

PORTOLA VALLEY: Christopher Sauer, 13 wins national science competition for middle schoolers. Page 10

The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

MENLO PARK,

ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

OCTOBER 29, 2008

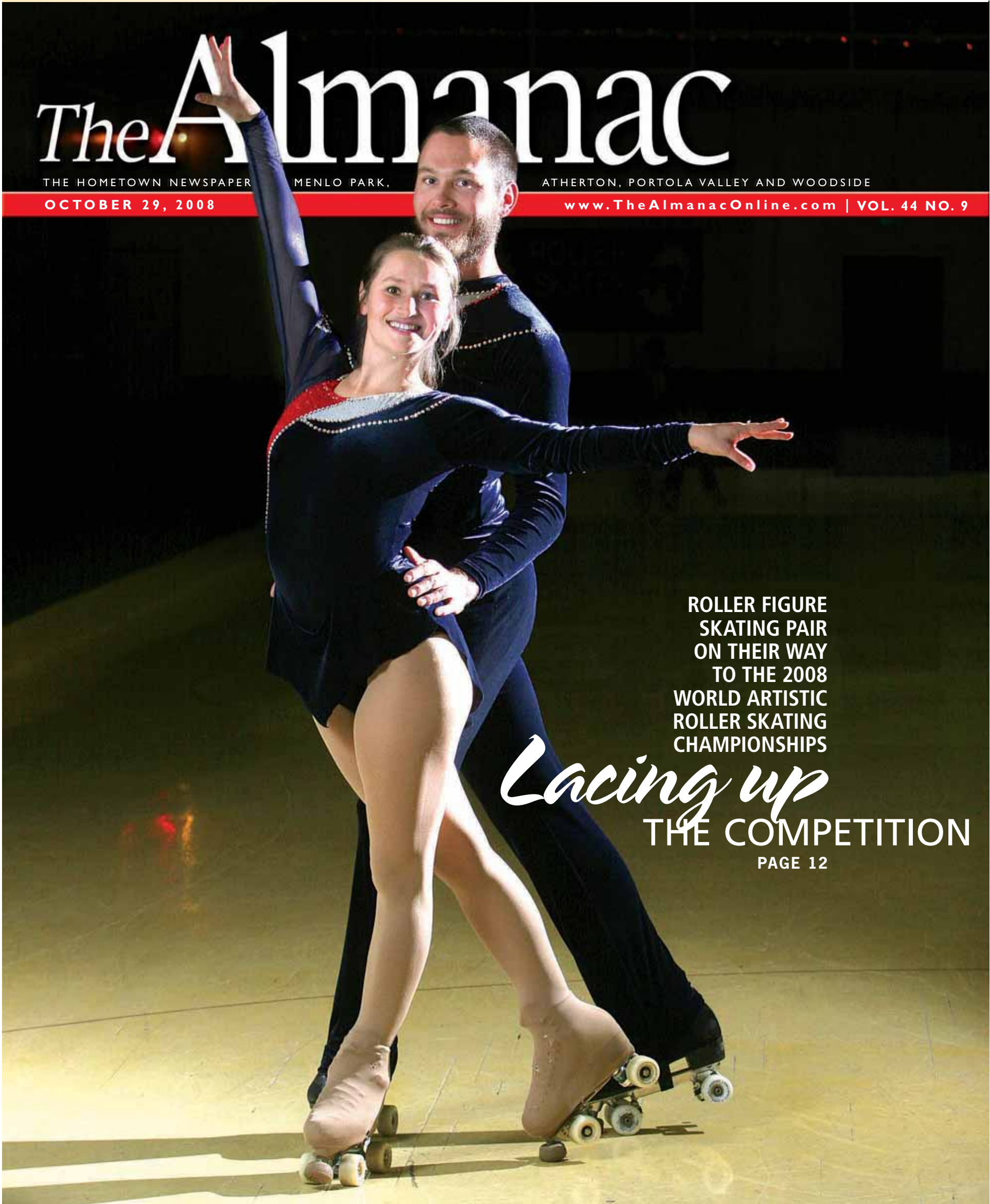
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ROLLER FIGURE
SKATING PAIR
ON THEIR WAY
TO THE 2008
WORLD ARTISTIC
ROLLER SKATING
CHAMPIONSHIPS

Lacing up

THE COMPETITION

PAGE 12



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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Photo by Veronica Weber

Freedom of expression

A man walks by election-inspired artwork created by students at Sacred Heart Preparatory in Atherton and on display at Kepler's bookstore in Menlo Park.

Atherton

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Menlo Park

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On the cover

Artistic roller skaters Aubrey Orcutt and Robert Hines inside the Redwood City Roller Rink, their second home for most of their lives. The two are training for the 2008 World Artistic Roller Skating Championships in Taiwan in November. Photo by Veronica Weber. **See Page 12.**

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Roberts Tip of the Week
Fresh Pumpkin
in Desserts

With the weather getting cold, it's fun to think about cooking fancy desserts - especially pumpkin, which has such strong holiday associations. Why not make your holiday dessert extra fancy by using fresh pumpkin? Sugar pumpkins work best, as opposed to Jack-O-Lanterns. Cut the pumpkin into halves or quarters, scoop out the seeds (save them for roasting later), and put the pieces on a baking sheet in a medium hot oven (375 degrees) for about an hour and a half. Once the pumpkin has cooled, scoop out the flesh and puree it in a food processor or mash it with a ricer. You can also cook it in the microwave on high for seven minutes per pound.

With Thanksgiving literally coming up in days, you might be thinking of desserts. At ROBERTS MARKET, we have the freshest ingredients for you to use in all things food, including wonderful desserts. Whether you need pumpkins, or cranberries, we have all the freshest fruits and vegetables for your holiday meals. Our wine department is the most extensive in the area, more than most liquor stores. Don't forget fresh cut flowers from our floral department to grace your table.

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Local News

MENLO PARK | A THERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

\$2.9 million surplus for Menlo Park in 2007-08

■ But the outlook for 2008-09 isn't as rosy.

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

It remains to be seen how well the city of Menlo Park will weather the tumultuous state of the financial markets, but a preliminary report indicates that the city escaped the 2007-08 fiscal year relatively unscathed.

In a one-page un-audited financial review, the city reported a surplus of \$2.9 million for the 2007-08 fiscal year, which ended on June 30. The surplus represents a \$3.8 million improvement over the \$900,000 deficit forecast in the original 2007-08 budget, Finance Director Carol Augustine said at the City Council's Oct. 21 meeting.

Council members warned, however, that the city should not expect similar numbers in 2008-09, given the state of the economy. Councilman John Boyle said he was pleasantly surprised to see that revenue had increased by 9.3 percent from 2006-07, but noted that a comparable jump in the current fiscal year would be unlikely.

Councilman Heyward Robinson agreed with the assessment by Mr. Boyle—who voted against the proposed 2008-09 budget back in June—but added that he thinks the city's financial situation is solid.

"I do think we have a sustainable budget going forward, despite what I've read in some e-mails I've

gotten," Mr. Robinson said, in an apparent reference to a series of dispatches by former councilwoman Lee Duboc, who lost her seat in the 2006 election that put Mr. Robinson on the council.

In one of her e-mails, Ms. Duboc criticized the council for budgeting an approximately \$1 million deficit for the 2008-09 fiscal year, writing, "I am wondering if the council has foregone one of its goals—to implement strategies that would provide for a sustainable budget."

In the past, actual financial returns have surpassed Ms. Augustine's projections, a fact that often leads the council to plan for a deficit. But Ms. Duboc said she thinks those days are over, citing the downturn in the economy and rising pension costs.

In an interview, Mr. Robinson maintained that budget management requires a long-term strategy.

"There's a fair amount of variation year-to-year," Mr. Robinson said. "We really try to balance it over a three- to four-year period."

Ms. Augustine attributed this year's surplus to a combination of higher income and lower expenses. She noted that both sales and property taxes were higher than anticipated, and said that the city received unexpected interest payments on funds from delayed public works projects.

The fact that the city was understaffed contributed to the lower-than-expected costs, according to Ms. Augustine. ■

Candidate seems to back off critique

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

After chiding the current Menlo Park City Council for mismanaging the city's budget and embracing costly, slow-moving studies, challenger Rick Ciardella seemed to back off those claims at a forum hosted by the League of Women Voters on Wednesday, Oct. 22.

Council candidates Ciardella, Andy Cohen and Kelly Ferguson answered questions from the audience of about 30 people at the event, hosted and moderated by the League of Women Voters and held at the council chambers in the Civic Center.

The questions touched on development and zoning issues in the city's downtown and industrial areas, the city's finances, environmental concerns, and the issue of

east-west connectivity across El Camino Real, among other topics. The candidates were allotted one minute to address each subject, with no follow-up questions.

Mr. Ciardella—challenging incumbents Cohen and Ferguson for one of two open council seats—pointed to his experience as a landscape architect and a small business owner, saying that the skills he has acquired in the private sector would inform his decisions in the arenas of city planning and budget management.

The criticisms he has leveled at the current council over the last few weeks did not surface during the forum, for the most part. Mr. Ciardella said he approved of the council's "visioning" study of the downtown area and El

See **ELECTION**, page 7

Portola Valley School District faces cost-cutting to reduce shortfall

■ Budget committee suggests ways to reduce costs and provide long-term stability.

By Marjorie Mader
Almanac Staff Writer

Facing financial uncertainties, trustees of the Portola Valley School District are studying proposals to cut costs and streamline operations to reduce a projected \$500,000 budget shortfall in 2009-10.

Recommendations include: Cutting technology purchases and staff; putting on hold innovative program initiatives such as "investigative learning" at Ormondale; and eliminating the district subsidy for after-school sports at Corte Madera until more robust economic times.

"It's very difficult to work with a dynamic financial situation," said Superintendent Anne Campbell Oct. 23. "It seems to be changing on a daily basis."

A comprehensive status report

from the Budget Study Committee, appointed by the school board, says the board "should be able to balance the budget" for next year if trustees use the list of suggested expense reductions.

The advisory committee was formed in May to study the causes of the current budget deficit and provide options for achieving a balanced budget and long-term financial sustainability.

The report also suggests some improvements in the budget planning process to "enable more deliberate and better informed decision-making," the authors said.

Five members of the committee, including school board members Judy Medelsohn and Bill Youstra, took part in the discussion when the report was

presented at the Oct. 15 board meeting.

"There isn't one thing on the list of options (for expenditure reductions) that doesn't impact the school program," said committee member David Kastanis.

The committee's priorities are to keep the core program (English, social studies, math, reading, science); continue programs such as Spanish and physical education that the Portola Valley community expects; and cut back on innovation that could be reinstated in better times.

To maintain the district's normal operations, said committee member Daniel Sobek, the district needs a 6 percent growth in property tax revenues, along with parcel tax revenue and contributions from the Portola Valley Schools Foundation.

See **BUDGET CUTS**, page 8



Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac

Space constraints in Portola Valley's new community hall won't allow an expansive showcase of items like these in the town's natural history collection.

Town ponders the standing of bones, rocks

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Credibility on environmental leadership on the Portola Valley Town Council, while hardly open to question given the council's many green priorities and its shepherding into being the new green community complex, nevertheless faced something of a test recently.

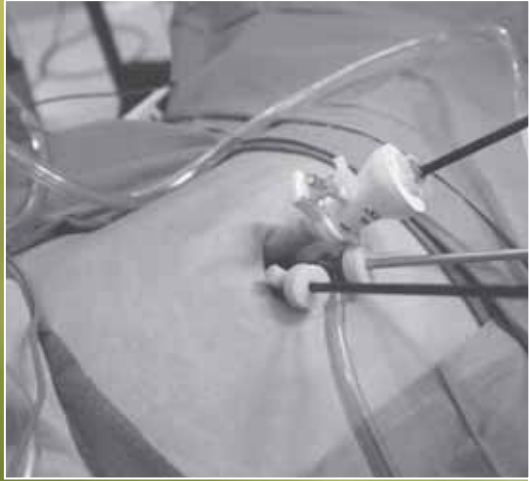
With space at a premium in the new complex, what should be done with a stash of locally gathered natural history objects, including animal skeletons, a stuffed bobcat and river otter, nests,

rocks and at least one condor feather?

Managing the collection and defending its relevance at the Oct. 8 council meeting was Yvonne Tryce, longtime teacher of children's nature and science classes at Town Center.

In the previous complex of school classrooms, Ms. Tryce taught class amid a permanent collection that included aquariums and a tarantula along with the artifacts. She's now teaching in one of two activity rooms in the new community hall. While the new complex was being built, she'd

See **PORTOLA VALLEY**, page 8



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Ladera church welcomes new pastor

By Linda Thomas

Special to The Almanac

A long-time Portola Valley institution, Ladera Community Church, is welcoming its first female pastor to its staff, the Rev. Lindsay L. Fulmer, who began preaching there Sunday.

Berkeley-born and a UC Berkeley graduate, she has served for 12 years as senior pastor of the First Church of Christ, Congregational UCC in Mansfield Center, Connecticut. From 1984 to 1990, she was an elementary school teacher and art consultant in the Richmond public schools in the East Bay.

She attended seminary in the early 1990s as a divorced single mother raising two children, and graduated with a master of divinity degree from San Francisco Theological Seminary in 1994.

She received the David O. Essler Preaching Award, interned at the

Community Church of Sebastopol and as chaplain's assistant at Marin General Hospital, and was ordained in 1996 at First Congregational Church of Berkeley.

"The church today is one place in our transient society where people can find and be nourished by a loving, supportive and inter-generational community," said the Rev. Fulmer. "It will be my joy and privilege to serve this church as it seeks bold new ways to make a difference in the local and global community."

"More than something to have and to hold, faith compels us to action," she said. "This is the crux of the gospel call at its most essential and exciting — to be agents of transformation in a world hungry for justice, compassion and peace."

Her church in Connecticut became the only church in the

state UCC conference to adopt designations as a "Just Peace" church, a "Green" church and an "Open and Affirming" congregation. Open and Affirming is voluntary UCC designation for welcoming lesbian, gay and bisexual people to the church. Ladera Church is also an "Open and Affirming" congregation.

In Connecticut, the Rev. Fulmer helped develop a local interfaith "Coalition of Caring Communities" for Darfur relief and served on the environmental task force of the Connecticut UCC as well as on the pastoral relations board of Windham Regional Hospital.

Ladera Community Church, known for integrating the arts in worship, looks forward to the Rev. Fulmer's passion for incorporating visual, dramatic and musical arts, pageantry and puppetry in services. She also intends to integrate all ages in the worship, mission and ministry of the church.

Ladera Community Church is at 3300 Alpine Road in Ladera. For more information, go to www.ladera.org. ■



The Rev. Lindsay Fulmer

About the author: Linda Thomas is communications coordinator with Ladera Community Church.

Election e-mail removed from council log

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

An e-mail sent by Menlo Park Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson to the council e-mail log on the city's Web site was swiftly removed following an allegation of impropriety by Menlo Park resident Frank Tucker on Oct. 20.

The Oct. 15 e-mail was one in a series of press releases that Ms. Fergusson has sent to her supporters — and to the council e-mail log — on a semi-regular basis over the past year and a half, according to city attorney Bill McClure. But in addition to a list of "updates" about goings-on around town, this one also included solicitations to

endorse Ms. Fergusson and donate to her campaign for re-election on Nov. 4.

E-mails to the council are posted for public viewing and sent by the city to those who sign up to receive them, including news organizations.

"It was not 100 percent clear" that the e-mail was an inappropriate submission to the e-mail log, Mr. McClure said. He added that he decided as a precaution to simply remove it.

The Fair Political Practices Act includes a provision that prohibits cities from issuing mass mailings about individual council members. Mr. McClure said that Ms. Fergusson's e-mail wouldn't

seem to fall under that category, because the act only specifically prohibits paper copies, and hasn't been updated to deal with the Web. He also said that because the council e-mail log serves as a public forum, the city doesn't have the same obligation to review the content of the postings.

He said that Ms. Fergusson — who referred questions about the incident to Mr. McClure — hadn't realized the potential conflict, and agreed with his decision to remove the e-mail.

"She wasn't thinking of this as a campaign e-mail," Mr. McClure said. "She might not even have been aware that she sent it" to the council list. ■

mitment to public safety, and his efforts to involve as many people as possible in the process of city planning. To support his bid, he pointed to the transparency of the downtown "visioning" process, public meetings he has held around the city since taking over as mayor, and initiatives he has spearheaded to improve communication between the council and city staff.

In one of the night's few direct confrontations, Mr. Cohen disagreed with Mr. Ciardella's call for more "fill-in" tenants along El Camino Real, comparable to Palo Alto or Redwood City. He noted that Menlo Park is smaller than those cities, and argued that the council should work to preserve the city's unique character.

Ms. Fergusson said that she played a crucial role in altering the tone of discussion on the council,

steering it away from the divisiveness of past years and allowing for a wide range of opinion. She highlighted her involvement in environmental initiatives, and pointed to her efforts to make it safer and easier for children to walk or bike to school.

Ms. Fergusson called land-use planning the most important issue facing the city. She cited the recent addition of Tesla Motors to El Camino Real as a sign that the city had taken steps to revamp the downtown area, and underscored the need for clear guidelines in residential planning.

The forum will be broadcast several times on Channel 27 in the days leading up to the election. It will also be available online through the Palo Alto-based Media Center's Web site, at tinyurl.com/mpforum. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Rental Market is Tightening

Q: I have decided to rent for the next several months instead of buying a property. What is the state of the current rental market?

A: The rental market is tightening some as other potential buyers like you opt to rent instead of buy. Demand is up and the supply has not increased significantly. This may change as more sellers whose properties haven't sold decide to rent them until the sales activity improves.

Rental rates have stayed strong

but because of the sagging economy they are not likely to increase. There is higher demand for rentals in the moderate price range than in the higher range. If demand exceeds supply this may change but it is more likely that tenants will hold out for more affordable prices and landlords will negotiate lower rents rather than see their properties remain vacant.

The current state of the rental market will most likely stay this way through the end of the year and into at least the first quarter of next year. Things may improve by spring 2009.

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

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I am running for the Atherton Town Council because of **my concerns for public safety, leadership, maintenance of good financial balance, and response to the will of the community.**

The Council must provide good leadership as well as wise oversight, for which my past experience uniquely qualifies me.

As your elected Councilperson my priorities will be to:

- Provide leadership and oversight; include the continuing improvement of the existing financial practices, while delivering desired services in balance with the Town's ability to generate revenues.
- Ensure that Public Safety meets the expectations of our citizens. Our police services are an indispensable asset in reducing crime, enforcing traffic laws, and assisting with ordinance compliance. Because of my background, I know what it takes to provide an environment that maximizes police resources.
- Enhance the Town disaster preparedness by working in conjunction with the community and the fire district. During my career as both Police Chief & Town Manager, I have attended many FEMA training programs. Presently, I am on the Town's Disaster Preparedness Committee.
- Preserve the rural and countrified environment established by the Town founders even as we address the community's ever-changing requirements.
- Make town services more user-friendly and less complicated for people wanting to realize their dreams of living in Atherton.
- As a former Little League Manager, I see the need for the council to facilitate playing field usage agreements between our private & public schools and youth sporting groups. More recreational areas are needed for our youth, and working together with the town this objective can be obtained.

In the course of this campaign and, when elected, during my tenure on the Council, I promise to walk the neighborhoods, talk with you, and listen to you.

Thank you for your vote!

Dick Moore, Retired Atherton Police Chief

www.VoteChiefMoore.com

View this web-site for more information

ELECTION

continued from page 5

Camino Real, which he derides as a costly, ineffective technique on his Web site.

He also said at the forum that he supports the council's decision to transfer \$9.2 million from the reserve to fund post-retirement benefits for city employees, though he lists on his Web site the resulting reduction in the reserve among several "disconcerting" fiscal decisions.

Mr. Ciardella did not return calls seeking comment.

He said that he approved of many of the council's actions, including its leadership on environmental issues, though he urged the city to give incentives to green builders.

Mr. Cohen emphasized his com-

Town ponders the standing of bones, rocks

PORTOLA VALLEY

continued from page 5

been holding classes off-site.

Assistant Town Manager Janet McDougall said that she's received inquiries about birthday parties, Girl Scout meetings, knitting sessions and yoga in the rooms. "It's a full time job just answering the questions and showing the spaces to people," she told the council.

Ms. Tryce uses Room 2 and can leave in place a bookcase, a display case and two aquariums, Town Administrator Angela Howard said. She also has exclusive use of a walk-in closet, which, though full, holds just 5 percent of the collection, Ms. Tryce said.

After an hour's discussion, the council, with Councilman Ted Driscoll absent, asked Ms. Tryce to enlist the town's Nature and Science Committee, which she chairs, to inventory the collection so as to arrive at an understanding of its scope — and

possibly reduce its size.

A dilemma

Before addressing the natural history archive, the council had discussed and referred to the Planning Commission a new chapter on sustainable living to add to the town's general plan.

The context was convenient.

"The natural environment of the town, that's one of the things that we want to sustain," said Town Planner George Mader, who had introduced the earlier discussion. The question, he said, is what to do with the archive.

"We're fortunate to have an amazing amount of material," Ms. Tryce said. "It's very disappointing to be unable to have the materials at Town Center."

Several residents defended her views.

Andy Browne, a nature committee member, noted that while the collection may lack tangible value, it does "pique peoples' curiosity"

and is thus valuable.

George Comstock, a committee member and former mayor, played off Mr. Browne's point in citing the U.S. corporate practice of recruiting science and engineering professionals from abroad.

"It's a serious problem for the country," he said. "Here is one small microcosm of that problem. (Having these objects) tucked away in a closet, that's not the right way to build a strong country."

Conservation Committee member Marge deStaebler added: "It seems to me that an archive is only useful if it's used. ... Shutting up the rocks, the plants, the organisms seems very counterproductive."

The council sympathized. "It was always fun to be in a room with a committee and to see the tarantula over there and the frog over there and the stuffed bird," Councilman Richard Merk said in defense of displaying more objects. And having a Pilates class in the same space? "Let them work



Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac

Yvonne Tryce, docent of Portola Valley's natural history archive, says the contents of this display cabinet and a nearby walk-in closet represent less than 5 percent of a collection for which there is no longer any room.

around some of these things and give the room some character."

Councilwoman Ann Wengert suggested that the archive be located somewhere else. "They were set up as activity rooms, not as classrooms," she said. "I do think we have a responsibility to those who funded the (new complex) to not turn this into a nature and science classroom."

Councilman Steve Toben said he

appreciated the thought-provoking discussion, the opportunities for "accidental learning" while sitting amid such objects, the need to serve a diverse community, and the limits of the situation.

"What enables that accidental learning to happen doesn't necessitate a whole huge archive," he said. "A condor feather could be just as powerful and take up a lot less space than a stuffed (mammal)." ■

BUDGET CUTS

continued from page 5

The "worst case scenario" for 2009-10, according to the report, would be no property tax growth, a 10 percent reduction in state revenue, and reductions in private contributions.

The \$11.5-million budget for the current fiscal year was balanced by reducing operating expenses by almost \$500,000; using \$333,000 from the district's reserves instead of making cuts

to the education program; and receiving an additional contribution \$165,182 from the Portola Valley Schools Foundation.

"We will be forced to make some tough choices," said Mr. Sobek. "The erosion of revenue has to be matched by reductions in expenditures."

The committee said these are the highest priority cost reductions:

- Reduce technology costs by \$110,000 a year by eliminating spending for new equipment, other than necessary replacements, and reducing tech staffing costs.

- Delay implementing some innovative initiatives — that are not mandatory but are part of the district's strategic plan to promote activities that foster 21st century learning for the global student. This year \$202,000 is budgeted for professional development of teachers and instructional support.

- Eliminate the district annual subsidy of \$30,000 for after-school sports. Parents currently pay approximately \$105 for the program. Fees would be increased to offset "scholarships" for players whose parents can't afford fees.

The next tier of cost reductions that the committee said the board should consider are:

- Further reduce administrative costs by \$110,000.

- Re-engineer the electives program at Corte Madera to optimize the number of students per class and save \$300,000.

- Reduce the teachers' work year from the current 188 days to 186 days. Given the proposed reduction in strategic plan initiatives and technology, fewer staff development days (when students aren't at school) would be

needed for related training and development. Estimated annual savings would be \$58,000.


- Eliminate cost-of-living increases from the salary schedule. (This option would require negotiations with employee groups.) ■

■ INFORMATION


The Budget Study Committee Report is available for review at the Portola Valley School District office at Corte Madera School, 4575 Alpine Road in Portola Valley.

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Two rob station

Menlo Park police are looking for two men in connection with an armed robbery Oct. 21 at the Union 76 service station on Willow Road between Durham Street and O'Keefe Street in the Willows neighborhood.

The men held up an employee at gunpoint at approximately 7:17 p.m. and made off with \$750, police said. The service station employee — who was not harmed — said the men fled south on O'Keefe Street.

A witness described one of the men as black, about 6 feet 3 inches tall, weighing between 220 and 230 pounds, and wearing a black hooded sweatshirt, dark pants, gloves and a dark face mask at the time of the robbery, police said.

The other man was described as slender, about 5 feet 8 inches tall, wearing a black hooded sweatshirt, gloves and a face mask, along with dark jeans.

Police ask that anyone with information call the department at 330-6300, or the department's anonymous tip line at 330-6395.

Fergusson leads in funds raised

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer



Incumbent Kelly Fergusson has opened a wide lead in both fundraising and spending in the race for two seats on the Menlo Park City Council.

Ms. Fergusson reported taking in \$3,609 in the Oct. 1 to Oct. 18 campaign finance reporting period, bringing her total haul to \$22,149.

But no one would accuse Ms. Fergusson of hoarding her war chest. She reported \$24,097 in expenditures as of Oct. 18, dwarfing the \$2,549 spent by challenger Rick Ciardella. Incumbent Andy Cohen has spent \$9,419 of his \$14,515 take, according to City Clerk Margaret Roberts.

Mr. Ciardella trailed his opponents with \$10,800 raised, though he also had the most cash on hand to spend in the final two weeks of the campaign. As of Oct. 18, nearly two-thirds of his expenditures had gone to lawn signs.

Mr. Ciardella collected \$3,575 in the reporting period, buoyed by contributions from real estate and development interests. He also received \$100 from Jim Bigelow, a consultant for the planning company Bay Area Transportation and Housing. In

a guest opinion for The Almanac on Oct. 15, Mr. Bigelow voiced his support for Proposition 1A, which would authorize \$9.95 billion in bonds to begin construction on a high-speed rail to connect Los Angeles with the Bay Area.

During the reporting period, Ms. Fergusson received \$1,000 from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which represents city employees other than the police. Mr. Cohen accepted an in-kind donation of \$750 from Portola Valley Mayor Maryann Moise Derwin, who had previously given \$760 to Ms. Fergusson's campaign.

Mr. Cohen and Ms. Fergusson, who have held joint campaign events, each received \$250 from the campaign of California State Senator Leland Yee, a Democrat. Mr. Yee represents the eighth district, which includes Woodside and Portola Valley, but not Menlo Park.

The incumbents collected \$250 each from PG&E. Gail Slocum, a PG&E attorney and a former council member in Menlo Park,

gave \$100 to Mr. Cohen.

Mr. Cohen took in \$300 from Charles Bourne, a member of the Menlo Park Transportation Commission. Frank Carney, a former chair of the Environmental Quality Commission, gave \$100 to bring his total contributions to Mr. Cohen's campaign to \$200.

Ms. Fergusson garnered \$250 from Sandra de Balzaretta, director of the Casa Dei Bambini Montessori School on O'Brien Drive, just east of the Belle Haven neighborhood. Kathleen Daly, the owner of Cafe Zoe in the Willows neighborhood, also gave \$250, as did Valerie Gardner, a Menlo Park homemaker.

Mr. Ciardella received \$500 from Tod Spieker, who owns a property management company in Palo Alto. Mr. Ciardella took in \$300 from local architect Henry Riggs, \$250 from real estate broker Howard Dallmar, \$200 from real estate manager Bryon Brill, and \$200 from developer Steve Dostart.

Mark Flegel, owner of Flegel's furniture store on Santa Cruz Avenue, donated \$300 to Mr. Ciardella's campaign. Milton Borg, owner of the 7-Eleven building on Alma Street and Oak Grove Avenue, chipped in \$200. ■

Lewis leads fundraising in Atherton race

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

Atherton candidate Elizabeth Lewis emerged as the new fundraising leader in the four-way race for two seats on the City Council.

In campaign finance reports covering Oct. 1 through Oct. 18, Ms. Lewis reported receiving \$9,048 in contributions, including a \$6,500 loan to herself, making a total of \$20,398 raised for the Nov. 4 election.

Ms. Lewis, who ran unsuccessfully for a council seat in the special June election, raised \$60,507 this year, the combined total for both election campaigns.

During the same October reporting period, architect David Henig raised \$1,500, bringing his total to \$17,940. Incumbent Kathy McKeithen raised \$798, bringing her total to \$16,885, and retired former police chief and city manager Richard Moore raised \$1,406 for a total of \$8,680.

Ms. Lewis' biggest donation in this last reporting period was \$1,000 from CREPAC, the California Real Estate Political Action Committee based in Los Angeles. CREPAC has donated a total of \$2,000 to Ms. Lewis this year. Other top donors are: Thom Bryant of Atherton, an executive at NetApp, \$500;

and architect Rose Hau of Atherton, \$250.

Her top expenditures were \$3,333 to Hatcher Press for campaign literature and paraphernalia, and \$3,086 to The Almanac for advertising.

Mr. Henig's top donors are: Lee Anderson of Atherton, a self-employed writer and a trustee in the Las Lomas Elementary School District, \$250; Kevin Brown of Atherton, ex-CEO of Kidaro, \$250; and Phyllis Busansky retired, of Tampa, Florida, \$200. His top expenditures were \$2,226 to Prodigy Press of Palo Alto for campaign literature and \$1,519 to the U.S. Postal Service for postage.

Ms. McKeithen's top donor this period is Bob Jenkins of Atherton, a retired real estate broker, \$300. Her biggest expenditures were \$2,204 to The Almanac for advertising and \$614 for postage.

Mr. Moore's top contributors are: David Clark of Atherton, the CFO of Maskless Lithography, \$500; and Bob and Carolyn Jenkins of Atherton, \$200. His biggest expenditures this period were \$714 to American Speedy Printing for campaign material and \$472 for postage.

All four candidates reported having cash left in their campaign war chests, from Mr. Henig's high of \$7,867 to Mr. Moore's low of \$1,007. Ms. Lewis has a cash balance of \$4,653 and Ms. McKeithen reports having \$2,240 left in her coffers. ■

The Almanac wins three first-place CNPA awards

The Almanac won three first-place awards — for its environmental reporting, editorial pages and lifestyle coverage — in the state-wide Better Newspaper Contest sponsored by the California Newspaper Publishers Association,

it was announced Saturday.

The first-place environmental reporting award went to staff writer Dave Boyce, for his cover story on grass versus artificial turf, "Which grass is greener?" in the Aug. 8, 2007, issue. Mr.

Boyce swept the category, winning the second-place award for his cover story "Second life" in the Feb. 7, 2007, issue, on the extensive recycling and reuse

See CNPA AWARDS, page 21

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PV student brings home top science trophy

By Marjorie Mader

Almanac Staff Writer

Portola Valley's Christopher Sauer, 13, won first place and a \$20,000 scholarship in a national science competition for middle school students Oct. 21 in Washington, D.C. The competition is sponsored by an organization called Society for Science & the Public.

Christopher and his teammate Jonathan Zdasiuk, 13 and a fellow eighth-grader at Corte Madera School, developed a "far out" science project, entitled: "An Engine with Nothing Inside? Building a Magneto-hydrodynamic Drive."

The project propelled the boys from the school science fair on to winning county and state competitions. Then they were selected among 30 finalists in the national competition that began with some 75,000 school fair winners.

"Kind of nerve wracking" is how Christopher described waiting through a lengthy awards presentation at the closing dinner Oct. 21.

Each of the 30 finalists received a medal. Then, the "Green Team," which he participated on with five other finalists, won the award for outstanding teamwork.



Photo by Marjorie Mader/The Almanac

Christopher Sauer, left, and Jonathan Zdasiuk check out their winning entry in the science room at Corte Madera School.

■ SCHOOLS

Finally, the top prize winners were announced, starting with fifth place; suspense mounted. "I knew my chances of winning were low, but I was hopeful," said Christopher.

"It was really exciting" to win first place, he said, after a "jam-packed" schedule of activities and working on science challenges with a small

team of students from California, South Dakota and Maryland.

Each of the 30 finalists and their supporting teachers will have a newly discovered asteroid named after them in the main asteroid belt, scattered between Mars and Jupiter, said Trenea Joi, Corte Madera science teacher and mentor, reporting from Washington, D.C.

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Rick Ciardella for City Council

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another national Blue Ribbon School Award" in the Capitol, Jonathan and Christopher "were also in town being tested" in the national science competition, said Ms. Joi.

Team challenges

For the team challenges, the two Corte Madera students were separated and assigned to different teams.

"They had to work on five, fresh 90-minute science problems at the National Academy of Science's Koshland Museum with a team of six people they had never met," said Ms. Joi. They were given no prior information, not even a topic to brush up on, she said.

One question the students had to figure out: Why is nitrogen in runoff water from a golf course near a lake killing trout in the lake?

Another question: How do you reduce light from light bulbs that is wasted when it goes up to the night sky?

"You have to kind of abandon the idea of competition and work together as a group on the team challenges," said Christopher.

Jonathan received a medal and \$500 for his participation.

Christopher and Jonathan have been good friends since third grade at Ormondale, when they were in Wayne Rickert's class. Since Ormondale didn't have a science specialist that year, Mr. Rickert took on that mantle for his class, involving students in all sorts of science experiments and encouraging questioning and discovery.

"Christopher and Jonathan are amazing," said Mr. Rickert. "My effect on them, I think, is over-rated. They had science in their

veins, arteries and capillaries long before they came to third grade."

When the boys moved to Corte Madera for fourth grade, they discovered Ms. Joi, who suggested she could use "a neat way" to ring a bell and get students' attention in class.

"They took on the challenge with gusto, and I had a Rube Goldberg-style bell for my desk," said Ms. Joi.

That project lead to bigger things when they worked with friend George Baier to make the Amazing Automatic Alarm clock.

In the following years, Jonathan and Christopher went on to county and state competitions, where they repeatedly have won top honors with their projects, including: "Building a Mag-Lev Train," "Electromagnetic Propulsion System for Magnetic-Levitation Train," and, most recently, "An Engine with Nothing Inside?"

Besides their science bent, they have other interests, including Boy Scouting.

Jonathan runs cross country for his school. Fishing, boating and model railroading are his favorite hobbies. He loves fish and other water-dwelling animals and enjoys learning about their habits.

Christopher enjoys swimming and competing on the Alpine Hills club team, the year-round USA Swimming team, and the Junior Olympics. He also enjoys a wide variety of building projects and art projects such as block printing and collage.

Supporting the boys in their activities are their parents Karen Peterson and Gerald Sauer, and Julie Fouquet and George Zdasiuk, who traveled to Washington for the national competition. ■

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- Didi Fisher** - "...Elizabeth will make an excellent Council Member..."
- Chris Cobey** - "...endorse Elizabeth for Council."
- John Fisher** - "...I urge you to vote for Elizabeth."

The Palo Alto Daily Post

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The Palo Alto Daily News

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Michelle Dollinger

"...Elizabeth values the use of the Park for entire community, especially the youngest members..."

Nancy Sterling

"...Elizabeth is passionate about youth and organized sports activities on Town's playing fields."

Valerie Gardner

"...Elizabeth impresses me with her dedication to smart energy conservation policies and breath-of-fresh-air, candid style."

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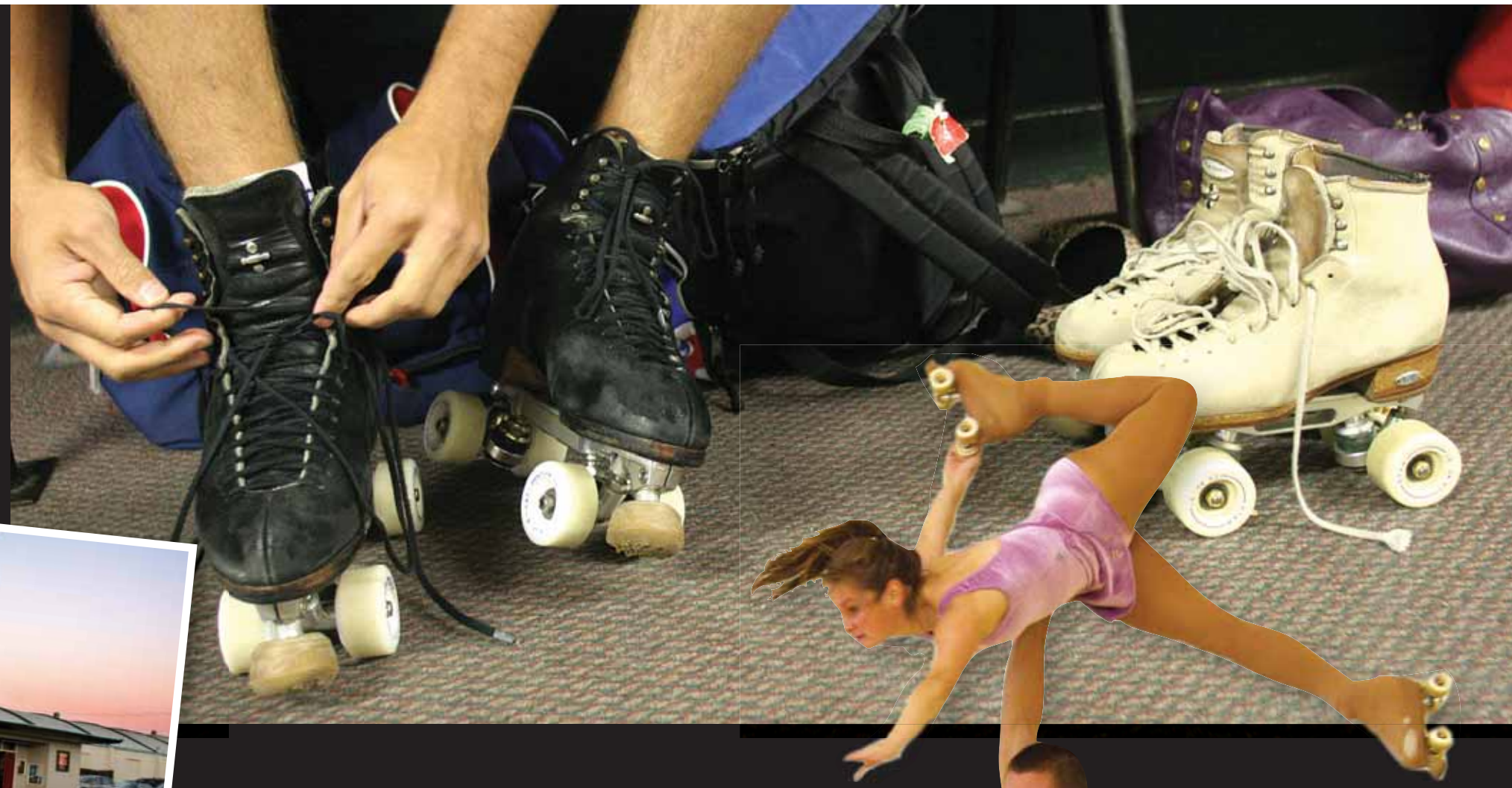
ROLLER FIGURE SKATING PAIR ON THEIR WAY TO THE 2008 WORLD ARTISTIC ROLLER SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Lacing up
THE COMPETITION

PHOTOS AND STORY BY VERONICA WEBER



From left: Practicing the triple twist; the exterior of Redwood City Roller Rink; Robert Hines laces up his skates; and the no-handed cartwheel lift.



On a recent afternoon, as the jumping tune of Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing" blares across the Redwood City Roller Rink, Robert Hines and partner Aubrey Orcutt quickly glide across the smooth wooden floor and gather into formation. With them bracing against each other, Hines throws Orcutt into the air; her body becomes like a whirling top, spinning through the air until he gently catches her — a perfect execution of the triple twist.

Over the past several months, Orcutt and Hines, both graduates of Woodside High School, have committed to training four days a week at the rink, working to perfect their routines for the upcoming 2008 World Artistic Roller Skating Championships in mid-November in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

They will compete in two events, the short (2 1/2 minutes) and long (4 1/2 minutes) program in the Senior Pairs division, representing the United States against approximately 15 to 20 other teams from around the world.

"We're in a good place

right now, competition-wise," says Orcutt. "We have new and more difficult lifts, more throw jumps, and a more fluid and smooth routine. Of course, there's always nerves when we get there, but I feel really good about this year."

Orcutt, 24, and Hines, 23, are serious veterans of the sport. Both have been skating since they could lace up their boots at age 4. They have placed first at the national championships for the last five years in a row, and have won numerous events at local and regional levels. This will be their eighth year skating in the world cham-

pionships.

In previous years, they placed fourth at the world championships against heady competition from Brazil, Argentina, Germany, Australia, and their strongest opponents, the Italians.

This year they hope to place in one of the top three spots. Their persistence has challenged them to perfect techniques, such as side-by-side double flips, a thrown triple axle, reverse cartwheel lift, and death-drop — to name a few.

"They've really matured," says Lorry Orcutt, a former pairs skater, the

team's coach and Aubrey's mother. "They have really developed into world-class champions over the past eight years."

The sport of roller pairs skating, much like its ice-skating cousin, is judged primarily on partner precision, execution of techniques, and artistic performance, usually on a score of 0-100.

"When you get to the world level, the bar has been raised so much higher for the athletes," says Robin Haleber, a skating coach and a 20-year judge of various regional, national and

world championships. "The quality of performance is so much higher, it's amazing to see the precision between each of the competitors."

"These two are heads above anyone else in the United States," he adds.

Yet that recognition of athletic ability in the sport has faced a dwindling population among fans and newcomers alike. Ever since its peak in the late 1970s and early 1980s, artistic roller skating in the United States has faced a decline in popularity and is struggling to gain more of a following.

Over the past 40 years, proponents have tried

unsuccessfully to have it recognized in the Summer Olympics. A lack of funding, competition among a multitude of other youth sports and activities, and little news media coverage of the sport help explain declining participation, Lorry Orcutt says.

Unlike ice-skating teams, many roller figure skating athletes are not sponsored and have to find their own creative ways to raise funds for competitions. This year, it will cost Orcutt

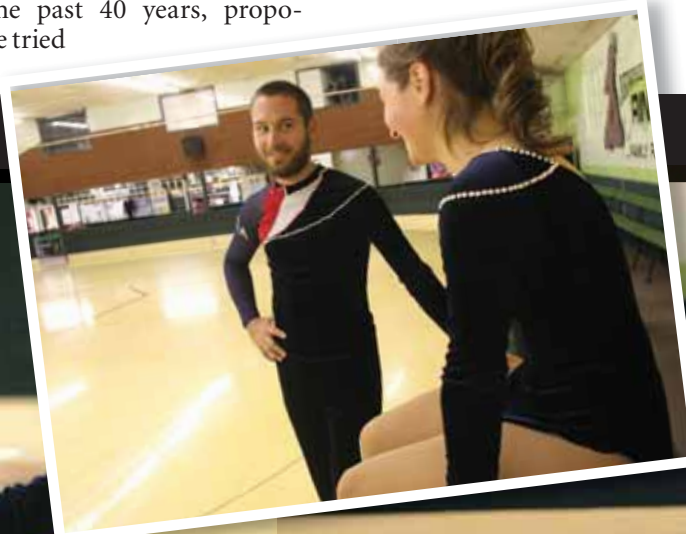
and Hines \$4,000 for their placement in the world games.

When they return, the pair will begin training for the World Games of 2009, also to be hosted in Taiwan.

"It's a beautiful sport, and these skaters put their heart and soul into competition," says Lorry Orcutt. "It's a shame it hasn't received more recognition." ■



From left: Aubrey Orcutt stretches before practice; the sleeping beauty; practicing moves from the long program; Robert Hines and Aubrey Orcutt take a breather; and the death drop.





CITY OF MENLO PARK

PUBLICATION OF CONTRIBUTORS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAMPAIGNS PURSUANT TO CITY ORDINANCE NO. 860, PROVIDING

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMITTEES AND CANDIDATES TO THE OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MENLO PARK.

Committees and Candidates are listed alphabetical by Committee name or Candidate last name.

COMMITTEE	AMOUNT
Menlo Park Matters	00.00
Menlo Park Tomorrow	00.00
Sustainable Menlo Park	00.00
Menlo Track on Track	00.00

COMMITTEE:
Richard Ciardella for City Council

CONTRIBUTOR	AMOUNT
Bigelow, James	100.00
Blach, Richard	50.00
Borg, Milton	200.00
Bottorff, Leslie	50.00
Boyle, John	300.00
Brennan, Kelly	50.00
Brill, Byron	200.00
Carcione, Joseph	100.00
Carnahan, Sanford	100.00
Chandler, Melani	50.00
Chaput, Rita	25.00
Crittenden, Howard	1,000.00
Dallmar, Howard	250.00
Dedera, Louise	30.00
Dehn, Robert	500.00
Dostart, Steve	200.00
Dove, Eddie	100.00
Englert, Stephen	250.00
Flegal, Mark	300.00
Inglis, John	100.00
Jorgenson Mince, Carol	100.00
Kirdk, Cassius (Jr.)	200.00
Lemieux, Kimberly	500.00
Lohmann, Walter	250.00
Long, Jim	250.00
Massard, Carol	25.00
McIntire, Bob	150.00
McLoughlin, Joseph R.	100.00
McNamara, Sandra	200.00
Mohrman, Michael	100.00
Moritz, Edward	100.00
Much, Kathleen	50.00

Ochieano, Bruce	200.00
O'Neel, Teresa	50.00
Paulson, Boyd	25.00
Peters, Stephen	50.00
Rice, Reg	100.00
Riggs, Henry	300.00
Rosales, Anne	100.00
Ryde, Nancy	100.00
Schlein, Ted	2,500.00
Selleck, Catherine	25.00
Siecer, Tod	500.00
Sinnott, Lorie	100.00
Sofer, Stuart	100.00
Storm Rosati, Dannelle	100.00
Stuart, Dr.	25.00
Tolles, Dee	100.00
Walker, Gloria	50.00
Whelan III, Harry	100.00
Whorton, Lisa	250.00
Under the \$25 limit	44.49
TOTAL	10,799.49

COMMITTEE:
Andrew Cohen for City Council

CONTRIBUTOR	TOTAL AMOUNT
Bacon, Charles	100.00
Barnby, Nancy	50.00
Basso, Susan	75.00
Berstein, Charles D.	250.00
Beuttler, Robert	25.00
Blake, Dianna	25.00
Blawie, Elias	500.00
Brady, Mike	250.00
Bramlett, Jim	500.00
Brawner, Don	500.00

Bressler, Vince	300.00
Bressler, Vincent	0.67
Brown, Denise	250.00
Brown, Morris	250.00
Caletti, Judith	100.00
Carey, Michael	100.00
Carney, Frank	100.00
Carroll, Kathryn	24.99
Cohen, John	200.00
Collins, n Dorothea	100.00
Couperus, Nancy	100.00
Cowan, Robert	50.00
Dippery, Dan	50.00
Drekmeier, Peter	50.00
Drury, Mark	23.97
Ekedahl, Robert	250.00
Engel, Martin	500.00
Fergusson Kelly	100.00
Ferreira, Michael	23.97
Ferrick, Katherine	100.00
Ferrick, Katherine	100.00
Foster, Patricia	50.00
Fox, John	100.00
Franklin, Barbara	25.00
Fry, Pattie	250.00
Hanson, Bill	100.00
Hart, Diane	250.00
Hirschberg, David	100.00
Hoffman, Nancy	30.00
Hosay, Nancy	50.00
Houck, Elizabeth	100.00
Houck, Elizabeth	100.00
Huang, Penelope	200.00
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	250.00
Janz, James	48.25

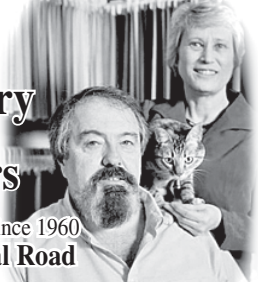
Joseph, Marion	10.00
Kadvany, John	25.00
Kenny, Mary	100.00
Khalili, Soheila	1,000.00
Kienitz, Jenny	500.00
Lechich, Paul	50.00
Madison, James	300.00
Martin, Joanna	50.00
Menke, Frank	50.00
Michie, Sara	20.00
Molony, Clem	35.00
Montana, Rachel	50.00
Montana, Susan	250.00
Mugler, Frederick	50.00
Nack, William	50.00
Norback, Ernest	50.00
Oakford, Janet	100.00
Organ, Henry	25.00
Paar, Kathleen	25.00
Parsons, Lyndall	25.00
Plumbers & Steamfitters local 467 / State and Political Action Fund ID# 788481	1,000.00
Reese, Elena	25.00
Roberts, Lenore	50.00
Roise, David	100.00
Rubin, Kim	25.00
Sarah Granger	50.00
Sims, Max	23.97
Soffer, Stu	100.00
Speer, David	250.00
Sredanovic, Gail	20.00
Stanek, Herbert	100.00
Stoker, Terence	25.00
Tregoning, Victoria	50.00
Walker, Patricia	100.00

GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION – NOVEMBER 4, 2008

Walter, Diane	100.00	Chaiken, Ora	50	Horsley, Don	100	Perez-Rubio, Mindy	50
Zara, Anna	100.00	Chow, Anna	50	Houck, Elizabeth	100	Pine, Dave	100
Zirker, Irving	50.00	Chu, Donna	50	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	250	Pletcher II, Charles	50
Chan, Kelvin	100.00	Clendenin, Judith	50	Janz, Jim	50	Plumbers & Steamfitters, Local 467	1000
Ratner, Mary	75.00	Cohen, Andy	50	Johnson, Edward	150	Ratchye, Jane	250
Pacific Gas & Electric	250.00	Coll, Barbara	25	Keenly, Michael	100	Ratner, Mary	75
Dember, Russell	50.00	Couperus, Nancy	100	Kellner, Madeline	75	Reese, Elena Lyn	25
Egbert, Marian	200.00	Cramer, Mayra	100	Kennedy, Dave	100	Renzel, Emily	25
Leland Yee for Senate	250.00	Crawley, Roger	25	Kenney, Kenney	100	Robinson, Heyward	150
Forrest, Florence	30.00	Crockett, Tim	50	Kepler, Clark	100	Roise, David	100
Slocum, Gail	100.00	Daly, Kathleen	250	Kishimoto, Yoriko	50	Ruskin, Ira	100
Payne, David	10.00	de Balzaretta, Sandra	250	Lance, Julie	600	Sabio, Moises	50
Bourne, Charles	300.00	Dell'Immagine, Robert	50	Lane, Laura	100	Sandoval, Dolly	75
Franklin, Barbara	50.00	Dember, Russ	50	Lange, Ingo	50	Schmitz, Randall	100
Medina, Alicia	10.00	Deutsch, L. Peter	100	Lasensky, Elizabeth	50	Schoenung, Susan	100
Carney, Frank	100.00	Drekmeier, Peter	50	Lee, Otto	250	Scholes, Frances	250
Zirker, Irving	40.00	Dudley, Malcolm	50	Lempert, Ted	50	Scott, Stan	40
Under the \$25 limit	0.00	Egbert, Marian	200	Levin, Adina	50	Searles, Irene	200
TOTAL	13,200.82	Eisner, Steven B.	125	Levinson, Jon S.	25	Segal, Jonathan	100
		Ekedahl, Bob	250	Lo, Sophie S.	250	Service Employees International Union - Local 521, Candidate PAC	1000
		Elliott, Bob	50	Lofaso, Chris	100	Sharma, Nick	250
		English, Bob	100	Lyall, Loren	100	Silano, Rob	25
		Ewell, Candace	100	Madison, Jim	250	Skinner, Loren C "Court" & Barrie	100
		Falkenhagen, Sally	25	Martin, Azita	50	Slocum, Gail	100
		Fearey, Seth	50	Martin, Joanna	50	Smith, Jeff	50
		Ferreira, Michael	50	Mendez, Daniel	250	Speer, David	250
		Ferrick, Katie G.	200	Menke, Frank	50	Spencer, James	50
		Flegel, Mark	250	Moise Derwin, Maryann	500	Sredanovic, Gail	25
		Forrest, Florrie	30	Molony, Clem	25	Stoker, Terry	25
		Forrest, Katherine	25	Morley, Judy	100	Stuart Alvord, Mary	50
		Foster, Patricia	50	Mugler, Jr., Frederick R.	50	Teikmanis, Mahra	100
		Fovinci, Lynne	50	Murveit, Leslie Airola	100	Teter, Mary	100
		Fox, John	50	Nagel, Terry	100	Thompson, Wayne	50
		Franklin, Barbara	50	Nelson, John	50	Tooley, Jim	100
		Fry, Patti	250	Newbold, Claudia	25	Weinstein, Deborah	100
		Gardner, Valerie	250	Nguyen, Thuy Thi	50	Westly, Steve	250
		Gaston, Shirley	50	Norback, Ernest	50	Yee, Leland	250
		Ghanbari, Mark	100	Oakford, Janet B.	100	Zeien, Shirley	500
		Grove, Karen	100	Operating Engineers - Local 3 District 01, AFL-CIO	150	Zirker, Irving J.	115
		Halliday, Barbara	25	Paar, Kay	25	Under the \$25 limit	120.99
		Hamel, Lawrence	25	Pacific Gas and Electric Company	250	TOTAL	17,940.99
		Hill, Robbie	50	Parsons, G. Lyndall	25		
		Hoffman, Nancy	30				
		Holober, Richard	250				

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Meetings to launch water system upgrade

Two back-to-back meetings on Thursday, Oct. 30, could officially launch San Francisco's \$4.3 billion project to fix the aging system that provides Sierra water to 2.4 million people in four Bay Area counties — including San Mateo.

The San Francisco Planning Commission will consider — and perhaps adopt — the Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) on Oct. 30 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 400 of San Francisco City Hall, Grove and Polk streets.

If the commission approves the report, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission will hold a special hearing at 5 p.m. in Room 263 of City Hall to approve a new phased version of its water supply improvement program.

The massive program consists of 37 regional projects to fix the deteriorating and seismically vulnerable system that brings 265 million gallons a day of water from Hetch Hetchy Reservoir in Yosemite National Park across five earthquake faults to faucets in San Francisco, Alameda, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Target date for completion is 2014.

The new variant in the plan addresses a controversy surround-

ing a proposal to withdraw up to 25 million gallons per day from the Tuolumne River to meet projected Bay Area water demand of 300 million gallons per day by 2030.

The proposed variant would hold consumption to 265 million gallons per day until an interim

date of 2018, when the need for water from the Tuolumne could be re-evaluated. Increases in demand would be met through conservation, recycling and groundwater.

For more information, call 415-554-3297 or go to sfwater.org.

Community meeting on water project

Residents of Menlo Park and North Fair Oaks concerned about the impacts constructing a large water pipeline in the Hetch Hetchy right of way are invited to a community meeting Wednesday, Oct. 29, at 7 p.m. at Home of Christ Church, 71 Bay Road.

The new pipeline would lie adjacent to two existing pipes that bring drinking water from the Sierra under San Francisco Bay to customers on the Peninsula. It will connect with a new tunnel under the Bay that will replace two aging pipelines between Newark and East Palo Alto.

The Bay Division pipeline project is part of the San Francisco Public Utility Commission's massive effort to upgrade its aging water system to be reliable and able to resist earthquakes.

Construction of the new pipeline should not affect trees, according to the PUC announcement. However, it may affect parking and traffic along Bay Road, and access to Flood Park for a brief period during the winter of 2010.

For information, contact Christina Kerby at 1-800-571-6610 or baydivision@sfwater.org.



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Los Altos

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November 8 or
December 6
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
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Daniel Yost named planning commissioner

Attorney Daniel K. Yost is the new Woodside Planning Commission representative for District 1, which includes Woodside Glens, Meadow Vista and neighborhoods on the west side of Canada Road.

The Town Council voted 6-0, with Councilwoman Sue Boynton absent, to appoint Mr. Yost at its Oct. 14 meeting.

"In this community, we have a lot of people who like to figure out the holes within the rules and there are a lot of litigious people. I think Daniel is a good fit for that (issue),"

Councilman Peter Mason said.

Mr. Yost, a resident of Woodside since 2003, is a partner at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, an international law firm with offices in Menlo Park. He is a director on the boards of the Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks and Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network, according to his online biography.

His application for the commission notes membership on the town's Public Safety Committee and that he gave pro-bono

legal advice to the 2006 campaign to save Kepler's bookstore in Menlo Park.

The seven-member Planning Commission meets on first and third Wednesdays. Commissioners administer planning regulations, make recommendations to the council on ordinances and resolutions concerning the town's general plan, and conduct public hearings on zoning issues, conditional use permits, building permits, site development permits and variances.

County transit agencies seek input from the public

Anyone who cares about how the San Mateo County Transit Authority (TA) spends the next half-cent sales tax for transportation has until Monday, Nov. 3, at 5 p.m. to weigh in with comments on its draft strategic plan.

The draft plan has been formulated after a series of community meetings. It is intended to target dollars raised by the Measure A countywide half-cent sales tax, which was re-authorized by voters in 2004, to create a balanced trans-

portation system for the county.

The plan, which is posted on www.samtrans.com, focuses on six key programs: transit; highways; local streets and transportation; railroad grade separations; pedestrians and bicyclists; and other programs to relieve congestion.

Comments may be submitted by phone to 622-7845; by e-mail to TAstrategicplan@smcta.com; or by mail to: San Mateo County Transportation Planning and Development Department, P.O. Box 3006, San Carlos, CA 94070.

SamTrans

Concurrently, SamTrans (the San Mateo County Transit District) is also developing a new strategic plan for the next five years.

The bus agency invites members of the public to weigh in at a meeting Wednesday, Oct. 29, at 6:30 p.m., at district headquarters, 1250 San Carlos Ave. in San Carlos.

The transit district operates the SamTrans bus service, the Redi-Wheels paratransit service for people with disabilities, and funds shuttles that link key employment centers with BART and Caltrain service.

A draft of the strategic plan will be available Nov. 5 on www.samtrans.com. Comments are due by Nov. 19.

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<p style="text-align: center;">Vive Sol-Cocina Mexicana</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2020 W. El Camino Real, Mtn. View (650) 938-2020. Specializing in the Cuisine of Puebla. Open daily for lunch and dinner.</p>	
Coffee & Tea	
<p style="text-align: center;">Connoisseur Coffee Co.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2801 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (650) 369-5250 9am-5:30pm Mon. - Sat. Coffee roasting & fine teas, espresso bar, retail & wholesale.</p>	

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Hearing set on Everest charter high school

The San Mateo County Board of Education has scheduled a public hearing on a petition for Everest Public High School. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 5, at Office of Education at 101 Twin Dolphin Drive in Redwood City.

Everest would open in September 2009 and be modeled on Summit Preparatory Charter High School, a Redwood City public school in its sixth year.

Petitioners are seeking a charter from the county after being rejected on a 4-1 vote Sept. 17 by Sequoia Union High School District trustees, with Trustee Olivia Martinez dissenting.

If the county board rejects Everest, the petitioners can apply to the state board. The Sequoia district must offer facilities and will be responsible for funds for Everest's operating budget if the

BRIEFS

petition is approved.

What classes?

What classes for adults and children do residents want at the new Portola Valley Town Center? Members of the town's Parks and Recreation Committee want to know. The first classes are due to start in January in the community room at Town Center. Suggestions may be sent to pvclasses@gmail.com.

Planting the banks

People of all ages are invited to help plant the banks of Sausal Creek at the Portola Valley Town Center at 765 Portola Road.

Friends of Sausal Creek and the Palo Alto-based Acterra Stewardship Watershed Project

are inviting people to six planting sessions between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Nov. 1, 8, 15 and 22, and on Dec. 6 and 13. Children under 18 will require adult supervision and the signature of a parent or guardian.

To register, go to www.acterra.org/watershed. For more information, contact Program Director Arnie Thompson at arniet@acterra.org or 962-9876, ext. 310.

Environmental awards

The Menlo Park Environmental Quality Commission will hand out seven awards to businesses and residents to honor their contributions to the environment at the City Council meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 28.

The council chambers are located in the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma Streets.



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE CONTROL COMMISSION RECRUITMENT

The Town Council is seeking an individual to serve on the Town's Architectural and Site Control Commission (ASCC). The objectives of the ASCC plan review and approval is to promote the preservation of the visual character of Portola Valley, assuring that all building sites and residences are developed in a manner minimizing disturbance to natural terrain and vegetation.

The ASCC consists of 5 members appointed by the Town Council, meetings are held on the 2nd and the 4th Mondays of the month. ASCC is charged with the review of all applications for building permits for new residential projects and additions over 400 square feet, site development permits, conditional use permits, subdivision and matters referred from the Planning Commission or Town Council.

If you are interested in serving on the ASCC, please submit a letter of interest to the Town Council by Friday, November 21, 2008

Dated: October 8, 2008

Leslie A. Lambert
Planning Manager

Published in THE ALMANAC on October 15, 29, November 5, 19, 2008



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In fact, my nurses were so attentive it was if they were taking care of their own child.

My thanks go to Sequoia, too, for their dedication in building an award-winning heart program.

How can I pay everyone back? I'm starting by giving each of my nurses a big box of chocolates.

If you ask me, the heart program at Sequoia is top notch. No wonder people come from far away to be treated here.

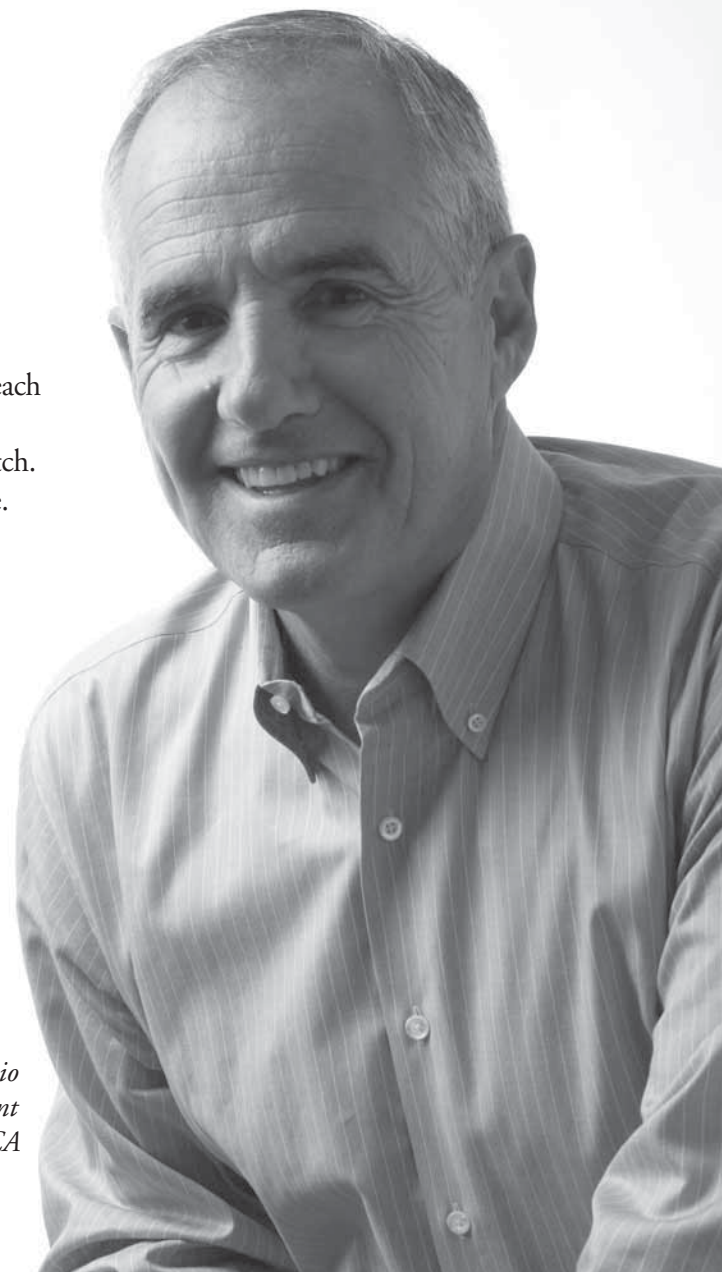
Sequoia Hospital invites you to learn more at www.sequoiahospital.org.



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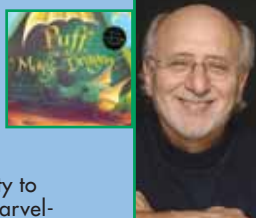
KEPLER'S FEATURED AUTHORS IN NOVEMBER

Project Runway Finalist:
Daniel Vosovic
Fashion Inside Out: Daniel V's Guide to How Style Happens from Inspiration to Runway and Beyond



Friday, November 7, 7:30 p.m.
Combines practical information on fashion design with an intimate look at the fashion scene today.

Peter Yarrow
Sleepytime Songs and Favorite Folk Songs



Monday, November 17, 6:00 p.m.
Don't miss this opportunity to meet and sing with the marvelous Peter Yarrow in his only Bay Area appearance.

Don't miss these other exciting author events!

Book Club Mixer

Monday, November 3, 7:00 p.m.
Meet some of your favorite local authors. Including advance reader copies, gift bags, refreshments and discounts!



Therese Poletti

Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger

Wednesday, November 5, 7:30 p.m.
Pflueger was one of the city's most prolific architects during his 40-year career. Therese Poletti tells the fascinating story of Pflueger's life and work.



GO-GREEN: Laura Stec & Dr. Eugene Cordero

Cool Cuisine - Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming

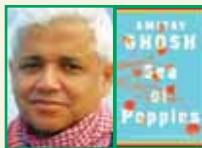
Thursday, November 6, 7:30 p.m.
Reports on innovative science, business, and savory solutions to the Global Warming Diet.



Amitav Ghosh

Sea of Poppies: A Novel

Monday, November 10, 7:30 p.m.
From one of the world's finest novelists—a vibrant saga of a tumultuous voyage across the Indian Ocean to fight China's vicious 19th-century Opium Wars.



Katherine Neville

The Fire: A Novel

Tuesday, November 11, 7:30 p.m.
An unforgettable story of peril, action, and intrigue from the author of the groundbreaking novel, *The Eight*.



H.W. Brands

Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Wednesday, November 12, 7:30 p.m.
Brilliantly captures the qualities that have made FDR a beloved figure to millions of Americans.



Wendy Northcutt

The Darwin Awards Next Evolution: Chlorinating the Gene Pool

Thursday, November 13, 7:00 p.m.
The human race's most popular humor series returns with a new collection of macabre mishaps and misadventures.



Hometown Peninsula presents Stacy Mitchell

Bigbox Swindle: The True Cost of Mega-Retailers and the Fight for America's Independent Businesses

Sunday, November 16, 4:00 p.m.
Location: Universalist Unitarian Fellowship, 2124 Brewster Ave., Redwood City



An expert's in-depth exploration of the enormous impact of mega-retailers—and what communities and independent businesses can do. More info at www.HometownPeninsula.org.

Dr. Irene Pepperberg

Alex & Me: How a Scientist and a Parrot Uncovered a Hidden World of Animal Intelligence - and Formed a Deep Bond in the Process

Tuesday, November 18, 7:30 p.m.
Dr. Pepperberg and Alex revolutionized the notions of how birds think and communicate. This is an unforgettable look at a 30-year shared adventure.



Karan Mahajan

Family Planning: A Novel

Wednesday, November 19, 7:30 p.m.
Stanford graduate's brilliant, wickedly funny debut, is the most original portrait of contemporary India to be published in years.



Gardening: R.J. Ruppenthal

Fresh Food from Small Spaces: The Square Inch Gardener's Guide to Year-Round Growing, Fermenting and Sprouting

Thursday, November 20, 7:30 p.m.
A passionate manifesto as well as a practical primer for urban food production.



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

November 2nd
- Election Story Time



November 16th
- Story Time with Todd Parr



November 23rd
- Story Time with Mark Reibstein
Wabi Sabi



November 30th
- Story Time with Oliver Chin, Jeff Root and Scott Runcorn



Welcome to Monster Isle
The Woollyhoodwinks vs. The Dark Patch



Special Family Events

Book Signing with M.T. Anderson

The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Vol. 2
Monday, November 3, 6:00 p.m.
Highly acclaimed National Book Award winner.



Francisco Jimenez

Reaching Out
Friday, November 14, 7:00 p.m.
Location: Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma Street
From child migrant worker to university professor: the power of education.



Paul Feig

Ignatius MacFarland: Frequent!
Sunday, November 16, 5:00 p.m.
Debut novel by the creator of the beloved cult TV show "Freaks and Geeks" is part comedy, part science fiction, and part fantasy.



All events are free at Kepler's unless otherwise noted.

Woodside theater group stages 'Guys and Dolls'

Woodside Community Theatre will present "Guys and Dolls," Frank Loesser's musical about gambling in New York and Havana in 1950, on two weekends in November at the Woodside High School performing arts center.

The cast and crew, made up of many local residents, will stage the play on the weekends of Nov. 7-9 and 14-16.

Show times are: Friday, Nov. 7, and Saturday, Nov. 8, at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Nov. 9, at 2 p.m.; Friday,

Nov. 14, and Saturday, Nov. 15, at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Nov. 16, at 2 p.m.

Tickets are available online at WoodsideTheatre.org or by calling 529-4828. The cost is \$20 for adults and \$16 for seniors, 62 and up, and students, 18 and under. Groups of 20 qualify for further discounts.

The Woodside High School performing arts center is at 199 Churchill Ave., just off of Woodside Road.

Documentary by Menlo Park resident on fractal geometry to air on KQED

A "Nova" documentary on PBS about fractal geometry, co-directed and produced by Menlo Park resident Michael Schwarz, will air at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 28, on KQED-TV (Channel 9).

The hour-long documentary, "Hunting the Hidden Dimension," traces the history of fractal geometry, a branch of mathematics that has been used to describe such seemingly disparate phenomena as the pattern of a human heartbeat and the behavior of the stock market.

Mr. Schwarz said that he enjoyed the challenge of illustrating the complex math involved in fractals in terms that can be understood by someone without a background in the subject.

He is currently working on a documentary adaptation of "The Botany of Desire," a book by Michael Pollan, that will air in the spring of 2009.

More information about the show — and about fractals — can be found on PBS's website at tinyurl.com/5vxxar4.

BIRTHS

Menlo Park

- Katianne and Alexander Annison, a son, Sept. 1, at Sequoia Hospital.
- Graciela and Gregory Tully, a daughter, Sept. 18, at Sequoia Hospital.

- Sierra and Robert Collier, a daughter, Sept. 19, at Sequoia Hospital.
- Alison and Brandon Sonderegger a daughter, Oct. 5, at Sequoia Hospital



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■ OBITUARY

Ivan Carl Odom

PG&E manager

A memorial service has been held for Ivan Carl Odom of Menlo Park who died Oct. 22 at the age of 85.

A native Californian, Mr. Odom was born in Sacramento. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a bachelor of science degree in engineering. He earned a master's degree from Stanford University.

Mr. Odom served in the Pacific with the Army Air Force as a pilot during World War II. He was a member of the Army reserves until he retired in 1983 with the rank of Lt. Colonel.

After 39 years of service, Mr. Odom retired from PG&E as Gas Systems Manager in 1988.

He served on the Menlo Park Planning Commission for many years, as well as other organizations. He was an active member of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, and enjoyed spending time with his family, raising bonsai plants, traveling, and researching his genealogy, say family members.

He is survived by his wife, Carol; daughters Cheryl Thompson and Laurel Johnston; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. His wife of 58 years, Gaye Northrup Odom, preceded him in death in 2005.

Memorials in his name may be made to Holy Trinity Episcopal Church or a charity of choice.



Ivan Carl Odom

City may act on Willows traffic study

Fifteen years after a failed attempt by the city of Menlo Park to implement traffic-control devices in the Willows neighborhood, the city looks poised to begin a new traffic study in the area.

At its meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 28, the City Council plans to vote on whether to authorize a \$120,000, consultant-led study of traffic in the neighborhood.

The city has promised a high level of community involvement in the process this time around,

after taking criticism for not seeking out enough feedback when the city installed lane chokers and a number of traffic circles in 1994 that were later removed when residents protested.

Eric Doyle, a member of the Transportation Commission who resides in the Willows, has criticized the study in several e-mails to the City Council log, arguing that it is being promoted by a vocal minority whose views are not in line with those of most Willows residents.

CNPA AWARDS

continued from page 9

efforts in deconstructing the old Portola Valley Town Center.

The Almanac also took first prize for lifestyle coverage in the Sept. 12 and 26, 2007, issues, which featured a story on a peer support group for bipolar disorder written by Sue Dremann, and one on fashion eyewear by Almanac intern Natalie Jabbar, respectively.

The Almanac's opinion pages in January 2008 took first place. The winning issues featured editorial endorsements for the February election on Jan. 23, and a Jan. 30 editorial defense of the First Amendment stemming from an outcry over the use of the Menlo Park Council Chambers by a church group.

In winning the awards, The Almanac competed against other weekly newspapers in the state in its circulation category.

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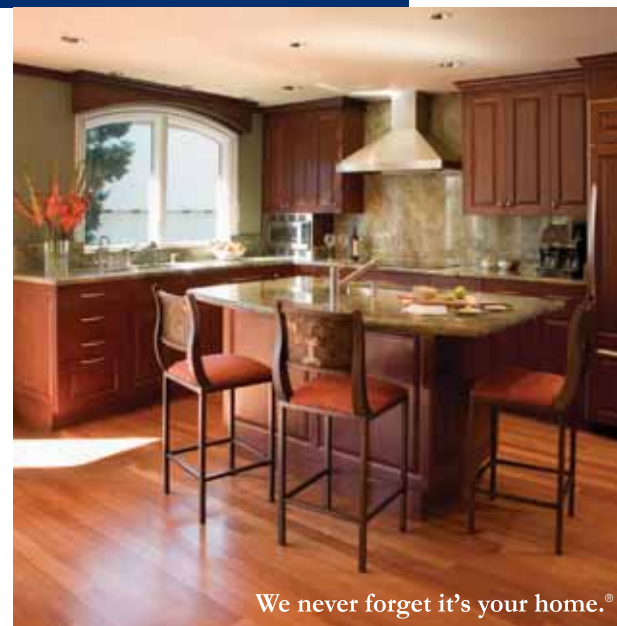


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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

TOWN SQUARE FORUM

POST your views on the Town Square forum at www.TheAlmanacOnline.com

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your views to: letters@almanacnews.com and note this it is a letter to the editor in the subject line.

MAIL

or deliver to: Editor at the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

CALL

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

Endorsements

Proposition 9: Victims' rights, parole

This measure amends the state Constitution and various state laws to (1) expand the legal rights of crime victims and the payment of restitution by criminal offenders, (2) restrict the early release of inmates, and (3) change the procedures for granting and revoking parole.

This measure is promoted by Henry T. Nicholas III, who provided almost \$5 million for the campaign in addition to the \$1 million he gave to Proposition 6. Nichols is a billionaire who has funded multiple anti-crime measures over the years. We don't believe it's a good idea to pass comprehensive and complex crime legislation through the initiative process and lock it into the state constitution.

The fact that so much of the funding for this measure comes from one person, Nicholas, and that he was indicted this summer by a federal grand jury for 21 counts related to conspiracy, securities fraud, wire fraud and separately for narcotics crimes, raises additional questions. We recommend a no vote on Proposition 9.

Proposition 10: Alternative fuel vehicles and renewable energy

This measure allows the state to sell \$5 billion in bonds for various renewable energy, alternative fuel, energy efficiency, and air emissions reduction purposes. The majority (58 percent in cash payments of between \$2,000 and \$50,000) would go to purchasers of certain high fuel economy and alternative fuel (especially natural gas) vehicles. Twenty percent is allocated for incentives for research, development and production of renewable energy technology, and 11 percent goes to incentives for research and development of alternative fuel vehicle technology. The cost would be about \$325 million annually over 30 years to repay the bonds.

The financial support for this initiative comes from the Clean Energy Fuels Corporation (CEFC), to the tune of \$3.2 million and counting. This corporation, which operates natural gas fueling stations, is owned by T. Boone Pickens and would benefit from the subsidies in this initiative. We're not convinced that California citizens should subsidize his large scale natural gas vehicle plan. Proposition 10 is opposed by a number of consumer groups, including Consumer Federation and TURN in the Bay Area.

While it may seem attractive on the surface, there are many reasons to be troubled by this initiative: its narrow support and benefit, focus on fossil fuel use subsidy, and long term public cost. We recommend a no vote on Proposition 10.

Proposition 11: Redistricting

Proposition 11 creates a 14-member redistricting commission responsible for drawing new lines for state Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization districts. It requires the state auditor to randomly select commissioners

from a registered voter applicant pool. The auditor must reject applicants for various reasons, including if they have recently been a lobbyist, political candidate, or given more than \$2,000 in a year to a political candidate.

A 60-person pool is created from which legislative leaders of both parties can strike 24 names. The auditor then randomly draws eight commissioners, three from each major party plus two others, who select the final six from the pool to produce a commission with five from each major party plus four others. The measure establishes standards for drawing lines that require respect for the geographic integrity of neighborhoods and that encourage compact districts. The commission would hold hearings and take public comment. Nine votes are required to approve final district maps.

The state Legislature would still draw lines for congressional districts but must adhere to the same geographic standards. The measure is supported by the League of Women Voters, California Common Cause, AARP and many business groups as well as Gov. Schwarzenegger. While it has picked up support from Democrats such as Steve Westly and former Gov. Gray Davis, it is opposed by the state Democratic Party, Don Perata, Barbara Boxer and Nancy Pelosi, who fear losing Democratic seats if it passes.

We opposed the redistricting initiative proposed in 2005 by this governor that would have handed the process to three retired judges, and we have not been satisfied with other approaches on past ballots.

This is different. While we share some of the opponents' concerns, it's apparent to us that the governing process in Sacramento is broken. Part of the problem is term limits, which produce a rotating cast of amateurs

who work with an ineffective governor. Part is the two-third vote requirement for budgets. Part is the campaign finance system. But part of it is also non-competitive legislative districts for both parties. This measure is not perfect, but it's the best we've seen, and it's time for change in Sacramento. We recommend a yes vote on Proposition 11.

Proposition 12: Veterans' Bond Act of 2008

This initiative appears on the ballot as a result of legislation sponsored by state Senator Mark Wyland, R-Carlsbad. It authorizes the state to sell \$900 million in general obligation bonds for the Cal-Vet program, which allows the state Dept. of Veterans Affairs to purchase farms and homes and resell them to California veterans. These bonds would provide sufficient funds for at least 3,600 additional veterans to receive loans. Each participating veteran makes monthly payments to the department.

According to the legislative analyst, these payments are sufficient to (1) reimburse the department for its costs of purchasing the farm or home; (2) cover all costs resulting from the sale of the bonds, including interest; and (3) cover the costs of operating the program. Given the history of this program, there is not likely to be any substantial cost to the state. While we think it's the federal government's responsibility to provide for veterans, not the state's, this is a proven program which helps deserving Californians at little or no cost. We recommend a Yes vote on Proposition 12.



Almanac Endorsements

Menlo Park City Council

Kelly Fergusson, Andy Cohen.

Atherton City Council

Kathy McKeithen, David Henig.

U.S. House

Anna Eshoo.

State Senate

Joe Simitian.

State Assembly

Ira Ruskin.

County Measure Q

8 Percent Tax on Parking Facilities: Vote Yes.

County Measure R

2.5 Percent Tax on Vehicle Rental: Vote Yes.

State Proposition 1A

High-Speed Rail: Vote No.

State Proposition 2

Treatment of Farm Animals: Vote Yes.

State Proposition 3

Children's Hospital Bonds: Vote No.

State Proposition 4

Parental Notification of Abortion: Vote No.

State Proposition 5

Changes in Sentencing, Parole and Rehabilitation: Vote Yes.

State Proposition 6

Tougher Criminal Penalties and laws: Vote No.

State Proposition 7

Renewable Energy: Vote No.

State Proposition 8

Limit on Marriage: Vote No.

State Proposition 9

Victims' Rights, Changes in Parole Policy: Vote No.

State Proposition 10

Alternative Fuel Vehicles, Alternative Energy: Vote No.

State Proposition 11

Redistricting for state Assembly, Senate: Vote Yes.

State Proposition 12

Veterans Bond Act: Vote Yes.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Missing political signs don't say much for the country

Editor:

It is profoundly disturbing that we have had three political signs stolen or pulled up and thrown aside from the yard at our home in the past month.

We totally understand that we have dear friends and neighbors who may disagree with our choice of candidates, and we strongly feel that they are entitled to their choices even if they may differ from ours. This is the United States of America, after all, the wonderful melting pot of so many from different backgrounds and cultures who are free to have different opinions about many things.

We work out our differences through a democratic process that hears everyone's voice — this is the foundation on which our amazingly wonderful country was built.

Our signs happen to be for Senator Obama but we are 100 percent certain that Senator McCain would be equally as appalled as Senator Obama to know that people are denigrating our constitutional rights for self-expression in the midst of this election.

**Martha (Marty) Arscott
Lindenwood, Atherton**

Minister invites sign thieves to talk about Prop. 8

Editor:

Sadly, earlier this week signs stating "Our Faith Community Says No on Proposition 8" were removed from in front of Ladera Community Church in Portola Valley.

This act of vandalism clearly violates our right to free speech, and demonstrates a disheartening lack of respect for differing opinions. As an open and affirming congregation, we are strongly committed to promoting justice. As a faith community, we are called not only to do justice, but to "walk the talk" in our willingness to bear public witness.

The resolution to ban same sex marriage is a justice issue, denying equal rights to our fellow citizens. In honoring diversity, we practice open and direct communication. We encourage members of the community to engage in dialogue with us about these important issues. As pastor, I welcome your feedback. Please feel free to contact the church at 650-854-5481 or e-mail us at church@ladera.org.

**Rev. Lindsay L. Fulmer
Pastor**

High-speed rail devastation? I don't think so

Editor:

In recent editorials and guest opinions on high-speed rail, I

The inside story on the city's reserves

By Heyward Robinson

Each election season, there is much said about city finances. A claim now circulating by council candidate Rick Ciardella and former council member Lee Duboc posits that the current city council has used money from the General Fund [reserves] to balance the current budgets. The charge is inaccurate and misleading. Here's why:

Menlo Park will have a surplus of over \$2.9 million for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, which closed in June of this year. Yet the general fund reserves will show a drawdown of almost \$8.4 million due to two extraordinary charges: \$2.6 million for the city's contribution to the new performing arts center at Menlo-Atherton High school, and \$9.2 million for previously unfunded liabilities for employee post-retirement benefits. Funding for the Performing Arts Center is something that has been supported by city councils as far back as 2002. The retiree benefits liability requires more explanation.

By law, Menlo Park has incurred future financial obligations called "Other Post-Employment Benefit" (OPEB) for its workers, but historically has not shown these liabilities on its books. In 2004, the Governmental

Accounting Standards Board (GASB) passed GASB Rule 45, which requires cities to show the net present value of total future liabilities for retired employee benefits (primarily healthcare). These costs are calculated over the working career of all current employees, rather than on a pay-as-you-go basis, which had been the practice for most government sponsored plans.

The council authorized a 2006 actuarial study that identified the net present value of Menlo Park's total unfunded OPEB liability to be approximately \$13.2 million, assuming that the city kept the money, committed to meet the future liability in an internal, city-managed fund at an average return of 4.25 percent. Further study concluded that the [net present value of the] liability could be reduced to \$9.2 million, by placing the same funds in an irrevocable trust, with average estimated returns of 7.75 percent. Reserves placed in the trust do not appear on the cities books as encumbered reserves.

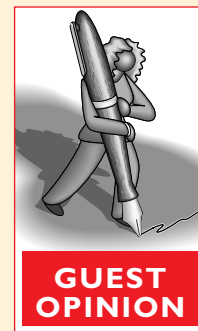
In April 2008 by a 5-0 vote, the City Council chose the second option, thus saving Menlo Park taxpayers at least \$4 mil-

lion. Moreover, future OPEB obligations are now factored into employee costs. With these changes, Menlo Park's financial statements now reflect the true state of the city's budget and reserves. We are fortunate to be able to fully fund our past OPEB liability and take advantage of the higher interest rate. Many other cities would like to be in our position.

The city's finances are strong. At \$27 million, our reserve is over 70 percent of our current \$38 million budget. This is a very healthy ratio, and is the primary reason that the city continues to receive a AAA credit rating.

This city council takes its fiduciary responsibility very seriously. We are committed to keeping our revenues and expenses in line while meeting the needs of Menlo Park's residents and businesses. We're also committed to making sure that we're upfront about liabilities so that our reserve balance accurately reflects what is available.

Heyward Robinson is a member of the Menlo Park City Council and current serves as vice mayor.



see opponents using over-the-top words like "devastating" and so on. I recently visited my son who lives in Hinsdale, Illinois, which, according to Wikipedia, "has a rolling, wooded topography, with a quaint downtown that contains boutique shops and restaurants, and is a 20-minute train ride to downtown Chicago on the BNSF Railway Line.

Hinsdale is also known for its excellent public school system, ranked among the best on all levels in the state of Illinois. In 2005, all its elementary schools were ranked in the top 25 in the state. Sounds a bit like Menlo Park, doesn't it?

Why write about Hinsdale? It is bisected by the main line of the BNSF railroad with three tracks, also known as the BNSF Racetrack. Hundred-car freight trains roar through at 60 miles per hour blowing their horns at every street-level grade crossing. Commute trains stop at the station many times every hour.

Is Hinsdale devastated by the railroad? Hardly! It thrives on it. People pay higher prices for houses within walking distance of the three stations so they can commute to downtown Chicago or go shopping on the Miracle Mile. If you want a real feel for the sights and sounds, go to YouTube, search "BNSF Racetrack," and watch some video.

**Al Neiman
Erica Way, Portola Valley**

ally, he did nothing wrong, and the driver of the car did nothing wrong. What happened? My son briefly rode for about 15 feet on the sidewalk, and when he re-entered the road, he entered into the blind spot of a car that was getting ready to parallel park. Why do I mention this? I have written the Almanac twice previously about bicycle safety. In one of those letters, I mentioned the danger of children riding on sidewalks, something my husband and I strongly discourage. Riding on the sidewalk is dangerous for many reasons. First, there are numerous hazards to negotiate around. Stop signs, power poles, trash cans, recycling bins, dogs, and yes, pedestrians. An obstacle course, if you will, and a narrow one at that. Second, when you ride on the sidewalk, every single driveway is an intersection. Add to that, the driver of a car backing out of a driveway has a much narrower field of vision at the sidewalk then he does of the street, and is not looking for a fast-moving vehicle on the sidewalk. In addition, many homes have high fences or hedges, especially along Santa Cruz Avenue. It is very difficult for the driver of a car coming out of its driveway to see much beyond a couple of feet at the sidewalk. Third, as in the case of my son, when you ride on the sidewalk, eventually you have to re-enter the road. The driver of the car that almost hit my son did not see him. There was no reason for her to have seen him, because

The dangers of biking on the sidewalk

Editor:

Today my son was almost hit by a car while riding his bike. Techni-

ally, he did nothing wrong, and the driver of the car did nothing wrong. What happened? My son briefly rode for about 15 feet on the sidewalk, and when he re-entered the road, he entered into the blind spot of a car that was getting ready to parallel park. Why do I mention this? I have written the Almanac twice previously about bicycle safety. In one of those letters, I mentioned the danger of children riding on sidewalks, something my husband and I strongly discourage. Riding on the sidewalk is dangerous for many reasons. First, there are numerous hazards to negotiate around. Stop signs, power poles, trash cans, recycling bins, dogs, and yes, pedestrians. An obstacle course, if you will, and a narrow one at that. Second, when you ride on the sidewalk, every single driveway is an intersection. Add to that, the driver of a car backing out of a driveway has a much narrower field of vision at the sidewalk then he does of the street, and is not looking for a fast-moving vehicle on the sidewalk. In addition, many homes have high fences or hedges, especially along Santa Cruz Avenue. It is very difficult for the driver of a car coming out of its driveway to see much beyond a couple of feet at the sidewalk. Third, as in the case of my son, when you ride on the sidewalk, eventually you have to re-enter the road. The driver of the car that almost hit my son did not see him. There was no reason for her to have seen him, because

when she passed him, he was on the sidewalk. Had he been on the shoulder where he should have been all along, she would have taken him into account before attempting to parallel park. Spread the word. Ride where cars can see you. The bike lane or the shoulder is much safer than the sidewalk.

**Jackie MacDonald
Elder Court, Menlo Park**

Rick Ciardella is my choice for council seat

Editor:

Four years ago Menlo Park elected two council members who joined the chorus to get El Camino revitalized. One actually said he planned to learn on the job.

This election we have that stand-out city issue. We have commissioned a major city planning effort for El Camino Real and downtown (credit to current council) in hopes of revitalizing our community and our economics.

But will business bring the investment we need to generate revenue and enliven empty lots if they see us as dithering year to year? How long has the former General Motors lot been waiting for a new life? The Park Theater? And at least seven other downtown lots? Will the same council bring our planning effort to real fruition or just an "offend nobody" plan of small steps? Ironically, the incumbent who speaks of "bold steps" is reticent about development on El Camino.

We have one candidate who knows what the diverse elements of planning really are — it's been

his profession for 30 years. His work is widespread, including right here in town. He's not a speech maker — he just knows what to ask, what to expect, when to put his foot down and when to support the process. Oh, and he knows how to balance a business budget. In other words, he's qualified, and we need his leadership on City Council.

Please cast one vote, and cast it for Rick Ciardella.

**Henry Riggs
Callie Lane, Menlo Park**

Prop. 4 is not the best answer for teens

Editor:

I am voting no on Prop. 4 because it is **not** about protecting our teens.

The best way to protect our daughters is to begin talking to them about responsible, appropriate sexual behavior — including abstinence — from the time they are young and fostering an atmosphere assuring they can come to us. Their health and safety is absolutely our responsibility.

California teens and parents need tools to help them communicate about sensitive issues like sexuality and pregnancy, and California must reinvest in teen pregnancy-prevention programs that are proven effective. We know how to do this — we've reduced teen pregnancy by 40 percent over the last 10 years without dangerous laws like Prop. 4. It must be defeated. Please join me in voting **no** on Prop. 4.

**Irene Searles
Oakdell Drive, Menlo Park**

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