



**PEOPLE:** Ansie Lee Sperry of Portola Valley will present her memoirs of a remarkable life. [Page 5]

# The Almanac

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

AUGUST 19, 2009 | VOL. 44 NO. 51



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[PAGE 16]

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# Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

## FIRST SHOT



Photo by James Tensuan/Special to The Almanac

### Feelin' groovy

Cosmic Chris plays a mix of classic rock and original tunes on the corner of Santa Cruz Avenue and Curtis Street in downtown Menlo Park on a Friday afternoon.

## Atherton

■ Higher fees raise big-picture questions. **Page 13**

## Menlo Park

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- Dorothy Bolton, 103, has been waiting patiently for 53 years for the city to resurface her street. **Page 12**
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## Portola Valley

■ Town Council flare-up over controversial postcard. **Page 8**

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## On the cover

Language arts teacher Chris Mahle edits Dominique Johnson's "Tools for Tolerance" script for a play to be performed on the last day of the Peninsula Bridge summer program at Sacred Heart Preparatory in Atherton. Photo by Michelle Le, staff photographer of The Almanac. See story on **Page 16**.

## CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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

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### EYE CARE NEWS



Presented by  
**Mark Schmidt**  
Licensed Optician



#### AGE-RELATED EYE-CHANGES

As we enter middle age, hardening of the eye lens makes it increasingly difficult to read print, necessitating the use of reading glasses. Another age-related change involves the loss of strength by muscles that control pupil size and our reaction to light. As a result, our pupils grow smaller and do not respond as well to changes in ambient light. In fact, people in their 60s are likely to need three times the amount of illumination that they needed when they were in their 20s in order to read comfortably. Mature adults are also more likely to be bothered by bright sunlight

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



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK CITY COUNCIL APPEAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Menlo Park, California is scheduled to review an appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of the following item:

**Use Permit/Penelope Huang, Taylor & Huang Properties, Inc./825 Santa Cruz Avenue:** Request for a use permit for a real estate office on the ground floor of an existing commercial building in the C-3 (Central Commercial) zoning district.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said City Council will hold a public hearing on these items in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on **Tuesday, September 1, 2009** at 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge these items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

The project file may be viewed by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Department of Community Development, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call **Thomas Rogers**, Associate Planner, at 650-330-6722 or email him at [throgers@menlopark.org](mailto:throgers@menlopark.org) if you have any questions or comments.

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

DATED: August 13, 2009

Margaret Roberts  
City Clerk

PUBLISHED: August 19, 2009

Visit our Web site for public hearing, agenda, and staff report information: <http://www.ci.menlo-park.ca.us>

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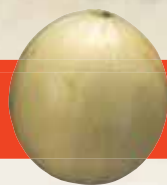
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# Local News

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## Getting a handle on the Bohannon project

■ As David Bohannon's proposed 950,000-square-foot "Menlo Gateway" office/hotel complex makes its way through city bureaucracy, locals try to understand how the project would affect Menlo Park.

By Sean Howell  
Almanac Staff Writer

On paper and in renderings, the first thing that jumps out at people about the "Menlo Gateway" real estate development project proposed by the David D. Bohannon Organization is, well, its size.

Developer David Bohannon, a Menlo Park resident, prefers the term "large-scale" to "massive."

But by any measure, the project, situated near the intersection of Marsh Road and Bayfront Expressway along Independence and Constitution drives, is a big one.

At a height of about 120 feet each (up to 140 feet when you include mechanical equipment and photovoltaic panels), the three office buildings would be the tallest in the city, an honor that currently belongs to a 90-foot-tall residential structure on the corner of Valparaiso Avenue and University Drive.

At roughly 950,000 square feet, the total floor area of the office buildings, hotel and health club would be roughly equivalent to that of the Sun Microsystems campus at the east end of Willow Road, according to city planning staff. And that doesn't even count the 760,000 to 820,000 square feet in parking garages.

It's so big, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District would have to buy a new ladder truck to reach its summit. According to a city consultant's estimate, the project would cost \$363 million to build

—roughly the cost of construction for San Francisco's AT&T Park.

"In terms of a Menlo Park project, this is sort of out of sight," said Morris Brown, who in 2006 led a successful referendum drive against the proposed Derry project in downtown Menlo Park. That project would have reached a maximum height of 50 feet. "This is a San Francisco project," he said.

Henry Riggs, the chair of the Planning Commission, said his first reaction to the height was: "Get serious. You're starting high, and waiting to bargain down."

But in and of itself, size isn't the most relevant aspect of the project, according to Mr. Riggs. Noting that he would probably be able to see the buildings from his home in the Lorelei Manor neighborhood, he said: "OK, so you live across the freeway from a (light industrial) zone, and you might see a building. How is that a specific issue?"

The pressing issues, Mr. Riggs said, are the project's aesthetics, as well as its effect on traffic patterns and nearby land development. With the recent release of a fiscal impact analysis and an environmental impact report, Menlo Park residents are getting their first insights into those issues, as well as the impact the project would have on city coffers.

### Traffic, housing

When the project is fully built — a process that some believe could take up to 20 years, pend-



Looking across U.S. 101 toward Bedwell-Bayfront Park at the **Menlo Gateway** project proposed by developer David Bohannon. The project would consist of three eight-story office buildings, a 230-room hotel, a fitness center, and several parking garages. Rendering by DES Architects.

ing negotiations between the city and Mr. Bohannon — about 2,500 people will work on the 15-acre property, according to a city consultant. Where will those people live, and how will they get to work?

Probably not in Menlo Park, and via the freeway or the Dumbarton Bridge, according to the consulting firm that prepared the environmental impact report.

That prompted resident Elias Blawie to remark at a recent Transportation Commission

meeting that the proposal looked, at first blush, like something that might have been built during the mid-20th century, not the 21st. The project is oriented around automobiles, he said, rather than mass transit systems or bicycles.

Mr. Bohannon disagreed, saying he thinks the project is "ideally located" by U.S. 101 and Bayfront Expressway. His company intends to implement a variety of programs to encourage people to carpool and take public transit.

"We're bringing forward a project that meets the needs of the region we're in, in a 21st century work environment," he said in an interview, adding that the industrial park his grandfather built on the land covering and surrounding his proposed project belonged to the mid-20th century.

Pointing to the results of a survey paid for by his company, Mr. Bohannon said he believes many residents view the fact that traffic

See **BOHANNON**, page 8

## 'Running with the Tiger' follows a life through World War II China

Ansie Lee Sperry of Portola Valley will present her memoirs of growing up in China — from her birth in 1914, through the Japanese invasion, to a prison camp in the Philippines — at Kepler's on Saturday

By Marion Softky  
Special to The Almanac

The cupcakes were delicious. But it was hard to make the jump of imagination from the scrumptious goodies shrouded in grated coconut, offered at a sunny spring book-signing party in Portola Valley, with their dark source.

Those "Santo Tomas" cupcakes

came from a recipe invented by Ansie Lee Sperry while she was interned in a Japanese prison camp outside of Manila during World War II.

Ms. Sperry recalls taking leftover mush from the food lines that served internees twice a day. She would dry it on a tin sheet in the hot Manila sun, and crush it into flour. Then she could add coconut

milk, spices, and fresh ginger, and bake the batter into cupcakes on her primitive charcoal stove — a rare treat for people trapped in a grim place in enemy territory during a war.

"There was no sugar; now and then you'd get a duck egg. It made a nice cake," she says in an interview in her small apartment at The Sequoias senior complex in Portola Valley. "If you have imagination, you can create things."

There will be Santo Tomas cupcakes to snack on when she reviews her new book of memoirs, "Running with the Tiger," at Kepler's

bookstore Saturday, Aug. 22 at 2 p.m. Her daughter, Vicky Merchant of Portola Valley, will make sure these cupcakes have additional ingredients not available at prison camp. "We add butter, oil and frosting," she says.

### Prosperous in Hong Kong

The first 23 years of "Running with the Tiger" shows a spunky girl growing up prosperous in China, from 1914, when Ansie was born, until 1937, when the Japanese invaded. The book is written in

See **SPERRY**, page 7

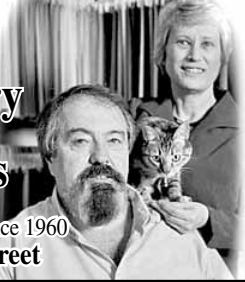


Photo by Hayoung Heidi Lee

**Ansie Lee Sperry** will speak at Kepler's bookstore in Menlo Park at 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 22.

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## Eshoo: No plans for health care town hall?

As people pack town hall meetings across the country to debate the issue of health care reform, Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, has not announced plans to hold a similar meeting with her constituents during Congress' August recess.

A spokesperson at Ms. Eshoo's office said he had "no information at this time" on whether Ms. Eshoo would hold a health care town hall meeting. She is planning to host a town hall meeting on the California high-speed rail project in Menlo Park from 7 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 26.

In a July 30 electronic newsletter, Ms. Eshoo

detailed the health care reform bill drafted by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which she sits on. She included an attachment with frequently asked questions, and invited people to e-mail her with questions to "save time and your taxpayer dollars!"

She said she plans to offer an amendment that would allow less expensive generic versions of drugs to enter the market.

The Energy and Commerce Committee is one of three House committees to draft health care bills.

Go to [Eshoo.house.gov](http://Eshoo.house.gov) to view the newsletter.

## Holy Trinity Episcopal Church names new rector

The Rev. Matthew Dutton-Gillett, who most recently served as rector of St. Elizabeth's church in Knoxville, Tennessee, has been named the 17th rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park.

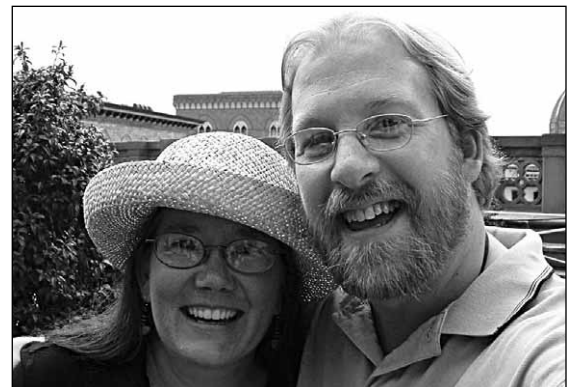
His first Sunday services will be Aug. 23 at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., said Linda Hubbard Gulker, a spokesperson for the church.

He graduated from the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1991, and has since served parishes in Missouri, Illinois and Tennessee, according to a press release.

Most recently, he lived in Knoxville, Tennessee with his wife Kate, and children Madeline and Max.

He is taking the place of Holy Trinity's previous rector, the Rev. Michael Spillane, who was called to be rector in 2007, but died of brain cancer in 2008, according to Ms. Hubbard Gulker, a junior warden at Holy Trinity.

"It was such a tragedy, but we are now enthused and excited to have a new leader," she said.



The Rev. Matthew Dutton-Gillett and his wife, Kate.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church was founded in 1884 and was one of the first congregations in the Diocese of California. It currently consists of the church, Trinity School, and the Child and Family Institute. For more information, contact the church office at 326-2083.

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# Author tells of a remarkable life

SPERRY

continued from page 5

clear, factual, prose with photographs, detailed sketches by Ms. Sperry, and references. Excerpts from her diary give day-by-day accounts of places and events.

She was born in the year of the Tiger, to Lee Hysan, a prominent and progressive Hong Kong businessman. She and several siblings were actually born in Macao to escape the bubonic plague in Hong Kong.

It was a big and happy family, but far distant culturally from Portola Valley in 2009. She was the second child of her father's first concubine; she was one of 15 children of her father's wife and three concubines. They all called his wife — who still had bound feet — "Ah Ma" (Mother). They lived in comfort and harmony.

Her father believed in educating girls as well as boys. When she was 9, Ansie and her sister, Doris, went to England to study at a Moira House, on the edge of Suffolk Downs. "It really was unheard of to be sending such young Chinese girls for schooling so far away," she wrote in her book.

From 1924 to 1928, the Lee girls had a glorious time. They had no exams and no uniforms, she wrote. They rode horses on the downs, took piano lessons, had no exams for four years, and heard special concerts by violinist Fritz Kreisler. "No child could have had more fun at school than I did."

Their happy school days were shockingly terminated in 1928 when their father was murdered. The murder was never solved, but may have been involved with the opium trade. The girls came home.

For the next 11 years, she lived a busy, comfortable, and increasingly frustrated life. She finished the Episcopal girls school at the top of her class, and spent a year in Peking, where she became close friends with the daughters of Col. — later General — Joe Stillwell.

By chance she was inspired to learn shorthand and typing, a rare skill among Chinese women at the time. "As a hobby, I learned shorthand. That changed my life," she says.

Another value Ansie brought home from England was an interest in volunteering and service. After she returned to Hong Kong from Peking, she was not allowed to work, so she partied, played tennis with the boys — and volunteered to help doctors in their clinics. She became increasingly restless. "There was something missing," she wrote. "There was no real challenge. I had to break out of this small island."

## Invasion

In 1937, when Japan invaded China, she wanted to "do her bit." In 1939, she joined the Chinese Medical Relief Service (like the Red Cross) and served in a rugged war zone in the Chinese interior. She was secretary for the chief.

Visiting Chungking, the capital, she contacted W.H. Donald, Australian adviser to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and took a position as secretary for Mr. Donald. She always called him "Don." They remained close throughout the war.

Part of her new job was serving as secretary to Mme. Chiang Kai-shek. "She was charming and beautiful," Ms. Sperry remembers.

But her first letter was to the French ambassador, thanking him for perfume. "I came to do war work," Ms. Sperry comments. "I quit right off."

She stayed with Don. They cruised the South Pacific with his new yacht and assorted ships for more than a year. For Ansie, the cruises, which extended as far as Honolulu and New Zealand, were marred principally by seasickness; she was not a good sailor.

On Dec. 6, 1941 (their time), Ansie and Don were on a freighter near New Guinea on their way from Honolulu to Manila. They heard the announcement that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, and America was in the war. Ansie wrote in her diary: "Golly, we are in a death trap."

## War and prison

They landed in Manila on Dec. 13 amid air raids. On Jan. 2, 1942, Manila fell. Within days Allied nationals — and Ansie — were rounded up and placed in internment camps.

On Feb. 20, she and Don were transferred to the internment camp at the University of Santo Tomas, to join several thousand others. It would be almost three years exactly before the two were rescued in one of the legendary rescue operations in World War II.

At first, the Japanese turned over operation of the camp to a democratically elected government of internees. They were led and supplied by internees from the Red Cross.

She found herself on double mattresses in a small room crammed with 32 women. There was hazardous netting to protect against hordes of mosquitoes. She soon discovered that bedbugs smell like essence of almonds.

She soon connected with Don. They found some lumber to buy, and were allowed to build a shanty in the courtyard. Her accounts of prison life include some amazingly upbeat activities, and some

horrors. Cooking and cupcakes, bookbinding, and helping put on shows gave satisfaction. She worked preparing vegetables — until she came down with amoebic dysentery.

Also on the down side were typhoons, downpours, a big earthquake, heat, and frequent trips to the hospital. And ants, the tiny red ones that get into everything and sting.

There was good company. Early in her time in the shanty, she met a handsome young American banker, Henry "Hank" Sperry. What started as friendship grew into love. They were married in Shanghai in 1946.

A transfer to the Los Banos camp, also in the Philippines, in April 1944 marked a change to a more restricted, and brutal regime. And as the war ground on, food became scarce; people began to starve. By the beginning of 1945, they were peeling the rice grains, hull by hull. "The whole camp was absorbed in dealing with this bit of madness," she wrote.

The morning of Feb. 23, everything changed. The day "exploded like a magnificent firework display," she wrote.

U.S. forces launched the famous rescue at 7 a.m. precisely, when Japanese guards were busy leading internees in calisthenics. Parachutes filled the sky, troops came by land, and an amphibious fleet rolled ashore from the lake. Soon Ansie, Don, Henry and the rest were chugging to freedom in amphibious tanks.

All 2,146 prisoners were rescued. There were no civilian casualties.

## Peace, prosperity

After the rescue, it took most of a year for Ansie and Henry to sort out their lives, get back to the United States, and get his bank's permission to marry. The wedding took place in the Episcopal Cathedral in Shanghai on July 6, 1946. Don died the following November.

The young couple stayed in Shanghai until 1949, until Mao and the Communists took over. They then moved to Hong Kong, where Mr. Sperry was a vice president of Citibank for much of Asia, until he first retired in 1967. "His whole career was in Asia," says his daughter.

Henry and Ansie Lee Sperry moved to a house in Portola Valley in 1973, after he retired a second time. They moved to The Sequoias in 1990; Mr. Sperry died in 2003.

More than 150 people came to Ms. Sperry's book signing at her old Portola Valley home where the Merchants have built a new house. Guest included about 10

# Two-story office proposed at Sand Hill and Santa Cruz

The owner of two parcels at Santa Cruz Avenue and Sand Hill Road in unincorporated San Mateo County is applying to build a two-story multi-use building on the property.

Property owner Steven Baugher has applied to demolish two single-family homes and replace them with a 14,400 square-foot commercial office building, with two residential units and underground parking.

The proposal will be the only building application on the county

Planning Commission's agenda at its meeting Wednesday, Aug. 26. It would require a general plan amendment, and a rezoning.

The commission reviewed a different version of the proposal in March; it has since been revised.

The commission is scheduled to meet at 9 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers on the county's campus, at the intersection of Bradford and Hamilton streets in Redwood City.

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### Flood Insurance Options

**Q:** I am buying a home that happens to be in a flood zone. I have been told that with some effort I may be able to get a better rate on flood insurance. Are you familiar with cost-saving options that are available to me?

standard, you may get a reduced rate even though it is still considered to be in a flood zone.

**A:** If you own a home in a flood zone, and you have a loan on the property, your lender will require you to obtain flood insurance. The insurance carrier will look at the property's location and quote a price based on what they find. However, you may be able to obtain a lower rate if your insurance carrier does a survey of the home and finds that it meets certain criteria with regard to crawl space ventilation and other factors. If your property exceeds the minimum

In some circumstances you can hire a professional surveyor and get an exception for your property from the flood designations for the area. It is possible that the elevation of your property is such that it is not considered to be in a flood zone, even though the surrounding properties may be. If you think your property may be above flood level, you should obtain a flood certificate that supports this. It is worthwhile to investigate your options carefully because you may be able to save a significant amount in premiums.

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

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See SPERRY, page 8

# Residents try to get a handle on Bohannon's Menlo Gateway project

## BOHANNON

continued from page 5

isn't expected to bleed out into Menlo Park neighborhoods as a plus.

According to the environmental impact report, Marsh Road and Chilco Street will see only a slight increase in traffic. The streets that would bear the brunt of the traffic load are minor roads in the "light industrial" zone that touch the project site. There would be minimal traffic cutting through the Belle Haven neighborhood, the closest residential area to the project site. The great majority of the 11,000 vehicle trips the project is expected to generate would not cross west of U.S. 101, according to Chip Taylor, the city's transportation manager.

Residents would, however, see significant delays at the intersection of Marsh Road and Middlefield Road in Atherton, and at Marsh Road and Bohannon Drive, according to the environmental impact report.

When it comes to housing, Patti Boyle, a member of Menlo Park's Housing Commission, said the city would do well to take a regional approach. Perhaps Menlo Park could arrange for housing to be built on nearby land in Redwood City, if the cities could work it out, she said.

Per the city's requirement, Mr. Bohannon would pay \$8.5 million into Menlo Park's below-market-rate housing fund. But "we just don't need the money, we need the land," Ms. Boyle said in an interview.

## Money, money, money

Some have asked why the city would even consider a project of this size. In addition to the fact that many Belle Haven residents have expressed support for it, the answer is, presumably: money.

With four long-term budget projections, several council members have said they view economic development as the city's main tool in stabilizing its finances. A city consultant estimates that once it's finished, the project would provide the city with \$1.36 million to \$2.16 million per year in property, sales, hotel user, and other taxes. Menlo Park would collect \$13.7 million in various impact mitigation fees, including for below-market-rate housing, traffic, and street repairs.

The project will also create nearly 2,000 one-year construction jobs, according to a consultant.

## Public benefits

The project's approval could hinge on the city's negotiation with Mr. Bohannon's development company over public benefits, in exchange for allowing more intense development than current zoning laws provide for. Rezoning to accommodate

Mr. Bohannon's proposal would increase the land's value from \$19.8 million to \$47.5 million, according to a consultant.

Among other things, public benefits could include the creation of open space, parks and trails, public art, a shuttle service, or the incorporation of environmentally sound building techniques. (Mr. Bohannon's company is already planning to construct the offices to meet LEED Gold standards, and the hotel to meet LEED Silver standards; he views it as a model for buildings of their size, he said.)

**At a recent Transportation Commission meeting, Menlo Park resident Elias Blawie said that the proposal looked, at first blush, like something that might have been built during the mid-20th century, not the 21st. The project is oriented around automobiles, he said, rather than mass transit systems or bicycles.**

The city could also negotiate for a cut of the hotel's revenue, or require Mr. Bohannon's company to pay into a fund for community amenities. At a study session in Oct. 2008, council members seemed to agree that those amenities should be distributed disproportionately close to the project — in this case, that would likely mean in the Belle Haven neighborhood.

The city is soliciting feedback on what residents would like.

## School, fire districts

The project would result in a windfall for the Sequoia Union High School District, which would garner about \$600,000 per year in property tax revenue once the project is fully built, without taking on many extra students, according to a consultant.

The project would cost the fire protection district \$62,000 per year, and the new ladder truck would run about \$1.25 million. The district plans to negotiate with Mr. Bohannon's company to determine who would pay those costs.

Having already spent a lot of time and money in developing plans for the project, Mr. Bohannon must feel fairly confident that the council will approve it. Right?

"Early indications are that people are strongly supportive," he said. "It's hard not to be buoyed by that."

The project isn't expected to come before the council for approval until March 2010. ■

## ■ INFORMATION

■ Menlo Park is holding a general meeting for city commissions and residents Wednesday, Aug. 19, on the office/hotel project proposed by developer David Bohannon. The meeting will begin in the council chambers in the Civic Center complex, between Laurel and Alma streets, at 7 p.m.

■ People have until 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 21, to respond to an environmental impact report on the project. For more information, or to view the report, visit [tinyurl.com/menlogateway](http://tinyurl.com/menlogateway). Copies are also available at the Menlo Park Library, and at the city administration building in the Civic Center complex.



Photos by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

"I got blindsided by this," says Councilwoman Maryann Moise Derwin, left, who criticized the town's decision to send residents a postcard that might be construed as campaigning for voter renewal of a tax. Mayor Ann Wengert, right, defended the mailing.

# Council flare-up over controversial postcard

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The Portola Valley Town Council spent a few lively minutes last week discussing a controversial Town Hall decision to mail residents a postcard with information about unusual expense cuts the town has taken to balance the budget.

At issue: the propriety of spending public money on such a mailing three months ahead of an election in which voters will consider renewing a tax on utility bills that brings in about 10 percent of the town's revenues.

The postcard could be seen as making a case for renewing the tax, something a government body is not allowed to do.

In 2005, voters renewed the tax by a 52 percent majority, a 20-percentage-point drop from the 72 percent majority that approved the tax in 2001.

Town Manager Angela Howard told The Almanac that she accepted responsibility for the decision to mail the card. Residents had been asking about the town's finances and something needed to be done, she said.

It was a novel situation. For the first time in her career in Portola Valley, as she told the council in June, she had to slash planned expenses by about \$420,000 to draft a balanced budget for the fiscal year that began July 1.

The postcard repeats statistics she cited then: building permit revenues are down some 40 percent, interest income is down 62 percent, and the cash-starved state is threatening to borrow up to \$200,000 in property tax revenues in December. The card does not mention the utility tax.

Ms. Howard said she decided a postcard would be appropriate and discussed key points with Stacie Nerdahl, the administrative services officer, before leaving on a three-week vacation on July 8.

Ms. Nerdahl wrote the text of the card and Councilman Steve Toben reviewed

it, Ms. Howard said, adding that she was away and did not see it before it was mailed on June 27.

The postcard was meant to say, "Hey, we're OK, and by the way, the budget's out there on the Web site. Go see it," Ms. Howard said.

Ms. Nerdahl, in an interview, added: "We really want people to know we're still balanced."

Asked to comment on the controversy, Ms. Howard replied: "It is unfortunate. It really is. That's all I can say about it."

## Council views

The topic came up at the Aug. 12 council meeting during the regular discussion of recent communications. Mayor Ann Wengert defended Ms. Howard's decision.

The town has sent 13 postcards in recent memory and this was one more, Ms. Wengert said. The annual budget, she added, "is a major event that we go through," and one probably not well understood by residents.

All well and good "on the surface," Councilman Richard Merk noted, but the potential for misinterpretation should have raised a flag. "I think this was a mistake at this time," he said. "If the town is going to send this out, we have to send it out (having given it) full thought."

Councilwoman Maryann Moise Derwin said residents had phoned her asking about the card before she'd seen it. "I got blindsided by this," she said. "It made me look like an idiot."

Councilman Ted Driscoll said he thought the card useful in the context of a general economic malaise in that it specifically addressed the town's situation, but later called the timing "just unfortunate."

Mr. Toben was absent and did not respond to an e-mailed request for comment. ■

## SPERRY

continued from page 7

nieces and nephews from all over the country, Ms. Merchant says, and several fellow prisoners at Santo Tomas.

At a lively 94 years, Ms. Sperry is grateful.

"I've had a wonderful life," she says. ■

*The famous rescue from the prison camp at Los Banos is portrayed in a History Channel documentary, "Rescue at Dawn: the Los Banos Raid."*

## More candidates emerge for local races

By **Andrea Gemmet**  
Almanac Staff Writer

**A** last chance for newcomers to run for election in November brought out a handful of late-filing candidates for local districts.

The extended filing period ended at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12, for all races in which an incumbent chose not to run for re-election. The filing period for all other races ended Friday, Aug. 7.

During the extended filing period, the Sequoia Union High School District added two more candidates for four-year terms on the school board: Nohema Fernandez, an educator and administrator from Redwood City; and Beth "Ms. Inja" Injasoulian, a high school teacher from Redwood City. There are now eight candidates running for two seats on the board.

Ms. Fernandez, 65, said she has a 42-year career in higher education, including professorships in the arts at the University of California campuses at Santa Cruz and Irvine. Her daughter is a graduate of Woodside High School, she said in an interview.

If elected, Ms. Fernandez said she would focus on maintaining high-quality education amid tightening budgets, and ensuring students "very rich opportunities" in sports, the arts and vocational pursuits.

Asked about Everest (charter) Public High School efforts to open in Redwood City, and Sequoia district Superintendent Pat Gemma's campaign opposing those efforts, she said she was unaware of the issue and planned to "educate (herself) on that immediately."

After having read "materials on both sides," Ms. Fernandez said in an e-mail that the Sequoia board denied Everest's charter "for all the wrong reasons" and that the district is trying to "force the school to operate in an unsuitable location."

Ms. Injasoulian could not be reached by The Almanac's deadline.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District also added some late-filing candidates: Jon Mosby, a retired electronic engineer from Menlo Park; Jack Nelson, a logistics safety manager from Menlo



Park; and Stephen Nachtsheim, a businessman from Atherton.

### Portola Valley

In the Portola Valley School District, there won't be an election, but there will be an empty seat on the school board. Incumbents Ray Villareal and Bill Youstra chose to run again, while incumbent Donald Collat did not. With no newcomers joining the race, the board has only two candidates for three, four-year seats.

In the town of Portola Valley, although the election for the Town Council will not be contested — there are three open seats and three candidates — the election cannot be canceled because the ballot includes proposals that would reauthorize the town's utility user taxes for another four years, Town Clerk Sharon Hanlon told The Almanac.

Incumbents Maryann Moise Derwin and Ted Driscoll are returning, and architect John Richards will return to public service — he served one four-year term on the Planning Commission in the 1990s.

Portola Valley is his home town, he said in an interview, and added that he expects to stand for the reasons it was established: to maintain open space and rural character. "I believe strongly in our volunteer government system," he said. "It's one of the last bastions of true democracy."

With a house that includes a photovoltaic system, solar hot water and passive solar heat, environmentally correct behavior is one of his priorities. "I think it's something that everybody in town should consider," he said.

### Woodside

In Woodside, the election for three Town Council seats is also uncontested. The council now has a choice: it can go ahead with an election at a cost of about \$10,000 or it can appoint the candidates. At a special meeting scheduled for 6 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 19, in Independence Hall, the council will decide what it wants to do, Town Clerk Janet Koelsch said in an interview. Woodside has a history of hold-

ing elections for uncontested council races, in order to encourage write-in candidates.

Incumbents Dave Tanner and Deborah Gordon will return to the council and be joined by Anne Kasten, who served on the Architecture and Site Review Board for nine years. She is a resident of Woodside Heights and a 17-year resident.

Ms. Kasten said in an interview that she's particularly interested in incorporating into the fabric of the town the year-long revisions now under way on the general plan. In a related note, she said she's hopeful that this effort may help a community feeling to infiltrate the town such that kids, with adult supervision, would feel good about walking to school.

The Woodside Elementary School District will have a contested election, with five candidates for three seats. The filing period was extended because incumbent Karen Werner is not running; however, no additional candidates emerged during the extended filing period.

### West Bay Sanitary

No election will be held in the West Bay Sanitary District, where one two-year term and two four-year terms are up for election. Incumbent Harry Harrison will retain his seat, and Fran Dehn will continue to serve out the four-year term vacated by John Lomax in June 2008.

Newcomer Ned Moritz will fill a seat that became vacant with the resignation of David Knight earlier this year. Mr. Moritz retired recently after spending his career as an executive in the freight transportation business, and said he wanted to find a way to give back to the community.

"It's a modest start, something I could get involved with," he said. "And the planning is focused on capital expenditures in the long-term, I sort of understand that stuff, I thought I could make a contribution."

Elections are cancelled for three uncontested races with incumbent candidates: the Woodside Fire Protection District; the Ladera Recreation District; and the San Mateo County Community College District. ■

*Dave Boyce and Sean Howell contributed to this report.*

## USGS talk on geothermal energy

Is there a geothermal solution to the United States' need for clean energy? The public is invited to hear geophysicist Colin F. Williams discuss emerging technologies that may dramatically increase the opportunities

for geothermal energy extraction in seven Western states.

The program starts at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, in Conference Room A, Building 3, at the U.S. Geological Survey's campus, 345 Middlefield Road in Menlo Park.

### Correction

In a story in the Aug. 12 Almanac, we identified Russell Peterson, who is bringing a lawsuit against the High-Speed Rail Authority and Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, as an Atherton resident. In fact, he lives in Menlo Park.

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## Recasting the Future: Donor Families' Selfless Gifts Are Legacy and Life for Others

Twins Isabel Stenzel Byrnes and Anabel Stenzel have fought long odds since their birth 37 years ago. As infants, they were diagnosed with cystic fibrosis (CF), a genetically transmitted disease that causes a dysfunction of cells in the lungs so disruptive they clog with mucous, making every breath a struggle and infection a constant worry. In that era, doctors told parents that children with CF would likely not live through elementary school.

The Stenzel sisters survived, however, keeping tenacious hold of their lives. Beating CF meant enduring uncomfortable and hours-long daily physical therapy, complicated regimens of medications and many hospitalizations. And when, after three decades, the disease finally overwhelmed their lungs and threatened their lives, the odds had turned for the Stenzels.

Both live now with donor lungs, with more life before them. Both received their transplants by the Stanford Hospital & Clinics Lung Transplant team, a multidisciplinary group with an evaluation and treatment protocol that has made the Hospital one of the most active and successful lung transplant centers in the U.S.

"We have huge gratitude," said Stenzel Byrnes, "that we could be offered a lung transplant and that we could survive and do really well, that we're still alive with every passing birthday."

### Right Place, Right Time

In 1990, when the twins arrived as freshmen at Stanford University and had their first consultation with Stanford Hospital pulmonologists and CF experts, lung transplantation had only recently developed beyond the experimental stage. Nine years earlier, Stanford's Bruce Reitz, MD, one of the world's premiere cardiovascular surgeons, had performed the world's first successful lung transplant of any kind, as part of a groundbreaking double organ transplant of heart and lungs.

Reitz did the transplant surgery that gave Stenzel Byrnes and her sister their new lungs.

Stanford Hospital had long been at the forefront of transplant landmarks. Reitz' colleague at Stanford, Norman Shumway, MD, PhD, who performed in 1968 the first successful human heart transplant in the U.S., also developed and perfected several key breakthroughs in transplantation, including surgical techniques, the use of cyclosporine to reduce rejection and lowering body temperature for surgery.

### Why It Worked

Lungs, however, remain the least often transplanted organs in the body. On average, fewer than a thousand lung transplants take place annually, only 4 percent of the combined organ transplant tally.

The Stanford Lung Transplant program's volume and results put it among the top such centers in the U.S. Last year, Stanford's lung patients had the second lowest length of hospital stay compared to that of similar facilities. Research has shown that the more transplants a hospital does, the better the survival rate. The Hospital's pro-



Anabel Stenzel and her twin, Isabel Stenzel Byrnes, were born with cystic fibrosis, a lung disease that would have ended their lives without lung transplants.

gram ranks, by volume, in the top ten U.S. transplant centers. It conducts an average of 40 to 50 lung transplant surgeries each year for people whose lung function has been destroyed by a variety of conditions, the most common chronic pulmonary obstructive disease, pulmonary arterial hypertension and CF.

*"We have huge gratitude that we could be offered a lung transplant and that we could survive and do really well."*

— Isabel Stenzel Byrnes, transplant patient at Stanford Hospital & Clinics

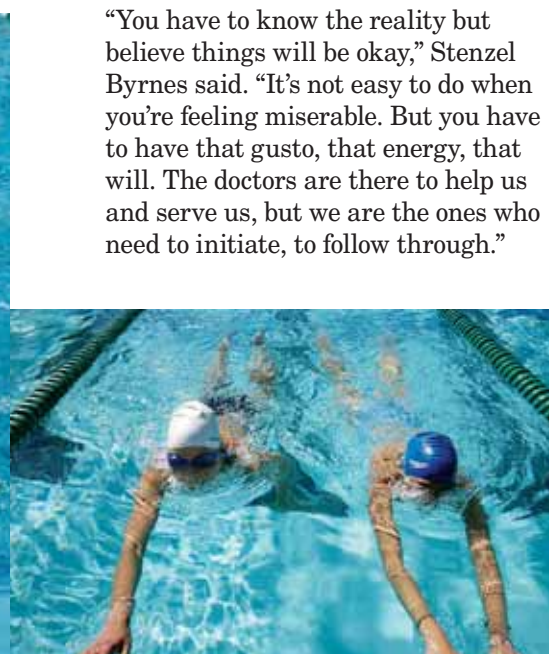
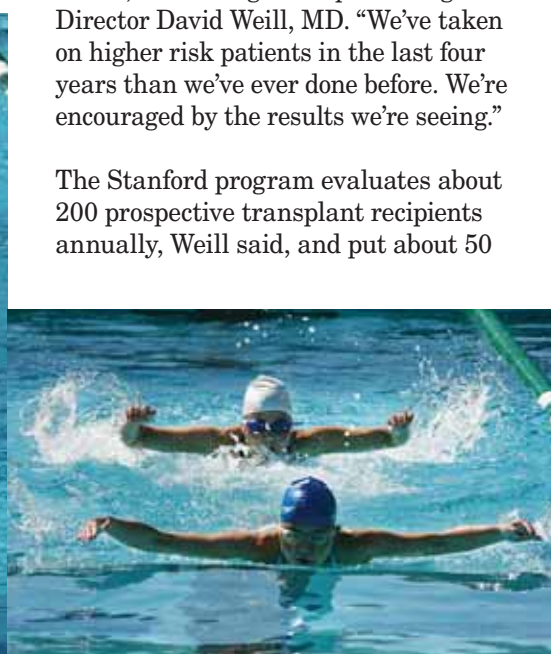
"This is a place where patients go because they've been turned down by others," said Lung Transplant Program Director David Weill, MD. "We've taken on higher risk patients in the last four years than we've ever done before. We're encouraged by the results we're seeing."

The Stanford program evaluates about 200 prospective transplant recipients annually, Weill said, and put about 50

on its list for transplants. The rate of transplantation is three times faster than the national average because of the Bay Area's excellent donor registration rate.

"It gives you a lot of confidence being at a facility with Stanford's experience, reputation and expertise. I'm an alum and I work there, so I know it like the back of my hand," said Ana Stenzel. "We are so grateful that we had this option."

Weill has headed the program since 2006, and instituted its most recent changes. Instead of looking for the most perfect lungs, he eliminated those he knew would not work. "We're aggressive about using those we think



The Stenzel twins have long been regulars at local pools. Swimming is part of a life that includes daily exercise and other physical activity that maintains their overall health. They've competed in four consecutive United States Transplant Games, winning several medals. At the 2004 games, less than six months after her lung transplant, Isabel Stenzel Byrnes achieved a personal best in the 1,500-meter racewalk, finishing just a few minutes after her sister did.

## What You Should Know About Organ Transplantation

- Physicians can transplant the heart, kidney, liver, lung, pancreas, intestine, bone and other tissues.
- Stanford Hospital & Clinics is one of only three hospitals in California that perform transplants of heart, heart-lung, liver, lung, kidney, kidney-pancreas and intestine.
- In California, the current waiting list for organs tallies more than 20,000; total transplants performed in the state in 2006 reached 3,064.
- Nearly 80 percent of the current California waiting list requests are for kidneys. Last year, just over 10 percent of those requests were filled.
- Every 11 minutes in the United States, another name is added to the organ transplant

waiting list. The current waiting list numbers more than 100,000. From January to May of this year, about 12,000 transplants were performed in the U.S.

- The length of time spent on a waiting list is determined by medical need, expected outcome, blood and tissue type, size of organ, height and weight of candidate, an individual hospital's criteria for recipient and donor acceptance, and distance between donor and recipient hospital.

- Potential donors must be 18. Registration is available online at [www.donatelife.org/register/](http://www.donatelife.org/register/), or when renewing or obtaining a California Drivers License or California ID card. There are no disqualifying age or health condition requirements to register.

Data Sources: The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients, California Donor Transplant Network

For more information about donation: Donate Life California Organ and Tissue Registry, [www.donatelife.org](http://www.donatelife.org), the California Transplant Donor Network, [www.ctdn.org](http://www.ctdn.org); Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients, [www.ustransplant.org](http://www.ustransplant.org).

will work," he said. "Our patients come to us very ill, with few options. If you are very picky about which lungs you pick, that increases the wait and the threat to survival."

### Multiple Viewpoints

The program also takes an aggressive approach to lung preservation, care coordination, detecting organ rejection and long-term patient monitoring. From the get-go, Weill said, patients receive a full team evaluation that includes surgeons, pulmonologists, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians and social workers. The social workers are vital to pre-operative analysis, Weill said. The team also has two outpatient coordinators who organize and develop plans for postoperative care, when family support is invaluable.

One crucial element in transplant survival is attitude, something that the Stanford team works to identify in prospective recipients. The Stenzels understand very well what's necessary to make it through the difficult operation and post-surgical life with a transplanted organ.

"You have to know the reality but believe things will be okay," Stenzel Byrnes said. "It's not easy to do when you're feeling miserable. But you have to have that gusto, that energy, that will. The doctors are there to help us and serve us, but we are the ones who need to initiate, to follow through."

The Stenzels are stellar examples of what new lungs can mean. They swim for pleasure and for the fitness that supports their overall health. Post-transplant, they have competed in four consecutive U.S. Transplant Games, both taking home medals in swimming, proving just how fully transplant patients can live.

*"We've taken on higher risk patients in the last four years than we've ever done before. We're encouraged by the results we're seeing."*

— David Weill, MD, Director, Stanford Hospital Lung Transplant Program

They accomplished another long-time dream, finishing a book about their lives titled, "The Power of Two: A Twin Triumph Over Cystic Fibrosis." It has received excellent reviews and brought ongoing requests for them to speak at national and international events about CF and the need for organ donation. Ana Stenzel works as a genetic counselor at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital; her sister is a social worker, an accomplished bagpiper and, this summer, gave her first docent tour at a county preserve a step toward fulfilling her dream to also be a naturalist.

Part of the twins' new lives is their continuing remembrance of their lung donors. Their donors' families "made a decision to say 'yes' to organ donation at a time of personal tragedy so that others could live," said Stenzel. "It was truly selfless and admirable and showed me the highest level of humanity. I hope that their pain of loss can be eased a bit, that they can know their loved ones



When Dr. Weill does his morning rounds, he receives updates from some of his team members. Left to right: Nurse Coordinator Mary Martel, transplant fellow Mihaela Ivan and social workers Tonia Gregory and Lesley Seeger.

left a legacy. I live and breathe each day in honor of my donor."

### Developing New Options

Physicians continue to refine the surgical techniques of lung transplant surgery and the combination and type of medications to reduce post-surgical rejection and prevent bacterial, fungal and viral infections. New approaches to donor lung removal, organ transportation and reconnection to the lung recipient are also developing. "Every couple of years it gets incrementally better," Weill said.

Stanford's Lung Transplant Laboratory is investigating mechanisms in chronic rejection, the major problem for transplant longevity. Patients at the Hospital are also part of several national clinical trials, including those looking at new immunosuppressive agents.

In July, Ana Stenzel marked the second anniversary of her second lung transplant; her body rejected her first transplanted lungs after six years. Last February, Stenzel Byrnes celebrated the fifth anniversary of her lung transplant.

She wrote in her blog, "I am feeling proud of all the experiences I've been able to have, thanks to healthy lungs. It's the little things that matter, the 'firsts' I'm amazed I can do because I'm alive. It feels great to have a future."

On that anniversary, she went to a lung transplant support group. "I witnessed so many people in desperate trouble. Some of them are yearning to breathe, to go home, to be with family, just for the simple things I have every day. I cannot ask for more. No one knows what the future will hold, so this group offers that timeless message to stay in the moment."

Stanford Hospital & Clinics is known worldwide for advanced treatment of complex disorders in areas such as cardiovascular care, cancer treatment, neurosciences, surgery, and organ transplants. Consistently ranked among the top institutions in the U.S. News & World Report annual list of "America's Best Hospitals," Stanford Hospital & Clinics is internationally recognized for translating medical breakthroughs into the care of patients. It is part of the Stanford University Medical Center, along with the Stanford University School of Medicine and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. For more information, visit [stanfordmedicine.org](http://stanfordmedicine.org).



Stanford University Medical Center

## Menlo Park resident, 103, asks city to repave street

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

Lined with cracks and pitted by potholes, a block-long stretch of Bay Laurel Drive in Menlo Park is unusual, perhaps, but not unique in its dilapidation. According to an estimate made by the city the last time it undertook a major street resurfacing project, Menlo Park is \$15 million behind in road repairs.

But not all the city's rockier streets can claim near-daily use by a 103-year-old resident, as Bay Laurel can. Dorothy Bolton sent a letter to the city at her 103rd birthday party in late July, signed by the party's attendees, urging the city to repair her street. Ms. Bolton finds it tough to negotiate the block's pitfalls in her electric scooter on her way to Trader Joe's and other local destinations, she said (she recently gave up her car, in favor of the scooter).

"When you punch down into a pothole, driving the scooter, it's ... not very stimulating," Ms.

Bolton said during an interview. "I have been living here for 53 years, and nothing has been done to the street. And I've paid a lot of taxes in that time."

Making the case for Bay Laurel, Ms. Bolton notes that it's a popular thoroughfare for joggers, bicyclists, and people walking dogs and pushing baby carriages.

Asked whether the city plans to fulfill Ms. Bolton's request, Public Works Director Kent Steffens said: "We haven't finalized the list (of streets to resurface) yet, but certainly we're considering Bay Laurel — it does need to be resurfaced."

But, he said: "We get requests from many residents. ... We have to look at the whole picture before making our final decisions."

The city recently completed a study of its streets to determine which of them it will repave in a \$4.6 million citywide resurfacing project approved for the current fiscal year. The city also received \$635,000 in federal stimulus funds to resurface



Dorothy Bolton says she has waited patiently for 53 years for the city to resurface her street.

The Almanac/Michelle Le

streets.

In addition to the condition of city streets, city management chooses the projects that would "give the city the best value," Mr. Steffens said.

"I know this is a bad time to ask," Ms. Bolton said, considering that the county is thought to be in the midst of a recession. She also sent a letter to the city on her 100th birthday, in 2006.

travel," she said, reminiscing about a 64-day trip she took with her husband around the world.

Ms. Bolton gave up painting after the fire, unable to get motivated again. But she still gardens, growing zucchinis, tomatoes, green peppers, and lettuce, among other plants in her small greenhouse. This year's blueberry crop was ruined by birds; she says she can't figure out how they found them, under an overhang in her backyard.

She hopes the city will act quickly to repair her street. In the meantime, though, she's focusing on things she can control, hiring a crew to repave her driveway. She followed The Almanac's reporter and photographer into the front yard after the interview, to talk with the contractor and inspect the job. ■

### Painting, gardening

On a tour of the home she and her husband built in the mid-1950s, Ms. Bolton — who walks with and without the aid of a cane — points out drawings and oil paintings she created during her days as an artist, before her studio burned down in a 1994 house fire.

She stops in front of a world map, dotted with dozens of pushpins at locales she traveled to with her husband, who died five years ago. Switzerland was her favorite destination.

"That's one of the advantages of not having children: you can

### Vehicles vandalized in Emerald Hills

At least 19 vehicles were damaged early Saturday morning, allegedly by occupants in a truck, who were spotted throwing rocks at the windows of parked cars in the Emerald Lake Hills area of San Mateo County, a sheriff's sergeant said.

The vandalism was first reported shortly before 3 a.m. when residents alerted 911 that they heard glass breaking, according to Sgt. Linda Gibbons of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

Other witnesses reported seeing a truck with at least two juveniles inside throwing rocks at the windows of parked cars, Sgt. Gibbons said.

Deputies searched the area but

were unable to locate the truck, described as either a white Toyota Tundra or a gray Ford F-150.

Streets affected by the vandalism include Sunset Way, Wilmington Way, California Way, Handley Trail, Paradise Way, Lakeview Way and Bayview Way, Sgt. Gibbons said.

Anyone who may have been a victim of this vandalism is asked to call the Sheriff's Office Communications Center at (650) 363-4911.

Anyone with information about the vandalism is asked to call the Sheriff's Office Detective Bureau at (650) 599-1536 or the anonymous witness line at (800) 547-2700.

By Bay City News Service

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## In Atherton, higher fees raise big-picture questions

By Andrea Gemmet  
Almanac Staff Writer

Advertising an event with a big banner sign at the intersection of Marsh and Middlefield roads is going to get a lot more costly.

The signs, which promote things like ice cream socials at the library and lacrosse camps at Holbrook-Palmer Park, cost the city nearly \$400 to erect. Under a new master fee schedule for the town of Atherton, the cost of this free service is going to get passed along to the advertising organization, to the tune of \$387.

"If that's what it costs us and we can find someone to charge it to, we should do it," said Councilman Jim Dobbie at a special council meeting held July 28.

The master fee schedule covers everything from building permits to renting the park pavilion for wedding receptions, and the City Council has been mulling over changes proposed by consultants NBS for the past couple of months.

While the setting of fees may seem a banal exercise on its surface, the task has brought up a number of bigger issues, such as whether to stop renting out park facilities for weddings, whether the town should absorb the cost of informing the public about building projects, and whether nonprofit groups should be asked to pay for those big banner signs at Marsh and Middlefield roads.

The use of Holbrook-Palmer, the town's only public park, is still up for debate. Renting out its facilities for weddings helps pay for the park's upkeep, but it also hampers residents' use of the rest of the park.

"There's definitely an impact on residents, especially on weekends, with all those weddings," said Councilman Dobbie. "If we shut them down, the park would be nice for residents. I'd like the park to remain a nice place for residents."

However, shutting down the events doesn't pencil out very well for the town. Public Works Director Duncan Jones told the council that the park currently costs \$316,570 annually to maintain, about \$40,000 more than it brings in.

With proposed increases in

the fee schedule, the park's annual revenue is projected to rise from \$276,400 to \$353,400, which would more than cover the annual cost of running the park, said Mr. Jones.

The numbers didn't work out as well when staff looked at discontinuing weddings and events, but keeping recreation classes at the park. The cost of running the park, which includes hiring temporary workers to staff the events, would drop, but not by enough. Mr. Jones said recreation classes would bring in only \$15,000 a year in revenue, but it would still cost the town more than \$160,000 a year to maintain the park.

Discontinuing all park programs would lower park maintenance costs dramatically, but bring in no revenue, so the annual cost to the town would be \$48,802, according to Mr. Jones.

The council said to go ahead with the higher fees, but promised to revisit the idea of eliminating wedding and event rentals at a future meeting.

As for the big banners at Marsh and Middlefield roads, the council said they'd give City Manager Jerry Gruber authority to consider waiving or reducing the \$387 charge for nonprofit groups.

Mr. Gruber told the council that he was the driving force for charging the fee, since installing the banners not only takes two public works employees away from other duties. There's also the liability associated with having them climb on ladders to hang the thing.

"Our public works people's time is more valuable than ever," Mr. Gruber said.

While many of the fees aim for 100 percent cost recovery for the town, there are some expenses that just can't be passed along — sifting through documents in response to public records requests, for example.

The council also said it was appropriate for the town to pick up the cost of public education and customer assistance on building projects. With those costs shouldered by the town, cost recovery on building department fees would be 79 percent.

The new master fee schedule appears headed for approval at the council's next meeting on Aug. 19. ■



### NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT and NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION

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

**Rezoning, Planned Development Permit, Lot Merger and Minor Subdivision, BMR Agreement, Heritage Tree Removal Permit, and Environmental Review/Sand Hill Property Company/1300 El Camino Real:** Requests for the following: 1) Rezoning the properties from C-4 General Commercial District (Applicable to El Camino Real) to Planned Development (P-D) District, 2) Planned Development Permit to establish development regulations including parking, building height, landscaping, and building setbacks, and conduct architectural review for the proposed development of 110,065 square feet of commercial space (51,365 square feet of retail/restaurant/service uses and 58,700 square feet of non-medical office uses), 3) Lot Merger and Minor Subdivision to merge the existing six lots and create up to four commercial condominium units, 4) Below Market Rate (BMR) Agreement for the payment of in-lieu fees associated with the City's BMR Housing Program, 5) Heritage Tree Removal Permits to remove one on-site and three off-site heritage trees, and 6) Environmental Review of the proposed project for potential environmental impacts. The Planning Commission will be making a recommendation on the proposed project to the City Council. The City Council will be the final decision-making body on the project.

In addition to analyzing the proposed project, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) analyzes a mixed-use residential alternative for which the applicant has prepared plans at the request of the City Council. The residential alternative would require similar entitlements as the proposed project, and would consist of 36 residential units, 58,700 square feet of non-medical office, and 22,895 square feet of retail/restaurant uses. This concept utilizes density bonus square footage as provided for in section 16.96.040 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Copies of the Final EIR will be on file for review at the City Library and available for distribution at the Community Development Department, Civic Center, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025, beginning on Friday, August 21, 2009.

The review period for the Final EIR has been set from **Friday, August 21, 2009** through **Monday, August 31, 2009**. Written comments should be submitted to Megan Fisher, Associate Planner at the Community Development Department no later than 5:30 p.m., **Monday, August 31, 2009**.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on **Monday, August 31, 2009**, 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge this item in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

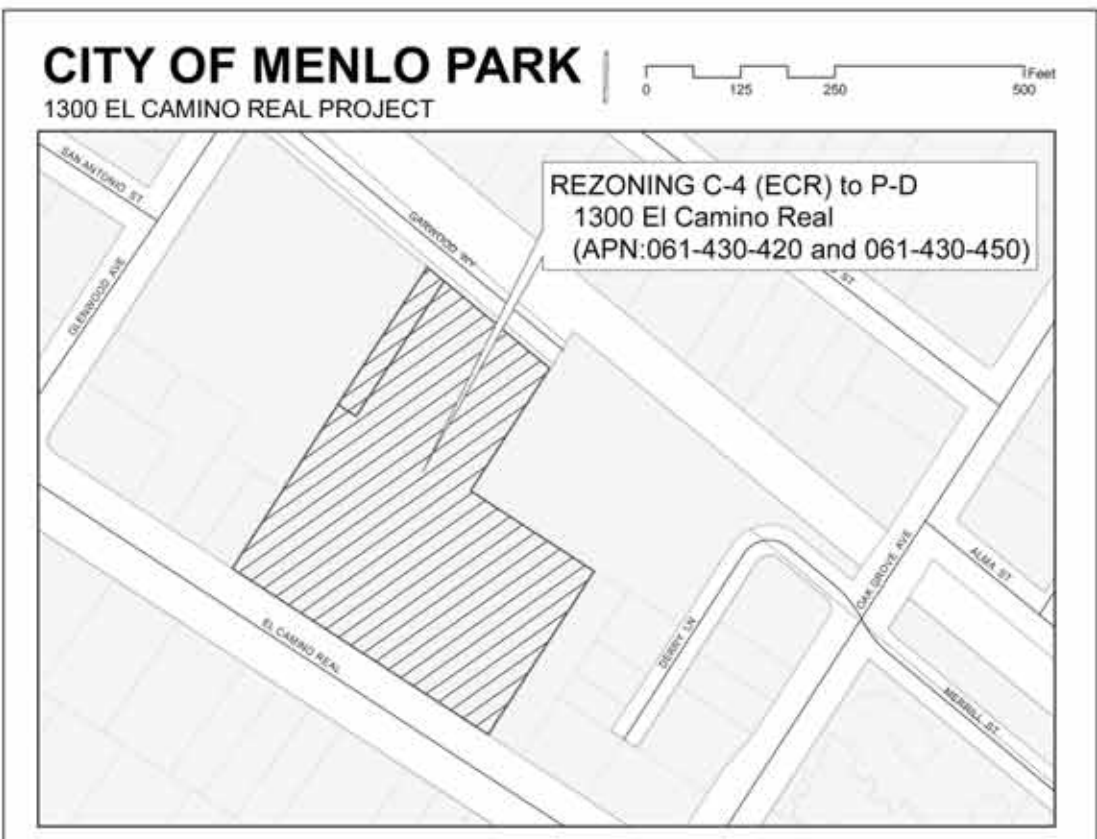
Documents related to this item may be inspected by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Community Development Department, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call Megan Fisher, Associate Planner, if there are any questions or comments on this item. She may be reached at 650-330-6737 or by email at [mefisher@menlopark.org](mailto:mefisher@menlopark.org). Up-to-date information on the project can be found on the project webpage: [http://www.menlopark.org/projects/comdev\\_1300ecr.htm](http://www.menlopark.org/projects/comdev_1300ecr.htm)

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

DATED: August 13, 2009  
PUBLISHED: August 19, 2009

Deanna Chow, Senior Planner  
Menlo Park Planning Commission

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



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**NOTICE OF INTENT TO  
ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE  
DECLARATION  
AND  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING  
COMMISSION MEETING OF  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2009**

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

**Use Permit, Architectural Control, Tentative Subdivision Map and Environmental Review/Joe Colonna for 1706 ECR LLC/1706 El Camino Real:** Request for a use permit, architectural control, tentative subdivision map, and environmental review to demolish an existing one-story, 6,875-square-foot commercial building (formerly Gaylords Restaurant) and construct a new two-story, 10,148-square-foot office building for medical/dental office use and the related on-site and off-site improvements, including new entry monuments on Buckthorn Way, at 1706 El Camino Real located in the C-4 (General Commercial, applicable to El Camino Real) zoning district. The proposed project would require the following approvals: Use Permit for construction of a new building; 2) Architectural Control for design review of the new building and related site improvements; 3) Tentative Subdivision Map for the creation of six medical/office condominium units within the building; and 4) Mitigated Negative Declaration to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. The Planning Commission will be making a recommendation on the proposed project to the City Council and the City Council will be the final decision-making body on the project.

The proposal requires the preparation of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). The Initial Study prepared for the project identifies less than significant impacts for the following categories: Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy and Mineral Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Utilities. The Initial Study prepared for the project identifies potentially significant environmental effects that can be mitigated to a less than significant level in the following category: Transportation/Traffic. The Initial Study for the project did not identify areas of potential environmental effects that are significant and unavoidable. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires this notice to disclose whether any listed toxic sites are present at the location. The project location does not contain a toxic site pursuant to Section 6596.2 of the Government Code.

Copies of the project plans and Mitigated Negative Declaration will be on file for review at the City Library and available for distribution at the Community Development Department, Civic Center, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025, on **Friday, August 21, 2009**. The review period for the Negative Declaration has been set from **Friday, August 21, 2009** through **Monday, September 21, 2009**. Written comments should be submitted to the Community Development Department no later than 5:30 p.m., **Monday, September 21, 2009**.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on this item in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on **Monday, September 21, 2009**, 7:00 p.m. or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge these items in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Documents related to these items may be inspected by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Department of Community Development, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call Deanna Chow, Senior Planner, if there are any questions or comments on this item. She may be reached at (650) 330-6733 or email at [dmchow@menlopark.org](mailto:dmchow@menlopark.org).

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

DATED: August 13, 2009 Deanna Chow, Senior Planner  
PUBLISHED: August 19, 2009 Menlo Park Planning Commission

If there are any questions, please call the Planning Division at (650) 330-6702.

## Track coach charged with threatening kids

A longtime assistant cross-country coach at Menlo-Atherton High School is facing misdemeanor charges in a racially charged incident involving three Hispanic children and a soccer ball, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

Kelly James Weston, 63, is accused of assault and making threats after two 12-year-olds and one 11-year-old bounced a soccer ball off the exterior wall of Mr. Weston's home, a house trailer, Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said in a report.

The children said the incident was accidental, the report said.

Mr. Weston allegedly came out of his house and told the kids that he hated them, that he hated "your kind" and Mexicans in general, and that he could "kill" them "right now," Mr. Wagstaffe said, adding that the home showed no damage from the soccer ball.

Mr. Weston allegedly pushed one of the kids, the basis of the assault charge.

The children reported the incident to their parents, who report-

ed it to a deputy from the Sheriff's Office, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Judge Norman Gatzert set Sept. 28 for a conference to determine a date for a jury trial. Mr. Weston is out of custody on a \$50,000 bail bond.

M-A Athletic Director Pam Wimberly, in an interview, expressed shock at the charges and noted that Mr. Weston has coached at M-A for more than 30 years.

The Almanac was unable to reach Mr. Weston's defense attorney for comment.

## Recent accident near Draeger's wasn't the first since 2005

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

In the Aug. 5 Almanac, we reported that an Aug. 2 car accident involving a pedestrian in the intersection by Draeger's market in Menlo Park was the first since the city reconfigured the intersection in 2005.

Not so, said Joan Urquhart, a 75-year-old Palo Alto woman who said she sustained major injuries when she was struck in the intersection March 13. A car turning left hit her as she was walking from the parking lot to Draeger's, throwing her 8 to 10 feet out of the Menlo Avenue crosswalk, she said.

Ms. Urquhart sustained a broken wrist and a broken ankle, spent four days recovering at Stanford Hospital and two and a half weeks in rehabilitation, and is only now concluding her physical therapy, she said.

According to Ms. Urquhart, she and the police differ as to whether she was in the crosswalk when she was hit, or outside it. Police spokeswoman Nicole Acker said that if Ms. Urquhart was outside the crosswalk, police might not consider the accident to have occurred in the intersection. The department cannot reveal the contents of accident reports, according to Ms. Acker.

### Housing development wins award

The "Lane Woods" housing development, near the Sunset magazine campus at Willow and Middlefield roads, won two "Gold Nugget" awards at the Pacific Coast

### ■ MENLO WATCH

Builders Conference in July.

The awards were for outstanding infill, redevelopment or rehab site plan, and for outstanding single-family detached home, according to a Summer-Hill spokesperson. The development consists of 32 residences.

The company planned the development to preserve more than 100 heritage trees on the property, the spokesperson said. The homes meet various standards for environmentally conscious design.

### Chambers hold tri-city mixer

The chambers of commerce from Menlo Park, Palo Alto, and East Palo Alto plan to hold a business networking event at the Four Seasons Hotel in East Palo Alto from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 26.

Registration costs \$10 a person. To register, e-mail [info@menloparkchamber.com](mailto:info@menloparkchamber.com). The Four Seasons is located at 2050 University Ave.

### Candidates sought for city commissions

Menlo Park residents interested in serving on a city commission are invited to apply before the Sept. 15 deadline. Their members appointed by the City Council, commissions are charged with considering issues related to their fields, and with making recommendations to the council.

The vacancies are all for four-years terms. Under current

city guidelines, there will not be a vacancy on the Planning Commission until spring 2010, and on the Bicycle Commission until spring 2011.

Commissions with vacancies are: Environmental Quality Commission, one vacancy; Housing Commission, three vacancies; Library Commission, three vacancies; Parks and Recreation Commission, two vacancies; and Transportation Commission, two vacancies.

Applications can be downloaded at [tinyurl.com/CommApp](http://tinyurl.com/CommApp), or picked up in the city administration building, in the Civic Center complex between Laurel and Alma streets.

For more information, contact City Clerk Margaret Roberts at [MSRoberts@menlopark.org](mailto:MSRoberts@menlopark.org) or 330-6620.

### City seeks green nominations

Menlo Park is seeking nominations for the city's Environmental Quality Awards by Friday, Sept. 11.

The awards are for "people, projects, efforts, or property designs that contribute to environmental quality improvement in Menlo Park," according to the city. Awards are given in the following categories: resource conservation, heritage tree preservation, cultural/historical preservation, landscape or native habitat, residential architecture, and commercial architecture.

For more information, or to get a nomination form, go to [tinyurl.com/MP-Env](http://tinyurl.com/MP-Env), or call 330-6740.

### ■ OBITUARY

#### David Elliott Coldoff

Former MP school board president

A memorial service for David Elliott Coldoff, a longtime Atherton resident and former member of the Menlo Park City School District board, is set for Tuesday,

Aug. 18, from 3 to 5 p.m. at Allied Arts Guild, 75 Arbor Road in Menlo Park. Mr. Coldoff died Aug. 5 at age 75, after suffering a hemorrhagic stroke.

Mr. Coldoff was born in Toronto, where he attended the University of Toronto, graduating with a degree in architecture in 1955. He moved to Boston, where he

met his future wife, Jane Hurley. The couple married in 1959 and moved to Palo Alto.

After the birth of their first child, Christopher, the family moved to Atherton. The house in Atherton offered a canvas for Mr. Coldoff to practice architecture;

*Continued on next page*

## Woodsiders win gold in cycling at senior games

By Colin Becht  
Special to the Almanac

### SPORTS

Dawn Neisser and John Novitsky, both of Woodside, came away from the 2009 Summer National Senior Games with gold medals in cycling.

Neisser won in both the 5K and 10K time trials for the women's age 50-54 group. Novitsky won in the same age group for men in the 10K time trials, and missed winning the gold in the 5K by one second. The time trials were held Aug. 10 on Canada Road.

In the women's 10K, Neisser crossed the finish line in 15:30, ahead of Carol Johnson of Washington by 24 seconds.

In the 5K, Neisser won the gold with a time of 7:27. Again, Johnson, who was 17 seconds behind, took the silver.

Neisser left the games with four medals, including two silvers in road races.

Novitsky finished the 10K course in 13 minutes and 44 seconds, beating Skip Rodgers of Pennsylvania by 25 seconds. Novitsky set a blistering pace, averaging 27.1 miles per hour.

"It was a relief [to win] in that I just had an OK ride in

the morning with the 5K, and was closer to 'on-my-game' in the afternoon with the 10K," Novitsky said.

Rodgers took the gold in the 5K with a time of 6:44, edging Novitsky by one second. At the 2007 Summer Senior Games, Novitsky beat Rodgers in the 5K by less than a second.

Novitsky's silver and gold performance in 2009 did not come as a surprise to his competitors. Novitsky is the reigning USA Cycling 2009 Masters Road Time Trial champion.

While most racers had a break between the road races on Aug. 6-7 and the time trials on Aug. 10, Novitsky had just cycled in two races over the weekend with his cycling team, VOS-cycles Gladiator.

"I did six races in five days, which is not a walk in the park for a 51-year-old guy," Novitsky said.

Another Woodside resident, Ted Zayner, competed in the time trials on Aug. 10. In the 5K, Zayner came in 19th in the men's 50-54 age group at 7:51. In the 10K, Zayner finished in 17th place at 16:15.

All three Woodside cyclists competed in the 20K and 40K road races on Aug. 6-7. In the 20K, Neisser finished second in her age group, Novitsky finished seventh in his group, and Zayner finished 25th in the same group as Novitsky.

In the 40K, Neisser again finished second, Novitsky finished seventh, and Zayner finished 21st.

"The way the courses were set up for the road races, they favored a guy with a good sprint, and I don't have a good sprint," Novitsky said. "I just wasn't strong enough to end it, but that's just the way the game is played."

For more information on the Senior Games, go to [2009senior-games.org](http://2009senior-games.org).

Amanda Young contributed to this report.

Continued from previous page

he designed renovations to the house and cared for it until the couple sold it in 2002 and moved to Redwood City, his family said.

During his career, Mr. Coldoff, worked for Mario Ciampi in San Francisco, then formed a partnership with Beverley Willis, building projects throughout the West and Hawaii.

Later, Mr. Coldoff began working out of his home, eventually becoming a highly sought-after planning consultant, his family said. Near the end of his career, he worked almost exclusively with the local school districts as they began to expand.

An active volunteer, he served on the Menlo Park school board, including serving as its president twice, and was involved with Rebuilding Together Peninsula. He coached Little League baseball and AYSO soccer, and was active in the Boy Scouts and YMCA Indian Princesses.

He is survived by his wife, Jane, of Redwood City; his children, Christopher of Los Angeles, Pamela of Sunnyvale, and Jonathan of Redwood City; and two grandchildren.

The family prefers that memorial donations to Rebuilding Together Peninsula (formerly Christmas in April), P.O. Box 4031, Menlo Park, CA 94026.

### ANNABELLE M. VARGAS

Our precious Annabelle peacefully ascended beyond our sight on July 29th, 2009, having been released from the lengthy bondage of Alzheimer's Disease. Her hesitation to leave us was dismissed when she learned that there was one space left on that day's angel-flight with included a stopover in Hawaii! She left word that she will continue to (keep in) touch (with) each one of us. Her brother, Maurice, and close friends are planning for celebrations of Annabelle's life, to be held on Aug. 21st and Sept. 5th. In gratitude for the loving care given to Annabelle during her times of need, we suggest contributions in her memory be sent to "Pathways Hospice Foundation". Donation forms available online, or mail to: 585 N. Mary Ave, Sunnyvale, CA 94085-2905.

PAID OBITUARY



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# A Bridge to somewhere

Local program gives motivated students  
the resources to succeed in school

Story By Amanda Young • Photos By Michelle Le

**N**ot many middle school students know very much about college, let alone what school they would like to attend. Seventh-grader Dominique Johnson, however, knows exactly where she'd like to be.

"Stanford, Harvard or UCLA," Dominique says with confidence. A brown hair clip holds her tight bun in place, and blue thin-framed glasses sit on her nose, reflecting the air of a serious student. "They're the top schools in the nation, and they sound pretty cool to go to."



Working on their play about bullying in school are, from left, Janet Gil Garcia, Lute Leaetoac and Jazmine Fajardo Morales, all participants in the Peninsula Bridge summer program in Atherton. On the wall are student chapter summaries from their English class.

Dominique, a student at James Flood Magnet School in Menlo Park, which is part of the Ravenswood City School District, says she greatly values her education, so she chose to attend the Peninsula Bridge summer program. It's a tuition-free academic program for fifth- through eighth-graders in under-resourced districts, such as Ravenswood and Redwood City.

For five weeks during the summer, the students take part in academic and enrichment activities on the campuses of local private schools, including Sacred Heart Preparatory, Menlo School, St. Joseph's and Woodside Priory. The goal is to help prepare motivated students, such as Dominique, to succeed in high school and maybe go on to college.

Since the first summer program in 1990 at Sacred Heart Prep campus in Atherton, the number of students enrolled each year has grown from 26 to about 300 this year. In the past two years alone, enrollment has grown 20 percent.

In addition to the summer classes, Peninsula Bridge has two other programs. One helps connect students, during the regular school year, to high-quality, after-school enrichment programs — in the arts and athletics — as well as tutoring resources. The other program offers parent education workshops to help keep the lines of communication open between middle school students and their parents.

The summer program is the Peninsula Bridge staple.

During summer months, many students, especially those in low-income families who cannot afford enrichment activities, forget material they learned throughout the school year. For Dominique and other Bridge students, the program is an opportunity that not many of their classmates in their under-resourced communities have.

#### Bridging the gap

Dominique's middle school, James Flood, is one of the top schools in the Ravenswood

School District. However, its students' performance on standardized testing remains low.

In 2007, only 26 percent of the students met the state standards. In comparison, 83 percent of the students at Hillview Middle School in Menlo Park met the standards.

By helping top-performing students from schools like Flood, Peninsula Bridge hopes to give students like Dominique the special attention they need.

"We want to work with the public schools to supplement the education of a group of students," says Grainger Marburg, the executive director of Bridge, which is based in Menlo Park.

One of her teachers at Flood School recommended Dominique for the Bridge program. So she applied and was accepted, and this is her second year in the program.

Bridge has changed its target group of students in the past few years.

"Early on, it was a catch-all program," Mr. Marburg says. "In the last four years, we've

tried to narrow the profile, and only look for the top students and try to focus deep down into academics."

Dominique sees differences between students at Flood and those at Bridge.

"People aren't really into school at Flood," she says. "They just want to play. Here [at Bridge], we play, but then we get down to work. At Bridge, everyone's so smart and really likes to learn."

As a seventh-grader, Dominique attends the summer program at Sacred Heart. Bridge has seven program sites for grade levels from 5 through 8. Fifth-grade girls go to Castilleja, and fifth-grade boys, to St. Joseph's. Sixth-graders go to Menlo School; seventh-graders, to Sacred Heart Prep; and eighth-graders, to Woodside Priory.

"We want students to be at a different site each year so that they can see different campuses," says Sherri Shaner, development director for Bridge.

In the mornings, Bridge students take classes in math and

language-arts. In the afternoon, they participate in enrichment activities, such as cooking, dance, photography and art.

On a recent visit, students in Dominique's math class were studying key words that signify what operation to use in math problems. The class enthusiastically brainstormed together.

"Product!" Dominique shouts when the teacher asks for key words for the multiplication operation. She then pulls out her yellow highlighter and marks all the important key words on her worksheet.

Dominique says she has always enjoyed school and been passionate about learning.

"My mom knows that I'm the one kid who's always done my best," Dominique says with a smile. "She calls me her honor-roll girl."

#### The importance of summer

Mr. Marburg, the Bridge director, emphasizes the importance of summer for students.

"Summertime is either when people get ahead or fall behind,"

he says. "Kids can fall behind if they have no extra chance for an enriching program, something that is good for the mind and body."

Dominique hopes the Bridge program helps keep her at the head of her class.

"I'm going to be advanced in all of my classes," Dominique says. "I'll be all ready, and sit there and be like, 'Oh, I know how to do this.'"

Bridge tries to help students learn by using hands-on activities. Dominique's English class learned a song to help students remember a story sequence.

"Exposition, rising action, climax, denouement, resolution!" the students shout together as they climb on chairs and jump off to demonstrate the rise and fall of a story's plot.

Afterward, students create their own stories that exhibit the different parts of a plot.

"How about the Hulk sees his girlfriend with another guy, and then he blows up?" one boy exclaims as he shares his idea with the group.

Dominique enjoys the activities that Bridge uses to stimulate student interest.

"We don't play games at my regular school," she says. "Games make things more fun, and we're still learning."

#### Individual attention

Dominique's math class at Bridge has one teacher, two teacher assistants and 14 students. With a one-to-five teacher-to-student ratio, students receive individualized attention not available in many classes at their regular school. At Flood, Dominique's sixth-grade class had approximately 30 students and only one teacher.

Ken Klieman, the master English teacher at the Sacred Heart Prep site of Bridge, emphasizes the importance of giving individual attention to each student.

"I tell students to talk me through every single essay," Mr. Klieman says. "The kids own the product and the process [of writing], and this ownership will carry the kids through to college."

During every period, students break out into small groups. On a recent day in Dominique's math class, the class splits into groups of four or five students. Her English class breaks into groups, depending on what each student wants to work on.

During study skills, Dominique seeks help on math problems, while other students catch up on reading or writing. The large number of teacher assistants enables Bridge to provide this degree of specialized attention.

Peninsula Bridge emphasizes



**Top:** Language arts teacher Chris Mahle, center, leads students in a game call "Jello." It teaches the students how to focus by performing various movements to symbolize words directed at them. Here, Dominique Johnson, left, and two other students replicate an elephant. **Below:** Dominique makes a brownie mix in a cooking class as other students watch.

the importance of teacher assistants, many of whom are Bridge alumni.

"Many programs have the academics, but we have the mentor side," says Scott McDade, the Sacred Heart Bridge Program site director. "When students see the TAs being successful, they learn that they are capable of success, and they come to believe that they are worth it."

Jade Fields, a sophomore at the University of Southern California and the head TA at the Sacred Heart site of Bridge, was a Bridge student herself. She came back to Bridge because she remembers the great influence that the program had on her.

"I remember the TAs as the first people to notice me, and it was great to be able to talk to people who were older about how they made it through high school," Ms. Fields says. "Bridge definitely helped me through high school. It helped me be confident."

#### Opportunities

"We want to give people the chance to graduate from high school and the opportunity to go to college," Mr. Marburg says. "We aren't necessarily saying that we expect every single student to go to college, but we want to make sure people have that choice."

Bridge focuses on middle school students because middle school is an important time of development for students.

"Middle school is the in-between," Ms. Shaner says. "It

is when students begin planning where they'll see themselves, and what their goals are."

Mr. Marburg says more than 90 percent of Bridge alumni attend college. At the moment, however, Bridge does not have an organized system of keeping track of the alumni.

"It's been inconsistent," Mr. Marburg says. "We are trying to build a tracking mechanism, and hope to do long-term tracking soon. At ninth grade, we are handing off the students with the tools to thrive in high school."

Dominique hopes to attend Sacred Heart Prep for high school, and she has big ambitions for the future.

"We don't get these kinds of opportunities often," Dominique says. ■

#### INFORMATION

For more information on Peninsula Bridge, to sponsor a student, or make a donation to the program, visit [www.peninsulabridge.org](http://www.peninsulabridge.org). Bridge is always looking for volunteers to help in office work, assist with special events, tutor students, or work with children in enrichment activities during the school year. Prospective volunteers can contact Grainger Marburg at 473-946 or [grainger@peninsulabridge.org](mailto:grainger@peninsulabridge.org).

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## Major development decisions ahead

Despite the economic downturn, upcoming development decisions will test the Menlo Park City Council like never before, as it takes up the huge Menlo Gateway project proposed by David Bohannon, completes work on the downtown "visioning" process, and chooses whether to take a position on the Cargill project that would add 12,000 new homes and 30,000 residents to reclaimed salt ponds on the bay lands just north of Bayfront Park.

The council has already invested a lot of time in the "visioning" process, scheduled to wind up in the fall of 2010. The plan could open up a stretch of sites housing now-vacant auto showrooms and other properties to a mix of residential and retail development that would substantially change the look and feel of this part of the city. And like all development decisions in Menlo Park, it will be controversial.

And then there is the Bohannon proposal.

This is a project that some say belongs in a large city, such as San Francisco or Los Angeles. With three eight-story office towers topping out at 140 feet, a companion 230-room hotel and fitness center, and parking garages to accommodate its 2,500 workers, this project is off the scale for Menlo Park.

The 16-acre site is located near Marsh Road and Bayfront Expressway and is now zoned for industrial use. If the requested rezoning is approved, it would increase the value of the property from \$19.8 million to \$47.5 million. The construction project would be the most ambitious ever undertaken in Menlo Park. Its estimated \$363 million price tag is around the construction cost of AT&T Park, and in terms of floor area, it is roughly the same size as the Sun Microsystems complex on Bayfront Expressway in Menlo Park.

But beyond its super size is the question of how Menlo Park residents and city officials will react to Mr. Bohannon's carefully

designed use of this ancestral property, first developed by his grandfather in the mid-20th century. The site is in an area that is off the radar screen for most Menlo Park residents, who primarily use Willow Road to reach Belle Haven and the Dumbarton Bridge.

Balancing the project's size and impact is sure to test the mettle of every City Council member, who must decide whether the 11,000 additional car trips per day and other environmental impacts are worth the revenue the project will bring to the city. The environmental impact report concludes that a great majority of vehicle trips would occur east of U.S. 101. But when coupled with the approval of the Cargill project in Redwood City, the cumulative impact on U.S. 101 could bring on perpetual gridlock.

The City Council will have to decide whether the expected \$1 million to \$2 million a year the city would receive in various taxes and fees makes up for the impact of nearly 1 million square feet of office and hotel space.

Mr. Bohannon, a Menlo Park resident whose family has a wide array of real estate holdings, including the Hillsdale Shopping Center in San Mateo, is doing everything he can to inform city officials and residents about the merits of his project. He says he intends to seek LEED certification for his buildings, and might be amenable to providing a shuttle service to downtown to answer critics who note that the project is not accessible for cyclists or pedestrians.

He has held explanatory public hearings and taken a survey whose findings are positive. Leaders in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, which is near the project, are on record as favoring the project. The neighborhood could receive some public benefits if the city negotiates a share of the hotel's revenue or receives other funds in return for approving the project.

The comment period on Menlo Gateway's environmental impact report ends at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 21. For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/menlogateway](http://tinyurl.com/menlogateway). Copies of the report are also available at the Menlo Park Library or the city administration building.

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

### Our Regional Heritage

This 1983 photo shows the new ramp to the Atherton Community Library before landscaping was installed. The library is an active part of life in Atherton, offering books and programs for all age groups.

Atherton Heritage Association



# It's time to take parking off El Camino Real

By Reg Rice

The \$1 million El Camino Real/downtown vision process has been going on for nearly two years, and it's time for us residents to make our wishes known before it's too late. A lot of sincere, hard-working people have been analyzing feedback from public meetings, and the paid consultants are well into making decisions about specific proposals to improve El Camino Real and downtown Menlo Park.

Specific recommendations will be forthcoming at the final public meeting, scheduled for Sept. 17, and I am enthusiastic about most of the ideas discussed both for downtown, and for the vacant "auto row" on El Camino. For instance, multi-story buildings will leave more open space on the ground for landscaping, pocket parks, and pedestrian circulation. Visually and socially, this will be more appealing than the sterile paving and single-story buildings now there.

However, as a member of both the Transportation Commission and the 18-person Oversight and Outreach Committee for the "vision" project, I have been more focused on the traffic problems of El Camino than on anything else. I don't want us to miss the opportunity to improve traffic flow as we make it safer for pedestrians, and relieve parking shortages. It can be done.

But at our July 30 committee meeting, nothing was said about recapturing six lanes to improve traffic flow on El Camino by removing on-street parking. I realize that this is a controversial idea, but I was shocked that the consultants were willing to accept congestion on El Camino as a way of life in Menlo Park, without an open discussion and some form of vote on the matter.

The consultants have heard from only 100 to 150 people at each of our meetings to date, but apparently were convinced that the present four-lane congestion was OK.

On the other hand, in a citywide survey in February 2008 that about 2,000 residents responded to, people ranked "improving traffic flow on El

Camino" as the number-one priority — by far — out of a list of 16 issues.

Here is my three-pronged approach to: 1) improve traffic flow on El Camino, 2) improve pedestrian safety and east/west connectivity, and 3) alleviate parking shortages.

1) No on-street parking on El Camino, from Encinal to Cambridge avenues (1.1 miles).

2) Have a four-way red light at El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue, with pedestrians allowed to "scramble" in any direction across the intersection, and a simultaneous red light on El Camino Real at Ravenswood Avenue.

3) Build multi-level parking structures on the parking plazas closest to El Camino, to replace the on-street parking lost.

I realize that traffic congestion on El Camino is not quite as bad as it was two years ago because of the recession, but you can bet it will again approach gridlock as the vacant auto row fills up with multi-story development. Restoring the pre-1989 road capacity of six lanes on El Camino would also dispel the perception of drivers that we are a community of xenophobes, caring little about the congestion we cause others who must drive through our city. The successful history of Sand Hill Road, after increasing its lanes from two to four, should convincingly invalidate the tired cliché that any improvement in traffic flow will bring more cars to clog our roads.

Please express your wishes on El Camino and downtown Menlo Park NOW, and at the Sept. 17 public meeting. City planner Thomas Rogers is in charge of the project, and would like to hear from you: throgers@menlopark.org / 330-6722.

Be the Paul Revere in your neighborhood and make sure your friends speak up. No couch potatoes allowed.

**Reg Rice is a member of the steering committee for the downtown planning project. He recently concluded his second and final term on the Transportation Commission.**



GUEST OPINION



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