

**SPORTS: M-A tops Woodside in thriller,
wins PAL Bay Division title. Page 10**

The Almanac

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

NOVEMBER 19, 2008 www.TheAlmanacOnline.com | VOL. 44 NO. 12

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RECENT SIGHTINGS OF THE BIG CATS ARE NO CAUSE FOR ALARM, WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST SAYS.

PAGE 15

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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Photo by Danielle Vernon/The Almanac

Cooking up something good

Students from Menlo School in Atherton dish up food they've cooked themselves at the Clara-Mateo homeless shelter on Nov. 16. On Sundays, the high school students pony up \$10 each and shop for ingredients and prepare meals for two local shelters. The Community Cooks program is run by students and parent volunteers, with funding from the school and its association.

Menlo Park

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Portola Valley

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Family Almanac

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On the cover

While not Cheshire cats, cougars from the Santa Cruz Mountains can approximate invisibility in the manner of all cats — by moving carefully, quietly and infrequently. Still, residents in Portola Valley and Woodside have been seeing more big cats lately. A cause for alarm? A Bay Area wildlife biologist says no. Photo illustration by Raul Perez. Story on **Page 15**.

CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

The Almanac offices are at **3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025**.

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By Jackie Ballinger, CEO Physically Focused

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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Woodside group wins fee award in Steve Jobs case

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Preservationists have won the latest round in the lengthy legal fight over the fate of a historic mansion in Woodside owned by Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple and CEO of Pixar.

The Jackling house, a 1920s mansion designed by noted architect George Washington Smith, was slated for demolition until an ad hoc group of historic preservationists called Uphold Our Heritage stepped in, claiming that the approval of the demolition violated state law.

So far, the group has prevailed in court, despite several appeals filed by attorneys for Mr. Jobs who took the case all the way to the state Supreme Court.

In the latest wrinkle, the California First District Court of Appeals on Nov. 12 upheld an award of more than \$400,000 to cover attorneys' fees incurred by Uphold Our Heritage.

The court ruled that the group is entitled to recover its fees because "the litigation resulted in the enforcement of an important public right by stopping the demolition of the historic residence."

Howard Ellman, the San

WOODSIDE

Francisco attorney representing Mr. Jobs, did not return The Almanac's phone calls seeking comment.

Clotilde Luce, a member of Uphold Our Heritage and whose family once owned the Jackling house, said in an e-mail that she's grateful to attorneys Jan Chatten-Brown and Doug Carstens for taking on such a time-consuming case with no assurance that they'd be fully paid for their work. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's West Coast office participated in the lawsuit, further proof of the Jackling house's historic importance, she said.

"(I) am very impressed by the thoroughness and probity the courts have to exercise," Ms. Luce told The Almanac.

Mr. Jobs has owned the Jackling house since 1984. He lived in it for about 10 years, but since 2000 it has been unoccupied and left derelict. The 17,000-plus-square-foot mansion was built in the Spanish colonial revival style and includes custom copper features made for its owner,

See **JOBS**, page 8

Lawsuit is main street going after Wall Street, says county attorney

By Bay City News Service

A lawsuit filed Thursday by San Mateo County against executives of the Lehman Bros. investment firm, which filed for bankruptcy in September, may spark a trend of similar lawsuits across the nation, according to Joe Cotchett, a lawyer representing the county.

County officials say the fall of the investment-banking giant resulted in losses of more than \$150 million for the county and the school and other government districts that had their money in a county investment pool.

The loss represents 5.9 percent of the pool that was invested in Lehman Bros. securities, County Treasurer Lee Buffington said.

Some school districts lost millions. The Sequoia Union High School District took a \$6.5 million hit, about 7 percent of its \$92 million annual budget. The Menlo Park City School District lost \$3.5 million, or 14 percent. Other local districts lost between 1.3 and 2.3 percent.

"This is going to start a prairie fire burning east toward Wall Street," Mr. Cotchett said. "This is a case where Main Street is going after the executives of Wall Street. The tables are turned here."

On Sept. 14, Lehman Bros. announced it was filing for bankruptcy and the participants in the investment pool lost a collective \$155 million, Mr.

Buffington said.

Contributing entities to the pool include 25 school districts and 15 cities, as well as the San Mateo County Transportation Authority and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. The money is used to finance nearly all services provided by the county, according to the lawsuit.

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors authorized the lawsuit in a closed session Oct. 28. It was filed Thursday against individuals on the Lehman Bros. board of directors, including CEO Richard Fuld Jr., as well as the company's auditors, Ernst & Young.

The lawsuit alleges the execu-

See **WALL STREET**, page 10

Town bites bullet, gives 'manager' title to top exec

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Angela Howard continues in her position at the top of the town staff in Portola Valley, but her title of town administrator is history. She is the town manager, as is her counterpart in Woodside. Menlo Park and Atherton have city managers.

The change is a historic one for Portola Valley, which has resisted using the common "manager" title for the town's top executive as one more way to emphasize the role of volunteers — as opposed to paid professionals — in running town affairs.

Councilman Richard Merk reflected that resistance in cast-

ing the only no vote in the council 4-1 decision on Nov. 12 to change the title.

This change is necessary, Mayor Maryann Moise Derwin said, noting that when Ms. Howard attends events outside town, people mistake her position as that of an assistant administrator.

Mr. Merk was having none of it. He recalled a committee that had studied such a change in the 1980s and split on what to do, so nothing was done.

"I think that not having a town manager makes Portola

'I think that is one more nail in the coffin of Portola Valley.'

COUNCILMAN RICHARD MERK

See **MANAGER**, page 8

See **MANAGER**, page 8



Photo by Connie Ahearn

Coleen Duncan is surrounded by "Holly Dancers," from left, Lara Karadogan, Sofia Karadogan, Camille Bossut (center), Cioana Bohack, Caitlyn Perkocho, Hannah Bogomilsky, Athena Li and Grace Geiser.

These youngsters 'Gotta Dance!'

"'Twas the Night Before Christmas" opens Dec. 7 at Woodside Performing Arts Center

By Jane Knoerle

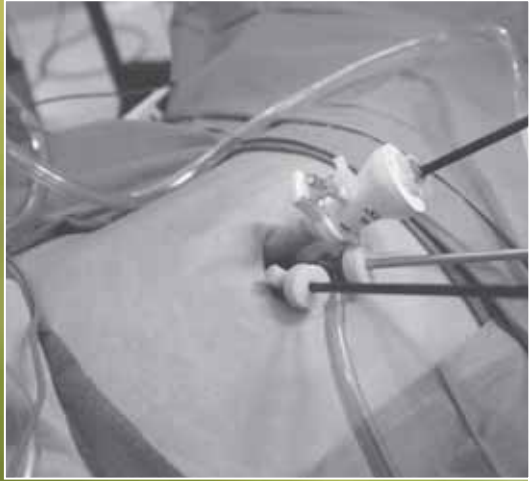
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

As dancing mice, rag dolls, and holly berries twirl across the stage at Woodside Performing Arts Center in the dance production of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas," artistic director Coleen Duncan will be anxiously watching from the control booth.

She's familiar with every minute of the holiday production, which is based on the poem by Clement Moore. She danced in the show from ages 8 to 18, and has been its director for three years.

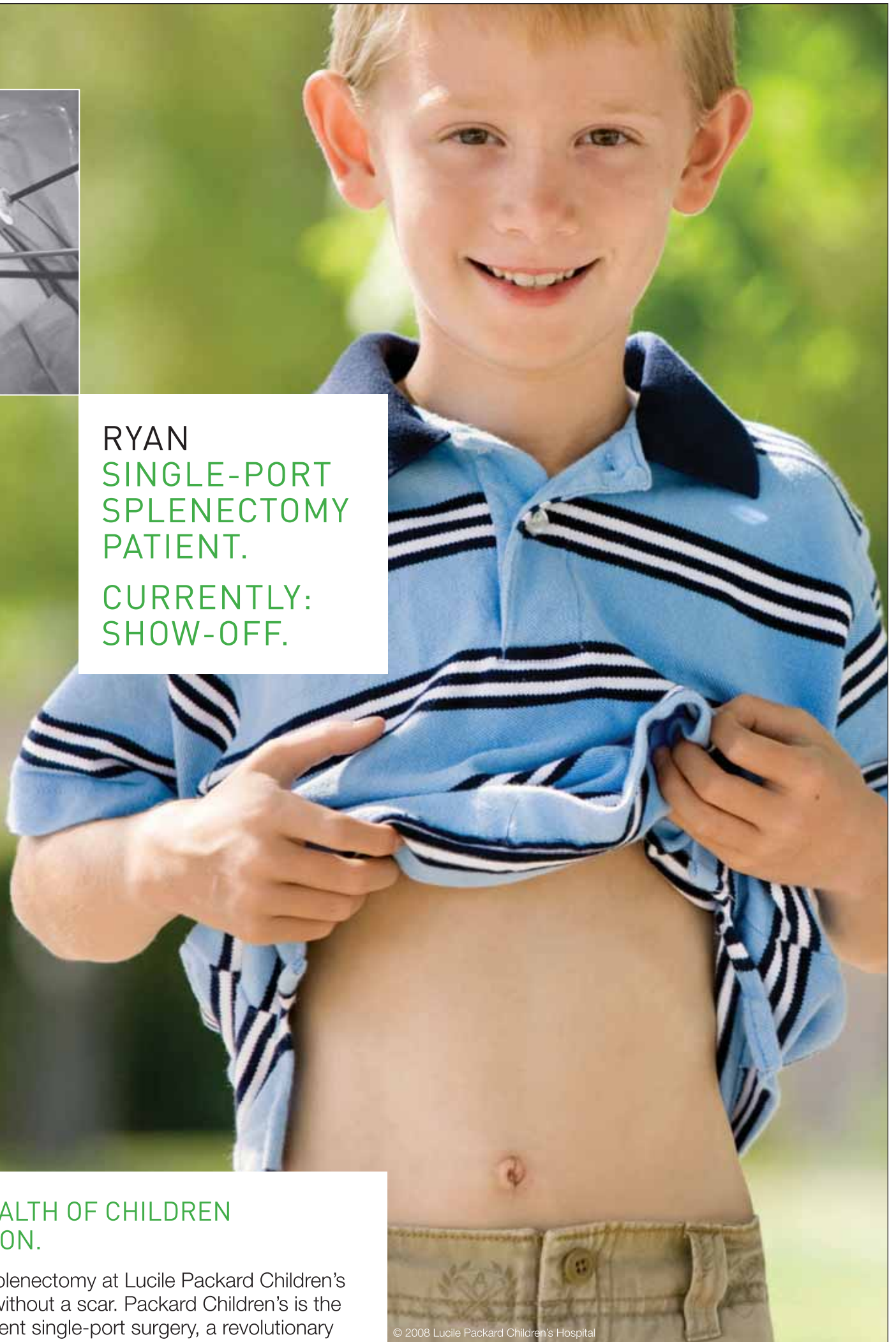
"I grew up in dancing," she says. It's in the family. Her mother, Sylvia Duncan of Atherton, and Sarah Jean Measor are co-owners of Menlo Park Academy of Dance. They acquired the business four years ago from RoseAnn Saylor, who founded the academy, located at 1163 El Camino Real, back in 1947.

See **DANCE**, page 8



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Robert Krost, owner, Menlo Oaks Plumbing

Robert "Bob" Krost, a resident of Menlo Park since 1954, died at his Sharon Heights home Oct. 30 surrounded by his family. He was 84.

Mr. Krost was born and raised in Fairmont, Minnesota. During his high school years, he was a star football player, winning several "Golden Football" awards.

In World War II he joined the U.S. Navy and served as a gunner's mate on the U.S.S. Comet. While on leave in San Francisco, he met and later married Bette Rud. The couple settled in Menlo Park and for 30 years ran their family business, Menlo Oaks Plumbing.

Mr. Krost's hobby was building, collecting and repairing clocks. He had hundreds of them, says his daughter Cathie Seager. He also enjoyed cooking and spending time with his family, say family members. They recall his smile, good nature, and love of life.

Mr. Krost is survived by his daughters, Cathie Seager of Pioneer and Cindie Krost of Menlo Park; brother John Krost of Fairmont, Minnesota; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Interment was in Holy Cross Cemetery in Menlo Park.

Jean Burnet

Conference manager
at SRI International

Jean Burnet, a resident of Menlo Park for more than 50 years, died Nov. 7. She was 81.

A native of Bellingham, Washington, Ms. Burnet was a graduate of Stanford University, class of 1949. For more than 35 years, she served as class correspondent. She was also a volunteer for the Cap & Gown honor society at the university for more than 50 years.

Ms. Burnet was conference and food services manager at SRI International for nearly 30 years, arranging seminars and large conferences in the United States and abroad. She also managed catering and food services at SRI headquarters.

She is survived by a daughter and grandson in Olympia, Washington, and a brother in Southern California. At her request, no services were held.

Ernie Kahl

Masonry contractor

Ernie Kahl, a Woodside resident since 1963, died unexpectedly, but peacefully, on Nov. 6.

Mr. Kahl was born in Hamburg, Germany, and came to California in 1951 with his wife,

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are based on information provided by mortuaries and family members.

Rita. The couple met in Hamburg when they were 13-years-old. As childhood sweethearts, they survived World War II together. They enjoyed years of travel, playing cards, and time at home with their family, say family members.

Mr. Kahl was a lifetime member of the Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers. As a masonry contractor, he worked on some of San Francisco's best known buildings, say family members.

He is survived by his wife, Rita; his three children, Jeanette, Henry and Steven; and seven grandchildren.

A private ceremony will be held with burial at Skylawn Memorial Park. Donations in his name may be made to Mills-Peninsula Hospital Foundation to benefit the Intensive Care Unit, 1501 Trousdale Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010.

Martha Jane Eastman

Community volunteer

Martha Jane Eastman of Atherton died Nov. 9 of pancreatic cancer. She was 82.

Born in Portland, Maine, Ms. Eastman graduated from St. Joseph's Academy and Westbrook Junior College, where she majored in chemistry. In her 20s she worked in several businesses, including the Jordan Marsh Co. in Boston, where she was a watch buyer.

In 1946 she married Therald Carlton Eastman Sr. of Boston. Mr. Eastman died in 1989. While living in Boston, Ms. Eastman was a community volunteer and, in 1973, became a real estate broker. Relocating to California in 1989 to be near her children, she started Kumquats, an interior accessories business.

Ms. Eastman married Joseph Donnelly, a longtime family friend, in 1996. For several years she was a volunteer in the library of Trinity Episcopal School in Menlo Park. When her husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, she worked on behalf of Peninsula Volunteers Inc., and its Rosener House facility to address this issue, say family members.

Ms. Eastman is survived by

her husband, Joseph S. Donnelly of Atherton; daughter, Francesca M. Eastman of Atherton, and son Therald C. Eastman of Santa Clara.

Memorials may be made to Peninsula Volunteers, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park, Ca. 94025.

Raymond Louis Wyant

Insurance broker

Raymond Louis Wyant of Los Trancos Woods died at home Oct. 18 with his wife by his side. He was 93.

Mr. Wyant was born in Santa Barbara and attended Montecito and Santa Barbara schools. As a boy of 12, he earned money to buy a row boat and enjoyed fishing on the coast of Montecito with his dog, say family members.

After attending UC Santa Barbara, he transferred to Stanford University where he received a bachelor's degree in engineering and mechanical engineering and a master's degree in botany.

During World War II, he served in the U.S. Coast Guard, graduating from the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, as a lieutenant junior grade. He served on a LC 322 (landing craft) in the South Pacific for nearly five years.

After the war, Mr. Wyant worked at Marsh & McLennan Companies. He was later employed by the Frank B. Hall insurance company as a vice president in charge of fire protection engineering. He retired in 1980.

He is survived by his wife, Joan Wyant; daughter Joan Bobrink; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Emily A. Vincent

Portola Valley resident

Emily A. Vincent of Portola Valley died Oct. 23 at Kaiser Hospital in Redwood City at the age of 94.

Ms. Vincent was a native of Carlock, Illinois. She and her husband, Emmett, moved from Indianapolis, Indiana, to northern San Diego County in 1979. Sometime after Mr. Vincent died in 1998, Ms. Vincent moved to Portola Valley to live with her son, Phillip, and his wife, Margarita.

Ms. Vincent was active in civic affairs in Indianapolis, particularly the Indianapolis Symphony and child care charities. She helped organized the first summer concert fundraiser for the symphony.

She is survived by her sons, Phillip of Portola Valley and Mark of Langley, British Columbia, Canada; and three grandsons.

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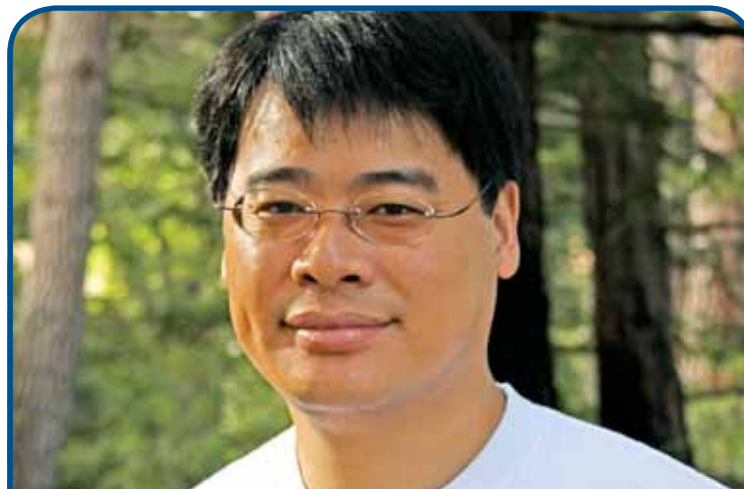


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HE COMPLETED HIS CHEMISTRY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION DEGREES AT UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY, CANADA

He was awarded a two-year scholarship from the Alberta Professional Engineer Association to pursue a career in Science Teaching.

At five-years of age, he started to read science related magazines. Gabe says, "No wonder I choose a career in science education."

He believes learning is a life-long process. It [learning] enhances our understanding of our environment, social interactions, and personal growth.

One of his favorite quotes is: "Do or do not, there is no try" - Yoda (Star Wars V - Empire Strike Back)

He hopes his students will find value in whatever they are studying; from arts to science and athletics to humanities. He also wants them to be thankful and better themselves for the greater good.

GABE TANG

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Short takes



Go speed racers!

Former Woodside Elementary School business manager Toni Imbimbo and her grown son Dallas have made it past the halfway point on this season of The Amazing Race, a reality show contest airing on CBS. So far, they've survived seven elimination rounds, been to Brazil, Bolivia, Cambodia, New Zealand, and India and are currently one of four teams still in the running for a \$1 million prize. The Imbimbo duo is home from their around-the-world adventure, but as with all reality competitions, they're strictly forbidden from discussing it before the final show is broadcast. The show airs Sunday nights at 8 p.m.

Dead heat in Atherton?

Every vote counts, and while it wouldn't have changed the winners in the Atherton election for two seats on the City Council, one more vote could have tipped last week's unusual tie for third place between Richard Moore and David Henig. Mr. Henig has since pulled ahead by a whopping 17 votes.

As the San Mateo County elections office continues to tally the votes — mostly from absentee and provisional ballots — Mr. Moore and Mr. Henig remained tied. As of Nov. 7, they each had 1,066 votes, and then 1,085 votes on Nov. 12. The latest update on Nov. 14 finally saw a break in the stalemate, with 1,279 votes for Mr. Henig and 1,262 for Mr. Moore.

Getting Johnny Goner

David Harris of Atherton is now selling DVDs of his movie "Johnny Goner" online. David, a student at Menlo School, produced and directed the award-winning short film with a cast of professional actors and a crew of teenagers. He was featured in the Oct. 1 issue of The Almanac.

The movie, about a young hypochondriac who works at a funeral parlor, costs \$9.99 and is available at <http://tinyurl.com/6rtop4> by typing in "goner" as the password.

For teens: food, movies, games at MP library

The children's branch of Menlo Park's main library will hold the second in what it expects will be a monthly series of "teen nights," inviting teens to the library for food, movies and games on Friday, Nov. 21, at 7 p.m.

The event, sponsored by the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, is part of an ongoing effort by the library to draw a younger crowd, said Michelle Barrese, head of youth services.

About 25 teens, mostly middle schoolers, came out for the first event on Oct. 24, which Ms. Barrese noted was competing that night with a dance at Hillview Middle School. The library provided food, made computers and board games available, and screened two episodes of the television series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" — the kids' choice, according to Ms. Barrese.



Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac

Playing a lively game of Apples to Apples at the Menlo Park Library's first teen night are, from left, Dana Benelli, Sophie Fox, Thalia Zimmermann and Audrey Weers.

This time around, the library will set up a henna tattoo station and a video game system where kids can play "Guitar Hero."

DANCE

continued from page 5

"Twas the Night Before Christmas" is co-presented by the Dancers Repertory Theatre and Menlo Park Academy of Dance. The original choreography and concert were created by Jeannde Herst of Oakland. She and RoseAnn Saylor founded the Dancers Repertory Theatre in 1969 as an outlet for serious students of dance to perform. The 102 dancers in this year's show were selected by auditions.

Coleen Duncan directs her young charges from a wheelchair. She doesn't complain about long hours of rehearsal that began in September. "On weekends I'm here from 10 to 5," she says.

Now 43, Coleen has been dancing since she was 4. During high school, she taught ballet, jazz and tap. After graduating from Menlo-Atherton High School, she moved to Los Angeles for college and danced professionally (mostly jazz). She spent seven years trying acting and show business and found it "very challenging."

Moving back to the Bay Area, she got married, continued teaching jazz, and worked for the San Jose Sharks, a job she loved. A diabetic since childhood, she underwent a kidney transplant

in 1997. An adverse reaction to medication resulted in near death. She has recovered, but is confined to a wheelchair. She undergoes dialysis and is awaiting another kidney transplant.

"Twas the Night Before Christmas," which showcases the academy's most talented students, is set in the 1800s. It is noted for the lavish costumes the young dancers wear. "The costumes are exquisite," says Ms. Duncan.

"The kids get so excited when they get to take the costumes home."

The colorful holiday family show lasts only 75 minutes. It is ideal entertainment for youngsters who find themselves bored and restless after two hours of "The Nutcracker."

The six performances of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" — presented on Sunday, Dec. 7, and Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 13 and 14 — will be the culmination of months of hard work by the young dancers. "Many of the girls, especially the older ones, are also in dance competitions, so they are busy all year long," says Ms. Duncan.

She says the kids are very cooperative and respectful. "We want to enrich their lives," she says.

"Twas the Night Before Christmas" has been performed by gen-

INFORMATION

"Twas the Night Before Christmas," family holiday entertainment based on the poem by Clement Moore and presented by Dancers Repertory Theatre and Menlo Park Academy of Dance, will be performed at the Woodside High School Performing Arts Center, at the corner of Woodside Road and Churchill Avenue, at 1:30 and 4 p.m. on these days: Sunday, Dec. 7; Saturday, Dec. 13; and Sunday, Dec. 14. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$12 for children and seniors. Call 323-5292 or visit TwasTheNight.org.

JOBS

continued from page 5

copper magnate Daniel C. Jackling. Mr. Smith, the architect, is best known for his work in the Santa Barbara area.

In 2001, Mr. Jobs requested permission to tear down the house and replace it with a family home more to his taste, triggering a review required under

MANAGER

continued from page 5

Valley distinct and emphasizes the voluntary culture in town," he said. "It's one of the ways to bolster up that kind of volunteer spirit within the town. I do not see the need to make this change. If someone needs to explain their job title, (then) explain their job title."

"What about recruiting," Mayor Derwin asked.

"Explain the job title," Mr. Merk replied evenly. "I'm not in favor of making a change unless there's a demonstrated need to make a change."

Giving someone a title that is widely recognized is only fair, Councilwoman Ann Wengert

the portion of the California Environmental Quality Act that deals with historically significant buildings. He won the town's permission in December 2004, following an appeal to the Woodside Town Council. Preservationists halted the demolition with their lawsuit, which prevailed in San Mateo Superior Court in January 2006 and was upheld upon appeal. ■

said. "There's a need to be recognized for the job that you're doing. I think we're penalizing ourselves."

"Things will change, they continue to change, and you need to be ahead of the change and not behind it," she added. "There are no other town administrators out there. That title has passed into obscurity over time."

Councilman Steve Toben concurred. "It's a way to position the town as showing a different face to the world. ... To better situate ourselves in the marketplace for her successor, when that day comes."

"I think that is one more nail in the coffin of Portola Valley," Mr. Merk said before his "no" vote. "It's very sad." ■

erations of little ballerinas and has played in the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco and Stanford Memorial Auditorium, among other venues. This is the fourth year for the production to be held at Woodside Performing Arts Center.

"The theater holds about 500. We hope to be sold out every performance," says Coleen. ■

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TheAlmanacOnline.com

Belle Haven residents 'disgusted' by proposed Habitat development

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Belle Haven residents voiced their opposition to a proposed Habitat for Humanity development during a meeting at the Menlo Park Senior Center on Thursday, Nov. 13, criticizing the city for over-burdening Belle Haven in its attempt to increase the number of affordable housing units in the city.

After hearing a proposal by Habitat representatives for 22 three-bedroom duplexes in a 644-by-100-foot strip of open land between existing houses on Terminal Avenue and the Dumbarton rail line, speakers derided the city for considering the land for housing.

"Menlo Park is dumping below-market-rate homes in Belle Haven," said Belle Haven resident Matt Henry, a former planning commissioner. Mr. Henry noted that the development would give the neighborhood over half of the city's below-market-rate housing, though Belle Haven represents only about one-sixth of the city's population.

The city currently has 53 below-market-rate units, 20 of which are located in Belle Haven, according to Community Development Director Arlinda Heineck.

Councilman John Boyle, who attended the meeting, pointed out that the vast majority of the money the city has accepted from the state for re-development projects has been used in Belle Haven, for projects like the Onetta Harris Community Center. The city is required to dedicate at least 20 percent of the re-development money to housing, Heineck said.

The city is also required to build below-market-rate hous-

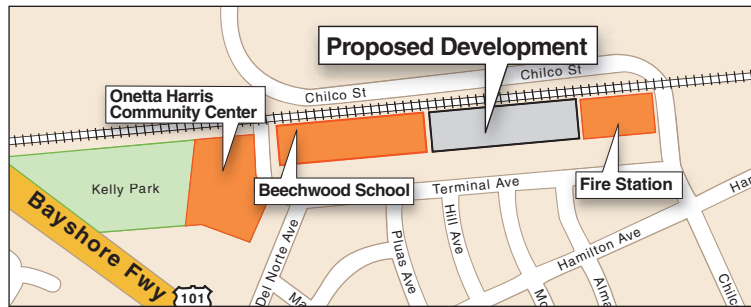


Illustration by Gary Vennarucci/The Almanac

A proposed housing development in the Belle Haven neighborhood, between Beechwood School and the fire station, calls for 22 below-market-rate duplexes.

ing under the housing element in the general plan.

If the Habitat proposal passes, the city would donate the land to Habitat for Humanity. In March of 2007, the City Council approved an agreement for SummerHill, a Palo-Alto based developer, to pledge \$2.5 million to the Habitat project in exchange for scaling back the number of affordable housing units in its own development off Willow Road.

Ms. Heineck said she was not aware of any substantial parcels of land owned by the city outside of the re-development district, which also includes the city's light industrial zone east of US-101.

Habitat's proposal calls for a single road to lead into the development, cutting behind existing houses — a fact that several speakers said they feared would create a "ghetto."

"I'm disgusted with the city," Belle Haven resident Rose Bickerstaff said, calling it "inhuman" to build houses in a narrow strip that abuts a railroad.

Speakers also argued that Habitat was trying to fit too many houses into the development, which calls for the duplexes to be built in pairs —

each sharing a wall with another

unit, with strips of landscaping in between.

A teacher in the Ravenswood City School District raised concerns that the infusion of residents would over-burden the already struggling district, which includes schools in East Palo Alto and east Menlo Park. And several speakers argued that new housing would only exacerbate traffic congestion in the area.

Mr. Boyle told the packed room at the Senior Center that he had heard the speakers' protests.

"I guarantee you, my thoughts on this project have changed from just an hour ago when I walked in here," Mr. Boyle said, responding to several speakers who said they feared the city wouldn't consider their feedback.

"I want to make sure that people in the community recognize that, although they may be frustrated, the city is listening," Mr. Boyle said in an interview, adding that he had talked with several staff members who were trying to incorporate input from residents in their recommendation to the Planning Commission. The project won't go before the City Council until it has cleared the planning and housing commissions. ■

PV bans firing of pellet and air guns

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

It's now official. Portola Valley residents not in law enforcement are allowed to fire BB guns within town boundaries, but unless they are defending themselves or someone else, they may not fire pellet guns, air rifles or other guns that operate by the expansion of gas in a chamber.

In a unanimous vote, the Town Council amended the town's firearms ordinance at its Nov. 12 meeting. The amendment originally banned BB gun shooting, but that language was dropped after a discussion led by councilmen Ted Driscoll and Steve

Toben, who questioned the wisdom of a law that some might see as the town getting involved in family decisions.

Mayor Maryann Moise Derwin brought the matter to the council in response to the August pellet-gun shooting and subsequent death of a pet cat of the Raab family on Cresta Vista Lane.

The unanimous vote was in spite of apparent doubts over the law's interpretation.

"I worry that the town is using ordinances to tell parents how to raise their children," Mr. Driscoll said, adding that an attorney defending a 16-year-old could make a case that the town overreached.

"I think there is wisdom in the statement that Councilman Driscoll just made," acting Town Attorney Dan Siegel said.

"I would like nothing more than to get that jerk who did this and prosecute him," Mr. Toben said, but added that the perception of overreaching could dilute the council's authority and hold the town up to ridicule. The amendment is also silent on the use of slingshots and bows, he noted.

The law is not perfect, Councilwoman Ann Wengert said. The council may be somewhat of an overreach, but shooting ranges are available and no one is infringing on anyone's right to own guns, she added. ■



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Menlo Park police nab five in strong-armed robbery

Menlo Park police have arrested four juveniles and an adult in connection with a strong-armed robbery of a wallet and possibly a purse from three pedestrians at about 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 13, near the intersection of Pierce Road and Sevier Avenue in the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park.

Medics took one of the victims to Stanford Hospital with "non-life threatening injuries," Officer Steven Knopp of the Menlo Park Police Department said in a statement. That victim had been bleeding from the face but was reported in stable condition.

All five suspects were identified by the victims as being

involved in the incident and are in San Mateo County jail on charges of robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, and battery, Mr. Knopp said.

The adult in custody is Dedrick Sevier, 19, of Menlo Park. Three of the juvenile suspects are also residents of Menlo Park; the fourth is an Oakland resident. All five are male.

Two of the victims are from Hayward. One is a juvenile, one is an 18-year-old adult, and information was not available on the third, Sgt. Sharon Kaufman said in a telephone interview.

All the officers on the night shift responded to the scene, Ms. Kaufman said.

M-A edges Woodside, wins PAL title

By Keith Peters
Palo Alto Weekly

A remarkable drive in the final four minutes of the game carried the Menlo-Atherton football team to a dramatic 28-25 victory over visiting Woodside on Saturday, clinching a second straight PAL Bay Division title while wrapping up a second consecutive undefeated league season.

The thrilling victory, topped by a one-yard plunge by junior quarterback Turner Baty with 22.2 seconds to play, capped a 5-0 division season for the Bears (8-2 overall). The triumph also sends M-A into the Central Coast Section Large School Division playoffs with the No. 1 seed.

Menlo-Atherton will open the section playoffs on Saturday (1 p.m.) by hosting No. 8 Monta Vista (8-2) out of the SCVAL

El Camino Division. The first-round matchup is a just reward for the Bears and their first-year head coach Phillip Brown.

"These kids are great," said an excited Brown, who hugged nearly everyone on the team following the game. "Having this team accomplish what it did, it's one of the greatest feelings I've ever had."

Those feelings might not have been so euphoric had the Bears not pulled things together after Woodside had taken the lead at 25-21 on a 25-yard run by Jason Simpson with just 4:03 to play.

Baty, however, calmly guided the Bears' comeback, throwing a 13-yard pass to Rod Nash for a first down at the Bears' 47. Baty then hooked up with Sam Knapp on perhaps the biggest play of the game, a 46-yard completion to the Woodside 7.

The Wildcats helped out on the next play, incurring a penalty to put the ball on the 4. M-A senior Vaughn Smith darted to the one-yard line and Baty plunged over from there one play later.

A kickoff and one wild play by Woodside and it was over. The Menlo-Atherton players celebrated wildly on the field and Brown got the ritual dunking of ice water.

"I will gladly sacrifice a suit for the sake of these kids," Brown said. "It's the greatest feeling to watch them succeed. I love these kids. I only come out for the kids."

Woodside (3-2, 7-3) needed a victory to force a tie with Menlo-Atherton and earn the league's No. 1 seed via a tiebreaker. It appeared the Wildcats were headed in that direction until the Bears put together their most dramatic and important series of the season.

After Baty's touchdown run and the ensuing kickoff, Woodside



Photo by Keith Peters/Palo Alto Weekly

Menlo-Atherton junior quarterback Turner Baty completed three big passes on the Bears' final series to beat Woodside, 28-25.

had one shot to score. However, Simpson was only able to advance 13 yards after taking a lateral from Sekope Kaufusi, ending the game.

At the start of the game, Woodside dominated play offensively and defensively, and led 10-0 by the end of the first quarter. Tito Gildo-Hernandez hit a 32-yard field goal and Simpson got in from four-yards out, while M-A gained only eight total yards on its first three drives.

However, M-A finally got into the game in the second quarter, scoring twice on a 40-yard touchdown pass from Baty to Rod Nash and an eight-yard run by Vaughn Smith. Heading into halftime, the Bears held a 14-10 lead. M-A built on that lead with its first possession of the second half when Smith got in for his second touchdown of the game on a 10-yard run. ■



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WALL STREET

continued from page 5

tives misled investors to believe the institution was stable, while privately aware that the company was on the verge of collapsing.

Mr. Cotchett said the lawsuit is significant in that "Wall Street has preyed upon public pensions (and) public moneys, but now Main Street is going after those executives."

"We're going after the salaries and bonuses paid to these executives who committed a fraud upon the public," Mr. Cotchett said.

The lawsuit goes after "their houses, their art collections and their multi-million dollar investments to recoup the money lost for the schools, environment, police -- people that work every day on Main Street," the lawyer said.

Specifically, the lawsuit alleges that as investors such as San Mateo

County were losing money, Mr. Fuld purchased several multimillion-dollar properties throughout the country and a multimillion-dollar art collection.

The lawsuit also claims the company's longtime auditor Ernst & Young was able to raise billions of dollars from investors, such as San Mateo County, by concealing Lehman Bros.'s increasingly diminished value.

In addition to filing the lawsuit, the county has also hired a bankruptcy attorney in New York to represent its interests in bankruptcy proceedings with Lehman Bros., an effort that could recoup 20 to 60 percent of the county's \$155 million loss, Mr. Buffington said.

County officials have also been working with local congressional leaders in an attempt to recover the money by way of the \$700 billion Wall Street bailout, according to Buffington. ■



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Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

New Sports Medicine Breaks Old Age Barriers Speeding the Healing of Common Injuries

Kevan Del Grande is soft-spoken and gentlemanly, as befits a 75-year-old grandfather, owner of a long-successful business and community-minded patron of the arts. Put him on a handball court and that version of Del Grande is gone. Here is a man whose competitive spirit drives the hard play required in this grueling sport with a no-holds-barred speed and an agility that belies his age.

He started playing handball six decades ago, ventured into tournaments at 50 and continues to beat opponents 20 years his junior. He shows no signs of slowing down, but he, like other athletes, whether recreational or competitive, lives with the possibility of injury. And Del Grande would be the first one to say thank you to his doctors at the Stanford Hospital & Clinics Sports Medicine Division of the Department of Orthopaedics.

Del Grande had played with such conviction and force over the years that by age 71, he had shredded his shoulder joint's protective sleeve of muscles and tendons, commonly called the rotator cuff. The cuff is essential to the arm's

movement at the shoulder—when it is not functioning, even daily chores are painful or impossible.

What Del Grande found at Stanford Hospital is a program that reflects the advances in sports medicine that have exponentially speeded recovery and improved outcomes. Instead of a procedure that mandated a six-inch long incision across the shoulder, the new minimally-invasive arthroscopic approach leaves behind three scars no more than a quarter inch long. Instead of being limited by repairs that might wear out within a relatively short time, even under normal use, surgeons now have available sutures and other repair components that are longer lasting and much stronger.



Kevan Del Grande, 75, took up tournament handball play 25 years ago. He has learned to live with injuries and the surgery that is sometimes necessary.

year, said its chief, Dr. Gary Fanton. "More people are participating in sports and the age of the recreational athlete is going up every decade. We are maintaining our youth into the later decades of life, but unfortunately, the muscle can't always keep up."

Wear and tear adds up

Now, almost half the injuries the Orthopaedics Clinic physicians see involve the rotator cuff, an area deep inside the shoulder that is naturally tricky to negotiate in surgery. The cuff sits beneath a protective layer of other muscles, including the deltoid, which rounds the shoulder and is also essential for normal shoulder movement. Before surgeons had the tools to slip between the muscle fibers and down into the rotator cuff, they

had to detach the muscle, creating an additional injury that would take months to heal. In athletes – or anyone who is active, the deltoid is especially developed, making it even more difficult to get to the cuff. Once at the cuff, surgeons needed to separate the muscles enough to maneuver sutures.

"We are maintaining our youthful activities into the later decades of life, but unfortunately, the muscles and tendons can't always keep up."

– Dr. Gary Fanton, Chief Sports Medicine Division

For athletes, such tearing and consequential repair procedure could finish a high-level competitive athletic career. The Hospital's Orthopaedics program has become very familiar with that possible outcome. For several years, its doctors have served as physicians for the San Francisco Giants, the San Francisco 49ers, the U.S. Olympic Decathlon team, Stanford University's championship athlete teams, at the 2002 and 2003 U.S. National Track and Field championships and for other groups whose performance depends on shoulder strength, including Ballet San Jose.

Del Grande is an example of a recreational athlete who remains competitive. In 1998, his tournament victories earned him a place in the Northern California Handball Association Hall of Fame. He was named as a grand master in the U.S. Handball Association Hall of Fame in 2003. That was the year he turned 70 and won singles and doubles divisions in his age group at the World Handball Association.

The following year, he finally paid attention to his right shoulder. "It was sore and I just kept playing on it," Del Grande said. "I have a tendency to play with injuries and consequently had a number of problems that probably would have been better served by laying off."

Handball stresses every part of the body. Playing in a court whose legitimate field includes all four



Del Grande's surgeon Timothy McAdams sees many patients who have an injured rotator cuff, the set of muscles and tendons that allow us to move our shoulders.

Preventing Sports Injuries

None of us need to be told that physical activity is good for us, immediately and long-term. However, whether it is sports or a visit to the gym or a brisk walk around the neighborhood, moving our bodies sometimes results in injury. To avoid such injuries, remember these suggestions:

- Don't exercise or play when you're already injured until you've seen your doctor. The old adage about playing through pain is not good advice. Your body needs time to heal from an injury or you risk reinjury and a longer recuperation.
- Don't push your body too hard. Getting enough rest is important. Those muscles and joints need a break after strenuous activity. If you're exhausted, so are they. Many sports injuries occur after several days of hard play.

- Exercise different muscle groups. If you run one day, do some free weight lifting the next day. By giving all your muscles regular workouts, you develop whole body strength.
- Warm up and cool down. Warm up for your warm up. Research studies have shown that the traditional static stretches can actually rob muscles of their strength. Do a slow jog or brisk walk for a few minutes, then mix static and dynamic stretches. After exercising, stretch again.
- Wear proper safety gear if recommended.

For more information, call the Stanford Hospital & Clinics at (650) 723-4000.

walls and the ceiling translates into the need to be both right- and left-handed at very high speed. And, Del Grande said, "You don't actually jump up the side of the walls, but you're going full speed to get the ball and the wall is not very forgiving." Remember—Del Grande is 75.

Transition to arthroscopy

When, finally, he saw Stanford orthopaedic surgeon Timothy McAdams, surgery was his only option and, finally, arthroscopy had come to the shoulder. It had been recent: McAdams, who graduated from medical school in 1995, was trained in the long-incision procedure. However, in the six years of advanced training in surgical orthopaedics that followed for him, the tools and techniques of arthroscopic surgery developed as the norm. In 2001, the transition from the old, open shoulder entry to arthroscopy's less damaging procedure was complete.

"I plan to be an athlete all my life."

– Kevan Del Grande, handball champion and Stanford Sports Medicine patient

It is not simple surgery. Physicians use a very different set of skills. With open surgery, the doctor holds the surgical tools in his hands and uses them. With arthroscopy, the surgeon is operating remotely, seeing inside the body with a tiny surgical camera and managing sutures and graspers. Instead of looking right down into



McAdams was trained in open shoulder surgery, but today, the preferred approach to rotator repair is with small arthroscopic instruments.

the body, the surgeon must triangulate his or her actions.

Today, all rotator cuff surgeries are performed arthroscopically and because that does so much less collateral damage, patients can go home the same day. Along with the new procedural instruments, physicians use newly developed sutures and anchoring bolts to reattach the cuff's tendons to bone. Stronger plastics makes the sutures more durable and the redesigned anchor can be made of material that ultimately melts away when the healing is complete.

Seeking more knowledge

Stanford Hospital sports medicine doctors are looking forward to their move to the new Stanford Medicine Outpatient Clinic in Red-

wood City, opening in February. There, the Orthopaedics Department will have a substantially improved and expanded area for state-of-the-art surgical, clinic and workspace that will enhance their research to clear the next set of hurdles.

"We're working with the University's sports medicine program to understand the body in action more completely," Fanton said,

"and to develop new training techniques and new ways to retrain and recuperate after injury. Better methods of healing will likely be at the cellular and biochemical level."

Corralling the body's own growth factor-loaded proteins is being widely studied, McAdams said. Those proteins, injected directly into an injured area, might one day be a routine part of healing.

And, added Fanton, perhaps addressing stoic folks like Del Grande. "We're looking at repairing tendon problems before they become huge."

That is all good news for Del Grande. He is back to winning national singles titles. "I plan to be an athlete all of my life," he said. The improvements in development – might just make it possible for him to do that, even at his full speed ahead pace.



Del Grande is back in the game, playing the way he always has: full speed ahead.



Without strong shoulders, handball is impossible. Here, Del Grande reaches out to swat back the ball as it flies toward him.

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Planners approve 327 seats for Ladera shopping center

By Marjorie Mader
Almanac Correspondent

Enjoying cafe lattes and eating outdoors will continue at Ladera Country Shopper, thanks to the unanimous decision of the San Mateo County Planning Commission on Wednesday, Nov. 12.

The revised conditional use permit allows a total of 327 seats - that includes both indoor and outdoor seating - and a parking exception to allow seven employee tandem parking spaces for the updated center at 3130 Alpine Road, near Portola Valley.

More than 100 letters and e-mails supporting the shopping center and outdoor seating were received by the county planning department from Ladera residents, customers and friends from

nearby communities. Petitions — signed by 492 customers who didn't want to lose outdoor seating at the center — arrived at the planning department before the re-scheduled hearing last week.

Concerns over how much outdoor seating should be allowed for restaurants and Bianchini's Market first surfaced last December at the county Planning Commission meeting. That's when two board members of the Ladera Community Association objected to the center's request for the conditional use permit to allow a maximum of 111 seats for outdoor use. They contended that additional parking, required by outdoor seating, would exceed the center's parking capacity. Parking spills over onto La Mesa Drive, one of two main entrances to Ladera, causing traffic and safety issues.

The commission's decision last week to reduce the parking requirements for the center came after further analysis by the planning staff of the county's parking standards in comparison with those of other jurisdictions.

In particular, staff recognized that the county's parking ratio of one parking space for each 160 square feet of retail space was not appropriate for the Ladera Garden Center's outdoor nursery area of 7,000 square feet.

This recognition effectively reduces the required parking for the garden center from 58 spaces to 26, resulting in a reduction of total required parking spaces from 291 to 259. The provision of 259 parking spaces, based on county requirements, allows a total of 327 seats for both indoor and outdoor eating.

Commissioners did not specify how the seating would be divided between indoor and outdoor seating. That decision is left to Eric Willis, owner of the center, and the tenants.

The allowed seating, now reduced from the existing 339 seats to 327, gives restaurants and the center management flexibility, according to the staff, to determine how many seats will be located inside and outside, based on weather conditions, occupancy limits, and safety standards.

"As long as the absolute maximum number of seats is not exceeded, the number of parking spaces provided at the center will be sufficient to meet the parking need," according to a report by project planner Tiare Pena.

Gail Slocum, Planning Commission chair, suggested allowing the current seating of 339 to remain, but the three other

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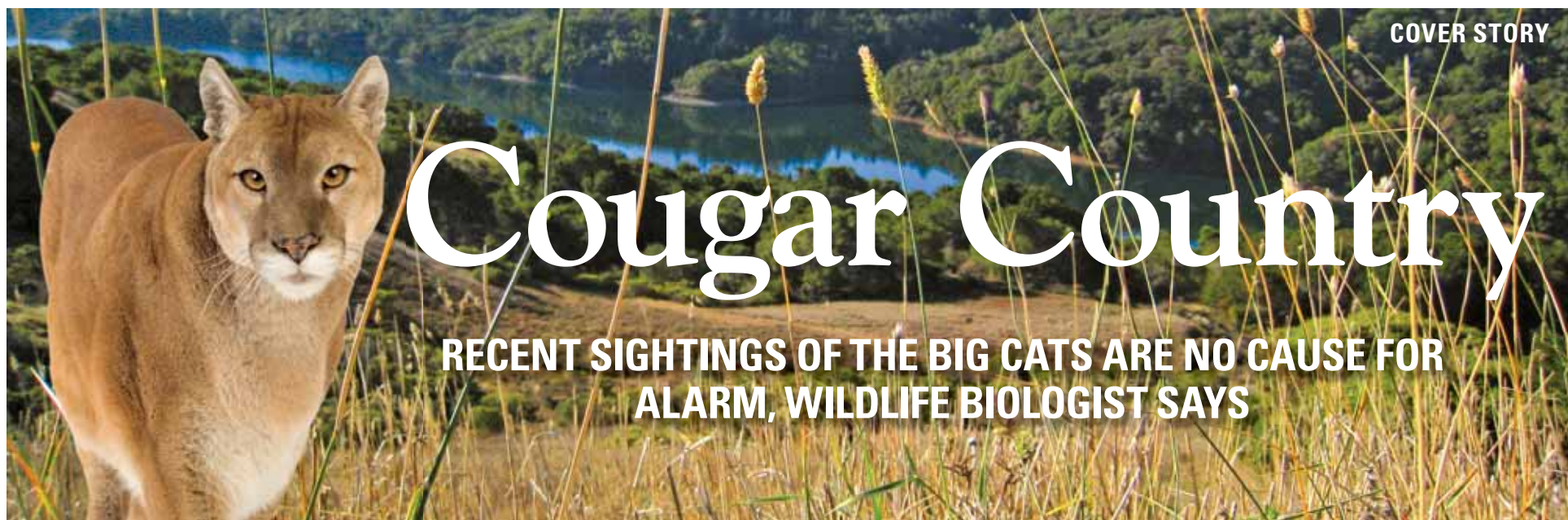
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See **LADERA**, page 16



By **DAVE BOYCE** | ALMANAC STAFF WRITER

On at least four occasions over recent months, observers have reported chance sightings of cougars in and around Woodside and Portola Valley, two communities that border wildland areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Cougars — also known as mountain lions, pumas and panthers — roam Peninsula woods and open spaces in search of food, mates and territory. They also tend to stay out of the sight of humans, so are these recent reports reason to worry? Is there a rogue cougar out there? Is one of them reconsidering its dietary preference for deer?

Anything's possible, but Rick Hopkins, a San Jose-based wildlife biologist, says we can relax, at least about seeing one. "There is no indication, in fact there's absolutely zero indication, that seeing cougars increases your risk of attack," he says.

Mr. Hopkins speaks from some experience, having radio-collared and monitored 30 cougars in the Diablo Range overlooking the East Bay between 1978 and 1990, he says.

'There is no indication, in fact there's absolutely zero indication, that seeing cougars increases your risk of attack.'

RICK HOPKINS, WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

He is a board member of the Cougar Fund, based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

The Almanac contacted him on the advice of Sharon Negri, executive director of WildFutures, an Earth Island Institute program based in Washington state.

While the risk of being attacked by a cougar in California is not zero, the chances of it happening locally are quite low if history is any guide.

Records from the state Department of Fish and Game show that, since 1972, a total of 2,278 cougars have been killed

statewide for safety reasons, but none of them were located in San Mateo County. Nor were any located in Marin or San Francisco counties.

Fifteen were killed in Santa Clara County, and three in Santa Cruz County, according to Fish and Game records. Mendocino County leads the state with 313, including 19 in 2000.

Quiet and patient

Deer draw cougars, and deer are plentiful in Woodside and Portola Valley. Chances are good, though, that the deer seen by us are not the ones being hunted, Mr. Hopkins says.

Cougars tend to go after prey that doesn't bring them into contact with humans, he says. They have a good internal map of their home range, usually about 65 square miles for an adult male, and they know the locations of human-erected barriers. When they do venture into populated areas, they tend to remain undetected, he says.

In the wild, cougars tend to rest in dense vegetation during the day, usually about 300 to 600 feet away from a trail, but then move closer to the trail as daylight fades, according to a University of California study discussed in a January 2004 story in the Los Angeles Times.

That story referred to a death by cougar attack in Orange County that same month. A mountain bicyclist was attacked while bent over to repair a broken chain. The cougar may have interpreted his posture as that of a four-legged creature, the Times story said.

Like all cats, cougars on the hunt are very quiet and very patient, but success can be elusive, he says. It's not uncommon for a cougar to spend an hour closing in on deer only to see them blithely amble out of range.

To thrive, an adult cougar needs to kill between 35 and 60 deer a year. They can't survive on small game, Mr. Hopkins says.

The Santa Cruz Mountains represents about 800 square miles of wild land. Each adult male has a territory of about 60 square miles, about half of what it would be in open country like the wilds of Utah, he says.

Cougars and cats in general are obligate carnivores, meaning that they must eat meat in order to thrive. Because meat is "fairly nutritious," a cat can spend less time eating and more time doing other things, such as resting, he says.

The deer's low-calorie diet means much more time spent eating, which they tend to do amid the landscaping and gardens of Woodside and Portola Valley homes, Mr. Hopkins says.

The presence of dense woodland and an abundance of irrigated greenery create an artificial environment that skews the predator/prey dynamic, he says. Under normal conditions, cougars would play a more significant role as deer would find less to eat during the hot dry months and fewer would survive the "summer stress."

Normal predation patterns can have a healthy impact on the environment. The reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park helped restore the park's creek systems as elk changed their grazing patterns to contend with the new threat, he says.

Risk of attack

Are cougars a threat to us? They like to hunt in low-light conditions and have excellent hearing and night vision. Should we avoid nighttime adventures in the woodland trails and open spaces?

People should make their own judgments, Mr. Hopkins says.

"I would do it (take nighttime hikes)," he adds. "I can't tell other people what to do but at no point do I make decisions based on the (potential) presence of cougars. The risk is enormously tiny."

"The risk is as close to zero as you can get and still be measurable," he says. The odds of dying as a result of strenuous physical activity are "a couple three million times more likely" than succumbing to a cougar attack, he says, noting that two people died in this year's New York City marathon.

As the December 2007 incident at the San Francisco Zoo proved, human encounters with big cats can easily be fatal. A Siberian tiger escaped its enclosure and mauled one man to death and severely injured two others before police shot and killed it.

Cougars are big cats, too. Why aren't they as dangerous? Size may be a factor, Mr. Hopkins says. A male cougar weighs between 150 and 230 pounds and may be 6.5 feet long.

Compare that to a male lion or tiger at 8 to 10 feet long, not including the tail, and weighing between 350 and 500 pounds. Leopards and jaguars are the other big felines known to represent a threat to humans.

"Those cats, particularly the ones from Africa and India, are much more likely to attack you," he says. "We just look like easier game to them. They may have a certain stronger aggressive attitude, maybe a genetic predisposition."

Coincidentally, all of the very big cats roar and none have a genuine purr like the cougar, the bobcat and other smaller felines.

More statistics

Five cougar hunting permits have been issued in San Mateo County since 1972: three in 1995, one in 2000, and one in 2004. Mendocino County leads the state with 623 permits issued.

Of the six fatal cougar attacks against humans statewide since 1890, two were attributed to a rabies infection, Fish and Game records show. One nonfatal attack involved a camouflaged hunter who was calling a turkey. ■



Council reviews proposed development plan

Menlo Park Business Manager David Johnson has submitted a draft of a business development plan to the City Council that identifies the prospect of short-term tenants along El Camino Real and a “freeway visible, revenue generating project” on Haven Avenue.

The plan includes a broad overview of pending projects in eight business-intensive areas defined by Mr. Johnson. This is the first year that such a report has been prepared.

The plan also calls for development in the city’s light industrial zone, and for additional infrastructure in Belle Haven. Mr. Johnson will present it and solicit feedback from council members at the City Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 18, in the council chambers at the Civic Center between

■ BRIEFS

Laurel and Alma streets. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

KQED-TV airs ‘Paperback Dreams’

“Paperback Dreams,” a documentary film about the struggle for survival of two independently owned bookstores — Kepler’s in Menlo Park and Cody’s in Berkeley — will air on KQED, Channel 9 on Wednesday, Nov. 19, and Thursday, Nov. 20 at 5 p.m., as part of the “Truly CA” series.

Kepler’s closed for nearly 40 days in 2005. The film, produced by KQED, is especially poignant because Cody’s has closed. It is airing nationwide this month through the Public Broadcasting System.

Menlo Park woman wins \$10,000 in raffle

Suzy Fisk of Menlo Park came away with \$10,000 at a raffle as part of a fundraiser sponsored by Community Action Marin, a nonprofit social service organization, on Wednesday, Nov. 12.

Ms. Fisk, one of 349 cash prize winners, bought two raffle tickets for \$150 each. The grand prize winner, yet to be announced, will win a house in Marin valued at \$2 million. Tickets can still be purchased at www.marinraffle.com.

‘Sustainable’ group meets Tuesday

Sustainable Menlo Park, a group created by developer David Bohannon and headed up by former councilman Chuck Kinney, will meet at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at the Recreational Center in Burgess Park. Speakers will include Councilman Heyward Robinson and Cherise Brandell, the city’s community engagement manager, according to Mr. Kinney.

A persimmon with your pinot grigio?

Patrons of Belramo’s Wines and Spirits will be able to pick up a few organic, locally harvested persimmons from the Menlo Park store on Saturday, Nov. 22, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. — and contribute to a charitable cause by doing so.

The fruit will be sold by Lisa and Sara Hewitt, members of the philanthropic group ChAngels

Building new town hall in Atherton

Does Atherton need a new town hall and police station? And if so, what should it look like? Residents are invited to attend a public meeting on the topic at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, at the Pavilion at Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Ave.

The town’s “Blue Ribbon Task Force” on town center will discuss space needs, recently completed projects in other Bay Area towns, and cost estimates. Another meeting on funding options is set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 9, also at the Pavilion.

Electronic recycling

Residents of Menlo Park, Atherton and the unincorporated Fair Oaks area can drop off electronic items for recycling between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 15, at Tyco Electronics at 300 Constitution Drive in Menlo Park.

The event is sponsored by the South Bayside Waste Management Authority. The items will be recycled by e-Recycling of California.

LADERA

continued from page 14

commissioners did not agree. They indicated the lower number had been recommended and was appropriate.

Speaking in favor of the staff recommendations for the center were long-time Ladera residents Judy Staples, Lennie Roberts and George Mader; center owner Mr. Willis; and Kevin Bianchini of Bianchini’s Market.

Rob Decker, president of the Ladera Community Association, thanked the commission for continuing the hearing from last December to allow time for staff to gather “complete and accurate” information so that all parties could seek a solution that will achieve both goals: “allowing lots

of outdoor seating and addressing traffic safety and aesthetic concerns that arose when La Mesa Drive began to be used as overflow parking” for the shopping center.

Changes to mitigate the parking problem already have taken place at the center since last December. Mr. Willis has requested center employees to park at the edges of the center and not on Las Mesa Drive. Employees are required to place a placard on their vehicle’s dashboard. Signs have been posted in the parking area, limiting parking to three hours while shopping at the center and warning motorists their cars will be towed at their own expense if they park too long or aren’t shopping at the center.

Big change

The most dramatic physical changes happened last week when the former Ladera Chevron station, at the corner of Alpine Road and La Mesa Drive, was razed as was the former Ladera Automotive repair garage.

A one-story medical office building will be built on the gas station site and have 19 underground parking spaces and an additional 12 spaces, including two handicapped ones, at ground level. Plans call for the 6,000-square-foot building to be designed by Larick Alan Hill Inc., the same architectural firm that helped renovate the center.

Thirteen more parking spaces will be created in the area formerly occupied by the garage, said Mr. Willis. Seven tandem parking spaces have been added in back of the center for employee parking.

In response to the Ladera Community Association’s concerns, represented by Mr. Decker, the county Public Works Department is considering parking restrictions on both sides of La Mesa Drive from Alpine Road to North and South Balsamina Way. ■

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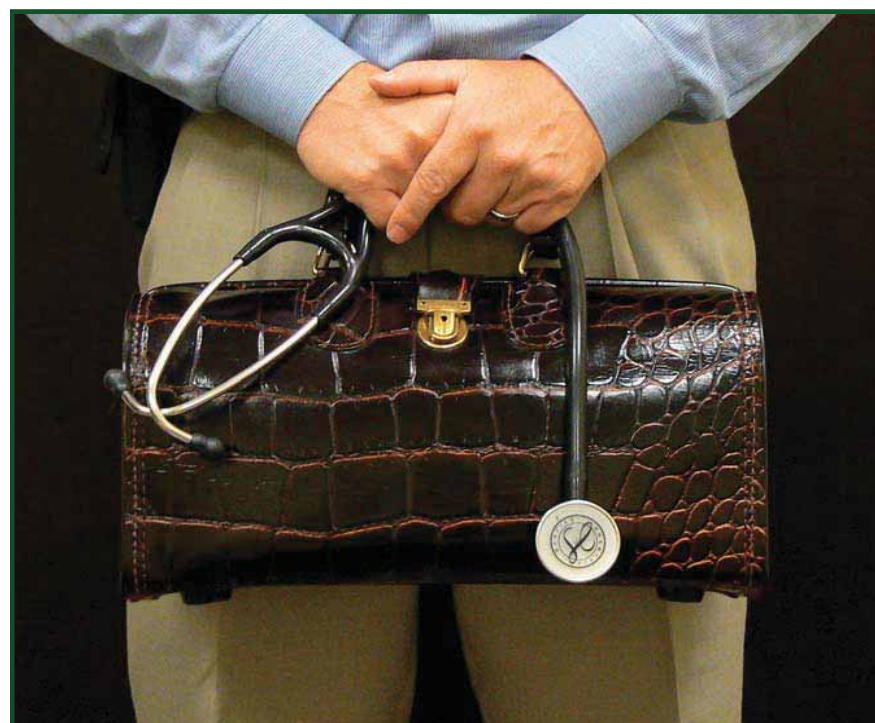
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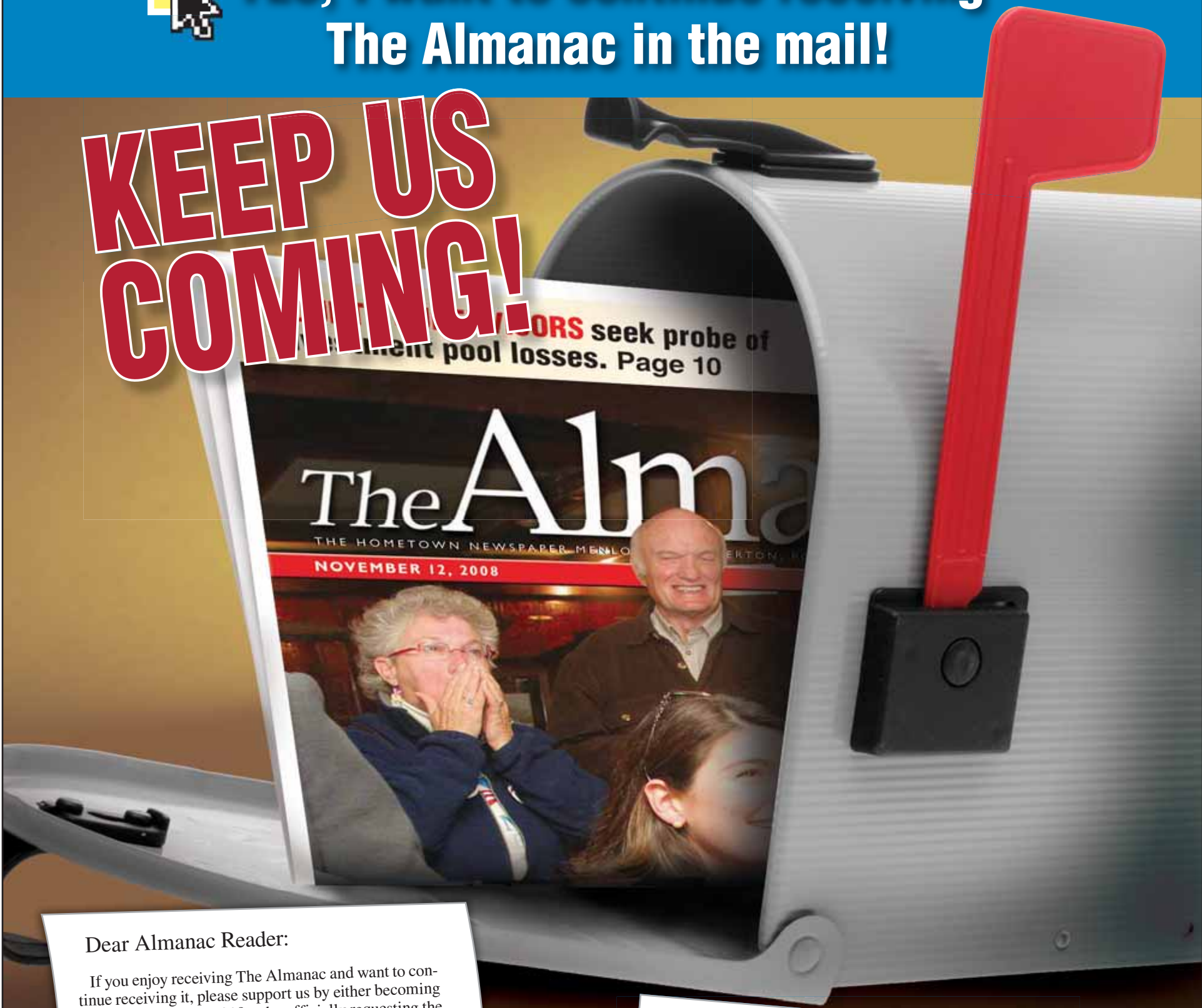
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Student avoids prison for dry-ice 'bomb'

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Nine days on the roadside picking up trash rather than a stay in prison is likely ahead for Justin Benjamin Levey, 19, after his "no contest" plea on Nov. 10 to possession of a "destructive device" — a "bomb" made by sealing dry ice in a container, typically a plastic water bottle.

One of these devices exploded on March 18 in Atherton and reportedly damaged the hearing of two Atherton police officers for several weeks, Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Levey was a student at Menlo College at the time and is originally from Los Angeles, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Atherton police have outstanding \$25,000 warrants for two friends of his believed to have been involved: Michael Guilfoile, 20, of Kawasaki, Japan, and Daljit Tut, 19, of Aptos, California. Four or five others participated but didn't come forward, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Levey is free on a \$25,000 bond and must surrender on Jan. 10, 2009, Mr. Wagstaffe said. Super-

ior Court Judge Clifford Cretan sentenced him to 10 days in jail, with credit for one day served, but recommended the sheriff's work program — picking up trash.

The sentence included three years of supervised probation, fines, restrictions on possessing weapons, and loss of his Fourth Amendment rights regarding search and seizure.

During his probation, Mr. Levey, his home and his vehicle may be searched with or without probable cause, and evidence of probation violations or crimes may be seized without a warrant, Mr. Wagstaffe said. Mr. Levey could have refused this condition, but would have faced mandatory time in prison.

The group is accused of building several devices, including one that exploded "somewhere on campus." The others were dumped on a street in an Atherton cul de sac, where a police officer kicked one, not knowing what it was, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

The explosion led to the officers' ears ringing and popping, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

The act of leaving the devices on the street, where anyone could have come along and picked them up, was what led to the felony

charge, he said.

Two other felony charges, possession of a destructive device in a public place and making such a device without a permit, would have landed Mr. Levey in prison, but those charges were dropped, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

"We felt that was too harsh a punishment," he said.

Chuck Smith, Mr. Levey's attorney and a former San Mateo County deputy DA, called the felony charges and the plea bargain an abuse. Drunken driving, by comparison, is a misdemeanor, he said.

"This was a stupid college prank," he said in a telephone interview. "To brand him a bomb-making felon for the rest of his life is wrong."

If Mr. Levey meets all the conditions of his probation, Judge Cretan may reduce the felony charge to a misdemeanor after 18 months, Mr. Wagstaffe said. The case can be dismissed after probation, giving him a clean record for purposes of most employment.

The felonious aspect of the case will be found on the Web by a diligent investigator even after state records are changed, Mr. Smith said. ■

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Pressure to meet OSHA, EPA and State requirements has urged a call to action. In 2006, the Council received a space needs study. This year, a Blue Ribbon Task Force of Council members, staff, and residents was formed to understand, define, and inform Atherton of space needs for the Town's public services.

The Task Force will focus on outreach to residents during the next few months.

Residents are encouraged to take escorted tours of the current Town Administrative Center at their leisure. Simply call to make an appointment at 650.752.0500.

Discussion meetings will be held at the Jennings' Pavilion in Holbrook-Palmer Park:

- November 20 7p.m. Topic: Explore Remodel vs New Construction.
- December 9 7p.m. Topic: Discuss data and survey results, State requirements, and visual site plans.

Survey forms will be given to those who attend.

A decision to go forward will affect every Athertonian, not just by the need to raise monies to fund these facilities but in the quality of services we demand.

Published in THE ALMANAC on November 19, 2008.

Filoli is ready for the holidays

They're decking the halls for Filoli's annual "Holiday Traditions" event, which will be held from Nov. 28 through December 6 at the historic Woodside mansion. This year's theme is "The Holly and the Ivy," symbolizing the warmth and goodwill of the season.

This is the 26th year for Christmas at Filoli. Among the scheduled events are children's parties, an evening dinner party, buffet luncheons, and shopping in the holiday boutiques while performers play and sing seasonal music.

Hundreds of volunteers have been working for weeks in preparation for the celebration. Many of the decorations will be for sale, as will be an assortment of cards, candles, toys, books, holiday sweets, wrappings and hundred of other Christmas-themed items.

Among the planned festivities are:

■ An evening of dining and dancing on Saturday, Nov. 29, with music by the Bay Society Band. Dinner seating at 6:30 and 8 p.m. Cost is \$135 for members and \$150 for others.

■ Premiere access shopping evening, "Holiday Traditions" on Friday, Nov. 28, offers a first look at this year's decorations. There will be music, hors d'oeuvres and wine. Cost is \$70 for members and \$80 for others.

■ A children's party lunch in the Visitor and Education Center on Saturday, Dec. 6, will feature a snow princess and clowns. Cost is \$60 for members, \$70 for non-members, and \$25 for children. The event is sold out, except for the 2 p.m. seating.

■ A buffet lunch will be served

Nov. 30 through Dec. 4. Lunch will be served three times each day at 11 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. Cost is \$60 for members and \$70 for others.

■ There will be daytime holiday shopping boutique from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 29, through Saturday, Dec. 6. Cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for others. There will be evening shopping on Tuesday, Dec. 2, and Thursday, Dec. 4, from 5 to 8 p.m. Cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for others.

Many events are sold out. To see what is available, go to www.filoli.org. Tickets may be purchased by mail, fax or telephone. For more information, call Filoli at 364-8300, ext. 508, or purchase online at www.filoli.org. An order form may be downloaded on the Web site.

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Robin Cornwell in *The Christmas Ballet*, Photo by Tom Hauck

★ Holiday Calendar

MEETINGS, MUSIC, THEATER, FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Submitting items for Holiday Calendar

Submit information online. Go to TheAlmanacOnline.com and on the green navigation bar on the left, click on "Calendar Event."

Thousands expected for 'Christmas at Our House' tour

Homes in the Los Gatos/Monte Sereno area will be featured in the annual "Christmas at Our House" tour presented by the St. Francis High School Women's Club.

This is the 20th year for the tour, which will be held Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5 and 6, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

There will be a preview party and twilight tour on Thursday, Dec. 4. The twilight tour begins at 4 p.m. The party will be held from 5 to 10 p.m. in a tented area at Sacred Heart Church, 13716 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga, where

AROUND TOWN

the luncheons and boutique will also be held.

At least 3,000 visitors are expected to tour the festively decorated homes. Over the years, the event has raised more than \$2 million for the Mountain View school.

Homemade baked goods, eggnog, hot cider, tea and coffee are included in the tour price of \$40 or \$50 at the door, if available. Tickets for the preview party are \$100 each. Lunch can be reserved for \$20. There will be holiday

entertainment by St. Francis students.

The tour will be by shuttle only and begin at Sacred Heart Church, 13716 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga. For more information, call 968-1213, ext. 701.

Holiday favorites in the kitchen

Chefs Suzy Farnsworth and Brad Touchette will be offering cooking classes for kids on Sunday, Dec. 7, at the Royal Hodge Masonic Lodge, 651 Roble Ave. in Menlo Park.

The 10 a.m. to noon class will be geared to 8- to 10-year-olds; the 1 to 3 p.m. class is for those 11 years and up.

Kids will prepare almond toffee bark, chocolate krinkle cookies, jam pinwheels, peppermint shortbread, and meringue mushrooms.

Cost is \$60 each and includes

recipe collections. To register, call Ms. Farnsworth at 321-8446.

Breakfast with Santa in Menlo Park

Menlo Park's annual "Breakfast with Santa" will be held from 8 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, at Burgess Recreation Center, 700 Alma St. in Menlo Park.

The pancake breakfast is sponsored by the Menlo Park Community Services Department, in cooperation with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District and the Menlo Park Rotary Club.

There will be holiday crafts, letter writing to Santa, and a visit from Santa Claus himself.

Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children, 12 and under (\$1 off with donation of an unwrapped toy). Reservations are required. Call 330-2200 on go to menlopark.org/registration.

Holiday events at Stanford Park Hotel

Holiday and Teddy Bear teas are scheduled for December at the Stanford Park Hotel.

Afternoon tea will be served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily at the Duck Club restaurant through Dec. 23. The Victorian tea will include finger sandwiches and sweets. Cost is \$30 per person and reservations are required.

Teddy Bear teas will be held from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, and Saturday, Dec. 20. The event includes a high tea, storytelling and music. Children are encouraged to bring their teddy bears. Cost is \$32 for adults, \$15 for children 10 and under. Reservations are required.

Stanford Park Hotel will be open Christmas Day, Dec. 25, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. An elegant buffet with Christmas Goose, prime beef, glazed ham and all the trimmings will be served. Cost is \$70 for adults; \$30 for children (5 to 12), children under five are free. Reservations are required.

The Stanford Park Hotel is located at 100 El Camino Real in Menlo Park. For reservations, call 322-1234.

MORE EVENTS

Doreen Cronin & Betsy Lewin.

Kepler's Books and the city of Menlo Park present Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin and their newest release, "Thump, Quack, Moo: A Whacky Adventure!" Join the creators of the Farmer Brown series as they kickoff the fundraising effort to remodel the Menlo Park Library Children's Room. Sat., Oct. 4, 11:30 a.m. Free. Menlo Park Public Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park. Call 650-330-2530. www.menloparklibrary.org

"Twas the Night Before Christmas."

Dancers Repertory Theatre and Menlo Park Academy of Dance present their annual holiday production of "Twas the Night Before Christmas." This theatrical dance event is based on the famous Clement C. Moore poem. Weekends, Dec. 9-16, 1:30-2:45 p.m. \$18 adults; \$12 seniors and children. Woodside Performing Arts Center 199 Churchill Ave. in Woodside. www.twastheight.org

Holiday Traditions at Filoli

November 28 through December 6. "The Holly and the Ivy" fundraising event. Shop the Holiday Boutique while performers sing and play seasonal melodies. Varies with each event. Holiday Traditions at Filoli, Canada Road, Woodside. www.filoli.org

"Holiday Treats" Puppet Show.

"Holiday Treats" is an original 30-minute holiday show presented by Nick Barone Puppets. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library. Mon., Dec. 8, 4-5 p.m. Atherton Library, 2 Dinkelspiel Station Lane, Atherton. Call 650-328-2422. www.smcl.org

Peninsula School Craft Fair

Peninsula School will host its annual holiday craft fair. There will be more than 30 vendors with handcrafted toys, pottery, jewelry, soaps and more. Homemade soups and desserts and other items will be available as well as live music and a supervised play area. Sun., Dec. 7, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Peninsula School, 920 Peninsula Way, Menlo Park. Call 650-325-1584. peninsulaschool.org

Thanksgiving at Little House.

Now is the time to get your tickets for the traditional Thanksgiving Dinner at Little House, 800 Middle Avenue, Menlo Park. If purchased by Nov. 14, they are \$12, if purchased by Nov. 21, they are \$15. Little House invites you to come and enjoy and save yourself a lot of hassle. Call 326-2025, ext. 230 (Community Service desk).

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Sacred Heart tops Menlo

By Colin Becht

SPORTS

The Sacred Heart Prep Gators knocked off the Menlo Knights in the sixth annual Valparaiso Bowl, 28-20, on Friday night in a non-league football game at Woodside High.

The Gators (9-0-1) took the lead early and never relinquished it. After leading 21-0 at halftime, Sacred Heart held on for the win. Ryan Sakowski led Sacred Heart offensively with two passing touch-

downs and a rushing touchdown. Sakowski was able to get Sacred Heart its early lead, scoring all three of the Gators' first half touchdowns. Victor Ojeda scored the deciding touchdown for Sacred Heart with a 13-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter.

For Menlo (6-4), which suffered its fourth straight loss, Beau Nichols scored twice on touch-

down runs of one and five yards. Quarterback Danny Diekroeger also hooked up with Chris Ryan for a 26-yard touchdown.

With the touchdown from Diekroeger to Ryan, the Knights drew within eight points of the Gators. However, SHP's Chris Gaertner recovered Charles LeMoullac's onside kick to ensure the victory for Sacred Heart, which now can prepare for the CCS Small School Division playoffs along with the Knights. In fact, the two teams could meet again in the postseason. ■

Thanksgiving service for all in Portola Valley

A Thanksgiving ecumenical service open to everyone and involving six churches in Portola Valley, Ladera and Woodside is set for 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 26, at Our Lady of the Wayside (Catholic) Church at 930 Portola Road in Portola Valley.

The other participating churches are Valley Presbyterian Church, Christ Church Episcopal and Woodside Priory Chapel in Portola Valley; Ladera Community Church in Ladera; and Woodside Village Church in Woodside.

Refreshments and fellowship follows the service in the Fireside Room at Valley Presbyterian Church across Portola Road.

For more information, go to The Almanac Web site at www.almanacnews.com.

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.

MENLO PARK

Theft reports:

- Apple iPod and Blackberry charger stolen from unlocked vehicle, 200 block of Waverley St., Nov. 12
- Debit card compromised and \$3,184 stolen from account, 400 block of Encinal Ave., Nov. 12.
- Computer monitor and \$400 in cash stolen from office, 100 block of Terminal Ave., Nov. 10.
- Carjacking report: Vehicle stolen and recovered unoccupied about one hour later after victim assaulted by one suspect

while second suspect simulated having handgun in waistband, 700 block of El Camino Real, Nov. 12.

Auto-burglary report: Stereo and speakers valued at \$500 stolen, 600 block of Middle Ave., Nov. 10.

Robbery report: Cell phone and wallet with \$100 in it were stolen after victims were punched by male juveniles, 1100 Willow Road, Nov. 10. One suspect from Menlo Park was identified in police lineup, others are at large.

Residential burglary report: Luggage, computer, cigars and personal documents stolen, 500 block of Lemon St., Nov. 11.

Fraud report: ID theft, 1000 block of Tehama Ave., Nov. 13.

Suspicious circumstances report: Someone seen trying to cut lock from bicycle, 600 block of Santa Cruz Ave.,

Nov. 13.

WOODSIDE

Incident report: Man working in yard hit in upper thigh by pellet; he looked to see a young man with a rifle nearby who ran into a house; victim later learned man was shooting squirrels; 300 block of Ridgeway Road, Nov. 6.

Residential burglary report: TV, computer and stainless steel garbage can stolen for total value of \$2,200, 100 block of Martin Lane, Nov. 10.

LADERA

Auto-burglary report: Items valued at \$700 stolen from locked vehicle, 200 block of Castanya Way, Nov. 9.

Theft report: Apple iPod and charger stolen from unlocked vehicle, 200 block of Castanya Way, Nov. 10.

Man arrested in MP auto burglary

A 19-year-old East Palo Alto man was arrested Thursday night in connection with a vehicle burglary in the 1300 block of Willow Road in Menlo Park.

Urbano Ortizrios was booked into San Mateo County Jail on suspicion of burglary and possession of burglary tools, Officer Steven Knopp of the Menlo Park Police Department said in a

statement.

Police were patrolling in the 1300 block of Willow Road at around 11:49 p.m. Thursday when they noticed the suspect hiding near parked cars. When they approached him, he fled on foot, Mr. Knopp said.

The officers discovered the suspect was in the process of stealing a stereo from a 1995

GMC SUV, Mr. Knopp said.

Menlo Park police, with help from East Palo Alto and Palo Alto police and San Mateo County sheriff's deputies, conducted a yard-to-yard search and the suspect was found by a Menlo Park K9 police service dog, "Gert."

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call the Menlo Park Police Department at 330-6300 or the anonymous tip line, 330-6395.

ASK THE DEPUTY

Q. What is the difference between a deputy sheriff and a police officer?

A. A police officer is employed by a city police department, such as the Menlo Park and Atherton police departments. These officers have jurisdiction in the incorporated portions of their cities. The unincorporated areas of the county, such as West Menlo Park near Avy Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas, are patrolled by deputy sheriff's with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. The towns of Portola Valley and Woodside contract with the Sheriff's Office for law-enforcement services. Deputies and officers are similarly trained, have the same authority, and very often help each other due to their close proximity.

Deputy Stephanie Josephson, of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, answers questions about law enforcement.



Send questions to: editor@AlmanacNews.com; call 854-2626, ext. 213; or mail to: Ask the Deputy, The Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Note: Glenn Raggio sends warm greetings to the readers of The Almanac. After retiring from the Menlo Park Police Department, he began working as a deputy sheriff in San Mateo County, where he is currently happily patrolling the beautiful areas of the south coast.

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ERNIE KAHL

Ernie Kahl passed away unexpectedly, but peacefully on November 6, 2008. Ernie was born in Hamburg, Germany and came to California in 1951 becoming a long time resident of Woodside, CA. He was a wonderful and dedicated husband, father, grandfather and friend. He was also a lifetime member of the Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers. As a respected masonry contractor, he worked on some of San Francisco's best known landmarks.

Ernie was a devoted husband to Rita Kahl for 58 years. Rita and Ernie met in Hamburg, Germany when they were only 13 years old. As childhood sweetheart's they survived World War II together and traveled to California where they started their family with so little, yet together they accomplished so

much. They enjoyed years of travel, playing cards, time at home and their family.

He is survived by his wife and best friend Rita, his three children, Jeanette, Henry and Steven, daughter in-laws Sylvie and Kathryn, future son in-law Bob Lawlor and his wonderful grandchildren Lisa, Rob, Jeff, Jenna, Todd, Brandon and Jack, all of which referred to him as Opi. He will also be missed dearly by his Wednesday golf group.

A private family service will be held with interment at Skylawn Memorial Park. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Peninsula Medical Center ICU, 1501 Trousdale Drive, Burlingame CA 94010.

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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.

TOWN SQUARE FORUM

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

EMAIL

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.

Can the county improve its foresight after huge loss?

We're not sure the lawsuit filed last week against the top executives of Lehman Brothers will do much to ease the financial pain of the school districts, cities and all the other county agencies that shared in the loss of \$155 million when the Wall Street investment bank collapsed.

Litigation like this can take years to resolve and in the end, the lawyers are usually the biggest winners. The suit accuses Lehman executives of fraud, deceit and misleading accounting practices in hiding the dire financial state of the company from investors, including the Sequoia Union High School District and the Menlo Park City School District. The bankruptcy was a terrible outcome that should have been prevented by a government bailout of Lehman, but was not. Now the taxpayers will have to foot the bill for the millions in losses.

The lawsuit filed last week came in the wake of a Nov. 4 meeting at which the Board of Supervisors, on a 5-0 vote, authorized the county manager to seek an outside analysis of the decisions made by county Treasurer Lee Buffington in the months leading up to the September failure of Lehman. The board also requested an analysis of the policies and practices in place at the treasurer's office to manage the county's \$2.7 billion investment pool.

As reported in last week's Almanac, the supervisors had some sharp questions for Mr. Buffington, who has held his elective position since 1986. Under questioning, Mr. Buffington acknowledged that the school districts in the investment pool were not aware of their stake in Lehman securities and that they should have been kept in the loop.

"I'll take full responsibility for that," he told the supervisors.] Mr. Buffington described Lehman's failure as "a perfect storm. It just doesn't happen. We've been doing this for 23 years. Nobody's lost any money prior to this point. ...The situation with Lehman was such a surprise to everybody. The big guys are in the same boat as we were."

Ironically, school districts had been pumping savings into their accounts in anticipation of a rough budget year. "Those funds and

more have now been eroded," county Superintendent of Schools Jean Holbrook told the supervisors.

The county's lawsuit may not be the last one aimed at getting to the bottom of what happened. The county Office of Education has hired its own counsel and forensic accountant to investigate the treasurer's handling of Lehman securities, Ms. Holbrook told the supervisors, which could pit one county agency against another.

With \$155 million at stake, we understand the concerns about the decisions that led up to Lehman's fall. But we doubt that any court would expect Mr. Buffington to be prescient enough to foresee Lehman's collapse. And while lawsuits naming the top Lehman executives sound good and could bear some fruit, there is a huge line of claimants with the same objective.

Certainly every effort should be made to recover whatever portion possible of the lost assets. Beyond that, it would behoove the supervisors and top county officials to draw up a new set of operating procedures for the protection and preservation of the capital held by the county treasurer. There are some obvious questions that need answering:

- Is it prudent for one person — the county treasurer — to oversee the entire county investment pool, which recently approached \$3 billion? Should a committee of investment advisers, perhaps representing schools, local governments and special districts, be in the loop?

- Despite the liquidity and higher returns possible by investing in short-term securities, should the county establish policies, particularly for bond funds, that would stipulate a preference for government securities with a higher safety rating?

- When a significant pool investment appears to be in trouble, should the advisers put safety first and seriously consider divestment, even if it means a loss?

In situations like this, hindsight is always 20-20, but there is a chance that a more precautionary investment policy could have sounded an alarm. Perhaps a team of advisers would have challenged Mr. Buffington's certainty that Lehman would never be allowed to fail. It was not a bad assumption at the time, but in retrospect, it was disastrous. The supervisors and other county officials should set a policy that offers more assurance to all partners in the county pool that their investments are safe.

EDITORIAL
The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS
Our readers write

Please spare us from wood-fire smoke

Editor:

It's been nice to have a little rain lately. I especially enjoy going for late afternoon walks to enjoy the fall colors and the clean wet smell.

We are so lucky to live where the winds from the sea sweep our air clean. Unfortunately, on some blocks the air is frighteningly contaminated even on these brisk clear days. Smoke from wood-burning fireplaces billows and settles.

This is the smoke that causes up to 30 percent of the air pollution in the Bay Area, according to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. This is the smoke that has particles that lodge in the lungs



Our Regional Heritage

In the early 1950s, the Bayshore Highway had a reputation as one of the most dangerous roads in the world. This photo shows the highway north of the underpass at Menlo Park. Construction of the Bayshore Freeway to replace the "Bloody Bayshore" began in 1945.

San Mateo County History Museum

See **LETTERS**, next page

High-speed rail takes dollars from real transit

By Martin Engel

The Almanac carried an editorial about the high-speed train last week. It points out the challenges facing Menlo Park if and when the construction teams take over the swath of land around the 8,500 feet of rail corridor that bisects our town.

The editorial also identifies me as an opponent of this project, and a critic of the consequences that will befall our city when the development process begins. I acknowledge that position and regret that my frequent words failed to convince a large enough number of voters to see the project for what it really is in the cold light of day.

In the past and in this newspaper I have sought to present a position about urban mass transit, its importance and its current inadequacy on the Peninsula and in the Bay Area.

The Almanac carried a powerful and compelling lead article about all this in July. Not only is the development of such a mass transit system critical to the economic well-being of our

region, it is where the investments, intended for the high-speed train project, should and could have been directed. If the high-speed rail is what I oppose, urban mass transit is what I support.

The rail project claims that it will mitigate the environmental damage and traffic congestion of the state's highways. That is a false claim since a train running between San Francisco and Los Angeles won't reduce Bay Area traffic problems, or those in the Los Angeles Basin, for that matter. Each population center suffers from severe transit difficulties and the billions of dollars earmarked for this luxury train would be far better invested in relieving our overburdened local highways with a comprehensive urban mass transit system.

The point here is to suggest not only how misconceived this particular high-speed train project is, but what a genuinely productive investment could have been made. It's not about what we are against, but what we are for, and aren't going to have.

It is uninformed thinking to posit one transportation mode against another; to suggest that a train, such as this high-speed train, is superior to cars or airplanes. They don't do the same job. It's apples and oranges. These are different

modalities. As any craftsman knows, there is a right tool for the right job. Each of these "tools" will undergo dramatic technological development over the next several decades with the awareness of carbon-based fuel problems. There is a critical role for all of them.

This high-speed rail project has been a solution looking for problems. It has discovered so many, including a solution to the current economic disaster, that at least a little skepticism ought to appear even among the most enthusiastic supporters. Although sections of it can be a necessary and useful component of regional mass transit in both population centers, in its current configuration it is outrageously expensive and unnecessary between those population centers.

We are about to start building the wrong solution to our state's transportation problems, and for the wrong reasons, at that. By the same token, we are not building what we ought or where we ought; a networked, multi-modal regional transit system, with highly distributed connectivity. And, that's a shame.

Martin Engel lives on Stone Pine Lane in Menlo Park and has written frequently in opposition to the California high-speed rail bond measure, which voters passed on Nov. 4.

LETTERS

continued from previous page

and stay there forever, contributing to lung disease, especially in children and the elderly.

To burn wood or pressed logs is to spew filth into the air for all to breathe. I know some people love the smell of wood smoke (I smell ignorance) but I love the smell of clean air, not smoke! Please give your family and neighbors clean air this holiday season.

Maria Kleczewska
Marmona Drive, Menlo Park

Does President-elect Obama understand the Constitution?

Editor:

In his guest opinion (Nov. 12), Henry Organ shares with us that the last eight years have demonstrated to him more acutely than ever "an appreciation and respect for this 'constitutional experiment.' This appreciation,"

Mr. Organ observes, "has been shamefully lacking in George W. Bush and Richard Cheney."

Unfortunately, such an appreciation is also clearly lacking in Mr. Organ's much-revered president-elect, Barack Obama. In a 2001 interview with Chicago Public Radio, Mr. Obama talked about the Warren Court, which in the 1970s was the source of great social change. But Obama denied that the Warren Court was really radical. He said: "It didn't break free from the essential constraints that were placed by the Founding Fathers in the Constitution ... that generally the Constitution is a charter of negative liberties. Says what the states can't do to you. Says what the federal government can't do to you, but it doesn't say what the federal government or state government must do on your behalf" (The interview is available on YouTube.)

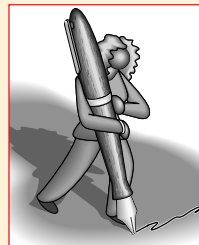
Such a statement shows either an appalling lack of basic understanding of the Constitution or

(more likely) a lack of belief in its tenets. The Constitution does indeed enumerate the powers delegated to the federal government. They are, in the words of James Madison, "few and defined," while those reserved to the states are "numerous and indefinite" (Federalist 45).

Apparently Mr. Obama has a problem with the fact that those few and defined powers delegated to the federal government do not include "redistributive change." It is equally apparent that Mr. Obama does not intend to let this fact stand in the way of his "redistributive" agenda.

January 20, 2009, will indeed be a history-making day in this country. For perhaps the first time in our history, a president-elect will take an oath to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States" while having no intention whatsoever of honoring that oath.

Anthony E. Wynne
Jennings Lane, Atherton



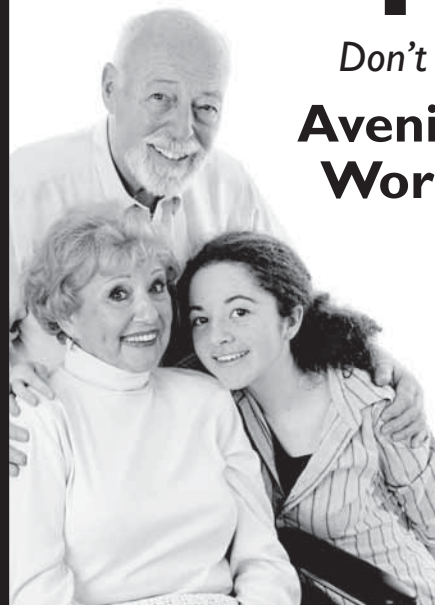
GUEST
OPINION

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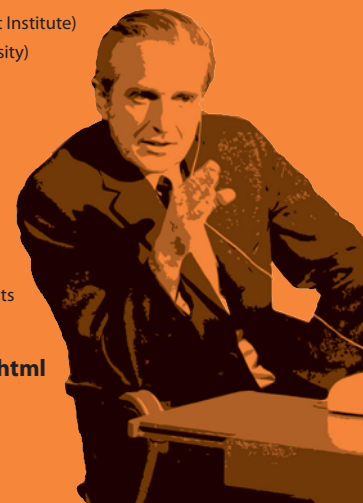
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Christina Engelbart (The Doug Engelbart Institute)
Chuck House (Media X at Stanford University)
Alan Kay (Viewpoints Research Institute)
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