

REFLECTIVE DOME over Scott McNealy's hockey rink irks Portola Valley neighbors. Page 5

The Almanac

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

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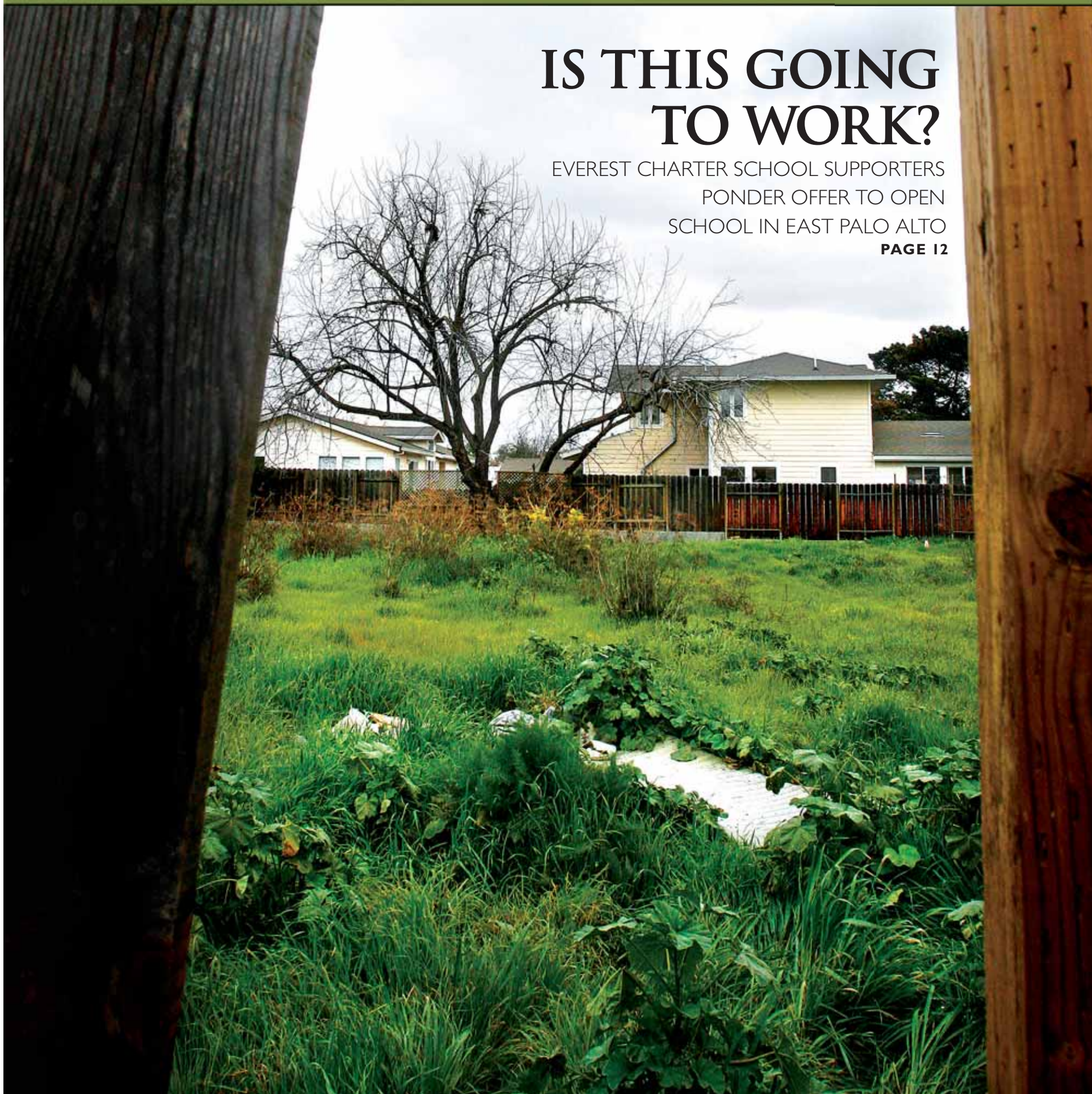
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EVEREST CHARTER SCHOOL SUPPORTERS
PONDER OFFER TO OPEN
SCHOOL IN EAST PALO ALTO
PAGE 12



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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

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On the cover

The Sequoia Union High School District owns this empty lot on Green Street in East Palo Alto and has offered it as a "starter campus" for Everest Public High School. Everest would share a set of portable buildings with a branch of the district's adult school that would use the classrooms and offices at night. Photo by Michelle Le. Story begins on **Page 12**.

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Local News

MENLO PARK | A THERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Reflective dome over hockey rink irks neighbors

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

For hockey enthusiasts, the sssshhhh of skates on ice, the grunts and groans of body checks, the slap of a wooden stick on a hard rubber biscuit ... well, it's music.

To residents of the hills straddling the border between Portola Valley and Palo Alto, such emanations coming from the home of Sun Microsystems Chairman Scott McNealy are not terribly welcome, given the flattened fabric dome that encloses his hockey rink and creates, a neighbor says, something of an echo chamber.

The dome, of a faint golden color, also sits on a visible promontory and reflects sunshine in every direction, says Ted Lamb, who lives across the valley in the uplands of the Golden Oaks neighborhood of Portola Valley. The half hour before noon is particularly bad, he says.

"You cannot even look anywhere near that direction," Mr. Lamb said in an interview. "It's like a nuclear blast each day, every day, forever."

"This thing is like a gigantic white whale that is lying there. It's monstrous," he said. "I have to stare at this thing all day from every window in my house."

Mr. McNealy was away when The Almanac asked for a comment. According to his biography at Sun's Web site, Mr. McNealy, 54, is married, has four sons, and is an "avid hockey player."

If the dome is that bothersome to Mr. Lamb, he figures he's not alone, and he

isn't. Four of his immediate neighbors agree with him, he said.

The Planning Department in Palo Alto, the jurisdiction that oversees the McNealy home, has its code-enforcement people looking into the permitting, said interim Planning Director Curtis Williams in an interview.

Mr. McNealy has a permit for a hockey rink; he does not have one for the dome, Mr. Williams said.

The "very large" home was approved five years ago and finished in 2008, Mr. Williams said, adding that Mr. McNealy may not have the square-footage allowance to enclose the 7,000-square-foot rink in a building. The matter is likely to require review by the Planning Commission and the City Council, he said.

Palo Alto's planning manager has heard from her counterpart in Portola Valley and from at least two Portola Valley residents, Mr. Williams said.

The topic also came up during the waning minutes of the Feb. 11 Portola Valley Town Council meeting.

"For sure, Palo Alto would never have a basis for approving something like this," Planning Manager Leslie Lambert told the council. "It's not a pretty sight," she added. "Ugh. It's horrible."

Peggy Law, who is trying to sell her Palo Alto home that looks down on Mr. McNealy's, said the dome has been in place since about November. The sounds of slap shots are occasional and whether they're audible depends on atmospheric conditions. "It's not quite like gunfire, but it's

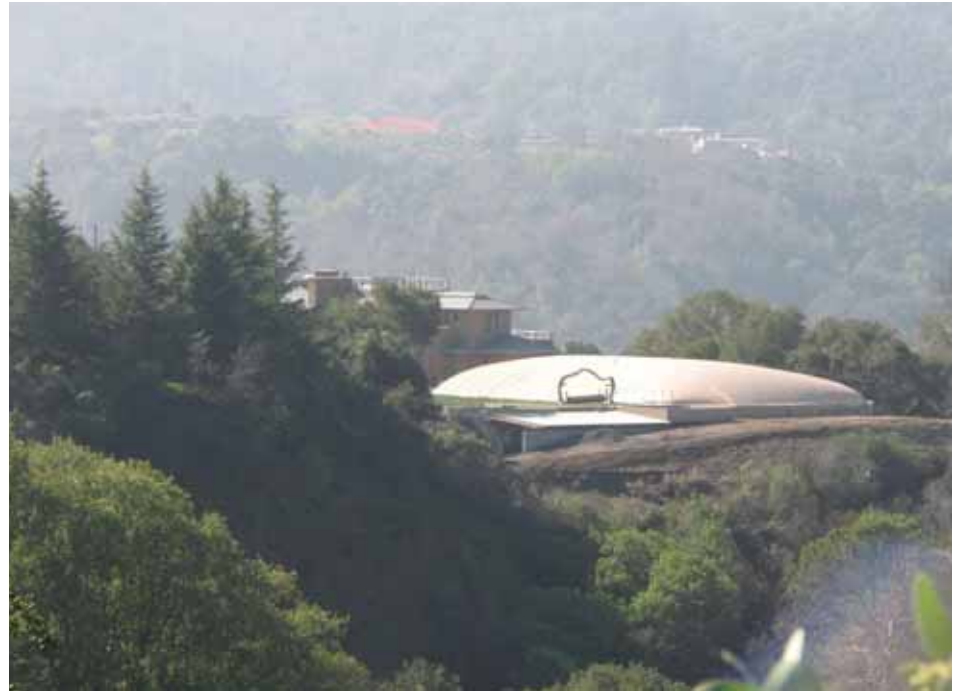


Photo by Peggy Law

The dome enclosing Sun Microsystems Chairman Scott McNealy's 7,000-square-foot hockey rink is reflecting too much sunlight, say neighbors, including those across the valley in the Golden Oaks area of Portola Valley.

pretty noticeable," she said.

The dome itself is a constant irritant, she said. "Nobody could come up here and not say 'What's that?'" she said of potential home buyers. "Now that they know it's there, they're not happy with what they see."

As for the dome's fate: "I've been very pleased (with Palo Alto city staff) and quite

sure it's going to be resolved," Ms. Law said.

Mr. Lamb, a retired builder, estimates that the 200 or 300 homes in Portola Valley from which the dome is visible have each lost about \$300,000 in value.

"It's very destructive to the view of these homes and it's a very ugly thing to have there," he said. ■

MP Presbyterian Church granted expanded use of meeting room

■ Neighboring businesses were concerned about the impact on parking.

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park Presbyterian Church has won approval to increase the number of hours it uses its meeting room in back of the building that houses the ACE hardware store at 700 Santa Cruz Ave. in downtown Menlo Park.

At its Feb. 9 meeting, the Menlo Park Planning Commission voted 6-0 to revise and extend the church's existing use permit to August 2014. Commissioner Vince Bressler abstained over concerns about the impacts on neighboring businesses.

The church currently uses the 5,225 square feet of space on

Sunday mornings and evenings, and for youth group meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Its current use permit, which was set to expire in May, allows for two additional "social events" per month during weekdays.

The new use permit would allow for events to be held from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and all day Sunday, granting the church full use of the space's capacity of 225 people. The church could also use the building for one weekday morning event per week, with attendance limited to 50 people.

The church had originally sought permission to hold events every weekday morning, with an upper limit of 100 attendees, but modified its request to placate neighboring business owners who were concerned about parking space.

See **PRESBYTERIAN**, page 8

Did negligence kill heritage trees?

■ Redwoods in front of former Cadillac dealership that weren't watered for over two years may face removal.

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

Two spindly redwood trees peek out over a row of street trees that stretches to the horizon along El Camino Real, fronting on the property of the abandoned Cadillac dealership. The trees look very much out of place — surrounded by a sea of concrete, bracketing a showroom where no cars have been sold for some time.

And after a long period of neglect, arborists say that one or both of the trees might be going the way of the dealership. The job of maintaining them seems to have fallen through the cracks, as General Motors vacated the space and the property changed hands. Amid a tangle of obligations between the city, two property owners and an absentee tenant, it's unclear where the responsibility lies for their precipitous decline.

"Minor problems"

On a recent drizzly Friday afternoon, devel-

oper Jeff Warmoth stood on the patch of dirt in front of the old Cadillac dealership, looking up at the trees with concern. His firm, San Mateo-based Sand Hill Property Co., took over the site in early 2006 from the previous landowner, a development company co-helmed by John Arrillaga. Sand Hill's proposal for the property — some combination of a grocery store, restaurant, gym, or office — is tentatively scheduled to come before the Planning Commission April 6.

Mr. Warmoth said the trees were in bad shape by the time the property changed hands. The tree on the southern side of the property was a goner by the time Sand Hill took over, he said, but he still holds out hope for the other redwood.

"We'd love to save that tree," he said, noting that Sand Hill has always factored it in to its development plans.

But according to Jim McClenahan — a well-known Portola Valley arborist hired by Sand Hill in December 2005, while the development

See **HERITAGE TREES**, page 8

Atherton expected to hire attorney

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

The Atherton City Council was expected to hire Wynn Furth as the town's new city attorney on Friday, Feb. 13.

Ms. Furth, of Oakland-based McDonough, Holland & Allen, has previously served as the acting city attorney for Palo Alto and as the city attorney of Claremont.

A member of the California Bar Association since 1973, she holds a law degree from Harvard University and a bachelor's degree from Stanford University, according to her law firm's Web site.

Approval of a contract with Ms. Furth was on the agenda of a special council meeting Friday at Holbrook-Palmer Park. The

vote was scheduled to take place after The Almanac's press deadline, but Mayor Jerry Carlson said he did not expect there to be any opposition.

Ms. Furth will replace city attorney Marc Hynes, who announced his resignation in September. The city attorney is one of only two town staff positions hired directly by the council; the city manager is the other one.

"I think she will give us excellent advice and push back on us when she needs to," Mayor Carlson told The Almanac.

Ms. Furth has been interviewed by all but one of the five council members and by key members of town staff, Mr. Carlson said. "I think it was a unanimous choice," he said. "I think (the staff) comments were strongly in support of this firm."

Mr. Carlson said that Ms. Furth's law firm is well-regarded and large enough to handle most of the town's legal services in-house. In recent years, Atherton has had to contract out for legal services on a number of litigation and other issues. "This ought to give us better cost controls," Mr. Carlson said. ■



Sustainable Menlo takes on housing issue

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

Sustainable Menlo Park, a group founded by David Bohannon and helmed by former councilman Chuck Kinney, will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 25, to discuss affordable housing in San Mateo County.

The meeting is set to begin at 5:30 p.m. in the Burgess Recreation Center, in the Civic Center complex between Laurel and Alma streets.

Speakers will include Duane Bay, the county's director of housing, and Chris Mohr, executive director of the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County. Mr. Bay and Mr. Mohr have been involved in efforts to create new affordable housing and rehabilitate homes across the county, according to Mr. Kinney.

Nearly 100 houses in Menlo Park are in some stage of foreclosure, according to the Web site realtytrac.com — most of them in the Belle Haven neighborhood. The city is currently looking into the idea of buying up foreclosed properties and reselling them as "below market rate" units.

Climate action plan

Menlo Park residents have until Sunday, March 1, to offer

their input on the city's climate action plan, according to Dianne Dryer, the city's environmental programs coordinator.

The plan provides a breakdown of the source of carbon emissions in the city, and outlines steps the city can take to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases.

The plan can be viewed on the city's Web site at tinyurl.com/MPclimate. Copies of the plan are also available at City Hall.

Bicycle Commission

Menlo Park is accepting applications to the city's Bicycle Commission. Four 4-year terms on the seven-person commission will expire in April, according to the city clerk. In addition, spots are open for two terms that have been vacated by commission members; those are set to expire in 2011.

The commission is charged with analyzing issues related to bicycle safety and bike-related facilities. Commission members are appointed by the City Council.

Applications can be obtained at tinyurl.com/aq6e2q, at City Hall, or by e-mailing City Clerk Margaret Roberts at MSRoberts@menlopark.org. They must be submitted by 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 5.

Packed agenda

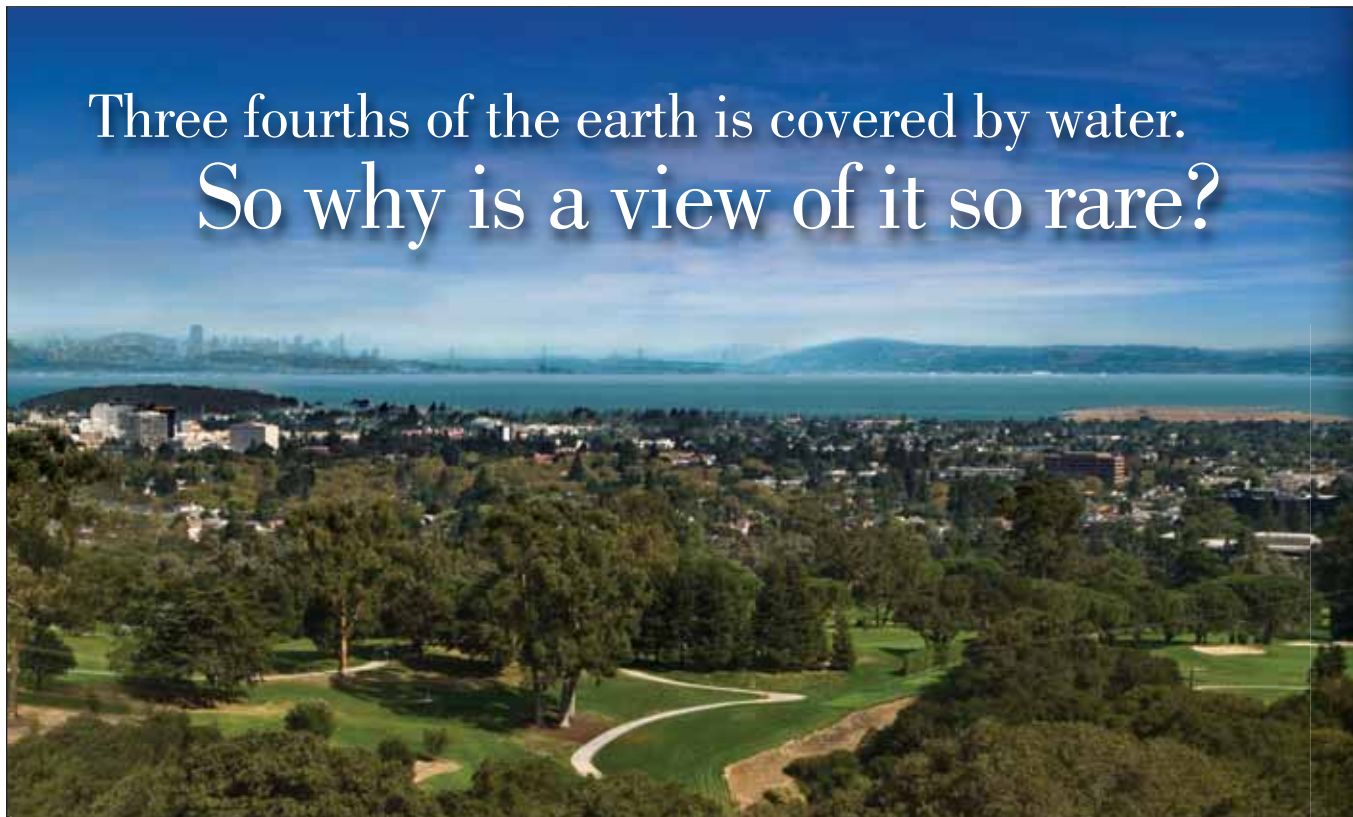
The City Council will not hold its regular meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 17, however the council calendar for Feb. 24 is packed.

At the Feb. 24 meeting, the council is tentatively scheduled to consider mid-year budget cuts; plans for "safe routes" to Encinal School; sending a letter to the High-Speed Rail Authority regarding environmental considerations about plans to shoot high-speed trains up the Peninsula; and approval of the issuance of debt by the local agency that handles waste management issues, presumably for a new waste treatment facility.

Results of a recent city survey are also scheduled to be presented at the Feb. 24 meeting, along with the Menlo Park School District's renovation plans at Hillview School.

The Feb. 24 meeting is set to begin at 5:45 p.m. — earlier than usual — in the council chambers in the Menlo Park Civic Center, between Laurel and Alma Streets. ■

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Verona Ridge

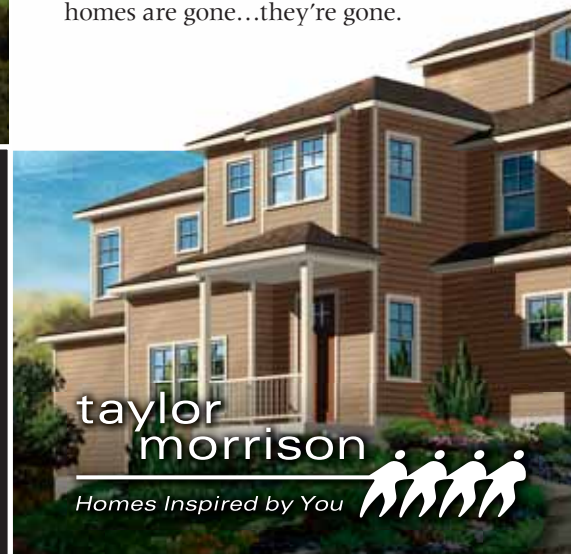
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Former Woodside mayor dies at 88

William Jackson Jr., who was active in Woodside civic affairs for 38 years, died Feb. 5. He was 88.

Soon after moving to Woodside in 1960 from Schenectady, New York, Mr. Jackson became involved in his new hometown.

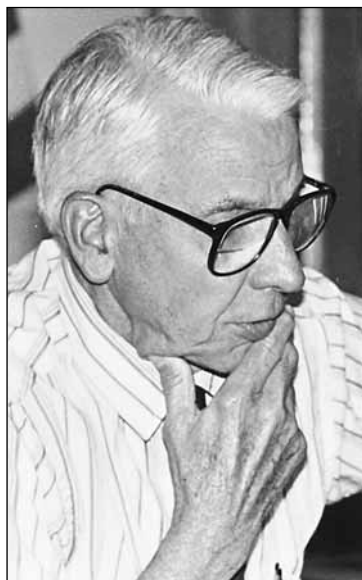
In 1963 he helped start the Woodside Heights Homeowners Association. He served as town treasurer, and sat on the Planning Commission and Architectural Site Review Board.

In 1993, he was elected to the Town Council, and in 1997, fellow council members elected him mayor.

Mr. Jackson lived in Woodside until 1998, when he and his wife, Franky, moved to the San Francisco Towers, a retirement community.

Born in Arlington, Massachusetts, he graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, where he was a member of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity.

He served in World War II and Korea as an engineering specialist in the U.S. Navy. He



1991 file photo

William Jackson Jr. was elected to the Woodside Town Council in 1993. In 1997, fellow council members elected him mayor.

was a member of the Navy Reserve, retiring in 1982 with the rank of captain.

For 28 years, he worked for Lockheed Corp., retiring in 1987.

Mr. Jackson served on the boards of directors of the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford and the Sequoia YMCA in Redwood City. He was a past president of the Peninsula Civil War Round Table.

A longtime member of the Menlo Country Club and the St. Francis Yacht Club, he served as a volunteer at the California Academy of Sciences, where he particularly enjoyed taking care of the penguins, say family members.

An outdoorsman, he was an avid sailor, golfer and swimmer. He is survived by his wife, Franky; daughter Elizabeth Reinhardt; brother George

Lyman Jackson of Dillsburg, Pennsylvania; and three grandsons.

Memorials in his name may be made to the California Academy of Sciences.

MP caregiver gets jail time for check fraud

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

A caregiver for the elderly was sentenced Feb. 2 to six months in county jail after pleading "no contest" to stealing about \$4,000 from two elderly residents in a check-writing scheme at the Atherton Health Care facility at 1275 Crane St. in Menlo Park.

Ramil Mabanta Panlaqui, 42, of Pacifica also was sentenced by Superior Court Judge Clifford Cretan to three years of supervised probation. He was fined \$240 and ordered to pay \$5,030 in restitution and \$2,700 in probation fees.

At the pre-trial conference, the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office had recommended that Mr. Panlaqui be imprisoned for three years, but later agreed

with a maximum one year in jail as recommended in the probation report, Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

Mr. Panlaqui admitted to stealing the checkbooks of two residents, 88 and 75 years old. He said that when they were out of their rooms, he wrote several checks from the account of one resident to that of the other, then withdrew cash from the second account, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Panlaqui was working two full time jobs and raising two small children while his wife was studying nursing and working part time, his attorney John Runfola said in an interview.

The diapering, showering and feeding of elderly residents is "back-breaking work," Mr. Runfola said. "I think he was eventually so exhausted that he came to a breaking point and

made some very bad choices. He has no criminal record and the judge recognized that. I don't see (criminal behavior) happening again in this man's life."

Judge Cretan's sentence included a requirement that Mr. Panlaqui undergo counseling and not accept future employment as a caretaker or housekeeper at board-and-care facilities, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Panlaqui is also forbidden to possess weapons and has lost his Fourth Amendment privileges regarding search and seizure. He has been out of custody under his own recognizance and is scheduled to report to jail on April 10. He received 30 days' credit for time served, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Panlaqui was assigned to the work-furlough program, which allows him to leave jail to go to work, Mr. Runfola said. ■

Man robbed at gunpoint by couple in Willows area

A man and a woman in a car cut off a vehicle driven by a 45-year-old East Palo Alto man, then robbed him at gunpoint around 4:20 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, at the intersection of Menalto Avenue and O'Keefe Street in the Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park, police reported.

No one was injured in the incident, but the robbers got away with the victim's wallet and \$150 in cash, police department

spokeswoman Nicole Acker said. The victim did not report the incident until about 2:30 p.m. that day, she added.

The pair blocked the victim's path on the road with a gray four-door Honda, then the woman got out, pointed a gun at the victim and asked for his wallet, police said.

The victim did not give up his wallet but said he had no cash, so the woman went around to

the unlocked passenger door, opened it, rifled through the contents of the front seat, found the man's wallet and took it, police said.

The man driving the Honda never got out of the vehicle and there were no witnesses, police said.

Anyone with information can call the Menlo Park police at 330-6300 or the anonymous tip line at 650-330-6395.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Energy Retrofit

Q: I keep hearing that in the current economic stimulus package that there will be incentives and/or credits for improving the energy efficiency of homes. Will this be available soon?

A: The Department of Energy is reported to be readying plans to provide money for property owners to retrofit their homes and buildings to make them more energy efficient. It is not clear yet how this program will work but some kind of plan is considered a priority for the new Administration. More

efficient use of energy is one of the surest and simplest ways to cut down on the country's reliance on oil and other unsustainable fuels. Programs like this will also create jobs at a time when the construction industry is contracting.

Not only will the country as a whole use energy more efficiently, but individual property owners will be able to cut their energy costs considerably. When this program is available it will be much in the news. Watch for it so you will be able to take advantage of this beneficial program.

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



EYE CARE NEWS

Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician

SILENT RUNNING

While hybrid automobiles provide decided benefits in increased fuel mileage, less pollution, and quieter performance, there are some trade-offs. According to the American Council of the Blind, because hybrid cars are nearly silent, they pose a danger to blind and visually impaired pedestrians. Traditionally, people with visual impairments have used sensory information from the surrounding environment to navigate streets and other vehicular paths. Because hybrid automobiles often rely on silent electric motors to

generate movement, blind and visually impaired individuals are deprived of a valuable audible clue that helps guide their movement. It should also be noted that this problem is not limited to people with limited seeing ability. Until the issue is addressed by carmakers, caution is advised.

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P.S. According to recent research, even people who are fully sighted utilize hearing (as well as vision) to make street crossing decisions even though they may not realize it.

Mark Schmidt is an American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners Certified Optician licensed by the Medical Board of California. He can be easily reached at Menlo Optical, 1166 University Drive, Menlo Park. 650-322-3900.

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Did negligence kill heritage trees?

HERITAGE TREES

continued from page 5

company was in the process of acquiring the property — Sand Hill didn't do anything to maintain the trees. In his assessment at the time, Mr. McClenahan described the northernmost tree's condition as "fair," and said it would survive with treatment.

"(The tree) had minor problems, but they developed into something major," he said, when reached at his office. "If it had been fertilized and watered, that tree would have looked better than it does today."

Reed Moulds, Sand Hill's project manager for the site, said Sand Hill did take Mr. McClenahan's recommendations — but not until November 2007, nearly two years after the original assessment. The trees are still General Motors' responsibility, Mr. Moulds said.

Though a car hasn't been sold at the site in nearly four years, GM's lease hasn't yet expired, according to Mr. Moulds. And under the terms of the agreement, the tenant is responsible for the landscaping. "Because they haven't been doing it, we've since taken it upon ourselves to maintain the tree, though we don't have control of the site," Mr. Moulds said.

Who's responsible?

According to Mr. Moulds' timeline, that leaves a two-and-a-half-year period in which the trees were not irrigated. Mr. McClenahan and city arborist Juan Alvarez both

said that General Motors had maintained the trees, but all maintenance stopped abruptly when the dealership folded in April 2005.

By the time Sand Hill took over the property from Mr. Arrillaga's development firm, the tree on the southern end of the property was dead, according to Mr. McClenahan's assessment. And the other tree is now also unsalvageable, in his opinion.

Mr. McClenahan is no longer on speaking terms with Sand Hill; they had a falling out over a "payment issue" about a year ago, he said.

Since then, the tree he originally graded as "fair" has "really gone down fast," he said. "I don't know why, because I haven't set foot on the property."

Mr. Alvarez, the city's arborist, said he hadn't made a thorough inspection of the tree recently, but that he agrees it's in "really bad shape."

Mr. Moulds disputed the contention that the tree is dying. To the contrary, he said, Sand Hill is "aggressively attempting" to keep it alive. After hearing that Mr. McClenahan thought the second tree was doomed, he sent a different arborist to evaluate the property on Friday, Feb. 13. According to Sand Hill representatives, the arborist said that, though the tree is "in distress," it has shown signs of improvement and a small amount of new growth in the time since Sand Hill started watering it.

Mr. Moulds declined to com-



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

At least one of the two redwood trees in front of the abandoned Cadillac dealership on El Camino Real will have to be removed. A local arborist says the property owner didn't follow his recommendations for treatment of the trees.

ment on Mr. McClenahan's assertion that his firm and Sand Hill had bickered over payment, saying he didn't think it was newsworthy.

City's response

What can the city do if it finds that the parties charged with the tree's care have been negligent?

According to Menlo Park's heritage tree ordinance, property owners — or those "in control" of the property — must "use reasonable efforts to maintain and preserve all heritage trees ... in a state of good health." If the property owner fails to maintain the trees while he has a development approval pending before the city, the city may

halt any prospective development while it determines mitigation measures for the loss of the tree.

But "willful negligence" is "pretty hard to prove," according to Dianne Dryer, the city's environmental programs coordinator. To her knowledge, the city has never fined anyone for neglecting a tree, she said.

Mr. Alvarez said he signed off on Mr. McClenahan's recommended course of treatment, but that he didn't follow up to make sure the tree was being maintained. "We don't have the money or the staff" to enforce such recommendations, he said.

The tree nearest the driveway of

the car dealership — the one Mr. McClenahan condemned in the original survey — is of more immediate concern to Mr. Alvarez.

"I don't know how that tree's still standing," he said. "It's really hollow."

Associate Planner Megan Fisher said the planning department wasn't aware of Mr. Alvarez's assessment that the tree is a hazard, and that the city hasn't yet granted a permit for removal of the tree. Mr. Moulds said Sand Hill is ready to tear down the dead tree "right away," pending the city's issuance of the permit. ■

iPhone app maker gets funding

Venture capital firms have reportedly been leery to invest in new companies since the financial markets plummeted in October 2008, but one Menlo Park start-up seems to be doing just fine.

SonicMule — makers of the application that produces an image of a flame on your iPhone's screen when you flick it, miming a cigarette lighter — has received a combined \$3.9 million in financing from two venture capital firms.

The company also makes an application that allows users to "play" the iPhone, as if it were a wind instrument.

In a press release, co-founder Jeff Smith thanked the firm that gave the company its first wave of funding last summer for helping him to "launch such an odd business."

Water conservation program ahead for Portola Valley

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

We don't have a water crisis, Portola Valley Councilwoman Maryann Moise Derwin said during a discussion of water conservation at the Feb. 11 council meeting.

What we have, she continued, is a water-use efficiency crisis. Ms. Derwin said she was quoting a landscape architect who is advising her in her energetic trimming of water use at her home. Being more efficient is a mind-broadening experience, she said.

Planning Manager Leslie Lambert brought the council a proposal for a water conservation program, summarized in a flier that would outline ways to cut water usage in the kitchen, bathroom, laundry

and outdoors.

During the public comment period, former mayor Bill Lane talked about officials in the Southwest in general and Southern California in particular who are turning a thirsty gaze on Northern California's waters.

"It's going to be very difficult to imagine that Northern California is going to fare well in this debate, these ongoing debates, for the next 10, 15, 20 years," he said.

No dead things in town's cooler

Portola Valley's natural history archives, a collection of 201 preserved items including songbirds, rocks, mammals and pine cones, is more or less now all fitted inside a walk-in closet in one of the two general purpose activity rooms in the town's community hall.

What's missing are the frozen items, mostly birds. There's an alcove in the room that would accommodate a small freezer, and Nature and Science Committee Chair Yvonne Tryce is reportedly looking for literature on a freezer that would fit, but it likely won't matter if she finds one.

Town Manager Angela Howard, at the Town Council's Feb. 11 meeting, said she has ordered a small refrigerator for the spot.

Councilwoman Maryann Moise Derwin, who broached the matter in her role as liaison to the nature committee, summed up the council's position, should Ms. Tryce inquire: "We've already ordered (the refrigerator) and it will not contain dead things." ■

PRESBYTERIAN

continued from page 5

The church had also sought to use the space all day on Saturdays.

The church's increased use of the space would not conflict with the majority of business operations downtown, Associate Planner Thomas Rogers said. And representatives from Menlo Park Presbyterian pointed out that weekday morning events would bring potential shoppers to the downtown area.

Jo English, a chiropractor with a nearby office who rallied neighboring businesses to respond to the church's proposal, said she was relatively happy with the concessions made by the church — though she was still concerned about noise at weeknight events, and parking issues on Sundays. Dr. English said she would "probably not" appeal the Planning Commission's decision to the City Council. ■

Woodside School seeks to renew parcel tax

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Woodside Elementary School officials are hoping voters will agree to an eight-year extension of parcel tax that helps fund the school.

The school board voted 5-0 at a special meeting on Feb. 2 to place the renewal of the parcel tax on a special, all-mail election May 5. The parcel tax currently costs property owners \$242 annually, and will continue at current rates — plus an annual cost-of-living increase — if it is renewed.

The current parcel tax measure is set to expire in June.

The parcel tax renewal will appear as Measure C on ballots that will be sent out on April 6. Voters in the district may return the ballots any time as long as they reach the county elections office by May 5. Voter registration closes April 20.

Measure C needs a two-thirds yes vote in order to pass. Exemptions from the parcel tax for senior citizens will carry over if it is renewed.

The parcel tax raises about \$240,000 per year, providing the K-8 Woodside school district with about 3.5 percent of its

annual budget. The money goes directly into the classrooms and cannot be used for administrative salaries or facilities, according to Jessica Lonergan, the chair of the parcel tax renewal committee.

“This is a straight renewal, not an increase. And it’s funds that the state cannot take away,” Ms. Lonergan said. “This really puts education back in the hands in of the town.”

Ms. Lonergan said the renewal committee is trying to run a low-cost campaign, relying

mostly on volunteers reaching out to their fellow parents and neighbors. A mailer about the election will go out to parents after ski week, she said.

“We’re up to the challenge, and we’ve got a great community. So far we’ve had very positive feedback,” she said.

Information about the parcel tax renewal campaign is at www.WoodsidePride.com and election information is available from the San Mateo County elections office at www.ShapeTheFuture.org. ■

Gun-brandishing man arrested

A small number of apartment residents were evacuated and taken to the Menlo Park Civic Center on Thursday, Feb. 5, after a 62-year-old man allegedly waved a gun in the direction of a garbage collector, then entered an apartment building on the 400 block of Waverley Street.

Menlo Park police arrested Kenneth Gfroerer about two hours later, at around 1 p.m., after he turned himself in, said Nicole Acker, spokeswoman for the Menlo Park Police Department. He was booked on charges

of brandishing a weapon, Ms. Acker said.

Employees of Allied Waste of San Mateo County claim to have had encounters with Mr. Gfroerer in the past, police said. In this incident, the employee told police that he “quickly retreated” when he saw the gun, around 11 a.m., and called 911.

Police were not immediately successful in making contact with Mr. Gfroerer, and so evacuated a “small” number of residents to the council chambers, Ms. Acker said.

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Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Breaking Stereotypes: New approaches to prevent, detect and treat women's heart disease

Cindi Lubeck had noticed that she tired out just a quarter-mile into her usual two-mile treadmill walks, but she thought it might have something to do with the 14 weeks of work she'd just completed in Louisiana. She had walked for miles every day through the ruin caused by three hurricanes, as a catastrophe insurance adjuster. And she was taking snowboarding lessons, which explained, she thought, the recurring pain in her right arm. Her shortness of breath, she thought, came from the dust she had inhaled while cleaning out her mother's attic.

A heart attack was not on her list of explanations, not even late one night when, trying to rest, she found she couldn't lie down without feeling anxious and nauseated. "I felt really weird," she said, "like everything was shutting down. There were 30 seconds when nothing functioned. The pain was in my right arm, not my left. I thought it had to be pulled muscles. Then I got really sick to my stomach." She called 911, and a couple of hours later, after a series of tests, doctors confirmed that she had had a heart attack.



Two years post a heart attack, Cindi Lubeck is ready to share her experience to help other women become more aware of the risks they face—and the measures they can take.

She was only 49. She had been in great shape all her life, so much so that the California Department of Forestry had hired her as its first woman firefighter. Heart disease was definitely not part of her thinking, even though both her parents had developed heart problems later in life.

"We know that effective treatment is not as simple as opening a blocked artery or improving diet and exercise."

— Dr. Jennifer Tremmel, Director,
Women's Heart Health Clinic

Two years later, Lubeck understands much more about her heart and about how to take care of herself. She is a patient at the Stanford Hospital & Clinics program, Women's Heart Health, one of only three dozen such centers in the U.S. dedicated to women's cardiovascular diagnosis, care and research. Her doctor is Clinic Director Jennifer Tremmel, MD, who offered Lubeck a comprehensive treatment plan that began with the discovery that Lubeck had a number of previously unseen problems with her heart. Treatment at the Women's Heart Health clinic is based on the most up-to-date research about sex differences in cardiovascular disease. It also includes an innovative care adjunct, the Heart-Mind Connection.

"It's our hope that, using this recent data, which clarifies the nature of those sex differences, we can help women do a better job of protecting their heart health and of recovering

from heart disease," Tremmel said. "We know that effective treatment is not as simple as opening a blocked artery or improving diet and exercise."

Understanding the risks

Women's health has only recently become a field of study driving significant research to detect and analyze the differences in women's response to disease and illness. The startling statistics on women's heart health demand an immediate and proactive awareness in women and in the medical community. Heart disease kills more American women than any other illness or accident. Most women think of breast cancer as their biggest health threat. But six times as many women die from heart disease, about 500,000 each year. An estimated 8 million American women have heart disease—10 percent of all women age 45 to 65, and one in four of women over age 65.

For reasons not yet understood, women are more likely to die within one year of a heart attack than are men. Women who survive that first heart attack are twice as likely as men are to have a second attack. Researchers are also finding treatment differentials. And, studies show, women are more likely to suffer depression and stress which increases their chance of developing heart disease or having recurrent heart disease.

Yet little is being done, Tremmel said, to address that particular influence

on women's heart health. That lack spurred the Clinic, in collaboration with Stanford's Center for Neurosciences in Women's Health, to assemble the Heart-Mind Connection, a creative new program aimed at the side of heart disease not isolated to the heart itself. "A person who has a heart attack has an incredible emotional experience to deal with," said Marcia Stefanick, PhD, a member of the program's coordinating group. "We are eager to provide a clinical setting that really does take care of women who are at the intersection of heart disease and depression."

"I am me again!"



Cindi Lubeck now has the stamina to get out a paint brush, go up a ladder, and put finishing touches on a home improvement project.



Time on the treadmill is once again part of her life.



She's also catching up on her gardening chores.

Heart attack symptoms women should know

Chest pain is the classic signal of heart attack, but that pain can also feel like pressure, tightness, squeezing or burning. Other symptoms women may experience as part of an attack are:

- shortness of breath
- nausea or vomiting
- arm or shoulder pain, usually left-sided but may be right-sided
- pain in neck, jaw, back or abdomen
- fatigue

Preventing a heart attack

A healthy diet, appropriate weight and daily exercise reduce your chances of heart disease. Other steps to take include:

- know your family's heart health history
- check your blood pressure regularly—optimal is less than 120/80
- check your cholesterol at age 20 and at least every five years afterwards
- don't smoke

Soon after Lubeck arrived at Stanford, she learned that she was facing not just one blocked artery in her heart, but also that parts of her arteries were constricting when they should have been dilating, especially during times of physical exertion and emotional stress. Tremmel inserted a stent, a tube-shaped stainless steel mesh, to hold open one of Lubeck's narrowed arteries, selected medications to regulate her artery's function and explained that a heart healthy diet must be low in cholesterol, not just fats and sugars. When Lubeck complained of waking at night gasping for breath, Tremmel sent her to Stanford's Sleep Medicine Clinic for an evaluation. She had sleep apnea, but responded well to treatment.

Apart from the heart

Helped to a more restful sleep, Lubeck felt much better, but still experienced anxiety when she was short of breath or felt chest pain. Tremmel noticed, and asked her a question Lubeck says was a turning point in her recovery: "How are you, apart from your heart?"

Tremmel is an interventional cardiologist, trained in invasive repairs to open blocked heart arteries, but, with an undergraduate degree in psychology, she understands that psychosocial factors can affect physical ailments, and vice versa. "I can treat people with medications," she said, "open their arteries, tell them all the right things to do, but there's always this elephant in the room. It's difficult to address, but there's no doubt that anxiety, depression and stress must be considered if we're going to treat the whole woman who has heart disease."

Providing treatment for those psychosocial factors is an important part of the healing process, Tremmel said. One of

the Clinic's primary goals is analysis of its treatments' effectiveness, within the frame of interdisciplinary research. The Clinic team includes not only cardiovascular experts, but also behavioral science clinicians who understand medicine.

"I wanted to meet other women with heart disease to find out where they were with it and to see how we could help each other."

— Clinic patient Cindi Lubeck

Women's Heart Health at Stanford screens every woman who comes in to gauge her emotional state. "We want to see her as a whole," said Clinic psychologist Meg Marnell. "If you were suddenly told you had some kind of heart disease, it's very frightening. And that fear increases the general stress of life. We know a lot about the impact of stress on diseases."

As one way to help women handle stress, Tremmel and her behavioral science colleagues created a mindfulness seminar. Tremmel asked Lubeck if she'd be interested. "I was like, 'Yes, the more information, the better!' And I wanted to meet other women with heart disease," she said, "to find out where they were with it and to see how we could help each other."

Get smart

Several Web sites offer in-depth information about heart health. They include:

- www.womenheart.org (The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease)
- www.nhlbi.nih.gov (The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health)
- www.americanheart.org (American Heart Association)
- www.womensheart.stanfordhospital.com (Stanford Hospital & Clinics Women's Heart Health Program)

Diagnostic tests to consider

Sometimes, more than one test is necessary to determine if you have heart disease. The options include:

- CT angiogram or cardiac MRI
- an EKG to measure the heart's electrical activity
- cardiac MRI, CT angiogram
- a stress test with echo cardiography or nuclear profusion

To contact the Women's Heart Health Clinic, phone: (650) 736-0516; email: herheart@stanford.edu

New avenues to recovery

She learned techniques that allowed her to talk herself through those moments when she felt chest pressure. "It showed me I had more control over this than I previously thought," Lubeck said. She found that the more she used that approach, the less emotional and afraid she felt. Having others to talk to about her feelings and experiences, and having the chance to be a help to others, changed her attitude about her illness in a profound way.

"You've got to be patient and not beat yourself up about doing well and then having a horrible week," she said. "You



Cindi Lubeck checks in regularly with Women's Heart Health Clinic Director Dr. Jennifer Tremmel (l) and the Clinic's nurse-practitioner Mary Nejedly. Tremmel is checking Lubeck's ankle pulse, one of the ways to gauge heart health.

have to do what you need to do for that day and think about being better."

The mindfulness seminar, said the Clinic's nurse-practitioner Mary Nejedly, gives women skills to deal with stress. "But they also realize they are not alone, that there are others like them, especially if they are younger women." For years, the stereotypical heart disease patient was an overweight, sedentary middle-aged man. That's changing, Nejedly said. "Women are smart and once they have the information, they do pay attention to their risk factors and to symptoms. They might say, 'I have a family history. Maybe I should get checked out.' It's just taking the time to do that. Women have to put their health higher on their to-do list."

Nejedly often recalls the 61-year-old mother of a friend who had always worried about her husband's health more than her own. Two weeks after a doctor told her he thought her chest discomfort was probably heartburn, she died of a massive heart attack.

The program's goal, Marnell said, "is to normalize the idea that everyone's going to have some kind of a stress reaction to getting a new diagnosis. We can help them move through that more quickly. We want to teach them how to be a part of their treatment and to keep a positive attitude."

Confident and practiced in her ability to work through her tense moments, Lubeck is back on the treadmill and recently flew to Florida on her own, for the first time since her heart attack, and was able to keep up with her toddler grandson for a week. She's also volunteering at American Heart Association health education fairs. "I am me again," she said, "and, as always, I love life!"

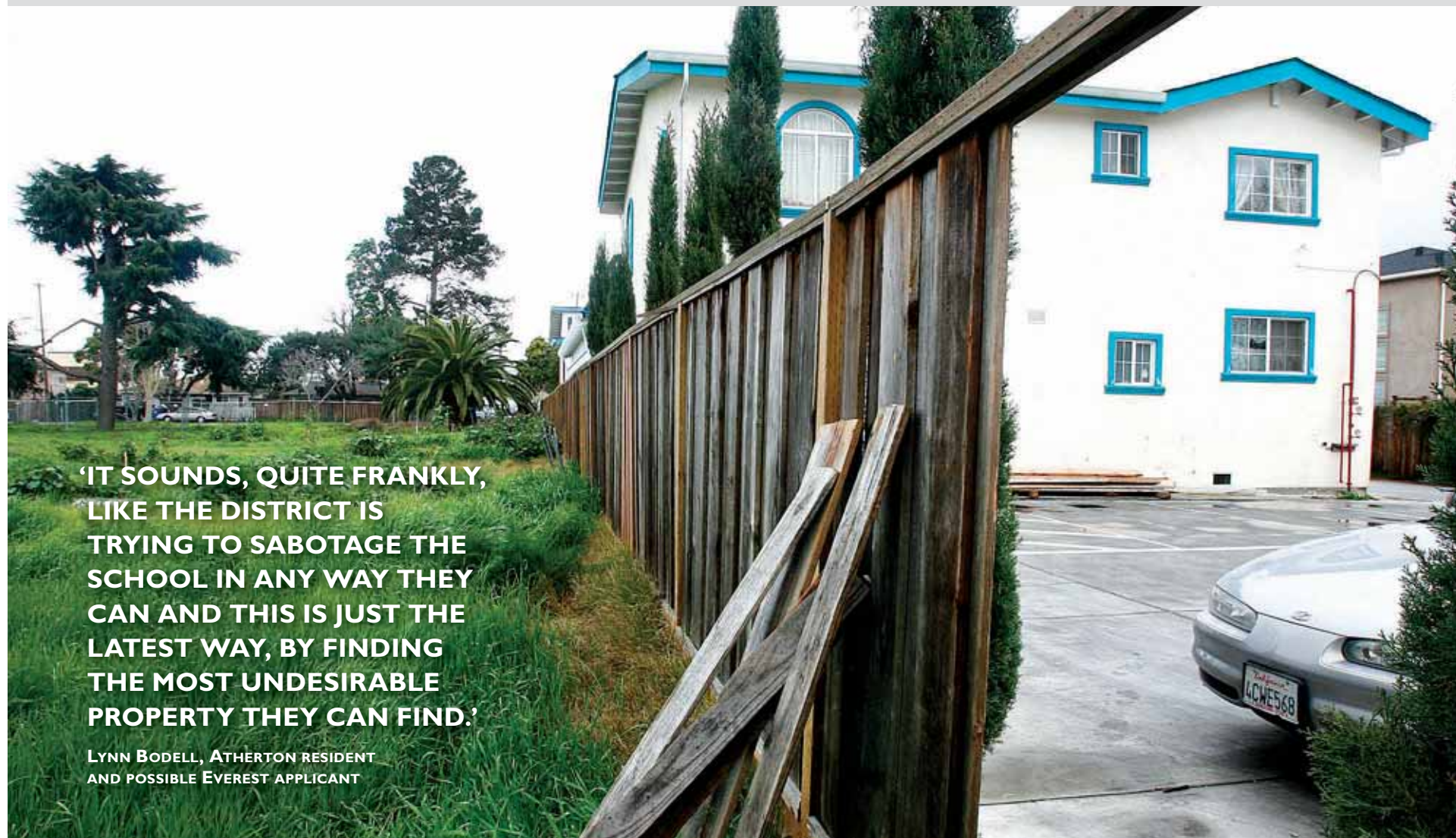
IS THIS GOING TO WORK?

EVEREST CHARTER SCHOOL SUPPORTERS
PONDER OFFER TO OPEN SCHOOL IN EAST PALO ALTO

STORY BY DAVE BOYCE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELLE LE

‘IT SOUNDS, QUITE FRANKLY, LIKE THE DISTRICT IS TRYING TO SABOTAGE THE SCHOOL IN ANY WAY THEY CAN AND THIS IS JUST THE LATEST WAY, BY FINDING THE MOST UNDESIRABLE PROPERTY THEY CAN FIND.’

LYNN BODELL, ATHERTON RESIDENT
AND POSSIBLE EVEREST APPLICANT



If Everest Public High School opens in September with 100 freshmen, as seems increasingly likely, the charter school may well settle for its first two years in a low-rent, high-crime community on the southern edge of the county.

From the outside, its portable buildings on concrete slabs at 763 Green St. in East Palo Alto won't win any architectural awards. And the classrooms and offices will be taken over in the evenings by a long-planned adult school.

Are appearances and location and shared space that important when the matter at hand is providing teens with an education designed to get them ready for and into four-year colleges?

It depends on whom you ask.

Everest spokeswoman Diane Tavenner told *The Almanac* that she “feels very confident we’ll open. There certainly is a great deal of hard work ahead of us.”

With negotiations over the school's location ongoing between Everest and the Sequoia Union High School District, neither side was ready to talk details, but *The Almanac* spoke to a few parents looking to send their kids to Everest. They reserved their judgment, as well as their enthusiasm. Safety and traffic topped their lists of concerns.

The Almanac also talked with the East Palo Alto police about the community around the school site and issues of safety.

Green Street residents, with the exception of the next-door neighbor, did not disguise their lack of enthusiasm for a high school on a street block that, they say, has too few sidewalks and too much speeding traffic.

An offer

The Sequoia district faced a Feb. 1 state deadline to make an offer of facilities to Everest.

Though Sequoia's board rejected Everest's petition for a charter in September 2008 and advocated against it before the San Mateo County Board of Education, which denied the petition in December, the Advisory

Commission on Charter Schools in Sacramento gave the Everest charter request a 9-0 recommendation on Feb. 3. The state Board of Education is expected to approve it in March.

The district based its decision on what it insists is a lack of community support, financial problems, and the school's attraction to white students who might otherwise attend two undersubscribed charter high schools in East Palo Alto.

Everest would be modeled on Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City. Admission to Summit is by lottery because there are many more applicants than seats. About a quarter of its students live in the Almanac's circulation area. Summit's founders are also leading the effort to establish Everest.

Summit is in its sixth year and has an ethnically and academically diverse student body, a four-year-college acceptance rate of more than 95 percent, and costs that run thousands of dollars less per student than the high school district's.

The 13-page facilities offer proposed by the Sequoia district,

approved unanimously by the trustees on Jan. 28, offered four classrooms in portable buildings, with furnishings to include desks and chairs along with library shelves, cafeteria tables, and one room outfitted with water and sinks for science labs.

The offer did not address where those cafeteria tables or bookcases would go, nor did it talk about bathrooms, office space or the details around sharing the space with the adult school. Everest had asked for five classrooms.

Above: This empty field at 763 Green St. in East Palo Alto abuts the Tokaikolo Christian Church and is the proposed site for Everest Public High School, the planned charter school modeled on Summit Prep and likely to win state approval in March.

sion-making, she said.

District spokeswoman Bettylu Smith said the offer “does not address every small detail,” and that more will come after Everest

‘WE CONSIDERED ANY AVAILABLE SPACE IN THE DISTRICT AND IDENTIFIED THE GREEN STREET PROPERTY AS THE BEST SITE.’

BETTYLU SMITH, SEQUOIA DISTRICT SPOKESWOMAN

Ms. Tavenner said she is working with Everest's attorney to prepare a detailed response, due March 1, that describes the school's needs.

As it stands, the offer's shortcomings reflect the district's “lack of coherence” in its deci-

responds.

The offer appeared to undercut some of the district's reasons for rejecting Everest's petition in September. District officials claimed that Everest would draw students away from other East

Palo Alto charter high schools, but this proposal would place Everest in their vicinity.

Similarly, Ms. Tavenner said, the letter accompanying the offer describes East Palo Alto students as “those most in need of a small-school program focused on college preparation,” a position at odds with the district’s refutation of Everest’s claim that there were such students in the district.

“It sort of leaves me speechless, to be honest with you,” Ms. Tavenner said.

Everest applicants

So far, the school has received 237 applications, Ms. Tavenner said. Of the first 220, 44 percent were from Redwood City and 21 percent from Menlo Park, she said.

About 12 percent came from East Palo Alto, with Woodside and Portola Valley at 5 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

Ethnically, the list includes 44 percent of applicants claiming Hispanic heritage, 38 percent white, 6 percent Asian and 3 percent African-American, Ms. Tavenner said.

The deadline to apply is March 6. For more information, go to www.speverest.org.

Nineteen percent of Sequoia district students live in East Palo Alto, said Ms. Smith, the district spokeswoman.

Parents respond

Everest would be on Green Street for its first two years — a “starter campus,” Sequoia district Assistant Superintendent James Lianides has said.

Before voting to approve the offer, Trustee Gordon Lewin said of the Green Street location that it “will create a different mix of students enrolled than if it were somewhere else.”

That site reflects an ongoing uncooperative attitude from the district, said Atherton resident Lynn Bodell, whose daughter attends Summit and whose eighth-grade son, though entitled to go to Summit, is expressing a preference for Everest.

Ms. Bodell’s first concern is safety, particularly with regard to traffic. “I know the way high schoolers cross streets en masse,” she said in an interview.

Security of teaching materials in a classroom to be shared with an adult school at night is another issue. “What’s the (Everest) teacher supposed to do with all the materials,” she asked. “Pack them up every night?”

Then there’s convenience. The Sequoia district extends from Belmont south to the county line in East Palo Alto, and west to Portola Valley and Woodside.

Everest, Ms. Bodell said, should be in the middle, not the edge, of the district so as to ease the commute for parents hard-pressed to

WHY IS SEQUOIA DISTRICT INVOLVED?

The Sequoia Union High School District must offer facilities to charter schools serving predominantly district students because of the terms of a series of successful ballot measures it sponsored, starting in 2001: It proposed \$323 million in bond measures that voters were able to approve with less than the normal two-thirds majority required for tax increases.

One tradeoff for the lower voter-approval threshold: Districts must provide facilities for charters.

About \$4 million would go to Everest, much of it already spent to acquire the buildings and the land.

The district will also owe Everest between \$7,000 and \$8,000 per student, the precise amount to be defined by the state.

deliver and retrieve their kids on work days.

“It sounds, quite frankly, like the district is trying to sabotage the school in any way they can and this is just the latest way, by finding the most undesirable property they can find,” Ms. Bodell said.

In separate interviews, Mr. Lianides and district Superintendent Pat Gemma said other sites had been considered, but neither would say where they were. Added Ms. Smith: “We considered any available space in the district and identified the Green Street property as the best site.”

A SamTrans spokeswoman said bus routes originating at train stations in Redwood City and Palo Alto stop along Donohoe Street about a block away from the proposed school, and there are sidewalks all the way to the school.

Maurine Xavier of Redwood City has applied to Everest for her daughter who, Ms. Xavier said, is neither emotionally nor academically equipped to attend a large comprehensive high school.

“I would want to see the location for its safety, but other than that, I don’t have a problem with it,” she said. With an adequate facility as a given, she said, the critical piece is the education model.

The Tokaikolo Christian Church is adjacent to the site. The Almanac asked Deacon Pulusila Bloomfield, who supports the proposed school, if he had a message to Everest applicants from Atherton, Woodside, Menlo Park and Portola Valley.

“I think it will be a good idea to have their children come here and experience life in East Palo Alto and not be afraid to get together with other kids who have a hard time in life,” he said. “Sometimes, I think that we set ourselves apart about what’s going on with our neighbors. ... If we can lay down our differences

and work together, I think we can make East Palo Alto a better place to stay and live.”

Asked to comment on the idea of driving her daughter to and from East Palo Alto every day, Ms. Xavier, who is self-employed, said she would not back down. “If we’re really a cross-section of society in San Mateo County, then you’re not going to not send your kid to this school,” she said.

The safety question

The cross-section of society that lives in East Palo Alto lives with more crime than the rest of the county.

East Palo Alto had 1,314 assaults for three years starting in 2003, and 1,065 for three years starting in 2006, a 20 percent drop, according to a December 2008 report from East Palo Alto Police Chief Ron Davis. (The report is available at tinyurl.com/d7yn8x.)

‘I THINK IT WILL BE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE THEIR CHILDREN COME HERE AND EXPERIENCE LIFE IN EAST PALO ALTO AND NOT BE AFRAID TO GET TOGETHER WITH OTHER KIDS WHO HAVE A HARD TIME IN LIFE.’

PULUSILA BLOOMFIELD, DEACON



Deacon Pulusila Bloomfield of the Tokaikolo Christian Church looks forward to Everest moving in next door, seeing it as an opportunity for families from different socio-economic backgrounds to get to know one another.

By comparison, Menlo Park had 402 and 281 assaults, respectively, during the same periods, though the latter number stops at June 2008. (The report is available at tinyurl.com/bbnxdq.)

Of the 1,500 total crimes reported in East Palo Alto in 2008, 2.5 percent, or 38, happened on Green Street, police Crime Analyst Doris Cohen said. None was violent, and there was one negligent gunshot in which no one was injured.

Included with the city’s \$6 million in grants to fight crime is \$200,000 for ShotSpotter, a

detection system that blankets the city with sensors to identify the location of gunshots, said Capt. Carl Estelle, precinct captain for the neighborhood that includes Green Street.

ShotSpotter gives the street address of the incident and can indicate whether the gunfire occurred in the front or back yard, Capt. Estelle said in an interview. Since March 2008, the system identified two incidents on Green Street, both after 10 p.m., he said.

The grants include \$420,000 to suppress gang activities and classes to help kids resist their appeal. Over 250 students have graduated, Chief Davis said.

One Green Street resident alleged that traffic reaches 60 or 70 mph there. Capt. Estelle acknowledged that some vehicles

working with the Sequoia district. We welcome them.”

Being neighborly

State law does not require school districts to go through city planning departments when building schools, but districts sometimes meet with affected communities in efforts to be a good neighbor.

The Sequoia district held a community meeting in East Palo Alto on Feb. 3 at the nearby Apostolic Church. Green Street resident David Winsberg, who said in an e-mail that he represents the street’s residents, said the meeting produced “general uproar in the community because, mainly, the increase in traffic on a narrow, residential street and because the whole project was rammed down our throats. There has been no study of the community done for this site.”

The district, Mr. Winsberg told The Almanac, didn’t think through its choice of locations. The proposed school, he said, “is in the middle of a residential block that doesn’t have sidewalks and doesn’t have a bus stop” at the northern end of Green Street, although there are stops at the opposite end. But, he said, there are no sidewalks from those bus stops.

“We get a tremendous amount of very high-speed cross-town speeders running through here,”

he added. Green Street is a cut-through route because, despite petitions signed by all but two of the street’s residents, the city has not installed slowing mechanisms such as speed bumps, he said.

District spokeswoman Smith said in an e-mail that of the 150 people invited to the Feb. 3 community meeting, “a couple dozen” showed up.

“In the weeks and months ahead, we will build on this developing relationship with neighbors, keeping them informed of important milestones in the process,” she said. ■

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“In the weeks and months ahead, we will build on this developing relationship with neighbors, keeping them informed of important milestones in the process,” she said. ■

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

MENLO PARK CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
NEW HILLVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Menlo Park City School District has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed New Hillview Middle School Project to evaluate its environmental effects. The document will be available for public review at the Menlo Park City School District Office, located at 181 Encinal Avenue in Atherton, California, for a period of 45 days from Wednesday, February 18, 2009, to Friday, April 3, 2009. Copies of the document will also be available at the Menlo Park City Library and the Atherton Town Library. It will also be posted on the internet at www.mpcsd.org/facilities. In addition, a Community meeting to orient the public to the Draft EIR document and process, and to provide an update on design, has been scheduled for Thursday February 26, 2009, at the Hillview School Library at 7:00 p.m. This meeting will be conducted as a presentation by District staff. A Public Hearing to take verbal comments has been scheduled for Thursday March 19, 2009, during a special meeting of the Board of Education at the Hillview School Library at 7:00 p.m.

Upon review of the document, comments regarding any or all parts of its content may be made, in writing, to the Menlo Park City School District. Comments should be addressed to Ahmad Sheikholeslami, P.E., Director of Facility Planning and Construction, Menlo Park City School District, 181 Encinal Avenue, Atherton, CA 94027, before the end of the 45-day review period. For further information, please contact 650-321-7140, Option 6, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Published in The Almanac on February 18, 2009.

Author, poet comes 'home' to speak in Portola Valley

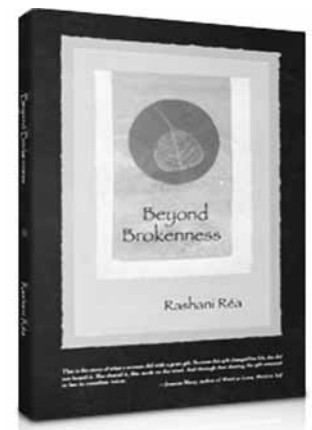
Rashani Rea, known as Tori Harris while growing up in Portola Valley, will present a talk, "The Importance of Place," and sign her book, "Beyond Brokenness," at a 7:30 p.m. event on Monday, Feb. 23, at the Portola Valley Library.

Ms. Rea, who now lives in Hawaii, is returning to town as part of a six-week book-signing tour in the United States and Canada. "Beyond Brokenness" is one of five books published by Ms. Rea. Her presentation will examine the impact of growing up in Portola Valley several decades ago.

A poet, musician, artist and Dharma teacher, Ms. Rea lived in Portola Valley until she was 14, attending schools in the Portola Valley School District. Her father, George Harris, was a painter who also taught art history and related courses at Stanford, and her mother, Christina Harris, was a poet and artist, Ms. Rea says.

Inspired by Martin Luther King and Joan Baez, Ms. Rea became a social activist as a girl, she says. In the early 1960s, she raised money for equal housing opportunity in the Bay Area. She began a school project to raise money to buy a washing machine for a Korean orphanage, inspired by what she learned from two Korean orphans who had just arrived in Portola Valley, she says.

Before moving to Hawaii, where she offers retreats at her home on the big island, she lived in France, and for some time worked with Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, a renowned



writer and researcher in the field of death and dying.

"Beyond Brokenness" is a personal story that explores grief and the path from it leading to equanimity and joy. It has collages and poetry, including a major poem that was set to music and performed in the Royal Opera House in London, Ms. Rea says.

Former Ormondale teacher Robin Toews, now retired, is helping to spread the word about her former fourth-grade student's library program. As an 8-year-old, Ms. Rea "wrote lovely poetry, and drew and painted beautifully," Ms. Toews writes in an e-mail.

"She is lively, enthusiastic and very talented," she says. "She has a presence developed from working with poets and seers, and gives workshops on self-fulfillment ... where she lives and throughout the world."

The event is free. The library is in the Portola Valley Town Center at 765 Portola Road.

Menlo Park Firefighters' Association

District 10 of Local 2400, I.A.F.F.
P.O. Box 534 Menlo Park, CA 94026-0534
800.218.9081



February 10th, 2009

Dear Members of the Community;

The Menlo Park Firefighters' Association would like to thank the community for its participation in our 2008 Annual Toy and Food Drive. In addition to the community at large, the Association would like to recognize the following local businesses for their assistance in the drive...

Allied Waste Services of Belmont	Fitness 101 of Menlo Park	Sharon Green
Allstate Insurance of Menlo Park	Goodwin & Procter of Menlo Park	Shepard Land Company
Atherton Town Hall	Heffernan Insurance of Palo Alto	Sherman & Sterling of Menlo Park
Bank of America of Menlo Park	Holy Trinity Episcopal Church	Sunset Magazine
Bingham McCutchen of Menlo Park	La Entrada School	TA Associates of Menlo Park
Burgess Gym	Los Solones of Menlo Park	The Almanac of Menlo Park
Carnegie Foundation of Palo Alto	Martha's Bakery of Menlo Park	The Menlo Park
Cashin Company of Menlo Park	Master Styling Salon of Menlo Park	Chamber of Commerce
Cheeky Monkey Toys of Menlo Park	Mayfield Corporation of Menlo Park	The Menlo Park Children's Center
Comerica Bank of Menlo Park	Menlo Park Personnel Department	The Menlo Park Library
Comerica Bank of Palo Alto	Oak Creek Apartments	The Menlo Park Police Department
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Dr. Scott Kaloust of Menlo Park	Pacific National Bank of Menlo Park	Tyco Electronics of Menlo Park
Evalve Incorporated of Menlo Park	Roberts Preschool	University Child
Fidelity National Title of	Robinson & Company	Center of Menlo Park
Redwood City	of Menlo Park	Village Stationers of Menlo Park

This season sixty-five barrels in fifty-six locations throughout the local area collected donations from our generous citizens. In addition to the efforts of Menlo Park Firefighters, other public service agencies such as San Mateo Firefighters, Redwood City Firefighters and the Belmont/San Carlos South Firefighters assisted with providing toys for this years Toy and Food Drive. The goods were distributed to nearly three thousand children throughout our community.

The recipients included; patients on two floors of Stanford Children's Hospital, five hundred children at the Menlo Park VA Hospital, over fifteen hundred children at Saint Anthony's on Christmas Eve with another five hundred children at St. Anthony's on Christmas Day. The Saint Anthony's food kitchen was stocked with over twenty barrels of food, and the Second Harvest Food Bank was supported which helped their efforts to provide a Holiday meal to members of the community.

Without the full support of program participants like the ones listed above, the Association's Annual Toy and Food Drive would not be possible. On behalf of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District and the Menlo Park Firefighters' Association, we thank you for making this year a success. If you would like to see photos from this years Toy and Food Drive please go to WWW.MPFFA.ORG and click on "MPFFA Holiday Toy and Food Drive" and [TOY DRIVE 2008].

Thank You,

John J. Wurdinger
MPFFA Toy Drive Administrator
Formally of Echo 2/23 4th MAR DIV

Dave Bragg
MPFFA Toy Drive Administrator
Formally of Echo 2/23 4th MAR DIV

Hannah Steuer, 8, wins poetry award

Hannah Steuer of Menlo Park, age 8, received honorable mention in the October 2008 Cricket children's magazine's poetry competition. For the contest, each entrant submitted a poem about something scary. Hannah's name appears in the February issue.

Her poem is:

*Tonight's the night of Halloween
The plastic ghosts make me so keen
It will just be my friends and me
Susy and Andrea and Lea
Scary jack o lanterns below
Dummies heads in which an arrow
A haunted house will give the creeps
When I see fake spiders make leaps
Skeletons with all their dead bats
Witches partnered by big black cats
Out in the dark it's hard to be seen
Oh, tonight's the night of Halloween.*

Hannah, the daughter of Laura and Brian Steuer, is in the third grade at Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School in Palo Alto.

In each issue, Cricket magazine sponsors a different writing or art competition and receives 300 to 400 entries. The best entries are published on the Cricket League pages of the magazine. Cricket is a national magazine for children ages 9 to 14. For more information, go to www.cricketmagkids.com.



Photo by Glen Howard

Six new Eagle Scouts from Portola Valley are, from left, Rian Draeger, Jon Harmon, Scott Somersett (a member of the U.S. Marine Corp. officer training program), Greg Pfau, Andy Davison and TJ Young.

Six Portola Valley youths attain Eagle Scout rank

Six young men from Portola Valley Boy Scout Troop 64 have attained Eagle Scout status and were recognized at Courts of Honor in 2008. The new Eagle Scouts are: Andy Davison, Rian Draeger, Jon Harmon, Greg Pfau, Scott Somersett and TJ Young.

To receive Eagle Scout rank, scouts must earn at least 21 merit badges, serve six months in a troop leadership position, and lead a service project.

■ Andrew "Andy" Davison designed and built a series of new benches near the Woodside Priory School dining hall. In 2008, Andy graduated from Woodside Priory, where he received the Drama Technical award and was a member of the Computer Club. The son of Wayne and Cindy Davison, he is attending Drew University in Madison, New Jersey.

■ Rian Draeger coordinated and served as project manager for the construction of 280 feet of redwood rail fence at Portola Valley's new Town Center. Rian graduated with honors from Woodside Priory School, where he played soccer and basketball all four years. A freshman at Santa Clara University, he is studying bioengineering. He is the son of Peter and Ann Marie Draeger.

■ Jonathan Harmon designed and built an information kiosk for Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley to display program information for the church and sell tickets for Portola Valley Theatre Conservatory productions. In 2008, Jon graduated from Sacred Heart Prep, where he received the Heart of the Sacred Heart award for embodying Sacred Heart goals and ideals. Now a freshman at Colorado College

studying environmental science, he is the son of Scott and Gayton Harmon.

■ Greg Pfau designed and led the construction of a collapsible outdoor flying enclosure for the rehabilitation of raptors, such as hawks and eagles. The enclosure was donated to Wildlife Rescue. Greg graduated with honors from Woodside Priory in 2008 and was named an AP Scholar with Distinction. A freshman at UC Berkeley, Greg is majoring in molecular environmental biology. He is the son of Dale Pfau and Cathryn Gawne.

■ Scott Somersett designed and coordinated construction of three redwood benches for the redwood grove at Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley. In 2008, Scott graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School, where he was on the wrestling and lacrosse teams. During high school, he was actively involved in Young Life and was a youth leader for Wyldlife and the Peninsula Covenant Church. The son of Dwight and Joy Somerset, he attends California Polytechnic State University and is a member of the U.S. Marine Corp. officer training program.

■ Theodore James "TJ" Young graduated in 2008 from Pinewood School, where he was a member of the varsity soccer team, debate team and National Forensic League, and was on the honor roll. California Wildfowl Association is enjoying wood duck nesting boxes in the Northern Sierras that he designed, created and installed. A freshman at Chapman University, he is studying economics and physics and is a member of the professional business fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi. He is the son of Stuart and Susan Young.

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Join other expectant mothers-to-be in a yoga class designed to enhance strength, flexibility and tranquility in preparation for the upcoming birth of your child.

- Thursday evenings, March 5-26
- Saturday mornings, March 7-28

* MOM & BABY STROLLER FITNESS

Join other new mothers and babies for a brisk exercise routine. Our instructor has designed a par course for moms and strollers with lots of adaptations depending on your energy level. Drop-ins welcome!

- Friday afternoons, March 6-27

* REFRESHER CHILDBIRTH CLASS

This is an excellent refresher course on labor and delivery techniques, including how subsequent labors differ from the first, as well as sibling and family adjustments.

- Saturday, March 7

* PREPARING FOR MULTIPLES SEMINAR

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

- Sunday, March 8

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



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 Kepler's Book Store, Menlo Park

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■ POLICE CALLS

This information is from the Atherton and Menlo Park police departments and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent until convicted.

ATHERTON

Auto burglary reports:

- Window smashed and property stolen, 500 block of Middlefield Road, Feb. 7.
- Occurred during basketball game, Menlo-Atherton High School at 555 Middlefield Road, Feb. 12.

Commercial burglary report: Student union broken into and computer and monitor stolen, Menlo College at 1000 El Camino Real, Feb. 9.

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary report: Two big-screen TVs and a computer stolen, 800 block of Santa Cruz Ave., Feb. 7.

Auto burglary reports:

- Window smashed and Apple iPhones stolen, 1100 block of Crane St., Feb. 7.
- Unauthorized entry into trailer, Willow Place, Feb. 10.
- Vehicle break-in, 1600 block of Marsh Road, Feb. 12.
- Vehicle break-in, 1200 block of o'Brien Drive, Feb. 12.

Grand theft report: Reported at main police station at 701 Laurel St., Feb. 6.

Stolen vehicle reports:

- 800 block of El Camino Real, Feb. 7.
- White 2004 Lexus 470XL SUV, 1800

Doris Drive, Feb. 8.

Assault with deadly weapon report: Nicholas VillaMadriz, 19, and William Sanchez, 21, both of East Palo Alto, arrested and booked into jail on assault charges and two juveniles cited and released, 400 block of Pope St., Feb. 12.

Spousal abuse reports:

■ A report was filed Feb. 7. No address given.

■ 800 block of Coleman Ave., Feb. 8.

Child protective services report: 1700 Bay Laurel, Feb. 6.

WOODSIDE

Theft report: Storage yard broken into through fence and two drain pipes stolen then recovered, 100 block of Stadler Road, Feb. 5.

Fraud report: American Express card opened by unauthorized person in victim's name with total charges of \$33,000 that had gone unpaid since 2000, 100 block of Ranch Road, Feb. 9.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Theft report: Someone entered house through unlocked door and stole laptop computer, \$300 in cash, prescription medicine and a digital camera, 100 block of Wayside Road, Feb. 5.

Fraud report: ID theft and false debit card purchases resulting in losses totaling \$2,343, 100 block of Groveland St., Feb. 6.

WEST MENLO PARK

Residential burglary report: Home ransacked and TV, two computers, jewelry and IDs stolen after side door left open for pet access, 200 block of Vine St., Feb. 5.

Four arrested in Willows stabbing

Menlo Park police arrested two men and two juveniles following a fight that occurred just before 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, in the Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park. The fight left one victim with a stab wound in the arm.

Following the altercation in the 400 block of Pope Street, officers arrested Nicolas Villa, 19, of East Palo Alto, William Sanchez, 21, of East Palo Alto and two juveniles on charges of conspiracy and

assault with a deadly weapon, said police spokeswoman Nicole Acker.

The victim's injuries were not life-threatening, and were tended to by medics at the scene, Ms. Acker said in a press release.

The incident is still under investigation. Anyone with information is asked to call the Menlo Park Police Department at 330-6300 or its anonymous tip line at 330-6395.

World Affairs Council talk Wednesday

The Peninsula Chapter of the World Affairs Council takes on the Geneva Convention and the treatment of civilians in war zones from 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18, at the Los Altos Youth Center, 1 South San Antonio Road in Los Altos.

The panel discussion will focus on conflict regions in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, and how today's conflicts cause major displacement of civilians. Admission to the program is free.

Panelist Katie Zoglin, the

former deputy director of the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative in Morocco, will provide legal and historical perspective on the issue.

Panelist Babak Dehghanpisheh, Newsweek's Baghdad bureau chief and John S. Knight Fellow at Stanford University, will discuss the status of refugees in the Middle East. The third panelist, Emily Whichard, the program officer for Global Health Access Programs, will discuss refugees in Southeast Asia.

For information contact the World Affairs Council at (415) 293-4600 or www.itsyourworld.org or the Los Altos Public Library at 948-7683 or www.santaclaracountylib.org/losaltos.

■ TOWN SQUARE

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Sports

NEWS OF LOCAL ATHLETES AND TEAM SPORTS



Members of the Menlo Sparks gymnastics team. See names in the story.

Menlo gymnastics team takes prize

The Menlo Sparks, a girls gymnastics team sponsored by the city of Menlo Park, took home the top prize at the Golden Gate Invitational in Concord on Jan. 17.

The team consists of girls between the ages of 9 and 14. Julia Chang, Avery Robinson, and Ursula Jongebloed won all-around titles in their respective divisions

at the Concord meet, according to coach Savina Krakowski.

Team members in the picture are, back row, from left, Ursula Jongebloed, Alyssa Westfield, Maddie Worden and Allison Gailbraith; and front row, from left, Sae Furukawa, Chelsea Wilson, Avery Robinson, Helen Poat, Julia Chang and Mary Tuomala.



Members of Juventus X championship soccer team. See names in the story.

Soccer team wins Abronzino title

By Ron Espeseth

Members of Juventus X, a local GU16 (girls under 16) elite soccer team, are Abronzino League champions. The team finished with a 6-2-2 record in Division 2 of the Bay Area's premier youth soccer league.

The players come from eight Peninsula communities — including Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside — and represent seven local high schools.

The Abronzino League is for the best youth club soccer teams (Class 1) playing between San Francisco and Monterey.

As league champions, the team will be promoted to play in Abronzino's top flight for

their GU17 season next fall, an honor reserved for the top six teams in the California Youth Soccer Association's District 2.

In addition to league play, this fall the team traveled to

four tournaments and placed in two of them. They were semi-finalists in the Hugh Kinnear Celtic Cup and were finalists in Cal Odyssey's Challenge Cup.

The X will take a break from club soccer while their players compete with their high school soccer teams. The team will resume play

after the high school Central Coast Section's (CCS) championships in February. Their spring season will get off to a quick start with the Northern California Showcase and State Cup in early March.

Members of the team in the picture are, back row, from left, Armando del Rio (coach), Lauren Campbell, Devon Simon, Caroline Moe, Maddy Shannon, Tess Cain, Nicole Quilliam, Corinn Small, Grace Marshall, Rebecca Ruff, and Ron Espeseth (manager); and front row, from left, Rachel Rosensweig, Mackenzie Adamis, Elitah Petty, Allison May, Keighley Lane, Lauren Espeseth and Cat Carragee. Not pictured: Graham Hampton (coach). ■



Members of the Menlo-Atherton Frosh-Soph basketball team, winners of the M-A Bear Classic Holiday Tournament. See names in the story.

Frosh-soph team tops tourney

The Frosh-Soph Menlo-Atherton boys' basketball team won the first M-A Bear Classic Holiday Tournament on Dec. 30, beating teams from Daly City and Half Moon Bay before squeaking out a 37-35 win over Palo Alto High in the finale.

Sophomore McKinley Mathon was the tournament MVP, and freshman Christian Perkins was named to the all-tournament team.

Members of the team in the photo are, back row, from left, Michael Culhane, Chris Chavolla, McKinley Mathon, Zach Cantu, Walbank Mahoney, Stoss Dela Morte and Christian Perkins; and

front row, from left, Wes Hagman, Jesse Perkins, Miles Weiss and Coach Tino Mendoza.

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Marion Softky, Marjorie Mader

Staff Writers Andrea Gemmet,

David Boyce, Sean Howell

Contributors Barbara Wood,

Kate Daly, Bill Rayburn, Miles

McMullin, Katie Blankenberg

Special Sections Editors

Carol Blitzer, Sue Dremann

Photographer Michelle Le**Design & Production****Design Director** Raul Perez**Designers** Linda Atilano,

Gail Thoreson, Joanne Lee,

Laura Don, Gary Vennarucci

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(650) 854-2626

FAX (650) 854-0677

e-mail news (no photos please) to:

editor@AlmanacNews.com

e-mail photos with captions to:

photo@AlmanacNews.com

e-mail letters to:

letters@AlmanacNews.com

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.

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■ WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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

City should reinstate summary minutes

Until it is important to find out in a hurry what happened at a City Council meeting, the difference between “summary” and “action” minutes probably would not make much difference to anyone.

But for those who do not find it easy or don't have the equipment to download video or cannot watch the City Council meeting live on television, detailed “summary” minutes are a godsend. Such longer synopses of council meetings are much

more descriptive than so-called “action” minutes, which simply record the order of business and council members' votes on action items.

EDITORIAL*The opinion of The Almanac*

In December, at the behest of city staff, the Menlo Park council voted unanimously to try a three-month experiment with action minutes, basing the decision in part on the availability of video coverage that is accessible to council watchers with the right equipment on the city's Web site. The test will be complete in about four weeks.

Last month, Andy Cohen blasted the use of action minutes, and singled out member John Boyle for not supporting his effort for a vote now to reconsider the test and return to summary minute-taking. The motion did not receive a second, so it died, and Mr. Cohen will have to wait until sometime in March for

the council vote on how the minutes are taken.

We hope the council majority will join him in reinstating the summary minutes. There are many good reasons for this, including:

■ The idea that videos accessible on the city's Web site can substitute for good written minutes is simply not true, especially for residents who are not computer-savvy or simply do not have the proper equipment.

■ Summary minutes reflect some of the give and take in council discussions, an important clue for anyone going back to conduct research on an issue. Action minutes simply report the outcome of a council vote, without filling in the details.

■ Finally, if the goal of the city and the council is to achieve greater transparency, action minutes are not the way to go. This abbreviated form of note-taking sends a message that council deliberations and action, which govern operations of the entire city, is not important enough to warrant production of detailed minutes. But this is basic information that should be made available to any citizen who wants it.

Changing back to the longer and more informative minutes will not cost the city a huge amount. We believe Menlo Park should return to its old ways, as proposed by Mr. Cohen, but not until the current test runs its course in March. If the council wishes, it can always require the city clerk to produce summary minutes from meeting recordings.

LETTERS*Our readers write***Pothole alert on San Antonio Avenue***Editor:*

I would like to alert you to the deplorable condition of the roadway on San Antonio Avenue in Menlo Park.

This street services Ducky's, Beltramo's and Alain Pinel Realtors, as well as numerous personal residences. The potholes are enormous and could seriously damage an automobile. There are so many cracks, depressions and potholes that drivers weave and swerve their way down the street in an effort to avoid them.

Barbara Slaton
Windsor Way, Menlo Park

Cyclist makes case for space on train*Editor:*

I ride my bike and take Caltrain to and from work because it's the right thing to do.

Sure, it takes a bit more travel time, substantial planning and coordination, and some discomfort during those rainy days, but it is environmentally and physically the right thing to do.

Unfortunately the current

suggestions offered to resolve the “bumping” issue do not help me. I live two miles from Caltrain, and work 4.5 miles away from Caltrain — so bicycle parking is not an option. I stand just 4 feet, 10 inches tall, so bicycle sharing is not an option. Believe me, it took years to find my extra-extra-small frame bicycle.

Bumping is extremely frustrating. It results in wasted personal time and money, and my family feeling let down when I don't return home as expected. I know the conductors feel bad, and the Caltrain supervisors and management feel bad, but they are not the ones left standing on the platform. I'd like them to put themselves in our shoes (or wheels, rather) and try to imagine those feelings of abandonment, of being targeted when you're trying to do your best for the environment.

We need a solution — as soon as possible.

Danyale J. Hilliard
Redwood City

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Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

Florence Alice Atherton models the fashionable gown she will wear for her marriage to Edward L. Eyre in 1888. The 28-year-old was the daughter of Faxon Dean Atherton, one of Atherton's early residents, and was married in San Francisco at the home of her widowed mother, Dominga Atherton. Her husband was elected the first mayor of the town.

Conduct the 'budget fix' election by mail

By Warren Slocum

As the budget impasse now reaches well beyond the 100-day mark, the word is that California will have a special election in May or June.

While the exact date of that "budget fix" election is not known at this time, there is one thing we know for certain. If that election is conducted by mail it would save taxpayers big bucks.

No matter what ends up on the ballot, the election will carry a healthy price tag for county governments. And it comes exactly at a time when they can least afford it. While the state has said it will repay counties for the costs of the special election, registrars of voters are not holding their collective breath. Who knows when "the check will be in the mail"?

In the meantime, the general funds of local government will pick up the tab. And they have already begun to do so — 40 percent of San Mateo County's budget covers the cost of administering state mandated programs. This is not an uncommon statistic statewide.

To reduce the financial burden on the counties and the state, California could take a common sense step forward and conduct this upcoming special election all by mail. Or lawmakers could allow counties that want to conduct the election by mail the legal authority to do so. It would save San Mateo County about \$300,000; more importantly, it would save the state something in the neighborhood of \$10 million.

And it has political support — not just from registrars, but from the California State Association of Counties, which took this position in January when members saw the budget impasse and the specter of another special election looming. And in past years, the California League of Women Voters and the California Letter Carriers Union have been among those organizations that supported legislation to allow the state (at a county's discretion) to conduct vote by mail elections.

Another side benefit that nobody's talking about is that it would possibly increase voter turnout. Nearly half the voters already vote by mail in regular elections, depending on the county. Huge numbers of voters have signed up to vote by mail voluntarily, which is the most substantial change in voting behavior in the past 25 years.

Ask any pollster. Consider the vote by mail statistics of these densely populated counties in Northern California for the last election: Santa Clara County,

71 percent; Sonoma County, 65 percent; Contra Costa County, 51 percent; Marin County, 62 percent; Alameda County, 47 percent; San Mateo County, 49 percent. Statewide for the Nov. 4, 2008, presidential general election, 42.61 percent of the voters opted to vote by mail (and their turnout reached 78 percent).

Those counties opting to conduct the upcoming special election by mail could open some number of regional voting centers for a week in advance of the election. This would ensure that voters from the disability community could come to the polls and cast a private and independent vote and those voters who absolutely want to cast their ballot in person would be accommodated as well.

Doug Chapin, publisher of Electionline.org and an associate of the PEW Charitable Trust has said, "They (the voters) can sit down with a voter guide ... and make their decisions deliberately." Voting by mail is a safe option and doesn't affect the integrity of the election nor does it violate any security requirements. Voters find it convenient and hassle-free. It meets their lifestyle needs. There have been no reports of vote by mail fraud. And every registrar in the state already successfully manages a vote by mail program.

You can share your thoughts with me at wslocum@smcare.org. And if you agree, please call or send an e-mail to your Assembly or state Senate member urging them to allow counties the option to conduct the "budget fix" special election by mail.

Warren Slocum is San Mateo County's chief elections officer.

The case for tunneling sooner, not later

By Martin Engel

Planners for the high-speed rail project along the Caltrain corridor are beginning to work on the environmental studies and the alignment design, which will take two to three years. Construction from San Francisco to San Jose is expected to take about five years. The entire 800-mile system should be operational by 2035.

At a meeting of the Atherton rail committee several weeks ago, former Atherton mayor Jim Janz made an insightful point: Planners need to take into account a much longer time frame than they have to date. The rail corridor has been carrying passenger trains for 145 years. Presumably, the new rail alignments now being designed will be in place for another 145 years.

The question that must be considered is this: How will the Peninsula evolve over the rest of the century? Authoritative predictions estimate that California's population will double in this century. It is safe to assume that most of that population growth will take place in the two major metropolitan areas — the greater Bay Area and the Los Angeles Basin.

So what? It would seem plausible to predict that there will be major in-fill development between San Francisco

and San Jose. That is, the two cities at each end of our Peninsula will grow together in population density until they become one continuous "Megatropolis" 50 miles long, populated by millions.

Thus, we must ask, what should the rail corridor be like in 75 or 100 years? Should there be high-speed trains and fast commuter trains whizzing up and down the corridor at or above street level within the confines of high-density, high-

rise housing and commercial structures, and within the dense grid of streets?

What do major metropolitan centers do with their train systems? Is there a railroad corridor running down the middle of Manhattan at or above street level? Boston? Washington? No. Big cities put their rail systems underground.

It's not like a rail tunnel is from some other planet. There are tunnels on the Caltrain line right now and the high-speed rail plans envision new ones. The high-speed train will be put underground for 1.5 miles in San Francisco to the Transbay Terminal, and also on the approach to Diridon Station in San Jose.

San Francisco and San Jose are major cities now and clearly their trains should run underground. But in 75 or 100 years the rest of the Peninsula will also become urbanized.

Shouldn't the trains run underground the entire length of the Peninsula? Current plans are for the high-speed rail to run at or above grade level.

Will peninsula city-dwellers and workers ask 75 years from now, "What were those guys thinking? Why didn't they plan ahead and anticipate the mega-city we now have?"

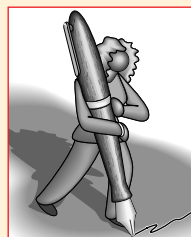
Will planners insist on building high-speed rail above ground now, only to tunnel it later on? Why not do it right the first time and for the long-term future?

We know that the complete high-speed rail system from Sacramento to San Diego will be the most expensive infrastructure project ever built in the U.S. It will also take decades to complete. The irony is that its overseers will probably seek to build it "quick, cheap and dirty" rather than doing it right.

The future for both Caltrain and the high-speed rail line is that they cannot, they must not, plow through the center of our Peninsula with four- or six-track rail corridors built on massive barriers as the Peninsula becomes an extended city of millions.

America's interstate highway system was built for the long haul. Shouldn't this train system also be built for the long haul? Or is it merely a matter of spending as much money as possible as quickly as possible, never mind the consequences?

Martin Engel lives on Stone Pine Lane in Menlo Park



**GUEST
OPINION**

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