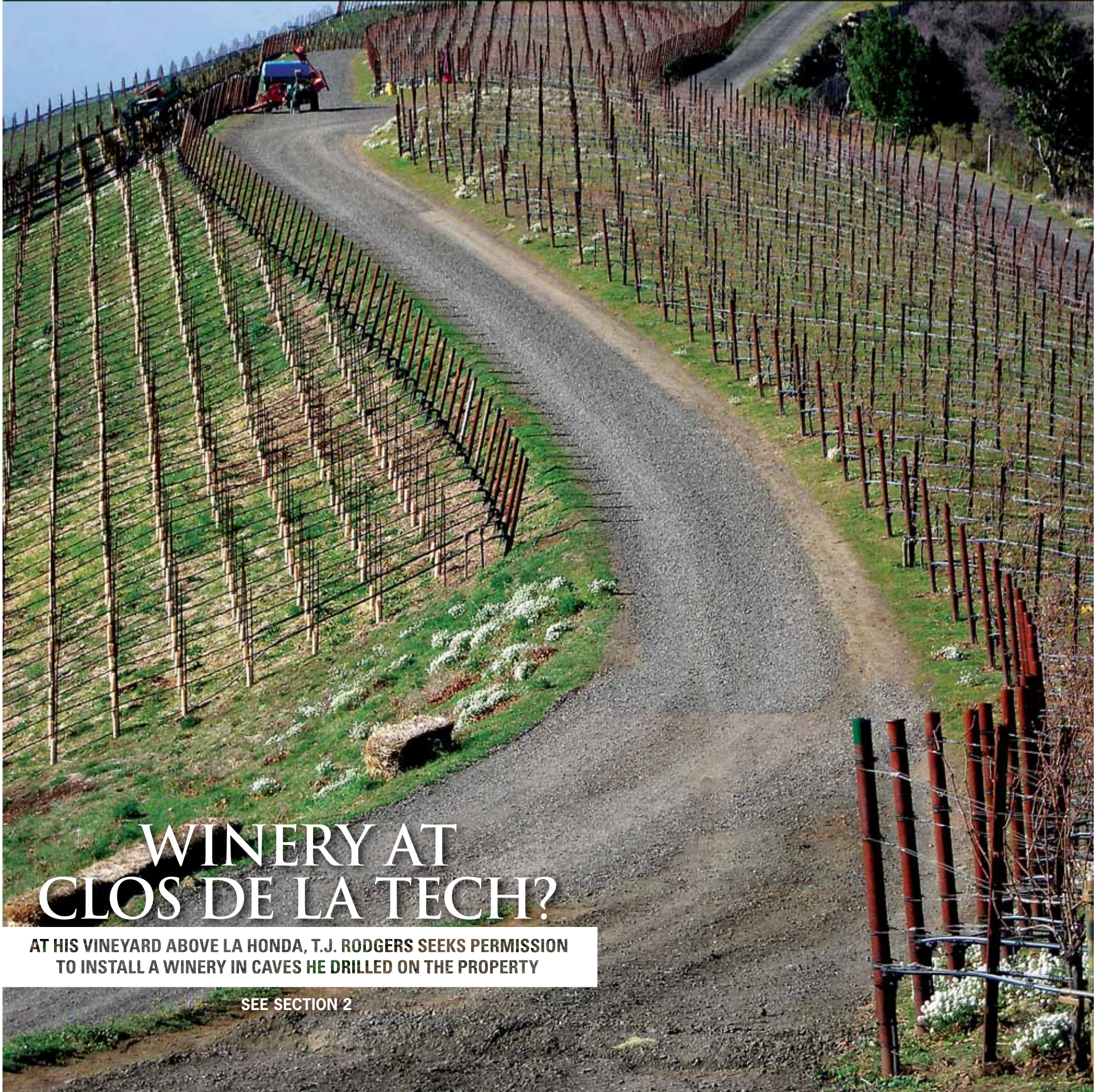


**MENLO SCHOOL** plans major new construction on its campus. Page 7

# The Almanac

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

JANUARY 28, 2009 | VOL. 44 NO. 22 | [www.TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://www.TheAlmanacOnline.com)



## WINERY AT CLOS DE LA TECH?

AT HIS VINEYARD ABOVE LA HONDA, T.J. RODGERS SEEKS PERMISSION TO INSTALL A WINERY IN CAVES HE DRILLED ON THE PROPERTY

SEE SECTION 2

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# Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

## FIRST SHOT



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

### Giving peace a chance

Belle Haven student Leslie Alvarez prepares for a peace walk in East Palo Alto designed to offer an alternative to the increasing violence in the community. Cesar Chavez was held up as an example of a peaceful leader. For more, see [TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://TheAlmanacOnline.com)

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### On the cover

Twenty-five acres of grapes at Clos de la Tech, just west of Skyline, are already producing wine that owner T.J. Rodgers hopes will become the "best pinot noir in the world." Seven years after he got a permit to drill three caves 300 feet into Langley Hill for the winery, he is still trying to get another permit to install the actual winery in the caves. Photo by Marion Softky. **See Section 2.**

### CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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

For Classified ads, call **854-0858**  
 For all other calls, phone **854-2626**  
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■ E-mail news, information and obituaries to (no photos please): **editor@AlmanacNews.com**  
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To request free delivery, or stop delivery, of The Almanac in zip code 94025, 94027, 94028 and the Woodside portion of 94062, call **854-2626.**

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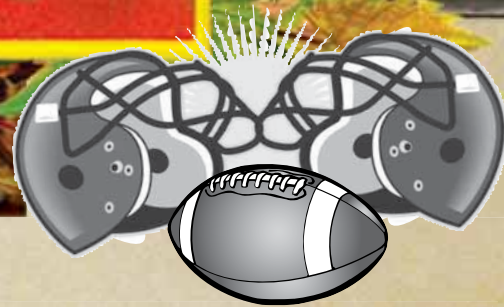
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## Roberts Tip of the Week Everlastings

Dried flowers represent a branch of flower arranging that flower and nature lovers appreciate for their beauty and long-lasting abilities. Not only do arrangements of this type enable us to continually enjoy the color, form, and complex structure of real flowers, they also allow for placement in areas of the home that are either not conducive to cut flower preservation or difficult to access. For instance, a bouquet of dried flowers in a stairwell niche can survive drafts and needs no further maintenance. Once placed in position, there is no need to climb a step stool to remove the arrangement from its perch, recut stems, change vase water. Dried flower arrangements preserve the color and beauty of nature's best.

Dried flowers could be the exact thing to bring home to your loved one today. At ROBERTS MARKET, our floral department is here to help you with beautiful bouquets and flowers for your dinner table. Please come see our florists today on your way home, and grab some fresh flowers. Your loved ones will thank you!

Hint: Dried flower arrangements are a good choice for the mantels of working fireplaces.



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### Hope and change

Atherton Mayor Jerry Carlson quoted President Barack Obama several times in his “state of the town” speech on Jan. 21. Can the town put aside the problems of the past and make Atherton a great place to live? “In the words of our new president, yes we can,” said Mr. Carlson.

### Defying the trend

While many small businesses are closing or cutting back, Lutticken’s deli in West Menlo Park is gearing up to open another eatery in Redwood City, leasing space at the Stanford Outpatient Center at 450 Broadway.

The center, being billed by Stanford Hospital as “one-stop care” for those requiring outpatient surgery, is expected to open in mid-February, and Lutticken’s will be there as the stop to make for sandwiches, salads, coffee and other gustatory needs of the center’s patrons.

The popular deli on Alameda de las Pulgas, owned by Bob Lutticken, is a West Menlo institution. The new location will come with a ready-made clientele, says deli manager Judy Congdon, who notes that eateries are scarce in the area.

### Remembering Beverly

On Saturday, Jan. 10, some 150 people packed the Menlo Park council chambers to honor the life of Beverly Searles-Beasley, an administrative assistant in the planning department who died on Nov. 15 at the age of 48.

Planning department head Arlinda Heineck delivered the eulogy, stressing Ms. Searles-Beasley’s kindness.

“She loved to joke around with people, loved to make people laugh,” Ms. Heineck said in an interview. “She was a real straight shooter. She would give you the truth in a way you could handle it.”

A cherry tree has been planted at the Civic Center in honor of Ms. Searles-Beasley, outside her former office.

An obituary ran in the Nov. 26 issue of *The Almanac*.

Have an item? Send it to Andrea Gemmet (AGemmet@AlmanacNews.com).

## Charter petition gets thumbs up in state report

### State commission to hear appeal Feb. 3.

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

It’s been a while since backers of Everest Charter High School had something to smile about, but with their twice-rejected petition now in the hands of the state Board of Education for one last try at a charter, a Jan. 21 staff report ahead of a February public hearing in Sacramento gave grounds for optimism.

In recommending approval of an “exemplary” petition, the report recognized the success of Summit Preparatory Charter High School, the six-year old charter in Redwood City that would be the model for Everest.

Everest, which would open this September, would offer “a remarkable array of services and resources to assist students in preparing for

and succeeding in college,” said report author Michelle Ruskofsky.

The public hearing and an up-or-down vote on the petition are set for Tuesday, Feb. 3, before the nine-member state Advisory Commission on Charter Schools (ACCS). The day-long meeting begins at 10:30 a.m. in Room 1101 at 1430 N St. in Sacramento.

The staff report and commission’s decision are preliminary to a vote by the state board, probably on March 12.

Everest’s access to Summit Prep’s expertise, the report said, represents an “ideal combination of petitioner experience in operating a highly successful charter school and the petitioner’s strong educational program.”

Summit Prep has many more applicants than available seats each year, a four-year-college acceptance rate of more than 95 percent, per-student spending lower than

the district’s, and a student body that is 10 percent less Hispanic and 14 percent more white than the Sequoia district student population, according to state data.

A fourth of Summit’s students live in The Almanac’s circulation area. Everest has received about 200 applications so far for its 100 freshman seats, spokeswoman Diane Tavenner said in an e-mail.

Ms. Tavenner said she looks forward to the coming decisions. The staff report, she said, “represents a fair, objective and rigorous review of the Everest petition, for which we are extremely thankful.”

The Sequoia Union High School District board turned Everest down on a 4-1 vote on Sept. 17, citing a lack of community support, potential financial problems, and the school’s attraction to white students who might otherwise attend undersubscribed charters

in East Palo Alto.

The San Mateo County board rejected the Everest petition on 5-2 vote on Dec. 8. County Superintendent of Schools Jean Holbrook knocked Everest, in part, for a budget too dependent on donations, its approach to special education, and the opposition of “so many district staff and elected board of education members.”

A state-approved petition would require the Sequoia district to offer Everest a facility and to pay the school between \$7,000 and \$8,000 per student per year.

District Superintendent Pat Gemma said he hadn’t read the report, but said the district supports charter schools and has “findings of fact” to support the claim that Everest’s petition departs from the intent of charter school law, particularly concerning “learning opportunities for low-achieving students.”

## History chapter added to town’s general plan

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The past, some of it anyway, is still present in Woodside, according to the list of areas of historic and cultural significance prepared by the town’s History Committee.

The 22-item list, presented to the Town Council on Jan. 13, includes Independence Hall, the Folger Estate, and the town’s museum, of course. Also there are Alambique Creek, home to San Mateo County’s first sawmill; and the 1769 campsite of Bay Area explorer Gaspar de Portola.

The council voted 6-0, with Councilwoman Deborah Gordon absent, to add the list and a related narrative to the town’s general plan as a “historic preservation element.” The decision precedes a scheduled staff/community effort to completely overhaul and update the plan in 2009.

Three private properties are on the list, but with the permission of the property owners. At a 2001 council meeting on the same topic, a roomful of residents had objected to having their properties listed without their agreement, Assistant Town Manager Kevin Bryant said.



Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

Narrow winding roads and wooded slopes characterize the Woodside Glens. A group of residents met recently to discuss wildfire risks following a November house fire.

## Fire prompts neighbors to look at risks

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The Woodside Glens is appropriately named. It’s a cozy neighborhood of valleys and wooded slopes threaded by narrow roads that wind among upscale single-family homes.

The scenes may be lovely on a winter’s day when green foliage is everywhere. But fire sometimes strikes — as it did on Nov. 25 when fire destroyed an unoccupied home at 223 Glenwood Ave. — and then the lush vegetation and steep topography show something else: the specter of wildfire.

A group of Glens residents met on Dec. 18 with town councilman and Glens resident Ron

Romines and officials from the Woodside Fire Protection District to talk about the Nov. 25 fire and what could be learned from it.

“A lot of them had no idea that a house fire could be that intense. House fires are scary,” Fire Marshal Denise Enea said in a telephone interview. “They were pretty much in awe and kind of still getting over the shock.”

The weather cooperated in the Nov. 25 fire with cool temperatures, high humidity and scant wind, but the overhanging vegetation at the house could have been a problem if conditions had been unfavorable. “There was certainly a potential for

See HISTORY, page 8

See FIRE RISKS, page 8

## TOWN OF WOODSIDE

## INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE REVIEW BOARD

The Architectural and Site Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Director of Planning and Building on residential, site design and commercial applications.

Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month, 4:30 p.m. Appointments are for a four-year term.

Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon and 1:00-5:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, by telephone at (650) 851-6790, or through the Town's web site at [www.woodsidetown.org](http://www.woodsidetown.org). Deadline for applications is Friday, February 13, 2009, 5:00 p.m.

Published in THE ALMANAC on January 21, 28, February 4, 11, 2009.



## NEWS RELEASE

December 18, 2008  
Press Contact: Regina Wheeler  
330.6740

### "HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF EVENT IN MENLO PARK"

Menlo Park, CA – Residents of Menlo Park, Redwood City, East Palo Alto, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside may take household hazardous waste to a special drop-off location in Menlo Park on Saturday, February 7, 2009. There is no charge. To participate, residents must make an appointment by calling (650) 363-4718 (24 hours a day) or visit [www.smhealth.org/hhw](http://www.smhealth.org/hhw). Appointments are limited – register early! If the city and date is not listed when you call, the event is already full and an alternate city and date may be chosen. Acceptable items for drop-off include paint, thinners, motor oil, batteries, fluorescent lamps, pesticides, herbicides, pool and photo chemicals, drain openers, and cleaning solvents. No business waste, explosives, infectious or radioactive waste is allowed.

Published in THE ALMANAC on January 28, February 4, 2009.

## City revenues \$3.1 million off pace

By Sean Howell  
Almanac Staff Writer

The books have closed on the first half of the current fiscal year, and the outlook isn't exactly rosy for Menlo Park — though it's also not as bad as it may seem, according to the city's finance director.

Through Dec. 31, halfway into the fiscal year that began on July 1, the city's revenues had only hit 41.8 percent of the revenue projection for the year — \$3.1 million short of half the expected revenue for 2008-09. Sales tax is down from the previous fiscal year, building activity has decreased, and the city is earning less interest on the general fund.

The shortfall "might look bad, but it's not too much more than was anticipated" when the city prepared its budget, said Finance Director Carol Augustine, because Menlo Park tends to receive a higher percentage of its income in the second half of the fiscal year, for a variety of reasons.

For one thing, three budget categories, the bulk of which tend to be collected in the second half of the year — franchise fees, property tax and the tax on guests in hotels and motels — fell approximately \$1.5 million short of the prorated revenue projection, though they are not far off the last fiscal year's pace.

Fees associated with building permits and business licenses — the two are lumped into the same category — were \$918,000 below the prorated revenue projection. Ms. Augustine attributed much of that decline to the fact that the vast majority of business license fees are paid in the second half of the year.

Still, both the number of building projects and the size of those projects has decreased, Ms. Augustine said. Sales tax is off \$134,000 from the same time in the 2007-08 fiscal year. And the interest the city gains from the general fund has also declined.

City staff will make recommendations on expenditure cuts when it presents its mid-year report on the budget to the City Council in late February. ■

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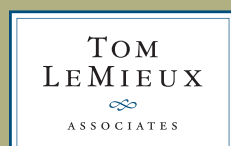
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Courtesy, Menlo School

**Menlo School** in Atherton plans a new creative arts center on the Atherton campus. This is an artist's rendering by Thomas Hacker Architects Inc.

## Town OKs land split for school, college

■ Menlo School plans major new construction on its campus.

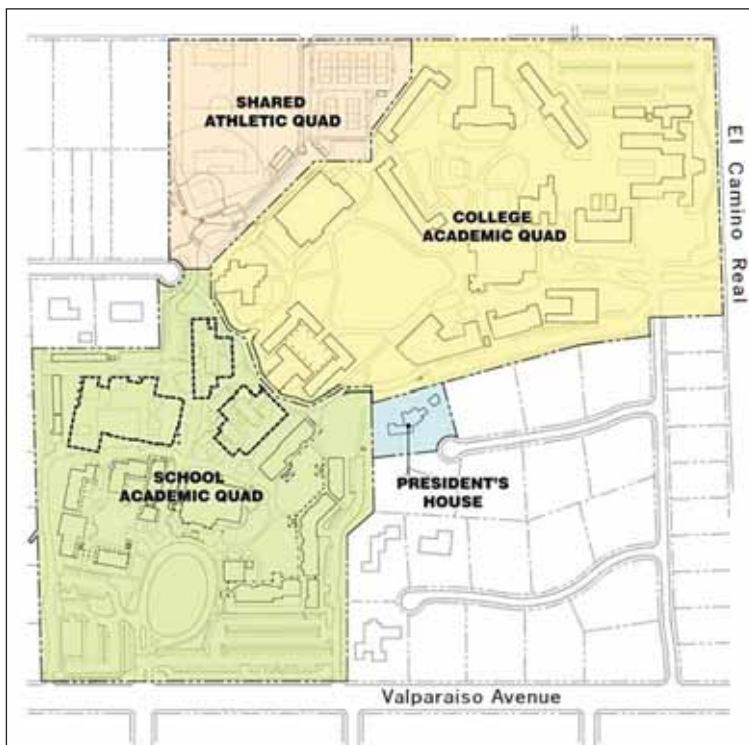
By **Andrea Gemmet**  
Almanac Staff Writer

One of the last steps in the velvet divorce of Menlo School and Menlo College — dividing up the land the institutions share — got the OK from the Atherton City Council on Jan. 21. The land division makes it possible to begin fundraising for a major new construction project on the Menlo School campus, development director Diane Clausen said.

The private college and the private grade 6-12 school have operated as separate entities for almost 15 years, said Norman Colb, the head of Menlo School. "Since 1994, we are entirely autonomous institutions, but we've been bedeviled by the problem of separating the land," he told the council at its Jan. 21 meeting.

A plan, reached after more than a year of intense negotiations, gives each school the land beneath its academic core campus. Menlo School will have a 16-plus acre parcel, and Menlo College will have a 21-acre parcel. The jointly used athletic fields will continue to be owned by a nonprofit organization benefiting both schools.

Menlo School plans to build a new gym, a 350-seat performing arts facility, and a creative arts center, said David McAddo, the director of operations and construction. The project includes relocating the childcare center and removing some heritage trees and other



Keven Hart Architecture/Courtesy, Menlo School

**Menlo School** and Menlo College, separate entities since 1994, will finally divide up the land they share, according to this parcel map.

buildings, among other things, and will cost an estimated \$40 million.

The development puts buildings at the heart of the campus, away from neighboring residential properties, and creates a sound barrier for neighbors, school officials said.

Because some buildings are as little as 20 feet apart, the council approved a change in zoning to allow for a 10-foot minimum setback, but only between adjacent school campuses. A typical side or rear setback would be 50 to 75 feet, which would make the land division impossible, said school officials.

Only one resident who lives near the school commented at the meeting. Lou Paponis praised Menlo officials for their courtesy and responsiveness to neighbors' concerns. "I find them to be sincere in everything they do, and I find them to be straight-forward in everything they do," he told the council.

A variety of approvals were needed from the town in order to divide up the land and authorize the construction plans, including environmental reviews and the creation of a tentative parcel map. The council voted 4-0, with Jim Dobbie absent, to approve the plans. ■

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



### Pricing in this new economy

**Q: We are forced to put our house on the market, although there probably has never been a worse time. We have had two different pricing opinions and they are about 7% apart. Our neighbors think both realtors prices are too low. Who do we believe and how do we know what is the right price in this economy?**

**A: I am relieved that you recognize that the economy has much to do with the price at which you put your home on the market. There is no denying that things have changed. Even though our local market has held up fairly well, an aggressive price will probably not bring you the result you want. When realtors do a market analysis usually they will bring a few other realtors with them to obtain an opinion of value. There is always a range because appraising is an art and not a science. They will look at**

the recent active and sold comparables and then give the listing agent the number at which they believe at which it should be priced. In the past we would often go with the higher number because the supply/demand ratio in this area always tilts toward demand. That is no longer the case. Buyers are concerned about the economy as a whole, about keeping their jobs and in addition, they may have lost part of the down payment in the stock market. To appeal to those waiting for a clear signal, your property must be priced attractively. We have had a few properties which have sold quickly this year because they were priced below what we are accustomed to seeing. One of them even had multiple offers. Interest rates are very attractive, there is financing available and prices are good so if you get your house in tip top shape and price it competitively, you should have no problems.

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

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# Ecumenical program: three faiths and their connections

The faithful of Islam, Christianity and Judaism have in common their belief in monotheism, a single deity, but in what other ways are the three religions connected?

Addressing this question and answering the audience's questions will be Abdul Mawgoud Dardery, an assistant professor of cultural studies and critical discourse at Egypt's South Valley University. This free talk is open to the public and scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 8, at Val-

## BRIEFS

ley Presbyterian Church at 945 Portola Road in Portola Valley.

The lecture is the first in a 2009 speaker series sponsored by the seven members of the Valley Ecumenical Group, which includes the churches of Portola Valley, Woodside and Ladera and the United Campus Christian Ministry at Stanford University.

## USGS talk: New discoveries from Mars

Woodside resident and U.S. Geological Survey planetary geologist Michael H. Carr discusses recent findings from the Mars rover and what it means about life on the red planet, at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, at the USGS campus, 345 Middlefield Road in Menlo Park.

Mr. Carr will explore recent data acquired from a Mars polar

lander, the still-active surface rovers, and three orbital spacecraft. He'll explain how scientists are uncovering new clues about the Martian landscape, geology, and climatic conditions, and how those discoveries are shaping scientific opinion on whether water has been present on Mars, and the possibility of life existing on the planet.

The lecture is open to the public, and held in Conference Room A, Building 3. For information, call Amelia Barrales at 329-5136.

son, author of the graphic novel "Charlatan." Mr. Lawson will give a presentation on graphic novels and his working method.

The library is located in the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets. For more information, visit [www.menloparklibrary.org](http://www.menloparklibrary.org), or call the children's room at 330-2530.

## Children's author to read at library

Mark Reibstein, an English teacher at Woodside High School, is set to read from his book, "Wabi Sabi," at the Menlo Park Library on Saturday, Jan. 31, at 11:30 a.m.

The book is about a cat in search for the meaning of its name. Kids are encouraged to stick around after the reading to make collages of cats.

The library is located in the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets. For more information, visit [www.menloparklibrary.org](http://www.menloparklibrary.org), or call the children's room at 330-2530.



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING FEBRUARY 9, 2009

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the City of Menlo Park, California, is scheduled to review the following items:

### PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

**Use Permit and Variance/Robert Mayer/208 Lexington Drive:** Request for a use permit to construct first- and second-story additions to an existing single-story, single-family, nonconforming residence that would exceed 50 percent of the replacement value of the existing structure in a 12-month period in the R-1-U (Single-Family Urban) zoning district. In addition, a request for a variance for a building coverage of 39.3 percent where 35 percent is required for two-story development.

**Use Permit Revision/Menlo Park Presbyterian Church/700 Santa Cruz Avenue:** Request for a revision to an existing use permit for a social hall in a commercial building in the C-3 (Central Commercial) zoning district. The modifications would include increasing the permitted days of operation to allow for use of the social hall seven days a week, in addition to extending the expiration date for the use permit from 2009 to 2014.

**Use Permit/Amprius/1430 O'Brien Drive, Suite C:** Request for a use permit for the indoor use and storage of hazardous materials for the research and development of lithium ion battery technology in the M-2 (General Industrial) zoning district.

### PUBLIC MEETING ITEMS - None

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on public hearing items in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on Monday, February 9, 2009, 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge this item in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

The project file may be viewed by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Department of Community Development, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call the Planning Division if there are any questions and/or for complete agenda information (650) 330-6702.

Si usted necesita más información sobre este proyecto, por favor llame al 650-330-6702, y pregunte por un asistente que hable español.

DATED: January 22, 2009 Deanna Chow, Senior Planner  
PUBLISHED: January 28, 2009 Menlo Park Planning Commission

Visit our Web site for Planning Commission public hearing, agenda, and staff report information: [www.menlopark.org](http://www.menlopark.org)

Published in THE ALMANAC on January 28, 2009.

## 'Teen night' at Menlo Park Library

The Menlo Park Library will hold its monthly "teen night" on Friday, Jan. 30, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

In addition to the usual array of video games, movies and Internet access, teens can talk science fiction with special guest Gil Law-

## HISTORY

*continued from page 5*

Resident Thalia Lubin rose to inform the council that she was part of a group who walked Woodside's streets in the 1970s to create an inventory of the "best places," only to witness a wave of renovations and demolitions in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The committee left the inventory out of the preservation element lest it jeopardize the element's inclusion in the general plan, Ms. Lubin added. The spirit of the inventory was in the room, however.

Anne Kasten, chair of the Architectural and Site Review Board, who grew up in Palo Alto and said she now doesn't recognize it, stated: "I'm alarmed by seeing that happening in our community."

## FIRE RISKS

*continued from page 5*

(wildfire)," Battalion Chief Ron Romero said at the time.

In September 2008, Ms. Enea recommended that the Glens be labeled a "very high" risk for wildfire based on the area's water supply, topography and accessibility for firefighting vehicles.

Residents complained about possible rising insurance rates should the neighborhood be so labeled, and the council rejected Ms. Enea's idea. Better to expand the applicability of a building code that requires fire-inhibiting landscaping and materials for new homes, the council said.

At the Dec. 18 meeting, "there was a commitment on the part of folks there to put some energy into trying specifically to make the Glens more fire safe," Mr. Rom-

"I wish we had some more ways of talking to people about what Woodside is and what it could be," she added. "I don't want to see this town become characterless. ... There's not a common language to discuss it with them."

Councilwoman Sue Boynton said: "I think that community residents should be inspired by incentives and educated (to be part of this). The landmarks we see every day in our life, they all have some bearing."

Mayor Peter Mason agreed on the need for incentives. "I think this is a good start," he said. "I think this town actually prides itself in preserving the past."

For the text of the historic preservation element, go to [tinyurl.com/WS-history](http://tinyurl.com/WS-history) and turn to page 57. ■

ines told The Almanac. Among the topics discussed: brush clearing; tree trimming, particularly near high-voltage power lines; and better communication.

Ms. Enea said that residents might want to move their vehicles off the streets where possible after 5 p.m. "The Glens is really difficult, and we do the best with what we have," she said. "If you are cognizant of how you park and how your neighbor parks, it could make the difference in whether we get in (to a fire) early." ■



# Rosewood Hotel may cut room rates by half

Despite the meltdown in the global economy, the Stanford University/Rosewood Hotel is still on track to open this spring.

The complex, which includes a 123-room hotel, 17,000-square-foot spa and a restaurant, will receive its first guests on April 1, according to project manager Mike Casey. It is located on Sand Hill Road near Interstate 280.

Standard rooms can be booked for as low as \$225 during the month of April — far lower than the \$400-\$450 officials had estimated before the economic crisis.

Opening a hotel in this economic climate is “uncharted territory” for Rosewood, Mr. Casey said, adding that the pricing would be “dynamic” rather than fixed.

A percentage of each reservation made in April will benefit Trees for Menlo.

## Kelly Field: Major renovation proposed

At its meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 27, the Menlo Park City Council will decide whether to approve a preliminary plan for a \$4.5 million renovation of Kelly Field in the Belle Haven neighborhood.

The renovation would add two

**■ MENLO WATCH**

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tennis courts, a multipurpose court, and a three-lane track. It also calls for the replacement of the field’s natural grass with artificial turf.

The council will not decide whether to appropriate the full \$4.5 million at the council meeting. Instead, it will vote on whether to approve a contract worth approximately \$350,000 with a landscape architect to draw up detailed construction plans.

## Locals meet with high-speed rail officials

Local residents and dignitaries were treated to their first public meetings with officials from the High-Speed Rail Authority on Thursday, Jan. 22.

Rail officials answered questions at the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce on Thursday morning. In the afternoon, over 100 San Mateo County residents packed a room in the SamTrans building in San Carlos to ask questions and provide com-

ments to determine the scope of the rail’s environmental review — a process officials estimated would take at least two years.

Visit [TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://TheAlmanacOnline.com) for more information.

## Steve Levy to speak

Steve Levy, director of the Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy, will speak Wednesday, Jan. 28, in Menlo Park on the state’s precarious financial situation. The talk, which will be at a meeting of the group, Sustainable Menlo Park, starts at 5:30 p.m. in the Burgess Recreation Center in the Menlo Park Civic Center.

## Bike safety

A free course on bicycle safety will be held in the Burgess Recreation Center in the Menlo Park Civic Center on Saturday, Jan. 31, at 10 a.m.

The four-hour course teaches the basics of safe and enjoyable cycling, including riding in traffic, avoiding crashes, obtaining the necessary equipment, and learning the “rules of the road,” according to instructor Robert Cronin. For more information, call Mr. Cronin at 323-3436.

# RUSSELL M.H. BERG



Russ Berg died peacefully at Stanford Hospital on November 21, 2008, at the age of 88, three weeks after being diagnosed with lymphoma, complicated by kidney failure.

He was born on May 21, 1920, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His family moved to Los Angeles, California when Russ was nine. He graduated

from Beverly Hills High School, then entered UCLA as a pre-med student, and after a year, transferred to Stanford University. His studies were interrupted by the start of World War II, and as an ROTC student, Russ joined the U.S. Navy, serving as a Lieutenant Commander in the South Pacific. He was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, when his ship, the Curtis was hit. Fortunately, he was unharmed. Before the end of the war he married Marjorie Lee Biddle of Mahwah, New Jersey. Together, they had three children: Deborah, Christopher and Laura.

After the war, they settled in New Jersey. Russ worked in publishing and advertising in New York City at McGraw Hill and Scientific American Magazine. In 1966, he went to work for Hewlett-Packard in Palo Alto, California as Director of Marketing and Communications.

After his retirement from HP in 1985, Russ served

as a consultant to Silicon Valley companies and entrepreneurs in the areas of marketing and strategic planning. His clients included Vantive, Rambus, Dejima, On Command Video and Mitsubishi.

Russ served as Board Member Emeritus of the Sensory Access Foundation, which works to develop access technology for the visually impaired. He was also an advisor to the Archimedes Project at Stanford University, and co-founder and Chairman of the Board of the Archimedes Foundation, which was also established to develop access technology for individuals with various disabilities who need assistance.

In 1974, Russ married Tuula Pullinen of Helsinki, Finland, and they made their home in Menlo Park, California. Russ shared a passion for all things Italian with his wife. They took yearly trips to Italy, sometimes staying for several months. Russ, at age 70, was the oldest student ever enrolled at the Italian Language School in Siena where he and his wife studied for nine months. In time, Russ also adopted Finland as a second homeland, where he wished his ashes to be interred.

His spirit, love and devotion will forever be remembered by Tuula, his wife of 35 years, his three children, four step-children, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren: Kassie, Penelope and Lilly.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 31, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, 815 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California, followed by a Celebration of Life Reception at Parkside Grille, a short walking distance from the church. 19, 2009 at 4:00 pm. All friends and family are invited to attend.

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## Town shuffles key staff jobs

By Andrea Gemmet  
Almanac Staff Writer

Atherton is shuffling key posts in the town's administration, eliminating a couple of mid-management positions in favor of cheaper help. However, the changes won't result in a net savings to the town over the long run, according staff projections.

The Atherton City Council approved the reorganization at its Jan. 21 meeting, on a 4-0 vote.

One of the key changes is that Atherton's assistant city manager, Eileen Wilkerson, will also take on the responsibilities of the half-time city clerk, thus saving the town about \$75,000 in the clerk's annual salary.

A new position, deputy city clerk, will be added at an annual cost of up to \$109,735 in salary and benefits.

In the finance department, the assistant finance director position will be dropped, and replaced by a less-expensive full-time accountant. The half-time finance assistant position will see a small increase in hours, and an office assistant position will drop from full-time to six hours a day.

The net annual additional cost of the reorganization, in salary, benefits and payroll costs, could be up to \$23,938, if the new hires qualify for the top step of the pay ranges, according to a staff report by Ms. Wilkerson. This year, however, the town will see a net savings of about \$14,000, since it will take a couple of months to fill the open positions, the staff report says.

The reorganization was triggered by a couple of openings in the town staff, Ms. Wilkerson said.

Acting City Clerk Kathi Hamilton has announced plans to retire, and the office assistant position is open. Assistant Finance Director Paula Pierce, a town employee for 19 years, was fired in November.

Ms. Pierce said she was called in to City Manager Jerry Gruber's office on Nov. 7, informed that she was a management employee not covered by any contract, and then terminated. "I was given no reason for my expulsion," she told The Almanac. ■



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# Climate action plan released

By Sean Howell  
Almanac Staff Writer

Charging stations for electric vehicles, LED street-lamps, and a \$2 million fund to loan residents money for energy-efficient home improvements are among the proposals outlined in a climate action plan that the city of Menlo Park is seeking feedback on.

The plan will be presented at a special City Council meeting from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27, in the council chambers, between Laurel and Alma streets in the Civic Center.

While the plan offers a comprehensive, detailed analysis of what the city can do to reduce its carbon footprint, its evaluation of the limits of the city's power to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions is also telling.

Even if the city were to adopt all of the recommendations in the plan for which carbon reduction levels can be quantified, it would see a 3 percent increase in emissions by 2020 — notwithstanding actions taken by the state, and by residents acting on their own.

Citizen involvement in climate mitigation efforts is “the foundation of a successful approach to bringing the climate under control,” said Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson. “You have to have participation from the community, or it won't happen.”

The city received \$38,000 in grants from regional government agencies to prepare the plan, created by city staff in conjunction with a consultant.

It contains a detailed reckoning of the amount of carbon reduction the city can hope to see if it takes various measures, as well as the cost in dollars to carry out each measure.

For instance, the plan's authors estimate that it would cost \$45,000 to install 30 recharging stations for electric and hybrid vehicles, reducing carbon emissions by 7,000 metric tons annually — \$6-\$7 per metric ton for the first year.

Installing streetlamps with light-emitting diodes along Santa Cruz Avenue in downtown Menlo Park would be much less cost-effective, at \$3,500 per metric ton.

Other recommendations include expanding the city's shuttle program, creating a law to prevent drivers from idling their vehicles, and giving more incentives to builders for using “green” practices.

It also proposes the installation of solar panels at the Belle Haven Pool and some city buildings.

The city's plan is separate from the list of recommendations released by the Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee in 2007, but Mayor Heyward Robinson said he expects the committee to play an integral role in helping the city carry out the recommendations contained in the plan.

The city will accept comments on the proposals through March 1, via phone at 330-6740 or e-mail at [ClimateActionTeam@MenloPark.org](mailto:ClimateActionTeam@MenloPark.org).

A draft of the plan can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/ClimatePlan>.

# KEPLER'S FEATURED AUTHORS IN FEBRUARY

Dan Simmons

*Drood: A Novel*

Friday, February 20, 7:30 p.m.

Just as he did in *The Terror*, Dan Simmons draws impeccably from history to create a gloriously engaging and terrifying narrative based on the historical details of Charles Dickens's life.



T.C. Boyle

*The Women*

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

Having brought to life eccentric cereal king John Harvey Kellogg in *The Road to Wellville* and sex researcher Alfred Kinsey in *The Inner Circle*, T.C. Boyle now turns his fictional sights on the women loved by Frank Lloyd Wright.



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

David Denby

*Snark*

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

Sharp, highly entertaining and witty polemic by New Yorker critic and best-selling author.



Veronica Chater

*Waiting for the Apocalypse: A Memoir of Faith and Family*

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

Growing up Catholic in a family where the reforms of Vatican II are seen as the work of Satan.



Mario Livio

*Is God a Mathematician?*

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

A fascinating exploration of the great discoveries of history's most important mathematicians.



David Thomson

*Try to Tell the Story: A Memoir*

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

A haunting and unsentimental look at the fragility of family relationships from celebrated film critic and historian.



Guy Kawasaki

*Reality Check: The Irreverent Guide to Outsmarting, Outmanaging, and Outmarketing Your Competition*

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

More uncommon common sense from the bestselling author of *The Art of the Start*.



Jamie Ford

*Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*

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

Stunning debut novel set during World War II.



Abraham Verghese

*Cutting for Stone*

Thursday February 5, 7:30 p.m.

A stunning debut novel from medical doctor, Stanford Med School professor and author of *My Own Country*.



Jonathon Keats

*The Book of the Unknown: Tales of the Thirty-Six*

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

Marvelous and mystical stories of the 36 anonymous saints — reimagined from Jewish folklore.



Yiyun Li

*The Vagrants*

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

Astonishing debut novel by the award-winning writer is set in China in the late 1970s.



Niloufar Talebi

*Belonging: New Poetry by Iranians Around the World*

Thursday, February 19, 7:30 p.m.

Eclectic and accessible, these vibrant poems deepen the often limited awareness of Iranian identity today.



Sumbul Ali-Karamali

*The Muslim Next Door: The Qur'an, the Media, and That Veil Thing*

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

Mixes scholarly insight about Islam with a personal, well-considered perspective on being a mainstream American Muslim.



Azadeh Moaveni

*Honeymoon in Tehran: Two Years of Love and Danger in Iran*

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

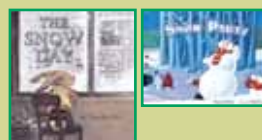
A story of coming-of-age in two cultures from the author of *Lipstick Jihad*.



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

February 1st - Snowy Story Time

Anyone who wishes the Bay Area were a bit snowier will love the wonderful winter weather in these stories. The lack of snow won't stop us from making marshmallow snowmen and other winter crafts.



February 15th - Valentine's Day Story Time

Valentine's Day is all about friendship, love and most importantly, showing special people in your life how much you care. We'll use these ideas to make some very special Valentine's cards.



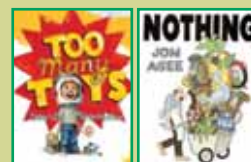
February 8th - It's OK to Be Different Story Time

What do a naked mole rat, a pink penguin and a spunky sheep have in common? These fun, funky stories prove that even though it doesn't always feel like it, it is ok to be different.



February 22nd - Stuff Story Time

What do you do when you already have everything? Each of these books is sure to teach you something about everything and something about nothing.



Our event program is updated often. Please visit [keplers.com](http://keplers.com) for current information.

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## WOODSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT Woodside Preschool Registration

You are invited to attend a Woodside Preschool parent visitation morning on Friday, February 6th from 8:45 to 10:00 a.m. (parents only).

From February 2nd through February 13th, 2009, Woodside School District will be accepting applications for the

### FALL 2009 PRESCHOOL.

The Woodside Preschool is a half-day, fee-based program running from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Your children must be at least 2 years, 9 months old as of September 2, 2009 to apply.

Preschool students are placed in either the 2- day, 3-day or 5-day program based on age. Priority is given to students who live within the Woodside School District boundaries. Interested families may pick up an application at the school office beginning February 1st.

For more information about the preschool program,

call Cathy at 851-1571 x294.

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## College admissions: 'calming the frenzy'

For parents and students wondering about how a college's rank relates to the quality of education to be had there, the PTA at Menlo-Atherton High School is hosting a free presentation on the topic at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4.

The scheduled speaker is Lloyd Thacker, founder of the Portland-based Education Conservancy and editor of the essay collection "College Unranked: Ending the College Admissions

### BRIEFS

Frenzy," published in 2005 by Harvard University Press.

From its mission statement: "The Education Conservancy ... returns control of college admissions to those who are directly involved in education: students, colleges, parents and high schools. It calms the frenzy and hype that plague contemporary college admissions." For more, go to [www.educationconservancy.org](http://www.educationconservancy.org).

To reserve a seat, write to M-A parent education chair Charlene Margot at [parenteducation@mabearspta.org](mailto:parenteducation@mabearspta.org) or call 868-0590.

2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21.

"Room Service" follows the antics of a Broadway producer (Patrick Daly) who is scheming to bring his new play to Broadway. He runs up a huge tab to house and feed his cast and crew for seven weeks. Everything is about to come crashing down when the theater folks go into high gear to save their show.

Tickets at \$5 for students and \$8 for adults are available at [tickets@menloschool.org](mailto:tickets@menloschool.org) or at the door. Menlo School is located at 50 Valparaiso Ave. in Atherton.

### Chinese New Year

Families are invited to kick off the Chinese New Year with a reading by Clarissa Yu Shen at the main Menlo Park Library at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27. Ms. Shen will read from three children's books she translated.

The Year of the Ox begins Monday, Jan. 26. This is the year 4707, according to the Chinese calendar. The library is located in the Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma streets. For more information, visit [www.menloparklibrary.org](http://www.menloparklibrary.org) or call the library at 330-2530.

### 'Green mobility'

The Forum at Redwood City is hosting an event on Thursday, Feb. 5, concerning what cities can do to cut greenhouse gas emissions via transportation reform.

"Green Mobility: 10 easy steps to ease congestion, earn money, and solve global climate change" is the title of the presentation to be delivered by Jeffrey Tumlin, who works for a San Francisco-based transportation planning firm.

The event will be held at the Little Fox Theatre at 2209 Broadway St. in Redwood City, near Middlefield Avenue. The fee at the door is \$10.

### Woodside hosts kindergarten tour

Parents of incoming kindergarteners can get a tour of classrooms, meet teachers and hear from specialists at an information meeting at Woodside Elementary School from 8:45 a.m. to 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, in the Wildcats Room.

Kindergarten registration is open to children who will be 5 years old on or before Dec. 1, 2009. Registration packets will be available at the school office beginning Feb. 2. Woodside requires a birth certificate, proof of residency, an immunization record and a physician's report for enrollment.

To reserve a space at the parent meeting, call the school office at 851-1571, extension 0. Woodside school is located at 3195 Woodside Road in Woodside.

### Menlo School stages classic comedy

A classic comedy set in the 1930s, "Room Service" will play at the Florence Moore Theater at Menlo School Jan. 29 through Jan 31 at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee performance at



## Your Child's Health University

Lucile Packard Children's Hospital offers classes, seminars and resources designed to foster good health and enhance the lives of parents and children.

### \* 2ND ANNUAL AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS UPDATE

A one-day conference designed to provide parents, teachers, psychologists and care providers of children with autism spectrum disorders with the latest findings on clinical care, education and basic science research. Online registration is available at <http://childpsychiatry.stanford.edu>. For more information, please call 650-721-6327.

- Saturday, February 7

### \* MULTIPLES BREASTFEEDING SEMINAR

Taught by a certified lactation consultant, this seminar is specifically for those expecting twins or more. Discussions will cover prenatal breast preparation, how your partner can participate in feeding the newborns, expression and storage of breastmilk, and more.

- Tuesday, February 10

### \* HEALTHY EATING IN A FAST FOOD WORLD

Join us for a presentation on the health effects of how our children are eating. Our clinicians will offer suggestions for establishing healthy eating habits in today's fast food world.

- Tuesday, February 24

### \* PEDIATRIC WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAM

Start the new year with a family-based, behavioral and educational weight management program that promotes healthy eating and exercise habits for overweight children and their families. More than 80% of children achieve long-term weight loss through this program - and parents lose weight too! The new session starts soon, so call

(650) 725-4424 to register. Spaces are limited.

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



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OBITUARY

Walter Gamble

Retired wholesale produce salesman

Walter Freeman Gamble, a resident of Menlo Park since 1988, died Jan. 13 of complications from pneumonia. He was 86.

A native Californian, Mr. Gamble was born in Redding. After graduating from high school with honors, he was admitted to Harvard, but due to family finances subsequently attended UC Berkeley, where he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity.

He enlisted in the military in 1943 and trained in civil engineering at Princeton University. In 1944 and 1945 he served as a

staff sergeant in the European theater with the Timberwolf 104th Infantry Division. He received a Purple Heart and took part in the Battle of the Bulge.

Returning home, he studied at the University of Southern California on the GI bill. At USC he met his future wife, Lorna Cameron McGibbon. They were married in 1947 after graduation.

He joined his father and brothers at Producer Sales Co. in Los Angeles, where he was vice president and a wholesale produce salesman. Mr. Gamble worked in the produce business until retiring in 1988.

The Gambles lived in West Covina before moving to Menlo Park. In retirement he enjoyed meeting new friends and attend-

ing his grandson Casey's baseball or football games at Menlo-Atherton Little League or Menlo-Atherton High School. He also enjoyed watching pro football, and was a faithful Raiders fan, say family members.

Mr. Gamble is survived by his sons, Donald Gamble and Scott Gamble of Menlo Park; daughter Jeana Gamble Monroe of Menlo Park; and one grandchild. He is also survived by two step-grandchildren and one great-grandchild. His wife, Lorna Gamble, died in 1994.

The family prefers that memorials be made to Fisher House Foundation, 1401 Rockville Pike, Suite 600, Rockville, MO 20852. Fisher House is an organization that assists relatives of military men who are in the hospital.

'Civil Rights Tales' from those who lived them

"Civil Rights Tales," a collection of stories and songs by those who lived through the civil rights movement, will be presented by the storytellers of Stagebridge on Saturday, Feb. 7, starting at 11 a.m. at the Menlo Park Library.

Stagebridge is an Oakland-based senior theater company that uses theater and storytelling to "bridge the generation gap and to stimulate positive attitudes toward aging," according to its Web site, stagebridge.org.

The "Civil Rights Tales" program is about an hour long, including an open discussion, and is geared toward children (fourth grade and up) and adults.

The storytellers share their memories of the civil rights movement as they lived through struggles for racial justice.

During the past year, Stagebridge has put on more than 500

AROUND TOWN

performances and workshops at schools, senior centers, libraries and community centers, the organization said.

The free program is sponsored by the Friends of the Menlo Park Library. Free transportation to the program is available for Menlo Park seniors and people with disabilities. To schedule van service, call 330-2512.

Play examines sexual identity

The Sacred Heart Preparatory School's drama department will present the world premiere of "Be Still and Know" on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 30 and 31, and on Thursday, Friday and Saturday,

For Calendar listings

go to TheAlmanacOnline.com and on the green navigation bar on the left click on the "Community Calendar" link.

Feb. 5-7, starting at 7 p.m.

Sacred Heart drama director John Loschmann adapted the play from the novel, "The God Box," by Alex Sanchez.

The play explores the Bible's view on homosexuality and the struggle adolescents have with their sexual identity and their identity as Christians. There will be a discussion with the audience after each performance.

Tickets are \$5 for students and seniors, and \$10 for adults. To reserve tickets, e-mail Mr. Loschmann at jloschmann@shschools.org.

Portola Valley sets hearing on green plan

A public hearing on the topic of adding a sustainability element to Portola Valley's general plan is scheduled for the Town Council meeting, which starts at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28, in the Historic Schoolhouse at 765 Portola Road.

While Portola Valley, and the government in particular, has a reputation for thinking about and acting on environmental issues, a separate chapter in the general plan is warranted, according to the draft document available at tinyurl.com/PV-sustainable.

The goals set out in the sustainability chapter include educating the community about green issues and encouraging action, the use of efficient methods and sustainable materials in home building, and concern for future generations and the quality of their lives.

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editor@AlmanacNews.com

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



**WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?**

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

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**CALL**

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

## Big pay hike a symptom of failed policy

Menlo Park's recent approval of a major pay increase for police sergeants has been roundly criticized by many residents, but the real driver of this and a raise for rank-and-file police approved earlier last year is the use of pay rates of nearby cities to set salary levels in Menlo Park.

Of course there is a need to offer competitive salary packages, but at some point, the wage escalation must stop or we will have our police force being paid more than the governor — and retiring at age 50 with 90 percent of their pay for life.

**EDITORIAL**  
*The opinion of The Almanac*

This is not to say that our police men and women (and our firefighters, who work for the Menlo Park Fire Protection District and are eligible for similar benefits) do not deserve good wages for the very dangerous jobs that they do. But the spiraling cost of these wage contracts for Menlo Park and other Peninsula cities could soon reach crisis proportions.

The most recent dustup in Menlo Park was the City Council's decision, made in executive session as are all wage agreements, to crank up the base pay for eight sergeant positions (one is unfilled) from \$107,086 a year to \$131,452 by 2011 — a 30 percent increase in just two and a half years. The deal was made public Thursday, Jan. 8, but the council approved it at its Jan. 13 meeting before the public had adequate time to comment.

Except for Councilman John Boyle, who was opposed, the council strongly defended the pay raise, which boosts the sergeants' salaries considerably higher than the average benchmark of 14 similar-sized Peninsula cities. City Manager Glen Rojas said the sergeants' deal was based in large part on the 36-month contract signed last year with the rank-and-file officers for a 25.7 percent increase by 2011, which the council approved on a 5-0 vote. Sergeants have traditionally enjoyed a 20 percent differential over line officers — and were due the 30 percent raise, Mr. Rojas and other city officials said.

Besides the quick turnaround of the sergeants' contract, the public was upset at giving a 30 percent increase over 30 months,

when so many local residents are losing their jobs or working for reduced wages or hours. Even though the council felt obligated to push through this increase, the city should at least have delayed approval long enough to explain its side of the story, and to give the public more opportunity to comment.

And we find Mayor Heyward Robinson's initial reaction to a suggestion by fire district board member Peter Carpenter that the city post proposed pay increases for 15 days prior to a final vote totally inappropriate.

"If you just announced it two weeks earlier, that gives people two weeks to send nasty e-mails, get a hot and heavy debate going, et cetera, et cetera," the mayor said. "If we throw it out a couple of weeks early, we'd create a huge amount of excitement over it."

If Mayor Robinson is saying that he does not want to give residents — his constituents and local taxpayers — an opportunity to review and comment on a major expenditure of city funds, is he truly supportive of open and transparent government?

Rather than rush final approval of this contract, the mayor could have used an additional two weeks to educate residents about the issue and brainstorm ways to get the city off this merry-go-round of bidding up the cost of police services.

In prior years, The Almanac has reported on the high cost to cities and special districts when police and fire personnel retire with 90 percent of pay for life at age 50, after 30 years service. As more and more officers qualify for these pensions, the city will be paying out more and more in retirement benefits, especially in years when PERS, the state retirement system, is struggling — as it is now.

In the case of the both police contracts, the city settled on an increase substantially above the average of the cities in the comparison group. By doing so, the city continues to escalate these pay hikes, often beyond normal cost of living increases.

Clearly, Menlo Park alone cannot stop the tendency on the Peninsula and elsewhere to keep pay raises high to simply retain police officers and stop them from defecting to nearby cities. But we believe that all the cities in the comparison group should search for a way, perhaps through a county-wide joint powers agency or in the Legislature, to stop the bidding war for police services.

**LETTERS**  
*Our readers write*

### Park Theatre becoming a real eyesore

*Editor:*

Each time I drive by what used to be the Park Theatre in Menlo Park I get mad.

I just noticed it is now adorned with graffiti, adding insult to injury. Though over the years, it became unprofitable and apparently too costly to adequately maintain, for decades the Park was a lovely place to catch a movie. And its classic-style facade, marquee and neon sign were a pleasure to see (especially around twilight). It was a valued landmark and as far as I'm concerned, a gift to the street.

And now look at it! For years it has sat there in suspended

animation, derelict, damaged and an absolute eyesore.

Evidently, it was determined not to be illegal for the owner of the property to partially demolish the building before a pending inquiry as to whether it qualified for historical status. It occurred to me at the time that the owner used a page right out of Vladimir Lenin's playbook: shoot the Tsar and his family so as to proclaim to the people: there is no going back.

Time is a traveler. Circumstances change. I realize there is no going back. But, at minimum the theater's owner should be required by the city of Menlo Park to make that former asset to our community presentable. I encourage the city to seek punitive damages in the courts as well. We should not have been subjected to that mess for these years.

**Robert Brooks**  
Pine Street, Menlo Park

### Councilman responds to charge on union funds

*Editor:*

In response to a letter from Mary Gilles last week, I received no contribution from any union anticipated or likely to be in negotiation with our city in the four-year term to which I was elected.

**Andy Cohen, member**  
Menlo Park City Council

### Hollow claims of openness by council majority

*Editor:*

The wisdom of granting the Menlo Park police sergeants a 30 percent raise in the current horrible economic environment is debatable. What is more disturbing is how the city's four council members (Kelly Ferguson, Mayor Heyward Robinson,

See **LETTERS**, next page



Portola Valley Archives

### Mystery solved

Thanks to the help of several readers, the question raised in the Jan. 14 Regional Heritage photo about the location of the Summit Saloon has been answered. According to Ruth Waldauer, the saloon was located at the top of Old La Honda Road, not Kings Mountain Road. It is now in a state of some disrepair, but still standing on the Langley Hill Quarry property off Rapley Ranch Road.

## Plenty of water in Los Trancos

By Richard Swan

In reference to your article last week, "Water district collects taxes but doesn't provide water," you and the San Mateo County civil grand jury fell prey to the catchy notion of "a water district without water."

The reality is precisely the opposite. We have ample water in the Los Trancos and Vista Verde area of Portola Valley and most residents feel this small portion of our property taxes is being well spent. Indeed, the Los Trancos County Water District spent 50 years investing our taxes and our water fees, some of the highest rates in the region, on an excellent infrastructure.

The all-volunteer board did such a great job that they were able to transfer the operation of the infrastructure and the responsibility to deliver water to a private company, CalWater. In return for acquiring our resident-funded water facilities for pennies on the dollar, CalWater agreed to tie our rates to those in the Bear Gulch district.

The grand jury report complained that 50 percent of the ongoing water district revenue was spent on reducing the price of water to our residents. They

entirely missed the point — previously 100 percent of the tax revenue was spent reducing the water rates for residents. A core duty, under the state charter for water districts, is the establishment of water rates. Now that CalWater actually delivers the water, the district passes revenue to CalWater that offsets the regular charge for connection fees and water usage.

The district's legal counsel has provided a thorough, well-documented legal brief to the county establishing that the district's actions with respect to water cost offsets are in accordance with its charter. As far as I can tell, this interpretation and legal opinion, which has not been legally challenged by LAFCO (the Local Agency Formation Commission), was not brought to the attention of the grand jury and so they may have been misled.

As a community we are well prepared for the scheduled spectacular rise in water rates due to the Hetch-Hetchy seismic upgrade. One true marvel of the situation established by the Los Trancos district in 2005 is that even after residents get reliable delivery of lower-cost water and the long-term benefits of water use efficiency

programs, all supported under the district charter, there is still money left over. Volunteer groups have made excellent use of these funds for emergency preparedness, improvement of district lands, reduction of fire fuel load, and so on.

The county, and some residents to be sure, feel that the local property tax would be better spent at the county level by dissolving the district. Note that under the law, if the district is dissolved, residents would not see a property tax reduction but would see a rise in their water rates and a loss of some local services.

In 2007 there was extensive debate in the community about the focus of the district. A well-subscribed survey in 2006 showed that only 8 percent of residents wanted to dissolve the district and a strong majority supported spending at least 55 percent of taxes on water cost offsets. So, rather than a water district without water, the Los Trancos district is a thriving district with one of the best water programs in the region and true local control over the spending of a small portion of the overall property taxes paid by local residents. The district's programs are subject to lively debate and there are hotly contested elections. As a longtime resident I salute the contributions of our district.

**Richard Swan lives on Ramona Road in Portola Valley**



GUEST OPINION

## LETTERS

Continued from previous page

Rich Cline and Andy Cohen) who voted for this contract did everything possible to minimize any meaningful public input on this decision.

The details of this 28-page contract were made available to the public only a few days before the vote at the Jan. 13 council meeting. Some of these council mem-

bers justify their fast-tracking of this vote by saying that they were merely following through on a commitment made to the sergeants in April of last year, when a similarly generous contract was approved for the police department's line officers.

Really? When was the public informed of that previous commitment to the sergeants? There is certainly no record of it in council minutes from last April, and in fact, the public first heard of it only after the vote two

weeks ago. These four council members all campaigned on platforms of "transparent decision making", and yet, when it comes time for a controversial vote desired by groups that supported their campaigns, they conceal decisions made months ago, and allow only the barest minimum of public review.

Their claimed embrace of transparent governance is selective and insincere.

**Frank Tucker  
Politzer Drive, Menlo Park**

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### Public Notices

continued from Page 23

greater on the day of sale. BENEFICIARY MAY ELECT TO BID LESS THAN THE TOTAL AMOUNT DUE. Trustor(s): ENRIQUE L. RODRIGUEZ, A MARRIED MAN AS HIS SOLE AND SEPARATE PROPERTY Recorded: 03/27/2007 as Instrument No. 2007-045941 in book xxx, page xxx of Official Records in the Office of the Recorder of San Mateo County, California; Date of Sale: 2/17/2009 at 12:30 PM Place of Sale: At the Marshall St. entrance to the Hall of Justice and Records, 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA Amount of unpaid balance and other charges: \$564,298.98 The purported property address is: 339 WISTERIA DR. PALO ALTO, CA 94303 Assessors Parcel No. 063414-070-1 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the property address or other common designation, if any, shown herein. If no street address or other common designation is shown, directions to the location of the property may be obtained by sending a written request to the beneficiary within 10 days of the date of first publication of this Notice of Sale. Pursuant to California Civil Code §2923.5 (c), the beneficiary or authorized agent declares as follows: See the attached Declaration marked as Exhibit A, attached hereto and made a part hereof by this reference. If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee, and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse. Date: 1/12/2009 Quality Loan Service Corp. 2141 5th Avenue San Diego, CA 92101 (619) 645-7711 For NON SALE information only Sale Line: (714) 573-1965 or Login to: www.priorityposting.com Reinstatement Line: (619) 645-7711 Quality Loan Service, Corp. If you have previously been discharged through bankruptcy, you may have been released of personal liability for this loan in which case this letter is intended to exercise the note holder's rights against the real property only. This notice is sent for the purpose of collecting a debt. This firm is attempting to collect a debt on behalf of the holder and owner of the note. Any information obtained by or provided to this firm or the creditor will be used for that purpose. As required by law, you are hereby notified that a negative credit report reflecting on your credit record may be submitted to a credit report agency if you fail to fulfill the terms of your credit obligations. P520972 1/28, 2/4, 02/11/2009 (Published in the Almanac 1/28, 2/4, 11, 2009)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO Case No. CIV 480568 TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner Carol Thomsen filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: William Scott Message to William Christopher Thomsen. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: March 18, 2009, 9am, Dept. P.J. Rm. 2C. Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: THE ALMANAC. Date: Jan. 22, 2009 /s/ Stephen M. Hall JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT (Almanac 1/28, 2/4, 11, 18, 2009)

Trustee Sale No. 08-14714 Title Order No. S809881 APN 111-470-080-8 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 12/13/2006. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU

NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 02/17/2009 at 12:30PM, Old Republic Default Management Services, a Division of Old Republic National Title Insurance Company as duly appointed Trustee pursuant to the Deed of Trust, Recorded on 01/09/2007 as Instrument# 2007-003260 of official records in the Office of the County Recorder of San Mateo County, California, executed by: Chari Farmer-Ogogo, an unmarried woman, as Trustor, U.S. Bank National Association, as trustee for ABCF 2007-WMC1 Trust, as Beneficiary, WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH (payable in full at time of sale by cash, a cashier's check drawn by a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state). At: At the Marshall St. entrance to the Hall of Justice and Records, 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA, all right, title and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust in the property situated in said County and state, and as more fully described in the above referenced Deed of Trust. The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 480 O'Keefe Street 208, East Palo Alto, CA 94303. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made in an "as is" condition, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust, with interest thereon, as provided in said note(s), advances, if any, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust, to wit: \$421,709.26 (Estimated). Accrued interest and additional advances, if any, will increase this figure prior to sale. It is possible that at the time of sale the opening bid may be less than the total indebtedness due. The Declaration pursuant to California Civil Code, Section 2923.5(b) is attached hereto as Exhibit A. Date: 1/21/09 Old Republic Default Management Services, a Division of Old Republic National Title Insurance Company, as Trustee 500 City Parkway West, Ste. 200, Orange, CA 92668-2913 (866) 263-5802 For Sale Information Contact: Priority Posting and Publishing (714) 573-1965 Layne Lambert, Assistant Secretary Exhibit A to Notice of Trustee Sale Trustee Sale No. 08-14714 Loan No. 2000423396 APN 111-470-080-8 Declaration of Lender, Trustee or Authorized Agent Under California Civil Code Section 2923.5(c) The undersigned is the lender, beneficiary, or its authorized agent under the Deed of Trust or Mortgage that is the subject of the Notice of Sale to which this Declaration is attached and made a part. In compliance with the requirements of California Civil Code section 2923.5(c), the undersigned does hereby declare as follows: (strike out or delete the option that is not applicable) 1. The borrower under said Deed of Trust or Mortgage has been contacted in order to assess the borrower's financial situation and to explore options for the borrower to avoid foreclosure. Or, 2/22/08 2/25/08 4/3/08 2. No contact has been made with the borrower. The following list enumerates the efforts that were made in order to make such contact with the borrower: (continue on attachment, if more space is needed). Date: 1/13/08 By: Shari Landram (name of person signing and their corporate title) Shari Landram Default Coordinator P524337 1/28, 2/4, 02/11/2009 (Published in the Almanac 1/28, 2/4, 11, 2009)



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650.543.1076  
covtsharov@apr.com



**Tom Correia**  
650.209.1587  
tcorreia@apr.com



**Mountain View** **\$1,628,000**  
Fabulous 6bd/4.5ba home in the heart of downtown Mountain View. Elegant hickory floors, beautiful kitchen + large MBR.



**Barbara Williams**  
650.209.1519  
bwilliams@apr.com



**Woodside** **\$1,600,000**  
Expansive 4bd/4.5ba contemporary mountain home, overlooks the bay and valley. Free-flowing floor plan with lots of light. 5+/- acres.



**Connie Linton**  
650.400.4873  
clinton@apr.com



**Los Altos** **\$1,498,000**  
Remodeled 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath home on an oak knoll near Rancho San Antonio.



**Patricia York**  
650.543.1161  
pjyork@apr.com



**Menlo Park** **\$1,398,000**  
Elegant contemporary 4bd/2.5ba home tastefully remodeled with gourmet kitchen, open floor plan and lofty ceilings.



**Connie Linton**  
650.400.4873  
clinton@apr.com



**Menlo Park** **\$1,369,000**  
Three bedroom, two remodeled bath home with new kitchen and designer touches located on a quiet street.



**Diane Rosland**  
650.575.6594  
drosland@apr.com



**Redwood City** **\$490,000**  
First time on the market in over 50 years! Charming 3 bedroom bungalow w/ original hardwood floors lovingly cared for and refinished.