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gifts | PAGE 19



LOCAL ACTOR Cyril Jamal Cooper
experiences a Civil War Christmas
from many angles | PAGE 7

The Almanac

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

DECEMBER 16, 2009 | VOL. 45 NO. 16



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Menlo Park family *spreads hope* at Chinese orphanage

[SECTION 2]



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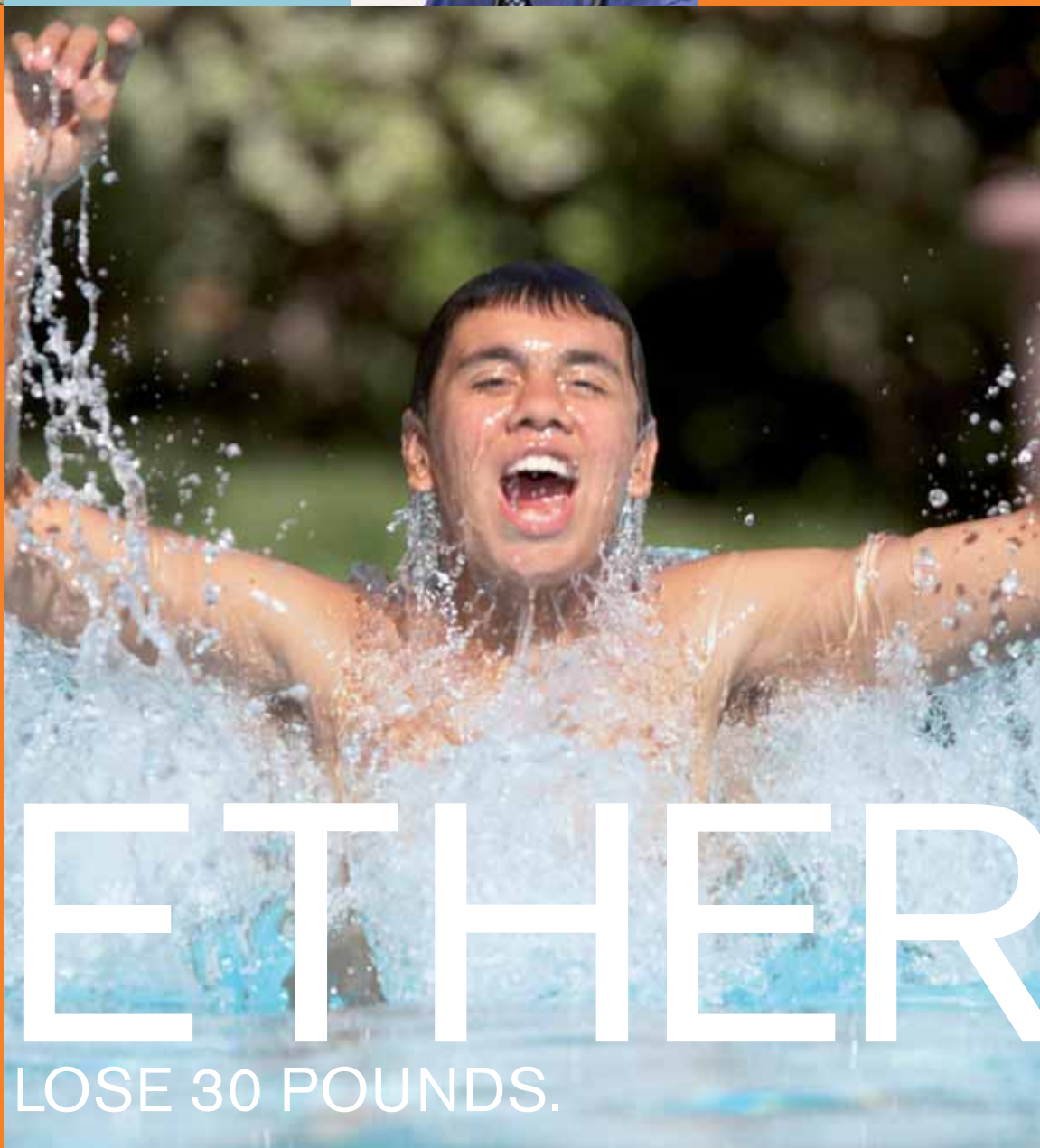


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Inside

This week's news, features and community events.

FIRST SHOT

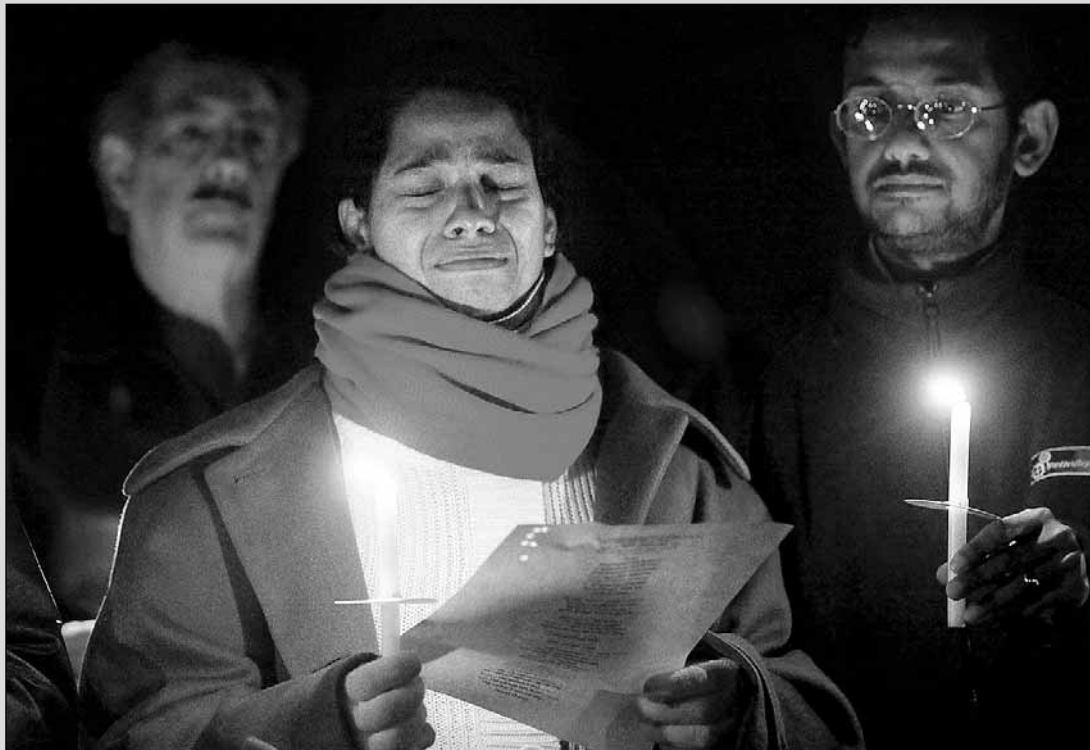


Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Vigil for Lisa Xavier

At a candlelight vigil last week at Laurel Elementary School in Atherton, Shiji Varghese joins more than 100 people to mourn the loss of her 6-year-old daughter, Lisa Xavier, who died after a hit-and-run car accident in Menlo Park on Nov. 12. See story on **Page 5**.

Atherton

■ Town settles police officer's harassment lawsuit for \$230,000. **Page 5**

Menlo Park

- Police report spike in property crime. **Page 9**
- New ordinance would restrict lawn watering in Menlo Park. **Page 9**
- Menlo Watch: Scoping session Tuesday on city's long-term plan for downtown. **Page 14**

Portola Valley

■ Fees raised again for organized sports teams. **Page 15**.

Schools

- Enrollment surge: Menlo Park schools face unpleasant options. **Page 5**
- Jury convicts Menlo-Atherton High School track coach of battery. **Page 9**

People

- A man of characters: Local actor experiences a Civil War Christmas from many angles. **Page 7**
- Former World Bank executive J. Burke Knapp dies at 96. **Page 6**

Business

■ Asian persuasion: Rice Republic, a furniture and accessory shop, opens in Menlo Park. **Page 18**

Also Inside

- Calendar 28
- Editorial 22
- Holiday Fund 19
- Letters 22
- Obituaries 21

On the cover

Tess Miller of Menlo Park comforts a baby from a Chinese orphanage, where Tess' family visited this year. In 2004, the Miller family adopted an orphan, Kaidi Miller, from this orphanage. Photo by Lisa Miller. See **Section 2**.

CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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

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- E-mail letters to the editor to: letters@AlmanacNews.com

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\$10.75 qt..... **\$5.50** pt

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Local News

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Enrollment surge: Schools face unpleasant options

■ Among the options: suspending the transfer program that allows minority students from Ravenswood district to attend Menlo Park schools.

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park City School District delayed its decision on opening a new elementary school at the O'Connor campus as officials mull a range of unpleasant options for dealing with an projected surge in student enrollment — including suspending the Tinsley transfer program that allows minority students in East Palo Alto's Ravenswood district to attend Menlo Park district schools.

Despite the district's current projects to add classrooms and reclaim playground space on all four of its campuses, projections show that climbing enrollment in the next five years will necessitate larger class sizes or the addition of portable classrooms to its elementary school campuses.

Opening a fourth elementary school campus would alleviate the space crunch, but is a costly solution in a time of shrinking education revenues. And, those same projections show that enrollment will taper

off and drop back down to the current level of about 1,850 K-5 students by 2019.

For the most part, all the options are unpleasant, the financial outlook isn't promising, and the actual number of future

Turning away Tinsley students requires a judge's permission, and no other district has done it, says Peter Burchyns of the county Office of Education.

students is unknown.

"I love finding win-wins, and this just feels like a lose-lose (situation)," said board member Laura Rich.

Superintendent Ken Ranella outlined costs, challenges and a couple of new options to the board at its Dec. 8 meeting. One option that Mr. Ranella presented would eliminate the nearly 150 transfer students

from outside the district during peak enrollment years, which would alleviate the need for portables or a new elementary school, he said.

"It's just an option, it's my last option that I put on the page," Mr. Ranella told the board.

It's a problematic option, to say the least. Currently, 122 of the 145 interdistrict transfer students are part of the Tinsley program. The remaining transfer students are the children of Menlo Park district faculty and staff.

Tinsley settlement

The Tinsley voluntary transfer program resulted from a 1986 court settlement over a desegregation lawsuit. It requires the Menlo Park district to accept 24 new students every year from the Ravenswood district, which encompasses East Palo Alto and Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, according to Peter Burchyns, spokesman for the San Mateo County Office of Education.

Ravenswood students may apply to attend school in Menlo Park or a half-dozen other districts, including Palo Alto Unified, Las Lomas, Portola Valley and Woodside. Once accepted, a Tinsley transfer student is guaranteed a place in the new district through eighth grade.

Turning away Tinsley students requires permission from a San Mateo County Superior Court judge, and is something no other district has done, said Mr. Burchyns.

Mr. Ranella said he is discussing suspending Tinsley transfers with the county superintendent of schools, and believes it would be legal. The court order says that a district does not have to add facilities or drop any element of its curriculum as a result of enrolling Tinsley students, Mr. Ranella said.

Board members said they'd like Mr. Ranella to explore the idea further, although board member Mark Box said the option raises questions not just about the district's commitment to support children from Ravenswood but also the

See **SCHOOLS**, page 8

Atherton pays \$230,000 to settle lawsuit over harassment of officer

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

The town of Atherton paid \$230,000 to settle a sexual harassment lawsuit filed by a former police officer.

News of the settlement came from attorney-rating Web site Avvo.com, where John Bonagofsky, the attorney for officer Pilar Ortiz-Buckley, posted information about the settlement deal. He told The Almanac that an agreement with the town was reached in late October.

The settlement was finalized Nov. 19, according to Wynne Furth, the Atherton city attorney.

Ms. Ortiz-Buckley, who is now retired from the Atherton Police Department, charged that public works supervisor Troy Henderson subjected her to ongoing sexual harassment. She filed a lawsuit against Mr. Henderson and the town in April, alleging that Mr. Henderson's supervisors did nothing to curb Mr. Henderson's behavior, and that when she complained, she faced retaliation and was forced out of the police department.

The lawsuit was set to go to trial next April. Mr. Bonagofsky said the town agreed to settle the case before depositions were even taken.

"It's unusual. If you don't settle right after the case is filed, you usually don't settle until after the depositions," he said. "I think they wanted to avoid attorney's fees and they knew they would be on the hook for something at trial, so what they did was make a business decision and put a number on what that was worth. It turns out we agreed on the number."

Ms. Furth said the town and Mr. Henderson agreed to the comprehensive settlement.

"Litigation is expensive, litigation is difficult. It's not simply the financial cost to the city, it's depositions and trials, and it takes people away from their work," she told The Almanac. "We're glad we were able to resolve this case and the city can put it behind it."

The case was on a City Council closed session agenda in

See **LAWSUIT**, page 8



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

A candlelight vigil is held Dec. 9 at Laurel Elementary School in Atherton for Lisa Xavier (in picture), 6, who died after a hit-and-run car accident in Menlo Park. See another picture on Page 3.

People gather to remember Lisa Xavier

By **Sean Howell**

Almanac Staff Writer

More than 100 people attended a vigil at Laurel School in Atherton on Wednesday, Dec. 9, for Lisa Xavier, the 6-year-

old Menlo Park girl and Laurel student who died last month following a hit-and-run car accident Nov. 12 at the intersection of Willow Road and Bayfront Expressway.

The program began with a performance by a solo violin-

ist, and ended with a guitar sing-along. In between, people huddled in a semi-circle against the cold, their faces illuminated by small candles cupped in their hands as they

See **VIGIL**, page 8

Former World Bank executive J. Burke Knapp dies at 96

A celebration of the life of J. Burke Knapp of Portola Valley, who had a distinguished career in international finance, will be held Thursday, Dec. 17, at Stanford Memorial Church on the Stanford campus. It will be followed by a reception at the Stanford Faculty Club. Mr. Knapp died Nov. 22 in Palo Alto at the age of 96.

Born in Portland, Oregon, Mr. Knapp graduated in 1933 from Stanford University, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and captain of the water polo team. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University from 1933 to 1936. After four years of apprenticeship in London in international banking, he returned to the United States to work as an economist for the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Knapp served in the U.S. government until 1952, holding senior positions on the Federal Reserve Board in the State Department. He was a member of the inter-departmental committee to prepare the Marshall Plan, became the economic

adviser to the first U.S. delegation to NATO in 1950-51, and was appointed U.S. chairman of the U.S.-Brazil Joint Commission for Economic Development.

In 1952 he joined the World Bank as director of its Latin-American operation, and in 1956 was appointed as senior vice president and chairman of the World Bank's loan committee. He retired in 1978.

After retiring, he returned to Stanford, where he was active in the university community for 26 years. He created a program for Stanford students to work as interns in World Bank offices and assisted students in preparing for their posts.

He also established a fund for Stanford students studying Washington, D.C., to receive free tickets to performances at the Arena Stage Theater, which he helped found.

A resident of Portola Valley for 26 years, Mr. Knapp lived at The Sequoias retirement community for the past 10 years.

Continued on next page



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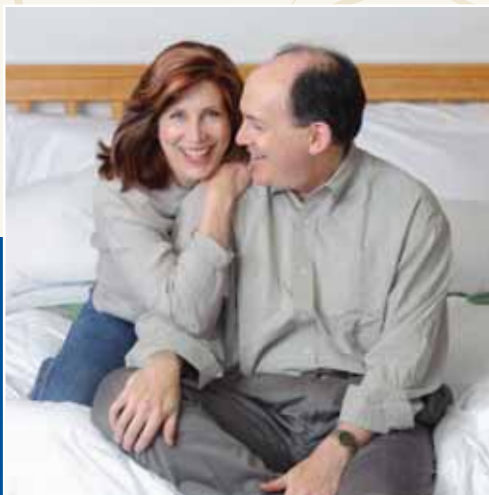
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The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

District 3 encompasses the area east and south of Woodside Road, Bear Gulch Creek (south of Woodside Road), west of Mountain Home Road and Manzanita Way, and Sand Hill/Portola Roads, and the Family Farm/Hidden Valley areas east of Portola Road.

Interested residents may check residency requirements and request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon and 1-5:00 p.m. at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, on the Town's web site at www.woodsidetown.org or by telephoning (650) 851-6790. Deadline for applications is Friday, January 15, 2010, 5:00 p.m.

A man of characters

Local actor experiences a Civil War Christmas from many angles

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Some people who shift back, forth and beyond from one personality to another within the span of minutes might benefit from a good psychiatrist or anti-psychotic drugs. But Cyril Jamal Cooper? No way. Just give the man a stage.

That's exactly what Mr. Cooper has through Dec. 27 at the Lucie Stern Theatre, where TheatreWorks' "A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration" is being staged. He's one of 15 actors performing some 90 roles in the musical by Paula Vogel, directed by TheatreWorks Artistic Director Robert Kelley.

In the production, Mr. Cooper, who has lived in Menlo Park for some 10 years, portrays eight different characters — including a mule.

"People love my mule," Mr. Cooper says, laughing. The scene in question features a mule who catches the scent of a horse in the darkness. Stirrings of longing ensue. "I fall in love with a horse — it's a magic moment," he explains, adding that the subsequent braying and neighing of the two hoofed creatures inspire a chorus of other animals pining for companions.

That moment, he notes, is one of several in the show that provides relief from the more serious themes of the play, which is set in and near Washington, D.C., on a snowy Christmas Eve, 1864.

It's an expansive play of imagination, with scenes of President Lincoln, four months before his assassination, and Mary Todd Lincoln occupied with thoughts of Christmas gifts; Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant and their soldiers facing the bleak realities of war as it nears its end; slaves and black soldiers fleeing their bonds, or fighting to free all slaves.

The action is given added dimension by the music of the time and season — hymns, spirituals, Christmas carols and 19th century folk songs.

"I like (the play) from the per-



Photo by David Allen

Cyril Jamal Cooper, right, is James Wormley, and Diana Torres Koss is Mary Todd Lincoln in "A Civil War Christmas" on the TheatreWorks stage.

spective of being a brand new take on a Christmas story," Mr. Cooper says. "All the stories in it connect, and it's truly an American story."

One of the most satisfying elements of the play for him was the duality of experiences he lives vicariously onstage: Mr. Cooper's roles include that of a black soldier who had earlier crossed to freedom and was now fighting on the side of the Union, and of Willie Mack Lee, Robert E. Lee's slave who, in the play, follows Gen. Lee into war.

"It's really cool to be able to express little bits and pieces of (the black experience) of the times," he says. "There's the older slave who doesn't have the option to pick up a gun and fight ... then there are the black people on the Union side."

In the older slave's role, Mr. Cooper says that he relishes a particular moment: He is carrying coffee to Confederate soldiers in the camp he is serving as Gen. Lee's slave. It is a time when it's becoming increasingly apparent that the Confederates are losing the war. He stops, and drinks the coffee himself.

An impressive debut

This is Mr. Cooper's fifth production with TheatreWorks. With his first TheatreWorks show, he made his professional acting debut — an unusual experience for an actor fresh out of school.

That experience came about after the TheatreWorks casting director was asked to critique

finals for graduating students in the Foothill College conservatory program, of which Mr. Cooper was a part. Shortly afterward, the casting director contacted him, suggesting that he audition for the upcoming TheatreWorks production of "Fences," by August Wilson.

He did, and won the role of Cory.

Since then, Mr. Cooper, now 33, has performed in "Where's William?," "Shakespeare in Hollywood," and "Memphis" at TheatreWorks. He's also won roles in local productions of "Ragtime," "West Side Story," "Showboat," "Miss Saigon," "The Jackie Robinson Story," "Urinetown," and others.

Mr. Cooper says he's been so focused on his eight roles in "A Civil War Christmas" that he hasn't had time to consider what he might audition for once the show closes. But, he adds, "I'm thinking about getting into movies."

His only film experience was as an extra in a martial arts movie when he was much younger. "I had my extra moment back then, wearing my little gi, but the movie never came out," he laughs. ■

■ INFORMATION

TheatreWorks' "A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration," by Paula Vogel, runs through Dec. 27 at Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. Tickets are \$26-\$62. Call 463-1960, or go to theatreworks.org.



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Continued from previous page

Mr. Knapp is survived by his four children, Louis, Rosalind, Elise, and Michael; two grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. In 1939 he married Hilary Eaves of London, and in 1976 was married to Iris Hay-Edie of Port Antonio, Jamaica. Both preceded him in death.

Menlo Park schools face unpleasant options

SCHOOLS

continued from page 5

commitment to its own students to increase diversity in the schools.

“We have a very legitimate problem,” said Jeff Child, the newly selected board president. “I’d like to see where it comes back on that (Tinsley) issue.”

O’Connor site

The district is facing a January deadline to notify the O’Connor site’s tenants, the private German-American International School, of a decision on its lease. The lease expires in 2011 and unless the board notifies GAIS in January, the lease will automatically renew for five more years.

Despite doubts about the enrollment projections — several board

members said they don’t think it will go as high as forecast — district officials want to keep their options open.

“If we extend (the lease) for five years, then we’re out to 2017, and that’s a hell of a gamble,” said Mr. Ranella.

Instead, the board directed Mr. Ranella to pursue talks with the GAIS about a new lease arrangement that would allow either party to opt out with a 14- or 16-month notice. Board members said they’d like to wait and see what the incoming kindergarten numbers look like when enrollment starts in February. The past two years have seen a bumper crop of new kindergarteners, far exceeding demographic projections.

“I’m not sure if we’re being strategic or if we’re kicking the can

down the road,” commented Mr. Ranella.

The financial considerations weighed heavily on board members. The small O’Connor campus could accommodate no more than 250 children and would require an estimated \$10 million to bring it up to par with the rest of the district’s elementary schools. Running a new school would cost the district about \$650,000 a year, which includes lost rental income and the cost of hiring administrators and staff. That number does not include teacher salaries, a cost the district would incur regardless of the school site.

The high price tag, coupled with the undesirable location of O’Connor — it’s on the remote edge of the district in Menlo Park’s Willows neighborhood — led several board members to wonder if

money wouldn’t be better spent by selling O’Connor to the GAIS and purchasing a new, more centrally located property for a school.

Hans-Peter Metzger, the head of the German-American International School, said his school could be interested in purchasing the campus.

“We’re not making an offer right now, but it’s something we at the school would entertain,” he told *The Almanac*. “We’ve been here almost 20 years and we like where we are.”

In the meantime, the GAIS has been scouting new locations, although the school community would hate to move, he said. He said he understands the Menlo Park district’s difficult position.

Other options

Cheaper, but equally unpalatable options include parking portable classroom trailers on school campuses, or boosting class sizes

rather than adding classrooms.

Oak Knoll principal David Ackerman said he’d rather see class sizes grow a bit than take up part of the school’s new athletic field with portables. The district isn’t blessed with an abundance of land, and construction projects at Oak Knoll, Encinal and Hillview schools include two-story classroom buildings in order to maximize playground and field space.

Terry Thygesen, a former board member who is part of the advisory committee that worked with Mr. Ranella on his report, encouraged the board to seek a parcel tax rather than cut the budget by eliminating programs or allowing the already large elementary schools to continue to grow.

“The schools are really the heart of the community,” she said. “Before we degrade things, let’s give the community a chance to step up.” ■

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Open Letter on Health Care Reform

We have come together throughout Silicon Valley to speak out against a ban on coverage for specific health care services, a ban that passed the U.S. House of Representatives and would leave millions of women with private insurance worse off than they are today.

The elimination of coverage for abortion services, known as the Stupak amendment, would prohibit millions of low- and middle-income patients from using their own money to obtain insurance coverage for a legal medical procedure.

This cannot be allowed to stand. We are on the verge of passing historic legislation that would protect the health of everyone in this country. But the effort will fail if millions of women are left with less health coverage than they had before. We implore our lawmakers in Washington to strike the Stupak amendment from the final bill.

Signed:	Richard Gordon	Doria Leong
	Mary Lavigne - Butler	Kim Scott
Magan Ray	Karen Grove	Linda Williams
Dr. Michelle Sandberg	Carol Hedges	Bob Fenwick
Carol Mayer Marshall	Allison Dundas	Jan Fenwick
Lucia Tedesco	Patricia Williams	Chris Riley
Mary Klein	Dick Fischer	Yoriko Kishimoto
Deborah Moritz	Russell Elmer	Amy Scherer
Susan L. Markowitz	Richard Kass	Susan M. Hyatt
Frannie Hall Kieschnick	Debbie Mytels	Tracey Bobrowicz
Diane Savage	Andrea Fono	Sophia Yen
Jennifer DiBrienza	Jennifer Blakely	Randy Yates
Eva Grove	Maura Dudley	Sarah Adler-McDonald
Alice Schaffer Smith	Barbara Berry	Linda Adler

Take action!

Call Representative Anna Eshoo at 650-323-2984 to urge her to support a final bill that doesn’t leave women worse off than they were before health care reform.

Family, friends gather to remember Lisa Xavier, 6

VIGIL

continued from page 5

strained to hear neighbors, relatives, and parents of classmates talk about Lisa’s generosity, her winning smile and mischievous sense of humor.

Small children, many of them wearing ski caps on a night when you could see your breath, wove through the crowd. Though some were hard to spot among the towering adults, their voices came clear during the sing-alongs, and in low, urgent whispers throughout the ceremony.

While there were occasional outpourings of grief, most speakers related upbeat stories about their encounters with Lisa.

John Reid, a Daily News sports writer who lives in the same apartment complex as Lisa’s family, recalled how Lisa would follow around the landlord as he went about various tasks, lending a hand and asking questions. “I could not think of another child being so thoughtful with others,” he said.

Kellen Glinder spoke of his daughter’s fascination with a water bottle Lisa had, saying that he observed Lisa asking her own mother to buy the same bottle for his daughter. “Lisa was incredibly compassionate in every interaction I had with her,” Mr. Glinder said.

Lisa had an air of mischief about her, said parent Lesley Heller. Ms. Heller said that Lisa once tricked her into thinking she had missed Lisa’s birthday party. “She had never met me, and most 6-year-olds barely talk to me,” she said. “She touched me that day, and I teased her ever since.”

Following a soulful lament by Lisa’s grandmother, Mr. Glinder asked everyone to take a moment to collect themselves. “I think we all need a breath,” he said.

The occasional camera flash poked the crowd, the clicks of shutters resounding in the hush. Cam-

era operators from several local television stations positioned themselves at the front of the assembly, pivoting between the speakers and Lisa’s family. They took people aside for interviews as the evening wound down, the cameras’ shotgun lights forming islands of luminescence on the dark field.

Near the end of the program, people were directed to turn to a tree near the school’s entrance, entwined in holiday lights. The tree will be lit every year in Lisa’s honor.

Lisa and her parents, Shiji and Charles, were driving eastbound on Willow Road just before 2 p.m. on Nov. 12 when their car was struck by one of two vehicles engaged in a street race heading northbound on Bayfront Expressway, according to Menlo Park police. Lisa was on her way to a violin lesson, according to Rashmi Bhandari, who has a son in Lisa’s class at Laurel and helped organize the vigil.

Witnesses reported that the driver of the black 1989 Ford Mustang that struck the family’s car exited his vehicle and jumped into a white Honda involved in the race. The Honda then fled the scene, police said.

Lisa and her mother, Shiji Varghese, were taken to Stanford Hospital with serious injuries. Lisa died the next afternoon. Ms. Varghese recovered and attended the vigil.

Charles Shuresh, Lisa’s father, was driving the car, but was not injured in the collision, according to police.

No arrests have been made in the case. Police are “actively searching for” and want to question East Palo Alto resident Shannon Fox, 24, in connection with the accident. Mr. Fox is described as a black man, 6 feet 2 inches tall, 220 pounds and muscular. He is not a suspect, but considered a “person of interest” in the homicide investigation, according to police.

Police are asking anyone with information to call 330-6300 and ask for the watch commander. ■

LAWSUIT

continued from page 5

October, but no reportable action occurred, said Ms. Furth. When asked if the council voted in closed session to approve the settlement, she reiterated that no reportable action occurred at the meeting.

Information about the settle-

ment is available from Atherton town hall upon request, she said.

“It’s a personnel matter, and we generally do not announce personnel matters,” Ms. Furth said. “We follow state law, and the Brown Act says that when a settlement becomes final, the terms shall be released upon inquiry.”

Since there was no council action, and information about the

settlement was not updated on the San Mateo County Superior Court’s Web site, it’s unclear how anyone would have known to ask about the settlement.

Mayor Jerry Carlson said that the council was instructed by Ms. Furth not to discuss the settlement until it was finalized, and

See **LAWSUIT**, page 20

Jury convicts M-A track coach of battery

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

After a four-day trial, a San Mateo County jury on Friday convicted a longtime Menlo-Atherton High School cross-country coach of misdemeanor battery over his response last May to three Hispanic boys after their soccer ball hit the side of his house trailer.

Kelly Weston, a former assistant coach of cross country at M-A, could be fined up to \$2,000 and spend up to six months in jail on the battery conviction, a prosecutor said. That conviction refers to the boys' claim that Mr. Weston pushed one of them.

The jury deadlocked on the other three counts: cruelty to a child, making criminal threats and making threats that include a violation of civil rights — a reference to the alleged racial aspects of the incident. Superior Court Judge Robert Foiles presided.

The case returns to court at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 15, for a decision by the prosecutor on whether to retry Mr. Weston over the deadlocked

counts. On the two threat counts, a majority on the jury concluded that Mr. Weston had not been motivated by racial prejudice, Assistant District Attorney Karen Guidotti said in an interview.

Mr. Weston originally pleaded not guilty to all counts and remains free on \$50,000 bail.

Asked to comment on Mr. Weston's future at M-A, Sequoia Union High School District spokeswoman Bettylu Smith said that M-A "does not have plans to renew Mr. Weston's contract for the upcoming track season."

The boys — two 12-year-olds and an 11-year old — say the soccer ball struck the house by accident. Mr. Weston, 63, allegedly 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," prosecutors said.

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

A deputy who interviewed Mr. Weston said "some of the hate

language that was charged, some of that was used in the interview," prosecutors said.

In the trial, prosecutor Brian Raft structured his case around testimony from the boys, the mother of two of the boys, a deputy sheriff, and the manager of the trailer park, who allegedly overheard some of the altercation, Ms. Guidotti said.

In defense, Mr. Weston's attorney Harriotte "Hallie" Aaron began with an "ear" witness who claimed to be talking on the phone with Mr. Weston during the altercation. But during cross examination, the witness could not say for certain on which day he was talking with Mr. Weston, Ms. Guidotti said.

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, prosecutors said.

Mr. Weston 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 to The Almanac. ■

New ordinance would restrict lawn watering in Menlo Park

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

A revised Menlo Park ordinance would prevent some homeowners from watering their lawns during the day, and require them to use water-efficient irrigation techniques.

At its meeting Tuesday, Dec. 15, the City Council will offer guidance on drafting the ordinance. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, located between Laurel and Alma streets in Menlo Park's Civic Center complex.

Under revisions to the water-efficient landscaping ordinance, prompted by a new state law that goes into effect in January, irrigation rules designed to save water would apply to one- and two-family units. The city's current

rules only apply to multi-family and commercial developments.

The ordinance would apply only to new or remodeled homes that have over 1,000 square feet of irrigated space, and to properties that undergo a landscaping overhaul. Based on recent renovation and construction projects, the city estimates that 250 homes would have been subject to the ordinance over the past two years.

Under the recommendations outlined by city staff, people would not be allowed to use an irrigation system on their lawns between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m., though they would be able to water their lawns with a hose. The new ordinance would also require that homeowners take specific measures to conserve water through their irrigation systems. ■

Police report spike in property crime in Menlo Park

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park police are conducting undercover operations and increasing patrols in some areas in response to a spike in property crime across the city, including a \$100,000 jewelry theft.

From Nov. 27 through Dec. 3, the city received reports of eight residential burglaries, three incidents of grand theft, a stolen vehicle, seven auto burglaries and a robbery, according to police.

On Dec. 4, jewelry valued at \$100,000 was reported stolen from a home in the 1000 block of Valparaiso Ave.

The spike in crime appears to have been relatively brief; it was preceded and followed by weeks in which incidents of property crime were not unusually high, based on city crime statistics.

The police report cited a recent burglary on Willow Road in the Belle Haven neighborhood in which \$18,600 worth of goods was stolen, including expensive jewelry.

A total of \$21,000 worth of electronics and jewelry was reported stolen from a Willows residence, though police found no sign of forced entry and have suspended the case, according to police spokeswoman Nicole Acker.

Another Willows resident reported a collection of Barbie dolls stolen.

A BMW was reported stolen from the Flood Triangle neighborhood, three bikes went missing, and several cars were broken into, with a briefcase containing a

birth certificate and Social Security card reportedly swiped from one of the vehicles.

The spike in property crime appears to have been largely isolated to Menlo Park. No property crimes were reported in Atherton over that period. A spokesperson with the Redwood City police department said that city had not seen an unusual rise in property crimes. A spokesperson with the Palo Alto police department said the city had

seen an increase in auto burglaries, but not other property crimes.

"We do want to put a message out there to remind people to keep items out of view in their vehicles," Ms. Acker said. She added that the police department advises people who have recently bought "big-ticket items," such as televisions or computers, to hide or recycle the boxes immediately. ■



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Peninsula Christmas Services



Grace Lutheran Church ELCA
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 3149 Waverley Street · Palo Alto, CA 94306 | 650.494.1212



Christmas Eve Thursday, December 24
 4:00 pm | 6:00 pm | 11:00 pm
 Candlelight Worship & Communion

Christmas Day Friday, December 25
 10:00 am Carols & Lessons

www.gracepa.org

St. Bede's Episcopal Church

2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, 854.6555
www.stbedesmenlopark.org

*Celebrate the Season of
 Promise Fulfilled!*

Thursday, December 24th

Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant and Holy Eucharist
 10:00 p.m. Festal Choral Eucharist

Friday, December 25th

Christmas Day

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Carols, Rite I



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 (All services will be about an hour)**

4:00 pm Children's Communion Service with Pageant
 6:00 pm Christmas Communion Service with the Festival Choir
 9:30 pm Carol Sing
 10:00 pm Christmas Communion Service with the Festival Choir

Christmas Day

10:00 am Christmas Day Communion with hymns

330 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park
 (between El Camino Real and Middlefield Road)
 650-326-2083

www.trinitymenlopark.org



Woodside Village Church

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES

Family Worship Service & Reception
 Sunday, December 20, 9:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service & Reception
 Thursday, December 24, 10 p.m.



Woodside Village Church

3154 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 650.851.1587 www.wvchurch.org

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The **Almanac**

Peninsula Christmas Services



Come & Celebrate Christmas Eve at Christ Episcopal Church

815 Portola Road · Portola Valley, CA 94028
650-851-0224

Christmas Eve

Kinder Service 3:00 p.m.

*Features Christmas carols, children's sermon
(for Children 6 years and under)*

Christmas Eve

Choral Eucharist 5:30 p.m.

A joyous traditional service featuring adult choir.

Christmas Day

Holy Eucharist 10 a.m.

ST. LUKE'S CHAPEL IN THE HILLS ANGLICAN

The 1928 Book of Common Prayer

Thursday, December 24, CHRISTMAS EVE:

5pm Family Holy Communion Service
10:00 pm Lessons and Carols
11:15 pm Candlelight Holy Communion Service
Friday, December 25: 11:00 am
- Holy Communion Service
26140 DUVAL WAY · LOS ALTOS HILLS
(650) 941-6524 www.stlukeschapel.org



Christmas Eve at Bethany

5:00 p.m. Family Christmas

Children tell the story of Jesus, as shepherds, angels, wisemen, and the holy family.

*Join us between services
and enjoy wonderful food and Christmas cheer!*

7:00 p.m. Christmas with Quadre

The horns of Quadre create the music of Christmas, as we celebrate the birthday of Jesus.

10:00 p.m. Candlelight Christmas

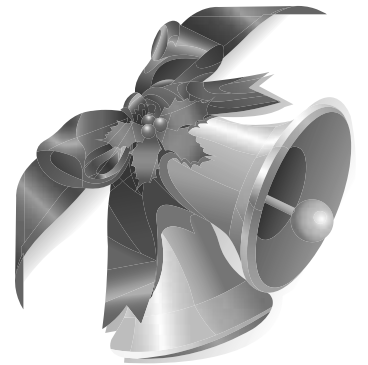
A quiet and contemplative time to listen, sing, and reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ.

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH



Bethany

1095 CLOUD AVENUE
MENLO PARK
at the corner of Avy & Cloud
www.bethany-mp.org



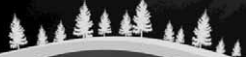
Celebrate Christmas With Us

Menlo Park Presbyterian Church
950 Santa Cruz Avenue

Wednesday December 23: 6:30 p.m., 8 p.m.
Thursday December 24: 5 p.m., 6:30 p.m.,
8 p.m., 9:30 p.m., 11 p.m.

The Cafe at 700B Santa Cruz Avenue (behind ace hardware)
Thursday December 24: Family friendly services, 5 p.m., 7 p.m.

Contact us at 650.323.8600, www.mppc.org



Valley Presbyterian Church in the Redwoods

945 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA
650-851-8282
www.valleypreschurch.org

Christmas Eve Worship

5:00 pm - Candlelight Service
10:00 pm - Candlelight Service
Lessons & Carols

Ladera Community Church

3300 Alpine Rd., Portola Valley
www.ladera.org

*We hope you will join us for
one or more of these events:*

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Advent Prayer Service, 7:30 pm
A service of "Healing and Hope"

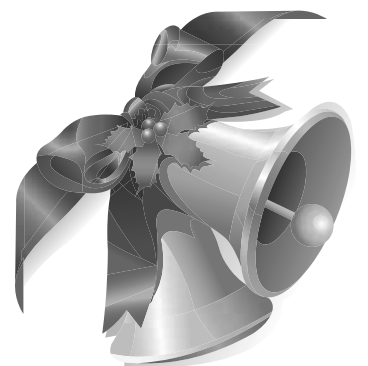
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13
Madrigal Concert, 10:30 am
Performed by Mountain View High School's Singers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20
Christmas Music Service, 9:30 am
Rejoice and Sing!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24
Family Christmas Pageant, 4 pm
Candle Lighting Service, 8 pm

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3
Celebration of Three Kings, 9:30 am

For more details, visit www.ladera.org
or call the church office at (650) 854-5481.



Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Beyond Medical Basics: Hospital Social Workers Blend Compassion and Counseling

Jim Carrigan was in shock. Three thousand miles across the country, his son Andrew was lying comatose at Stanford Hospital, bones broken up and down the left side of his body. And, a few hours after he'd been hit by a car while riding his motorcycle on Highway 9, he also suffered a stroke that disabled his uninjured right side. Carrigan and his wife Sue were overwhelmed.

Even before the Carrigans arrived at Stanford to be with their son, hospital social worker Tim Chamberlain had phoned them, ready to help them cope not only with the emotional impact of what had happened but with practical issues as well. Among those was the question of recovering Andrew's motorcycle. A local towing company had it and the charges were mounting. Chamberlain was ready to take care of the paperwork to get the bike released.

"He went above and beyond the call to solve a problem, relieving us of some stress in the middle of everything else that was going on," said Jim Carrigan. As the days passed, and Andrew slowly defied an initially poor prognosis, Chamberlain continued to be someone whose compassion and understanding

was crucial. Not only was Chamberlain willing to let Carrigan vent his frustration, but he remained a proactive champion even after Andrew was discharged.

What the Carrigans discovered at Stanford was that pivotal element of care supplied by a particular group of professionals. "Social workers are the cement that binds all the disciplines," said Will Gressman, interim director of the Hospital's Social Work and Case Management Department. Whether a patient is waiting for an organ transplant, or receiving treatment for cancer or recovering from an accidental trauma, Stanford's care team includes a social worker.

Seeing the Whole Picture

Every day, social workers gather with nurses and physicians to talk about their patients, reviewing their progress, working together to make sure that the non-medical needs of each are considered and addressed. For one patient, a social worker might be helping with insurance issues; for another, the most important service might be to arrange for a family visit.



Norbert von der Groeben

Before his accident, Andrew Carrigan loved making music. After many months of therapy, he's regaining his skills on the guitar.

in situations where the lives of a patient and family have been turned upside down in a second, a social worker is the person who helps a family get organized to cope.

In his first meeting with the Carrigan family, Chamberlain said, "We talked about what had happened and we talked about the feeling of being afraid he might not survive. Part of my reward is being able to offer support, to say, 'It's appropriate for you to be afraid.' But we also talked about how it was okay to maintain hope. There is nothing wrong with hope."

As Andrew's family rallied, Chamberlain continued his work.

For many families, he is the person who educates them about practical matters, including disability insurance. But he's always checking in, asking, "How are you coping?"

Handling Difficult Realities

"It's a very subtle science," said Thomas. "We have to tell people things they really don't want to hear and tell them in a way so there can be a productive outcome for the family. It can be very challenging, especially when there's a lot of emotion and a lot of anger."

In the most difficult circumstances, social workers must find a way to quickly address issues of life and death. "We see a wide variety of situations that have an emotional impact on a patient and patient's family. For instance, a patient may have been in a car with their best friend and maybe they lived and their best friend didn't," said Thomas. "We want to respond to those issues from as close to the onset as we can, with education and support because that can have a positive influence on the immediate and long-term well-being of a patient."

"We're problem solvers," said social worker manager Michael Thomas. "We answer all manner of questions and all sorts of non-medical problems come to us. We fill that role of being an emotional support to patients and families, identifying things that might be obstacles to doing well here in the hospital and to a smooth transition out of the hospital."

"People go to a hospital and can be pretty clueless," said Jim Carrigan. "When something catastrophic happens, you need to ask as many questions as possible. You're dealing with so many people and then there are shift changes. You would be lost unless you really get a handle on it."

"He went above and beyond the call to solve a problem, relieving us of some stress in the middle of everything else that was going on."

— Jim Carrigan, father of Stanford Hospital patient Andrew Carrigan

Someone like Chamberlain is that person "you can go to and say, 'This is what I need,'" Carrigan said. And



Norbert von der Groeben

Andrew Carrigan and his brother John look at x-rays of Carrigan's leg injuries, still awed by the damage done by the accident.



Andrew Carrigan was wearing a helmet, leather jacket, leather pants and heavy riding boots when he was hit and injured. The accident shredded the leather.

Norbert von der Groeben

tions between transplant candidates and transplant recipients as another way of educating those candidates about the change they face, focusing on coping skills and the lifelong need to follow a medical regimen that protects their health. “I can yack away at them, but there’s nothing like hearing it from a person who’s walked the walk,” David said.

“We’re problem solvers. We answer all manner of questions and all sorts of non-medical problems come to us.”

– Stanford Hospital social worker Michael Thomas

With her cancer patients, Sandy Chan makes sure that they have the chance to talk about their feelings. “Doctors can be busy, and patients have these things they want to say, but they’re not always able to tell them. They hold these things in, feeling as though they shouldn’t be feeling them. But the deeper you can get in, the more you can find out, the more you can do.”

“Our goal is to make sure patients have all the information they need to make good decisions,” she said.

“Social workers are the cement that binds all the disciplines.”

– Will Gressman, Interim Director, Stanford Hospital Social Work and Case Management Department

And even when patients are no longer patients, social workers keep their best interests at heart. Weeks after Andrew left the hospital, his father called Chamberlain for help with an insurance issue. “Let me check,” Chamberlain said. Less than 10 minutes later he called back to say he’d found the missing piece of paper and had sent it on its way.

patient’s stay in the hospital, Thomas said. “Sometimes we are planting seeds we hope will grow at some point in the future.” Recently, he received a voice-mail message from a former patient who said she still had his card and that she had stopped drinking after he had talked with her while she had been hospitalized five years earlier. She didn’t leave her last name, but she’d wanted to thank him.

Thoughtful Guidance

The better a social worker understands a patient, the better medical treatment plans can be implemented. Social worker Evonne David, who works with transplant patients and their families, has become expert in analysis of key psychosocial elements in order “to develop a therapeutic alliance that keeps everyone engaged,” she said, including a patient’s support person. She also arranges conversa-

How Hospital Social Workers Can Help

Stanford Hospital’s Department of Social Work and Case Management provides a wide array of services and information. They include:

- discharge planning
- assistance and referrals to lodging resources
- supportive and adjustment counseling
- crisis intervention
- financial assistance
- insurance, Medicare, Medi-Cal, state disability and Social Security
- psychosocial evaluations
- support groups
- education and consultative services
- medical care preference documents

Other Hospital resources include:

- Stanford Health Library 650.723.9863. healthlibrary.stanford.edu
- The Hospital’s Guest Services Department 650.498.3333. stanfordhospital.org/forPatients/patientServices/
- Farewell to Falls 650.724.9369
- Aging Adult Services 650.498.3333
- Stanford Cancer Supportive Care Program 650.725.9481
- Art for Health, massage therapy, Pet Assisted Wellness, music, smoking cessation. Call 650.498.3333



Stanford Hospital social workers find ways to help patients and their families cope with the stress and challenge of illness and hospitalization. Pictured here clockwise from the top left are: Evonne David, Michael Thomas, Tim Chamberlain and Sandy Chan.

Norbert von der Groeben

TOWN OF WOODSIDE2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062**INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR
ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE
REVIEW BOARD**

The Architectural and Site Review Board (ASRB) reviews and makes recommendations to the Director of Planning and Building on residential, site design and commercial applications.

Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month, 4:30 p.m. Appointment is for a term expiring in February 2013.

Interested residents may request information and applications from the Town Clerk's Office, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM-12 noon and 1-5:00 PM, Woodside Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, by telephone at (650) 851-6790, or through the Town's web site at www.woodsidetown.org. Deadline for applications is Monday, January 4, 2010, 5:00 p.m.



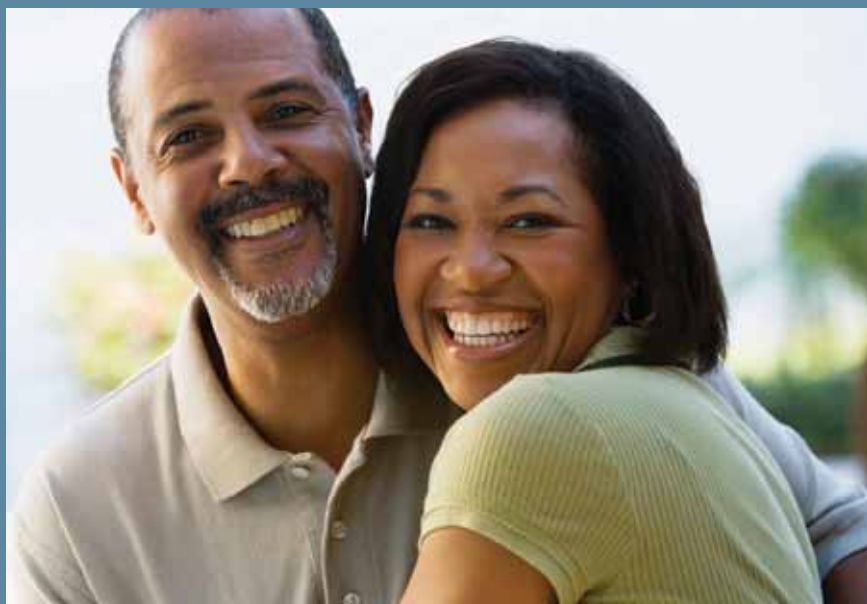
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Scoping session on city's plan for downtown

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

A long-term planning project for Menlo Park's downtown will be the subject of a "scoping session" during the Dec. 15 City Council meeting.

The session is a formalized step in the environmental review process, according to state law. People are invited to give feedback on what topics the city should analyze in the environmental review process.

Through the plan, the city is expected to

**■ MENLO
WATCH**

outline new zoning guidelines and capital improvements in downtown Menlo Park, along El Camino Real, and around the train station.

An initial draft of the plan is scheduled for release in early spring. Residents will have several opportunities to offer feedback on that plan, through the environmental review process and otherwise, before it comes before the council for a final vote.

In addition to speaking at the meeting, people can submit written comments by e-mailing city planner Thomas Rogers (throgers@menlopark.org), or via mail at: Thomas Rogers, Associate Planner/City of Menlo Park/Community Development Department, Planning Division/701 Laurel St./Menlo Park, CA 94025. Comments are due by Jan. 8.

Overnight parking will be relaxed

Menlo Park's police department brings us the final word on overnight holiday parking (we hope): Enforcement will be relaxed, but only for a few days.

People can park on Menlo Park streets without fear of getting cited on the nights of Dec. 24, Dec. 25, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1, according to spokeswoman Logan Bruttig.

That's not as lenient as the usual two-week period sans enforcement, but it's better than total enforcement. Police spokeswoman Nicole Acker had previously told us that the city's standing ban on overnight parking would not be lifted at all during the holidays.

For more information, call the police department at 330-6308.

Fees raised again for organized sports teams

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

Soccer and baseball players can expect to pay substantially more in 2010 for the use of the two baseball and two soccer fields in Portola Valley. The Town Council has authorized increases, effective Jan. 1, 2010, that are expected to boost playing-field revenues by 62 percent to \$66,000 a year, assuming that field use remains about the same.

The council approved the new fees in a unanimous vote Dec. 9. The Parks & Recreation Committee recommended the new per-player, per-season rate structure, which follows a 50 percent across-the-board increase that the council implemented in August.

The increases come in a rare budget year for Portola Valley in which revenues dropped, the first such event in 15 years, Town Manager Angela Howard said in June. Home-construction and state-derived revenues are down and expenses are up, including a 33 percent increase over three years for law enforcement services.

The fee increases are designed to have players split with the taxpayers the \$168,600 cost to maintain the four fields, though the anticipated \$66,000 in revenues falls short of that goal for 2010. A staff report included an additional 25 percent increase for 2011, but the council put off that discussion for a future meeting.

The changes affect organized soccer at Rossotti Field at 3919 Alpine Road and Russ Miller Field at Town Center at 765 Portola Road, and organized baseball and softball at Ford Field at 3399 Alpine Road and the new Town Center diamond.

For kids in leagues, including Alpine-West Menlo Little League and two soccer leagues — AYSO and Kidz Love Soccer — the fee per player goes to \$40 from \$22.50, a 78 percent increase.

For the Alpine Football Club, a youth soccer group with

home fields in Portola Valley and Woodside, the rate jumps 167 percent to \$60. The steeper increase reflects lower revenues from club games, in which only the home-team players pay.

The same logic applies for adult leagues and clubs. Players with the co-ed adult soccer league and the adult softball league will see their fees rise 33 percent to \$60, while fees for the Portola Valley Soccer Club will jump 100 percent to \$90.

A town apart?

In a Dec. 9 letter to the council, Tim Goode, president of the Alpine/West Menlo Little League, complained about a tripling of fees from the spring of 2009 and wondered why Portola Valley asks for so much from its players.

Burlingame charges \$10 per player, and San Carlos and Belmont charge \$20, he said.

Among communities that charge by the hour, Portola Valley works out to nearly \$18 per hour versus \$2 and \$6 for Palo Alto and Menlo Park, respectively, and nothing at all in Pacifica and Foster City, Mr. Goode said. (Woodside also does not charge fees, Assistant Town Manager Kevin Bryant told The Almanac.)

Taken as a whole, Alpine-West Menlo will pay \$12,000 to Portola Valley in 2010 to play on two ball fields, Mr. Goode said, whereas Hillsborough's Little League pays \$30,000 to the city for the use of eight ball fields.

"To get two fields and have to pay \$12,000 is a heavy, heavy burden," he told the council.

And Portola Valley should not bundle staff costs in with field maintenance costs, he added. "This seems to be a necessary expense of the town," he said.

Parks committee member Lindsay Bowen suggested that leagues might respond by avoiding Portola Valley fields.

Council members and town staff responded with comparisons of their own. The town maintains its fields to a higher standard than is common and there are fewer taxpayers in town, they said. The thirsty grass fields are not as hardy as synthetic grass and will be increasingly expensive to maintain when water rates start three years of increases in 2011, they added.

Portola Valley is atypical in that its sales taxes represent 3 percent of its revenues. That compares to 5 percent for Pacifica, 8 percent for Woodside and double-digits for Belmont, San Carlos and Burlingame, according to published budgets for 2009-10. Hillsborough is residential only and levies no sales taxes, the assistant city manager told The Almanac.

See FEES, page 18

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- It creates local jobs. Local businesses are the best at creating higher-paying jobs for our neighbors.
- It helps the environment. Buying locally saves transportation fuel. Plus you get products that you know are safe and well made, because our neighbors stand behind them.
- It nurtures our community. Studies show that local businesses donate to community causes at more than twice the rate of chains.
- It conserves tax dollars. Spending locally ensures that your sales taxes are reinvested where they belong, right here in your community.

Local merchants know the community and are experts in selecting merchandise that is based on what you like and want. Shop with awareness. In a down economy with many businesses at risk, you are voting with your dollars. If you value a diverse local economy, choose to support these and other independent, locally owned businesses.

Here are some good reasons to shop at locally owned businesses this holiday season and all year:

www.hometownpeninsula.org



This message is brought to you by **Hometown Peninsula**, an alliance of locally-owned independent businesses. We strive to maintain our unique community character, to educate local residents that purchasing locally creates a strong local economy and bring back the vibrant hometown to our communities that is being displaced by national chains and online stores.

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Shorter meetings? Don't count on it.

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

■ MENLO PARK

Soon after beginning his first term on Menlo Park's City Council in late 2006, Rich Cline co-authored a letter with Councilman Andy Cohen, calling for an "open government initiative."

Among the things the council members asked for in that letter was to "put a hard stop on council meetings at 11 p.m. No exceptions.

"We cannot continue to make decisions after the community has gone to sleep," they wrote.

Nearly three years after that request, the council has not taken up the call for a "hard stop." During Heyward Robinson's just-concluded term as mayor, exactly two-thirds of the meetings ended after 11 p.m., with the council making plenty of decisions after the community had gone to sleep.

With Mr. Cline poised to take the gavel as mayor and get his chance to run the meetings beginning Dec. 15, should interested residents expect to be able to stay awake for their entirety?

"The goal is to get more disciplined, but I don't want to make the assumption that we'll necessarily shorten the meetings," Mr. Cline said in an interview, acknowledging that he's taken a more realistic outlook since penning that letter. "I don't want to squash creativity or discussion."

Mr. Cohen repeatedly lamented the length of meetings during Mr. Robinson's term, calling it "extremely frustrating."

"It's not uncommon for most of the council members to repeat themselves ad nauseam, in the hope that they can bowl over the opposition, and get their way," he said. "Or, they simply ask many questions, in an attempt to stall the process.

Both of those methods are counter-productive, and discourage (people) from coming to council meetings."

While the council did spend more time in the chambers during Mr. Robinson's term, long meetings were not unique to that term, or even to this council. Excluding closed sessions, special workshops and ceremonial meetings, the council spent 145 hours deliberating during the just-concluded term, as opposed to 134 during Mr. Cohen's term, with just over half of those meetings going past 11 p.m. It spent 129 hours debating during the final term of the previous council majority, which was criticized by some for rushing discussions.

Ms. Fergusson said she thinks this council is much more efficient than the one she joined after her election in 2004.

"I think that every year we get better and better at this ... as we understand each others' working style more and more," she said.

Like Mr. Cohen, Mr. Cline said he gets frustrated when council members launch into speeches, or ask unnecessary questions, though "I don't want this to come off as me making some broad, sweeping statement on the conduct of council members." A student of city politics, he said he doesn't know of many cities of Menlo Park's size that regularly hold meetings past 11 p.m.

He'd like to see the council stick to Robert's Rules of Order, which he describes as "rules for getting business done, not rules for a discussion forum. Not rules for getting everything said."

"I wish him all the success in the world in running shorter meetings, we all aspire to that goal," Ms. Fergusson said with a good-natured laugh. ■

TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 Woodside Road
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INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING COMMISSION Districts 4

The Planning Commission participates in the administration of the planning laws and policies of the Town. It is responsible for recommending to the Town Council ordinances and resolutions necessary to implement the General Plan and adopted development policy. The Commission also conducts necessary public hearings to administer the planning laws and policies of the Town and acts upon applications for zoning amendments, conditional use permits, variances, subdivisions and other related functions as may be assigned by the Council.

The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.; Commissioners are appointed for a four-year term.

District 4 encompasses the Emerald Lakes area, the Cañada Road area north of Arbor Court/Olive Hill Lane, including the Runnymede Road and Raymundo Drive areas.

Interested residents may check residency requirements and request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon and 1-5:00 p.m. at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, on the Town's web site at www.woodsidetown.org or by telephoning (650) 851-6790. Deadline for applications is Friday, January 15, 2010, 5:00 p.m.

West Bay Sanitary District Sued by San Francisco Baykeepers

December 11, 2009

To Our Customers:

This memorandum is to keep you informed about a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court against West Bay Sanitary District (WBSD) on December 2nd. On the same day similar lawsuits were filed against the cities of Millbrae and San Carlos. Over the past decade similar suits have been filed against Burlingame and a number of other cities surrounding the Bay.

San Francisco Baykeepers (SFBK) and its supporting attorney group have the stated goal of protecting the water quality of the San Francisco Bay. It derives its status to file lawsuits against sewage systems and other governmental operations under federal and/or state legislation established to protect and improve environmental resources. The legislation enables individual citizens and groups to bring suit when they believe they have found cause. This unique legal structure effectively creates an industry that is "sub-contracted" to perform enforcement of the law. It avoids having the government fund and staff a separate enforcement and prosecution agency. Funding ultimately comes from penalty judgments and legal fees awarded by a court or won through settlement negotiations with the governmental agency being sued. **The ultimate source of these awards comes from the rate and taxpayers.**

The basis for these suits is data showing sewage spills

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

that have taken place within a sanitary district. That data comes from reports filed by each agency with the California Regional Water Quality Board for each spill that occurs, regardless of the amount of sewage and whether or not any of the material entered the SF Bay or a tributary to the Bay. This very useful reporting system has been required for more than 4 years. WBSD uses this data as one its management tools. It provides statistical details that allow us to focus our resources for cleaning and repair efforts.

WBSD is over 100 years old. It is a collection system only. We use the processing plant managed by South Bayside System Authority (SBSA) that is located in Redwood Shores. This same plant provides processing for Redwood City, San Carlos, and Belmont. **The SBSA plant was built in 1980.**

More than two years ago SBSA began comprehensive engineering reviews to assure the facility would meet future capacity needs and continue compliance with emerging environmental requirements. This is critical because it is located adjacent to the SF Bay. WBSD has maintained a consistent capital expenditure program over the years aimed at needed pipe repair and replacement, but when the SBSA began its more intense review **WBSD began a similar effort of examining the status of its collection network.** Both reviews have identified a need for accelerated capital expenditure programs. The first impact of this review and planning process was seen this past summer when we announced a significant increase in sewer service charges. These new rates have now appeared on your property tax bill. These funds will be used to replace sewer main lines in the WBSD and pay financing charges required to fund major construction projects at SBSA. We have been active in planning and we are moving to implement that plan.

The WBSD board of directors is disappointed that we will have to divert management attention and financial resources to deal with the SFBK suit. We are confident that we have the same goals and intentions as SFBK. We manage the WBSD to provide efficient, reliable sewer service to our customers and make every reasonable effort to protect the precious natural resource that is the San Francisco Bay. We hope to minimize the time and effort for all parties and quickly negotiate a settlement based on the work we have already started.

We will be providing you with greater detail on our capital improvement program within the next several months. It will likely require short-term disruptions of traffic as we replace sewer mains whose useful life has ended. We will also provide updates on the progress we can make with SF Baykeepers so we can use our funds to put new pipes in the ground rather than time spent at a negotiating table.

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Jimmy James recently opened Rice Republic, a store featuring various Asian imports, on Oak Grove Avenue. By Michelle Le/The Almanac

Asian persuasion

Rice Republic, a furniture and accessories store, opens in Menlo Park

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

Hunting for a Christmas gift for the hard-to-please? How about a Chairman Mao tea set, a shadow puppet from Java, or a hand-stitched silk quilt from Vietnam?

These exotic goodies are available at the Rice Republic, a shop featuring Asian furniture, artifacts and accessories, which opened the day after Thanksgiving at 564 Oak Grove Ave., in downtown Menlo Park. (Longtime residents will remember the site as the former Johnny's Smoke Shop.)

Rice Republic is an Asian import gallery owned by Jimmy James, a personable "Aussie" from Sydney. Mr. James has been a collector of Far Eastern merchandise for more than seven years.

He had been studying Chinese medicine and massage in Australia and had traveled back and forth to China a number of times. During his travels, he became interested in starting a business that would focus on antiques and well-made contemporary pieces from Tibet, China and other Asian countries," he says.

Mr. James opened his first stores, called Eastern Element, in Byron and Ballina, in Northern NSW, the most eastern region of Australia. After seven years in the Australia marketplace, he began looking to expand to the United States, particularly Silicon Valley.

While visiting the Bay Area for a friend's birthday party last year, he spent time exploring to find a new location for his business. He now lives in Palo Alto and is getting acquainted with Menlo Park.

Rice Republic is a one-man operation. Mr. James

has spiffed up the store's interior with yellow walls and a blue-painted floor. One wall is papered with Chinese newspapers and centered with a colorful 150-year-old Chinese ancestral scroll. A canopy of painted paper umbrellas covers the ceiling.

A 9-foot wooden sign board wishes good fortune in Chinese characters. The signs are traditionally given to a new business, says Mr. James. His sign, which he said is approximately 280 years old, was given to him by a business associate in Australia.

Mr. James says his merchandise is not the same as that found in the finer furniture stores in San Francisco's Chinatown. "This furniture is designed with simpler lines. It is not as elaborate as you would find in a Chinese establishment."

Rice Republic is the kind of store where you need time to poke around. Wander into the back room, stopping to check out an opium bed from China, a beautifully hand-painted chest from Tibet, a Balinese xylophone, or a baby's cradle from Indonesia. Admire the antique postcards or colorful note and address books that would make inexpensive Christmas gifts.

Mr. James is enthused about his new location. "As I've been setting up the store, I've already had many people stop in and show interest in what I'm doing. Everyone is so friendly here," he says.

He feels downtown Menlo Park is a good location for his new Asian import gallery, with the kind of clientele that will appreciate what Rice Republic has to offer.

Rice Republic is open Monday through Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and by special appointment. For more information, call Mr. James at 716-3856. ■

FEES

continued from page 15

Portola Valley's goal of having players pay half the costs is somewhat arbitrary, Councilman Ted Driscoll noted, but added: "I wonder how long Pacifica will be able to (have a no-fee program)

in the face of an ongoing water crisis."

Little League families paid \$15 per-player per-season in 2008 and will pay \$40 in 2010. It's not as if they were paying \$50 and that was boosted to a comparable \$150, Councilman Steve Toben said. "Forty dollars, to me, in a (setting) of fresh air and sunshine for my kid is a pretty decent investment," he said. ■

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Belle Haven Clinic takes off

By Kathleen Alexander

Director of Communications,
Ravenswood Family Health Center

What was once a quiet clinic next to the Onetta Harris Senior Center in Belle Haven has, under the leadership of Ravenswood Family Health Center (RFHC), become a bustling clinic for all ages including expectant mothers, children, teens, parents and seniors.

In addition to primary medical care, patients can take advantage of RFHC's health education programs, behavioral counseling, and public health insurance enrollment services.

Next spring, when the new Ravenswood Family Dentistry clinic opens on Bay Road in East Palo Alto, patients will also have access to dental care.

On a recent Friday two exam rooms were set aside, and Dr. Cynthia Detata was scheduled to see 18 pregnant women. For many, it's their first baby.

To ensure a healthy start, every pregnant patient is offered one-on-one comprehensive prenatal education. In some instances, the young woman has no other support.

Marianna (not her actual name) first came to the Belle Haven Clinic last spring. She was living in a shelter for teens. She had no money and a lot of fears about what the future held for her.

Monica Martinez, the comprehensive perinatal health worker at the Belle Haven Clinic, met with her many times over the course of her pregnancy as she does with other young women.

"Lots of them seem clueless about how to read the needs of a baby, what to do when a baby cries," says Monica. "Many think you should just stick a pacifier or bottle in the baby's mouth. I tell them, no, you have to comfort and hold the baby. I show them how to swaddle the baby."

Critically important is the education they receive about bonding, breast feeding, nutrition, and above all protecting and nurturing

their baby. Marianna was prepared for motherhood when her baby was born on July Fourth.

"Once the baby was born," says Monica, "Marianna's parents accepted the birth and I got to meet her whole family. They stop by to see me. She has a big healthy baby that is 100 percent breastfed. She is doing everything right."

A lot of new patients have enrolled at Belle Haven in the past year; some are among the ranks of the newly unemployed that have lost health coverage.

"Since the summer, there has been a 57 percent increase in the number of Belle Haven patients compared to the same period last year," says CEO Luisa Buada.

Ravenswood's Belle Haven Clinic is supported in part by the Sequoia Healthcare District and federal stimulus funds. Belle Haven patients also benefit from referral partnerships with Lucile Packard and San Mateo medical centers.

For more information, call 321-0980 or go to www.ravenswoodfhc.org.

HOLIDAY FUND

Your donation to the Holiday Fund will help Ravenswood's Belle Haven Clinic provide care for uninsured and low-income families in south San Mateo County.

Giving to the Holiday Fund



Your gift helps children and others in need

Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers contributed \$146,045, and with available matching grants, over \$170,000 was raised for 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched, to the

extent possible, by generous community corporations, foundations, and individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies.

This year, the Almanac's Holiday Fund will support these nonprofit organizations in the community

- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula**
 Provides after-school academic support and enrichment activities for 1,000 youths each day, ages 6 to 18. Operates clubhouses in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, East Palo Alto and Redwood City, and after-school programs at schools in these communities designed to extend the learning day and supplement the school's curriculum.
- Second Harvest Food Bank**
 The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributed 30 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to some 162,000 people each month through more than 700 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.
- St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room**
 Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week in a social and friendly atmosphere to anyone in need. Funded entirely by contributions from the community, St. Anthony's is the largest soup kitchen between San Francisco and San Jose. It offers groceries to take home and distributes clothing to families.
- Fair Oaks Community Center**
 Serves more than 2,500 households each year with services ranging from food assistance to shelter referral to rental and crisis assistance. The center also has a subsidized child-care program and a fully operating senior center, and offers a variety of other social services and programs throughout the year.
- Shelter Network**
 Provides short-term shelter and transitional housing services to more than 3,700 people and children each year. Offers programs for families and individuals to become self-sufficient and return to permanent housing.
- Youth and Family Enrichment Services**
 Provides many programs to help people who struggle with substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health, relationship and communications issues. Helps strengthen youth, families and individuals to overcome challenges through counseling, education, and residential services.
- Ecumenical Hunger Program**
 Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, special children's programs and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 1,500 households.
- Teen Talk Sexuality Education**
 Provides educational programs for youth and adults to help teens make healthy choices that will result in lower rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Its "Teen Talk" program last year served thousands of youth at public school sites in San Mateo County.
- Project Read-Menlo Park**
 Provides free literacy services to adults in the Menlo Park area. Trained volunteers work one-to-one or in small groups to help adults improve their basic reading, writing and English language skills so they can achieve their goals and function more effectively at home, at work, and in the community. In 2007-08, a total of 120 tutors assisted more than 300 students.
- Ravenswood Family Health Center**
 Provides primary medical care, behavioral health services and preventive health care for all ages at its clinics in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. It also operates a mobile clinic at school sites. Of the 22,700 registered patients, most are low-income and uninsured.

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Packard Foundation



Rotary Club of Menlo Park

The Almanac will make every effort to publish donor names for donations received before Dec. 31, 2009, unless the donor checks the anonymous box. All donations will be acknowledged by mail.

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Betty Howell.....	200	Esther Johnson.....	50
Carl & Barb Jacobson.....	100	Kenneth Larkin.....	100
Eric & Phyllis Knudsen.....	**	Martin S. Seaney.....	200
Bob & Nancy Luft.....	100	John & AnnMarie Sisson.....	**
Lorraine Macchello	100	Vern Varenhorst	**
Anne Moser	**		
Mary Louise Moses.....	**	Gift	
Jim & Stephanie Nisbet.....	**	The Lund Family.....	100
Bob & Marna Page.....	**		
John & Carmen Quackenbush.....	**	Totals: As of December 11, 2009,	
Lucy Reid-Krensky.....	200	a total of 64 donors have given	
Mr. & Mrs. Tim Rowland	**	\$37,040 to the Holiday Fund.	
Joan Ruben	**		

** The asterisks designate that the donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.

AUDRIANNE CONYERS

Audrienne ("Audrey") Conyers, 84, passed away peacefully on December 3, 2009 at El Camino Hospital in Mountain View, California. She was devoted to her family and will be affectionately remembered by us as "Gammy".

Audrey was born in Michigan and attended the Edison Institute located in historic Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. The school was founded by Henry Ford who attended morning chapel on most school days. Audrey knew Mr. Ford personally and had many interesting stories to share about her unique education. She attended Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, graduated from Michigan State University, and later attended the University of Michigan for graduate studies where she met her future husband John Conyers. They were married in 1953 in Pennsylvania. In 1960, they moved to Menlo Park, California where they raised their four girls. In 1978, they moved back briefly to Pennsylvania and then in 1982 made a final move to the Bay Area. John passed away in 1983. Audrey has been a resident of Los Altos, California for the last 18 years.

We are especially grateful for the care given during the last year and a half by the wonderful staff at Pilgrim Haven.

Audrey is survived by her children Betsy DePangher, son-in-law Steve DePangher, Deborah Winter, Janice Chambers, son-in-law Ken Chambers, Jaci Beering, son-in-law Jim Beering, and her eight grandchildren.

The immediate family will hold a private service. In lieu of flowers, a Tribute Fund in Audrey's name has been set up at City Team Ministries, 2304 Zanker Road, San Jose, CA 95131. Donations should be made In Memory of Audrienne Conyers.

PAID OBITUARY

WILLIAM ARTHUR CHURCHILL

Beloved husband and father, William Arthur Churchill, 75, died November 18, 2009 in Carson City, NV, of complications from diabetes and Parkinson's disease. He was born June 24, 1934 to Kenneth M. and Martha H. (Morrison) Churchill in Oakland, CA. He celebrated 54 years of marriage to his wife, Carol, whom he met while attending UC Berkeley, where he obtained a degree in Architecture. Bill was a talented award winning Bay Area architect, practicing from 1956 – 2009. He held memberships in the South San Jose Kiwanis, the Half Moon Bay Rotary, and served on the Planning Commission in Portola Valley. For the last nine years Bill and Carol made their home in Zephyr Cove, NV, at Lake Tahoe, a place he loved and with which he had life long family and spiritual ties. They were world travelers throughout their marriage, making lifelong friends along the way.

Bill is survived by his wife Carol (Nelson) Churchill, daughters Catherine Collins of Minden, NV, Leslie Granneman of Goleta, CA, son Christopher Churchill of Las Cruces, NM, brothers James Churchill of Cedaredge, CO and John Churchill of Anchorage, AK, seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, two nieces and one nephew. He was preceded in death by his parents. A Celebration of Life for family and friends is being planned for Bill's birthday next June. The family suggests that donations be sent to the American Diabetes Association and the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

PAID OBITUARY

Police arrest two on burglary charges

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park police arrested two young men on burglary charges following a traffic stop at Bay and Willow roads on Dec. 9.

Officer Bob Simpson pulled over the Nissan pick-up truck around 11 a.m. because it had a cracked windshield and because it matched the description of a suspicious vehicle reported by a resident in the nearby neighborhood, said Sgt. Sharon Kaufman.

The back of the truck held a computer monitor, jewelry, cameras and other personal property — not the sort of stuff normally kept in the back of a truck, police said.

Although no burglary had been reported, Sgt. Kaufman said she went back to the area where the suspicious vehicle had been reported and went door-to-door until she

■ POLICE CALLS

found a house that had been broken into in the 1000 block of Berkeley Avenue. The home's occupants were away at work and unaware that they'd just been burglarized, Sgt. Kaufman said.

Nathaniel Hernandez, 18, of East Palo Alto was arrested and booked into San Mateo County jail on burglary charges. A 17-year-old juvenile, also from East Palo Alto, was booked into Hillcrest juvenile facility on burglary charges. His name is withheld due to his age.

Son of Barry Bonds arrested in Menlo Park

The 19-year-old son of home run king Barry Bonds was arrested in Menlo Park on Dec. 5 after an argument with his mother, police said.

Nikolai Bonds, 19, allegedly threw

a doorknob at his mother, 45-year-old Sun Bonds, spit in her face, and prevented her from leaving the home, police said.

He was booked on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon, vandalism, false imprisonment, and assault and battery, according to police department spokeswoman Nicole Acker.

He is accused of causing about \$400 worth of damage, police said.

The Associated Press reported that Mr. Bonds was released after posting \$50,000 bail Saturday night.

Sun Bonds' home is located in the 1000 block of Valparaiso Avenue, according to the police log. She was divorced from Barry Bonds in 1994, according to the Associated Press. ■

Sean Howell contributed to this report.

WARREN EDWARD SPIEKER 1919-2009

Died on December 7 at the age of 90. Born and raised in San Francisco, Warren graduated from Stanford University, but was a lifelong fan of Cal, his father's alma mater. His wife of almost 67 years, June Blackaller Spieker (1921-2009), was a Cal co-ed when they met while sailing to the South Pacific; they married in 1942. The war years were spent in Southern California at Santa Ana Army Air Base; 'overseas' duty was Catalina Island where Warren was charged with troop entertainment. His only brush with 'hostilities' came while umpiring a baseball game in which he pronounced Joe DiMaggio OUT! Following World War II the Spieker family had grown with a son and daughter; they settled in their new home in Atherton and the family grew with 2 more sons. Warren loved country living on the Peninsula and was a lifelong local businessman, starting Menlo Motors in the '50s, which evolved into Redwood Lease Company. He devoted himself to his family and hosted the Kids Swim Carnival in the backyard pool for scores of years, as well as Boys Club events for his sons and their friends. He was a sports enthusiast as a participant, a fan, or a cheerleader for his children. He was immensely proud of having attended 76 consecutive Big Games, a record that still stands. A member of Menlo Park Kiwanis, he enthusiastically organized the City Swim Meet at Burgess Pool each summer in an attempt to provide wholesome competition and entertainment for all the local kids. The Kiwanis Club also hosted his lunchtime lectures on travel, his passion. The memoirs of his travel years are collected in 'Spieking of Travel'. Warren and June traveled to more than 200 countries together; he was driven by his interest in history. Legend has it that he even had a dog shipped from Paris to surprise his wife who always had a dog or 2 to complete the family.

There was always a sparkle in his eye, a toast on his lips, and a laugh in his heart. He was a keen jokester and everyone was fair game. He was surrounded by family and friends, always and everywhere. He is survived by his 4 children, 13 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that gifts may be made to the Kiwanis Foundation in memory of Warren Spieker. Donations may be sent to the Kiwanis Foundation, P.O. Box 311, Menlo Park CA 94026. A memorial mass at Nativity Church in Menlo Park is planned for family members.

PAID OBITUARY

LAWSUIT

continued from page 8

even he hadn't known when that occurred.

In hindsight, the town should have foreseen the need to issue a press release and inform the public, rather than reacting to the disclosure, Mr. Carlson told The Almanac.

"It's a significant amount of money we're talking about, and we need to discuss how to handle it so it (doesn't appear to be) an under-the-table transaction type of thing, because it's not. It's certainly subject to public disclosure after it's done," said Mr. Carlson. "I need to have that discussion with the attorney."

Mr. Carlson vowed to work on a more proactive approach to informing residents. "The town should be forthcoming once the thing is finalized," he said.

Mr. Henderson, who still works for the town, stood trial this summer for misdemeanor criminal charges of assault and battery against Ms. Ortiz-Buckley. He was found not guilty by a jury in July.

The criminal charges stemmed from a June 3, 2008, incident caught on videotape in which then-Officer Ortiz-Buckley was sitting in the police station staff room when she said she was threatened by Mr. Henderson, who then lunged at her, according to Steve Wagstaffe, the chief deputy district attorney of San Mateo County.

During the trial, several other female Atherton employees testified about sexual harassment they had allegedly suffered from Mr. Henderson. Mr. Henderson's defense attorney countered by alleging that it was all a set-up by Ms. Ortiz-Buckley, who was looking to cash in at Mr. Henderson's expense. ■



Be sure to
SHOP LOCAL
this holiday
season

Thanks. *The* Almanac

OBITUARIES

Louise Barbour

Longtime Menlo Park resident

Louise Saunders Jones Barbour, the last original resident of Edgewood Lane in the Oakdell Manor development in Menlo Park, died Nov. 9 at Stanford Medical Center, surrounded by her children. She was 91.

Ms. Barbour was born in Morganfield, Kentucky, and moved to Yuba City with her family as a child. The family lived on a ranch before moving to Woodland, where she graduated from high school. Ms. Barbour attended Mills College, UC Davis, and San Jose State University.

Before World War II, she worked in the editorial department of the Woodland Democrat newspaper. During the war, she was a Red Cross volunteer at a U.S. Army hospital near Auburn, where she met her husband, Richard Barbour, who was recovering from wounds received in the Battle of the Bulge.

They were married in 1947, and in 1949 moved to Oakdell Manor in Menlo Park. Ms. Barbour was known for her devotion to the neighborhood, where she lived for 60 years, say family members. She saw many generations come and go and, for as long as she was physically able, welcomed newcomers with a smile and a pot of homemade soup, they say.

She is survived by three daughters, Liz Barbour of Redwood City, the Rev. Ellen Steele of

Campbell, and Molly Lashmett of Hot Springs, Arkansas; son John Barbour of Gloucester, Massachusetts; an aunt, Mildred Davis of Atlanta, Georgia; and two grandchildren. Her husband, Richard Barbour, died in 1984.

Robert Marsh Rowe

Retired electrical engineer and sportsman

Robert "Bob" Rowe of Menlo Park, who spent 24 years traveling the world in his sailboat, died peacefully Sept. 26, surrounded by family and close friends. He was 89.

A lover of the ocean, Mr. Rowe was not only a sailor, but a scuba diver and body surfer for most of his adult life.

Mr. Rowe was born May 13, 1920, and raised in Rochester, New York. He served as an instructor at the Coast Guard Academy in Groton, Connecticut, during World War II.

Following the service, Mr. Rowe entered Tufts University, where he graduated summa cum laude in electrical engineering. Mr. Rowe decided to accept a position at Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International) in Menlo Park, say family members.

He set off for California by car with his first wife, Pauline Rowe, and their daughter, Helen.

Mr. Rowe worked and consulted for a number of companies, ultimately working for Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) until his retirement at age 60.

A "tinkerer," Mr. Rowe collected and restored antique clocks and enjoyed doing home and auto repairs.

After retiring at 60, Mr. Rowe sailed the seas with his wife,

Jeanie. They circumnavigated the Earth, often living on their sailboat for months in exotic ports.

Mr. Rowe is survived by his wife, Jeanie; daughters Helena Rowe and April Holman; and two grandchildren.

Audrienne Conyers

Former Menlo Park resident

Audrienne "Audrey" Conyers died peacefully on Dec. 3 at El Camino Hospital in Mountain View. She was 84.

Born in Michigan, Ms. Conyers attended the Edison Institute in historic Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. The school was founded by Henry Ford, who attended morning chapel on most school days. Ms. Conyers knew Mr. Ford personally and shared many stories about her unique education, say family members.

She attended St. Mary-of-the-Woods College and graduated from Michigan State University. While taking graduate studies at the University of Michigan, she met her future husband, John Conyers. They were married in 1953 and moved to Menlo Park in 1960, where they raised their four daughters.

For the past 18 years, Ms. Conyers has been a resident of Los Altos.

She is survived by her children, Betsy DePangher, Deborah Winter, Janice Chambers, and Jaci Beering; and eight grandchildren. John Conyers died in 1983.

Services will be private. A tribute fund in Ms. Conyers' name has been set up at City Team Ministries, 2304 Zanker Road, San Jose, CA 95131. Donations should be made in memory of Audrienne Conyers.



Louis Barbour

SARAH HARMONY SULLIVAN, 76

Sarah, Sally to all of her friends and Nonni to her grandsons, passed away December 8, 2009. She was surrounded by her family in her Menlo Park home of forty four years.

Sally was born November 27, 1933 in Washington D.C. to Maj. Gen. John W. (Jazz) and Marion B. Harmony. Many of her fondest memories were of the time that she spent with her parents. She remained a devoted daughter throughout her lifetime.

Sally graduated from high school from Marymount International in Rome, Italy. She received her B.A from the University of Maryland, where she served as President of the Delta Gamma Sorority and was chosen to be a Cherry Blossom Princess. She began her career as a teacher in New Jersey and went on to teach at Sarah Dix Hamlin in San Francisco. After taking time off to raise her two children, she returned to teaching at Trinity Parish School in Menlo Park. Upon retirement, she continued to pursue her love of literacy by tutoring students in her home and volunteered at the Oak Knoll Library for twenty years.

Sally loved music and was a patron of the San Francisco Symphony for over twenty five years. She shared the passion for music with her grandson by introducing him to the Ragazzi Boys Chorus. She was a devoted gardener, a gourmet cook, an avid reader and cultured traveler. For over thirty years, she enjoyed the serenity she found in the family's vacation home in Lake Tahoe.

Sally was married to her beloved husband Thomas J. Sullivan for 45 years. She was a devoted mother to her children Carrol and Stephen. She adored her grandchildren, John and Matthew. She is survived by her husband, children, son-in-law Robert Cleveland, grandchildren, brother-in-law Gerald Sullivan S.J., sister-in-law Angela Sullivan and her many nieces and nephews. Sally was a generous and loyal friend who will be dearly missed.

A memorial will be held in her honor at Holy Trinity Parish in Menlo Park at 2:00 PM on December 19, 2009. A private interment will take place at the Santa Clara Mission Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made in her name to: The Ragazzi Boys Chorus, 20 N. San Mateo Dr., Suite 9 San Mateo, CA. 94401.

PAID OBITUARY



Steven Gray

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sgray@cashin.com



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Real Estate Reports
are now available for
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GARY MITCHELL LAMPERT

January 5, 1951- November 21, 2009



son, brother and dear friend.

A graduate of Woodside High School, he went on to attend the University of Oregon to receive his B.S. in Political Science, and Western State University School of Law where he received his Juris Doctorate. His true passion was found in the sky as an avid pilot for over thirty years with multiple aircraft ratings. He was a devoted attorney, practicing law in Redwood City before getting into real estate development with his father Roland and brother David.

Gary adored spending time with his son Joshua

along with family and friends. He had an adventurous soul. Much of his time was spent traveling the world, working on his planes, riding motorcycles, and relaxing with a good book. He had the ability to light up a room with his infectious smile and quick wit.

Those left to treasure his memories are son Joshua of Atherton, Ca., parents Roland and Audrey Lampert of Woodside, Ca., siblings David Lampert of Atherton, Ca., Julie Bell of Atherton, Ca., nephews Tyler, Jordan and Cameron Bell of Atherton, Ca., his uncles Bob Bernstein (Phyllis) of Kansas City, Mo., Arvin Bernstein of Scottsdale, Ar. and cousins Steven, Susan and David of Kansas City, Mo.

A Memorial service will be held at 11:00 AM Tuesday December 22, 2009 at Menlo Circus Club, 190 Park Ln. Atherton, Ca. 94027. In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that donations be made to Family Service Agency of San Mateo County, 24 2nd Ave. San Mateo, Ca. 94401 or your favorite charity.

PAID OBITUARY

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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

TOWN SQUARE FORUM

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

EMAIL your views to:

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

MAIL or deliver to:

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

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

For Menlo, more work to be done

It is no surprise that in the current economic downturn, Menlo Park and many other Peninsula cities and fire districts are finding that their labor contracts are more than they can bear.

Increasingly covered with what appear to some residents as lavish health and retirement benefits, many union workers today cost cities well into the six figures every year, even after they retire. These are sums that can easily eclipse the median wage level of the private sector for a similar job. And as cities and special districts try

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

to cope with shrinking revenues from property and sales taxes, they understandably look to municipal unions for wage roll-backs or at least agreements that hold the line on costs.

The city of Menlo Park recently did just that when negotiators worked a deal with the middle managers' union. The agreement will hold off pay and benefit increases, saving a modest amount in the short term, but it also will trim costs when new employees join the workforce. More important, and significant, is the city's hope to make this agreement a model for the 152 Service Employees International Union (SEIU) members, whose contract is under discussion now. The SEIU represents more than half of the city's employees, and has already publicly volunteered a two-year salary freeze.

Until recently, Menlo Park has been relatively blasé about seeking major concessions from its unions, but the downturn has brought much more scrutiny of the salaries and benefits of municipal workers. Despite its healthy reserves, Menlo Park needs to take a hard look at the salaries and lifetime health and retirement benefits that are costly now but that will just keep growing in the years ahead. In many cases, the city bases its compensation on what is paid for

similar jobs by similar-sized cities on the Peninsula.

Municipal employees who have spent 30 years with the city can retire at age 55 with 81 percent of their highest salary, which in some cases is over \$100,000 a year. Police and fire personnel can receive 90 percent of their highest pay after 30 years, and retire at age 50.

In an Almanac guest opinion last week the chief of the Central Labor Council put a human spin on this debate, saying municipal employees work hard for their money and provide services that are vital to all residents of a community. These workers are not villains, as some critics make them out to be.

That is correct, but in the current economic climate, all municipal unions (as well as department heads and the city manager) must put aside their contract demands and work to reduce labor costs, even if that means foregoing a pay increase. These days, workers in the private sector are lucky to have jobs at all, let alone jobs that include lucrative retirement and health care benefits, which long ago were given up for 401 (k) plans and high co-pays at the doctor's office.

Top union officials must recognize, as some have, that times have changed, and that even as the local economy recovers, municipal governments will continue to struggle under the burden of ever-greater personnel costs due to rising health care costs and Baby Boom retirements. Menlo Park is on the right track to hold down the cost of its middle managers, but there is much more to be done. The SEIU must accept a similar deal, and then the city needs to find a strategy to hold the line on salaries and benefits in its public safety departments when contracts are renewed in the next few years.

Given the comparisons with other Peninsula cities, that will not be easy, but unless something is done, today's tight budgets will look like a walk in the park in the years ahead.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Atherton building fees excessive

Editor:

I have been a resident of Atherton for four years. I am not a builder but I have undertaken a few modest improvement projects at my home, and have been subject to what many perceive as overreaching regulations and fees imposed by the City Council.

I agree with your Dec. 9 editorial suggesting the Atherton Council rescind the extreme road impact fees at the Dec. 16 meeting. Also on the agenda, the council can vote to rescind or revise the extreme "drainage criteria" which require private homeowners to install miniature public works projects in their backyards at a cost of \$50,000 — \$100,000 because the town lacks a sufficient drainage system of sewers. These rules are foisted on projects involving as little as 5,000 square feet of construction or hard-scaping. What's worse, the homeowner must sign up for unlimited legal risk and other costs associated with these projects in the form of the "maintenance agreement."

Both the 40 percent road impact fee and the increased drainage cri-



Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

In this scene from 1942, Atherton Police Officer Leroy Hubbard and town librarian Mrs. John Farrell, seated, at left, shared the same room. Today, the quarters are occupied by the Atherton Heritage Association, which is open Tuesday from 10 a.m. until noon.

teria were approved in 2007 by 4-1 votes of the council, with member Charles Marsala opposed. A review of council minutes from 2007 shows that both measures were not scrutinized by the council very carefully. Town staff members promised the council repeatedly that they would

provide a report about the drainage criteria, but never did.

After talking to other residents who have paid these fees and been subject to the drainage criteria, we organized a group of more than a dozen homeowners. We spoke at the October meeting, then were

put on the agenda for November. We waited until 11 p.m. to speak at the November council meeting and then the meeting was ended in the middle of our item and rescheduled for Dec. 8. That meeting was subse-

See **LETTERS**, next page

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

quently and inexplicably canceled without full review by the council.

I encourage others beginning construction or who believe in fair laws to join our group and attend the meeting. We are the Citizens for Responsible Drainage in Atherton; you can find us on Facebook or e-mail me at venverloh@gmail.com

Jon Venverloh
Marymont Avenue, Atherton

Granddaughter in awe of Tommy Simpson

Editor:

My grandmother was the most amazing woman. She was, and will continue to be a great inspiration to me. I am eternally grateful that I was able to be there for her over the last few months.

At first I was at her home every other day to help with the cats, and then, full time when she grew more dependent. I can only hope I was able to make her last days as special as she made them for me.

She regaled me with stories about her life in the Valley, the special trips she was lucky to take (like riding elephants on a tiger reserve in India), and even that she met Amelia Earhart at Ogontz!

I loved her dry sense of humor and sharp wit and enjoyed writing snazzy comments in her diary for her. Although she needed help with getting around during her last days, she was still extremely independent, even letting me know when I was try-

New MP mayor shares his vision

By Rich Cline

All great cities can be defined by their past decisions.

Almost four decades ago, Menlo Park city leaders rejected a proposed Willow Expressway freeway connection that would take cars from U.S. 101 to Interstate 280 along what is now Willow Road.

Three decades ago, when the old Marsh Road dump closed, city leaders seized an opportunity to take ownership of that land and transform it into a 160-acre park.

These two seemingly simple acts help illustrate how the decisions we make as a community can define our town for decades to come.

The quality of life in our great city and in this region at large is unique. Most of us feel very fortunate to call this home and that is a tribute to past city leaders and community members.

Think about what defines our quality of life.

Our trees are amazing. But the trees are defined by the people who planted and protect those trees.

Our downtown has been built by local residents and business owners who put in the time and effort to create better pedestrian opportunities and more accessible storefronts.

Our parks were designated and purchased

and designed by people in this community to pass on the experience to their children, and so on.

Think about your homeowners' associations and the local religious communities and how dedicated they have been to helping improve neighborhoods and communities. Think about the schools and all of the dedicated people who give of their time and resources to create flourishing foundations for our children. The parents and fundraisers, teachers and coaches, mentors and tutors make our schools work.

Of course the people who serve as our police and fire personnel provide the security that lies at the core of a great quality of life.

Menlo Park is neither an organization nor an institution. It is a community of people who have worked for years to build and protect our town so that we can pass the baton to our children. It is our duty to protect that quality of life and to find ways to improve and pass it on to future community members to carry forward.

As a community, we have to unify on large decisions and put some of our differences aside for the bigger picture.

In this coming year we will continue to face unprecedented economic challenges. We must set a new economic direction for our city, one based upon a long-term, sustainable and bal-

anced budget. We need to get our financial house in order.

This plan will be underscored by our labor negotiations. We will achieve a new balance between our revenues and the costs of our services so that we can continue to provide the community enrichment that defines us, but do it at a level that does not strain us beyond our resources.

We have great needs in our infrastructure. We must secure resources for substantial long-term infrastructure upgrades.

As a community we will tackle the largest proposed commercial development project in our city's history — the Menlo Gateway Project. Ultimately we need to determine how we balance benefits of development with our city's delicate ecosystem.

Together we will have to decide what we want to become and preserve for the next 25 to 30 years in our downtown and El Camino corridor as the specific plan takes shape. With a nod to the folks who brought us here, we need to provide the same vision for our children and our future residents and leaders.

Finally, we will have to continue to weigh the potential of high-speed rail and the impacts of the greatest rail project in 100 years on a small town such as Menlo Park.

So make no mistake about it, these are indeed challenging times. We can make the right decisions. We can pass forward a better community to the next generation if we work together, challenge each other and accept that change is necessary.

It won't be easy. But great cities don't come easy.



ing to be too helpful.

One day, she was trying to turn the television off with the telephone and accidentally pressed the 911 button. When the police showed up 10 minutes later and determined everything was fine, grandmother and I had a good laugh and a funny story to tell.

She wasn't bothered by the

handicaps that come with age, and when she passed peacefully Nov. 25 she inadvertently taught me not to fear my own mortality. I will forever love and miss my grandmother, and friend, Tommy Simpson. I hope I have inherited even half of her remarkable qualities.

Annika Simpson
Menlo Park

Touching story about equestrian shuffle

Editor:

Thanks to Maggie Mah Johnson and The Almanac for publishing the lovely story on Nancy Hey and her relocation from the Stanford Red Barn Equestrian Center to Ed Cohn's Rancho Viejo.

My daughter Allison Littlefield

and her horse Claudius were pictured in the story. She has indeed been riding with Nancy since she was 7 years old. Nancy's teaching style has taught my daughter not only equestrian skills but life skills — cooperation, goal-setting, teamwork, the patience to weather setbacks, and the importance of a positive attitude.

I also want to say a few things about Ed Cohn. When Nancy's students and clients heard the news that Strideaway Farms had to leave Stanford, there was a great deal of worry and distress. Ed welcomed the Strideaway Farms family to Rancho Viejo, turning distress into enthusiasm.

Life goes in a circle. My daughter's father, the late Jacques Littlefield, became friends with Ed Cohn in 1973 when Jacques purchased Pony Tracks Ranch, where Ed was working. Thirty-six years later, Allison is looking forward to learning roping skills from Ed in the spring.

Liz Ditz
La Questa Way, Woodside

Gateway offers rare opportunity

By Rose Jacobs Gibson

The more things change during the economic crisis, the more they stay the same.

Successful communities are still built on a strong foundation of sustainability, equality, and innovation. These core values provide the most effective local stimulus package to fuel the economic engine for San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

East Palo Alto's Ravenswood 101/IKEA project and the University Circle developments represent fine examples of sustainable, equitable innovation that provide well paying, local jobs. Also, the city benefits enormously from the tax revenues. I am grateful that the city and voters had the political leadership and foresight to approve these ambitious projects.

Menlo Park now has the chance to take similar positive economic steps. The Men-

lo Gateway project proposed by the Bohannon Development Co. of Menlo Park is a prime example of a sustainable, innovative project that would greatly benefit the cities within my supervisorial district and Silicon Valley.



From a jobs and social justice perspective, the project creates a desirable mix of construction, hotel, restaurant, office, and high-tech jobs. Furthermore, the Bohannon family has signed an agreement with JobTrain to offer available jobs to local residents first. This means that residents of the Belle Haven neighborhood and southern San Mateo County will benefit directly from this project.

The Menlo Gateway project will also become a model for sustainable and green development. The project is being built to impeccable environmental standards and will transform the current site into a model for socially responsible design. The green

aspects of the project can be seen at www.MenloGateway.com.

Finally, these tough economic times mean difficult budget times for every governmental entity in the state and Bay Area. Tax and fee increases cannot and should not be the only answer to solve our budget shortfalls. We should consider economic opportunities that bring in new revenues for our county, cities and schools. The Menlo Gateway project, like the Ravenswood 101 and University Circle projects, will be a net positive tax benefit to local governments and stimulate the local economy during a difficult time.

This is a challenging time. I continue to hear stories of families struggling to provide for their families. Also, elected leaders everywhere are facing difficult service and job cuts. Yet, challenge represents opportunity, and this project is a tremendous opportunity to provide 21st century jobs, tax revenue, and environmental leadership.

County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson represents Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and unincorporated North Fair Oaks.

Be sure to **SHOP LOCAL** this holiday season

Thanks.

The Almanac





Barbara Williams
650.209.1519
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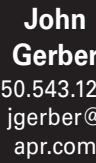
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