



RECESSION brings new life
to downtown Menlo Park. Page 5

The Almanac

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

AUGUST 12, 2009 | VOL. 44 NO. 50



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[Section 2]



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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT



Photo by Barbara Wood/Special to The Almanac

Complete restoration

Woodside's historic McArthur house, built in 1900 by Hugh and Elizabeth McArthur, great-grandparents of current owner Judy Rice, is being restored right down to the shingles. The shingles recently could be seen hanging on lines in the yard of the house, where they were drying after being doused in linseed oil before being painted and installed.

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On the cover

Feeding time is twice a day for the goats, chickens, geese, ducks and a llama who live rent-free in a pasture at the corner of Woodside Road and Hacienda Drive in Woodside. Lisa Green and her son Evan (pictured) are looking for an angel investor to buy the property and allow their operation to become an example of sustainable living. Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac. **See Section 2.**

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THE ALMANAC (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Wednesday by Embarcadero Publishing Co., 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-4455. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices. Adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for San Mateo County, The Almanac is delivered free to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside. Voluntary subscriptions for \$30 per year or \$50 per 2 years are welcome from residents of the above circulation area. Subscription rates for businesses in, or residents of, other communities is \$50 per year and \$80 for two years. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Almanac, P.O. Box 7008, Menlo Park, CA 94026-7008. Copyright ©2009 by Embarcadero Publishing Co., All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

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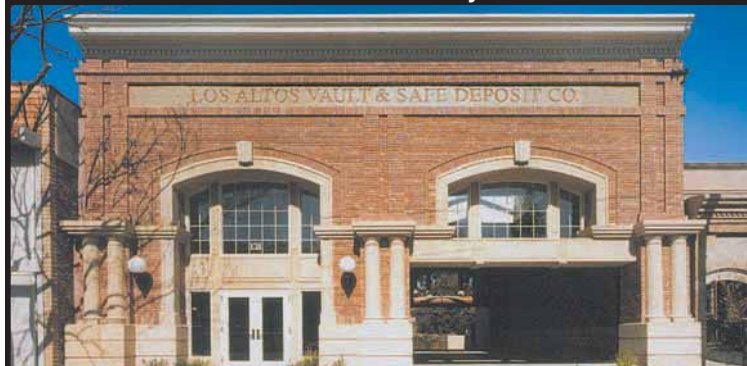
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Duck, duck, Dutch Goose

Menlo Park beer and burger joint The Dutch Goose, a favorite hangout on Alameda de las Pulgas for college students, kids' sports teams and old-timers, is adding an extra counter area to its back patio for people to order food and drinks.

The small, covered hut — dubbed “the Duck Blind” — will provide a refuge for people who want to escape the crowds at the bar, owner Greg Stern said. He added, with a touch of regret, that the county wouldn't allow him to expand the patio.

Customers can only hope the bartender will not be sporting a 12 gauge.

Climb Ev'ry Mountain

Menlo Park resident Subramanian Subbiah had a momentous family vacation. He, his wife and their 7-year-old twin sons climbed to the top of Mt. Whitney on Aug. 4. Rangers believe that the twins, who are students at Laurel School, are the youngest to reach the top of the mountain unassisted, Mr. Subbiah reports.

New in town

Brielle Johnck and Steve Schmidt spotted author/journalist Christopher Hitchens dining at Left Bank in Menlo Park recently. On their way out of the Santa Cruz Avenue restaurant, the maitre de overheard the pair discussing the celebrity sighting and wanted to know if there was someone famous in the house.

“When I told him who we had seen, he replied that he didn't know the name, as he had just moved to the area,” said Ms. Johnck.

Game on

Atherton police Chief Glenn Nielsen is pretty handy with a racket. He and San Mateo County Undersheriff Carlos Bolanos took home the silver medal in the doubles tennis tournament at the Western States Police & Fire Games this summer. The week-long games, held in Santa Clarita in Southern California, drew more than 5,000 police, sheriff and firefighters to compete in more than 50 events.

Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

In heated high-speed rail battle, Peninsula residents may have found their Goliath

■ Citing potential common ground between Peninsula dwellers and Union Pacific, local residents plan to file an action to assure the railroad behemoth has a seat at the table in high-speed rail negotiations.

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Those who would like to see the high-speed rail line run in a tunnel or a trench, rather than on a berm, as it passes through the Peninsula might have found an ally in the negotiating process — in the form of, ironically, a major railroad company.

According to Menlo Park attorney Mike Brady, Union Pacific railroad retained an unusual set of rights when it sold the Caltrain corridor to the Peninsula

Joint Powers Board, which represents Peninsula counties, in 1991. Among those rights is the right to “veto any other inter-city passenger service” running along the rail line, and to prevent any invasive construction in the right of way, according to Mr. Brady.

With Mountain View-based attorney Zachary Tyson, Mr. Brady plans to file a declaratory relief action Tuesday, Aug. 11 in San Mateo County Superior Court on behalf of Atherton resident Russell Peterson. In the claim,

Mr. Peterson asks the court to declare that the High-Speed Rail Authority cannot begin work on the project without Union Pacific's consent.

Residents who feel that neither the High-Speed Rail Authority nor the Joint Powers Board are looking out for their interests hold out hope that Union Pacific could disrupt potential plans for raised tracks, which many feel would have deleterious effects on local communities.

Mr. Brady and Mr. Tyson are working pro bono, according to Mr. Brady.

Unlikely Union

Peninsula residents and Union Pacific officials would make

unlikely bedfellows, given that the three Peninsula counties — Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco — originally bought the rights to the rail corridor from Union Pacific.

But residents who are concerned about the potential impacts of the high-speed rail system on local jurisdictions have said they think the Caltrain board is more interested in securing benefits for its own system, such as electrification of the rail line, than it is in defending the interests of Peninsula communities.

It's not clear where Union Pacific stands on the prospect of high-speed rail, though it has

See **RAIL**, page 11

Recession brings new life to downtown

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

When the Menlo Park stationery store Paper Chase closed in October 2008, longtime downtown shoppers lamented the exit of a valued shop, one that had been open for 28 years.

But Jim Gothers, who had just bought The Runners High next door, saw an opportunity. His company's previous owners had long mulled the idea of expanding from the narrow space, to allow them to carry more inventory, and provide more room for customers to maneuver.

“It was a great opportunity for us to expand the space,” Mr. Gothers said.

The Runners High is currently operating out of the former Paper Chase storefront, while it renovates its former shop. He expects the full store to open in late August, under a new name — “Fleet Feet,” a franchise retailer Mr. Gothers partnered with to help finance the expansion.

The downturn in the economy also helped push the expansion



Felicia Jose dresses a mannequin in josef Boutique, the women's clothing store she opened recently.

Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

along. The building's landlord agreed to help pay some of the construction expenses, and met Runners High “part way” on a new lease.

“In booming times, that might not have been the case,” Mr. Gothers said. “Given the economic times, I don't think anyone was jumping at (the opportunity to move into the space). We snatched it up before it went on the market.”

Mr. Gothers isn't the only local

business owner who is finding that the recession is creating opportunities that would not ordinarily be available. While the recession has spelled shutters for an unusually high number of local retailers and restaurants, it has also opened the door to a number of new businesses.

The state of the economy “is allowing some smaller, local, independent businesses an opportunity to go into business now,” said Alex Andrade,

the city's business development specialist, citing a host of retail stores and restaurants that have moved to the city in recent months. Strong businesses like The Runners High have a chance to expand, and ones that are struggling may be able to renegotiate their leases — though getting property owners on board can be a hard sell.

“Some are amenable,” Mr.

See **DOWNTOWN**, page 8

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Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

Gordon Lewin helped usher in some \$323 million in voter-approved bond funds for capital improvements, including a new performing arts center at Menlo-Atherton High School.

Eight years is enough for trustee Gordon Lewin

By **Dave Boyce**
Almanac Staff Writer

Gordon Lewin will be passing the baton after eight years as a trustee for the Sequoia Union High School District. His second term expires at the end of the year, and follows one term as a trustee for the Menlo Park City School District.

“I’m the kind of person who goes around the track a few times and looks for another track,” he said in an interview. “It’s time to do something else. Come December, I might feel some seller’s remorse here.”

There have been demands on his attention. Since coming to the board in 2001, Mr. Lewin has faced the arrival of charter schools, the departure of one superintendent and the hiring of another, the contentious No Child Left Behind Act, and eight budgets, including the 2003 crisis in which then-Gov. Gray Davis threatened the property tax revenues of wealthy school districts.

Perhaps more enjoyably, Mr. Lewin also helped usher in some \$323 million in voter-approved bond-measure funds for capital improvements, including, at Woodside and Menlo-Atherton high schools, upgraded classrooms and recreational facilities and new performing arts centers. M-A’s \$32 million, 490-seat theater is set to open in October.

Asked if any of these matters had kept him up at night, Mr. Lewin said he’s learned “compassionate detachment” so as to avoid taking issues home. And while unanimous decisions on the board are sometimes unreachable, “when we disagree, we disagree agreeably,” he said,

which is an improvement over the board’s dynamic before he came to it.

The issues are complex, he added. Asked for an example, he noted the new career technical education (CTE) initiative at the district. A key goal: every student, whether college bound or not, should leave high school with at least some experience working with his or her hands.

The questions in setting up this district-wide program are many, Mr. Lewin said. The courses will be spread among the four comprehensive campuses and one yet-to-be-built central location. Which courses should go where? Will interest be high enough to make it worthwhile? The curriculum should encompass both 20th and 21st century skills. How many of each? The curriculum should serve students regardless of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic factors. How is that achieved?

“The job is very deliberative,” Mr. Lewin said.

The superintendent

Sequoia district Superintendent Pat Gemma has been in the news as the point man in opposing efforts by Everest (charter) Public High School to get off the ground.

Mr. Gemma first fought the school’s efforts to obtain a charter. When the state Board of Education granted one to Everest, he then worked to prevent the school from opening in centrally located Redwood City as opposed to East Palo Alto, where the district wants the school to be.

Mr. Lewin voted against giving Everest a charter in September

See **LEWIN**, next page

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Richard Merk to step down from council

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Richard Merk, who will conclude his 13th year on the Portola Valley Town Council in December, is taking a breather after 30 years of public service.

Mr. Merk, known for his attention to detail, his willingness to ask politically incorrect questions, and his concern for proper procedure in transacting council business, will not be running for re-election, he told *The Almanac*.

"I have to confess, I'm tired," he said in an interview. "I've been serving the town for 30 years. I could use a little time off."

He began as a volunteer on the Conservation Committee in 1977, he said. He served on the Planning Commission between 1980 and 1993, the year he joined the council.

He served as mayor in 1996, was re-elected in 1997 and resigned abruptly in February 1999, citing business and personal reasons. Voters re-elected him to the council in 2001 and 2005. In the in-between times, he volunteered in other town-related activities, he said.

If the election remains uncontested — three candidates running for three open seats — it's likely that architect and newcomer John Richards would fill Mr. Merk's seat, with incumbents Maryann Moise Derwin



File photo by Dave Boyce/*The Almanac*

Richard Merk has been a reliable skeptic on the Town Council.

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

and Ted Driscoll returning.

Mr. Richards was on the Planning Commission from 1991 to 1996. "He understands the groundbreaking strides that the town has made," Mr. Merk said, referring to the commission's role in protecting against oversized houses and streets lined with fences and walls.

"I've always thought that planning was the most important thing in Portola Valley and I think John gets it," Mr. Merk added. "I feel freed up to step down (now that) there's a really good person to fill my shoes."

"I'm honored that he feels that way," Mr. Richards told *The Almanac*.

If Portola Valley is known for anything, it is its environmental ethic. The new \$20 million Town Center complex was designed to win certification in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program of the U.S. Green Building Council.

The complex may win a platinum rating, the highest available, but Mr. Merk is not impressed. The money spent on LEED — and he doesn't know how much that is and says that no one else can figure it out — could have been better spent on the project itself.

"I'm willing to question LEED," he said. "I've always been the person who would ask the question (prompting others to think) 'Oh, he's asking that question.'" ■

LEWIN

continued from previous page

2008 and refused a counter offer by Everest to locate on Charter Street in Redwood City. While he would not discuss Everest for this story, citing ongoing litigation — Everest has sued the district claiming that the East Palo Alto offer was illegal — he was willing to discuss Mr. Gemma's performance.

"He's been a very effective education leader," Mr. Lewin said, adding that personally, he would give Mr. Gemma "very positive marks."

Hiring a superintendent is the most important job a trustee has, he said. When Mr. Gemma was one of three finalists being considered in 2002, the board invited him to 12 hours of interviews over a weekend, including late dinners, Mr. Lewin said.

The point, he said, was to get candidates out of their comfort zones. "That's when you really got to see the person," Mr. Lewin said. "What we saw

'Celebrate Africa' fundraiser in PV

The African Library Project, a Portola Valley-based nonprofit that collects and ships books to libraries in Africa, will hold a fundraising event, 'Celebrate Africa,' from 4 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 23, at the Portola Valley Town Center, 765 Portola Road.

Guests can watch African drummers and dancers perform, experiment with African arts and crafts, and feast on traditional African food, such as jolof rice and banana beignets.

Volunteers will explain how people can support their efforts. Admission is free, but people are en-

couraged to donate to help fund book shipping costs, said book drive coordinator Amelia Yee.

The project works with schools and organizations across the country and with some 375 libraries in African countries, such as Swaziland and Botswana, Ms. Yee said.

The project pairs up each African library with a U.S. organization that agrees to hold book drives for the library. Mrs. Yee estimates that the project has sent more than 300,000 books to Africa in the past four years.

For more information, go to www.africanlibraryproject.org.

is what we got."

Mr. Gemma is "very respectful," a good communicator and listener, and district schools

have "really improved a lot" under his leadership, even during these difficult financial times, Mr. Lewin said. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



Walk-thru

Dear Gloria,

Our agent has advised us that prior to putting our final payment into the title company to close on our new house, we will do a "walk-thru". What is the purpose of this and what if we are not satisfied with what we see?

— Margaret N.

Dear Margaret N.,

That is an excellent question and one that probably needs definitive standards in our industry. The walk-thru originally was to make sure that the house is in the same condition as when the contract was signed, that everything is in working order and that the items mentioned in the contract, such as refrigerator, draperies, etc. are left with the house. Some walk-thrus go very smoothly with both buyer and

seller present and the seller happily demonstrating the various systems of the house, exchanging gardeners and maintenance peoples names, etc. Often people are not yet moved out so there is no way to ascertain that the house will be left clean and free of debris. Some people will want funds left in escrow to guarantee that these things are done and other people don't give it a thought. Some buyers, although the house looks very clean are unhappy and think the cupboards should have had a more thorough cleaning or something else which, in the total scheme of things, is not a big deal.

As to what you can do if you are not satisfied with what you see, is to hold funds back until the sellers move out and have both agents then agree (or disagree) that the property is delivered to you as expected.

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

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Businesses arrive, expand in downtown Menlo Park

With rents falling and companies closing their doors, a number of businesses have expanded or set up shop in Menlo Park over the past few months. Here is a partial list of those businesses, including some that haven't opened yet, based on information provided by the city's business development department.

Specialty retail

- Alys Grace (formerly Calla), 1131 Chestnut St. (temporary)
- The Box Works, 625 Oak Grove Ave.
- Dolma Tibetan Carpets, 611B Santa Cruz Ave.
- Farnad Couture, 1160 University Drive
- Josef Boutique, 883 Santa Cruz Ave.
- Milana C., 1158A Chestnut Street
- Pendleton Clothing, 145 El Camino Real
- Runners High (expansion; now "Fleet Feet"), 859 Santa Cruz Ave.

Restaurants and dining

- Amici's East Coast Pizzeria, 880 Santa Cruz Ave.
- Cook's Seafood Restaurant (expansion), 751 El Camino Real
- Marqs in Menlo, 1143 Crane St.
- Ristorante Mitaro, 827 Santa Cruz Ave.
- Rubio's Fresh Mexican Grill, 515 El Camino Real

Other businesses

- Advanced Trustee Strategies, 1162 Chestnut St.
- Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes, 801 El Camino Real
- Menlo Cleaners, 515 El Camino Real
- Menlo Park Academy of Dance (remodel/relocation), 1137 El Camino Real
- Peet's Coffee and Tea, 525 El Camino Real (Safeway)
- New Image Optical, 441 El Camino Real
- The Realty Consulting Group, 155 Crane St., Suite 5

DOWNTOWN

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Andrade said. "Others aren't playing ball."

New businesses

Over the past few months, several new businesses have opened in downtown Menlo Park, and along the city's stretch of El Camino Real, including four women's clothing boutiques and five restaurants. Several others plan to open soon.

Menlo Park resident Farnad Fakoor said that lowered rents helped her make the plunge and open a boutique and clothes design studio, Farnad Couture, on University Drive, near Oak Grove Avenue. Ms. Fakoor designs and manufactures clothing, specializing in evening gowns; she had previously operated out of an atelier in San Francisco's Union Square, where she met clients one-on-one.

But with the dip in the economy, she saw an opportunity to expand to sell pre-designed couture that she can modify and tailor, as well as "made-to-measure" clothing.

"This is a big opportunity to get started. It can't get any better than this," she said, referring to the low rent.

A year ago, the rates for retail space on Santa Cruz Avenue ranged from \$4 to \$5 per square foot, according to Mr. Andrade. Today, it's more like \$3 to \$3.25, he said.

A block away from Ms. Fakoor's new operation, Felicia Jose recently opened her own women's clothing boutique, Josef Boutique, at 883 Santa Cruz Ave. Ms. Jose, who left a career in the high-tech industry to "do something creative," said she found rent in downtown

Menlo Park to be a "very good value," compared to her former San Mateo space.

"This has been a long-time dream, I've always been interested in fashion," said Ms. Jose, a Menlo School alum. "It's been a real joy" to run the business.

Another women's clothing boutique, Milana C., opened on Chestnut Street in June.

And Calla, a women's clothing boutique that closed temporarily after a major fire in March, plans to re-open on Chestnut Street in the fall under a new name: Alys Grace.

Adapting to economy

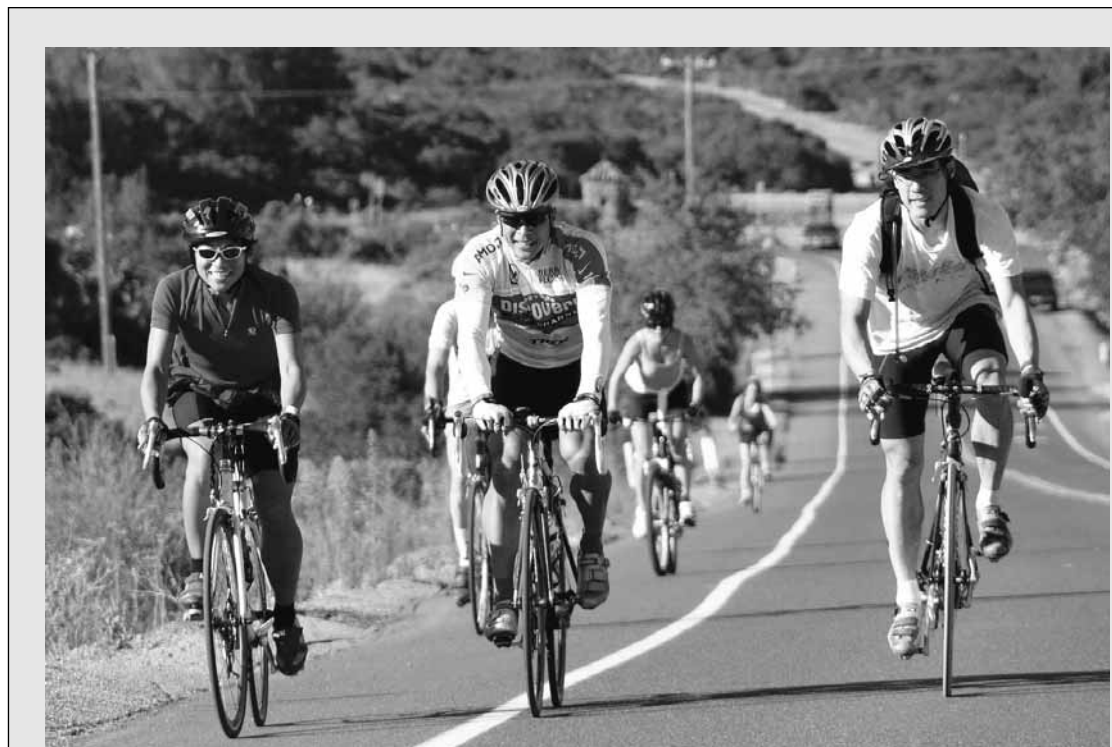
The recession may have opened the doors to new businesses. But once they're in they've got to figure out how to stay — and compete with existing businesses that are also fighting to stay afloat.

"There's definitely a Darwinian aspect to today's economy," Mr. Andrade said. "The companies that have a strong foundation and the staff to keep them productive, the ones that are creative, are going to be the ones that can restructure successfully, and move forward."

Mark Adams, co-owner of the recently opened Marqs in Menlo restaurant, said that while he's trying to create a soothing, big-city vibe, he's also trying to make customers feel they're getting their money's worth.

"I'm not just a restaurant," he said. "What people need now is a little more bang for their buck." There's no cover charge to hear the musicians, and customers can simply have a drink at the bar or a few appetizers, instead of ordering a full entree.

"It's all about giving them their



File photo

Proceeds from the rides support need-based Rotary scholarships for local high school students and a tutoring project at Garfield School in Redwood City.

Tour de Menlo set for Saturday, Aug. 22

Cyclists are invited to sign up for the 2009 Tour de Menlo, a scenic ride over Peninsula roads that benefits Rotary Club tutoring and scholarship programs. The ride, set for Saturday, Aug. 22, has three routes, all starting at Menlo-Atherton High School, with a lunch stop at the Picchetti Winery in the Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve in Cupertino.

Sponsored by The Almanac and the Rotary Club of Menlo Park, the Tour includes the option of 65-, 46- and 35-mile routes over Peninsula roads.

Lutticken's, the Alameda de las Pulgas delicatessen favored by many cyclists, will cater the barbecue lunch of hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken sandwiches and numerous salads and other vegetarian options.

The entry fee is \$45 for pre-

registration and \$50 on the day of the ride. There will be full SAG (emergency) support for the riders and water stops at Belmont and Portola Valley along the route.

The 65-mile route includes about 3,000 feet of climbing, while the shorter routes are relatively flat.

Proceeds from the rides are used to support need-based Rotary scholarships for local high school students and a tutoring project at Garfield School in Redwood City. Last year, about 275 riders took part in the event.

Riders are urged to use the TourdeMenlo.com Web site to register in advance. All riders must sign a waiver at check-in, which will begin at 8 a.m. at Menlo-Atherton. The Lutticken's lunch will be served from

11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

The 65-mile route will make its way north on Edgewood and Canada roads, cross Highway 92, past Crystal Springs Reservoir and then up Polhemus Road to the first rest stop. It will continue past Interstate 280 on Ralston Avenue, and return south on the Bike Bridge, before heading to Portola Valley, Los Altos and the Picchetti Winery on Montebello Road for lunch.

The shorter routes have less elevation gain, with the 46-mile picking up the Portola Valley/Los Altos loop and the 35-mile heading through the Stanford campus and Foothill Boulevard to Montebello Road. All routes return on Foothill to Menlo-Atherton High School.

For more information, see www.TourdeMenlo.com or call Tom at (650) 854-2690, ext. 222.

money's worth," he said, adding that he's been able to line up better musicians than he could have wrangled a year ago.

There has been much more turnover than usual among downtown businesses, Mr. Andrade says. He added that the city is working to fill vacancies, and that among other types of retail, he's heard interest from high-end nail salons, yogurt and cupcake shops, fitness centers, travel agencies, restaurants, furniture designers — and, of course, women's clothing boutiques.

The city's new businesses "are all local, independent businesses that take pride at being in Menlo Park, and really care about the community," Mr. Andrade said. "We're pleased with the new opportunities that are being created." ■

Menlo Park cops nab bike-napper

An item on Craigslist has led to the arrest of a suspected bicycle thief, Menlo Park police reported Aug. 6. An undercover officer arrested a San Jose man July 30 in connection with two Menlo Park thefts.

A theft victim discovered her stolen bike listed for sale on the online site Craigslist, and contacted Menlo Park police. They arranged a sting and, on July 30, arrested James Barry Durr. Police recovered a bicycle as well as stolen property from another theft in Menlo Park, said police spokeswoman Nicole Acker in

a press release.

In recent weeks, there's been an upsurge in bike thefts from carports, and in front of homes and apartments, police said. Many of the bicycles are high-end, worth more than \$500, according to Ms. Acker.

Simply locking up a bicycle is not necessarily enough to prevent its theft, police warned. Besides storing bicycles out of view, police are encouraging people to mark their bikes with an identification number. An ID number makes a bike less attractive to thieves, and it makes for better evidence in court, Ms. Acker said.

Filing deadline extended in many races

■ No election in several races due to lack of contestants.

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

The deadline for filing candidate papers for the Nov. 3 election has been extended until Wednesday, Aug. 12, in a number of local races — including those for seats on the Woodside and Portola Valley town councils — because incumbents whose terms are expiring in December did not file for re-election by last week's deadline.

The filing period closed Friday, Aug. 7, for the other races, and in some cases, there will be no election because the number of candidates filing to run is equal to the number of open seats.

Incumbents on the Woodside and Portola Valley councils, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, the Sequoia Union High School District, and several other school districts chose not to seek re-election. When an incumbent doesn't run, the deadline for filing is automatically extended five calendar days.

Councilwoman Carroll Ann Hodges, who represents Woodside's District 6, is not running, so the deadline to file papers to run for that seat will be extended to Aug. 12. Anne Kasten, a member of the Architecture and Site Review Board, is running for Ms. Hodges' seat, Town Clerk Janet Koelsch said.

Councilman Dave Tanner, who represents Woodside's District 4, filed candidate papers, as did Councilwoman Deborah Gordon, who represents District 2, Ms. Koelsch said. The filing period for those two seats is closed.

In Portola Valley, incumbent Councilman Richard Merk is not running for re-election. Three candidates — council members Maryann Moise Derwin and Ted Driscoll, and newcomer John Richards — have completed the necessary steps to run, Town Clerk



Sharon Hanlon said.

To run for a seat on the Town Council, contact the respective town clerks in Woodside (851-6790) and Portola Valley (851-1700, ext. 210).

School boards

In the Sequoia high school district, incumbents Sally Stewart and Gordon Lewin are not seeking re-election.

As of the end of the day Aug. 7, six candidates had filed papers to run for that board's three open seats: finance specialist Robert Ferrando; former Ravenswood school board member Jacquie Wallace Greene; former state Assembly candidate Virginia Chang Kiraly; retired software manager Alan Sarver; university social scientist Chris Thomsen; and Noria Zasslow, a frequent candidate who in the past hasn't responded to interview requests.

The filing deadline for the Woodside Elementary School District board has been extended to Aug. 12 as well because incumbent Karen Werner is not running for re-election.

As of late Aug. 7, incumbents Bettina Pike and Elianne Frenkel-Popell had filed, as had three other candidates: Millo Fenzi, an Internet businessman; Wendy Warren Crandall, a school community volunteer; and Marc Tarpenning, an entrepreneur. There are three open seats.

The filing period for the three open seats on the Portola Valley School District board was extended because incumbent Donald Collat is not running for re-election. The two other incumbents, Bill Youstra and Ray Villareal, are both running. As of late Aug. 7, no one else had filed papers.

In the San Mateo County Community College District, incumbents Helen Hausman and Richard Holober filed for the two available seats, so there will be

no election, according to the San Mateo County elections office.

Special districts

The filing period for three open seats on the Menlo Park Fire Protection District board has been extended to Aug. 12 because incumbents Peter Carpenter and Ollie Brown are not running for re-election.

Incumbent Rex Ianson is in the running, as is James Harris, a semi-retired businessman, and Robert Silano, who lists himself as an intelligence analyst. There will be no election if no one else files by the extended deadline.

There will be no election for the Woodside Fire Protection board; incumbent Peter Berger was the only person filing papers for the only open seat.

Los Trancos County Water District incumbents David Smernoff and Thomas Uridel are running to retain their seats, but incumbent Perry Blackmon is not, so the filing period for the three open seats has been extended. As of late Aug. 7, two other candidates had filed: Tracy Sherman, a real estate manager; and Richard Swan, who lists himself as a chief technical officer.

No election will be held in the West Bay Sanitary District, where there is one two-year term and two four-year terms up for election.

Incumbent Harry Harrison and newcomer Edward "Ned" Moritz, a retired business executive, were the only people to file for the four-year terms. One of the seats was vacant with the resignation of David Knight earlier this year, and now Mr. Moritz will fill that seat.

Fran Dehn was the only person filing for the two-year term; she had been appointed to a 16-month term when board member John Lomax resigned in June 2008. She will now continue to serve out the four-year term John Lomax was originally elected to fill. ■

— Staff writers Dave Boyce, Andrea Gemmet and Sean Howell contributed to this report.

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David C. Daniels Nature Center

Block party Wednesday in downtown Menlo Park

Menlo Park will hold its second and final block party of the summer Wednesday, Aug. 12, featuring a performance by a Beatles tribute band.

Local businesses and non-profits will line the street for the block party, scheduled to run from 6 to 9:30 p.m. The Sun Kings, a Beatles tribute band, are scheduled to play from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in Fremont

Park, on Santa Cruz Avenue at University Drive in downtown Menlo Park.

The block party will feature performances by The Fabulous Hummerz, The Raytones, Kitchen Help, Blah Blah Woof Woof, and The Upside Trio, according to the Chamber of Commerce. Several groups are also scheduled to perform at the community stage at Santa

Cruz Avenue and Crane Street: Kuk Sool Won Martial Arts at 6:30 p.m., Radya's belly dance Class at 7 p.m., and the Hillview School Jazz Ensemble at 8 p.m. Stanford's marching band is scheduled to make an appearance at 7:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, Santa Cruz Avenue will close at 3 p.m. and re-open at 11 p.m., according to the chamber.



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Eshoo sets new date for high-speed rail meeting

Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, will host a town hall meeting to discuss the California high-speed rail project on Wednesday, Aug. 26, at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers from 7 to 8 p.m.

Representatives from the High Speed Rail Authority and Caltrain will make presentations and answer questions.

A meeting had been set for July 25, but Rep. Eshoo said she had to cancel due to critical votes in Washington, D.C.

California voters passed Proposition 1A in November, approving \$9.95 billion in bond funding for the high-speed rail project. Many

local residents have raised concerns that the new rail line could divide communities and lower property values.

The city of Menlo Park and the town of Atherton have joined a lawsuit against the project, arguing that the state did not thoroughly consider the potential consequences of running high-speed trains along the Caltrain corridor.

The town hall meeting will be webcast live on <http://eshoo.house.gov>. To submit questions for the panelists, email AskAnna@mail.house.gov. For more information, call her district office at 323-2984.

RAIL

continued from page 5

said it doesn't intend to give up its right to veto the high-speed trains, according to Mr. Brady. He points out that a memorandum of understanding between the rail authority and the Caltrain board doesn't even mention Union Pacific, saying the railroad giant is "being completely ignored by the authority and the Joint Powers Board."

In response to a request for an interview, Caltrain said in a statement that "nothing has been done that would violate" Union Pacific's rights.

Mr. Brady agreed with that assessment. "They can plan all they want to, but they couldn't start the project until Union Pacific agrees," he said. "It's a waste of public funds for the Joint Powers Board and the High-Speed Rail Authority to be planning this project without Union Pacific's consent."

Mehdi Morshed, the authority's executive director, said in a statement: "We're looking forward to working in good faith with everyone involved and can't speak to a lawsuit that doesn't exist."

Common ground?

On the issue that looms largest in the minds of locals —

whether the rail system would run underground, or on a berm — Peninsula residents and Union Pacific might find some common ground, Mr. Brady said.

For instance, running Caltrain and high-speed rail tracks through an underground tunnel, with Union Pacific freight running above ground, could be a win-win for both locals and the railroad giant, he said. Union Pacific wouldn't have to share the above-ground tracks, enabling it to run freight trains during the day. And Peninsula cities wouldn't have to confront a 15-foot-high berm bisecting their communities.

Perhaps Union Pacific would make the tunnel option, thought in many quarters to be prohibitively expensive, a condition for its consent to the high-speed rail system.

Mr. Brady admits it's all speculation at this point. He met with Union Pacific representatives, but didn't get any indication of the railroad's position, he said.

If Union Pacific is concerned about its rights when it comes to the rail corridor, why doesn't it file for declaratory relief itself?

"It's probably political," Mr. Brady said. "Maybe they have to be careful, who knows. I don't purport to answer for them ... What their ultimate position will be, I don't know." ■

Exhibit on Loma Prieta earthquake

"I survived the Great Quake of 1989: Recollections of Loma Prieta Earthquake" is the theme of an exhibit now on display at the San Mateo County History Museum through Dec. 6. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The exhibit includes television news coverage, photographs, artifacts and residents'

personal accounts. You will have a chance to share your own stories.

Cost is \$4 for adults, \$2 for children and seniors, and free for kids under 6. The history museum is located at 2200 Broadway in Redwood City. For more information, call 299-0104 or go to www.historysmc.org.

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Men sentenced in brutal assaults, robberies

Plea bargains will mean prison sentences for three East Palo Alto men and possible jail time for a fourth after they all pleaded no-contest on Aug. 4 to charges related to the Feb. 24, 2008, early-morning burglary of the Safeway store on El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

Following the burglary, the men assaulted and robbed two pedestrians: a 63 year-old man on O'Brien Drive east of the Bayshore Freeway, leaving him with a blood clot on the brain and several skull fractures; and a 37-year-old man bruised by kicks and punches in the Belle Haven neighborhood, according to reports from the District Attorney's Office and the Menlo Park Police Department.

Superior Court Presiding Judge Barbara Mallach sentenced John Mahe, 19, and Holomesi Tuineau, 20, each to three years in prison

and ordered them to pay \$300 in fines and restitution, Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said.

Both men pleaded no-contest to robbery charges and will receive credit for time served in county jail, with Mr. Mahe getting 595 days of credit and Mr. Tuineau getting 599, Mr. Wagstaffe said. Credit can exceed actual jail time if the defendant is cooperative.

Both men are ineligible for parole and will each have one felony strike registered against them, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Sipukako Tony Vailala, 19, received a sentence of two years in state prison on charges of felony assault, and is receiving credit for 777 days in jail — more credit than his prison sentence. He also must pay \$300 in fines and restitution, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Attorneys representing the three men did not return requests

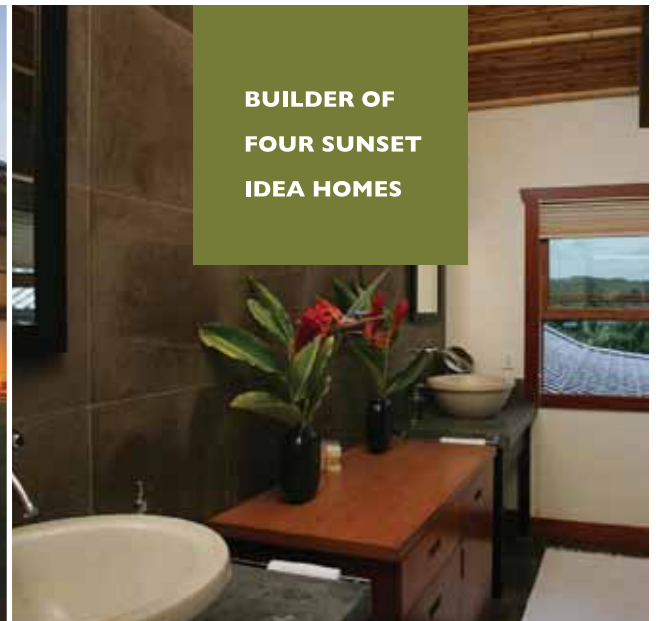
for comment.

Malakai Mataele, 19, who was charged with commercial burglary, had been out of custody and is set for sentencing on Oct. 8. Mr. Mataele pleaded no-contest in exchange for no prison time and six months in jail, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Mataele's attorney, Michael Hroziencik of Redwood City, said his client had joined the group for a "grab and dash beer run" and hadn't been involved "with any of the more serious activity," Mr. Hroziencik said.

The incident began with a 5:40 a.m. robbery at the Safeway store at 525 El Camino Real, where the men stole whiskey and a six-pack of beer, and tangled with a security guard.

Both victims were robbed of their cell phones. Police did not reveal their identities to protect their safety.



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Six candidates vie for two seats on high school board

■ Charter schools, budgets are hot issues.

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The election heat will be on as trustees Gordon Lewin and Sally Stewart vacate their seats on the governing board of the Sequoia Union High School District.

The heat has not been on in recent elections. In 2001 and 2005, the incumbents won by double digits.

This time around, six candidates have verified their intention to run for the two open seats in the November election, as indicated by

a candidate roster at the Web site of the San Mateo County Registrar of Voters.

This is a time of crisis for the state budget and education funding in general, and the issue of charter schools is particularly relevant to the Sequoia district: Everest (charter) Public High School is suing the district over its obligation to provide Everest with “reasonably equivalent” facilities.

Here, in alphabetical order, is an introduction to the candidates who made themselves available for interviews.

■ Robert Ferrando, 58, is a



resident of Atherton and the chief financial officer for a Bay Area roofing company. He has two children: a son in fourth grade at Encinal School, and a daughter in her sophomore year at Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, he said in an e-mail.

His priorities: a fiscally sound district—he looks forward to analyzing the budget line by line—and finding “the best way possible” to educate students, he said.

On charter schools, Mr. Ferrando

suggested that the district should capitalize on Summit Prep’s successful academic model.

■ Jacquie Wallace-Greene, 44, is an East Palo Alto resident, a former school board member for the Ravenswood district, and she works in the offices of Stanford University’s graduate school of business. She is a Woodside High alumnus, as is one of her four children. Another graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School.

The academic achievement gap affecting students in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park is Ms. Greene’s primary concern, she told The Almanac. The last four years under Superintendent Pat Gemma have seen “great improvement” in closing that gap, but more needs to be done, she said.

■ Virginia Chang Kiraly, 45, a resident of unincorporated Menlo Park, ran in 2006 as a Republican against Assemblyman Ira Ruskin, D-Redwood City, and is a retired investor with major investment banks. She has two children in La Entrada Middle School.

Ms. Kiraly’s primary issues are the efficient budgeting and having communities commit to high academic standards for all students, she told The Almanac.

At the Sequoia district’s request, Ms. Kiraly said, she spoke in Sacramento in February against Everest’s charter petition. She’s also worked as a volunteer at an East Palo Alto charter school, she said. If elected, she would want to “sit down and talk to both sides” in the charter school debate “because clearly there’s hostility.”

■ Alan Sarver, 56, is a retired

software manager, former K-6 teacher and a resident of Belmont. His two daughters graduated from Carlmont High.

He sees the district as making “excellent progress” in recent years. His challenge: to keep the district “on track and moving in the right direction.”

Charter schools “bring a lot of value” and “keep districts on their toes,” Mr. Sarver said, but added: “I’m very concerned about a wild proliferation of charter schools that begin to undermine the strength of a school district.” At Mr. Gemma’s request, he said, he spoke against Everest’s petition at county and state hearings.

■ Chris Thomsen, 54, is a Menlo Park resident, a former biotech entrepreneur and the executive director of Stanford University’s Institute for Research in the Social Sciences. His two sons attend M-A and Summit Prep.

His institutional-planning background at Stanford would inform his trusteeship, he said. His priorities: maintaining quality education as budgets sink, and significantly lowering the drop-out rate.

Asked about charter schools, Mr. Thomsen noted Superintendent Gemma’s ongoing complaints about Everest. “I don’t think that it’s the most important thing that he needs to focus his attention on,” he said. Mr. Thomsen spoke in Everest’s favor at the county hearing.

■ Noria Zasslow, who lists her occupation as “mother,” regularly runs for the Sequoia board. She did not respond to a request for an interview by press time. ■

Peninsula College Fund gives scholarships

By Amanda Young

Special to the Almanac

Sixteen students from Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Redwood City who graduated in June from local high schools have each been awarded college scholarships of \$12,000 from the Peninsula College Fund.

“All of these students are the first in their families to go to college, (are) minorities, and have severe financial needs,” said Charles Schmuck, founder of the Menlo Park-based fund. “They have GPAs between 3.2 and 3.8, and they are the kids who are often overlooked by other scholarships.”

Along with the scholarship, which is distributed in \$3,000 increments over four years, students are linked with a mentor who advises them throughout their four years in college. The fund also hosts workshops for students to receive training and help in honing their resume-writing and interviewing skills in hopes of securing summer internships and jobs.

This year’s winners are Deji Aiyedogbon and Melissa Sandoval of Woodside High School; Cinthia Zamora and Ana Lara of Summit



Peninsula College Fund winners are, front row, from left, Daniel Valencia, Shayla Bunch, Ruby Bustos and Roseanna Maafu. Second row, from left, Cinthia Vieyra, Julia Cook, Sindy Crisostomo and Ana Lara. Third row, from left, Prescilla Pelayo, Hashina Brumfield, Cinthia Zamora and Melissa Sandoval. Top row, from left, Francisco Betancourt, Jakari Perry and Deji Aiyedogbon. Not pictured: Tania Garcia.

Preparatory; Daniel Valencia and Julia Cook of Menlo-Atherton High School; Francisco Betancourt, Hashina Brumfield and Roseanna Maafu of East Palo Alto Academy; Sindy Cristosomo, Tania Garcia, Prescilla Pelayo and Cinthia Vieyra of Sequoia High School; and Shayla Bunch, Ruby Bustos and Jakari Perry of Eastside College Prep.

“The mentors are very useful for someone like me, since I’m the first

in my family to go to college and it’s hard to know what the experience will be like,” said Cinthia Zamora, who plans to attend Chico State University in the fall.

The Peninsula College Fund has awarded 34 scholarships since its inception four years ago. The organization mostly depends on individual donations. For more information, go to peninsulacollegefund.org. ■

Kolozsi scholarships help eight high school grads

Eight high school graduates from the Sequoia Union High School District have received Kelly Kolozsi Scholarships, given to students with high academic achievement, a record of contributing to their school and community, and a demonstrated financial need.

They also must plan to enroll in one of the University of California schools, says Tita Kolozsi of Atherton, the mother of Kelly, for whom the scholarship is named.

Kelly Kolozsi was killed in 1989 at age 24 when his car was struck by a vehicle driven by a drunken driver. Kelly had graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School in 1982 and UC Santa Barbara in 1986.

The scholarships, which have been given for 20 years, range from \$1,000 to \$2,500, depending on the financial need of the student.

Five of the eight winners were named Kelly Kolozsi Scholars. They can apply for a renewal scholarship for next year. These students are Adedemeji Aiyedogbon,

Vanessa Torres and Gabriella Tripolsky of Woodside High School, and Michelle G. Martinez and Monica OfDell of Carlmont High School. Adedemeji will attend UC Davis; Vannessa, UC Los Angeles; Gabriella, UC San Diego; Michelle, UC Merced; and Monica, UC Santa Cruz.

Three Woodside High School students, Tevye Friedlander, Irene Kalaitzidis and Steven Rhodes, received awards of merits. Tevye and Steven will attend UC Berkeley, and Irene will attend UC Santa Barbara.

Three UC Berkeley students, Lisa Gellerman, Hussain Raza and Nicholas Salem, were named Kelly Kolozsi Scholars last year and have received “renewal awards.”

Members of the scholarship selection committee are Marilyn Hohbach, Jeanette Ogburn, Marty Fuller, Betty Oliver, Bryan Kolozsi, Dan Siegel, Ellen Hobach Scheetz and Tita Kolozsi.

For more information regarding the scholarship, contact Tita Kolozsi at titakolozsi@hotmail.com. ■



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Portola Valley postcard: message between lines?

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Timing, it's said, is everything. So what led town staff in Portola Valley to mail residents a postcard on Aug. 4 informing them of the town's serious and unprecedented budget issues three months ahead of an election that would reauthorize the utility users tax? The tax brings in 10 percent of the town's revenue.

A municipal government is not allowed to take a position on an election issue, and the postcard's language does not take one; it doesn't even mention the utility tax. But a skeptical reader, seeing lists of reduced services, pared back plans, lower revenues and higher expenses, could also see a message to voters: renew the tax.

Voters reauthorized the tax by majorities of 72 percent in 2001 and 52 percent in 2005. The current \$5.5 million budget is balanced and anticipates \$556,000 in revenues from the 4.5 percent tax on residential and commercial utility bills.

A persistent utility tax opponent, resident Ed Wells, saw a message in the postcard. "I think it has to do with just mobilizing public

information in connection with the upcoming utility users tax election," he told The Almanac.

The potential for inadvertent advocacy should have been considered by the full council, council members Maryann Moise Derwin and Richard Merk said in interviews.

"Someone should have asked these questions before it went out, and I don't think anyone did, and that concerns me," Mr. Merk said.

"I think we have to be very, very sensitive on this issue," Ms. Derwin said. The advocacy potential is there, she noted, adding: "I hope I'm wrong, but I don't think I am."

Mayor Ann Wengert said in an interview that staff had been fielding residents' budget-related questions recently and that the postcard conveys information about the town's financial condition. People can interpret the information as they choose, she said.

There was no ulterior motive, Town Manager Angie Howard said. "It seemed like a good idea to send something out to reassure the community that we're OK," she said. "I did not think this was controversial." ■

More parent parking at school

About 30 more parking spaces at Woodside Elementary School will be available to accommodate parents who need to park and walk their younger children into school, Assistant Superintendent Tim Hanretty told The Almanac.

This rearrangement of staff parking spaces was included in a recent proposal from Public Works Director Paul Nagengast to the Town Council that addresses the ongoing issue of vehicles illegally parked in the bike lanes on Woodside Road near the school.

The plan would generally ban parking on the north and south sides of Woodside Road between Canada and Miramontes roads,

but allow parking on the south side when parents come to the school to pick up and drop off their kids. The signs could be covered with bags to allow parking for special events.

The school endorses the Mr. Nagengast's proposal, Mr. Hanretty said, adding that the school is "looking forward" to parking restrictions on the north side of Woodside Road. Clear bike lanes could encourage more kids to walk and bike to school, he said.

The Town Council is seeking parking alternatives from school parents ahead of its Sept. 22 meeting.

SLAC gets \$21.8 million more

SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory on Sand Hill Road received an additional \$21.8 million in the final round of funding for national laboratories through the federal economic stimulus package.

The money will go toward construction and improvements at the laboratory's research facilities on light sources, according to a SLAC representative. All told, SLAC has received \$90 million of the \$220 million awarded to national laboratories through the stimulus package.

Of the \$21.8 million, \$20 mil-

lion will fund the construction of an instrument to study transient states of matter that "can exist during fusion processes, the evolution of stars, and inside supernovae," SLAC said in a statement.

The remaining \$1.8 million will go toward upgrades of the light-source research facility and the purchase of new equipment.

Previous stimulus funding for SLAC went toward speeding the assembly of a new X-ray device, supporting the subatomic particle accelerator, and seismic upgrades to the structures.

Dr. Robert B. Constantz

A Kaiser Permanente, Redwood City, founding physician

A memorial service will be held at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 21, at Valley Presbyterian Church, 945 Portola Road in Portola Valley, for Dr. Robert B. Constantz Sr., who died Aug. 4 at age 86.



Robert Constantz

A reception will follow at 2:30 p.m. at the community ranch house at Portola Valley Ranch.

Dr. Constantz practiced medicine with Kaiser Permanente for 45 years. He first joined the Maple Street Kaiser Clinic in Redwood City in 1954. The group later expanded and built Kaiser Permanente Medical Center on Veterans Boulevard, where Dr. Constantz, at one time, served as president of staff. He retired at the age of 67.

Born in Canton, Missouri, Dr. Constantz grew up south of St. Louis on the Mississippi River, living a childhood reminiscent of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, say family members.

He was an excellent basketball player in high school, and played saxophone with a band he put together as a teenager, they say. He worked on a river boat on the Mississippi River the summer after high school, and attended Culver-Stockton College.

He graduated from medical school at the University of Louisville and received internship training at New York Univer-

sity General Hospital in general medicine. He completed residencies in pathology and internal medicine, and a fellowship in cardiology.

During World War II, he served as a U.S. captain in Germany during the final winter push against Hitler, having to perform hundreds of frost-bite amputations in field hospitals, say family members. During the post-war occupation of Germany, he and his wife, Kate, and two young sons, Robert Jr. and James, lived in Augsburg, Germany, where he played a role in reconstructing the hospitals in the region.

In 1954 Dr. Constantz left the Army as a colonel and the family returned to civilian life on the Peninsula. They built one of the original homes on La Mesa Drive in Ladera, where their sons Mark and Brent were born. They moved to Alpine Hills in 1966.

Dr. Constantz and his wife, Kate Constantz, moved to the Hyatt Classic Residence in Palo Alto in 2006.

Dr. Constantz is survived by his four sons, Dr. Robert B. Constantz of San Carlos, James E. Constantz of Portola Valley, Mark Q. Constantz of Mountain View, and Brent R. Constantz of Portola Valley; a sister, Ann Constantz English of Dallas, Texas; and 11 grandchildren. His wife, Kate, grandson, Ryan, and daughter-in-law Caroline preceded him in death.

Aug. 18, from 3p.m. to 5p.m. at Allied Arts Guild, 75 Arbor Road, Menlo Park. Mr. Coldoff died Aug. 5 at age 75. A full obituary will run in an upcoming issue of The Almanac.



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■ POLICE CALLS

MENLO PARK

Grand theft reports:

■ Bicycle valued at \$700 stolen, 1600 block of El Camino Real, July 31.

■ Red and white bicycle valued at \$1,400 stolen, first block of Waverley St., Aug. 3.

Auto burglary reports:

■ Break-in and Apple iPhone charger, \$30 in cash and set of car keys stolen, 300 block of Sharon Park Drive, Aug. 2.

■ Back window smashed and shirt, \$30 in cash and black bag stolen, first block of University Drive, Aug. 3.

Fraud reports:

■ Counterfeit bill discovered, Mi Rancho Supermarket at 812 Willow Road, Aug. 2.

■ Counterfeit \$100 bill discovered at dry cleaning business, 500 block of El Camino Real, Aug. 4.

Spousal abuse report: 600 block of Central Ave., Aug. 3.

Child Protective Services reports:

■ 1300 block of Henderson Ave., Aug. 5.

■ 100 block of Seminary Drive, Aug. 5.

WOODSIDE

Auto burglary reports:

■ Three vehicle searched and wallet stolen from one of them, first block of Quail Meadows Drive, July 29.

■ Apple iPod stolen, first block of Quail Meadows Drive, July 29.

■ Old registration, several credit card receipts and small amount of cash stolen, first block of Quail Meadows Drive, July 29.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Fraud report: Identity theft, 300 block of Golden Hills Drive, July 29.

LADERA

Theft report: Four rings valued at \$15,335 missing from safe deposit box after recent inventory of box by owner, Chase Bank at 3130 Alpine Road, July 30.

David Coldoff

A memorial service for David Elliott Coldoff, a longtime Atherton resident, is set for Tuesday,



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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING WEST BAY
SANITARY DISTRICT 500 LAUREL STREET
MENLO PARK, CA 94025**

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the District Board of the West Bay Sanitary District will conduct a public hearing on Wednesday, September 9, 2009, in conjunction with the regularly scheduled meeting, which commences at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the District's offices at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park.

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to consider a resolution of intention to Annex Certain Territory in Portola Valley (210 Golden Oak – APN 079-101-320) to the West Bay Sanitary District On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone. The resolution is available for review at the District's offices, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

At the Public Hearing, any interested person may address the District Board. Written comments may be submitted at or before the Public Hearing by addressing them to the District Board at the address indicated above.

Dated: July 23, 2009

Vivian Housen, Interim District Manager

Pursuant to Government Code 6066, this notice will be published in The Almanac on August 12, 2009 and August 26, 2009.



**TOWN OF ATHERTON
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Atherton City Council will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of the Comprehensive Zoning Code Update to Title 17 of the Atherton Municipal Code. CEQA Determination: Exempt per Section 15061(B)(3)

Summary of substantive changes;

- Additional floor area for covered patios
- Exempt trellis structures from floor area calculations
- Remove the limitation on the number of kitchens in the main building and number of bathrooms in accessory structures
- Allow fountains, sculptures and small accessory structures in the front yard
- Exempt roof dormers from sidewall height limit for the main building
- Allow increased sidewall height for tower elements for the main building
- Allow bay window on the main building to encroach two feet into the side yard in the R1-B zoning district
- Require a 20' setback for entry gates
- Eliminate the Exception Review process
- Require exterior lighting on main buildings above ten feet to be shielded or downlit
- Allow eight feet tall fences along interior property lines

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said item is set for hearing by the City Council at its regular meeting on August 19, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall of the Town of Atherton, at which time and place all persons interested may appear and show cause, if they have any, why the Zoning Code should or should not be adopted.

IF YOU CHALLENGE the Zoning Code Update in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing.

**Woodside Vaulters club takes top honors
at national championships in Lexington**

This story was submitted by Carrie Wick, a spokesperson for the Woodside Vaulters.

The Woodside Vaulters equestrian vaulting club won individual and team national titles at the U.S. Equestrian Federation/American Vaulting Association national championships, held July 9-12 in Lexington, Kentucky.

Vaulting is gymnastics and dance on a moving horse.

Ali Divita, 20, of Redwood City, was the women's national champion at the gold level, the highest level of individual competition, for the second straight year.

Also finishing in the top 10 in gold-level competition were Katharine Wick, 16, of Hillsborough, who placed fourth; Samantha Smith, 22, of Saratoga, eighth; Megan Lanfri, 19, of San Jose, ninth; and Shannyn Poer, 23, of Venice, 10th.

Patrick Stevens, 17, of Martinez was the men's gold-level reserve national champion. Gabe Aniello, 18, of Vancouver, Washington, placed fifth.

In the silver women's individual level, Yvonne Greenen, 14, of Los Altos, finished third; Kathryn Jagers, 15, of Portola Valley, eighth; and Grace Koz, 15, of Saratoga, fourteenth.

Tessa Divita, 11, of Redwood City won the bronze level women's national championship. She was followed closely by teammate Katrina Nibbi, 15, of Woodside, who was the women's bronze reserve national champion. Julia Plungy, 15, of San Jose finished in



Photo by Susie Bors

In team freestyle on Giovanni are Yvonne Greenen, Katharine Wick and Alyssa Bonora.

11th place.

Competing at the one-star (beginning) canter level, Janie Salisbury, 10, of Atherton placed first. Christine Herrmann, 15, of Hillsborough was fourth; Siddartha Kreaden, 11, of Sunnyvale was sixth; and Sarah Dunn, 12, of Palo Alto rounded out the top 10.

In trot individual competition, Katherine Salisbury, 8, of Atherton placed fifth; and Hadley DeBrine, 11, of San Carlos was tenth.

In team competition, Woodside Vaulters won the national B team championship, placing first in both the compulsories and

freestyle rounds. Team members are: Alyssa Bonora, 15, of Portola Valley; Molly Gould, 16, of Menlo Park; Yvonne Greenen, Kathryn Jagers, Janie Salisbury, Patrick Stevens and Katharine Wick.

At the one-star team level, Woodside Vaulters also won the national title, with team members Tessa Divita, Sarah Dunn, Christine Herrmann, Grace Koz, Siddartha Kreaden, Katrina Nibbi and Julia Plungy.

In the preliminary pas-de-deux (pairs) freestyle event, Christine Herrmann and Tessa Divita placed first, while Kathryn Jagers and Molly Gould placed fourth.

A combined team of Woodside Vaulters and Mount Eden Vaulting Club (Saratoga) placed first overall in the trot 2-phase team event. Team members are Giulia Corno, 10, of Saratoga, Caroline Morse, 7, of Los Gatos, Hadley deBrine and Katherine Salisbury.

Equestrian vaulters perform compulsory moves and freestyle routines choreographed to music. The athletes are judged on form, performance, level of difficulty and harmony with the horse.

Woodside Vaulters, founded in 1990, provides year-round instruction in recreational and competitive vaulting.

Isabelle Parker Bibbler of Redwood City is the head coach. The other coaches and trainers are Krista Poppenberg Mack, Julie Divita, Jennifer Lauzze, Jennifer Arntsen, Samantha Smith, and Michele Stevens.

For more information, go to woodsidevaulters.org.

**Woodside Vaulters club wins titles at
Junior/Young Rider competition**

Local athletes from the Woodside Vaulters equestrian vaulting club won individual awards at the Federation Equestre Internationale's North American Junior/Young Rider championships, held July 22 in Lexington, Kentucky.

The sport of vaulting involves gymnastics and dance on a moving horse.

Carrie Wick, a spokesperson for Woodside Vaulters, provided this information:

In the women's one-star level, Yvonne Greenen, 14, of Los Altos took first place and Kathryn Jagers, 15, of Portola Valley finished fourth.

In the men's two-star level, Patrick Stevens, 17, of Martinez won first, and teammate Gabe Aniello, 18, of Vancouver, Wash-

ington, came in second.

In the women's two-star level, Ali Divita, 20, of Redwood City finished second; Megan Lanfri, 19, of San Jose finished fourth;

The sport of vaulting involves gymnastics and dance on a moving horse.

and Katharine Wick, 16, of Hillsborough came in fifth.

Top U.S. and Canadian vaulters, ages 14 to 21, competed in this event, said Isabelle Parker, Woodside Vaulters' head coach.

For more information on Woodside Vaulters, visit www.woodsidevaulters.org.



Patrick Stevens performing a side stand at the equestrian championships. He was the men's champion at the two-star level, the highest level in vaulting.

Frances Freyberg shows her travel photos

Menlo Park native Frances Freyberg is hosting an exhibit of her travel photography at Little House Activity Center in Menlo Park.

The exhibit, which runs through August, has photos from five countries, and can be seen during Little House

AROUND TOWN

business hours, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Little House is at 800 Middle Ave.

Ms. Freyberg's photos may also be viewed Aug. 15-23 at the San Mateo County Fair (2495 S. Delaware, San Mateo) and through the end of September at Planet Granite San Francisco (924 Old Mason St., San Francisco).

For more information, go to www.francesfreyberg.com.

Atherton artist holds exhibit

Nancy Wagstaff of Atherton, who paints items left behind by society, is holding an exhibit entitled "Urban Still Lives: Faded Glories, Forgotten Stories," at the Portola Art Gallery in Menlo Park through August.

A reception for Ms. Wagstaff will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, at the gallery in the Allied Arts Guild complex at 75 Arbor Road. The gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, go to www.portolaartgallery.com.

Dog walk raises funds for animals

The Peninsula Humane Society will hold the 15th annual Mutt Strutt community dog walk fundraiser on Saturday, Aug. 15, at Coyote Point Park in San Mateo.

The event raises money for animals at the PHS shelter in San Mateo.

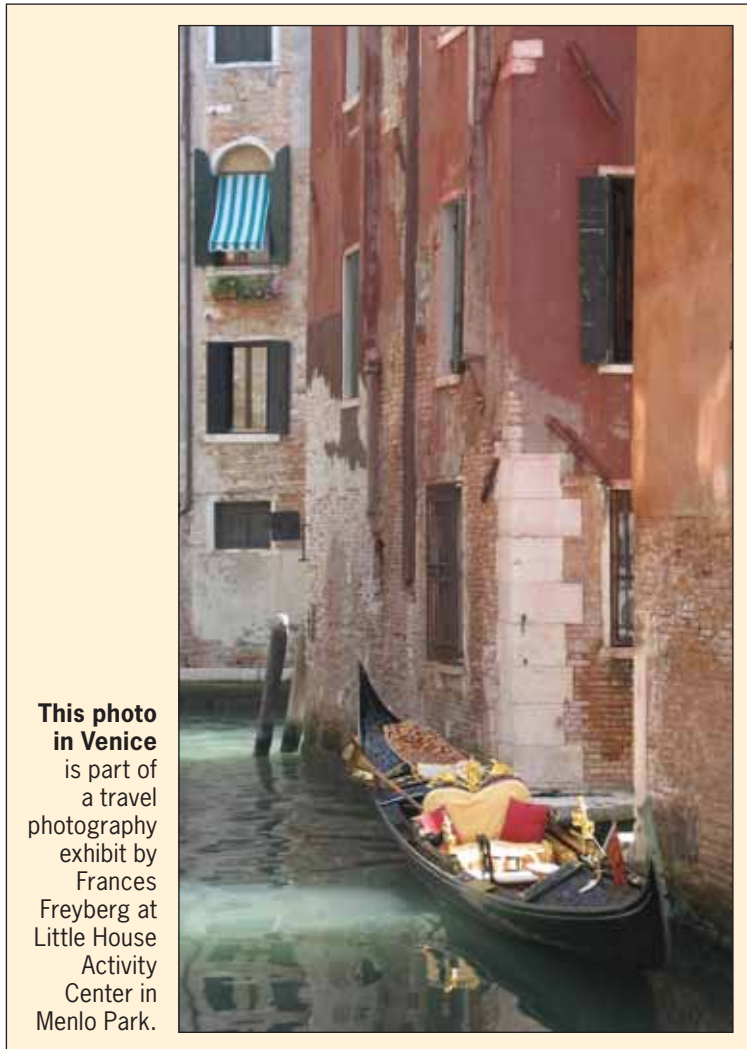
Registration and festivities begin at 9 a.m. A 3K walk and an alternative 1K walk start at 11 a.m. There will be vendors, dog contests, prizes and music.

In past years, the event has attracted about 400 people and raised about \$60,000.

Participants pay a \$30 registration fee. The PHS also encourages people to collect pledges. Prizes are given for pledge levels from \$100 to \$600. The top fundraiser wins a night's stay at the pet-friendly Stanford Inn in Mendocino.

PHS says that last year it took in more than 4,000 stray, injured, abused or abandoned dogs, and for the sixth year straight, found homes for every healthy and adoptable dog.

Coyote Point Park is at 1701 Coyote Point Drive in San Mateo. For more information, contact Dawn Kelsey Fanara at



This photo in Venice is part of a travel photography exhibit by Frances Freyberg at Little House Activity Center in Menlo Park.

340-7022, ext. 375, or dkelsey@PeninsulaHumaneSociety.org.

Texas alum barbecue

The San Francisco/Bay Area Texas Exes chapter will hold its annual "Burnt Orange Barbecue" from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 23, at Flood Park, 251 Bay Road in Menlo Park.

The event is sponsored by alumni of the University of Texas at Austin. There will be a catered barbecue meal, including brisket, chicken, and pulled pork. The cost is \$20 per person; children 12 and under free. To attend, register at bbq.sflonghorns.com.

Civilian Ex-Prisoners of War meet

The summer luncheon meeting of Bay Area Civilian Ex-Prisoners of War will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, at Bella restaurant, 487 Seaport Court in Redwood City. The cost is \$28 for members. For more information, call Marjorie Wagstaffe, 324-3086.

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WANDA LOUISE VREEBURG



An elegant woman always said "One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready..." and now, it was her time to go. On the morning of Wednesday July 29, 2009, Wanda Louise Vreeburg peacefully closed her eyes, joining her husband, Harry, just two days shy of the fifth anniversary of his passing. Raised in Rockford Illinois, Wanda moved West on a train to California at the age of 16 and never looked back. Her "life is just a bowl of cherries" attitude, combined with a hint of stubbornness enabled her to conquer many severe personal challenges. With her constant focus placed on her family, Wanda refused to allow her diagnosis of breast cancer at the age of 40 to be anything more than a simple bump in the road. Ten days after being told she would never golf again due to lung cancer complications, Wanda was swinging a broom on the back lawn for the upcoming Seascape getaway. At the top of Woodside Hills, people of all ages came to visit a constantly endearing "Missy V," who was never once seen without a beautiful lipstick-highlighted smile and a flawless hairdo.

Mom never missed a Giants' baseball game and would have been more than pleased to see her favorite pitcher, Matt Cain, win in the tenth inning on the day of her passing. The Giants were not alone

on Wednesday, however, as she also left the ballpark with a victory in her own set of extra innings.

Wanda, the quintessential wife and mother is survived by her children Sheila C. Vreeburg of Woodside, H. Michael Vreeburg (Diane) of Half Moon Bay, Cathy Ann Vreeburg of Woodside, Jan Kevin Vreeburg (Joan) of Santa Rosa, Sandy V. Lees (James) of Menlo Park and her grandchildren Hayden M. Vreeburg (Jolene), Kevin J. Vreeburg, Ashley A. Giannini (Chris), Timothy R. Salvesson, Jonathan H. Salvesson, Ryan M. Salvesson (Pia), Sean K. Vreeburg, Holly I. Vreeburg, Daniel W. Lees and Missy K. Lees, three great grandchildren, Charlotte Lynn Vreeburg, Lane Michael Giannini, and Cole Patrick Giannini, her sister Carolyn Britto, brother James Orebaugh and sister-in-law Sylveen Fabbro. Also surviving are her "other kids" Kathy Stevens and Teri Price, and her treasured friend Stephen Woolery, who provided endless love and support along with her adoring German Shepherd, Captain H.

The family would especially like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the staff of Sequoia Hospital, Dr. Sigal Tene and her staff and Dr. Hardwin Mead and his staff. Their loving care enabled Mom's bright smile and gorgeous blue eyes to shine a little longer.

At Wanda's request, no services will be held, "No funerals! Oh, ish!" A celebration of her life will take place at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations to The Sequoia Hospital Foundation in our Mom's memory would be very much appreciated.

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Published every Wednesday at
3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas,
Menlo Park, Ca 94025

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

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



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

TOWN SQUARE FORUM

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

EMAIL your views to:

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

MAIL or deliver to:

Editor at the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

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

Wrong way on bus routes

Just when the environment needs good public transit the most, the wheels are beginning to fall off the SamTrans bus system following a slump in revenue and devastating cuts in the state budget, which ended all support for the agency.

In presenting a list of four plans to reduce service during public hearings over the last two weeks, the transit district contends it has few options as it tries to recover from the \$28.4 million shortfall in next year's budget. The most drastic reduction, which we strongly oppose, would simply eliminate seven bus routes, including two that serve the east and west sides of Menlo Park. Other options would save less money by reducing schedules, but also preserve the routes.

Testifying at the Menlo Park hearing, Mayor Heyward Robinson and City Council member Kelly Fergusson encouraged the agency to increase, rather than eliminate, ridership.

"The path we're on risks going into a death spiral. We cut rides, cut more and cut more. We need to get out of this mess because buses will be the key," Mayor Robinson said.

There is no doubt that by continuing to reduce service, SamTrans will soon lose the few loyal riders it has and, in the process, cause a huge problem for people like Menlo Commons resident Patricia Penning, a senior citizen whose vision is impaired by macular degeneration. She said she cannot drive and has relied on the 295 bus, which stops outside her home on Santa Cruz Avenue.

"I'm already trapped on Saturday and Sunday (no buses those days) but if I have to stare at the walls seven days a week I'm really in trouble," she said.

Ms. Penning's 295 bus serves downtown San Mateo, Hillsdale

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

**Letter to Rep. Eshoo:
Siding with the enemy?**

The following letter was submitted to Rep. Anna Eshoo.

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo:

As you know, you have continued to enjoy unequivocal support from the majority of your constituents in this district. Now, however, many of us feel that you are siding with the enemy.

We do not need high-speed rail tearing down the middle of our communities, rending in two the fabric of Menlo Park and Atherton. Is a speedy train (which will not stop for us) more important than our quality of life? It seems that you have not really studied this issue, but rather accept blithely the "truths" that the "experts" continue to espouse.

This is neither the time nor the place for high-speed rail. We need instead to repair our roads, to improve the efficiency of public transportation systems in the Bay Area, and other California cities. Who will actually take a train to Los Angeles, and once I get there, how do I get around without a car?

Shopping Center, Sequoia Hospital, Redwood City and west Menlo Park. SamTrans says 1,238 riders use the 295 bus every day, but shutting it down would save nearly \$1.5 million.

The 281 and 280 buses travel to important destinations, including the Stanford Shopping Center, the Palo Alto Caltrain station, the Onetta Harris Community Center in Menlo Park, the Ravenswood Shopping in East Palo Alto, and other stops in that town.

The 270 bus stops at the Redwood City Caltrain station, Kaiser Hospital, Seaport Village, Harbor Village and Marsh Road in Menlo Park.

Clearly, it would be a mistake to eliminate any of these routes, given that many riders are senior citizens or cannot afford other forms of transportation. In some cases, the buses offer the only transit option for riders to reach connecting lines in downtown Menlo Park or the Stanford Shopping Center.

SamTrans, which is proposing fare increases, has already imposed a hiring freeze, laid off two top executives, and furloughed administrative employees for four days during the last fiscal year. The agency said it also has improved driver scheduling efficiency and saved money by hedging fuel purchases.

That will help reach break-even, and those attending the hearing had other ideas as well, including a suggestion to move to smaller buses that cost less to operate and would be good for the environment.

Given the challenge of the economy and global warming, it would be terribly wrong for SamTrans to impose the option that would eliminate seven routes on the Peninsula. We urge the SamTrans board to do everything in its power to preserve service along El Camino and into east and west neighborhoods in Menlo Park and other communities. Without bus service to these neighborhoods, many senior citizens and people with modest economic means will be left high and dry, without a public transit option.



Menlo Park Historical Association

Our Regional Heritage

The original Sequoia High School building in Redwood City was built in the early 1900s by John MacBain, a Menlo Park contractor who also served on the Board of Supervisors. Menlo Park high school students were bused to the school until after World War II.

In a time of financial crisis, how can we overlook the fact that this train will cost billions of dollars more than high-speed rail officials Quentin Kopp and Rod Diridon promise? Every such project these days has huge cost overruns. Rebuilding the Bay

Bridge is a good example.

I wish that I could believe that your Aug. 26 town meeting in Menlo Park will be an honest effort on your part to learn what folks in the community really think about high-speed rail. Instead, you seem to be bringing

together the usual "experts" who will again "explain" to us why we must accept this project. Local citizens have been subjected to numerous meetings of this sort. Who, pray tell, will really listen

See **LETTERS**, next page

Comparing firefighters' pay to other critical jobs

Below is part of a post by Peter Carpenter on *TheAlmanacOnline's TownSquare* community forum. Mr. Carpenter is a board member of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

TOWN SQUARE

Go to TheAlmanacOnline.com to join the conversation on TownSquare.

Firefighters in the Menlo Park Fire Protection District get paid, on average, \$125,900 in salary and benefits. (Editor's note: The firefighters' pension benefit is 3 percent of a firefighter's highest pay, multiplied times each year of service, capped at 90 percent. Firefighters are eligible for the pension starting at age 50.)

Following are a few comparisons with other difficult, demanding and potentially risky public services jobs.

1. The pilot of Air Force One is a USAF colonel, usually with 20-25 years of service. His/her base pay is \$11,007.30 a month or \$132,087 a year.

He/she also receives about \$500 a month, or \$6,000 a year, of flight pay.

He/she supervises a crew of approximately 26 (not including

the Secret Service agents accompanying the president). He/she can retire with 2.5 percent of the average of the last three years base pay for each year of service but capped at 75 percent.

2. U.S. Forest Service smokejumpers (a firefighter who parachutes from airplanes to put out forest fires) are in GS-5 to GS-9 pay grades and start at \$27,026 a year and top out at \$53,234 a year at the top step level for non-supervisory (includes crew chiefs but not management level) smokejumpers.

Medical and physical requirements: Smokejumper duties present unusual hazards and require that personnel be in excellent physical condition and possess a high degree of emotional stability and mental alertness. The health of individuals must be such that they have the capacity to meet demands

for performance in the position and for human reliability. Before entrance on duty, and periodically during employment, smokejumpers must undergo a medical exam, physical conditioning, and an aptness test.

3. Maj. Jennifer Grieves is the first female helicopter aircraft commander in the history of Marine One, the HMX-1 helicopter the president of the United States flies on. She makes about \$84,000 and can retire with 2.5 percent of the

average of her last three years base pay for each year of service but capped at 75 percent.

4. NASA's civilian astronauts are in the GS-11 through GS-14 pay grades, based on academic achievements and experience. Currently, a GS-11 astronaut starts at \$59,493 per year; a GS-14 astronaut can earn up to \$130,257 per year. To date 13 out of 321 who have flown in space have died in the line of duty or a fatality rate of about 4 percent.



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LETTERS

Continued from previous page

to those of us who sensibly voted against this boondoggle in the first place — or to countless other citizens who have now begun to realize that high-speed rail is both too costly and too destructive to Peninsula communities?

Please, Ms. Eshoo, take a step back and consider this project as our spokesperson, not as the mouth of the high-speed rail powers.

Nancy Barnby
Spruce Avenue, Menlo Park

Thanks for coverage of Burgess Gym

Editor:

A big thank-you to The Almanac for Sean Howell's excellent July 29 coverage of the controversy concerning the new Burgess Park gym project.

His intelligent reporting gave his readers the whole picture. All sides were represented.

We very much need more of that kind of reporting. The facts are clear, not twisted in such a way as to attempt to persuade us one way or another, but to think for ourselves.

Kathleen McIntyre
Burgess Drive, Menlo Park

In defense of Elizabeth Lasensky

Editor:

In response to the Aug. 5 letter

from Elizabeth Lasensky to The Almanac and the flurry of comments online, I would like to weigh in with all the force of transparency.

Unlike the anonymous critics, please put me in the group of Menlo Park residents who appreciate her continuous watchful eye on the council. Elizabeth took this responsibility when the other team was in power and she continues to do so today.

Unlike council member Andy Cohen, Elizabeth answers to no one. She calls it like she sees it and her calls are based on her strong core values: transparency, fairness and knowing the facts before she speaks.

In her letter Elizabeth made a point that many made when Nicholas Jellins was on the council and often refused to join the discussion, abstained from voting and yes, even left the meeting so as to cause a lack of quorum.

I believe Elizabeth is sincere in her disapproval of such conduct. Where we differ is that I appreciate The Almanac's following up with Mr. Cohen and giving the public some insight regarding Cohen's thought process.

Let me go on record that I am neither an adviser nor an instigator of Elizabeth Lasensky but I am flattered that anyone would think so. From the comments on The Almanac Online, it seems that there are some who fear the sharp and watchful eye of this dedicated civic volunteer.

Steve Schmidt
Menlo Park Council 1994-2002

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