'Holy Rollers' to race across America

Cycling fans have called Race Across America (RAAM) "the world's toughest bike race," but that doesn't discourage the four-person team of everyday riders from Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, who called themselves Team H4 or "Holy Rollers Hammering for Habitat Homes," says Kelly Brieger of Valley Presbyterian Church.

The bike team, which includes Rafael Ornes, Joel Phillips, Sally Phillips and Michelle Santihano, will take part in Race Across America's 3,000-mile ride from Oceanside, California, to Annapolis, Maryland, June 11-20.

The riders hope to draw attention to Peninsula Habitat for Humanity, the local nonprofit organization building affordable homes for low-income families. They hope their endurance efforts will raise \$50,000 for Peninsula Habitat.

Rather than get "mile sponsorship," they decided to have a series of events to raise awareness about the ride. Recently they scheduled a three-day practice, starting from Peninsula Habitat's current construction site on Lincoln Avenue in Redwood City.

Valley Presbyterian Church has been hosting rest stops outside the church to provide refreshments to riders who follow the popular "loop" around



Photo by Karen Russell

**Planning to race** for Habitat for Humanity are, from left, Rafael Ornes, Michelle Santihano, Sally Phillips and Joel Phillips.

Sand Hill and Alpine roads. The cycling team has also gone into local schools, such as Woodland School in Ladera, to talk about the race.

Cyclist Ornes of Menlo Park is Valley Presbyterian Church's minister of music. Mr. and Mrs. Phillips have been members of the church since 2001. Ms. Santihano, a Menlo Park resident, is a member of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church. While the four riders consider themselves endurance riders, none are professional

cyclists.

The support crew for the riders consists of Stanford student Mary Elting and husband, Matthew, church members Anne Hubble, Cathy Paniagua, Karen Russell, and Pastor Mark Goodman-Morris.

For more information, visit the Team H biking Web site and blog at [www.valleypreschurch.org/TeamH4](http://www.valleypreschurch.org/TeamH4). To learn more about Peninsula Habitat for Humanity, visit their Web site at [www.peninsulahabitat.org](http://www.peninsulahabitat.org)



Photo by Kasey Hansen

**The Sacred Heart Prep boys' tennis team** won three straight matches to claim the Northern California championships on May 17 at UC Davis, finishing the season with a 27-3 record.

## Perfect finish for SHP boys

By Keith Peters

Palo Alto Weekly

**F**unny how things work out. Last year, the Sacred Heart Prep boys' tennis team took an undefeated record into the postseason, finished 26-1 and failed to win Central Coast Section or NorCal titles. This season was completely different.

The Gators took three losses into the CCS tournament in 2008, captured the section crown and advanced to the NorCal tournament that concluded May 17 at UC Davis with Sacred Heart Prep capturing the title with a 7-0 triumph over Monte Vista (Danville).

The Gators finished off a 27-3 season by sweeping through the NorCal event. SHP opened with a 7-0 romp over outmanned Pleasant Valley (Chico), won a legitimate hard-fought 5-2 match with Jesuit (Sacramento), and then topped a Monte Vista team that was missing its No. 1 player.

Speaking of missing, the entire Saratoga team did not compete in the NorCal tour-

namment. The Falcons qualified as the No. 2 entry from the CCS after falling to Sacred Heart in the section finals, 5-2. However, a number of Saratoga players had already committed to a USTA junior event, leaving their team shorthanded.

While Saratoga's absence certainly made Sacred Heart's title-winning easier, the Gators were on a mission this season and achieved it by winning CCS and NorCal crowns.

"If we had lost in NorCals, it would have been disappointing -- knowing how much we had to work to get there," said Jeff Arons, director of tennis at Sacred Heart Prep.

Sacred Heart seniors Erik Blumenkranz, Jamie Hutter and Billy McCall went a combined 8-1 during the three matches, with only Hutter dropping a 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 match at No. 2 singles against Jesuit.

Perfect throughout the weekend were the SHP doubles teams of John Hansen/John Parsons at No. 1, Mark Westerfield-Mario Paganini at No. 2 and Kyle Scherba/Pedro Robinson at No. 3. ■

## Sunset Celebration Weekend set for June 7-8 in MP

Sunset magazine will host its 11th annual Celebration Weekend on Saturday and Sunday, June 7 and 8, at its Menlo Park headquarters at 80 Willow Road.

Ted Allen of Bravo television channel's "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" and "Top Chef" will be a special guest.

The Eco-Lounge will showcase Sunset's favorite eco-friendly outdoor furnishings and green products and will host an eco-fashion show. Presentations will include tips on how to have a greener home and ways to live a healthy energy-efficient lifestyle.

Cooking demonstrations on the food and entertaining stage will include Ted Allen preparing dishes with Robert Mondavi wine at 12:30 p.m. Saturday; Joseph Keller of Bistro Zinc preparing fresh tomato soup with crab guacamole at 3:30 p.m.; and Bev Gannon of Hawaiian Airlines preparing macadamia nut-crust-

ed mahi mahi at 4:30 p.m.

On Sunday, Joey Altman, host of KRON Channel 4's food show, "Without Reservations," will prepare a panini of brie, figs, prosciutto and arugula at 2:30 p.m.; and Amy Machnak of Sunset magazine will prepare fast-and-fresh, 30-minute recipes at 4:30 p.m.

There will be continuous blues, Cajun, soul, Hawaiian and American music on the music stage.

Hands-on activities will include stringing an orchid lei, painting a terracotta garden pot, creating edible art at the cupcake station, mixing up a batch of chocolate chip cookies, and hands-on grilling.

Members of the Sunset garden staff will give gardening tips, including answering questions about raising tomatoes and orchids, from the garden and outdoor living stage.

Taste tickets for \$3 each are required in the beer and wine garden. Special Robert Mondavi wine seminars will be held both Saturday and Sunday.

The celebration takes place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday, June 7 and 8. Tickets, sold at the door, are \$12 for general admission and \$10 for seniors. Kids are free under 12. For more information, call Sunset magazine at 321-3600.

## SEBASTIANO "SAM" TONA

1913 - 2008



Sebastiano "Sam" Tona, a devoted husband, former wine and spirits sales manager and an artist and craftsman died of natural causes in Redwood City. He was 94.

Mr. Tona, born in Tirano, Italy in 1913, moved to the United States in 1950 and married his sweetheart Jeanne Bettini in 1957.

They recently celebrated their 50th anniversary at their home of Redwood City.

Sam worked in the spirits industry as a sales manager in the Bay Area. He was very successful and a favorite merchant to nearly all of his clients. He also loved creative

bronze welding and other works of art that he shared with his extended family. He was an avid golfer and loved traveling and reading newspapers from his Italy. He was a wonderful chef and enjoyed preparing Northern Italian dishes and BBQ for friends and family.

He is survived by one sister and nieces and nephews in Italy. For his California family he will be leaving behind his wife Jeanne, sister and brother in law Robert and Mary Crenshaw, nieces Susan and David Maddex, Lynn & Jeffrey Blazy, great-Nephews Devon Maddex, Riley Maddex, Jack Blazy and Nicholas Blazy.

A Funeral Mass was held Wednesday, May 21, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at the Church of the Nativity, 210 Oak Grove in Menlo Park. In lieu of flowers please send a donation to your favorite charity in Sam's name.

PAID OBITUARY





Photos courtesy of Joseph and Susan Fil Sr., the U.S. Army and the Ft. Hood Sentinel newspaper; cover-story photo illustrations by Laura Don/The Almanac.

**Joseph F. Fil Jr.** received his third star and promotion to lieutenant general in February 2008. Lt. Gen. Fil's life began in Portola Valley, but the photos illustrated behind him focus on his military career. From left, in Europe with his dad, Joseph Fil Sr.; Gen. Fil, in camouflage, participating in a ceremonial cavalry charge, a tradition at Fort Hood, Texas, when commanders depart the 1st Cavalry Division.



**Continued from left:** A cavalryman in period costume steadies Gen. Fil's horse; Gen. Fil's official portrait; when speaking on ceremonial occasions, Gen. Fil is reputed to limit his remarks to a few minutes; Joseph Fil Jr., who received free riding lessons from a retired Russian cavalry officer, on a horse in the company of an unidentified girl.

## At the Top

PORTOLA VALLEY NATIVE AND "SURGE" COMMANDER IN IRAQ MOVES TO KOREA TO HEAD UP THE U.S. 8TH ARMY

STORY BY DAVE BOYCE

**I**n a time of war but not of national sacrifice, of an official news blackout on photos of the flag-draped coffins of war dead, and of an all-volunteer military, those of us engaged in the domestic economy may not be focusing on the people in uniform fighting or preparing to fight under the red, white and blue.

That would not be the case for Portola Valley native Joseph F. Fil Jr., for whom the health, well being and battle readiness of U.S. soldiers is a daily priority and responsibility.

Lt. Gen. Fil — whose Army career began with an offer of college money from the Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) — recently took command of the 28,500 soldiers of the United States' 8th Army in South Korea. He received his new assignment, and his third star, in February 2008.

As commanding general, he also serves as chief of staff to the United Nations command and the Combined Forces

command in Korea. His prior service includes tours in Germany, Texas, California and Washington, D.C., as well as in Kuwait and Iraq during the Desert Storm campaign in 1990.

Gen. Fil, 55, returned to Iraq for the current war. He commanded the Multi-National Division, a combined-forces unit in which Iraqi soldiers serve with other U.S. forces, including the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division.

The 1st Cavalry was under Gen. Fil's command when it was folded into the Multi-National Division, which played a key role in the recent "surge" that put a stronger U.S. troop presence in and around Baghdad.

The Almanac spoke with him recently by phone from his official residence at the Yongsan Garrison in South Korea.

### It's intense

South Korea is "unlike any place I've served before," Gen. Fil said. Reduced to rubble by 1953, when a treaty ended fighting in the Korean War, South Korea is now the 13th largest economy, according to

U.S. government estimates.

But just across the border is a massive and heavily armed force controlled by a Stalinist-style communist regime in North Korea.

"It's a super intense cycle that (our soldiers) stay in here," he said. "You just never know what they're going to do over there. ... We could fight tonight," he said, echoing a slogan on the 8th Army's Web site.

U.S. soldiers train for such a fight constantly, he said. It can be lonely. There are neither homes nor schools available for soldiers wanting to bring over their families. So the tours of duty are shorter: one year rather than the normal three-year hitch, as is the case in Germany.

Longer tours will come with new accommodations for up to 50,000 spouses and children, he said. Being apart from loved ones is "a huge price that troops are paying," he said. "It's a huge price."

Families would bring in a strategic consideration, as they did in West Germany during the Cold War, he said. "It's one thing to contemplate attacking soldiers. It's another to consider attacking wives

and children."

His wife Wendy and daughters Mary Margaret, 12, and Rebecca, 16, are scheduled to join him this summer. It's been four years since they lived together.

Meanwhile, he is enjoying himself. "The (Korean) people are just so warm and polite," he said. "A bit on the formal side but wonderful. ... I'm having the time of my life."

### A perfectly safe place

Gen. Fil's life may be regimented today, but his boyhood was not.

He spent his free time with his younger brothers running around Portola Valley, said his parents Joe Sr. and Susie Fil, who still live in the home near the border with Woodside where young Joe grew up.

Portola Valley, Gen. Fil said, was "a perfectly safe place (with) awesome weather," a town that was "rural and fun," without street lights or stop lights — a status quo that still exists today and is not likely to change.

His youthful days included rock climbing, kites, swimming holes, skiing, tree

houses, a homemade boat with "8,000 pounds of nails" in it (according to his father), and occasionally, consequences.

"We'd see them going by in an ambulance," his mother recalled. "We were working, so we didn't sort of pay any attention to them." The couple were on a first-name basis with the staff at the Stanford Hospital emergency room, she said.

For a time, Joe Jr. attended the one-room school at Portola School, where the Town Center is now. He also went to Ormondale Elementary and Corte Madera Middle schools and graduated from Woodside High School.

Asked to comment on his primary and secondary education, he noted the stability of his years there, that he'd had friends in second grade who stayed with him all the way to high school. "It was a warm and stable environment," he said. "We all felt like the teachers really cared about us and cared for us."

Another staple of Portola Valley, horsemanship, came to him via a former Russian cavalry officer who trained young equestrians for no charge in Woodside.

Joe Jr. "fell in love with horses," his mother said.

And a good thing, too. He has served as a battalion, brigade and division commander in the 1st Cavalry Division and has used his skills with horses to advantage on ceremonial occasions.

A peak experience came in February 2008 at Fort Hood, Texas, during the change-of command ceremony at his departure from the 1st Cavalry for his new post in Korea, according to his mother. At the bugle's call, Gen. Fil led a platoon of mounted soldiers, sabers drawn, in a charge across the parade ground.

He'd always wanted to do it and it was "15 seconds of pure exhilaration," his mother reported.

### Iraq: 'It's fragile'

That 15 seconds capped 15 months of combat operations in Iraq, where Gen. Fil's mission was to quell the violence in Baghdad using soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division augmented with Iraqi soldiers and a "surge" of some 30,000 more U.S. soldiers.

As has been reported, the violence in

Baghdad has gone down. Is the surge going according to plan?

"There's no question that we're being successful," he said. "I would say that it is going according to plan. It's fragile. You can expect setbacks and it's one day at a time."

The Web site IraqBodyCount.org reported 78 "documented civilian deaths from violence" in Baghdad in the seven days from May 13 to 19, 2008. Over the same week in 2007, the death count was about 245.

Iraq Body Count says its data is based on cross-checked media reports of civilian deaths or of bodies found, supplemented with figures from hospitals, morgues, non-governmental organizations and official sources.

Some 30,000 U.S. soldiers have come home from Iraq with physical wounds, according to the Web site Iraq Coalition Casualty Count. Not listed are the soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, an anxiety disorder that can follow a terrifying or life-threatening experience.

"We still don't fully understand PTSD,

See **AT THE TOP** page 14

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### COVER STORY



Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

**Joseph Fil Sr. and his wife Susan Fil**, above, with their dog Fluffy. The Fil's raised four boys in Portola Valley: Joseph Jr., now a lieutenant general, right, and (not shown) Paul, a banker; Jonathan, an attorney; and Thomas, an accountant.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army

### AT THE TOP

continued from page 13

although I feel we're getting our arms around it," Gen. Fil said. "It's still a fairly new science. I think the soldiers are getting the care they need."

The stress of combat may be in a class by itself. Loved ones are far away, the people you work with are dying, and you never know when the next improvised explosive device (IED) is coming, he said.

Gen. Fil said he knows of individual soldiers who have come through a dozen explosions — and the accompanying concussions — without external wounds. What is the lasting effect? The jury is still out, he said. They did not become punch drunk as he had expected.

What is it like to be participating in a controversial war that likely has substantial opposition in his home town, which tends to vote Democratic?

The important question to him is not why U.S. forces went into Iraq, but what's to be done now that they're there? In conversations with people in Woodside and Portola Valley, he said he has yet to meet someone who is not in favor of supporting the troops.

At times, he travels in uniform. In airports, he said he is continually being invited to lunch by complete strangers, which he sees as an indication of "huge support" out there.

His message to those who oppose the war in Iraq: "I am OK with that," he said. "That makes sense to me."

"I think (the war's opponents) should be confident that the young men and women fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan and Korea are doing so courageously and are wonderful representatives of our nation," he added. "There's a nobility to it, not only as troops but as ambassadors. ... People should be proud. I say that with total sincerity."

### Aspiring to esprit

In addition to nation building in Iraq, the United States is engaged in army building. Is it working? Is there an esprit de corps among the new Iraqi forces?

"I think they're developing it. It's a proud nation" and in real hardship at the moment, Gen. Fil said. "They're aspiring to that. You see it in the good units."

The essence of military leadership — and an element still missing from the Iraqi forces, he said — is a corps of non-commissioned officers and young officers. "That's where the esprit comes from."

"Iraqis are proud to be Iraqi and they aspire to be a great nation and they can be," he said. "They're wonderful people. I came to know many of them well."

And the pride in the 1st Cavalry Division? "Soldiers are re-enlisting like crazy," he said. "It's because they know how good they are. They are really on top of their game. They see the results in combat. It's a great army."

### Army green

Gen. Fil's education includes two years at the University of California at Berkeley and two more at San Jose State University, from which he graduated with a degree in anthropology. He's now a three-star general. What sent him in a military direction?

It wasn't a family tradition. His father graduated from the Virginia Military Institute and spent two years in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but went on to a career that included teaching, civil engineering and business management. His mother taught special education.

The ROTC scholarship reoriented Joe Jr.'s career compass. "I said, 'OK, I'll take it,' not really knowing what I was getting into," he said. "I fell in love with it. By the time I was a sophomore, I was just hooked. I knew I was going to do this."

He emerged from SJSU as a Distinguished Military Graduate. His education continued, including two master's degrees in strategy from military institutions.

How is it, being the parent of a career soldier? "It's horrible," his mother said. "He's been deployed to Iraq and Bosnia and it's been pure hell." She starts each day with a prayer, she said. "Would I prefer that he be a doctor or a dentist or a lawyer? You bet. But that's not our choice."

The Almanac asked Gen. Fil if he would recommend a military career to kids growing up where he did.

"I think so. I've just had a wonderful time. It's an opportunity to work with people in a leadership role, and to take as much responsibility as you're willing to accept," he said. "I've really liked the fact of being with young men and women who are committed to serving the nation." ■

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# PGP Corp. moves to Menlo Prognosis still uncertain for Ford Field oak

PGP Corp., a major distributor of e-mail and data protection software, is setting up shop in Menlo Park.

The company with about 200 employees has moved its Silicon Valley headquarters from Palo Alto to a 70,000-square-foot space at 200 Jefferson Dr. in Bohannon Industrial Park.

PGP Corp. employees and city officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new site on May 22.

"We've seen steady growth at PGP Corp. since we first

opened our Palo Alto headquarters in 2002," said Chief Financial Officer Alex Doll in a press release. "We knew the day would come when we would need to increase our space, and it was important to us to find a location that would not only afford us more room, but would also help us build our presence in Silicon Valley."

PGP Corp. CEO Phil Dunkelberger said the company plans to stay in Menlo Park for "some time to come."

**By Dave Boyce**  
Almanac Staff Writer

The home team at Ford Field in Portola Valley may not soon return to their old dugout under the oak tree — it was closed after arborists declared the hollowed-out tree unsafe — but a temporary "bleachers" dugout along the first-base line will be shielded from foul balls and the sun for the rest of the Little League season.

In a 30-minute May 21 meeting at the field, the Town Council directed staff to install a sun shade over the bleachers and a fence to stop line drives.

The council met on-site not principally to agree on shade and fencing, but to consider whether to cut down the picturesque oak tree or trim and brace it.

The council voted 4-0, with Councilwoman Ann Wengert absent, to trim the canopy as soon as an arborist can be engaged. A 50-percent trim would leave a



Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

**Councilman Ted Driscoll**, center, gathered with Susan Thomas, Paul Heiple and about a dozen other Portola Valley residents in the plentiful shade of the oak tree that overhangs the home-team dugout at Ford Field. Arborists consider the hollow tree a safety hazard, but the tree's friends want to save it.

is set for May 28. If it's to be saved, the tree would likely have one or more braces installed, though arborists have said it could still be dangerous.

Former mayor Jon Silver, as he has on previous occasions, argued for a fence around the tree to prevent all access. If appealingly designed, the fence need not be an eyesore or easily climbed, he said.

Councilman Ted Driscoll argued against it. "I think the assumption that no matter what we do, there has to be a fence is wrong," he said. "What we want to do is reduce the unreasonable risk." He also said he prefers that the old dugout eventually be reopened.

In an interview later, Town Administrator Angie Howard, clearly agitated by the liability the tree represents to the town, remarked: "A lot of people don't drown in a lot of pools, but that doesn't mean you don't put a fence around a pool." ■

## Forum on successful aging May 30

"Livable Communities for Successful Aging" will be the topic of a free public forum from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, May 30, at the San Mateo County Event Center at the fairgrounds, 2495 South Delaware St. in San Mateo.

There will even be a free lunch for people wanting to attend the event organized by Supervisor Adrienne Tissier.

With the county's population of people over 65 due to more than double by 2030, Supervisor Tissier is encouraging individuals and agencies to develop

ideas to guide the creation of communities that combine ease of access with other services. "We'd particularly like to hear from Baby Boomers and those who would like to remain in the area," she said.

Supervisor Tissier hopes the forum will generate principles that can be adopted by the county supervisors and city councils to help shape decisions on planning and development.

To register call 363-4526 or go to [www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/SuccessfulAging](http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/SuccessfulAging).

round canopy with the some heavy limbs removed. A final vote on the tree's fate



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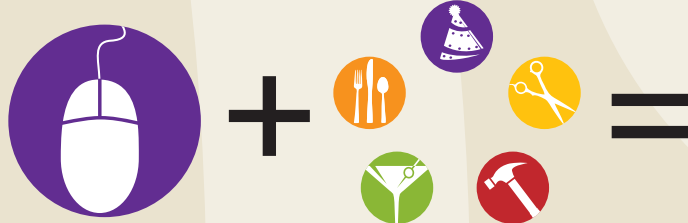
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## Is Atherton's ACIL taking on political role?

### ACIL

continued from page 6

wants to destroy the rural and wooded atmosphere of Atherton. "I love that (atmosphere), that's why I live here," she said.

She said she doesn't understand why there would be a problem with support from residents with ties to commercial real estate, because Atherton has no commercial development.

"These people are citizens also, everybody has the opportunity to support one candidate or another," Ms. Lewis said. "And they're not necessarily developers, they're home builders, custom-home builders for private citizens, not spec home builders."

### ACIL's role

But beyond the claims and counterclaims of the council candidates is the issue of why the ACIL is getting closely involved in a City Council election.

It's an unusual role for the organization, which at times has served as a critical watchdog of town affairs, but more recently has been busy with projects to improve Selby Lane School and organize residents for emergency prepared-

ness.

"This is no objective attempt to get the truth out, it's a campaign ploy," said former City Councilman Alan Carlson, who has endorsed Ms. Lewis to fill the remaining two years left on his term. His departure in December, when he moved out of town, triggered the special election.

John Davey, the ACIL's board president, and Carol Smith, a board member campaigning for Mr. Dobbie, did not respond to requests for comment by The Almanac's press deadline on Friday. However, the group's press release said its vote to investigate the accuracy of candidate statements is "a formalization of an existing practice."

Mr. Carlson said the ACIL's actions in this election are unprecedented.

"They've always been scrupulous to stay out of direct politics, because something about their tax-exempt status bothered them about it," he said. "They've limited themselves to sponsoring debates."

Mr. Carlson and Ms. Lewis charged that Mr. Dobbie's supporters have co-opted the ACIL in order to promote Mr. Dobbie's

candidacy.

"If you look at the members on the ACIL board, they are all Jim Dobbie supporters, so it's clearly a biased organization," Ms. Lewis said. "They're clearly politicizing the ACIL, which has not, historically, been that way. It's unfortunate that they are doing this because I feel it's going to compromise their position with the town."

Mr. Dobbie said he had nothing to do with the ACIL's decision to weigh in on the campaign.

"If I'd been asked for my opinion, I probably would have said that I don't know if it's worthwhile doing it," Mr. Dobbie said.

He said he doesn't know the political leanings of most of the 18 ACIL board members, but he does count board members Phil Lively, Ms. Smith, Richard Moore and Charles Ramorino among his supporters. At least one ACIL board member, Bob Jenkins, is supporting Ms. Lewis' candidacy, he said.

According to the ACIL's press release, the board voted 17-0 to investigate allegations of inaccuracies, but it doesn't specify which member did not participate in the vote. ■

## Community recycling day at Hillview Middle School

Students at Hillview Middle School are hosting a community recycling day for old computers, monitors, computer equipment, televisions, office/business equipment and other electronic devices on Saturday, May 31, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at their school located at 1100 Elder St. in Menlo Park.

These items as well as toner cartridges, CDs, DVDs, magnetic tape, and cellular

phones and chargers may be dropped off at the Hillview parking lot. They will then be driven to Hayward to be safely recycled.

Home appliances such as refrigerators, washers and dryers will not be accepted.

"We hope that this recycle day will be a big event to make Menlo Park a greener city," said sixth-graders in Mike Rogers' fourth period advisory class in their news release.

### BUDGET

continued from page 9

the 2007-08 fiscal year. But due to unexpected savings, the city now anticipates a \$715,000 surplus for the fiscal year that ends June 30.

Past budgets have also come in rosier than expected.

Mr. Rojas noted that the city is

expected to collect about \$250,000 of additional transient occupancy tax dollars in the upcoming fiscal year thanks to the anticipated opening of the Stanford/Rosewood Hotel by early 2009. He also said that the city's new red light cameras, although intended to reduce collisions, are estimated to net the city \$100,000 next fiscal year. ■

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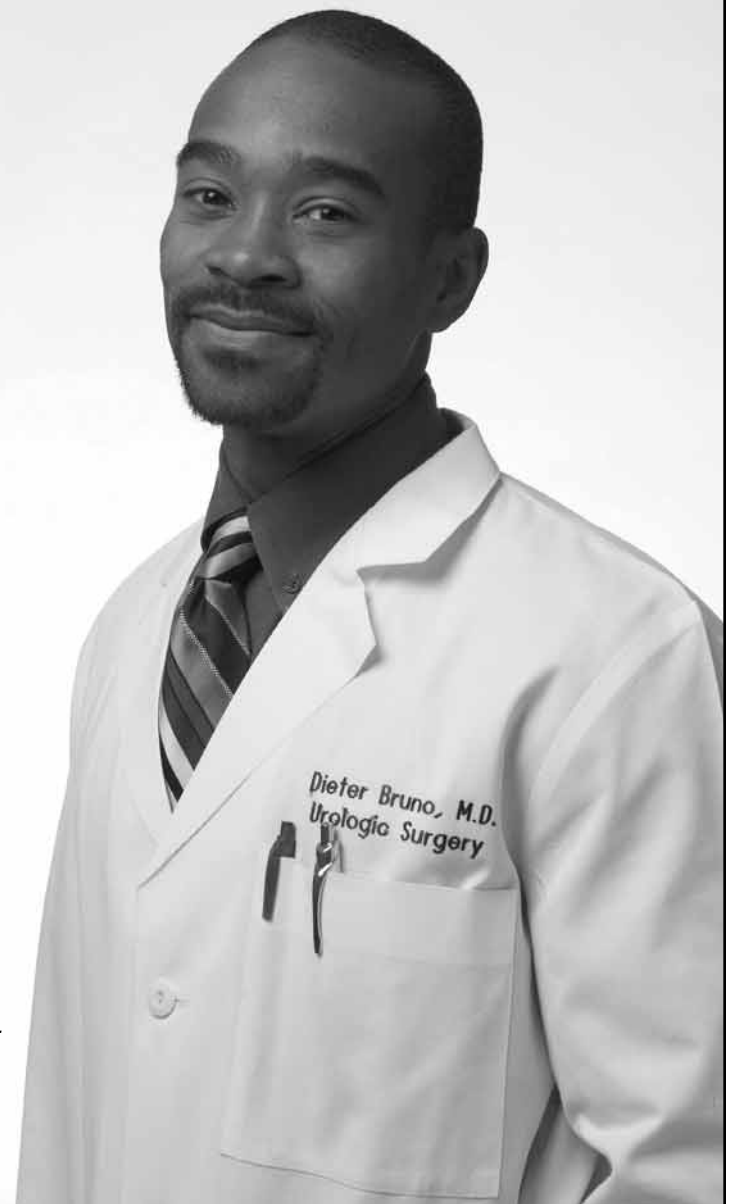


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## Double murder suspect found dead after high-speed chase

Sunnyvale police believe that a man who shot himself following a high-speed chase into San Bruno on May 21 was the suspect in a shooting that killed two men, including one from Menlo Park, outside a Sunnyvale strip club on Sunday, May 18.

Matthew Andrew O'Reilly, 29, of San Mateo was wanted in connection with the shooting deaths of Menlo Park resident Benjamin Osegura, 31, and San Mateo resident Jason Gamino, 29. The two men were seated in a 2006 Range Rover parked in the Brass Rail parking lot in Sunnyvale when they were shot dead May 18 at approximately 9:30 p.m.

The May 21 chase began around 6 p.m. when San Mateo

County and California Highway Patrol officers pursued the suspect in a black Range Rover on northbound U.S. 101, according to CHP Officer Herman Quon.

The chase continued onto westbound Interstate 380, where the vehicle crashed into the center divide at El Camino Real, Mr. Quon said.

Police vehicles created a perimeter around the scene and attempted to extricate the suspect, who was believed to be armed with a rifle, he said. When officers approached the vehicle, they found the man dead from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound.

—Bay City News Service

### ■ 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

- **Commercial burglary report:** Two personal music players, DVD player and two laptop computers stolen, Menlo College at 1000 El Camino Real, May 10.
- **Auto burglary reports:**
  - Navigation system stolen, first block of Mulberry Lane, May 18.
  - Vehicle broken into, first block of Mulberry Lane, May 18.
- **Residential burglary report:** Cabinets found open upon arrival home and two juveniles arrested, first block of Maple Leaf Way, May 20.
- **Grand theft reports:**
  - Backpack robbed of iPod, calculator, and \$300 in gift cards, Sacred Heart Preparatory School at 50 Valparaiso Ave., May 9.
  - Jewelry missing, first block of Flood Circle, May 16.
  - **Fraud report:** Credit cards opened under victim's name, Park Drive, May 10.

#### MENLO PARK

- **Residential burglary reports:**
  - Tools stolen from storage shed, 1100

- block of Willow Road, May 17.
- 900 block of Timothy Lane, May 18.
- TVs, computers and cell phones stolen, 2200 block of Tioga Drive, May 19.
- 100 block of Gloria Circle, May 20.
- **Auto burglary report:** 1300 block of Willow Road, May 22.
- **Child protective services reports:**
  - 700 Laurel St., May 20.
  - 700 Laurel St., May 20.
- **Grand theft reports:**
  - Digital camera stolen, Civic Center, May 21.
  - 1300 block of Hoover St., May 22.

#### WOODSIDE

- **Fraud report:** Unauthorized use of resident's credit card account, 100 block of Tripp Court, May 15.
- **Commercial burglary report:** Locks cut from gym lockers and items valued at \$450 stolen, Woodside High School at 199 Churchill Ave., May 16.
- **Residential burglary report:** Equipment valued at \$3,850 stolen from construction site, 200 block of Eleanor Drive, May 20.
- **Theft report:** Lock cut and bicycle stolen, Woodside High School at 199 Churchill Ave., May 20.

## Deputies find man missing after crash

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office issued an alert Thursday, May 22, that a man missing from a Woodside crash — Ryan Patrick Coyne, 25 — had been located and is alive.

Deputies had asked the public to help find Mr. Coyne when they found an overturned vehicle with no one in it on Highway 84, about one mile west of Portola Road. The accident occurred around 5:45

a.m. and a witness reported seeing an injured person next to the overturned vehicle, said Sgt. John Diggins of the San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services.

After sending out alerts, deputies were able to contact Mr. Coyne by phone, and learned that he had headed up to wine country after his brother picked him up at the accident scene, Sgt. Diggins said.

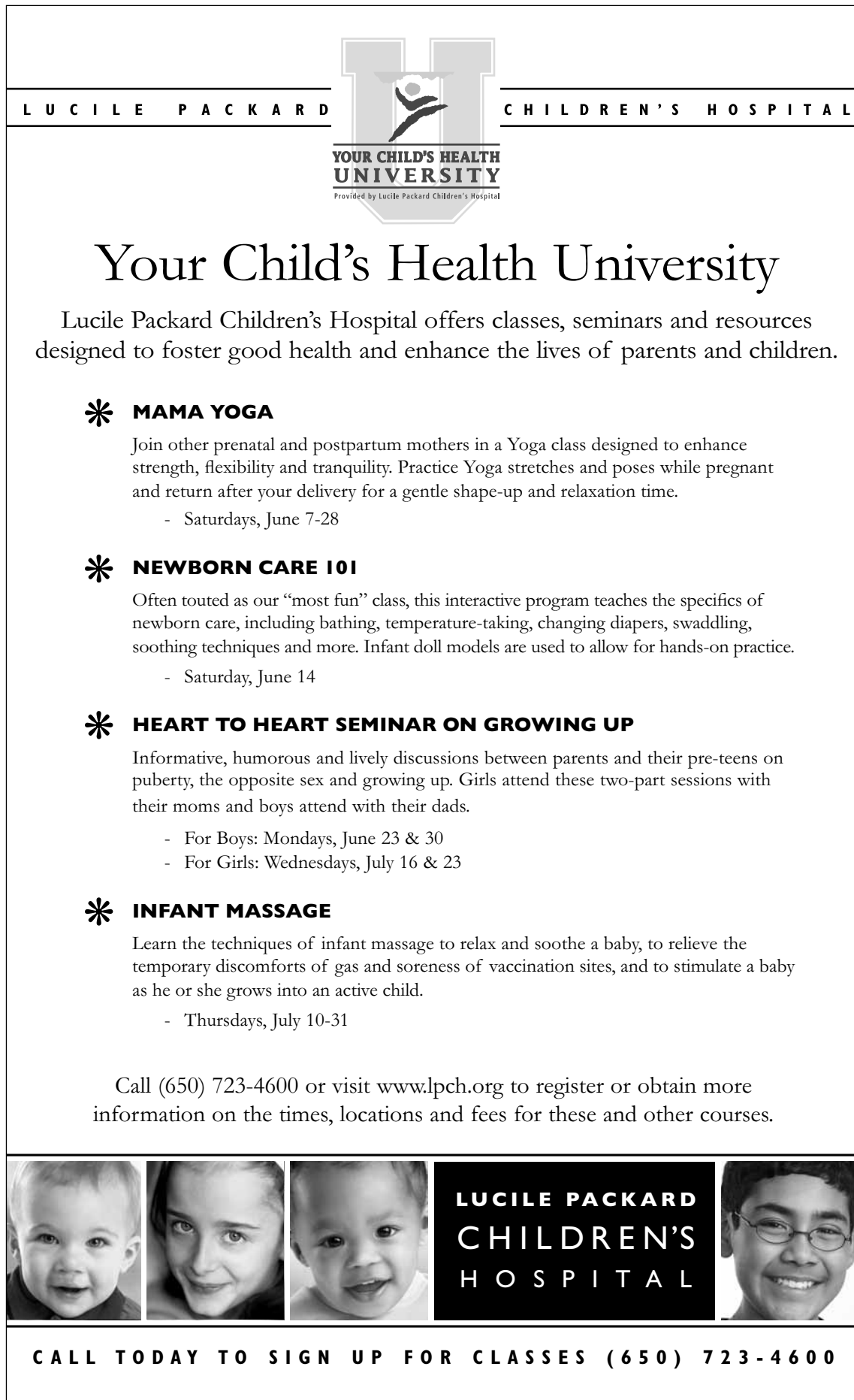


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- For Boys: Mondays, June 23 & 30  
- For Girls: Wednesdays, July 16 & 23
- \* **INFANT MASSAGE**  
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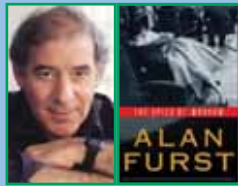
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# KEPLER'S FEATURED AUTHORS IN JUNE

**Alan Furst**  
*Spies of Warsaw*

Wednesday, June 4, 7:30 p.m.

The widely recognized "master of the historical spy novel" returns with a thrilling new novel set in WWII-era France and Poland.



**Melissa Marr**  
*Ink Exchange*

Thursday, June 5, 7:00 p.m.

Enter once again into the murky and mysterious world of the Faerie with the sensational teen author, Melissa Marr.



## Don't miss these other exciting author events!

**Carl Zimmer**

*Microcosm: E. coli and the New Science of Life*

Monday, June 2, 7:30 p.m.

The NY Times Book Review calls Zimmer "as fine a science essayist as we have."



**Nam Le**

*The Boat*

Tuesday, June 3, 7:30 p.m.

A stunningly inventive fiction debut: stories that take us all over the world.

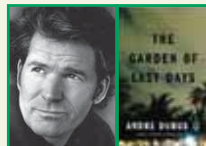


**André Dubus III**

*The Garden of Last Days*

Friday, June 6, 7:30 p.m.

From the author of House of Sand and Fog — a big-hearted, painful novel.



**Nuruiddin Farah**

*Knots*

Monday, June 9, 7:30 p.m.

A new novel from one of the world's great writers -- set in Mogadiscio, Somalia.



**Anna David**

*Party Girl*

Tuesday, June 10, 7:30 p.m.

Benefit for the Woman's Recovery Association (WRA)

A harrowing ride through the world of Hollywood excess.



**Ellen Sussman**

*Dirty Words: A Literary Encyclopedia of Sex*

Wednesday, June 11, 7:30 p.m.

A smart, funny encyclopedia with entries written by notable contemporary writers.



**Dalia Sofer**

*The Septembers of Shiraz*

Thursday, June 12, 7:30 p.m.

A moving portrait of a family in distress set against the background of a country in flux.



**Janelle Brown**

*All We Ever Wanted Was Everything*

Monday, June 16, 7:30 p.m.

Marks the debut of a knowing and very funny novelist, wise beyond her years.

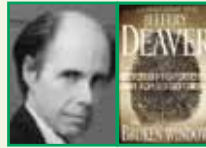


**Jeffery Deaver**

*The Broken Window: A Lincoln Rhyme Novel*

Tuesday, June 17, 7:30 p.m.

Bestselling author is back with a new novel in the Lincoln Rhyme series.



**Ron Hansen**

*Exiles: A Novel*

Wednesday, June 18, 7:30 p.m.

The story of a notorious shipwreck that prompted Gerard Manley Hopkins to write poetry again.



**Meg Waite Clayton**

*The Wednesday Sisters: A Novel*

Thursday, June 19, 2008 7:30 p.m.

A beautifully written novel of five women who redefine what it means to be family.

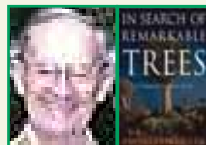


**Thomas Pakenham**

*In Search of Remarkable Trees: On Safari in Southern Africa*

Saturday, June 21, 2:00 p.m.

Benefit for Canopy Trees of Palo Alto  
Presents some of the oldest, most unusual, and most impressive trees on the planet.



**Garth Stein**

*The Art of Racing in the Rain*

Tuesday, June 24, 7:30 p.m.

A captivating look at the wonders/absurdities of human life . . . as only a dog could tell it.



**Darin Strauss**

*More than It Hurts You*

Wednesday, June 25, 7:30 p.m.

The third novel from the author of Chang and Eng and The Real McCoy.



**Dorothy Hearst**

*Promise of the Wolves*

Thursday, June 26, 7:30 p.m.

The first title in The Wolf Chronicles trilogy.



**Lisa Lenard-Cook**

*The Mind of Your Story: Discover What Drives Your Fiction*

Sunday, June 29, 2:00 p.m.

Illuminates the often-elusive elements of fiction and helps you connect with readers.



## Kepler's Story Time every Sunday at 11:30 a.m.

June 1st - *Dinosaur Story Time*

These giant beasts from long ago will romp, chomp, and stomp their way through your morning. Don't be afraid though! Our dino tales will make you "roar" with laughter.



June 8th - *Story Time with Dashka Slater*

Award winning journalist and author Dashka Slater unveils her new book, *The Sea Serpent and Me*, about a little girl, a serpent and the true meaning of friendship.



June 15th - *Father's Day Story Time*

Kepler's helps to honor dads and granddads with readings that highlight the special bond that fathers have with their children.



June 22nd - *Batty Story Time*

We've gone batty! Well, not really, but we've decided to devote an entire Story Time to these very unique and often misunderstood animals. Get a nature lesson and hear some fantastic stories about our soaring, swooping friend—the bat!



June 29th - *Camping Story Time with SCORE Educational Center*

Gather round the campfire for great stories and fun activities. Make sure you don't forget to bring your sleeping bag.



All events are free at Kepler's unless otherwise noted. Learn more, go to: [Keplers.com](http://Keplers.com)

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## OBITUARY

**John A. Harman**

Retired Naval officer

John Ashmore Harman, a resident of Menlo Park for 44 years, died May 20 at the age of 87.

Mr. Harman served as an officer in the U.S. Navy from early 1941 until his retirement as a commander in 1964. His early war years were aboard a ship protecting convoys in the North Atlantic, later patrolling in the Pacific until the end of World War II.

The majority of his career, however, was spent as a pilot on anti-submarine aircraft and in helicopters. After retiring from the Navy, he worked for Southern Pacific Railroad for 20 years.

Born and raised in Rochester, New York, Mr. Harman graduated from Brown University where he was a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

He was the quintessential "officer and a gentleman," say family members, and respected and admired by all who knew him. He acted as a surrogate father to many foreign students during their years at Stanford University, says the family.

Mr. Harman is survived by his wife of 62 years, Jean; his children, Sheri Lee, Scott Harman, Marcy Crawford, and Stuart Harman; and six grandchildren.

There will be no formal service. Contributions may be made to Pathways Hospice, 585 North Mary Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94085.

## 'Kids 4 Kids' benefit concert at Menlo School in Atherton

Seniors at Menlo School will present a "Kids 4 Kids" concert as a benefit for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula on Saturday, May 31, in Florence Moore Auditorium on Menlo's campus, 50 Valparaiso Ave. in Atherton.

Jazz, jokes, blues, hard rock and a harp solo are just some of what's in store when Menlo students and faculty stage this "funraiser" that starts at 7 p.m.

Students Toby Espinosa and Alyssa Marks came up with the idea because they wanted to do a

community service program for their senior project. All funds generated will go to help underwrite the clubs' arts programs.

"Everyone at Menlo is performing and making art to sell so the kids who go to the clubhouse in East Palo Alto can have some of the same experiences," says Toby, who sings in the school chorus and plays water polo.

Tickets, at \$15 for adults and \$5 for students, are available only at the door before the performance.

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## Victoria Johnson, former director of library services for San Mateo County

A memorial service and celebration of the life of Victoria Louise "Vickey" Johnson will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 31, at the Community Church of the Monterey Peninsula, 4590 Carmel Valley Road in Carmel.

Ms. Johnson, director of library services for San Mateo County until March of this year, died May 5 at her home in Carmel with her husband by her side. She was 60.

Ms. Johnson was the wife of David Johnson, Menlo Park's business development manager.

Born in Oakland, Ms. Johnson eventually settled with her family in South Pasadena. It was there that she met and married her husband and they raised their family before moving to Northern California in 1996.

Ms. Johnson received her bachelor's and master's degrees in library science from the University of Southern California. She began her career at the South Pasadena Public Library. She rose to the position of acting library director at Pasadena Public Library, became the director of Sunnyvale Library, and retired from her career as director of library services for San Mateo County.

She held leadership positions with the American Library Association, the California Library Association, Peninsula Library

### OBITUARY

Services, and was a member of the board of trustees of the OCLC, the Ohio-based library services nonprofit organization.

Ms. Johnson is survived by her husband of 38 years, David R. Johnson of Menlo Park and Carmel; sons Benjamin Tor Johnson of La Mesa and Erik Odin Johnson of South Pasadena; her mother, Louise Benson Ball of Pasadena; sister Margaret Dickey of West Barnstable, Massachusetts; and three grandchildren.

The family expresses its appreciation to the physicians, nurses and other caregivers at Stanford Medical Center for their care of Ms. Johnson during the past 12 years.

Contributions may be made to the Victoria Johnson Memorial Children's Book Fund. Checks may be mailed to: Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Grants and Gifts Administration, 2440 W. El Camino Real, Suite 300, Mountain View, CA 94040. (The V. Johnson Memorial fund should be listed in the check memo. Individual tax receipts will be issued for gifts.)



Victoria Johnson

## Team tops classroom competition

The Menlo-Atherton boys' varsity swim team won the title, Spring Scholastic Championship Team, at the CCS championships at Stanford University on May 16.

The award is given to the varsity team from each CCS sport with the highest collective grade-point average of all teams competing in that sport during that season of competition.

The M-A boys varsity swim team

had a collective unweighted GPA of 3.7, best of some 70 swim teams competing at CCS.

The members of the 2008 swim team are seniors Matt Bogott, Alp Kutlu, Jason Kwok and Alex Popp; juniors Richard Hong, Simon Hood, Chris Kelvie and Reid Schultz; sophomores Jed Springer, Scott Swartz and Eric Wright; and freshmen Nick Henze, Kei Masuda and Jackson Rafter.

## Grant for water-contamination alert system

An \$8 million federal grant has been awarded for water security and drinking water contamination early detection systems for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission water system.

San Francisco was selected for the grant through a process evaluated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency water quality and homeland security staff.

The grant will allow the utilities commission to pilot monitoring, sampling, detection and early-warning systems that could serve as a model for other water systems across the nation.

"Our Hetch Hetchy water is the

cleanest and most pristine drinking water in the nation," San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom said in a prepared statement. "With this federal grant, San Francisco can pilot cutting-edge monitoring and detection tools that will help keep our precious drinking water safe from contamination."

Utilities commission officials say they test drinking water more than 90,000 times a year throughout the regional water system using state-of-the-art sampling, detection and analysis tools.

— Bay City News Service

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john.mcafee.mmq@statefarm.com  
Bus. 650-851-3276 Fax 650-851-4029

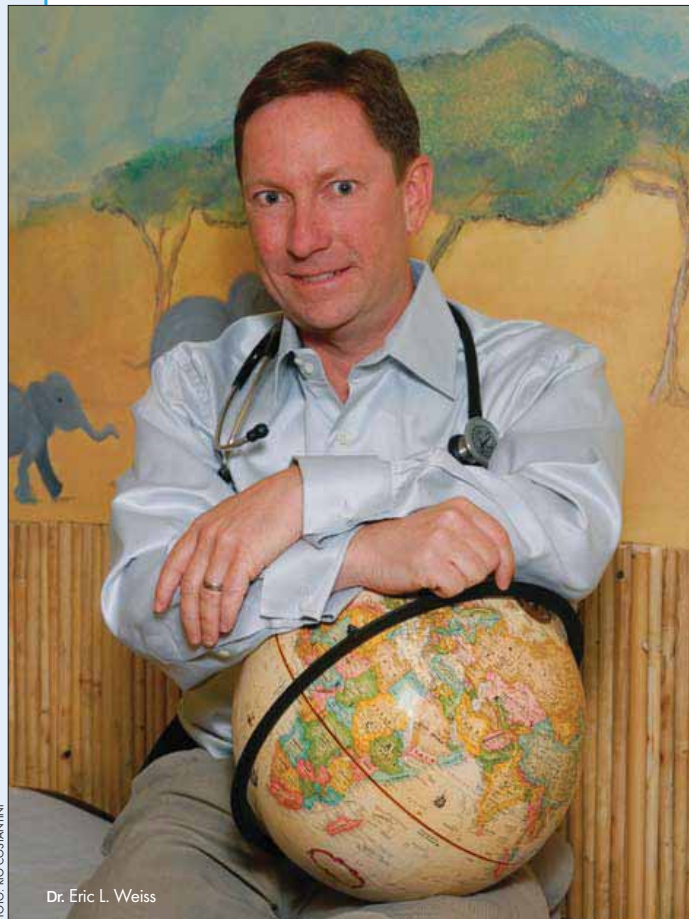


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**Senior Staff Writers**

Marion Softky, Marjorie Mader

**Staff Writers** Andrea Gemmet,

David Boyce, Rory Brown

**Contributors** Barbara Wood,

Kate Daly, Bill Rayburn, Miles

McMullin, Katie Blankenberg

**Special Sections Editors**

Carol Blitzer, Sue Dremann

**Photographer** Veronica Weber

**Design & Production**

**Design Director** Raul Perez

**Designers** Linda Atilano,

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**Advertising**

**Advertising Manager** Neal Fine

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Published every Wednesday at

3525 Alameda de las Pulgas,

Menlo Park, CA 94025

(650) 854-2626

FAX (650) 854-0677

e-mail news (no photos please) to:

editor@AlmanacNews.com

e-mail photos with captions to:

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The Almanac, established in September, 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County. The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior Court of San Mateo County to publish public notices of a governmental and legal nature, as stated in Decree No. 147530, issued November 9, 1969.

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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## Downtown development challenge

Never was the challenge of selecting a course for downtown development in Menlo Park more apparent than when residents of College and Partridge avenues turned out in force two weeks ago to shout down a plan to build 48 condominium units over retail shops on El Camino Real, near their homes.

The high-density proposal from the Matteson Companies would squeeze a four-story building with underground parking on a small, 1.23-acre lot up against single family homes on Partridge and College, quiet, tree-lined

streets used for walking, where children are often playing.

Neighbors asked why the City Council even held a hearing on such a high-density project, which would include out-of-character, 60-foot-high buildings near some of their homes, add traffic to their quiet streets, and bring unwanted noise from trucks servicing the condos and retail businesses in the project.

On the other side, the developer said the small lot is a difficult site, meaning that high density is necessary for the project to meet the owner's investment goals.

The discussion came just a week before a Planning Commission study session, where a consultant hired by the city unveiled 12 broad goals for guiding downtown development, including a number of large properties along El Camino Real south of Ravenswood Avenue. The stage is now set for what will be an intense discussion of the zoning for these

downtown areas, particularly several south of Ravenswood.

Now it will be up to the City Council to walk the tightrope between the developer's bottom line and what Menlo Park residents will accept as reasonable projects along El Camino.

The 12 broad goals, laid out by the consultants who oversaw the Downtown Vision plan, grew out of several months of committee discussions and ideas generated after walks around the downtown to view the issues up close. On several occasions, participants met in small groups to organize their thoughts and then presented them to the entire audience.

The meeting last week was the only opportunity for the Planning Commission to comment on the plan, which will now

become a long-standing item on the City Council's agenda, starting with a study session June 10. Nevertheless, comments at the meeting were peppered with support for the broad goals of the vision, as well as cautionary statements from anti-development forces who could mount a formal challenge to any plan that would allow projects they view as oversized for the city and the El Camino sites.

It wasn't that long ago that Morris Brown and his group, Menlo Park Tomorrow, successfully stopped the now 108-unit Derry condominium

project proposed for Oak Grove Avenue, forcing the developer to downsize and pay the city \$2 million in additional fees. The specter of a similar action against a downtown vision plan not to their liking was an ever-present backdrop at the meeting.

See **DOWNTOWN**, next page

**EDITORIAL**

The opinion of The Almanac



This three- and four-story, 135-unit housing project was proposed for the Cadillac dealership site on El Camino Real in 2006, and later withdrawn when the current city council said it did not conform to zoning guidelines and would not get approved.

**LETTERS**

Our readers write

**Hard work behind measure to enhance local parks**

Editor:

Measure O — Parks for the Future — is good for our community. It is an investment in our quality of life.

Measure O did not appear overnight. It is the product of a multi-year community process, involving representatives from San Mateo County, every city, parks and recreation commission, special recreation district, and residents, to develop a program that benefits every neighborhood and community.

Moreover, this process began with citizens who took the idea to their elected officials and asked for their support. We had the chance to pass it in November 2006; while it received 55 percent of the vote, a two-thirds voter approval was required for it to pass; Measure O has the same requirement. I urge every San

See **LETTERS**, next page



Atherton Heritage Association

**Our Regional Heritage**

Robleda comes from a Spanish word meaning "little oak," but oak trees were scarce when this home at 24 Robleda in Atherton was built in the 1920s. Today, large oak and redwood trees grace the property, which was part of the Atherton Oaks subdivision, which was registered in 1927.

**LETTERS**

*Continued from previous page*

Mateo County voter to vote yes on Measure O for our parks.

**Linda Liebes**  
**Monte Vista Avenue, Atherton**

*Editor:*

"If [the developer] can't build at 18.5 units per acre, as far as I'm concerned, the developer paid too much for the land," said resident Morris Brown at the recent Menlo Park City Council study session on 389 El Camino Real.

The community might like to see the numbers to back up that statement. We're all aware of the value of Menlo Park land, which is extremely high. There are other costs, like construction, labor, and borrowing of money that also must be factored into the cost and profit of a development.

Right now, all of those costs

are substantially higher than when our current density zoning of 18.5 units per acre was set. Unless the development is not-for-profit, it's hard to imagine what developer (or business) would build for less than profit.

So we should ask: At what density can a development be built that will both be acceptable to the community and return enough of a profit to create a well designed and constructed project?

Perhaps some of our knowledgeable residents can respond with real numbers so that we can have a fact-based discussion on appropriate density levels for the El Camino corridor.

**Elizabeth Lasensky**  
**Fremont Street, Menlo Park**

**Parks need our help on Election Day**

*Editor:*

I support Measure O on our ballot June 3, which will establish a 1/8th-cent sales tax dedi-

cated to city and county parks.

We are fortunate to have many parks in our county, from the beaches, to the redwoods to the Bay. I have enjoyed many of them. Parks for the Future — Measure O — provides dedicated funding for our county parks but also includes money to maintain and improve our local parks, which will benefit many communities.

An independent committee will audit and report on all money raised and spent by Measure O. An investment in the open space of parks will give our children and grandchildren a place to play and explore away from the noise and confines of suburban living. Please join me in voting yes on O.

**Anne Moser**  
**Spruce Avenue, Menlo Park**

**Vote yes on Proposition 98; but no on Proposition 99**

*Editor:*

If you really believe in property rights, vote yes on Proposition 98 and no on Proposition 99.

Have you wondered what the difference is between 98 and 99? Prop. 98 protects all property from condemnation while Prop. 99 does not. Prop. 98 will also have the effect of gradually phasing out rent control. Prop. 99 has the killer provision in it so that if both measures pass, Prop. 99 will prevail regardless of which of the two has the most votes. That is why it is important to vote no on 99 and yes on 98.

The taking of property by the state and cities for tax purposes rather than for eminent domain usage is what this is all about. Props. 98 and 99 protect private property from condemnation but only Prop. 98 protects all private and business properties.

In recent years cities have chosen to force long-standing businesses to close under the guise of eminent domain, the purpose being to collect higher taxes from a new user. Eminent domain is intended for public works whose use will benefit all, not as a means for a city to raise taxes.

If Prop. 98 passes, apartments currently under rent control would remain so until voluntarily vacated. California laws now in effect allow rent to be brought to a market rate upon vacancy.

Rent control is a taking of a property right and has had a deleterious effect on the supply of rental housing. In Berkeley, for example, a well-known study by economist Michael St. John has shown that the number of poor, black and elderly tenants has decreased since rent control started in 1978. In addition, thousands of apartments have been removed from the market.

**Hartha and Harold Hanerfeld,**  
**Alpine Road, Portola Valley**

**DOWNTOWN**

*continued from previous page*

But despite such ominous possibilities, the broad goals provided by the consultants captured many, if not most, of the ideas laid out by those who took part in the process. Most goals reflect a downtown design that most everyone present could support in some fashion.

The first goal stated in the presentation is to maintain the "European village" character of the city, accessible to pedestrians, with well-designed buildings, plazas and streets, including some vertical mixed-use, but not highly intensive development.

Other goals are equally benign. For example, the consultants wrote that El Camino Real developments should be "sensitive to adjacent neighborhoods," suggesting four-story buildings be approved on the east side of El Camino and south of Ravenswood, with lower roof-lines of two to three stories on the west side, near neighborhoods.

Many other ideas were presented, including goals to:

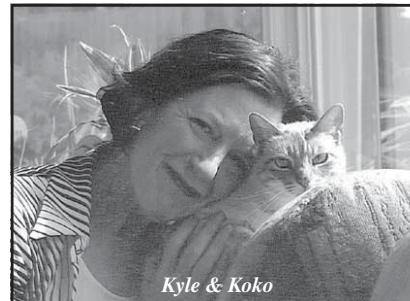
- Revitalize under-used buildings and parcels, including the former Park Theatre.
- Expand shopping, dining and services to ensure a vibrant downtown.
- Activate the train station area by expanding housing for senior citizens and open a new public plaza where Santa Cruz Avenue meets the station.
- Develop different types of housing, including affordable units downtown, while considering the impact on local schools;
- Provide park and plaza spaces, enhance east-west connections for the town and a safe pedestrian and bicycle network, including a tunnel under the railroad tracks.
- Improve traffic circulation and the streetscape on El Camino Real, add pedestrian amenities on Santa Cruz Avenue and study the residential and commercial needs for parking downtown.

At this point, the council has no specific timetable to complete the much-needed zoning framework that will change the character of downtown Menlo Park for years to come.

As the process unfolds, we urge all segments of the community to stay involved, and keep an open mind. It will not be possible to please everyone, but a successful final product must work for those who own the property, and for those who live on the premises or nearby. As the process moves forward, it is incumbent on all parties to forgo referendums and lawsuits, which should not play a role in this important business.

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### VOTE FOR JIM DOBBIE ATHERTON TOWN COUNCIL

- JIM DOBBIE** has a 4 years record as a Planning Commissioner of consistently upholding Residents' Rights
- JIM DOBBIE** is not beholden to any real estate interests and is not supported by Home Builders
- JIM DOBBIE** is a creative, independent and objective thinker
- JIM DOBBIE** has 40 years of business management and financial experience with start up, established and public companies
- JIM DOBBIE** has 3 generations of Family living in Atherton
- JIM DOBBIE** is a long-time member/supporter of Holbrook Palmer Park Foundation and Atherton Community Library
- JIM DOBBIE** lives in rural Atherton and wants to keep it that way for the present generation and their children

### JIM DOBBIE'S PRIORITIES

1. Make Residents' Rights a Priority
2. Improve Communications with Residents
3. Ensure Close Oversight of Town Management
4. Keep up the Financial Progress of the last 6 years
5. Increase Collaboration within the Council
6. Preserve the Rural Character of Atherton

**JIM DOBBIE ATHERTON COUNCIL**  
**VOTE FOR JIM DOBBIE ON JUNE 3** ✓

**jim\_dobbie@yahoo.com**