



**FOOD & DRINK:**

Local chef writes book about food, shopping choices for a healthier planet. Section 2

# The Almanac

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

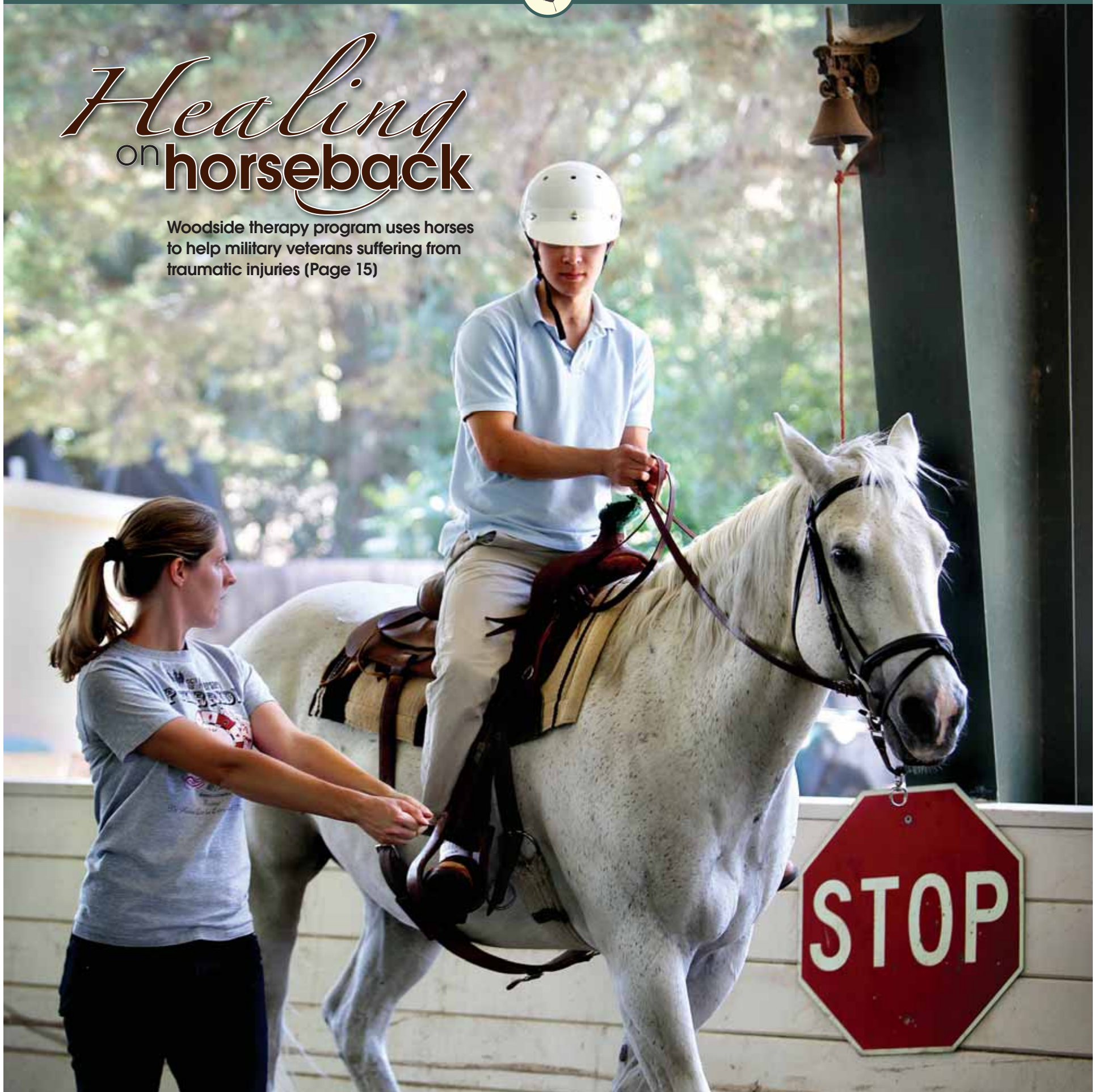
SEPTEMBER 2, 2009 | VOL. 45 NO. 1



[WWW.THEALMANACONLINE.COM](http://WWW.THEALMANACONLINE.COM)

## Healing on horseback

Woodside therapy program uses horses to help military veterans suffering from traumatic injuries (Page 15)





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# Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

## FIRST SHOT



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

### Meeting and mingling as school year begins

Laurel School's new principal, Linda Creighton, introduces herself to new kindergartners Nila, left, and Julia in teacher Bryn Cahill's classroom on the first day of school last week. For a roundup of news from local high schools and four elementary and middle school districts, see **Page 7**.

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### On the cover

Riding instructor Sharon Tirashi teaches Derek Liu hand placement and body awareness during a session at the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy in Woodside. Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac. See **Page 15**.

### CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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

Classified ads: **854-0858**  
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■ E-mail news, information, obituaries and photos (with captions) to: **editor@AlmanacNews.com**  
 ■ E-mail letters to the editor to: **letters@AlmanacNews.com**

To request free delivery, or stop delivery, of The Almanac in zip code 94025, 94027, 94028 and the Woodside portion of 94062, call **854-2626**.

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Presented by  
**Mark Schmidt**  
 Licensed Optician

**IN A BIND**  
 Soft contact lenses that fit too tightly leave no room for tears to flow beneath the lenses to refresh the cornea. Instead, tears tend to pool under the lens and breed bacteria, which produce toxins that create cloudy patches in the cornea and cause infections. Moreover, a tight-fitting soft lens starves the cornea of oxygen, making it more susceptible to swelling and the growth of new blood vessels within the cornea. Warning signs of tight-fitting lenses include foggy vision, fluctuating vision (better or worse vision after blinking), dryness, irrita-

tion, and redness. This problem doesn't necessarily mean the lens fitter is at fault since contact lenses can tighten on their own with a few hours' wear, especially if eyes are dry. But this is why follow-up care is necessary to help your lens fitter determine the best fitting lens for a full day of wear.  
 Because contacts are worn directly on the eye, it is important to follow specific handling, cleaning, and disinfecting instructions. At MENLO OPTICAL, we feature soft, hard, and bi-focal contacts as well as cleaning supplies. To ensure you enjoy healthy eyes and clear vision, we provide instructions on how to care for your lenses. If you would like to have an eye health examination, we know of and work with many fine physicians in this area and would be happy to recommend one for you. Call us at 322-3900, or visit us at 1166 University Drive.  
 P.S. It is important to have new contact lenses in for a few hours prior to a follow-up visit so that the fit of the lenses can be accurately assessed.  
*Mark Schmidt is an American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners Certified Optician licensed by the Medical Board of California. He can be easily reached at Menlo Optical, 1166 University Drive, Menlo Park. 650-322-3900.*

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**WINE**

*Announcing The  
Return of Solitude!*

After a two year hiatus, Solitude Chardonnay will return mid September. The wine is sourced from the same Carneros vineyards as before, and is being made by Richard Litsch, the original owner and winemaker of Solitude. Production is much lower than it was, so I expect the 2008 to sell out before Christmas. To kick off this new release, we are offering a special "by the case" deal. You may reserve wine in advance by calling John or Bob, at 650-851-2640, or Jeff at 650-851-1711. There is no limit on the number of cases you can reserve.

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# Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Judge sides with MP, Atherton over rail EIR flaws

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

Critics of a plan to send high-speed trains shooting down the Peninsula's Caltrain corridor — including the Menlo Park and Atherton city councils — won a ruling in a lawsuit challenging the environmental study of the project.

The decision returned Aug. 26 by a Sacramento County Superior Court judge found several problems with the environmental review for the massive, 800-mile-long California High Speed Rail project.

The judge's decision will require additional studies for the environmental document, something that could result in a significant delay — and added costs — to the project, according to the plaintiff's attorney. High-speed rail officials, however, say that the ruling won't slow down the project at all.

The litigants didn't win on every point in

their lawsuit, as the judge rejected a number of their claims.

Judge Michael Kenny ruled against the plaintiffs over the rail authority's decision to run trains along the Pacheco Pass route. The contention that alternative routes weren't adequately studied just didn't hold up, according to the ruling.

Judge Kenny's decision will require the California High Speed Rail Authority to rescind decisions based upon the flawed environmental impact report, including the decision to run high-speed trains along the so-called Pacheco Pass route, according to Stuart Flashman, the Oakland-based land-use attorney representing the plaintiffs. Project-level studies that are under way will have to stop, he said.

"They're back to the drawing board," Mr. Flashman said.

Mike Scanlon, the CEO of Caltrain, had a very different take on the lawsuit. "Our

Rep. Anna Eshoo draws a crowd for high-speed rail meet. Page 8.

attorneys characterized it as minor," he said at a high-speed rail meeting in Menlo Park on Aug. 26. "The court didn't say anything about recirculating (the EIR)."

Rod Diridon, a member of the rail authority's Board of Directors, said the state Attorney General's office is studying the judge's ruling to determine its impacts. He also said the impact of Kenny's judgment won't be known until the judge rules on the remedial actions the rail authority must take. Mehdi Morshed, the executive director of the rail authority, said the project's timeline won't be affected at all.

Mr. Scanlon contended that only two areas of concern were identified by the judge — the impact of vibrations from the train, and a "somewhat flawed" definition of the

rail corridor from San Jose to Gilroy.

However, the ruling issued by the court clearly shows that there were four problems: inadequate project description; unsupported findings that vibration impacts can be mitigated; inadequate land-use analysis; and failure to recirculate the EIR once the Union Pacific railroad made it clear that it wouldn't allow high-speed trains to use its right of way.

Mr. Flashman said that the most significant problem with the EIR may be restrictions on the use of the Union Pacific Railroad's right of way. The high-speed rail authority said the project would do without it, but there are places in the EIR that clearly rely on the use of that right of way, Mr. Flashman said.

The rail authority said the route for the tracks isn't dependent on using the Union Pacific's right of way, but Judge Kenny

See **HSR**, page 8

## Woodside solar array to offset huge electricity consumption

By **Dave Boyce**

Almanac Staff Writer

You need to have some kind of alternative energy thing going if you're using up electricity at a rate five times the average of your neighbors and you want to claim that you're living a green lifestyle.

A Woodside homeowner who prefers anonymity and who pays

about \$40,000 yearly for 105,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity is having a 10-500-square foot ground-mounted solar array installed

on a secluded meadow to cover all his electricity needs, says Dave Markham, the owner of CM Peletz Co., a high-end-home contractor with offices in San Jose and San Francisco.

The average Woodside home uses 17,544 kWh in a year, says Pacific Gas & Electric spokeswoman Katie Romans. Comparable figures for Atherton, Portola Valley and Menlo Park are 20,064, 12,360 and 5,976 kWh, respectively. The San Mateo County average is 5,784 kWh.

The project will cost about \$850,000, but government incentives cut that by about 42 percent. It will pay for itself in eight years, Mr. Markham says. With a 25-year warranty on the silicon-based solar

panels, that works out to 17 years of free electricity.

The solar array was a feasible alternative to fixing energy leaks in the house, which would have required replacement of classic details such as the windows. "It would have cost a fortune," Mr. Markham says.

When the solar panels gather dust, the output will drop predictably, a signal to have workers squeegee the panels clean, he says.

PG&E does not pay for excess solar power that feeds into its grid, and the CPUC requires PG&E to wait until the end of the year to charge when owners draw from the grid. If a home system regularly generates more electricity than needed, residents have the opportunity to switch an appliance from gas to electric to take advantage of it. If it generates less, they have time to cut their usage to within their system's capacity.

**Incentives helped**  
As of Jan. 1, 2009, the federal government removed a cap from the federal Solar Initiative Tax Credits: until 2016, an investment of \$1 million yields a tax credit of \$300,000,

See **SOLAR**, page 8



Michelle Le/The Almanac

Owner **Sally Halstead**, granddaughter to founder Roger Reynolds, at the nursery in Menlo Park.

## Nursery celebrates 90 years in Menlo Park

By **Jane Knoerle**

Almanac Lifestyles Editor

Roger Reynolds Nursery & Carriage Stop will be decked out in red, white and blue during September to celebrate its 90 years of business in Menlo Park. The patriotic theme will be carried out in banners, balloons and bunting, says manager Gary Entwistle.

The celebration will highlight the nursery's early days, with live entertainment, hot dogs, lemonade, popcorn, cotton candy, and music from founder Roger Reynolds' era. History displays will feature other businesses serving the community in those days and reminiscences from long-time customers.

There will also be pot painting and planting crafts, face painting, and a train ride for kids. Raffles will be held throughout the day each Saturday, with drawings for grand prizes on Sept. 19. Gardening workshops and demonstrations will be held each weekend.

Saturday, Sept. 5, will be community appreciation day, when the nursery pays tribute to local businesses and service organizations. There will also be a tomato tasting.

Saturday, Sept. 12, will be vendor appreciation day. A "carnival of gardening" will feature exhibits by vendors, fruit tasting, and entertainment

See **REYNOLDS**, page 6



## ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

TOWN OF ATHERTON  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

2009 CAPE SEAL PROJECT  
PROJECT NO. 09-001

Notice is hereby given that SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, California 94027, until 3:00 p.m. September 15, 2009, at which time they will be publicly opened and read, for performing the following work:

Performing of Cape seals per Town specifications on the listed streets which includes notifications, traffic control, prep work, oil and chip installation, compaction, sweeping, and re-stripping/pavement markings where needed. 1 year guarantee.

Bids must be for the entire work, and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for Atherton Cape Seal Project, Project No. 09-001, along with date and time of bid opening.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Any questions regarding the project should be directed to the Streets Superintendent, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, CA 94027, telephone (650) 752-0541, preferably no later than five days before bid opening. Requests for Information may be faxed to (650) 688-6539. Plan holder's lists may be obtained by calling (650) 752-0570.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Duncan L. Jones, P.E., City Engineer

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Roger Reynolds Nursery celebrates 90th anniversary

### REYNOLDS

*continued from page 5*

by a Sweet Adeline quartet.

On "friends of the nursery" appreciation day, visitors may have their photo taken with a 1932 Ford delivery truck from "Roger's" era. There will also be entertainment by the Motley Q barbershop quartet, raffles, and grand prize drawings. On Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 26 and 27, there will be a customer appreciation sale, with special anniversary pricing on all nursery products and Carriage Stop plants.



**Roger Reynolds** in a circa 1925 portrait that hangs on the wall of the nursery.

### A historical journey

Roger Reynolds, the nursery's founder, was a printer in San Francisco. When he discovered he was allergic to printer's ink, he looked for a business where he could work outdoors.

According to an article that appeared in *The Almanac* on Oct. 1, 1975, Mr. Reynolds opened his nursery in 1919, after earlier purchasing 22 acres of land between El Camino Real and the Southern Pacific railroad tracks.

Not all of the property was used for a nursery, however. Mr. Reynolds turned a redwood grove into a park that was rented on weekends to organizations for "a day in the country." There were barbecue grills, a dance floor and, later, a jukebox.

According to a retrospective written by Mr. Reynolds' stepdaughter, Phyllis Reynolds, which appeared in the June 15, 1994, issue of *The Almanac*, during the Depression years, to keep down costs, the nursery adopted a "pick, pay, and away" policy. There were no charge accounts or deliveries.

Several shops were located on the property. Mr. Reynolds' wife, Pauline Sparrow, whom he

married in 1930, had a millinery shop. There was also a woolen shop selling looms.

The article says Mr. Reynolds was kind to the hoboes who rode the rails of the Southern Pacific. He allowed them to cook stews over wood fires and sleep on old sofas and chairs.

In 1940, Mr. Reynolds was killed in an automobile accident and the property was left to his wife. Over the years, pieces of the property were sold and leased, including the Victorian cottage, which was once used as a guest house for the family. Today the nursery, which originally faced El Camino Real, is located on 2.5 acres at 133 Encinal Avenue in Menlo Park.

The Victorian cottage, at one time Edy's ice cream and candy shop, is now the Carriage Stop, an indoor plant and gift shop.

The current owner of Roger Reynolds Nursery is Mr. Reynolds' granddaughter, Sally Halstead. The professional staff includes general manager Gary Entwistle and nursery manager Antonio Ramirez. The Nursery and Carriage Stop are open seven days a week. For more information, visit [www.RogerReynoldsNursery.com](http://www.RogerReynoldsNursery.com). ■

## Applying for medical marijuana permits

San Mateo County is accepting applications for medical marijuana clubs in unincorporated areas.

The application process sounds fairly rigorous. In addition to a county business license, county officials want details about the proposed medical marijuana collective's employees, operations, and compliance with security and other regulations.

Payments by members can cover only overhead costs and operating expenses.

"I expect some applicants may feel the application questionnaire is long and burden-

some to complete," said County Counsel Michael Murphy in a press release. "However, no one benefits from confusion over the regulations and we firmly believe legitimate collectives will embrace the regulatory framework to ensure their patients have access to medical marijuana and to prevent the crime associated with profit-making drug enterprises that harm the cause of providing medicine to those in need."

Applications will be reviewed by the Sheriff's Office and the Department of Planning and Building.

# Schools open: New Green Academy at Woodside High

■ M-A High to open new performing arts center.

By Almanac staff

Students returning to the classroom are being greeted by new teachers, programs, and facilities.

Elementary school districts in Menlo Park and Atherton reported higher enrollments over last year, while Portola Valley schools' enrollment was slightly down and Woodside's was almost the same as last year.

Bettylu Smith, the spokesperson of the Sequoia Union High School District, would not release enrollment figures for Menlo-Atherton and Woodside high schools, saying a week after the schools were in session that "it's still early." The schools opened on Aug. 19.

Here's a round-up of news from the high schools and four elementary and middle-school districts.

## Woodside High

It's new, it's green, it's digital, it's European. It's a selection of new programs at Woodside High School for 2009-10, including new Green Academy, digital media arts classes, and an advanced-placement course in European history, according to a statement from the Sequoia Union High School District.

The Green Academy, part of the high school district's career technical education program, is a school-within-a-school open to all. The focus: environmental careers, particularly in energy and water conservation.

Latin teacher Alan Eaton returns from sabbatical, and there are two new administrative vice principals: Maureen Campbell for freshmen, and Alvaro Calderon for sophomores.

## M-A High

The newest item on the Menlo-Atherton High School campus is hard to miss: the sloping tan bulk of the metal roof at the corner of Ravenswood Avenue and Middlefield Road. It covers a \$32 million,

490-seat performing arts center that is set to open with a concert in mid-October, and includes cafeteria space, rehearsal and practice rooms, and a stagecraft workshop.

Meanwhile, work has begun on M-A's old music room to convert it to a visual arts studio/classroom, according to the district.

New courses at M-A this year include astronomy and space science, including observations of the night sky and the sun, and an advanced-placement physics class that will address topics normally covered in an introductory college course in mechanics.

## Summit Prep

Summit Preparatory Charter High School, which has 418 students this year, is located in Redwood City but typically enrolls about 100 students from The Almanac's circulation area.

At Summit for 2009-10, an outdoor park was expected to be ready for the first day of school, Executive Director Todd Dickson said.

A new staff member will be looking into more activities for students during the winter and spring inter-sessions: four-week breaks from academic classes that students use to study the arts, including music, filmmaking and photography, as well as business, technology and other subjects.

The school is exploring partnerships with BUILD, a small business workshop; TechShop, a do-it-yourself workshop; and Habitat for Humanity, Mr. Dickson said.

*Note: A detailed story about the new local charter school, Everest Public High School, which opened on Aug. 19 in Redwood City, was published in the Aug. 26 issue of The Almanac.*

## Menlo Park

Preparations for the new school year went right up until

## ■ BACK TO SCHOOL

See picture on Page 3.

the last minute in the Menlo Park City School District, said Superintendent Ken Ranella. Students arrived for the first day of school on Aug. 25 to find that a lot had been going on.

Classrooms at Encinal in Atherton were modernized with new doors and windows, and the whole school got a fresh coat of paint. The new classroom wing for grades 4-5 is framed up, and it's expected to be completed by spring, said Mr. Ranella.

The new Teacher Education Resource Center on the Encinal campus is ready to be occupied.

At Oak Knoll School in Menlo Park, there's a new drop-off lane, parking lot and kindergarten yard, with construction to build new classrooms and a multi-use room under way.

Students at Laurel were greeted by their new principal, Linda Creighton. The K-2 school in Atherton has new buildings under construction, and added two classes of Spanish immersion program kindergarteners.

Hillview Middle School in Menlo Park has a new principal, Mike Melton, and is free of construction — for now. A major reconstruction of the campus could begin as early as this spring.

Enrollment in the district continues to grow, with a total of 2,553 students on the first day of school, 142 more than last year, said Mr. Ranella. The surging enrollment is prompting district officials to study the idea of reopening a public school at the O'Connor campus that's currently leased to the private German-American School. The lease ends in 2011, and the school board has until January to notify the German-American School of its decision.

## Las Lomas

Students returned to Las Lomas School District class-

rooms Aug. 24, sharing space with a few more schoolmates than last year. That was especially true at Las Lomas (K-3) school in Atherton, where an extra kindergarten class was added this year.

Enrollment at that school grew from 573 last year to 618, with 185 kindergartners.

At the La Entrada School (4-8) in Menlo Park, enrollment grew from 618 last year to 621. There are two new portable buildings on the campus, one for science and the other for foreign language classes, said district Superintendent Eric Hartwig.

Mr. Hartwig said there's been a steady growth in district enrollment since the late 1990s, but the growth is now "picking up from the 2 percent that was seen in recent years."

There's a new assistant principal at La Entrada. Sonya Dineen replaces Pattie Dullea, who left at the end of last school year to become principal at Ross School, an elementary school in Ross, California. Ms. Dineen had been working at Roosevelt School in Redwood City, but started her career at Woodside Elementary School, Mr. Hartwig said.

Robin Spindler comes from the Berryessa school district to become the new director of special education.

## Portola Valley

Students in the Portola Valley School District started school on Monday, Aug. 24. Enrollment is down slightly in the district, and class sizes inched up this year.

A total of 735 students enrolled in grades K-8 this year, compared with last year's 741 students. Last year, there were 35 classrooms. This year, there are a total of 34 classes divided among the two campuses, Ormondale and Corte Madera.

Fourth- and fifth-graders at Corte Madera will be the pilot group in a new program of themed classrooms starting this school year.

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

To accommodate the teachers' need for additional planning time, fourth- and fifth-grade students will get out early on Wednesdays, at 12:15 p.m. instead of 2:10 p.m.

## Woodside

Classrooms opened their doors on Aug. 24 at Woodside Elementary School with a drop in enrollment — by one student. Principal Diana Abbati said 460 students are enrolled at the K-8 school this year.

The Spanish language pro-

See **BACK TO SCHOOL**, page 9

## Portola Valley School District gets \$2.9 million from feds

The 735-student Portola Valley School District hit the jackpot in the recent lottery for federal stimulus money. The district will receive \$2.85 million in federal income tax credits.

The credits cover the interest payments on school construction bonds, and are intended to free up school district money for additional construction or facility rehabilitation projects.

Portola Valley was one of

only two districts in San Mateo County to be selected to receive the stimulus money. The other one is the San Mateo-Foster City school district.

The windfall is part of the \$22 billion Qualified School Construction Bond tax credits, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that was signed into law in February. California's share of the tax credits amounts to an estimated

\$2.7 billion over two years.

Eleven of the state's largest school districts automatically received funds. Another 43 school districts were recently selected by lottery to share \$700 million in tax credits, state superintendent Jack O'Connell announced on Aug. 28. An additional \$73 million is available this year to qualifying charter schools.

The remainder of the stimulus money will be allocated next year.

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

### Schools Affect Property Values



**Q: How much do schools affect property values?**

at some point you will resell the property and will do better if the school district is very good.

A: The new school year is just beginning and it is a good time to write again about the effect schools have on property values. There is no single factor that more affects property values than schools. High demand for good schools pushes up property values in those communities. Even if you do not have school-aged children, you should consider the school district carefully when you purchase a property because

Some years there are parcel tax measures and bond issues on community ballots and it benefits all property owners if the schools are adequately funded to maintain high standards. This is especially true in this state budget crisis year.

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# Eshoo draws a crowd for high-speed rail meet

■ Some use the opportunity to demonstrate on health-care issues.

By **Andrea Gemmet**  
Almanac Staff Writer

A chance to question Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, face-to-face drew hundreds of people to the Menlo Park City Council chambers on Wednesday evening, Aug. 26. A capacity crowd filled the building, with police officers assisting in turning away insistent gate-crashers. A couple hundred folding chairs were set up outside the chambers, and they filled up quickly.

While the event was billed as a panel on high-speed rail, organizers from MoveOn.org rallied members to attend the event and agitate for health care reform.

Those who came for a town hall meeting on health care, including sign-waving anti-reform protesters, single-payer advocates, and colorfully dressed Raging Grannies, left disappointed. Every question on health care was deferred, as Ms. Eshoo explained that she would hold two meetings next week on health care, including one set for Sept. 2 in Palo Alto at the Spangenberg auditorium.

Instead, the focus was strictly on high-speed rail, as Ms. Eshoo read the written questions submitted by attendees and got responses from a four-member panel of experts. She didn't hesitate to chide panel members for giving rambling or unclear answers, or prompt them to cut to the chase.

"This is the opportunity of a generation, the opportunity to set a course for future generations," Ms. Eshoo said. "We can embrace this opportunity and work together as a community to make this worthy of us."

Most of the questions were pointed, and expressed concern for the effect on property values and quality of life for residents living near the Caltrain corridor, once high-speed trains carrying passengers from San Francisco to Los Angeles hurtle through the Peninsula.

Ms. Eshoo, a Menlo Park resident, echoed some of her constituents concerns, saying that very few people live closer to the tracks than she does. Answers to key questions — what will it look like, and will the tracks be

elevated or buried in a tunnel — are still unknown and will be worked out in the next 18 months, according to rail authority officials.

"I don't want to see a 40-foot wall, I want less noise. I want a plan that will improve our environment, not diminish it," Ms. Eshoo said.

Several people questioned the economics of the project, including a Palo Alto man who wanted to know what the state would have to cut in order to pay the interest on the billions of dollars in high-speed rail bonds.

"Are they going to fire teachers, fire police? Release convicted felons? How are they going to pay for it?"

Mike Scanlon, the executive director of Caltrain and Samtrans, and the California High Speed Rail Authority's executive director Mehdi Morshed attempted to soothe or dismiss people's fears. Authority engineer Dominic Spaethling and Bob Doty, the director of the Peninsula Rail Program, rounded out the panel.

Details about exactly how the Caltrain corridor will accommodate additional tracks for high-speed rail are still being determined, Mr. Scanlon said. "There aren't answers yet, but there will be," he said.

Mr. Morshed attempted to ease concerns about property along the tracks being seized by eminent domain.

"As far as we know, it will essentially be built within the Caltrain right of way. It might take some property, but we will do everything we can to avoid that," he said. "I'm not aware of any single home in the area (being) threatened through eminent domain."



Panel members face many questions and concerns following a meeting on high-speed rail in the Menlo Park City Council chambers Aug. 26. See more photos on [TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://TheAlmanacOnline.com).

Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Mr. Morshed promised that electrified Caltrain rails and high-speed trains would be much quieter than the current horn-blasting diesel trains that currently rattle along the tracks. Realizing that he was facing a skeptical crowd, he began prefacing his comments with the phrase, "this may be horse-(manure)."

While the people inside the chambers stayed fairly quiet and composed, those outside listening to loudspeakers were more vocal in their reactions.

Mr. Scanlon dismissed many concerns, saying they were the result of misinformation.

"(People worried) that there will be a 15-foot wall of concrete are just misinformed. I heard people say that a judge ruled against high-speed rail today, and that just isn't true. They found a couple of faults that are relatively minor, relatively correctable," Mr. Scanlon said.

However, Stuart Flashman, the attorney for the plaintiffs, including the towns of Atherton and Menlo Park, had a very different view of the lawsuit's significance. He told The Almanac that a Sacramento

County Superior Court judge found four major areas of flaws in the environmental study of the project that will require the rail authority to rewrite the environmental impact report and rescind decisions based on it — including the decision to run trains along the Caltrain corridor. ■

## ■ HEALTH CARE MEET

Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, says she will hold a face-to-face "town hall" meeting on health care issues on Wednesday, Sept. 2, at Gunn High School in Palo Alto. It will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Spangenberg Theatre, 780 Arastradero Road.

Rep. Eshoo is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, one of three House committees charged with drafting portions of a health care reform bill. For more information and to listen to her telephone town halls on health care, go to [tinyurl.com/Eshoo2009](http://tinyurl.com/Eshoo2009).

## Judge sides with Menlo Park, Atherton on high-speed-rail EIR flaws

### HSR

continued from page 5

said in his ruling that "drawings, maps and photographs in the administrative record strongly indicate that it is."

Tom Lange, a spokesman for Union Pacific, said that the company is not opposed to the concept of a high-speed rail system. But the proposed California high-speed system would not be compatible with Union Pacific's freight trains.

Vibrations from the train are potentially significant, Mr. Flashman said. "The authority said we can mitigate the vibrations, but that's not based on any information on the record. The court said that you had no business saying it could be mitigated."

The court also found that the

description of the San Jose to Gilroy route was so vague that you couldn't tell where the project would be, so you couldn't determine what impacts it could have, Mr. Flashman said. The EIR also didn't adequately describe property impacts or land takings, he said.

The lawsuit was spearheaded by environmental and rail nonprofit groups that were previous supporters of the high-speed train project, but have since become vocal critics of the rail authority's selection of the Pacheco Pass as the route to connect trains from the Central Valley to the Bay Area. Last year, the city councils of Atherton and Menlo Park voted to join in the lawsuit. Palo Alto submitted a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the lawsuit, but it was thrown out by the judge.

### Pacheco Pass plan

Under the Pacheco Pass plan, high-speed trains would connect to Gilroy from the Central Valley and shoot up and down the Caltrain corridor to connect to San Francisco. That route would serve fewer riders, and be far more environmentally damaging than the Altamont Pass route, according to the group of environmental and rail nonprofits. Rail authority officials say that it's just the opposite — Altamont would be more expensive and environmentally damaging.

Under the Altamont plan, trains would continue north into the San Joaquin Valley before heading west and crossing a new bridge across the Bay to connect to the Caltrain line — a route

that could bypass Menlo Park and Atherton entirely.

The nonprofits behind the lawsuit include the Planning and Conservation League, the Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund, the California Rail Foundation (the educational arm of the Train Riders' Association of California) and the Bay Rail Alliance. The cost of their legal challenge will be paid for by the California High Speed Rail Authority, the judge ruled.

A separate lawsuit, over the use of the Union Pacific right of way, was recently filed by Menlo Park resident Russell Peterson.

*Palo Alto Weekly staffers Gennady Sheyner and Jay Thorwaldson contributed to this report.*

### SOLAR

continued from page 5

Mr. Markham says.

(A tax credit subtracts a specific amount from taxes owed; a deduction has a lesser effect in that it lowers taxable income.)

The performance-based incentive of the California Solar Initiative Program reimburses solar-panel owners per kilowatt hour for the first five years of operation. In PG&E territory, the current rate is 22 cents per kWh for a residential project — a locked-in return of \$115,500, Mr. Markham says.

The incentives drop over time, CPUC analyst Melicia Charles said in an e-mail, adding that the 22-cent incentive is "approaching" a decline to 15 cents. ■

## Police videotape crowd at rail meeting

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Tipped off by blogs that there would be a big crowd at the Aug. 26 high-speed rail meeting, a Menlo Park police officer videotaped the crowd in the hopes of deterring violence among groups of protesters.

Police estimate that about 600 people gathered at the meeting convened by Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park. When the Menlo Park City Council chambers reached its capacity of 170, the remaining 400 or so attendees and protesters filled folding chairs, pressed their noses to the windows, or milled around outside the building and listened in via loudspeaker.

While the meeting was a

question-and-answer session with a panel of high-speed rail experts, members of MoveOn.org and other groups billed it as a health-care town hall meeting and urged supporters to show up — and they did.

An actual town hall meeting on health care held by Rep. Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, is set for Wednesday, Sept. 2, at Spangenberg Theatre at Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Road in Palo Alto.

Taking video of a large crowd is a standard police practice, said spokeswoman Nicole Acker. If there's a crime, the footage can be used as evidence, but mostly the presence of a camera encourages people to keep their cool.

"It's a deterrent to keep people

from acting out," Ms. Acker said.

Police communicated with the heads of the various protest groups, which included the Raging Grannies, anti-reform "Tea Party" protesters, and a satirical group called Billionaires for Wealthcare, to make sure they knew what kind of behavior would and wouldn't be OK, Ms. Acker said.

There was no violence and were no arrests. "Thankfully, nothing happened," she said. "They didn't disrupt the meeting, which was our goal."

Taping a public gathering doesn't go against privacy laws, Ms. Acker said.

"It's a public forum, so there's no violation of the expectation of privacy," she said. ■

## Tempers flare in debate over public employee pay

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

Long-simmering political tensions boiled over at Menlo Park's City Council meeting Aug. 25, sparked by a San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury report on rising public employee costs.

In a prickly meeting, the council voted 4-1 to approve the city's response to the report, "Reversing the Upward Trend of Employee Costs in the Cities of San Mateo County." Councilman John Boyle dissented, calling the city's response defensive. He acknowledged weaknesses in the report, but argued that the city was missing an opportunity to take a leading position in reigning in unsustainable costs.

The debate quickly swung to a discussion of politics, with Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson alleging that the report was driven by a thinly concealed ideological agenda.

"I have to say, this grand jury failed miserably," she said. "There is just a shocking level of factual errors, and misstatements of facts."

Ms. Fergusson went on to rip former councilwoman Lee Duboc for sending "hysterical" e-mails to her supporters about city issues. Ms. Duboc writes often on her blog, "Menlo Future" (menlofuture.weebly.com), about the cost to the city of employee salaries and benefits.

"The willful misrepresentation shown in this report is very much why Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler got voted out of office," Ms. Fergusson said, calling Ms. Duboc's behavior shameful and selfish. Ms. Winkler, who along with Ms. Duboc failed to win re-election in 2006, is one of 19 members of the grand jury.

Mayor Heyward Robinson also expressed weariness over Ms. Duboc's e-mails, arguing that she manipulates the truth

to inflame her supporters. It costs the city time and money to respond to e-mails prompted by Ms. Duboc, Mr. Robinson said.

"We get a lot of comments from everybody, and it's everybody's right to respond and send us messages," Mr. Boyle said, adding that employee costs is "clearly a big issue for a lot of people."

"Absolutely," Mr. Robinson said, before alleging that Ms. Duboc was abusing her position as a former council member. During Ms. Fergusson's comments, Mr. Robinson declined Mr. Boyle's request that he "control where this is going."

Mr. Boyle asked that the council table the discussion to allow for more input from the community, repeating a previous call for more citizen involvement in drafting employee contracts.

City Manager Glen Rojas said it was unfair for Mr. Boyle to imply that the city responded defensively. "We're going in the right direction to address long-term costs," he said.

Ms. Fergusson said she thinks the council needs to take the "higher road," instead of being drawn into a divisive, politically motivated debate by Ms. Duboc and Ms. Winkler.

In another e-mail she sent two days after the council meeting, Ms. Duboc said she was disappointed with the city's written response to the report, but didn't respond to Ms. Fergusson's comments. She signed off with a quote by Portuguese writer Jose Saramago: "As citizens we all have an obligation to intervene and become involved — it's the citizen who changes things." ■

the foreign language of choice," Ms. Abbati wrote in the school newsletter.

Every classroom has been equipped with interactive whiteboards this year, thanks to a \$180,000 grant. Also, money raised at the school foundation auction, along with Site Council funds, will be used to lease new teacher laptops and purchase document cameras, according to the district. Existing equipment will be available for student use. ■

Andrea Gemmet, Dave Boyce and Renee Batti contributed to this report.

### BACK TO SCHOOL

continued from page 7

gram will be reintroduced to fourth grade students this year after a one-year suspension; fourth- and fifth-grade students will have Spanish class two days per week. Sixth-grade students will have Spanish instruction four days per week, and seventh- and eighth-graders will have Spanish class daily.

The decision to continue and expand the program was based on input from the community, which made it "clear Spanish is





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**Couple found dead in Woodside home**

Authorities have identified the Woodside couple found dead in their Woodside Drive home last Thursday, Aug. 27, as Don and Joyce Stoddard, both 83 years old.

Their deaths appeared to be the result of a murder-suicide by handgun, Lt. Ray Lunny of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office said in an interview.

Both had gunshot wounds, county Coroner Robert Foucraut told The Almanac, adding that an official cause of death will not be released without a toxicology report, which

usually takes weeks.

"There's indications that it was a planned event," Lt. Lunny said, noting that the couple had sent an explanatory letter to one family member, who then contacted the Sheriff's Office.

Both Mr. and Ms. Stoddard were suffering from illness, Lt. Lunny said. "It's a really sad tragedy."

Deputies have reached a preliminary conclusion that no one else was involved in the incident and that there is no danger to the community, Lt. Lunny said.

**Menlo Park credit union robbed**

An armed man robbed the Tyco Credit Union at 220 Jefferson Drive in Menlo Park Aug. 26 at about 3 p.m. and got away with an undisclosed amount of money, according to the Menlo Park Police Department.

Police are looking for a black man about 6 feet 1 inches tall wearing a black and silver motorcycle helmet "with patterns and designs on it," dark clothing and a camouflage-col-

ored backpack, said department spokeswoman Nicole Acker.

The man reportedly brandished a black handgun and demanded money from a teller. Police spotted the suspect on a motorcycle and chased him, but lost him in East Palo Alto, Ms. Acker said.

Police are asking anyone with information on this case to call 330-6300 or the anonymous tip line at 330-6395.



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**Solar power use in 2008**

	Total systems (per capita*)	Watts (per capita*)	Watts per system
Menlo Park.....	97 (3.15).....	257,641 (8.37).....	2,656
Woodside.....	31 (5.79).....	169,322 (31.64).....	5,462
Atherton.....	26 (3.61).....	188,250 (26.17).....	7,240
Portola Valley.....	19 (4.22).....	212,772 (47.28).....	11,199
San Mateo County.....	375 (0.51).....	1,952,000 (2.66).....	5,205

\* Per capita = per 1,000 residents  
 Information from the Northern California Solar Energy Association.

**Towns rank high in solar power use**

In using solar power, local cities and towns rank high on the Northern California Solar Energy Association's 2008 list of Bay Area cities, counties and communities.

The association keeps track of the annual use of solar power in 10 Bay Area counties, and 163 cities and communities.

Among 46 medium-sized cities, Menlo Park ranked second in solar systems per capita, and 11th in watts per capita generated by solar power.

Among 61 small-sized cities,

Woodside ranked second in systems per capita, and third in watts generated per capita. Portola Valley ranked fifth in systems per capita, and first in watts generated per capita. Atherton ranked sixth in systems per capita, and seventh in watts generated per capita.

Among 10 counties, San Mateo County ranked sixth in systems per capita, and ninth in watts per capita.

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## Atherton home asking prices drop 23 percent, says Forbes

Are there bargains to be had in the Atherton real estate market? Forbes, which ranks Atherton No. 2 on its list of "America's 500 Most Expensive ZIP Codes," reports that home asking prices have tumbled 23 percent in the town over the past year.

Atherton's 94027 ZIP code, with a median asking price of \$3.85 million, isn't the only one seeing big declines. The most expensive ZIP code on Forbes list, for Alpine, New Jersey, also tumbled 23 percent, and overall, the list of 500 saw an average decline of 7 percent, reports Forbes.

"Take for example affluent Atherton, California, where residents bring in an average annual salary of \$122,571. Foreclosures don't explain its 23% price slide; there are only 10 homes in foreclosure there," says the Forbes article.

Instead, gun-shy buyers waiting for rock-bottom prices are likely to blame for the slide in asking prices, according to the story.

### Memorial run for Andy Garcia

The eighth annual Andy Garcia Memorial 5K Run-Walk-Bike event takes off on Labor Day, Sept. 7, from Triangle Park in Portola Valley.

This event commemorates the birthday (Aug. 28) of Mr. Garcia, who lost his life in the United Airlines Flight 93 crash on Sept. 11, 2001, in Pennsylvania. This would have been his 70th birthday.

The Garcia family—Andy, wife Dorothy and their children Kelly, Audrey and Andrew—moved to Portola Valley in 1976. He and his wife founded a business, representing manufacturers.

The run starts at 9 a.m. at Triangle Park, the intersection of Alpine and Portola roads, and finishes at the park. The town of Portola Valley has planted a tree and installed a plaque there in Mr. Garcia's memory.

"We've had amazing support from the community over the years," said his daughter, Kelly Garcia Arrillaga. "We hope friends and community members will join the family for both the run/walk and a complimentary pancake breakfast in the park after the run."

In past years, many families, friends and pets have come out for the event on foot, on bikes,

### AROUND TOWN

in strollers and even on roller blades, she said. "It has really been a wonderful tribute to my dad," said Ms. Arrillaga."

### Peninsula's open space inventory expands

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) lands have grown by about 450 acres with the acquisition of about two-thirds of the 600-acre Elkus Ranch in Half Moon Bay.

The Aug. 12 action by the board of directors will be "an important link in the district's goal to connect 'Purisima to the Sea' by preserving a corridor of public open space from Skyline Ridge to the coast," according to an MROSD statement.

The University of California will retain ownership of the remaining 150 acres, including facilities for hands-on agricultural and environmental education, the study of California history, animal care and retreats.

The ranch serves about 6,000 adults and youths per year, including programs for urban, inner-city and disabled youth, for bringing together children of diverse backgrounds, and for the environmental education of children with special needs.

The portion just purchased is closed to the public and open to cattle grazing. Plans call for eventual public access in combination with grazing as well as agricultural, cultural and environmental preservation.

### Project Read tutor training

Registration has begun for those interested in volunteering as a tutor for Project Read Menlo Park, the library-based program that offers adults free tutoring in reading and writing.

The first tutor-training session is set for Wednesday, Sept. 9, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Menlo Park Library at 800 Alma St. Training continues Saturday, Sept. 12, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The final session is Tuesday, Oct. 20, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., when tutors exchange ideas.

Those who cannot attend the sessions may contact Project Read-Menlo Park to check out training resource materials. For more information, call 330-2525.

## Private schools: new facilities for new year

By Alexandra Baum

Special to The Almanac

The new school year brings new students, facilities and programs to local private high schools. Among the changes: a new science and student life building at Sacred Heart Preparatory, a new gym at Menlo School, and a new football program at Woodside Priory.

### Woodside Priory

Woodside Priory in Portola Valley resumed classes Aug. 26 with a total enrollment of 360 in the middle and high school.

There are 74 students entering the ninth grade, 18 of whom are returning from the middle school, said Director of Admissions Al Zappelli. Priory was able to provide \$1.7 million in financial aid, he said.

Due to a new multi-building solar power system, the school has reduced its electricity bills by 45 percent, said Sean McLain Brown, director of communications.

"We are also pleased to announce that this will be the first year we have a football team," he said. "This is a huge addition to our athletic program, and we are all very excited for our season to start."

Priory is joining the seven-man football Coast Athletic League this season.

### Menlo School

Menlo School in Atherton began classes Thursday, Aug. 27, after holding an orientation program for the 144 incoming freshman the day before, according to Director of Upper School Admissions Cathy Shelburne.

The school is in the middle of building a new gym for the upper and middle schools. The project costs \$21.3 million, and is expected to be completed by September 2010.

### Sacred Heart Prep

Classes began at Sacred Heart Preparatory in Atherton on Monday, Aug. 31. There are 533 students enrolled in grades 9-12, according to Director of Communications Millie Lee.

Tuition is set at \$29,755, a 3.9 percent increase over the prior year, she said.

Sacred Heart Prep built a new science and student life building on campus this year.†The structure is one of the first high school buildings in the area to be built to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmentally Design) standards for new construction, Ms. Lee said.

She added that the two-story building, which encompasses 44,000 square feet, houses eight state-of-the-art science labs, an assembly hall with seating for 700, a student cafeteria and outdoor patio.

### Mid-Peninsula

Mid-Peninsula High School in Menlo Park starts classes Tuesday, Sept. 8, with 47 incoming students and a total enrollment of 120 for grades 9-12, said Barbara Brown, director of admissions.

Tuition increased slightly, and now stands at \$25,462.

"We also saw an increased need for financial aid among new and returning families," she said.

Mid-Peninsula allocated \$772,000 to financial aid for the 2009-2010 school year, which enables about a third of the families to receive some aid, she said. ▀

### BACK TO SCHOOL

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# Community Health Education Programs



## Palo Alto Center 795 El Camino Real

### Lecture and Workshops Update on Food Allergies in Children

Presented by Kristina Philpott, M.D.,  
PAMF Allergy and Immunology  
Tuesday, Sept. 8, 7 – 8:30 p.m., 650-853-4873

**Note:** Please do not bring children, as we cannot accommodate them at this event.



### Living Well Classes

#### Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Free orientation, Wednesday,  
Sept. 2, 6:30 – 9 p.m. Classes start  
on Monday, Sept. 14 and Tuesday,  
Sept. 15, 6:30 – 9 p.m., 650-853-2960

#### Taking Charge of Your Body

Monday, Sept. 21, 6 – 8 p.m., 650-853-2960



### Nutrition and Diabetes Classes

#### Bariatric Class

Tuesday, Sept. 1, 9:30 a.m. –  
noon, 650-853-2961

#### Supermarket Wise

Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2 –  
4 p.m., 650-853-2960

#### Healthy Eating with Type 2 Diabetes

Thursday, Sept. 10, 2:30 –  
5:30 p.m., 650-853-2961

#### Prediabetes

Monday, Sept. 14, 9 –  
11:30 a.m., 650-853-2961

#### Heart Smart Class

Must attend both sessions.  
Tuesdays, Sept. 15 & 22,  
5:30 – 8:30 p.m., 650-853-  
2961



### Pregnancy, Breastfeeding and Child Care Classes



#### Preparing for Birth

Thursdays, Sept. 3 – Oct. 8,  
7 – 9 p.m., 650-853-2960

#### Breastfeeding

Saturday, Sept. 12, 10 a.m. –  
noon, 650-853-2960

#### Feeding Your Toddler

Thursday, Sept. 17, 10 a.m. – noon, 650-853-2961

#### Moving Through Pregnancy

Mondays, Sept. 14, 21, & 28, 7 – 9 p.m., 650-853-2960

## Palo Alto continued

### Support Groups

#### Cancer

650-342-3749

#### CPAP

650-853-4729

#### Diabetes

650-224-7872

#### Drug and Alcohol

650-853-2904

#### Healing Imagery for Cancer Patients

650-279-8772

#### Kidney

650-323-2225

#### Multiple Sclerosis

650-328-0179

## Redwood Shores Health Center 290 Redwood Shores Parkway

### Nutrition and Diabetes Classes

#### Prediabetes

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., 650-853-2961

## Mountain View Center 701 E. El Camino Real

### Weight Management Class

#### Lifesteps® Weight Management (18-week session starts)

Thursday, Sept. 3, 6 – 7:15 p.m., 650-934-7373

### Pregnancy, Breastfeeding and Child Care Classes

#### Infant Emergencies and CPR

Wednesday, Sept. 2 and 23,  
6 – 8:30 p.m., 650-934-7373

#### Childbirth Preparation (3 part or two day series)

Thursday, Friday, or  
Thursday/Saturday sessions, Sept. 3, 4 or 17, 650-934-7373



#### Breastfeeding

Monday or Tuesday,  
Sept. 8 or 14,  
6:30 – 9 p.m., 650-934-7373

#### Preparing for Baby

Tuesday, Sept. 15, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., 650-934-7373

## Sunnyvale Center 201 Old San Francisco Road

### Breastfeeding Support Group

Tuesdays, 10:30 – noon  
408-730-4251

## Town celebrates schoolhouse at barbecue festival

Portola Valley's one-room Historic Schoolhouse, which also serves as the Town Council Chambers, is 100 years old this year and will be the honored guest at the Blues & Barbecue festival on the afternoon of Sunday, Sept. 13.

**PORTOLA  
VALLEY**

The annual fall event brings together live music, kids' games, barbecue and a silent auction, with the proceeds going to a fund in the town's budget dedicated to the purchase of open space in town.

(The current budget projects a fund balance of \$2.6 million by July 2010. A 2 percent utility users tax on residents and businesses adds to the available funding and is expected to contribute \$246,500 in the current fiscal year.)

Tickets for table seating, appetizers, beverages, and use of all activities are \$65 per person. The same food and refreshments but at your own picnic site on the grass is \$35 per adult and \$20 for kids 6 to 14. If you bring your own food, the beverages and appetizers are \$10 per person.

Appetizers, starting at 2 p.m., will be from Amigos Grill in Ladera, and the barbecue, served after 4:30 p.m., is from Bianchini's Market, also in Ladera, said organizing committee member Beth Bianchi in an interview.

The festival runs from 2 to 7 p.m., with music by Johnny Nitro and the Door Slammers beginning at 3:30 p.m., Ms. Bianchi said.

Children's games will include a climbing wall, inflatable play spaces and pony rides. The schoolhouse ceremony begins at 5:45 p.m.

The auction begins at 3 p.m., with the last bid taken at 6:15 p.m. The list of about 50 items include dinners, getaways, works of art, and tours. To see the complete list, go to [tinyurl.com/krzfn4](http://tinyurl.com/krzfn4).

The committee's members this year are Alison Alston, Beth Bianchi, Toni Bray, Michael Bray, Vicki Burton, Joi Deaser, Beth Erskine, Cynthia Hamilton, Al Minor, †Elizabeth Ozden, Diana Raines, Jason Schmidt, Kris Schmidt, Carrie Sweetnam, Ruth Taylor, Karin Wick and Jane Wilson. Mayor Ann Wengert is the Town Council liaison.



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# Community

NEWS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

## Summer Symphony celebrates 50 years of music magic

By Jane Knoerle  
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

This year Summer Symphony will celebrate its 50 years in style with a performance by British soul singer Seal, on Saturday, Sept. 12, at Frost Amphitheater. Concert co-chair Betsy Matteson promises the event is going to be “amazing.”

Instead of nodding to nostalgia, the Children’s Health Council benefit concert will have a brand new format: The concert will be held in September, not July (can you call it Summer Symphony in September?) and will take place on Saturday night, instead of Sunday. Also new is an after-concert party for VIP ticket holders, instead of a before-concert reception as in years past.

“I think this will be a little bit more of a grown-up affair,” says Ms. Matteson, who reports that response has been “phenomenal,” especially with Seal as the headliner.

“For the 50th, we’re bringing back the quality of entertainer from Summer Symphony’s early days. It’s been a personal dream of mine to have Seal perform. He’s also been fabulous to work with,” says Quin Whitman, co-chair with Ms. Matteson.

Doors for the event open at 4:30 p.m. The concert starts at 6 p.m. Concert-goers will still be able to picnic on the lawn, as they have for the past 50 years, with general admission tickets at \$50. There will be concierge seats at \$250 each, with a reserved beach chair and mat and a gourmet picnic dinner.

Before Seal takes the stage, there will be music by the Summer

Symphony Orchestra. After the concert, there will be a Club 50 party for those with VIP tickets in the Arrillaga Alumni Center. The party will feature cocktails, after-dinner fare, music and dancing. Premier concierge tickets at \$450 a seat will include access to Club 50 and valet parking, as well as a reserved beach chair and mat, and gourmet picnic dinner.

For really big spenders, there are “Up Close and Personal” tickets at \$1,500 each, or \$15,000 for a table of 10, which includes a table stage front with catered dinner by McCalls, premium wines, access to Club 50, valet parking, VIP entrance and program listing. Dinner and wine at a table for six in the first tier, plus valet parking and access to Club 50, is \$1,250 each.

A sellout crowd is expected Sept. 12. For many Peninsula families, Summer Symphony is a tradition that dates back to its first 17 years when Arthur Fiedler directed the San Francisco Symphony every year. Some of the music world’s most famous entertainers, from Ella Fitzgerald, Benny Goodman, Rosemary Clooney, and Pearl Bailey to Burt Bacharach, Smokey Robinsons and Peter, Paul and Mary, have taken center stage at the annual concert to benefit the Children’s Health Council.

This year’s event is also expected to draw new concert-goers who’ve never been able to attend before, because they were on vacation in July.

Betsy Matteson of Menlo Park and Quin Whitman, co-chairs of Summer Symphony, bring years of

experience to the job. Betsy served as Summer Symphony chairman in 1996 and 1997. Quin was chairman in 2005 and 2006.

“Our job is to get the most out of people. It’s like being a CEO,” Ms. Whitman says. “We have an incredible committee and a wonderful advance staff.”

The co-chairs recall coming to Summer Symphony meetings when their kids were small. Now the Mattesons’ older daughter, Courtney, is off to college at Duke University. Ms. Whitman’s children, Corey and Katherine, are now teenagers.

“It’s been a wonderful experience coming back to the CHC to work on this event,” says Ms. Matteson, who hadn’t been active with the organization since 2004. She also persuaded several “old-timers” to come back as committee members for 50th. They include: Lulu Frye, Jan Harris, Shelley Hutter, Anne Lawler, Ellen Rose, and five past Summer Symphony chairs: Eve Jaffe, Lisa Keith, Lisa Wan, Kim Young, and Lou Ann Winchell.

“All these women are extremely savvy,” says Rosalie Whitlock of the entire committee. Ms. Whitlock took over as executive director of Children’s Health Council on Aug. 17. She comes to the position after 11 years as head of the Charles Armstrong School in Belmont. She has served on the CHC board for nine years.

Ms. Whitlock and the concert co-chairs agree it’s worth putting in long hours to make Summer Symphony a success since it is the Children’s Health Council’s chief



Quin Whitman, left, and Betsy Matteson are co-chairs of Summer Symphony.

fundraiser.

CHC was founded in 1953 by Dr. Esther B. Clark to assist children with complex behavioral and development problems. It offers clinical services to children, parent education, and operates the Esther B. Clark Therapeutic Day School for between 50 and 70 students. It is located on the

Health Council’s campus at 650 Clark Way in Palo Alto.

“After all these years, many people still don’t know we’re here,” says Ms. Whitlock. “We’re the best kept secret in the community and we don’t want to be!”

For tickets to Summer Symphony, call 725-2787 or go to [summersymphony.org](http://summersymphony.org). ■

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## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Andy Garcia Memorial 5K

**WHEN:** Labor Day  
Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** Triangle Park, Portola Valley  
(Intersection of Alpine &  
Portola Roads)

**WHEN:** 9:00 a.m.

Please join family and friends for a free pancake breakfast in the park following the run! *Coffee and water will be provided.*

Contact [kelly.arrillaga@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kelly.arrillaga@sbcglobal.net) for more information

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## Signup time for fall classes at new Portola Valley Town Center

It’s not a school, but it can be educational in the fall at Portola Valley Town Center. A new catalog of children and adult classes held there includes the martial arts, physical fitness, science and nature, and creative and language arts.

The catalog is located on the town’s Web site at [portolavalley.net](http://portolavalley.net). From the menu at the top of the page, choose For Residents, then Community Classes, then Current Class Catalog.

Residents and non-residents can participate, with registration for residents having begun Monday, Aug. 17, and beginning for non-residents on Monday,

### ■ BRIEFS

Aug. 31. Whether registering online or in person at Town Hall, the process is not complete until the town receives payment.

Fees for these town-sponsored classes run from \$45 for seven weeks of aerobic dancing on one day per week, to \$540 for a 12-week course in writing in French for middle-school students.

For more information, click on the catalog’s Class FAQs link or call Cindy Rojas at 851-1700, ext. 200.

### Breakfast benefit for Planned Parenthood

Planned Parenthood Golden Gate will hold a benefit breakfast from 9 to 11 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16, at the Menlo Circus Club, 190 Park Lane in Atherton.

Guest speaker will be David Magnus, director of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics and professor of pediatrics, medicine and philosophy at Stanford University. His topic will be “Who Owns Life?”

Individual tickets are \$175. Responses must be made by Sept. 9. For more information, visit [www.ppgg.org](http://www.ppgg.org).

## OBITUARIES

**Margaret Gale Moore**

Journalist and lifelong  
Menlo Park resident

Margaret Gale "Maggie" Moore, a journalist who worked on several south Peninsula newspapers, died Aug. 19 at her home in Menlo Park. She was 85.

Ms. Moore's family had lived in the Menlo Park area for four generations. Her great-grandmother, Bridget Carroll Brophy, arrived by covered wagon to her new home in Searsville, now the site of Searsville Lake. Her aunt was Susan Gale, who was known as Menlo Park's historian, as well as an artist. Her father, David Moore, was a journalist who published his own small newspaper.

Ms. Moore was a graduate of St. Joseph's Elementary School in Atherton, Sequoia High School, and San Jose State University. She worked on several Peninsula newspapers, including the Menlo-Atherton Recorder. She also volunteered in writing newsletters and assisting in public relations for the Catholic community, including St. Raymond Church and Sacred Heart Schools.

In the 1950s, Ms. Moore helped

form auxiliaries for two of her favorite community organizations, the Menlo Park Library and the Peninsula Symphony, say family members. When her daughter Susan attended Hillview Elementary School, she co-lead her Brownie, Junior and Cadet Girl Scout troops. She later joined the Peninsula Volunteers and worked several hours a week at its Turnabout Shop.

Ms. Moore is survived by her four children, Joseph Anthony Scaroni III, Susan Scaroni Glasser, John Christopher Scaroni, and Nicholas Edward Scaroni; sisters Alida Mary Moore of Menlo Park, Susana Moore Porter of Mountain View, and Dorothy Ellen Rouse of Bonny Doon; and a granddaughter.

Donations in Ms. Moore's name may be made to Friends of the Menlo Park Library, the Peninsula Volunteers, or Pathways Hospice.

**Louise Bertolucci**

Former Belle Haven teacher

A service for Louise Bertolucci will be held at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8, in the rose garden of Trinity Episcopal Church, 330 Ravenswood Ave. in Menlo Park. A 52-year resident of Menlo Park, Ms. Bertolucci died at

home on Aug. 26. She was 95.

Ms. Bertolucci grew up in Oregon, where she attended college, graduating with a teaching degree. In 1945 she moved to San Francisco, where she met her future husband, Harry Bertolucci. The couple lived in San Bruno before moving to Menlo Park.

After raising her children, she taught second grade at Belle Haven Elementary School in Menlo Park for 16 years. After retiring, she studied Swedish and joined the Swedish Club of San Francisco and the Peninsula Rose Society, where she made many friends, say family members.

For many years, Ms. Bertolucci rented rooms to college students, forming many lasting friendships. She and her daughter, Estelle, visited a Japanese student, who had kept in close touch, and his family in Tokyo at cherry blossom time. She also enjoyed art, traveling, gardening, and going to the beach.

Ms. Bertolucci is survived by her son, Parris; daughter Estelle; and two grandchildren. Mr. Bertolucci died in 1981.

**Valdis Marie Sisson**

Saga dietician

A memorial service for Valdis Marie "Dee" Sisson will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at Peninsula Lutheran Church, 6509 38th St. NW, in Gig Harbor, Washington.

A former Menlo Park and Atherton resident, she died Aug. 14 at her home in Gig Harbor. She was 91.

She was born in Clifford, North Dakota, and graduated from North Dakota State University in 1940 with a bachelor of science degree in home economics.

During and following World War II, she served six years as a hospital dietician in the U.S. Army. She married Daniel Sisson in the chapel of Stanford Memorial Church in 1948.

For 17 years, she worked at Saga Food Services in Menlo Park, retiring as chief dietician. In 2002 she and her husband moved to Gig Harbor.

She was an avid reader and lover of music, yet her greatest passion was food with family and friends, say family member.

She is survived by her husband of 61 years, Daniel Sisson; children Robert Sisson of Fair Oaks, Paul Sisson of Seattle, Margaret Colman of Gig Harbor, and Philip Sisson of San Rafael; and six grandchildren.

Remembrances may be made to Peninsula Lutheran Church or a charity of the donor's choice.

See OBITUARIES, page 16



Eleanor and Joe McLoughlin on their wedding day, July 23, 1949.

**McLoughlins observe 60th anniversary**

Eleanor and Joe McLoughlin, who were married July 23, 1949, at the Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with a family reunion at South Lake Tahoe.

Ms. McLoughlin, the former Eleanor Lussier, was a dedicated stay-at-home mother while raising six daughters. She sang in the Church of the Nativity choir for more than 50 years.

Mr. McLoughlin, a native and life-long resident of Menlo Park, owned and operated McLoughlin's Shoe Repair on El Camino Real for 35 years. He has volunteered with the Menlo Park Host Lions' Club for 30 years and helps out at the Menlo Park farmers' market. Both serve with the Meals on Wheels program.

The McLoughlins are the parents of six daughters: Eileen of Rocklin, Cecelia of Angels Camp, Julia of

Fort Bragg, Mary Eleanor of Reno, Joanne of Tigard, Oregon, and the late Margaret Sarah McLoughlin. They have 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Photo by Joanne Taylor

Eleanor and Joe McLoughlin at a family gathering in June.

**Woodside vaulters take first, second spots**

Members of the Woodside Vaulters equestrian vaulting club took home first place in the one-star team event, and second place at the two-star team event, at the Kentucky Vaulting Cup competition, held July 28-Aug. 2, in Lexington, Kentucky.

The Kentucky Vaulting Cup is one of several Concours de Voltige International events held worldwide each year. It is recognized by the Federation Equestre Internationale, which is the international governing body of horse sports.

A group of seven girls representing the Woodside Vaulters

equestrian vaulting club won the one-star team event. The members of the one-star team are Tessa Divita, 11, Sarah Dunn, 12, Christine Herrmann, 15, Grace Koz, 15, Siddartha Kreaden, 11, Katrina Nibbi, 15, and Julia Plungy, 15. The one-star level is the intermediate level of international vaulting competition.

Members of the Woodside team that took second place at the two-star elite level are Gabe Aniello, 18, Alyssa Bonora, 15, Janie Salisbury, 10, Patrick Stevens, 17, Katherine Wick, 16, Yvonne Greenen, 14, and Kathryn Jaggars, 15.



## Nature, Creativity and Health An Evening with Richard Louv

September 25th at 7:30 pm  
Smithwick Theater  
Foothill College, Los Altos Hills

Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, has inspired a national movement to reconnect children with nature.

This event is part of a month-long 'Let's Play Outside' campaign with Play Days throughout the Bay Area starting September 15th.

For information, visit [cinabayarea.org](http://cinabayarea.org) or call 650.969.6592

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# Healing on horseback



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Woodside therapy program uses horses to help military veterans suffering from traumatic injuries

By Alexandra Baum

Special to the Almanac

Next to a fully restored 1920s dairy barn at the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy (NCEFT) in Woodside, a military veteran tentatively stands beside a large horse, brushing its chestnut brown hair in one fluid motion.

A slight breeze gathers dust from the ground and blows it into the horse's face. But the animal's calm and gentle demeanor doesn't change.

Soon, an occupational therapist instructs the veteran to put the brush away — it's time to mount the horse.

The therapist leads the horse slowly around the ring, while instructing the veteran to try different movements while on horseback, such as letting go of the reins and sticking his arms straight up in the air, or out toward his sides.

The rider, hesitant at first, slowly drops the reins he was clinging to, and reaches his hands up toward the sky, earning the therapist's praise. She then encourages him to drop his arms to his sides and focus on his balance and breathing.

This method of using horses to enhance balance, posture, mobility, coordination and strength in the rider is known as hippotherapy. By attempting to maintain balance in response to a horse's motion, riders tone, stretch, and strengthen the muscles they would normally use in walking and sitting, according to Smita Shukla, occupational therapist at the Palo Alto Veterans Association.

Additionally, riders who emotionally

connect with the horse generally see an improvement in their attention span, memory, concentration and speech, Ms. Shukla says.

Military veterans have been coming to the NCEFT for about two years. Recently, the organization received a \$10,000 matching grant from the Koret Foundation, a private philanthropic organization, to continue providing free hippotherapy treatments to veterans suffering from traumatic brain injuries and physical injuries. Through private donations, the funding grew to \$24,000.

#### Range of needs, benefits

The nonprofit NCEFT has provided hippotherapy to people with special needs for the past 37 years. About 90 percent of those served are children, according to Executive Director Gari Merendino.

"While the treatment is the same, adults are typically facing more cognitive issues resulting from a stroke or an accident. On the other hand, children are generally treated for birth defects such as autism, cerebral palsy, or Down syndrome," he says.

As for the veterans' program, "We also see a great deal of psycho-social benefits from this treatment," Ms. Shukla says. "The patients' self-confidence grows tremendously from their interactions with the horse and the therapeutic riding instructor."

The veterans can also volunteer at the facility, where they practice a variety of skills they can use in everyday life, she adds.

Veterans who come to NCEFT receive primary treatment at the Poly-Trauma Transitional Rehab Program at the Veter-

**Military veteran** Derek Liu works on trunk stability and core strength while balancing himself on the horse, Boon, as volunteer Susan Bosse-Atwell steers at the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy in Woodside.

ans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, Ms. Shukla says. All the patients in the program suffer from traumatic brain injuries, which can result in challenges such as difficulty speaking, organizing information, and other problems.

"We are one of the major poly-trauma centers, so many veterans are referred to our hospital in Palo Alto for treatment," she says.

Veterans receive hippotherapy treatment free of charge. "The only thing we have to pay for is transportation of the veterans from the hospital to the riding facility," Ms. Shukla says.

Three veterans are currently receiving treatments at NCEFT, which are typically 30- to 45-minute sessions once or twice a week for about six to eight weeks, according to Ms. Shukla.

"It is very rewarding for the veterans and their families to see them improve," she says. "They also really enjoy getting out of the hospital environment and experiencing the outdoors."

Derek Liu, 27, has been coming to the center for almost a year. He says he learned a lot about the benefits of riding horses from fellow patients at the hospital.

Mr. Liu has graduated from hippotherapy treatment, and is now in the therapeutic riding program, which focuses more on improving cognitive skills.

"I had never been on a horse before I came here, so I was a little nervous at first," Mr. Liu said. "But now I really enjoy coming because it helps improve my balance and memory skills."

#### Community support

Mr. Merendino, the executive director, says that when NCEFT received the matching grant, the staff took a grassroots

approach and sent out information to the facility's volunteers and people who had donated money in the past.

"At first, I thought it would be quite a challenge to raise the appropriate funds because of the poor economic climate," he says. "People today simply do not have a lot of extra money to give away. However, people are very willing to support the veterans, so we had no problems raising the money we needed."

Each year, the NCEFT spends about \$240,000 to \$250,000 for all of its programs. Last year, the organization spent \$90,000 on veterans' services alone. All NCEFT programs are funded solely by donations from individuals or companies, and grants.

"With the money we received from the Koret Foundation and raised ourselves, we expect to be able to provide 300 sessions of hippotherapy to the veterans in the coming year," Mr. Merendino says. The organization, he adds, is virtually paying itself back for providing free treatments to the veterans in the past.

There are three physical therapists — one full-time and two part-time — working at NCEFT. The center also has an occupational therapist who helps the veterans and others seeking hippotherapy services.

The organization also offers clinical internships in the field of hippotherapy throughout the year for individuals who are interested in this type of work. ▣

#### ■ INFORMATION

For more information, call the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy at 851-2271, or visit its Web site at [nceft.org](http://nceft.org). The Palo Alto Veterans Association can be reached at 493-5000 and at [iris.va.gov](http://iris.va.gov).

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**OBITUARIES**

*continued from page 14*

**Enid Kuchel Wood**

*Fabric artist*

Enid Kuchel Wood, who lived in Menlo Park until recently, died Aug. 16 after a long illness.

Ms. Wood was a fabric artist whose work was shown in galleries throughout the Bay Area. A member of the Russ family, early San Francisco settlers, Ms. Wood was born in Oakland in 1918 and grew up in San Francisco in what is now called the Haight-Ashbury. She was an art major at Stanford University, graduating in 1939.

She is survived by her children, Russ Davis and Kathy Davis McFarland; and a grandson. Donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 1060 La Avenida St., Mountain View, CA 94043; or <http://www.alz.org>.



**Enid Kuchel Wood**

on Aug. 13. He was 88.

Mr. Spillane served in the New York City Fire Department for 35 years, rising in the ranks to battalion chief. He had been a resident of Menlo Park since 1996.

Born and raised in New York City, Mr. Spillane attended Bishop Loughlin High School. He turned down five college scholarships to support his family and his country by joining the U.S. Army Air Corp, say family members.

During World War II, he flew 35 missions as navigator of a B-17 bomber, and served for 10 years as an officer in the Air Force Reserve.

In retirement, he was a devoted New York Yankees fan, avid reader, and a history, geography and travel buff, say family members. He was president of Menlo Commons and active in an organization of members of the 457 Bomb Squad Unit.

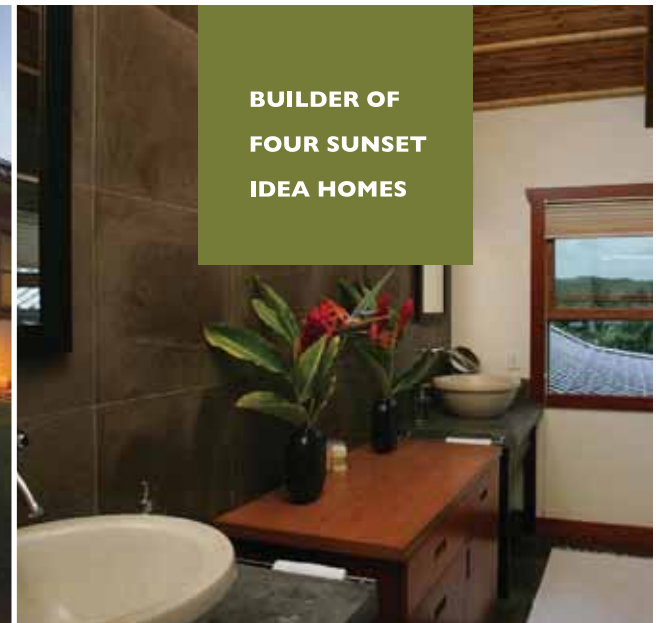
He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Kathleen, of Menlo Park; daughters Maureen Capitolo of Kentfield and Jeannine Chambers of Visalia; brothers Joseph and Charles Spillane of New York; a sister, Margaret Swanberg of Virginia; and five grandchildren.

A funeral Mass was held at St. Denis Church in Menlo Park, where Mr. Spillane was an active member.

**Francis Spillane**

*Retired New York firefighter*

Francis Gerard "Frank" Spillane died at his Menlo Park home



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## Boys would testify if coach goes to trial, prosecutor says

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

If misdemeanor accusations by three Hispanic boys against longtime Menlo-Atherton cross-country assistant coach Kelly Weston lead to a jury trial, the boys will testify for the prosecution, said Steve Wagstaffe, the chief deputy district attorney for San Mateo County, in an interview.

Mr. Weston, 63, is alleged to have pushed one of the boys and to have threatened them all in a May 2009 incident in which a soccer ball they were playing with hit the side of

Mr. Weston's home, a house trailer in unincorporated Redwood City, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Weston is charged with assault and making threats. He has pleaded not guilty and is out of custody on \$50,000 bail. A conference to set a trial date is scheduled for Sept. 28, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

The boys — two 12-year-olds and an 11-year old — say the ball hit the house by accident, Mr. Wagstaffe said. They said Mr. Weston came out 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."

The children reported it to their parents, who reported it to a deputy from the Sheriff's Office, who then interviewed the boys, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Weston will not be commenting on the charges, his attorney, Harriotte Aaron, told The Almanac. She would say only that the details of the incident are in dispute.

The charges do not rely exclu-

sively on the boys' allegations. A deputy interviewed Mr. Weston and "some of the hate language that was charged, some of that was used in the interview," Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Asked about the phenomenon of three preteen boys accusing an adult with a responsible position in the community, Mr. Wagstaffe said that such a situation "weighs very heavily" in prosecutors' minds.

M-A community members have come to Mr. Weston's defense, saying that the incident is out of character, and that he is "very, very wonderful" with kids, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Prosecutors are "appreciative" of such feedback and will consider it, but it hasn't been enough to change the decision to prosecute this case and go to trial, Mr. Wagstaffe said. If there is a conviction, penalties could range from nothing to a year in jail, he said.

Mr. Weston has coached at M-A "going on 40 years" and won the 2005-06 Coach's Honor Award from the Central Coast Section of the Peninsula Athletic League, he said in an e-mail asking for career specifics.

Menlo Park resident Diane Hester, whose two sons Mr. Weston has coached in cross-country, called Mr. Weston "a fabulous man" who used to call them regularly at home on his own time to update them on their sons' progress. He uses a Facebook account to augment these communications, she said.

"I have nothing but wonderful things to say about the man," she added. "He's got an incredible heart." ■

### M-A community members have come to Mr. Weston's defense.



Louise Bertolucci was born in 1913. She grew up in Oregon and graduated college with a teaching degree. She taught in a one-room school.

In 1939 she traveled with her girlfriend to San Francisco to see the world fair. She fell in love with SF and moved there 6 years later. It was there she met her future husband, Harry Bertolucci. They married and had one son, Parris.

They moved to San Bruno, bought a house, and daughter Estelle was born.

They then moved to Menlo Park where Louise lived for 52 years. After raising her children, she returned to teaching. She taught 2nd grade in East Menlo Park for 16 years.

When she retired, she went back to painting,

learned Swedish and joined the Swedish Club.

After Harry died, she joined the Peninsula Rose Society. She had so much fun and loved all her Swedish and Rose Society friends and all of the parties and dinners.

Louise had a very generous and loving spirit. She cared for the little birds that fell from their nests, any cat that came across her door, and almost every person she met. Louise's visitors rarely left empty handed; she always had flowers, food or something to give. Long after their tutelage ended, students from her 2nd grade class would call and write.

She rented rooms to college students for many years, forming long lasting relationships with her renters. Many wrote and came to visit. One Japanese student visited regularly and became a real friend. He invited Louise and Estelle to visit his family in Tokyo, which they did at cherry blossom time.

She loved the beach, art, traveling and gardening. She and her daughter traveled to Europe.

Louise is survived by son Parris and daughter Estelle and two grandchildren.

PAID OBITUARY

## RUTH HICKS RANDALL STEWART

JANUARY 17, 1916-AUGUST 22, 2009



"Ruthie," as she was lovingly known to her friends, resided in Atherton for 35 years with her late husband John K. Stewart before she moved to the Sequoias in Portola Valley thirteen years ago.

Ruth was born in Hazleton, PA and attended the Katherine Gibbs School in New York City where she met her first husband, Irving Randall, Jr., a student at Yale University. Married in 1938, they moved to Menlo Park in 1941 with two young daughters. Her husband developed several neighborhoods in Menlo Park and defense housing in the East Bay before his untimely death in 1947.

As a young widow Ruth devoted thirteen years to raising her daughters while remaining an active volunteer in the community. She taught Sunday School and was President of the Episcopal Church Women at Holy Trinity Church in Menlo Park. For many years she served on the Board of the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary which raised funds for the Stanford Convalescent Home, later the Lucille Packard Children's Hospital. She served as Treasurer of the Allied Arts Guild and was also active in the early formation of the International House at Stanford. Together with a neighbor she ran a business in Menlo Park called the Yarn Barn which served as a meeting place for knitters to take tea and lessons in front of the fireplace. Ruth has also been a member of the Peninsula Volunteers, the Menlo Circus

Club and the Menlo Country Club.

In 1959 she married family friend and resident of Palo Alto, John Stewart. They enjoyed a very happy marriage for 35 years. His son and daughter are John K. Stewart and Nancy S. Rush of San Francisco.

Ruthie has spent the last years of her life staying in touch with family members and friends, and enjoying many hours at the bridge table where she played with great finesse. She leaves a legacy of important lessons to her progeny, the first being the fun and camaraderie created by playing family games together and the lessons learned through winning and losing gracefully. She has also set an example by her spirit of generosity to others, particularly sensitive to the needs of children. She took each day as it came, welcoming everyone in her presence, taking the greatest pleasure in kind words and deeds.

She will be dearly missed as the matriarch by her entire family, including daughters Jane Randall Barry and husband Walter and Barbara Randall Preuss and husband Charles; six grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren; brother Robert B. Hicks and his wife Louise of Bloomington, IN and brother-in-law Charles D. Randall and his wife Sally of Atherton.

A Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, September 27 at 3 pm, Christ Episcopal Church, 815 Portola Road, Portola Valley, 94028 with a reception to follow at Menlo CC.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in honor of Ruth Stewart may be sent to The Hoover Institution, 434 Galvez Mall, Stanford, CA 94305 or the Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 400 Hamilton Avenue, Suite 340, Palo Alto, CA 94301 or Christ Church of Portola Valley.

### ■ POLICE CALLS

#### ATHERTON

##### Auto burglary reports:

■ Three vehicles searched and Louis Vuitton bag stolen, Elena Ave., Aug. 25.

■ Vehicle service record and registration stolen, Edwards Lane, Aug. 25.

■ **Fraud report:** Identity theft used to buy two Apple iPhones, Walnut Ave., Aug. 25.

#### MENLO PARK

##### Assault with deadly weapon reports:

■ Resident arrested for assaulting spouse with small kitchen knife, 1300 block of Almanor Ave., Aug. 21.

■ Shovel used to strike person on arm, 1300 block of Carlton Ave., Aug. 27.

##### Grand theft reports:

■ Locked bicycle valued at \$1,000 stolen, 800 block of Coleman Ave., Aug. 22.

■ Purse stolen from shopping cart and later turned in with Apple iPhone missing, 300 block of Sharon Park Drive, Aug. 24.

■ Laptop computer stolen, Daily News offices at 255 Constitution Drive, Aug. 25.

■ Gate lock cut and bicycle valued at \$500 stolen from back yard, 1100 block of Arbor Road, Aug. 27.

##### Fraud reports:

■ Unauthorized use of account with loss valued at \$39,000, in 400 block of Waverley St., Aug. 24.

■ Resident wired \$3,000 to Montreal in response to phone call saying that granddaughter had been in collision and needed money, first block of Mansion Court, Aug. 27.

#### WOODSIDE

■ **Auto burglary report:** Window smashed and sunglasses and iPod transmitter stolen for loss valued at \$370, in 2000 block of Kings Mountain Road, Aug. 20.

#### WEST MENLO PARK

■ **Residential burglary report:** Flat-screen TV and remote control valued at \$2,500 stolen from house for sale, 2000 block of Sterling Ave., Aug. 21.

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Subscriptions are \$60 for one year and \$100 for two years.



**WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?**

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

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**EMAIL** your views to:

[letters@almanacnews.com](mailto:letters@almanacnews.com) and note this it is a letter to the editor in the subject line.

**MAIL** or deliver to:

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

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

## Everest opens auspiciously, despite Sequoia's obstacles

The founders and leadership team of the area's new charter high school should take a bow. In spite of all the obstacles placed in front of them by Sequoia Union High School District officials, Everest Public High School leaders got the school off to an impressive start in its Redwood City facilities with an Aug. 19-20 student orientation.

Beginning with 108 freshmen chosen by lottery from throughout the Sequoia district, Everest will fill the needs of students and parents who want an alternative to the district's large, comprehensive schools but couldn't get into Summit Preparatory High School, a charter school that has been so popular that it must conduct

lotteries to choose its student body. Everest, which will add one grade level each year until it has freshman through senior classes, is modeling its program on Summit's, a school founded in 2003 by some of the same people now behind Everest.

During the orientation, students and parents received the happy news that the first two weeks of classes will be held in a classroom in the Quad at Stanford University, an experience that will include guest speakers from the university and campus tours. Everest co-founder Diane Tavenner said the Stanford component was developed as a result of the school's commitment to better prepare students for college. "This was a really excellent opportunity to do something impactful and profound," she told The Almanac.

Just as Everest officials should take a bow for their innovation and determination to open on time and on their own

terms, Sequoia district officials should take a hard look at their relentless opposition to Everest, a charter school that has significant community support, and has every legal right to exist and receive facilities support from the district. From the beginning, Sequoia has placed roadblocks in Everest's path — from denying the planned school a charter to making it difficult for the school to find a home. Everest founders had asked for space on the Sequoia High School campus, which had vacant space. Sequoia district officials said no, although it would have cost the district little, if anything, to house the charter school there.

Sequoia's adversarial and sanctimonious maneuvers aimed at trying to force Everest to locate at an East Palo Alto site made the charter school's attempt to find reasonable, convenient housing in time to begin the school year in August a major challenge. The location offered to the school made no sense to the Everest community, or to many observers watching the situation play out. Those maneuvers also have led Everest officials to file a lawsuit against Sequoia, charging that the district failed to meet its legal requirements in providing Everest with adequate housing.

Sequoia's opposition to Everest continues to mystify, but one thing is crystal clear: Its adversarial actions have put it on a costly course that is likely to become an even greater drain on taxpayer dollars as the legal battle goes forward. With two new board members taking office after the November election, perhaps the district will develop a new, more rational approach to dealing with charter schools, and its own legal responsibilities toward them.

**EDITORIAL**

*The opinion of The Almanac*

**LETTERS**

*Our readers write*

**Editorial reflects 'bias' against health plan foes**

*Editor:*

I am concerned about both the tone and content of your recent editorial concerning Rep. Eshoo's recent "town hall phone conference" pertaining to national health care. As you opined, this format proved the "best way to filter out any harsh talk from constituents and anyone else who might be steamed ... and wanted to butt in..." This language clearly reflects an unwarranted bias against anyone who may disapprove of the disastrous health care legislative options favored by liberals.

Furthermore, you stated that members of the Bay Area delegation "are committed to the passage of a strong health care bill." To me, this inappropriately equates "strength" with maximal, uneconomical and unwarranted government take-over. Would you characterize the Medicare program as being "strong?" Please specify the areas in which you believe the government does a better job than the private sector.



Menlo Park Historical Association

### Our Regional Heritage

In 1930, the Menlo Park Recorder was a presence on El Camino Real. The newspaper's advertisements listed fryers or broiling chickens for 37 cents a pound, leg of lamb for 39 cents a pound, and lean sliced bacon for 35 cents a pound. A dozen jumbo eggs cost 43 cents, and a gallon of gasoline was 31 cents. And the Milky Way Creamery on Santa Cruz Avenue near the post office sold ice cream cones for a nickel.

Additionally, you clearly implied that those who would oppose Ms. Eshoo are people who "let their emotions do the talking on this subject." Please allow me the opportunity to

present a "Viewpoint" column, and I will fill you in on the facts, fully and unemotionally. You also stated that "she could have expected a wide range of support from the audience."

Perhaps, but you may be underestimating the intelligence of the American public, which is finally beginning to compre-

See **LETTERS**, next page

**LETTERS**

*Continued from previous page*

hend the implications of these proposals.

Finally, I wish to announce that, in response to widespread indignation, Ms. Eshoo will finally be holding an actual live town hall meeting on this topic, between 7 and 8:30 p.m. at Gunn High School on Wednesday, Sept. 3. To my knowledge, this has only been announced via her e-mail distribution list, which of course is more likely to include supporters than detractors.

**Mark Williams**  
White Oak Drive,  
Menlo Park

**Sand Hill office building would create "disaster"**

*Editor:*

Because of a San Mateo County decision, Menlo Park has a disaster about to happen. On

Aug. 26, the San Mateo County Planning Commission approved by a vote of 3 to 1 the construction of a 33-foot office building generating 50 cars plus delivery trucks near the corner of Sand Hill and Santa Cruz.

This construction required a zoning change from residential to commercial for 2126-2128 Sand Hill at the request of the developer for Vinod Khosla, a venture capitalist. The Menlo Park homes impacted are at White Oak, Pacific, and Santa Cruz (Menlo Commons condominiums).

The traffic at this corner is already a nightmare, and the Stanford Hospital construction will soon add over a thousand cars. The danger to the adjacent residents is obvious as well as the distress from added auto noise and decrease of value in the neighboring residential property.

**Patricia B. Penning**  
Santa Cruz Avenue,  
Menlo Park

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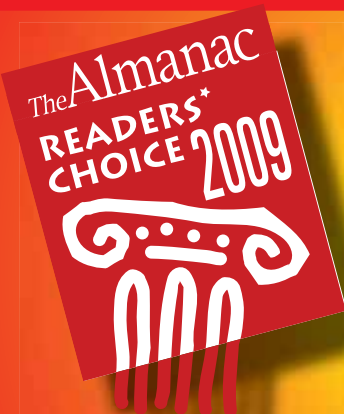
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## HORSE PROPERTY; WOODSIDE SCHOOLS

166 Raymundo Drive, Woodside  
3-bedroom, 2.5-bath home with 6-stall barn  
*Offered at \$2,249,000*



## WINDY HILL VIEWS; PORTOLA VALLEY SCHOOLS

727 Westridge Drive, Portola Valley  
2.9 usable acres with approved house plans  
*Offered at \$3,650,000*



## PRIVATE SETTING; LAS LOMITAS SCHOOLS

471 Fletcher Drive, Atherton  
Ranch-style home with 3 bedrooms and 2 baths  
*Offered at \$2,395,000*



## ENGLISH TUDOR; LAS LOMITAS SCHOOLS

149 Karen Way, Atherton  
5-bedroom, 3-bath, and 2 half-bath home  
*Offered at \$4,395,000*



## WESTERN HILL VIEWS; SPACIOUS FAMILY ROOM

11 Carriage Court, Menlo Park  
3-bedroom, 3.5-bath multi-level townhome  
*Offered at \$1,699,000*



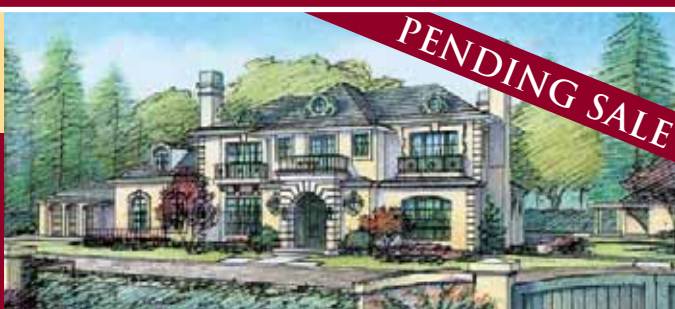
## WESTERN HILL VIEWS; SINGLE-LEVEL UNIT

2 Mansion Court, Menlo Park  
3-bedroom, 3.5-bath condominium  
*Offered at \$1,850,000*



## PRIME ATHERTON; MENLO PARK SCHOOLS

58 Linda Vista Avenue, Atherton  
Flat, rectangular parcel of approx. 1 acre  
*Offered at \$3,995,000*



# HUGH CORNISH

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*Atherton  
Menlo Park  
Portola Valley  
Woodside*



Information deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

For more information on this property and others, please visit my Web site at:

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