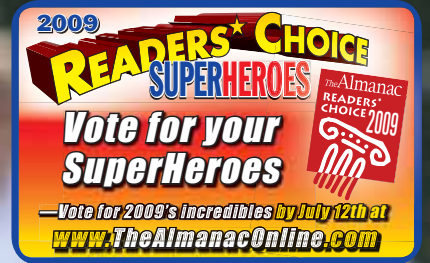


MENLO POLICE officers, sergeants
agree to modify contracts. Page 5

The Almanac

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

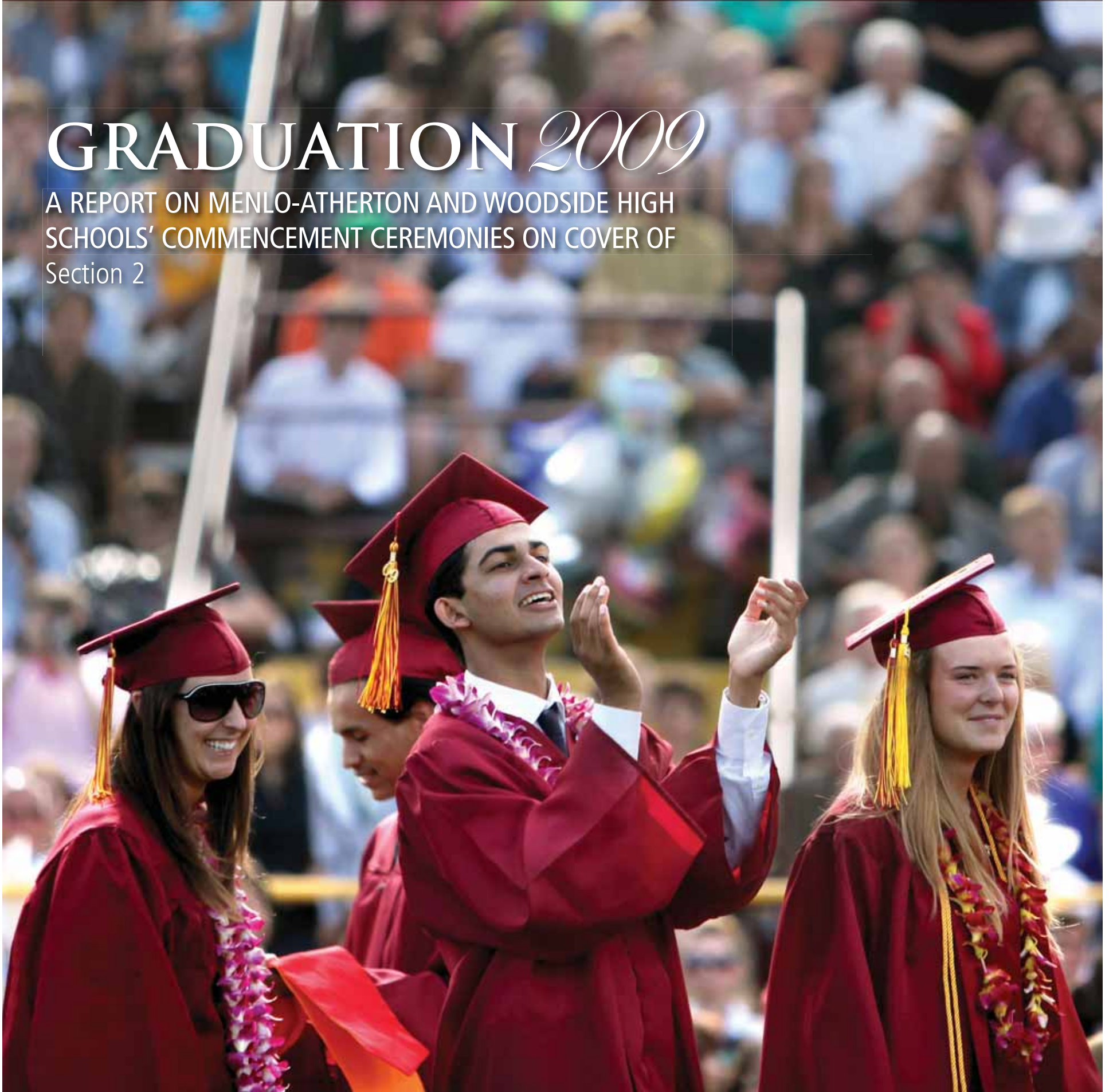


JUNE 10, 2009

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GRADUATION 2009

A REPORT ON MENLO-ATHERTON AND WOODSIDE HIGH
SCHOOLS' COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES ON COVER OF
Section 2



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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

The eye of the beholder

Gary Espinosa, the vice president of Bonhams & Butterfields Auctioneers & Appraisers, takes a close look at a couple of dollies at Allied Arts in Menlo Park on Thursday, June 4. Behind him, two painting specialists hold a pair of canvases up to the light. A crowd of people brought their venerable keepsakes to Allied Arts for its Antiques Appraisal Day fundraising event. For \$10 per item, they got an expert's assessment and learned whether they had trash or treasures.

Atherton

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People

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On the cover

High school graduation is a time to celebrate, and that's what Menlo-Atherton High School seniors Haley Rebekah O'Neel, left, Rishikesh Santhanam, center, and Katherine Sullivan did with their fellow graduates at their Thursday, June 4, ceremony. Photo by Michelle Le. Graduation stories begin on the cover of **Section 2**.

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This little piggy is homeless

A stray piglet found wandering around in Woodside is now up for adoption, says the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA. The 40-pound porker is about two months old, and for \$25 can be adopted into a good home.

However, the Peninsula Humane Society has a fairly detailed description of what would constitute a good home for the Hampshire pig they've dubbed Mercedes: a large fenced yard for foraging, access to mud baths, and an enclosed space with straw bedding.

Anyone in possession of an appropriate porcine paradise should contact PHS.

Goats have got to go?

In late spring each year, Menlo Park brings in goats to chomp on grass in Sharon Park for a few weeks. As the city sees it, everybody wins: the goats get fed, the kids love it, and there are no exhaust-spewing mowers involved.

Resident Alex Cannara sees it a little differently.

"The whole idea of this as being an environmentally sound practice is actually absurd," Mr. Cannara said at a recent City Council meeting. Trucking hundreds of goats around the Bay Area takes a lot of fuel, and the goats wreak havoc on the park's wildlife — scaring away quail, and preventing new trees from growing.

According to Mr. Cannara, the solution is simple: fence off small trees and other at-risk areas.

City staff said they would look into Mr. Cannara's criticism.

A matter of principal

Yes, this Almanac reporter really does know the difference between the words principle and principal. At least, in theory. In practice, however, last week's photo caption referred to "Principle Mike Moore" of Hillview Middle School. While we hear that Hillview's soon-to-retire principal is a man of principle, it was not a Freudian slip but a typo, and an embarrassing one, at that.

Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Police officers, sergeants agree to contract change

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

The unions that represent Menlo Park police officers and sergeants have agreed to a contract change that will save the city about \$152,000 per year.

City Manager Glen Rojas announced at the June 2 City Council meeting that the unions had agreed to modify their contracts. If the council accepts the renegotiated contracts, a provision that mandates a certain amount of overtime pay on patrol shifts would be eliminated, according to Mr. Rojas.

He plans to share the tentative agreement with the council in a closed session, and to present it for final approval June 16.

"The police unions are keenly aware of the

concerns voiced by local residents and city staff seeking cost savings through reduced City personnel costs," Detective Jeff Keegan, president of the union that represents police officers, said in a press release. "We recognize that, while the economy has affected each of our families, we can be part of the solution."

Mr. Keegan did not return a call from The Almanac.

The clause in the contracts that mandates overtime was added "a couple" of years ago, according to Glen Kramer, the city's personnel director. Mr. Kramer said the clause remained in the contracts when they were renegotiated recently, but that an unforeseen change in the patrol shift schedule made the clause a more costly proposition

for the city.

Though Menlo Park is projecting a balanced budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year, excluding a \$450,000 expense for the downtown planning process already under way, city officials have said they are not as optimistic about the long-term outlook for the city's finances.

According to recent estimates, the city expects to devote \$10.4 million in salary and benefits to its 47 police officers and sergeants in the 2009-10 fiscal year, with those employees in line for a cumulative raise of \$870,000 in salary and benefits.

During the same fiscal year, the city expects to spend about \$12.1 million in

See **COPS**, page 18



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Having a field day

Teacher Suzanne Fast and her second-graders from Ormondale School reach out as they try to keep a giant ball off the ground on Friday, June 5. Students at the Portola Valley school spent the morning playing games outside for Field Day, an annual end-of-the-school-year event.

Caltrain drops plans for major fare hikes and service cuts

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

After announcing that major fee hikes and service cuts could be in store for Caltrain as it looks to balance its budget, the rail agency's staff has shied away from recommending the most dramatic of those options. Caltrain's financial situation appears to be much healthier than the agency had initially reported.

The staff will not recommend suspension of weekend service, or service to Gilroy, Caltrain spokeswoman Christine Dunn said, adding that customers

See **CALTRAIN**, page 9

Green Academy in the works at Woodside High

■ Students would be urged to travel by greener methods.

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

A new building intended for the campus of Woodside High School will, if things go as planned, be the home of the new Green and Clean Academy, and a prominent example of environmental consciousness.

The ideal building would be "self-sufficient," Principal David Reilly said in an e-mail. The intended site is part of the southeast parking lot, next to

a secluded grassy acre destined to become a garden with a small outdoor amphitheater/classroom and greenhouse.

The Green Academy will be a school-within-a-school focusing on green careers, particularly in energy and water conservation. This academy, like Woodside's Business Technology Academy, is a state program for students wanting to go to college and needing extra support. It is open to all, but requires that 50 percent of the enrollment be at-risk students.

Perhaps in the spirit of things, the Green Academy building would usurp part of fossil-fuel's domain

— a section of the parking lot.

"Students will have to earn the right to drive" to school, Mr. Reilly said. "It all fits. It's perfect. I'm sure I'll get complaints ... but Mother Nature will smile down upon us."

San Francisco's very green California Academy of Sciences building is an inspiration, he said, adding, "I want to put Woodside High School on the map as the greenest high school in the Bay Area."

In an interview in Mr. Reilly's office that included Vice-Principal Diane Mazzei and Green Academy social studies teacher Marin Aldrich, there was talk of

wind- and solar-power, compost piles that generate usable heat, and a high rating from the U.S. Green Building Council.

The school is in very early talks with architect Bruce McClure of the Palo Alto firm Cody Anderson Wasney Architects, Mr. Reilly said. The academy enrolls its first class in September, but significant planning will wait until funding is assured, probably around August or September, Mr. McClure told The Almanac.

Woodside High has \$3 million available from the \$165 million

See **GREEN**, page 8



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Linda Common heads to Palo Alto

■ Former Woodside High principal delays retirement for role as assistant superintendent.

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Linda Common, a former principal of Woodside High School and the director of special education for the Sequoia Union High School District, has been recommended as assistant superintendent for administrative services in the Palo Alto Unified School District.

The Palo Alto district's Board of Trustees is expected to approve her appointment on June 23, according to a district statement. Ms. Common's new job would include oversight of curriculums for the high schools and middle schools in the district, Ms. Common said in an interview.

"I am very excited about my new position," she said. She had planned to retire and maybe do some special education work on the side, but was contacted by the Palo Alto district.

"I had an opportunity and I was called and asked and came in and it was really something that I really wanted to have and I

took it," she said. "It's just a new adventure for me."

Ms. Common has been with the Sequoia district since July 1996, when she came to Woodside High as principal. In January 2007, she took over special education for the district, and she's enjoyed it, she said.

The number of kids with special needs such as autism is on the rise, and she was constantly busy, she said, going from one meeting to another to another to make sure a child was correctly placed, had access to the right equipment and had proper transportation. Litigation not infrequently had her talking with lawyers.

"There is a tremendous amount of follow-through," she said. "Boy, it's a tough job. It's a very tough job. My hat's off to every special education director in the country."

Ms. Common has a resource-specialist credential, a learning-handicapped credential, two master's degrees — in education from the College of Notre Dame,



Almanac archive photo
Linda Common will be assistant superintendent in Palo Alto district.

and in educational administration from the University of Santa Clara — and a doctorate in educational leadership from Argosy University.

Dr. Common's breadth of experience will be an asset to our district," Palo Alto district Superintendent Kevin Skelly said in a statement. With her administrative background, he added, "and her abundance of energy and friendly demeanor, I am confident that she will quickly learn the culture of the district and establish strong working relationships with the entire administrative team." ■

PV school board approves early Wednesday dismissal

■ Kids in grades 4 and 5 will end day shortly after noon.

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

Portola Valley's fourth- and fifth-graders are going to have an early end to school on Wednesdays, starting this fall. The board of the Portola Valley School District voted at its June 3 meeting to allow class to end at 12:15 p.m. once a week, rather than the usual time of 2:10 p.m.

A big change in the structure of fourth- and fifth-grade instruction is the reason for the early bell.

Earlier this spring, the school board authorized a plan to give students at Corte Madera

School a choice of four different programs designed to play upon teachers' strengths while improving students' learning, according to Principal Carol Piraino. In one classroom, for example, students would learn the curriculum through methods that emphasize visual and performing arts, while in another classroom, there would be a stronger emphasis on using technology.

The new method of "content delivery," as it's being called, requires a good deal of time for curriculum planning and collaboration. While students will end up with almost two hours of additional free time on Wednesdays, teachers will still be on the job.

Board members said that, even with the reduction in hours, the students would still be receiving

more than the state's minimum number of instructional minutes.

About 74 percent of parents of incoming fourth- and fifth-graders said they would support the plan, according to a survey on early dismissal sent out by the district. The approval rating dropped to 55.6 percent when parents of children in other grades were surveyed.

Students who need to stay on campus until 2:10 p.m. on Wednesdays will have the option of signing up for fee-based after-school enrichment classes or educational support services, such as a homework club, according to Ms. Piraino's report to the board.

Other options for giving teachers extra preparation time were considered and rejected, she said in her report. Those options include monthly all-day planning sessions, which would require hiring substitute teachers to cover the classes, and having school start later on Wednesday mornings. ■

Water rates expected to drop

Customers of the Skyline water system should see their water bills decrease by nearly 70 percent, thanks to Skyline's recent acquisition by the California Water Service Company. The average residential cus-

tomers should expect to pay \$94 a month instead of \$288, according to Erin McCauley, the Bear Gulch District manager for Cal Water.

"We look forward to serving our new customers, and to

welcoming the Skyline water employees into the Cal Water family," Ms. McCauley said in a press release.

Cal Water serves about 55,200 people in its Bear Gulch District, which includes Atherton, Woodside, Portola Valley and a portion of Menlo Park.



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REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

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etc. It was a struggle to find enough comps to fit this narrow definition but in the end the property appraised at purchase price. Are all appraisers being this strict?

A: Yes, appraisers are all being

very strict in the comparables they are allowed to use. They also don't want to have direct communications with lenders, agents or clients regarding appraisals. This may have always been the rule but now it is being strictly followed. Stricter rules are good for the current market. Because no one knows if the market will improve or if there will be more price fluctuations, it is better for the stability of the economy, not just now but in the future, to be conservative in appraisals.

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Green Academy

GREEN

continued from page 5

construction bond measure that voters approved in February 2008, Mr. Reilly said. The school is also applying for a matching \$3 million state grant from a fund reserved for school construction projects.

The building's green elements "uniquely position us to have a higher score" with the granting agency, Ms. Mazzei said.

Woodside is one of four comprehensive high schools in the Sequoia

Union High School District. Asked for the district view of this project, Ms. Mazzei described the reaction as "very positive."

Also in the works at Woodside: another \$6 million building, also relying on \$3 million in state grants, that would house digital arts, including journalism, photography, music and video production, animation and Web-page design, Mr. Reilly said.

Build it and ...

They're coming and it isn't even built yet.

When the Green Academy opens in September, staff is expecting 56 sophomores, with a maximum of about 160 stu-

dents when everything is up and running. But, Mr. Reilly said, one building may not be enough.

He said he sees the school trying to accommodate 300 to 400 students "itching" to get in. "This is like the Greenies Task Force on steroids," he added, referring to the campus club that promotes activities such as gardening, biking to school and using green products.

Staff interest, skills and experience are also crucial to creating

'I want to put Woodside High School on the map as the greenest high school in the Bay Area.'

PRINCIPAL DAVID REILLY

something like this, Mr. Reilly said. "The interest from the ground level has to be there, and we have it," he said.

The Green Academy will have a variety of tasks, he said. The gardening tasks, for example, include labor and soil analysis, and the chance for kids of varying abilities to meet and talk.

There will be some tracking, particularly with math, Ms. Aldrich said, but students of mixed ability would gather for "one or two periods a day," including in English, social studies and career-pathway classes.

With the building sited next to and open to the garden, it could blur the lines between the classroom and the real world, Mr. Reilly said, adding, "I would love for this building to be as transparent as possible." ■

Atherton: special meeting on budget, fee study

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac staff writer

The town of Atherton is expected to be tight on funds next year, so a special City Council meeting on the budget is set for 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 10. At the meeting, the council is expected to scrutinize the proposed 2009-10 budget and discuss the findings of a comprehensive study of the town's fees.

The meeting will be held in the Town Council Chambers, 91 Ashfield Road.

On May 28, the council spent more than three hours poring over the proposed budget, looking for cuts to bridge a projected \$1.4 million revenue shortfall for the fiscal year that begins July 1.

No line item was too small to be considered, as the council decided to cut in half its annual \$9,000 in donations to several local nonprofits, and eliminate the bottled water delivery service

to the council chambers, saving about \$700. Instead, the water cooler will be filled from the tap.

There are bigger cuts on the horizon, as well. The police department is slated to leave open two vacant positions — an officer and a dispatcher — as well as delay hiring another officer position. The savings should total about \$260,000.

"It will have some impact on the community," said Chief Glenn Nielsen. "The 21 sworn officers we have this year will go down to 20. We can still fill the traffic (patrol) and school resource positions."

The town hired consultants NBS to conduct a study of all of the various fees charged by the town to see if its costs are being covered. The council has been waiting to see the study's results before deciding whether to change Atherton's fee schedule.

The agenda for the meeting is online at www.ci.atherton.ca.us by clicking on "City Council." ■



Photo courtesy of Peace Builders

Sent with love

Orphans in India clutch their new toys, part of a shipment of medical and other donated supplies sent by Peace Builders, a nonprofit founded by Woodside resident Diane Eskenazi. On Tuesday, June 2, Ms. Eskenazi packed up \$500,000-worth of donated goods, including new clothes from Gymboree, shoes, vitamins and medical supplies, all destined for orphaned refugee children living in Dharamsala, Tibet. Included in a 40-foot container were more than 100 friendship letters penned by Woodside Elementary School students, Ms. Eskenazi said. In August, she plans to send supplies to African AIDS orphans in Lesotho, she said.

Downtown workshop June 18

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park residents will get their first glimpse of potential plans for the city's downtown area and a stretch of El Camino Real at a community workshop Thursday, June 18.

A consultant hired to conduct a long-term planning process will present three scenarios for zoning changes and capital improvements at the meeting, according to city planner Thomas Rogers. Residents will be asked to discuss and modify the scenarios in small group discussions.

Through the planning process, the city hopes to hammer out a parcel-by-parcel zoning plan, and to identify desired capital improvements, such as widened sidewalks and increased open space. The process follows a "visioning" effort, another consultant-led process through which the city laid out a set of guiding principles for planning in the city's downtown area.

The workshop will be held in the meeting room of the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, behind the ACE Hardware store at 700 Santa Cruz Ave. The entrance to the meeting space fronts is off the parking lot behind the hardware store, which can be accessed from Oak Grove Avenue. It is set to begin at 7 p.m.

At the third and final community meeting, scheduled for September 17, the city expects residents to form a consensus for the downtown area.

For more information or to sign up for project e-mails, visit www.menlopark.org/specificplan.

■ MENLO WATCH

Green building conference at SRI

Greentech Media and SRI International plan to hold a one-day summit on "green building" on the SRI campus Thursday, June 11.

Despite the downturn in real estate values and the slowed pace of construction, the market for green building is growing, according to spokesman Jonathan Diaz — aided in part by stimulus funds set aside for retrofitting buildings.

Speakers and panelists will include representatives from Serious Materials, Stanford's Precourt Institute for Energy Efficiency, and the Northern California Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council.

President Barack Obama singled out Serious Materials in a March 24 press conference, mentioning the fact that the company had retooled a factory in Pennsylvania to produce energy-efficient windows. Almanac readers may remember an April 1 article on Paul Holland, vice-chair of the company's board, who shared the stage with President Obama at a White House gathering of cleantech entrepreneurs.

Stanford provost to speak

Stanford Provost John Etchemendy is scheduled to speak and answer questions at a meeting of Sustainable Menlo Park on Wednesday, June 17.

Mr. Etchemendy is expected to field questions on a range of topics, according to chairman Chuck

Kinney. The meeting is scheduled to run from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in the Burgess Recreation Center in the Civic Center complex, between Laurel and Alma streets.

Sustainable Menlo Park recently formed a board of directors, and went online with a slick new Web site: sustainablemenlopark.com. The site includes a description of the group's mission, a synopsis of Menlo Park history, and a list of upcoming speakers.

In addition to Mr. Kinney, the board members are: Harry Bims, Mark Flegel, Clark Kepler, and Clem Molony.

City receives stimulus funds

The federal government has approved Menlo Park's application for funding through the federal stimulus bill to resurface streets, the city has announced.

The city will receive \$635,000 to resurface parts of three streets, according to Public Works Director Kent Steffens: Live Oak Avenue, Haven Avenue, and Monte Rosa Drive.

The work is scheduled to get under way this summer, Mr. Steffens said. ■

Correction

In a story in the June 3 Almanac, titled "Habitat for Humanity begins work on foreclosed home in Belle Haven," we stated that families with income ranging from about \$63,000 to \$94,000 per year would be eligible to buy the homes. In fact, the income range is about \$45,000 to \$68,000, according to Habitat spokeswoman Jennifer Doettling.

Menlo Park increases funding for children's programs at library

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park looks set to increase the programs it offers to children at the library.

An extra \$23,000 given tentative approval by the City Council will allow the library to provide more programs for children, and to continue to reach out to young teens through the popular "teen night" program that began in fall 2008, according to Library Director Susan Holmer.

"Right now, what our community is telling us is that we need more and more programming for children," Ms. Holmer said in an interview, citing community members' responses in library surveys.

The increase in library funding is an anomaly in a year when the city has strained to

cut its expenditures as it tries to weather the recession. The city has slashed funding for departments across the board, and is holding off on filling several vacant staff positions — with the prospect of more dramatic spending cuts on the horizon.

The \$23,000 was originally earmarked for two 10-hour-per-week page positions at the library. When those positions went vacant in 2008, Ms. Holmer "temporarily" redirected the money to hire staffers to help with children's programs.

Those staffers made it possible for the library to offer more events for children, including "teen night" — an event held one Friday a month, when middle school and early high school students hang out at the library, playing games and listening to music. It's gotten so popular that the library requires teens to sign up early.

City Manager Glen Rojas pro-

posed cutting funding for the page positions from the library's budget.

But council members, wary of eliminating programs that people have come to rely on, decided to restore it to continue funding the children's programs staffers.

The net outcome, at least for now, is a reallocation of library funds to its children's programs.

Why isn't the money going toward other projects, such as improving the library's Web site to better accommodate Spanish speakers, or spreading awareness about water conservation — two programs with an estimated combined cost of \$13,500 that the city has held off on?

According to Ms. Holmer, the money is budgeted only for hiring staff members. She can't use it to purchase materials or equipment, or to pay for contract work. ■

Caltrain drops service cuts plan

CALTRAIN
continued from page 5

seemed most concerned about the prospect of service cuts.

The only recommended fare hike is for the "GO Pass," an annual, employer-sponsored ticket. The staff is not recommending charging passengers to take bicycles on the train.

Other recommendations include running midday trains at hour intervals, and increasing station parking fees to \$3 per day, from \$2 at most stations; and \$30 per month, up from \$20.

Caltrain staff presented the recommendations to the agency's board of directors in a public hearing Thursday, June 4. The board is expected to act on it in a July 2 meeting, according to Ms. Dunn.

Fiscal emergency

The agency's budget situation does not appear to be nearly as dire as it had initially claimed.

Caltrain had announced that it was anticipating a deficit of \$10.1 million, but has since said that it identified a total of \$8.6 million in savings from a variety of sources that wouldn't entail service cuts or fare hikes. Those sources include grants, a proposal to buy fuel at a fixed price, and "unanticipated savings" from the current fiscal year, Ms. Dunn said.

Still, Caltrain declared a fiscal emergency at the June 4 meeting — a measure that will allow the agency to make service changes without conducting an environmental review. That will allow the agency to act quickly to shore up its revenues, Ms. Dunn said.

She did not rule out the possibility of additional cuts down the road.

"With the state situation being the way it is, our budget is really unpredictable," she said. "We might have to come back late in the year, or in the follow-

ing year, and consider making changes again."

Cost-saving measures

Caltrain expects an additional \$8.6 million in revenue or savings in the 2009-10 fiscal year that wouldn't entail service cuts or fare hikes:

- Maintenance grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission: \$2 million.

- Entering into a contract to buy fuel at a fixed price: \$2.5 million.

- "Unexpected savings" from 2008-2009 fiscal year, mostly due to lower-than-expected fuel costs: \$3.7 million.

- Reduced administrative expenses, due to decreased ridership: \$410,000.

The agency's staff is also recommending service cuts, and fare or price increases, that it expects will net \$2.8 million in savings and revenue:

- Reducing midday service: \$1.9 million.

- Increasing GO Pass pricing: \$450,000.

- Increasing parking fees: \$420,000. ■

Noise ordinance on agenda

The update to the noise ordinance in Portola Valley is due for a fourth public hearing on the evening of Wednesday, June 10, at 8 p.m. at the Historic Schoolhouse at 765 Portola Road.

Attempts to adopt the ordinance in April and May failed because the Town Council added something substantial enough — allowing commer-

cial gardening on Saturdays, for example — to warrant a new draft, thereby restarting the two-step process of adopting an ordinance.

This latest attempt includes the potential for another delay. A memo from Town Planner George Mader asks the council to consider "special circumstances" that would allow the

town to require holders of conditional-use permits — typically businesses and institutions — to adjust a noise source to a level below what is acceptable in most communities.

Also on the council's agenda for June 10 is a review by Town Manager Angela Howard of the proposed town budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

■ PORTOLA VALLEY



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Laurel students perform Shakespeare for kids

This story is by Kristin Geiser (kgeiser@stanford.edu), who teaches at Stanford's Center for Youth and Their Communities, and has three children in the Menlo Park City School District.

Andi Dehne's and Jeriann Hirsch's class of second-grade students at Laurel Elementary School recently performed a one-hour version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream For Kids" by Lois Burdett (Firefly Books Inc.).

Siblings skipped school to attend, parents missed mandatory meetings, and we sat, cameras poised. First, one line, then another, delivered flawlessly and from memory. Gorgeous costumes. Handheld microphones and props being shared with ease. Comedic timing. Shakespearean meter. A complex story line.

Soon we lowered our cameras and just allowed ourselves to witness these young people taking this risk together — and trusting us to be part of it.

Ms. Dehne and Ms. Hirsch

began preparing for this last fall when they applied for a Jeanie Ritchie Grant, funded by the Menlo Park Atherton Education Foundation.

"These grants provide critical seed money for teachers to try out new and innovative teaching ideas in the classroom," said foundation co-president Steve Hoffmann.

Through this grant, Ms. Dehne and Ms. Hirsch were able to purchase scripts and costumes and integrate their spring production into their curriculum such that it was not done "on top of" everything else — but instead provided the rhythm of their classroom life over the last few weeks. They taped off rehearsal space in their classroom, studied Shakespeare's language in detail, and blocked the scenes that included powerful kings, magic spells, sword fights, and fairies.

All of this complemented and reinforced their study of writing, of narrative, of voice, and of presentation. It also, surprisingly, made things better on the playground.



Photo by Kristin Geiser

In the cast are second-graders, from left, Andrew Geiser, Abigail Grossman and Lucas Olson.

When a young girl in the class was teased on the playground last week, she did not reply by shouting back or asking a teacher to help her. Instead, with classmates around her, she put her hands on her hips and recited one of her lines from the

play with authority: "That ends the debate! Any more of this talk, I'll not tolerate!"

It worked perfectly. Peace was restored. Play resumed.

Andi Dehne, Jeriann Hirsch, and their students are examples of what is possible when a com-

munity fosters innovation, creativity, and care.

Programs such as this are possible through the support of community members. For information on the Menlo Park Atherton Education Foundation, go to www.mpaef.org.



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Atherton man found dead in backyard pool

The apparent drowning death of Atherton resident Rajeev Motwani, a Stanford University professor, is under investigation after his body was found Friday afternoon floating in his backyard swimming pool, a San Mateo County deputy coroner said today.

Mr. Motwani, a 47-year-old computer science professor renowned for his academic research and for assisting Silicon Valley start-ups, was found at about 12:30 p.m. Friday, according to the San Mateo County coroner's office.

Mr. Motwani was last seen around 1:30 a.m. Friday during a party at his home, according to the coroner's office.

Friends of Mr. Motwani said

he did not know how to swim, according to a press release issued by the university.

The coroner's office is investigating whether Mr. Motwani's death was related to a pre-existing medical condition.

According to the university, Mr. Motwani was born in Jammu, India, and earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur in 1983, and his doctoral degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1988.

He leaves behind his wife, Asha Jadeja; two daughters, Naitri and Anya; and two brothers. The university is planning a public memorial service.

— Bay City News Service

Redwood City schools parcel tax measure fails

Measure E, a parcel tax to support the Redwood City School District, failed to win the necessary two-thirds vote it needed to pass in the special June 2 election.

About one-third of Atherton households are in the Redwood City district, which includes Selby Lane School in Atherton.

A little over 62 percent of people casting ballots said yes to the

\$91-per-parcel tax, with 37.9 percent voting no, according to semi-official results posted by the San Mateo County Elections Office.

The tax would have raised \$2.2 million annually to help pay for teacher salaries, science, school libraries, tutoring and physical education.

Voter turnout was 23.5 percent, according to the elections office.



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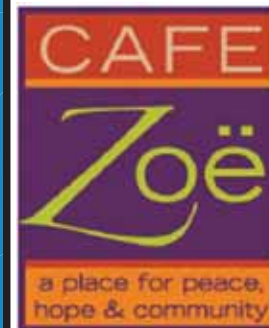
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Atherton police officer exonerated in 'theft'

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

There is "no foundation" for an allegation of theft against an Atherton police officer, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

Officer Dave Metzger was accused of stealing from the Atherton Police Officers Association, triggering an investigation by the DA's office. The accusation turned out to be baseless, Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe told The Almanac.

"There are times when I say that there wasn't enough evidence to prosecute," Mr. Wagstaffe said. "In this case, we

determined that there was no basis for it."

What it came down to was a small item of furniture that was thought to be missing, he said.

"It was simply confusion over what was to be done with this small piece of furniture," Mr. Wagstaffe said.

The case was automatically referred to the DA's office because police departments can't investigate cases that involve their own officers, for obvious reasons.

"With law-enforcement agencies, we have a strict policy that we expect departments to follow. Then no one can reasonably claim a cover-up," said Mr. Wagstaffe. ■



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Please join us for our next conversation with Stanford Provost John Etchemendy about Stanford's future.

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Ansel Adams Day at Allied Arts

Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park is celebrating Ansel Adams Day on Saturday, June 13. The famed photographer maintained a studio at Allied Arts in the 1930s and photographed many of its buildings and gardens.

Ansel Adams Day is part of Allied Arts' year-long celebration of its 80th anniversary. In 1929, Delight and Garfield Merner bought 3.5 acres of land located at the edge of Menlo Park to create an arts guild in California. Their goal was to provide a workplace for artists, to encourage crafting handsome objects for everyday use, and to support folk art, especially that of early California.

Today, Allied Arts Guild is operated by the Allied Arts Guild Auxiliary (formerly Woodside Atherton Auxiliary) to benefit Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.

Ansel Adams Day programs will be held at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Docents will lead tours focusing on the Guild's history and Mr. Adams' involvement with it. There will also be a DVD presentation on Mr. Adams' life and art.

A limited number of lithographs, from copper plates of

AROUND TOWN

photographs taken of the Guild by Mr. Adams, will be for sale. Kepler's bookstore will also have books about Mr. Adams for sale. Admission is \$15 at the door.

New setting for Tally Ho

Allied Arts Guild Auxiliary announces that, for the first time, its annual gala, Tally Ho, will be held on Saturday, July 25, in the Allied Arts gardens. For many years, Tally Ho was held in September at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton.

Featuring a "Great Gatsby" theme, this year's Tally Ho will include some of the gala's most popular activities from over the years: wine and appetizer tastings, live and silent auctions, musical entertainment and dancing. Dessert, cigar and whiskey tastings will cap off the evening. For more information, visit alliedartsguild.org.

Summer book sale

Friends of the Menlo Park Library will hold a summer book sale from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, June 14, in the library

meeting room at 800 Alma St. in Menlo Park.

Books on subjects including travel, art, history, biography and cooking will be sold at bargain prices. Students may find their required summer reading books for less than \$2, according to Tim Goode of the Friends of the Menlo Park Library. Children's books and comic books will also be reasonably priced.

Educational garden tour

Six gardens in Atherton and Menlo Park will be on the Master Gardeners "Advice to Grow By" educational garden tour from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, June 20. The Master Gardeners program is part of the UC Cooperative Extension San Mateo/San Francisco Counties.

The six gardens will feature flowers, vegetables, herbs and fruits. Educational features will be highlighted at each garden, with plants for sale at the shade garden.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, or \$30 the day of the tour. Visitors may pick up maps and tickets at 2 Walnut St. in Atherton, on the day of the tour. For more information, call 738-0208.

Menlo Kiwanis awards \$50,000 in scholarships

The Menlo Park Kiwanis Club is awarding \$50,000 in scholarships to 14 college-bound students.

Seven of the scholarship winners are from Menlo-Atherton High School. They are: Julia Cook, Ada Chan, Sasha Duchin, Mary Fakalata, Uriel Hernandez, Paula Tovar, and Elizabeth Jane Wagstaffe.

The seven winners from East Palo Alto Academy High School are: Francisco Betancourt, Hishina Lanea Brumfield, Adrian Delgadillo,

Ana Talia Kafeloa, Roseanna Maafu, Daisy Revuelta, and Jazmin Rocha.

Since beginning its scholarship program, the Kiwanis Club has given away more than \$500,000. The club, which has about 70 members, also contributes money and volunteer work to more than 50 other charities and organizations serving Menlo Park.

The Kiwanis Club welcomes new members. For more information, call Les Koonce at 321-6068.

Drop off hazardous waste

Residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Woodside and Portola Valley can drop off hazardous waste, including batteries, motor oil, cleaning solvents and

paint thinners, at a Menlo Park location on July 11. To make an appointment, and to learn the exact location, go to SMHealth.org/hhw, or call 363-4718.

The Almanac newsroom has a new phone number!

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Other departments, including Advertising, will keep the number they've been using: (650) 854-2626



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TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

PLANNING COMMISSION

June 17, 2009
7:30 PM

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2. Arnon Rosenthal XMAX#2009-0001
150 Normandy Lane

Review of a proposal to construct a 480 square foot second floor addition to the existing single-story residence. The Planning Commission must make findings for an exception to the maximum residence size to exceed 4,000 square feet per Municipal Code Section 153.047 (E) (3) (b) (5), where the Code allows consideration of up to 5,000 square feet, for application XMAX 09-0001.

All application materials are available for public review at the Woodside Planning and Building Counter, Woodside Town Hall, weekdays from 8:00 – 10:00 AM and 1:00 – 3:00 PM, or by appointment. For more information, contact the Woodside Planning and Building Department at (650) 851-6790.

Man survives after running into Caltrain

A man ran into the side of a moving Caltrain at the Menlo Park Caltrain station the evening of June 3, a Caltrain spokeswoman said. The incident caused major delays in train service, and was one in a series of recent incidents involving people placing themselves in harm's way on the Peninsula's train tracks.

At 6:50 p.m., a middle-aged man on the southbound platform of the station ran from the platform into the side of southbound express train 382, according to Caltrain spokeswoman Christine Dunn. The man hit the side of the second car on the train and was thrown back onto the platform, she said.

He was taken to Stanford Medical Center. As of Monday, June 8, Ms. Dunn said she could not characterize the man's condition, other than that he was "currently still alive," and still hospitalized. She could not say whether the man's injuries were life-threatening, though she had initially said he was expected to survive.

The Midpeninsula community has been jolted by a number of recent incidents involving Caltrains and pedestrians, including suicides by two Gunn High School students and the attempted suicide by a third student.

Contract change

COPS

continued from page 5

salary and benefits on its entire police force, including commanders, dispatchers and other staff members — about 32 percent of the city's total expenses.

Council members thanked the police unions for making the concessions.

"That's something certainly that they had no obligation to do," said Mayor Heyward Robinson. "But that doesn't mean we won't ask again."

Police officers and sergeants received significant pay raises in the past year. The raise for officers followed a three-year period in which 30 officers left the force; the new contract went into effect in July 2008, calling for a 25 percent pay hike over three years.

In January, the City Council approved a 30 percent raise over a 30-month period for the city's sergeants, over an outcry from residents that the raise was too steep in a time of severe economic stress. Councilman John Boyle dissented in that decision. ■

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Piano teacher to get retrial on molestation charges

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Boying Chen, a Fremont piano teacher convicted in March 2006 of 63 counts of child molestation involving an 8-year-old Menlo Park girl, will have his case retried in San Mateo County Superior Court.

After two days of testimony, Judge Stephen Hall concluded on June 1 that Mr. Chen's representation in the 2006 trial was "not competent" because his defense attorney did not have a psychological expert testify as to whether Mr. Chen fit the profile of a pedophile, according to a report by Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

On June 4, Criminal Presiding Judge James Ellis set Nov. 2 as the date for a new jury trial for Mr. Chen, with a pre-trial conference set for June 22 at 1 p.m., Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said in a report. The judge denied a motion to have him released under his own recognizance and set bail at \$100,000.

Mr. Chen posted bail, but because he's been imprisoned in San Quentin, the county needs permission from the Department of Corrections to release

him, Doron Weinberg, his attorney, said.

In explaining why he did not obtain a psychological profile of Mr. Chen, his trial attorney, Alan Dressler, said an expert-witness had told him that psychological tests would be inadvisable, given Mr. Chen's limited understanding of English and the lack of accurate test results for Chinese speakers, according to Mr. Wagstaffe's report. Mr. Chen immigrated to the United States from Shanghai in 2000.

Mr. Dressler could not be reached for comment.

As a defense attorney, Mr. Dressler should not have relied on the views of one psychiatric expert but should have sought other opinions, said Dr. Marvin Firestone, an expert witness based in San Mateo. Dr. Firestone dismissed the notion that an accurate assessment was not possible, saying that he personally had used interpreters and "had no trouble ... determining the defendant was not a pedophile," Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Two more expert witnesses for the defense, both local attorneys, testified in agreement with Dr. Firestone's conclusions about what Mr. Dressler should have done. ■

■ 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

Grand theft reports:

- Bicycle stolen from locked cage, Menlo-Atherton High School at 555 Middlefield Road, May 29.
- Tires stolen from vehicle, Snowden Ave., May 30.
- Laptop computer and cell phone stolen from residence via unlocked door, first block of Nora Way, June 3.

Theft report: Cell phone and Apple iPod stolen from student backpack at old gym, Menlo-Atherton High School at 555 Middlefield Road, June 2.

Auto burglary report: Two speakers stolen, 200 block of Oak Grove Ave., June 2.

MENLO PARK

Robbery report: Juvenile robbed of cell phone, Belle Haven Community School at 415 Ivy Drive, May 29.

Residential burglary report: Jewelry valued at \$1,000 stolen, 1100 block of Henderson Ave., June 3.

Stolen vehicle report: White 2007 Dodge Charger, 1400 block of Plumas Ave., June 3.

Fraud report: Three cases of identity theft, 1900 block of Byers Drive and 800 block of Menlo Ave. and 1100 block of Hollyburne Ave., May 29 and June 2 and June 3.

WEST MENLO PARK

Residential burglary report: Someone attempted to unlock residence's side door by reaching up through doggie door, 1900 block of Avy Ave., May 31.

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JUNE 2009

El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

June 18

Community Workshop:

Where Critical Decisions Will Be Made

What: Specific Plan Workshop #2

When: June 18, 2009 - 7:00 p.m.

Where: 700B Santa Cruz Ave. (enter from rear parking plaza, behind Ace Hardware)

The El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan will set the direction for downtown Menlo Park and El Camino Real for the next 30 years. Key to developing this plan is community input. Feedback from previous planning activities is now helping planners shape the alternatives for new buildings, uses, public amenities, and other components that will be considered by the community at the June 18 workshop. **This workshop will be one of the most important community planning activities to date**, as the alternatives that emerge from that discussion will ultimately be fed into the final framework of the Specific Plan. Join us June 18th to make your voice heard and help transform our community's exciting vision into an enduring reality!

For more information or to sign up for the Project e-mails, visit www.menlopark.org/specificplan or contact Thomas Rogers at (650) 330-6722 or THRogers@menlopark.org.





ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA

STREET RECONSTRUCTION - PHASE VI
ATHERTON AVENUE - ATHERTON AVENUE
PROJECT NO. 08-025

Notice is hereby given that SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, California 94027, until 3:00 p.m. July 9, 2009, at which time they will be publicly opened and read, for performing the following work:

LAYOUT OF WORK, REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF ASPHALT CONCRETE PAVEMENT ON STREET, REPLACEMENT OF CONCRETE VALLEY GUTTERS, AND PLACEMENT OF PERMANENT STRIPING FOR ATHERTON AVENUE BETWEEN STERN LANE AND ELENA AVENUE.

The UDBe Contract goal is 8.5% (percent).

Bids must be for the entire work, and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for STREET RECONSTRUCTION - PHASE VI - ATHERTON AVENUE - ATHERTON AVENUE, Project No. 08-025", along with date and time of bid opening. Contractors must attend the Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting on June 25, 2009 at Town Hall at 2 p.m.

6610. Notice inviting formal bids for projects by a public agency that include a requirement for any type of mandatory prebid conference, site visit, or meeting shall include the time, date, and location of the mandatory prebid site visit, conference or meeting, and when and where project documents, including final plans and specifications are available. Any mandatory prebid site visit, conference or meeting shall not occur within a minimum of five calendar days of the publication of the initial notice. This provision shall not apply to the Regents of the University of California.

Plans and specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton Public Works Department, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton CA 94027, for a non-refundable fee of \$30.00. Additional important information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available for an additional \$20.00. If shipping is requested, there will be an additional charge of \$20.00.

Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of cash, a cashier's or certified check or bid bond for not less than ten percent (10%) of the amount of the bid, as a guarantee that the bidder, if awarded the Contract, will fulfill the terms of the bid. The Town of Atherton reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and/or to waive any irregularities therein.

Bidders are hereby notified that, pursuant to California Civil Code Sections 3247 and 3248 and Standard Specifications Section 3.02, the successful bidder will be required to provide payment and performance bonds in the amounts stated in Section 3.02 of the Standard Specifications.

Bidders are hereby notified that provisions of California Labor Code regarding prevailing wages are applicable to the work to be performed under this contract. Pursuant to Section 1773 et seq. the general prevailing wage rates have been determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations and appear in the California Prevailing Wage Rates. Copies are on file at the office of the City Engineer and are available to interested parties upon request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of the wage rates at the job site.

The Contractor may elect to receive 100 percent of payments due under the contract, without retention of any portion of the payment by the Town of Atherton, by depositing securities of equivalent value to the retention amount in accordance with the provisions of Section 22300 of the California Public Contracts Code.

The successful bidder must be licensed under the provisions of Chapter 9, Division 3, of the California Business and Professions Code to do the type of work contemplated in the project at the time the contract is awarded and shall be skilled and regularly engaged in the general class or type of work called for under the Contract. Failure of the bidder to obtain proper and adequate licensing for an award of the contract shall constitute a failure to execute the contract and result in the forfeiture of the bidder's bid security.

Each bidder shall submit with this bid a statement setting forth his/her/its experience and qualifications. The statement shall be made on the forms provided by the Town and must accompany each bid. The three lowest bidders will be required to submit subcontractor's experience and qualifications statements within 48 hours of the bid opening, on forms provided by the Town.

By submitting a bid in response to this advertisement for bids, the bidder shall be conclusively deemed to have read, understood and agreed with all of the information and materials contained in the bid documents, including but not limited to the construction contract, the standard specifications, the special provisions, the required nature and amount of insurance and the documentation evidencing said insurance.

Any questions regarding the project should be directed to the Assistant Engineer, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, CA 94027, telephone (650) 752-0555, preferably no later than five days before bid opening. Requests for Information may be faxed to (650) 688-6539. Plan holder's lists may be obtained by calling (650) 752-0570.

By: _____
Duncan L. Jones, P.E., City Engineer

Date: _____

Richard L. Johnson

Ampex and Varian engineer

Richard L. Johnson, who lived in Menlo Park for nearly 20 years, died May 1 in Mountain View at the age of 80.

Born and raised in Moline, Illinois, Mr. Johnson joined the U.S. Air

Force during the Korean War. He graduated from Stanford University in 1958 with a degree in industrial engineering, and worked as an engineer for Ampex and Varian Associates.

He and his wife, Marlyn, raised their children in Menlo Park. In the late 1970s he moved to Dallas, Texas, where he was self-employed.

Mr. Johnson enjoyed vegetable gardening, playing piano, smelt fishing, diving for abalone, his pet chickens, gambling, and visiting over a cup of coffee, say family members.

He is survived by his children, Chris, Natalie, Barbie and Doug; sister Jeanne Baker; and six grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his longtime partner, Bertha Faye Dudley.

Condolences may be sent to the online guest book at www.cusimanocolonial.com. Donations in his name may be made to Pathways Hospice, 585 N. Mary Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94085 www.pathwayshealth.org or the Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org.



Richard Johnson

OBITUARIES

Stuart Whittelsey Jr.

Financial executive and horseman

Stuart Gordon Whittelsey Jr. of Woodside, who was a financial officer for high-tech companies, died June 1 at the age of 79.

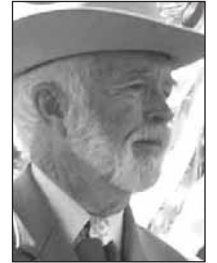
Mr. Whittelsey was also an avid horseman who served in the color guard of the Mounted Patrol of San Mateo County for more than 20 years, carrying the American flag at events throughout the area. He was a past captain of the Mounted Patrol, a member of Los Viajeros Riding Club, the San Mateo County Horsemen's Association, and the Shack Riders.

A 1951 graduate of Stanford University, Mr. Whittelsey received an MBA at Harvard University. He served in the U.S. Air Force.

Mr. Whittelsey was chief financial officer for a number of high-profile initial public offerings, such as Informix and Stanford Telecommunications. For more than 30 years, he was a board member of the Mid-Peninsula Blood Bank.

Surviving Mr. Whittelsey are his wife, Carleen Whittelsey; daughters Susan and Linda; nine stepchildren, 17 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Services were held June 6 at the Mounted Patrol Grounds in Woodside. Arrangements were under the direction of Crippen & Flynn Woodside Chapel.



Stuart Whittelsey

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Marian J. Neuman

From prominent early Woodside family

Marian J. Neuman, who with her twin sister, Barbara "Bobbie" Neuman, helped her parents run the Neuman Brothers Market (now Roberts of Woodside) in Woodside during World War II, died April 26 at a care facility in Modesto. She was 90.

Born in 1919, Ms. Neuman grew up in Woodside, graduating from Woodside Elementary School and Sequoia High School. She and her sister were seniors at UC Berkeley when their brother, Jack, was drafted during World War II. Their parents, James V. and Ann Neuman, asked them to leave school and helped operate the store during the war years.

The Neuman family was an important part of Woodside history. Ms. Neuman's father, James, built a general store at 3015 Woodside Road in 1931. He sold the business to J. Emott Caldwell in 1951. George Roberts, the present owner, bought the store in 1960.

Ms. Neuman's grandfather, Andre Neuman, first settled in Woodside in 1880 and operated a general store and a tree nursery. He also built "Home Place," a 50-acre plot at Woodside and Bear Gulch roads, where he rented cottages on weekends to San Franciscans.

■ **OBITUARIES**

The general store was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and was rebuilt on what is now the site of the Village Pub. Andre's son, James, took over the business in 1919, and subsequently built a new store at the present Roberts location.

After World War II, Marian Neuman divided her time between the family's home in Woodside and their ranch in San Gregorio. She always loved horses, says her niece, Kathy Neuman, and she partnered with her friend, Mary Thompson, in horse rehabilitation. In the 1980s she moved to the Sierra foothills near Sonora.

Ms. Neuman is survived by her sister-in-law Mary Neuman of Sonora, two nieces and two nephews, including Kathy Neuman of Menlo Park. Her twin sister, Bobbie Neuman England, died in 2000.

Donations in her memory may be sent to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, telephone, 800-628-0028.

Philip Forsyth

Former Woodside resident

Philip Leland Forsyth died peacefully at the home of his daughter, Pamela Forsyth, in Sunnyvale on May 25. The former Woodside resident was 79.

Mr. Forsyth was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He from the University of Cincinnati with a degree in mechanical engineering.

After serving in the U.S. Army, he worked towards an MBA from the University of Maryland and a doctorate in operations research from Case Western Reserve University.

He was employed for several years by the M.A. Hanna Co. in Cleveland, Tri Valley Growers of San Ramon, and Lockheed Missiles & Space Company in Sunnyvale.

In addition to his daughter, Pamela, Mr. Forsyth is survived by his brother, Fred Forsyth of Chapin, South Carolina. His wife and fellow Life Master bridge partner, Jolanta, preceded him in death in 1986.

After private services, interment will be at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Sacramento.

Jay D. Webster

Former Portola Valley resident

Jay D. Webster of Paradise died April 14 at the age of 50.

A former Portola Valley resident, Mr. Webster was a graduate of California State University at Chico, where he majored in hydrology.

He and his late wife, Patty Schmidt, operated a dog grooming business. His second "occupation" for many years was as a "hot tub philosopher," communicant with

nature, and eclectic music connoisseur, say family members.

Mr. Webster is survived by his parents, Robert and Mary Louise Webster of Portola Valley; brothers Rod Webster of Merced and Kevin

of Portola Valley; and companion Carol Brand of Magalia.

Memorials may be made to Mission Hospice of San Mateo, 1900 O'Farrell St., Suite 200, San Mateo, CA 94403.



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
ZONING ORDINANCE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the "Zoning Ordinance" on Wednesday, June 24, 2009 at 8:00 p.m., Historic Schoolhouse, Town Center, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. The proposed ordinance amends Section 18.40 Motor Vehicle Fuel Price Signs of the Town of Portola Valley Municipal Code. The proposed amendment relates only to provisions for service station signs, specifically to the fuel pricing sign. The Town Council will consider all evidence, written and oral pertaining to the proposed amendments. Copies of the proposed amendments are available at Portola Valley Town Hall. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council to be heard at the time and place mentioned above.

To review documents related to this item, please come to the Town Hall Offices. The Portola Valley Town Hall is open from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Dated: June 4, 2009

Leslie A. Lambert
Planning Manager



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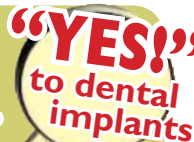
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The Almanac, established in September, 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County. The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior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

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



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

TOWN SQUARE FORUM

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

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

MAIL

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

CALL the Viewpoint desk at 854-2690, ext. 222.

City should not jeopardize library parking

What was expected to be smooth sailing for Menlo Park's plans to construct a new gymnasium on Alma Street near the library has hit a ripple of determined opposition over how the project will impact parking for library patrons.

The construction of the gymnasium would take away 17 of the 132 spaces in the parking lot nearest the library and recreation center. It is estimated that gym users will take up 100 parking spaces during peak periods of use. Unless these users park elsewhere, it appears that the lot frequented by library patrons could be full, forcing them to park a five- or 10-minute walk away.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

That possibility, which would be particularly hard on families and senior citizens, backs up a key criticism voiced by library supporters, who strongly dispute the finding in an environmental impact report that the Civic Center has enough parking to accommodate the users of the new gym, and the proposed new gymnastics center.

Friends of the Library member Tim Goode said in an Almanac guest opinion last week that due to the economic downturn, the library is currently seeing more users who are taking advantage of computer time and other services. These additional users would also add to the parking crunch, he said.

In criticizing the parking conclusions in the environmental report, library backers and members of the city's Planning Commission suggested several ways to solve the problem, including building underground parking, operating a shuttle bus service around the Civic Center complex, and even moving the gym to another location.

Despite the findings in the impact report, it is clear that 117 parking spaces is woefully inadequate to serve the library and the huge gym, which features two NBA-sized basketball courts that could attract players and spectators from many other Peninsula communities. Unless more space is provided in the library lot, either by adding a layer of underground parking or building up, with a parking structure, there is no doubt that some library patrons or gym users will have to park in other Civic Center lots.

For those headed for the library, especially people with small children or senior citizens, this could present a hardship that should not stand in the way of visiting the reading room or attending the children's story hour. And while gym users are much closer to the main Civic Center parking lot,

how can the city make sure they will not fill up the much more convenient library lot?

The city needs to assure its wide community of library users that the new gym will not push them out of convenient parking. We doubt if developer John Arrillaga would like his generous offer to oversee construction and underwrite a large portion of the cost of the gymnasium to go sour due to a miscalculation of parking needs.

Although expensive, underground spaces or an above-ground park-



ing structure at the library lot could easily provide room to accommodate visitors to the library and the gym. A Civic Center shuttle bus could provide another, perhaps temporary, solution. Closing a portion of Alma Street for parking might also solve the problem, although an earlier effort to do so fell apart.

Despite the city's wealth of 560 parking spaces at the Civic Center, renovation of the swimming pool, the upcoming conversion of the old gym to a gymnastics center and the addition of the new gym will draw many more visitors to the city complex. Even now some lots are full during peak periods and will undergo even more pressure when the new gyms come online.

City officials should take another good look at the impact report's conclusions about library parking after the gym is built. In our view, the city has much more work to do on the parking issue before the gym project moves forward. Without more diligence, the city's best intentions to build a trouble-free project could fall apart before it gets off the ground.

LETTERS

Our readers write

General plan shenanigans

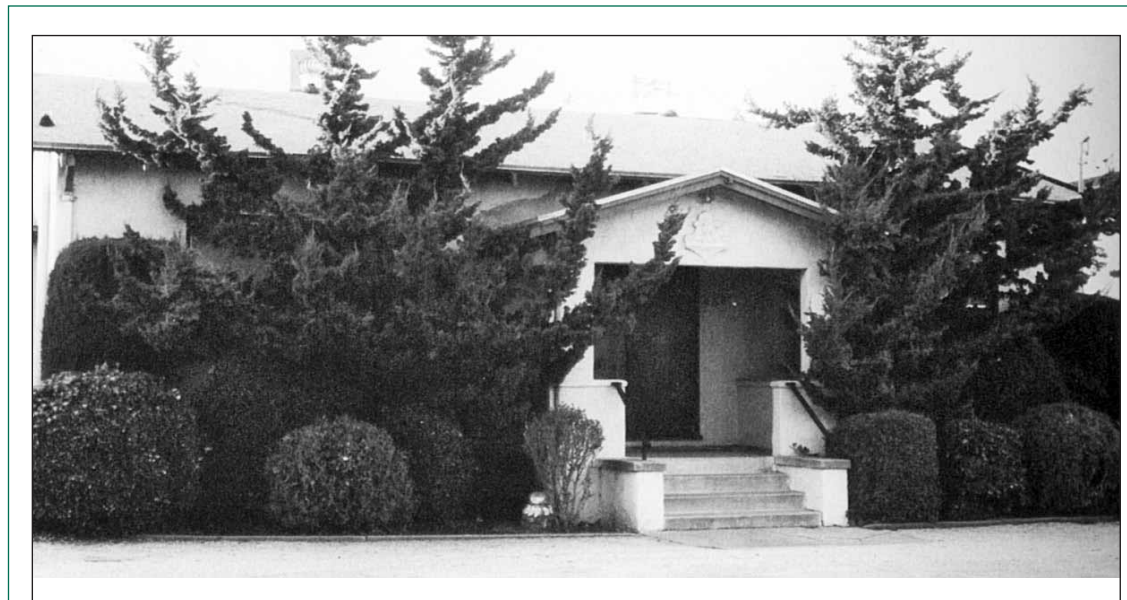
Editor:

Vigilance truly is the price of freedom. In this case, I refer to the Redwood City General Plan update.

Earlier this year, the City Council removed the 1,433-acre Cargill salt ponds from the General Plan update process, allowing **no changes** to the existing 1990 General Plan regarding the Cargill properties — all of which are designated "open space" in the 1990 plan.

The city just released the Draft 2009 Natural Resources Element of the General Plan update for review by the Planning Commission. And what does the map of the Cargill site show? The city staff has **changed** part of the Cargill site, removing it from open space! What part of **no changes** to the 1990 General Plan doesn't the staff understand?

This General Plan change to the salt pond site is exactly what Cargill wants — it paves the way for letting Cargill pave the bay. Without citizens carefully reviewing the 1990 General Plan and comparing it to



Menlo Park Historical Association

Our Regional Heritage

The clubhouse of the Italian-American Social Club was built in 1929 on Oak Lane in Menlo Park. The club drew members of Italian heritage from Menlo Park and other communities to socialize and play bocce ball on sand courts in the back yard.

the new draft map, this unauthorized change in open space would not have come to light.

Public vigilance is essential, especially with mega-money interests like Cargill and DMB

hounding the city.

The city can't have it both ways. If they want changes to the Cargill property, then the site must be part of the General Plan update with the rest of the city. Because the council

ordered the site left out of the process, then no changes to the Cargill site from the existing 1990 plan are allowed.

Lynne Trulio
Redwood City

A dynamo who inspired Valley school district

An appreciation of Barbara Schneiderman

By Michele Garside

Only rarely does one person transform a community and heighten its aspirations. Imagine the Portola Valley School District without the endowment from the sale of the Nathorst property, or the support of a thriving educational foundation. Seems impossible, yet that was the reality in the early 1980s. Onto this bleak stage stepped Barbara Schneiderman, and through her incredible ability to inspire, our district and community were transformed.

Imagine almost 300 people — children and adults; school parents and community members, meeting evenings for months to rehearse an ever-evolving script coupled with scores of songs that framed "Broadway Our Way" for a six-night SRO run at the Town Center. That's the magnitude of the several shows Barbara Schneiderman and her collaborator, Chris Jeffers, produced and directed.

Couple those productions with elaborate behind-



Barbara Schneiderman in clown costume at a 1983 production.

the-scenes preparation for auctions and dinners, decorations, sets and costumes, and one has a sense of the synergy Barbara created when she set about supporting the enriched curriculum of Portola Valley School District. Seasoned thespians mixed with neophytes to create a cacophony that lightened the hearts of thousands of theatergoers and raised much-needed funds to continue enriched school programs. The community productions were a catalyst for cohesiveness, for

creativity, for community. Barbara Schneiderman made every person feel like a star.

Barbara's successful efforts to mobilize the community generated funding that made it possible for the school board to develop a highly creative strategic plan. Children in grades K-8 took in all venues of arts education, including classes in art, vocal and instrumental music, dance and theater. They participated in H.O.T.S. (higher order thinking skills); they had science/technology specialists;

they became skilled in expository writing, and they were endowed with a sense of "can do" coupled with just plain fun! She helped set the bar for excellence and community involvement. One woman — one incredible woman — our Barbara Schneiderman — the lady who made us laugh, allowed us to dream and who made a difference for every Portola Valley child for decades.

The remarkable community productions were only the most visible manifestations of Barbara's ability to energize and challenge the rest of us to give more to make this valley a special place for our children and ourselves. She was our consummate go-to leader in a unique time of growth and creativity.

It is fitting that Barbara died April 2 in the month of her birth — in spring — a time of renewal. The seeds she sowed in the Portola Valley School District continue to nurture and grow the intellect, the curiosity and the spirit of our children.

Barbara Schneiderman, we salute you, we honor you, we remember you, we thank you.

Michele Garside is a former superintendent of the Portola Valley School District. Wendi Haskell, Robert Bauer, Frank Cameron and William Rogoway contributed to this article.



Graduation is big payoff for mentor

By Connie Heldman

Volunteer, Boys & Girls Clubs

I have to share some terrific news. Four youths from the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula, whom I have been mentoring for years, most since grammar school, graduated May 22 from Sacred Heart Preparatory high school in Atherton. They are Demetrius Hill, Martell Winn, Dania Reed and Juan Sandoval.

My husband Hal and I were at the graduation ceremony to cheer them on. All of them received scholarships to major colleges and all of them have become like family to us.

But the good news just kept getting better. The school's college counselor called me the night before graduation to let me in on a big secret. One of them, Martell, would be receiving one of the highest honors given at the school — come to find out, it was for his personal and active faith in God.

Martell is very special to me. He was the very first member of my Reading Wizards Book Club that I started at the Boys & Girls Club in East Palo Alto more than 10 years ago.

He came into the book club at 8 years old — a shy, scared little boy. Life had thrown him more than his share of curve balls. Martell and I connected and I began mentoring him from that moment on.

He has changed my life and he says I have changed his. As he walked across that stage graduating with honors, it was so inspiring to see how far he has come and how his life and those in his family have changed. In reality, the Boys & Girls Club has changed both of our lives and countless others.

As each of these youth walked across that stage with their heads held high, I couldn't help but remember the children I met so long ago who didn't think they had a chance in this world, who

were told that they weren't smart enough and that they should not waste time reaching for the stars.

I will always remember the trials and ridicule they had to overcome to focus on their studies and school and to stay away from other distractions, not to mention gangs and drugs. Now they have become role models for their younger siblings, their families and countless others at the Club and in the community.

I will always remember all of the wonderful staff and volunteers at the Club who helped and supported them and made them welcome. I will remember and I will cry tears of joy.

I remain the captain of their fan club today. I always bring my megaphone to their games and events. Sometimes I have to ask the kids if I overdid the cheering. But, before their graduation, each one of them gave me permission to bring my megaphone and to cheer as loudly as I could.

I happily obliged, albeit with tears in my eyes, as I have writing this now. I am so proud of each of these young people for who they are and for what they have accomplished.

In a few weeks my husband and I will take them on a cruise to Alaska to celebrate. We will then embark on another journey — college. And I so look forward to seeing them graduate in four years.

Thank you for indulging a proud mentor. I have been on the ride of my life for the past 10 years, a ride that has given my life new meaning. I thank God everyday for the opportunity to work with these youth and so many others at the Club. I encourage everyone else who wants to make a difference in a child's life to stop talking about it and just do it.

Connie Heldman is a volunteer and board member at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula.



TOWN SQUARE

Post your views and comments on TownSquare:
www.TheAlmanacOnline.com



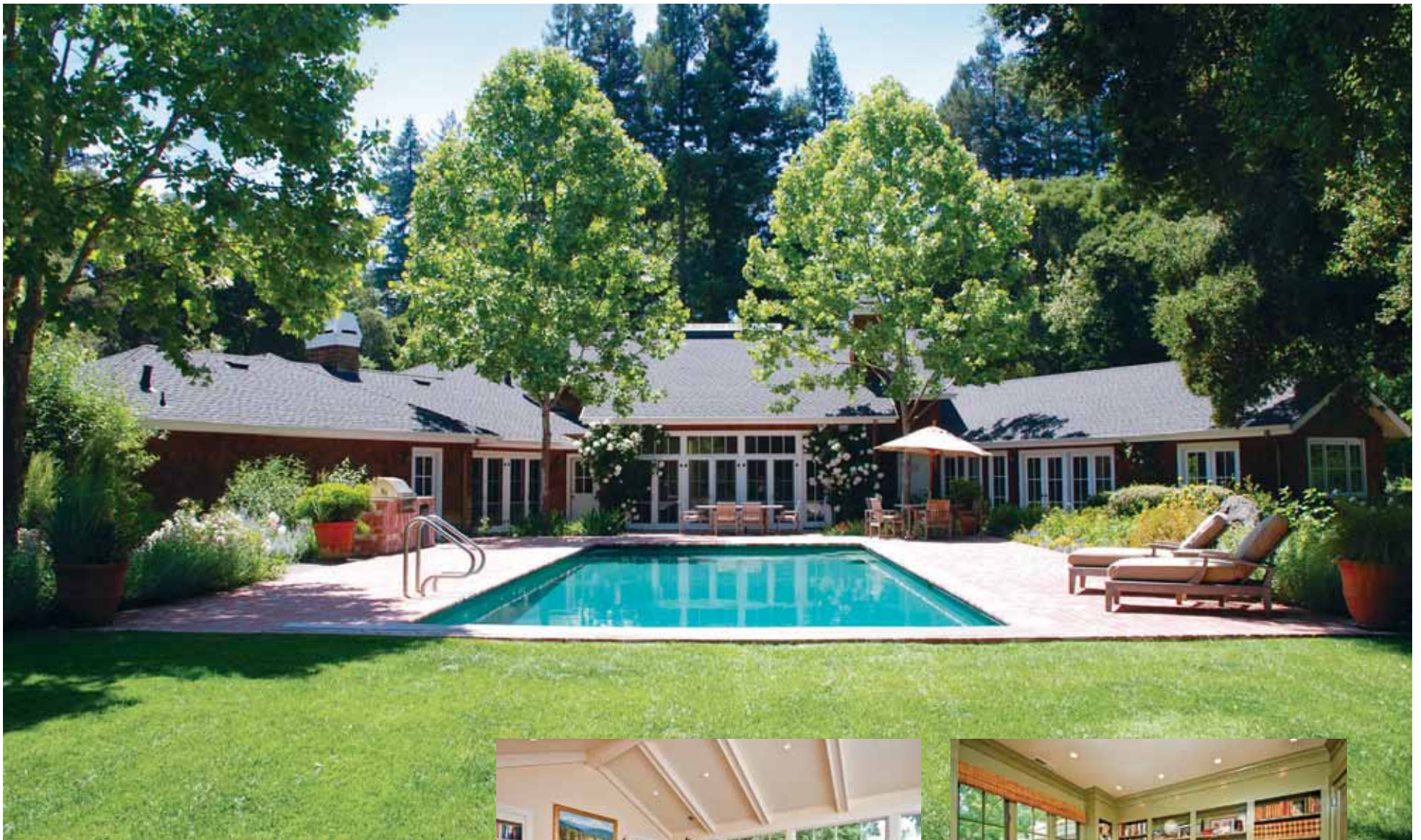
TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE CONTROL COMMISSION RECRUITMENT

The Town Council is seeking an individual to serve on the Town's Architectural and Site Control Commission (ASCC). The ASCC is responsible for review of all proposals for significant new development in Portola Valley, including new homes, major residential additions and changes to commercial and other non-residential uses. The ASCC, with staff support, administers the Town's design plans and guidelines, for the purposes of promoting the visual character of the community, minimizing disturbance to the natural setting and ensuring that improvements are properly related to their site and adjacent uses.

The ASCC consists of five (5) members appointed by the Town Council. Regular meetings are held at 8:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. Since most of the ASCC work is property specific, often on the Monday meeting dates special late afternoon field sessions are conducted to fully consider site and area conditions. The ASCC process involves significant interaction with existing and new Town residents, architects, landscape architects, and contractors.

If you are interested in serving on the ASCC, please submit a letter of interest to the Town Council by Friday, June 26, 2009.



187 MOUNTAIN HOME ROAD
WOODSIDE



- 5 bedrooms and 4.5 baths
- Dramatic heart pine plank flooring
- Chef's kitchen with Carrara marble and stainless steel appliances
- Master suite plus two additional bedroom suites – one with outside entrance
- Rear yard with brick terrace, pool, barbecue center, spa, pond with waterfall, and large level lawn
- Equestrian area with barn and corral
- Open meadow with potential for tennis court, riding ring, or expanded orchard
- Approximately 2.35 acres on Woodside's premier street
- Access to excellent Woodside schools



FOR SALE \$6,500,000

Information deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.



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