



CELLIST MICHEL FLEXER performs with the Saint Michael Trio, musicians-in-residence at Menlo College. | PAGE 5

The Almanac

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

JANUARY 20, 2010 | VOL. 45 NO. 21



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Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

Freak accident: Officers Jason Poirier, left, and Tony Mendoza of the Menlo Park Police Department inspect a car damaged by a toppling top of a redwood tree that speared its windshield and injured the driver at the corner of Olive Street and Santa Cruz Avenue around 10:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 18.

Treetop crashes through car, injures driver

By Andrea Gemmet
Almanac Staff Writer

The driver of a silver Toyota was injured when the top of a redwood tree came crashing through his windshield as he was driving eastbound on Santa Cruz Avenue near Hillview Middle School around 10:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 18.

The car crashed through the wooden fence in front of David Eline's home on Santa Cruz Avenue, and then through a chain link fence into his neighbor's front yard. It came to rest only a couple of yards away from the car parked in the home's driveway.

The driver was taken to the hospital, accord-

ing to Officer Tony Mendoza of the Menlo Park Police Department.

"I heard the crash of the tree limb literally going through the car, and then I heard the crash of the car going through the fence," Mr. Eline told The Almanac.

He said a strong gust of wind snapped the treetop with an audible popping sound. The tree is one of a stand of large redwoods at the corner of Olive Street and Santa Cruz Avenue, opposite Hillview Middle School.

Power was knocked out temporarily in the neighborhood because the crash caused arcing of wires. ■

More news, information online; also comment on stories

Go to TheAlmanacOnline.com for more news, sports and other information, including stories on:

- The publisher of the Daily News in Palo Alto, the San Mateo County Times in San Mateo, the Mercury News, and many other newspapers in the Bay Area is filing for bankruptcy protection. MediaNews Group Inc., using the name of Affiliates Media Inc., announced it would seek protection from creditors

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in federal court.

- A search and rescue team based in Menlo Park may be heading to Haiti to help with relief efforts, according to the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

- A 25-year-old man was arrested early Friday morning after being spotted near homes in Portola Valley where authorities had

received reports of a prowler earlier in the week, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

- A local drive to raise \$50,000 to help victims of the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti has been accomplished, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation announced.

- Residents brace for heavy storms.

- Upcoming community events, including the Calendar and Around Town stories.

Also Inside

Editorial 14
Guest opinion 15
Letters 14
Obituaries 12
Police Calls 13

On the cover

Early morning encounters like this one at Menlo-Atherton High School will be less common in September if the school implements a new daily schedule that starts school later. Research shows teens need more sleep than the rest of us. Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac. See **Section 2**.

CALLING ON THE ALMANAC


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EYE CARE NEWS

Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician

DISTANT THOUGHTS

A farsighted eye is too short (from front to back) and its size is responsible for its refractive error, which may improve until about age 25 as the eyes grow and get bigger. However, the age-related loss of near-focusing power that makes reading glasses necessary for everyone at about age 45 may have an earlier impact upon the farsighted eye. In fact, accommodation (close-up focusing ability) begins to diminish at about age 10, and this can begin to affect the ability of the farsighted

person's reading ability as early as his or her 20s. As the late 30s and 40s approach, there may be increased trouble with vision, requiring corrective lenses that get stronger through the 50s and 60s.

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P.S. Symptoms of far-sightedness include having to squint to see clearly, nearby objects appearing blurry, and eye discomfort or headache after reading or performing up-close tasks for prolonged periods.

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

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Local News

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School district won't suspend Tinsley program

By **Andrea Gemmet**

Almanac Staff Writer

The Menlo Park City School District won't be shutting its doors to Tinsley transfer students — at least, not this year. Facing a potentially severe shortage of classroom space in the coming school year, district officials weighed a number of strategies, including the temporary suspension of interdistrict transfers for Ravenswood district students under the Tinsley program.

Parents crowded the district board meeting Tuesday night, Jan. 12, speaking against the idea, one of several possible strategies proposed by Superintendent Ken Ranella for dealing with a projected enrollment bubble.

The Tinsley transfer program is part of a desegregation lawsuit settlement that requires Menlo Park and a half-dozen other Peninsula school districts to accept a set number of minority students from Ravenswood, a district serving East Palo Alto and Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood.

Under the settlement, Menlo Park is

required to offer places to 24 new kindergarten or first-grade minority students from Ravenswood each year and guarantee to keep them through eighth grade.

Following Mr. Ranella's recommendation, the board unanimously opted to find other ways to accommodate the expected surge of students. Class sizes will go up slightly in all grades — to an average of 22 in grades K-3 and 26 in grades 4-8 — and Laurel School will expand from 400 to about 475 students with the addition of three or four modular classrooms.

"What I've heard is that the community is willing to make the trade-offs and sacrifices to educate every child who comes to this district," said board member Maria Hilton.

Suspending the Tinsley program would have required permission from a San Mateo County Superior Court judge.

The board preserved the option to open a new elementary school and evict the German-American International School from the district's O'Connor school site, but it's unlikely to happen, given the expense

■ INFORMATION

A study session on the O'Connor school site is set for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 20, in the Menlo Park City School District board room, 181 Encinal Ave. in Atherton. Board members plan to discuss what type of elementary school would make sense at the location — a neighborhood school or a magnet school — and whether it would serve students in grades K-3 or K-5. Those decisions will dictate what sort of facilities will be needed if the district reclaims the campus.

involved.

"Coming to this district has been very enriching for my daughter, and for other people," said Edwardo Hernandez, the father of a Tinsley student. "We have a chance to interact with other people and see the way they see the world."

However, the district's practice of backfilling — replacing Tinsley students who leave the district with new kindergarteners —

could be suspended next year. This year saw about 14 Tinsley students leave the district, which is an unusually high number. Mr. Ranella recommended not backfilling those spots.

Board members said they want to see the size of the incoming kindergarten class before deciding, so the backfilling decision will wait until the March board meeting, once the kindergarten priority enrollment in February ends.

No one who spoke at the meeting liked the idea of suspending interdistrict transfers. Calling it a disservice to students, contrary to the community's values and "an embarrassment," people urged the board not to consider suspending the Tinsley program. One mother who lives in the Menlo Park district told the board that her two African American children benefit from having Tinsley students at their school because they like to see other kids like them, with brown skin and black hair.

See **TINSLEY**, page 6

Bohannon polling effort raises some alarm on council

By **Sean Howell**

Almanac Staff Writer

A polling effort by land developer David Bohannon has elicited "grave concern" from some Menlo Park city officials, and little more than a shrug from others.

Questions about what Mr. Bohannon is trying to accomplish in a second round of public opinion polling — and about what impact, if any, the poll will have on continuing closed-door negotiations over a million-square-foot office/hotel complex proposed by his development company — were the subject of about 45 minutes of discussion at the City Council's Jan. 12 meeting.

In an interview, Mr. Bohannon portrayed the effort, featuring phone surveys and focus groups, as an extension of an earlier survey on his project. He said he wants to "talk to people directly" about new issues that have been raised, specifically regarding the project's greenhouse gas emissions.

A handful of residents, most prominently former council member Paul Collacchi, have pressed the council to force Mr. Bohannon's company to offset the project's emissions — a view that seems to have gained traction among some council members.

Mr. Bohannon said he is also

trying to prepare for the possibility of a referendum.

Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson and Councilman Andy Cohen, who constitute the council's subcommittee on the project, said they met with Mr. Bohannon Jan. 12 to express "grave concern" about the most recent polling effort. Ms. Fergusson said she worries that Mr. Bohannon will use the results of the poll to exert pressure on the City Council, or that he will use them to determine whether he wants to circumvent the council altogether and take the proposal directly to voters in a ballot initiative.

"These activities really could be used to undermine the negotiations," Ms. Fergusson said. "This kind of information could be used to go around the council, and it could be used to apply pressure to us to compromise in a way that we feel is not in the best interests of Menlo Park."

Asked in an interview if he wanted to respond, Mr. Bohannon said, "Not really. ... I thought the other council members did a good job of dealing with it."

Noting that the council receives plenty of petitions — business interests who oppose plans for a revamped downtown have infor-

See **BOHANNON**, page 7



Photo by Sterling Hancock

Daniel Cher, from left, Russell Hancock and Michel Flexer perform as the Saint Michael Trio at a recent concert. They are musicians-in-residence at Menlo College.

The music imperative

With full-time jobs outside the music world, Saint Michael Trio players are driven to perform and teach

By **Renee Batti**

Almanac News Editor

What do you get when you put a doctor, a software engineer, and a political scientist in a room and tell them to do what comes most naturally?

It's OK — you really weren't expected to pass this quiz. Who could possibly guess, after all, that when Dr. Daniel Cher, software whiz Michel Flexer, and Joint Venture: Silicon Valley

CEO Russell Hancock join forces, they would have what it takes to produce the high-caliber classical music they regularly create as the Saint Michael Trio?

Each a classically trained musician with a fierce passion for the art, they nevertheless chose careers outside the music world, which made their appointment in 2008 as musicians-in-residence at Menlo College in Atherton unusual, to say the least.

Unusual, but apt, given the college's focus on developing leaders in the business world. In announcing the appointment, Menlo College

See **MUSIC**, page 10

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TINSLEY

continued from page 5

Jesuita Rivera, a teacher in the Ravenswood district whose daughter is a Tinsley transfer student, told the board that children deserve the opportunity to benefit from a good education.

"I teach a class with 30 students and we don't have half the stuff that you guys have," she said. "To look at all the resources you have, you shouldn't even be discussing (suspending Tinsley)."

Ravenswood is on the right track and improving, but it still has a way to go, Ms. Rivera said. "Right now, I don't dare put my daughter in the school where I'm at," she said.

Mr. Ranella said the district is committed to educating its Tinsley students, and pointed out that the district is working hard to improve the performance of its minority and low-income students. The district's values haven't changed, he said. It's just facing an extraordinary surge in enrollment, he said.

"This is about facilities, not about values," he said, as the audi-

ence rumbled with disapproval.

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.

The Menlo Park district is facing a budget deficit next year of about \$1.3 million, said Diane White, the district's chief business official.

The board voted 5-0 to approve the rest of Mr. Ranella's proposals. Besides expanding Laurel school and raising class sizes, officials will renegotiate the German-American school's lease with a 14-month termination clause, and get renovation plans for the campus pre-approved by the state. ■

Menlo Park kindergarten registration

Priority kindergarten registration for the Menlo Park City School District begins Feb. 1 and ends Feb. 26.

Children must be 5 years old by Dec. 2 to enroll. Call the district office at 321-7140, ext. 5603, with questions.

Parent orientation meetings for incoming kindergartners will be held at Encinal School on Jan. 21 and March 11; call 326-5164 to register. Oak Knoll's meeting is Jan.

28 at 7 p.m. and Laurel School hosts meetings on April 7 at 6:30 p.m. and April 22 at 2:30 p.m.

For information about the district's bilingual Spanish immersion program, call Tami Girsky at 321-7140, extension 5601. Mandatory information meetings about the program are set for 7 p.m. on Jan. 26 and Feb. 23 at the district boardroom, 181 Encinal Ave., Atherton.

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It's wait and see on public pensions

■ Meanwhile, a former council member is exploring a local initiative.

By Sean Howell, Dave Boyce and Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writers

The cost of pensions to California and its cities, towns and agencies has long been a concern, with prognosticators warning that government agencies would have an increasingly hard time balancing their budgets as pension payments consume a greater portion of the general fund.

City managers in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties have taken note, recently forming groups to address the issue collectively. While each jurisdiction must negotiate its own labor contracts with unions, the groups issued a statement of principle in July, asserting that member cities were "committed" to scaling back pension benefits for new employees.

Menlo Park and Atherton officials acknowledge that the system is not sustainable in the long run, but neither jurisdiction has concrete plans to address the issue. Woodside and Portola Valley officials, meanwhile, say retirement benefits are not a strain on their towns' budgets, partly because they don't have their own police forces or fire departments.

Meanwhile, former Menlo Park councilwoman Lee Duboc is exploring whether there is sufficient local support for an initiative election that would bypass the council and change Menlo Park's pension policies with a vote of the people.

Menlo Park, Atherton

In Menlo Park, skyrocketing pension costs have contributed to what the city characterizes as a structural budget deficit. Those costs have increased 16-fold over the past six years, from \$260,000 in the 2003-04 fiscal year to \$4.28

million in 2009-10. Assuming no new employee positions and no new raises, those costs are expected to approach \$6 million annually in five years.

Pension costs represent 12 percent of the current budget, and are beginning to strain it; the city finished the 2008-09 fiscal year about \$500,000 in the red.

Still, the city has a \$27 million general fund reserve, and is not seeking to renegotiate pension benefits. It obtained concessions from its middle-management employees in negotiating a two-year contract ratified by the City Council in December, calling for those employees to share pension costs with the city if they increase at a faster-than-expected rate.

"The council's thinking was that, at some point, we want to get (to long-term sustainability), but we want to take care of the direct impacts now," City Manager Glen Rojas said, shortly after the city negotiated a new employee contract that did not scale back retirement benefits. Mr. Rojas has said the city would consider doing so only if it didn't affect its competitiveness in the hiring market.

In other words, Menlo Park might follow suit if surrounding cities or the state make new rules related to retirement benefits, but would not initiate the effort.

"The reality is that the city is in decent shape right now," said Councilman John Boyle at the time. "It's not time to panic."

Atherton is in a similar situation: faced with budget strain, but with no imminent plans to address the pension issue. The town has, however, taken measures to reduce its pension load by holding the line on employees; for example, it contracts with Redwood City for IT services.

"We're not poised to take action, but we're at a point where we

a ballot initiative is not in his plans, at least not at the moment. Morris Brown, who led a 2006 referendum campaign that Mr. Bohannon says provided much of the impetus for the poll, said he has no intention of waging another such campaign.

But the possibility that the issue would be decided by popular vote hung over the council discussion. Mr. Boyle said the city would be well-positioned to defeat an initiative, in the unlikely event that Mr. Bohannon launches one.

"You're thinking we could win such a campaign?" Ms. Fergusson asked.

"I'm thinking, if we can't, we should be embarrassed," Mr. Boyle replied. ■

recognize the need to get serious about looking at this," said Councilman Jerry Carlson.

Portola Valley, Woodside

Neither Portola Valley nor Woodside is facing trouble in paying for current retirement obligations for public employees, in large part because neither town has embedded fire or police departments. Both towns contract for police services from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office and are served by the Woodside Fire Protection District.

Safety personnel "are the expensive ticket as far as retirement costs are concerned," Woodside Town Manager Susan George said. "Our financial projections indicate that we can continue to support our current obligations well into the future."

State guidelines allow safety workers to retire at age 50, after 30 years' service, with 90 percent of their highest annual salary for life. It's a formula that many cities in the region have adopted, including Menlo Park and Atherton. With candidates for those jobs scarce, scaling back those benefits could put a serious dent in a city's hiring prospects, according to Ms. Duboc, former Menlo Park council member.

Portola Valley's situation is similar to Woodside's. The town's pension plan "is sustainable, assuming the stock market doesn't fold," Town Manager Angie Howard said.

Though neither Woodside nor Portola Valley is financially

See PENSIONS, page 12

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Inventories Are Low

Q: I am looking for a home and am amazed at how little inventory there is currently on the market. Is this a typical January market, or do you think that inventories in the coming months will remain lower than normal?

A: Inventory is very low at the moment, which is not unusual for January. Sellers may be thinking of selling their homes but waiting until the weather gets a bit warmer and the flowers begin to bloom. It is still early yet and it is not certain how exactly the market will be as we move into spring, which is typically the strongest market of the year.

We don't know whether this January is like most others or if there is something else causing inventories to be low. Are sellers reluctant to sell at the current lower prices? If they are not in a rush to sell, are they waiting for a stronger market? Do sellers not know where to go so they are staying put

for awhile? It is too soon to know what the market forces this year will be.

We are lucky to live in the relatively strong and stable Mid-Peninsula area. The overall economy is still a major factor affecting the local economy but there are good signs of growth ahead. As we ended 2009, the real estate market in this area had recovered fairly well from the lows of early 2009. Sellers should be aware that there are serious buyers who want to buy now and lock in a low interest rate for many years. If you are thinking of selling this year, you should do so now while these low rates are available and buyers are motivated. These conditions may not last.

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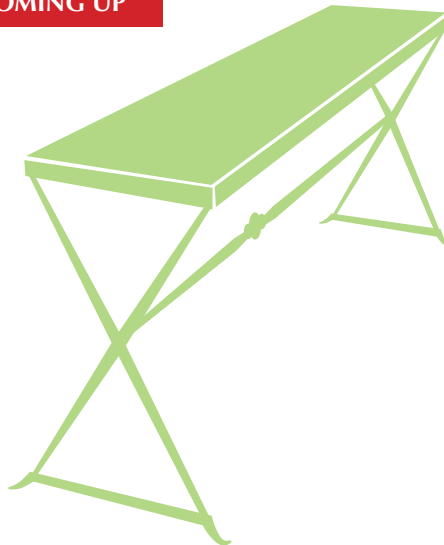
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Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Deadly Heart Condition Yields to Screening and Prompt Treatment

High school senior James Cooper and his mother laughed at first when, in the middle of a sports physical, the examiner mentioned that the young man's arm span was suggestive of Marfan syndrome, a connective tissue disease that can seriously affect the heart. Cooper was otherwise in the peak of youthful fitness, working out four to five hours a day and playing several competitive sports.

"But a couple of weeks later my mom said, 'Maybe we should get you checked out, just to be safe,'" Cooper said. This exam, with a cardiac specialist, included an ECG, a non-invasive test that can identify potentially dangerous heart conditions by measuring the heart's electrical activity. When his mother, a former U.S. Navy medic, saw the look of that ECG and the physician's scrutiny of it, she knew something was wrong. "That's when my heart dropped," she said. Cooper did not have Marfan's, but the specialist was fairly certain he did have a genetic heart condition called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, sometimes shorthand as HCM.

The physician recommended Cooper and his mother go to Stanford Hospital

& Clinics, where Euan Ashley, MD, PhD, heads the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center, one of a few clinics in the world devoted to the diagnosis and treatment of the condition.

"Thank God we found out. I thought of all the families who have no idea, and sudden death is how they realized their son or daughter had this condition"

— Paulette Cooper, mother of patient at Stanford's Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center

"From the moment we first met Dr. Ashley at Stanford," said Paulette Cooper, "I felt we were sitting in a room with a doctor who really cared – a really gentle person, a really caring person who was not rushing us through, not treating us like he had a waiting room full of other people he had to see. His staff was amazing, too. I felt we were in a really good place."

Ashley, himself an athlete as a youth, developed an early clinical and research interest in heart health, including that specific to the kind of activity athletes ask of their bodies.



James Cooper has had to give up the vigorous athletic conditioning that once filled his life, but his enthusiasm for life and his future is undiminished.

"I've always been fascinated by the heart as an organ," he said. "It's a phenomenal thing that can power Olympic athletes but holds an 80-year-old woman to her chair, not able to walk."

He suspected Cooper had HCM, but also thought some of the behavior of Cooper's heart might be the result of his heavy athletic training, so he ordered the young man to take a break.

That enforced inactivity was a major blow to Cooper. Sitting on the bench and watching his classmates playing team sports was the complete opposite of a path he had followed since he was six years old and ran his first 10k. "I wasn't feeling too good about myself," he said.

As such a change might affect any young athlete, "that just about took the rug out from under him," said Cooper's mother. "This was a kid who worked out four to five hours a day, without a coach. It was hard for him just to suddenly stop. Everybody's saying, 'I'm sure you're fine,' and James is sitting there saying, 'I hope so, but there's something happening.'"

Recognizing the unusual

Stanford's center is a place where hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is understood as a condition that can be found, as it was in Cooper, in the most athletic of patients. It is caused by genetic mutations that change the structure

of the heart's muscle cells, thickening them and disrupting the flow and force of blood through its chambers. It is the most common cause of sudden death in young people and the most common form of inherited cardiovascular disease.

"From the moment we first met Dr. Ashley at Stanford, I felt we were sitting in a room with a doctor who really cared – a really gentle person, a really caring person."

— Paulette Cooper, mother of a patient at Stanford's Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center

Cooper's mother knew her grandmother had been in and out of the hospital, treated for congestive heart failure. And there had been others in the family who had died young, stricken with sudden heart attacks. But she had had no clue that that history might be reflected in her son's heart health.

Often, the symptoms HCM chest pain, fainting, palpitations – can be misdiagnosed. Genetic testing is still evolving, but only at a few places, like Stanford, is it available.

The center has had long experience with the surgery sometimes performed to counteract the obstruction to blood flow caused by the condition. Few surgeons specialize in that surgery, Ashley said. It calls for judgment and experience. "You might only make a small



Once James' mother, Paulette, knew something was wrong with her son's heart and that it could be inherited, she began to recall the heart ailments and early cardiac deaths of other family members.

What To Know About Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a disease of the heart muscle which causes certain areas to enlarge and obstruct blood flow. Typically, it's inherited and can affect both children and adults.
- Symptoms don't always appear in the early stages of the disease, but later can include dizziness, shortness of breath, fatigue and swelling of legs, ankles and feet.

- Treatments include medication to alter how the heart muscle acts, surgery to remove a portion of the thickened heart muscle or implantation of a defibrillator, which starts the heart if it stops.
- Anyone with a family history of unexplained early cardiac death should think about screening and genetic testing.
- Euan Ashley, MD, recommends that young athletes be evaluated by a physician before they begin to do sports. Adults with family history of heart issues should see a physician to address their risk factors. The disease can show itself in adults into their 40s and 50s.

For more information, visit stanfordhospital.org. Video talks by Dr. Ashley can be viewed at healthlibrary.stanford.edu. Contact the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Clinic at 650.736.1384.

number of cuts, but they make a very big difference," he said.

Even after cutting back on his strenuous physical workouts, Cooper's heart still showed the disturbing abnormalities and Ashley presented Cooper with his choices. "He said I could continue living my life as I had before and have the possibility of suddenly dropping dead. Or, I could get a defibrillator or we could talk about medications like beta blockers."

The next steps

Cooper chose the defibrillator. Compared to his pre-diagnosis lifestyle, his physical activity now is quite restricted – he's not allowed to push his body in ways that significantly raise his heart rate. That means no marathons. And no more competitive sports. But Cooper's personality fights against the restrictions.

People with this heart condition face "something they're going to be dealing with for the rest of their life," said Heidi Salisbury, a nurse who has worked with Ashley at the center for several years. "We encourage our patients to learn as much as possible about their condition, to make the necessary changes in behavior and lifestyle and then to live a high quality of life."

Cooper is both the worst and best case scenario, she said. "He epitomizes a young man, playing basketball, who could have died of cardiac arrest. He had no idea he had this disease or the severity of the disease. He had a higher chance of death than others. But he was a save."

"I've been living with it for awhile now, it's not something I dwell on," Cooper said. "I'm in a good place now. It's not something I fear."

"For a long time, I went through a lot of difficult feelings," said his mother. "On one side, I thought, 'This isn't fair. Here's a kid who wanted to be a firefighter since he was four years old – why does it have to be this? If this was a kid who played videogames all day, it wouldn't have had the impact. On the other side - thank God we found out. I thought of all the families who have no idea and sudden death is how they realized that their son or daughter had this condition."

"James has gone through some hard times, being angry and disappointed. It's been hard for him, but once he had the defibrillator put in, his goal was to help other people like him. He wanted to reach out and talk to others and help them."

"I've been living with it for a while now. It's not something I dwell on. I'm in a good place now. It's not something I fear."

– James Cooper, patient at Stanford Hospital Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center

Cooper took part in last year's Stanford HCM Patient Day. He ran on a treadmill in front of the 75 attendees, demonstrating the importance of remaining active while exercising within the necessary restrictions. His internal defibrillator, about the diameter of a



Norbert von der Groeben

Since his diagnosis, James Cooper is only slightly less busy than he was before. He's completing his undergraduate degree, holds a part-time job and sings in a church choir, along with his fiancée, Breanna.

can of shoe polish, was visible below the surface of his skin. "That visual of seeing him run was really inspiring to the audience," Ashley said.

His internal defibrillator is routinely monitored, but doesn't need much maintenance except for its battery, which lasts for an average of 10 years. The technology is improving continually, Salisbury said. His medical team monitors Cooper's activity remotely, so they know when he's pushing the limit. "It's hard to change your behavior when you're young and vital," she said. "But we are here to support every patient and their family for the long run. This is a process and James is living proof of our mission."



Norbert von der Groeben

Euan Ashley, MD, director of the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Center, sees several new patients each week who come for treatment of the thickened heart muscle that can cause sudden death even in young athletes.

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

Principal to retire in June The music imperative

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Gerald Traynor, the principal of Las Lomitas Elementary School in Atherton for the last 10 years, has announced his retirement, effective in June.

Mr. Traynor, 63, notified the school community with a letter in the school's Jan. 11 newsletter. "The time has come to move on," he wrote.

Likening his experience at the K-3 school to a good book whose story has run its course, he wrote, "Life will continue, and I will continue to hold the volume close; I will continue to review its contents in my heart; I will continue to wish that perhaps there might have been a few more pages."

Mr. Traynor was principal of a school in Carmel before coming to the head office at Las Lomitas, according to district Superintendent Eric Hartwig. He had been planning his retirement for two years, Mr. Hartwig said.

Mr. Traynor has done "a brilliant job with Las Lomitas," Mr. Hartwig said. "The school runs like a magic kingdom — it will have his stamp on it for years to come. ... We're going to be in his debt for a long time. He's a very talented and gracious man."

Mr. Traynor could not be reached for comment, but in his letter to the school community, he wrote: "While there were times that might euphemistically be called 'rocky,' and while there were disagreements along the way, and while everything did not always run the way I planned or the way I would have wished it, still, the vast majority of the time I spent on this campus was joyous and invigorating and filled with wonder, thanks to an ever-changing, ever-wonderful student body, a host of supportive and cooperative parents, and the most talented and dedicated faculty and staff it has ever been my privilege to know and serve." ■

MUSIC

continued from page 5

President G. Timothy Haight said, in a prepared statement: "All three performers are extremely successful in their business careers, and their private sector experience will add significantly to the intellectual life of the college."

"And yet they have simultaneously built successful concert careers and perform on stage to the highest musical standards. They model the type of success and multi-dimensionality we intend for our graduates."

High praise for an ensemble that had performed together for just over a year at the time.

Joining forces

The trio came together after a mutual friend introduced Mr. Hancock, a pianist, and Mr. Cher, a violinist, and "there was instant rapport — we knew we had to play together," Mr. Hancock says. "I said, 'we need a cellist,' and he said, 'I know just the person.'"

That person was Michel Flexer, who was part of the Beet Quartet Mr. Cher performed with in casual settings, including the Palo Alto farmers' market.

Mr. Hancock, who in addition to his leadership role at Joint Venture: Silicon Valley teaches in Stanford's public policy program, recalls his excitement: "I'd been looking my whole life for collaborating partners."

A Washington state native, Mr. Hancock performed as a soloist with orchestras in the greater Seattle area when he was still in

high school. He almost "went the conservatory route" after high school, but changed his mind at the last minute, he says.

"I was passionate about music, but I also had other interests," he said, noting that he was his school's student body president and was interested in public policy and in having a stable family life rather than life on the road as a performing artist.

Dr. Cher, who leads clinical trials for Chestnut Medical Technologies in Menlo Park, performed with Orchestra New England and the New Haven Symphony when he was in medical school. Before that, he won the undergraduate music prize at Stanford.

Now a software architect for a startup in San Mateo, Mr. Flexer has also worked with Siebel Systems and Gain Technologies. As a youth he performed with the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, then studied cello at the New England Conservatory while a student at Harvard.

All three men say music is not only important to them as they pursue non-musical careers, it's an imperative.

"We need to play. We can't help it," Mr. Hancock says. And where does the energy come from, when the work day is long and difficult, and the time to practice an instrument and rehearse as an ensemble is short? "High metabolism," he responds with a laugh, adding that they all "take a lesson from the kids — they're always multitasking."

Among the three of them, they have seven children, so their rehearsals, usually at Mr. Hancock's Palo Alto home, don't begin until 8 p.m., "when the kids are in bed," he says.

Mr. Flexer says his high-stress work and other of life's pressures make rehearsing more a need than a chore. "I come here, and within minutes, as I start to play, there's (a sense of) joy ... and calm," he says during a recent rehearsal break.

Likewise, Mr. Cher feels driven to perform. "The music is in my head all day long — and I need to share it with the world," he says in an e-mail.

Noting the need to expose modern audiences to "a huge literature of remarkable music" to keep it alive, he says that working with young people is important as well. He described a recent coaching session with Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra violinists as "fabulously fun."

Conducting master classes, performing concerts and giving lectures at Menlo College are part of the duties of the musicians-in-residence. Last year the trio performed a series of concerts ranging from a "pops and jazz night" to herald in summer, to a two-part event featuring the work of Mendelssohn.

All of their concerts are free, but they welcome donations to help fund projects such as a planned festival at Menlo College for musicians "who play up to industry standards" but are not in the music industry, Mr. Hancock says.

The funds also go toward commissioning original music for the trio. The first commission was to Woodside resident Mary Finlayson for a work the trio premiered last June, he says.

The trio also performs for private parties in homes, clubs and other venues, as well as in public spaces such as schools. On Sunday, Jan. 24, they will perform in Ralston Hall Mansion at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont.

They're planning a second CD to follow "Debut," which features music ranging from Debussy, Chaminade and Brahms, to Astor Piazzolla. ■

Las Lomitas teachers sign contract

Teachers in the Las Lomitas Elementary School District will receive a retroactive 1.75 percent salary increase for the 2008-09 school year under a newly signed agreement reached between their union and the district.

The agreement also includes a 0.25 percent increase in health benefits, according to district Superintendent Eric

Hartwig, who said the contract took about 18 months to negotiate.

The district and its teachers will soon begin to negotiate the 2009-10 contract to cover the current school year; that contract might cover more than the current year, Mr. Hartwig said.

Go to TheAlmanacOnline.com for more information.

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Concert salutes black composers; benefit for Eastside College Prep

A concert featuring the music of nine composers who worked in African American traditions — spirituals, jazz and blues — will be held on Sunday, Jan. 24, to benefit the music program at Eastside College Preparatory School in East Palo Alto.

The event, "A Tribute to African American Composers," is set for 3 p.m. at Eastside Prep, 1041 Myrtle Ave. in East Palo Alto.

It will feature performanc-

es by Menlo Park pianist Josephine Gandolfi, as well as pianists LaDoris Cordell, a former Palo Alto City Council member, Deanne Tucker, and Jefferson Williams. Performers also include soprano Yolanda Rhodes, violinist Susan C. Brown, and cellist Victoria Ehrlich.

Admission is by donation, suggested at \$15, general, and \$5 for seniors and students. For more information, call 688-0850.

■ INFORMATION

The Saint Michael Trio will perform at 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 24, at Ralston Hall Mansion, 1500 Ralston Ave. in Belmont. The concert is free, but donations will support Notre Dame de Namur University music programs. Reservations: 508-3429, or concerts@ndnu.edu.

In Atherton, disparate views on what constitutes transparent government

By Andrea Gemmet

Almanac Staff Writer

In the wake of recent criticism about the appointment of the new police chief and lack of disclosure about a \$230,000 sexual-harassment lawsuit settlement, Atherton City Council members are doing some soul-searching about the town's responsibility to communicate with its residents.

At a daylong Jan. 11 strategic planning workshop held in the town council chambers, council members debated policies and philosophies on open government.

"I think the council as a whole does a very poor job of engaging the community," said Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis. "Council members as individuals do a very good job."

While the council ultimately decided to create an ad hoc council subcommittee made up of Jerry Carlson and Ms. Lewis to come up with a town policy on public information and council communications, it was clear that there are disparate visions as to what constitutes transparent government.

The subcommittee was to have included members of the public, but the council changed direction when informed that including residents would force the meetings to be open to the public.

"The image we want to create with our residents is that the council's working as a team. That we appear to be divided publicly is not good," said Councilman Jim Dobbie.

Mr. Dobbie complained about an online survey about several town issues created by Councilman Charles Marsala. Mr. Marsala e-mailed links to the survey to residents prior to Monday's meeting, and had gotten about 60 responses.

Mr. Marsala should not have sent out the survey without informing the other council members first, Mr. Dobbie said.

"I do think I have the right to ask my constituents what they think about the issues I'm going to be voting on," said Mr. Marsala in response.

Mayor Kathy McKeithen suggested adopting a philosophy that council members will try not to blindside each other with things like resident surveys, but City Attorney Wynne Furth warned that the law clearly prohibits anything that smacks of behind-the-scenes deliberation. Weighing in on another council member's communication before it's made public is against the law. According to the Brown Act, the council can't find something

out before the public does, she said.

The Brown Act, the California law that guarantees public access to meetings of legislative bodies, was much discussed at Atherton's meeting. Peter Carpenter, the president of the Atherton Civic Interest League and recently retired member of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District board, read the preamble to the Brown Act aloud to the council members and urged them to follow its spirit.

"What you are talking about to some degree is how to control information. The Brown Act is clear that everything you are doing is the public's business, with exceptions for pending litigation and personnel issues," Mr. Carpenter said. "Any attempt to control information is not going to work, it will lead to more distrust."

It may be a painful transition for Atherton officials to go from trying to tightly control information to being completely open, but they should do it, he said. "Once you get past that barrier, life gets a lot easier," Mr. Carpenter said.

The council members also discussed ways to increase online communications with residents, and expand the town's e-mail list that currently has only about 300 or so residents. Mr. Marsala said that while the online survey isn't scientific, it's a good way to solicit resident input on town affairs and that he was encouraged by the number of write-in comments from respondents.

Mr. Dobbie appeared unconvinced.

"Let's say everyone on the council sends out a survey. It gives the impression we're not working as a team," he said.

"I'm not concerned about your image, I'm concerned about you making informed decisions," countered Mr. Carpenter. "The five of you cannot decide 'this is what we're going to do' amongst yourselves, and 'this is what we're going to tell the public.'"

However, lack of action caused by endless discussion clearly frustrated Mr. Dobbie.

"One of the things we are being measured on is how efficiently we are getting things done," said Mr. Dobbie.

Mr. Carpenter countered by saying, "Efficiency is not necessarily the hallmark of democracy. It may not be efficient, but at least you can see how you're getting things done."

"The more we accomplish, the better it is for the residents," said Mr. Dobbie in response. "Things that should take a month take a year because we're debating amongst ourselves."

Simitian to offer 'education update'

State Senator Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, will hold an "Education Update" on Saturday, Jan. 23, in Palo Alto, when he will "provide an in-depth update on K-12 education funding and legislation pending in Sacramento," he said.

The meeting, open to the public, will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Jan. 23 in the Palo Alto Unified School District Board Room, 25 Churchill Ave. in Palo Alto.

Sen. Simitian's office asks that if you plan to attend, please call 688-6384.

After-school science

The physics of simple machines,

BRIEFS

the interaction of force and motion, is the topic for after-school winter science classes for kids in grades K-3 at the Portola Valley Town Center.

The 10-week sessions are \$250; the cost includes materials and snacks. Classes began Jan. 11, but registration continues through Jan. 22.

Go to tinyurl.com/PVregistration to register, or register by mail or in person.

Go to www.portolavalley.net for more information. Click on the Community Classes link on the left side of the home page.

To contact the instructor,

Yvonne Tryce, write to ytryce@yahoo.com.

Register for kindergarten

Families with children who will be entering kindergarten in the fall are invited to parent visitation day at Ormondale school in Portola Valley beginning at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 26. Principal Jennifer Warren will give a brief orientation in the school library, and then parents will have a chance to visit the four kindergarten classrooms.

Incoming kindergartners must be age 5 by Dec. 2 and must live within the Portola Valley School District. Ormondale School is located at 200 Shawnee Pass at Iroquois Trail. Call 851-1777, ext. 1151 for information.




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Jeanne Hueffed, longtime Almanac employee

■ OBITUARY

Jeanne Hueffed, who was the receptionist for The Almanac office over a period of 14 years, died Jan. 12 after a year-long battle with lung cancer. She died, surrounded by her children, at home in Foster City. She was 83.

Services were held Tuesday, Jan. 19, at St. Mark's Catholic Church in Belmont.

Ms. Hueffed began working at The Almanac in 1988, when it was located on Oak Grove Avenue in downtown Menlo

Park. In her job, she was a goodwill ambassador to the public, problem solver, room mother, quartermaster, party planner and event coordinator.

She presented The Almanac's best face to the public and created a pleasant atmosphere, with fresh flowers on her desk and a well-filled candy jar.

"Jeanne did so much more for me and The Almanac than greet customers and answer the phone," said publisher Tom Giboney. "She would handle correspondence, plan parties and a million other things that were far beyond her job description. And she always had a smile and was happy to do it. She never wanted to sit still."

Ms. Hueffed retired from the Alameda de las Pulgas office of The Almanac in 2002 when her husband became seriously ill. Mr. Hueffed died in 2004.

Jeanne Hueffed was born May 21, 1926, in Saginaw, Michigan. She attended local parochial schools and graduated from St. Joseph's High School in Saginaw.

She graduated from Marygrove College in Detroit in 1949

and went to work as an assistant buyer for Higbee's department store in Cleveland. She developed an interest in fashion, which lasted all her life. She was always well dressed, with a passion for shoes.

She met her future husband, Theodor Kundrz Hueffed, in Cleveland on St. Patrick's Day, and they were married Feb. 3, 1951, at St. Luke's Church in Lakewood, Ohio. The couple lived in the Cleveland suburb of Bay Village, before moving to California in 1959.

Ms. Hueffed devoted her life to raising her six children, often volunteering at their schools or taking part in parent activities. After they were grown, she worked for a few years for the Swensen Ice Cream Co., before coming to The Almanac.

Although her maiden name was Kessel, she took great pride in her Irish heritage, gained through her grandmother, Bridget, who lived next door when she was growing up. St. Patrick's Day would always find her sporting a green outfit and a shamrock pin, oftentimes with a pot of shamrocks on her desk.

Ms. Hueffed is survived by her six children: Martha Rivello, Lisa Hueffed, Ted Hueffed, Mary Ann Hubbard, Mark Hueffed and Molly Hueffed; 10 grandchildren; and eight grandchildren.

The family prefers memorials in her name be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.



Jeanne Hueffed

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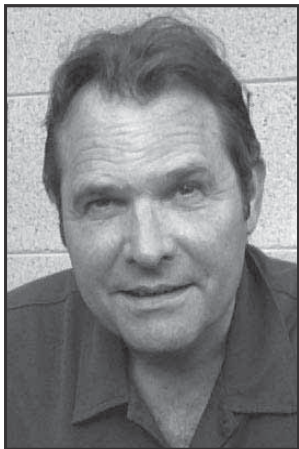
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Tommy Simpson

Memorial services for Tommy Simpson, a Portola Valley icon who died Nov. 25 at age 92, will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23, in the Community Hall at the Portola Valley Town Center, 765 Portola Road. She was well known in town as the former owner and frequent presence at Portola Valley Hardware.

Bob Augsburger

Memorial services will be held Friday, Jan. 29, in Portola Valley for Robert R. "Bob" Augs-

■ SERVICES

burger, a former vice president of Stanford University and the first executive director of the Peninsula Open Space Trust.

He died Dec. 31 of a brain tumor at his home at The Sequoias in Portola Valley.

The services will start at 4 p.m. at Valley Presbyterian Church, 945 Portola Road in Portola Valley. The family requests no flowers. Donations may be made to POST, Hidden Villa, or the Children's Health Council.

PENSIONS

continued from page 7

strained, both Ms. George and Ms. Howard said their towns would consider scaling back retirement benefits for new employees if it becomes a trend in both counties.

Ballot box

Ms. Duboc is looking into the prospect of launching a ballot

initiative aimed at reducing retirement benefits for new Menlo Park employees. Given the lobbying prowess of employee unions and council members' close working relationship with employees, people shouldn't necessarily expect their elected representatives to solve the issue, she said.

Ms. Duboc said she's trying to determine whether there's enough interest among the public to merit launching a campaign. ■

Portola Valley: Deputies arrest alleged prowler

A 25-year-old Sunnyvale man was arrested early Friday morning after being spotted near homes in Portola Valley where authorities had received reports of a prowler earlier in the week, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

At about 1:30 a.m., sheriff's deputies spotted Daniel Silverman on the campus of Woodside Priory School, located at 302 Portola Road.

Silverman allegedly approached nearby housing units where the reports of prowlers had been made. When the deputies tried to contact Silverman, he fled, according to the sheriff's office.

More deputies were called to the scene, and Silverman was eventually spotted hiding in a vehicle on Georgia Lane near the school.

He was arrested and booked in county jail in Redwood City on suspicion of prowling, trespassing and resisting arrest, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Anyone who may have witnessed the incident or has any additional information about the case is encouraged to call sheriff's Sgt. Bryan Raffaelli at (650) 363-4058.

— Bay City News Service

■ POLICE CALLS

ATHERTON

Fraud report: Unauthorized check for \$3,450 cashed from resident's account, Mount Vernon Lane, Jan. 11.

Grand theft report: Cell phone stolen, Middlefield Road, Jan. 12.

Auto burglary report: Window smashed, Shearer Drive, Jan. 11.

MENLO PARK

Commercial burglary report: Locked container forced open and tools and gardening equipment stolen, 100 block of Independence Drive, Jan. 11.

Residential burglary report: Bedroom forced open and cell phone, charger and \$50 in cash stolen, 1100 block of Sevier Ave., Jan. 10.

Auto burglary reports:

■ Window smashed, vehicle ransacked and stereo system stolen, 1000 block of Madera Ave., Jan. 9.

■ Window smashed, 1000 block of Madera Ave., Jan. 9.

■ Window smashed, 1600 block of Marsh Road, Jan. 13.

■ Sunglasses, stroller and other items stolen, 300 block of Pope St., Jan. 14.

Stolen vehicle report: Boat stolen, 3600 block of Haven Ave., Jan. 8.

Embezzlement report: Embezzlement and forgery by former employee, 100 block of Encinal Ave., Jan. 14.

Fraud reports:

■ Identity theft, 1200 block of Hoover St., Jan. 8.

■ Account opened and deposits made with fraudulent checks, 3700 block of Haven Ave., Jan. 14.

Child protective services reports:

■ 100 block of O'Keefe St., Jan. 11.

■ 1400 block of Chilco St., Jan. 14.

LADERA

Residential burglary report: Laptop computer and jewelry stolen for estimated loss of \$11,200, 700 block of La Mesa Drive, Jan 7.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Fraud report: Resident's name and medical account information used to make unauthorized medical appointment in Santa Cruz County, 200 block of Golden Hills Drive, Jan. 11.

WOODSIDE

Theft report: Victim's purse stolen from unattended shopping cart, 3000 block of Woodside Road, Jan. 8.

Fraud report: Resident's address and phone number used to open account with online music outlet for loss estimated at \$20, 100 block of Jane Road, Jan. 11.

Salon Menlo: history of civil liberties

Activists Elaine Elinson and Stan Yogi, authors of "Wherever There's a Fight," will discuss the history of civil liberties in California at Salon Menlo, set for 12:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 24, in the Fireside Room at the Menlo Park Recreation Center, 700 Alma St. in Menlo Park.

The authors will talk about the Hollywood Ten blacklist of the 1950s. Menlo Park librarian Nick Szegda will show film clips and join them in discussing government attempts to censor filmmakers during the "red scare" Cold War era. Librarian Lauren John will serve as moderator.

Coffee and refreshments will be served. The free program is provided through the Al Jacobs Fund administered by the Friends of the

■ AROUND TOWN

Menlo Park Library.

'Twelfth Night'

Menlo School's drama department will present Shakespeare's comedy "Twelfth Night" Jan. 28-31 at the Florence Moore Theatre on campus at 50 Valparaiso Ave. in Atherton.

Show times are 7:30 p.m. Jan. 28-31, with a 2 p.m. matinee on Jan. 30. Tickets, at \$5 for students and senior citizens and \$8 for adults, are available at tickets@menloschool.org, at the campus bookstore, or at the door of Florence Moore Theatre, 50 Valparaiso Ave. in Atherton.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK CITY COUNCIL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Menlo Park, California, will hold a Public Hearing with respect to the proposed participation by the City in the CaliforniaFIRST Program of the California Statewide Communities Development Authority. Participation in the CaliforniaFIRST Program will enable property owners to finance renewable energy, energy efficiency and water efficiency improvements on their property through the voluntary levy of contractual assessments pursuant to Chapter 29 of Division 7 of the Streets & Highways Code ("Chapter 29") and the issuance of improvement bonds under the Improvement Bond Act of 1915 (Streets and Highways Code Sections 8500 and following) upon the security of the unpaid contractual assessments. Chapter 29 provides that assessments may be levied under its provisions only with the free and willing consent of the owner of each lot or parcel on which an assessment is levied at the time the assessment is levied.

The Public Hearing will be held in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park at 7:00 p.m., or as near as possible thereafter, on Tuesday, the 2nd day of February, 2010, at which time and place interested persons wishing to express their views on the City's participation in the CaliforniaFIRST Program and the financing of renewable energy, energy efficiency and water efficiency improvements as described above will be given an opportunity to do so at the public hearing or may, prior to the time of the hearing, submit written comments to

If you challenge this matter in court, you may be limited to raise only those issues you or someone else raised at the Public Hearing conducted for this project, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the Public Hearing.

Visit our Web site for City Council, public hearing, agenda, and staff report information: www.menlopark.org

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



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

Transparency is not always pretty

A few weeks ago we chastised the Atherton Town Council for intentionally keeping word of a \$230,000 settlement against the town from the public. Some council members said that was not their intention and agreed to discuss setting a new policy to deal with such matters.

Well, if their discussion at last week's planning workshop for council members is any indication of how the council intends to address the "transparency" problem, not much will change. The theme we heard from council member Jim Dobbie was "image," and the concern that the public might possibly see the council working at cross purposes.

One flashpoint for Mr. Dobbie was an online survey on town issues sent out by council member Charles Marsala with good intentions, but without informing his colleagues.

This did not sit well with Mr. Dobbie, who said "the image that we want to create with our residents is that the council's working as a team. That we appear divided publicly is not good," he said.

The dividing line here is obviously that Mr. Dobbie either didn't want to know what residents thought about town issues, or was miffed that Mr. Marsala had the chutzpa to do something on his own that the council likely would not have approved.

Another indication that transparency is not foremost in the council's mind: At the planning session, the proposal to invite a few residents to serve on a committee to write a public information policy was scrapped when the council learned that includ-

ing outsiders would force the committee to meet publicly.

Atherton resident Peter Carpenter, a former member of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District board and a crusader for more openness in government, did his best to explain the importance of the Brown Act, the state law that governs how all government agencies are expected to deal with public information. Mr. Carpenter even spent a few minutes reading the preamble to the Brown Act to the council.

"The Brown Act is clear that everything you are doing is the public's business, with exceptions for pending litigation and personnel issues," he said. "Any attempt to control information is not going to work. It will lead to distrust."

And that is the real issue. Until the Atherton council realizes that 99 percent of the time, citizens have a right to know everything that they know, there will be trouble and infighting in a town that should be operating harmoniously.

But that harmony should not come from managing the flow of information, and withholding news that will make the town look bad. Council members should understand that true harmony will come when the council can talk candidly in public about their differences, take a vote and move on. And Mr. Dobbie should know that the business principle of presenting a unified front does not apply to the public's business.

In response to Mr. Dobbie's contention that the council is measured by how efficiently it gets things done, Mr. Carpenter said:

"Efficiency is not necessarily the hallmark of democracy. It may not be efficient, but at least you can see how you're getting things done."

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Menlo should keep Ravenswood students

Editor:

As a former teacher and tutor on the Peninsula, I think that taking away the opportunity for mostly low-income students from Ravenswood to attend Menlo Park schools would be a huge, huge mistake as mentioned in the Dec. 14 story: Menlo Park schools face unpleasant options.

Instead of being a burden on the school district, opening up enrollment would actually improve the district's financial situation as it would enable Menlo Park to apply for readily available federal and state funding for at-risk students through SES and Race to the Top initiatives. I argue that the best use of those funds is for one-on-one tutoring. Instead of limiting opportunity, opening our doors to other students would create a well-balanced, diverse, and more personalized learning atmosphere for all.

**Seth Linden, president
Tutorpedia, San Francisco**

See **LETTERS**, next page



Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

This home is the centerpiece of Atherton's Holbrook-Palmer Park, 22 acres in the center of town donated to the town by Olive Holbrook Palmer. The original home, known as Elmwood, was built in 1875 and burned down in 1958, but it was rebuilt and continues to be a popular site for weddings and other events in the park.

Would Dr. King be proud of his dream?

(From a speech Mr. Marks planned to deliver Monday at a Martin Luther King birthday celebration.)

By Jym Marks

Early this morning I envisioned the days and signs of times, with racial temperaments still well and alive in the 21st century, as we hold the truth that all men are created equally.

Black Americans are still living in an institutionalized state of necessity. It reveals to us that we need a dream, perhaps the dream that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. shared with us, to become a reality.

This dream necessity is a stronger reality for the black male, who is in roots of black American's greatest struggle for survival. The mission of survival has been a journey of constant struggle. A struggle from mama's breast milk to absent fathers.

We have had a chorus of bravery and a hymn of courage. We are from a surviving culture. The Black American culture.

We have crossed the sea of misery, skimmed the waters from Africa, and talked with our distant cousins through pretentious ambitions that many times have gone unno-

ticed.

We've seen the eyes of our skeleton past and the coming of the light. That light has illuminated so brightly that it has lit up over four hundred years of struggle; however, the obstacle and pediment has kept us strong.

Would Dr. King be proud of his dream?

We elected the first black president, Barack Obama. We appointed the first Hispanic to the Supreme Court.

We can no longer conceal the disgustingly insane ambushing, and self-destruction, of many of our young never-to-reach-their-21st birthday black males, who are aiding in putting down the ball and chain and replacing it with crack cocaine. Instead of being programmed for Yale, several may be programmed for jail. Sadly and willingly being faithfully directed back to, forty acres and a mule. (One problem, there will be no mules.)

many people want — a lawn larger than a typical driveway — economic incentives to conserve are a much better idea. If you look at a residential PG&E electric bill you will see the power billed after the first 378 kilowatts gets increasingly expensive — nearly four-fold at the top tier, which really gets a user's attention. Given that what the council is considering would apply to new landscaping in a town already built out, phasing in tiered water rates would capture far more users, and not create criminals of future residents who might feel strongly about what most neighbors have, or discouraging owners who want to and should upgrade an old irrigation system or replace highly inefficient hand watering. (Those who insist on irrigating huge lawns will meanwhile pay toward the much needed water system upgrades.)

The state has mandated action that will reduce landscape water use and provided a template that looks reasonable — and Menlo should adopt it — but some council members are trying to go it one better and make a

Too many young black men have guns in their hands and chips in their pockets. However, when they are hauled off to prison the guns will be removed. Then when they return to the free world, cement will be placed around their feet. They will be weighed down like hammers, driving nails in city streets.

The streets will render darkness into a life of success, because they're cool on the outside and messed up on the inside.

My brothers you're no longer paralyzed from the dusty bones of the so-called founding pilgrims of America.

You are paralyzed by self-destructive behavior. You are paralyzed from robbing too many banks of failure. You are paralyzed if you remain dumb, numb and uninformed, loaded down with do-nothingism.

You are pointing at your wives, pointing at your parents, pointing at those who try to help. You need to pay attention to your thumb.

Would Dr. King be proud of his dream?

Jym Marks is a poet, motivational speaker and barber who owns and operates a hair salon, Markstyle, on Willow Road in Menlo Park.

statement. If we want to show leadership on water use, let's get the conversation going with CalWater and the public utilities commission, because tiered rates can make a much bigger difference than criminalizing local landscape projects.

**Henry Riggs
Callie Lane, Menlo Park**

Will the train take the strain?

Editor:

A report from researchers at Cal Berkeley points out that all is not peaches and cream when looking at high-speed rail vs. other transportation modes.

The researchers discovered that while high-speed rail may lower energy consumption and greenhouse-gas emissions per trip, the current electricity mix in California means that it can create more sulphur dioxide emissions, leading to environmental acidification and human health issues.

California's high-speed rail project has been promoted on many fronts. Now we can see that even with fuel savings, there are other unwanted effects.

**Morris Brown
Stone Pine Lane, Menlo Park**



GUEST
OPINION

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

Atherton struggles with transparency

Editor:

It is impossible for the town of Atherton and its governing body to be transparent. Atherton does not know what the word "transparent" means and how the application of that word might assist them in their jobs.

The best of luck to you all in your editorial push to make a muddy town called Atherton into a transparent town called Atherton.

**Mary Perkins
Karen Way, Atherton**

Use rates to ration water for landscaping

Editor:

Water is a big issue in California and it will soon be a constant and possibly tense issue in this state, so I agree we need to take this seriously; the question for the Menlo Park City Council is how to address it within town jurisdiction. Compared with flatly outlawing what

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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.woodsidesidetown.org. Deadline for applications is Friday, February 12, 2010, 5:00 p.m.

2009 - 2010 ATHERTON SALES



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ATHERTON



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ATHERTON SALES

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Isabella Ave, Atherton
Fairview Ave, Atherton
Stevenson Lane, Atherton
Ralston Road, Atherton
Camino Al Lago, Atherton
Barry Lane, Atherton
Barry Lane, Atherton
Ralston Road, Atherton
Catalpa Dr, Atherton
Middlefield Rd, Atherton
Ridge View Dr, Atherton
Fletcher Dr, Atherton
Magnolia Dr, Atherton
Austin Ave, Atherton
Selby Lane, Atherton
Linda Vista, Atherton



ISABELLA AVENUE
ATHERTON



BARRY LANE
ATHERTON

MENLO PARK

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San Mateo Dr, Menlo Park
Hermosa Way, Menlo Park
Johnson St, Menlo Park
Hanna Way, Menlo Park
University Ave, #54, Menlo Park
Oakdell Dr, Menlo Park



RIDGE VIEW DRIVE
ATHERTON



FAIRVIEW AVENUE
ATHERTON

PALO ALTO

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Palo Alto Ave, #D3, Palo Alto
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