

Spring Real Estate 20

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The Almanac

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

APRIL 21, 2010 | VOL. 45 NO. 34

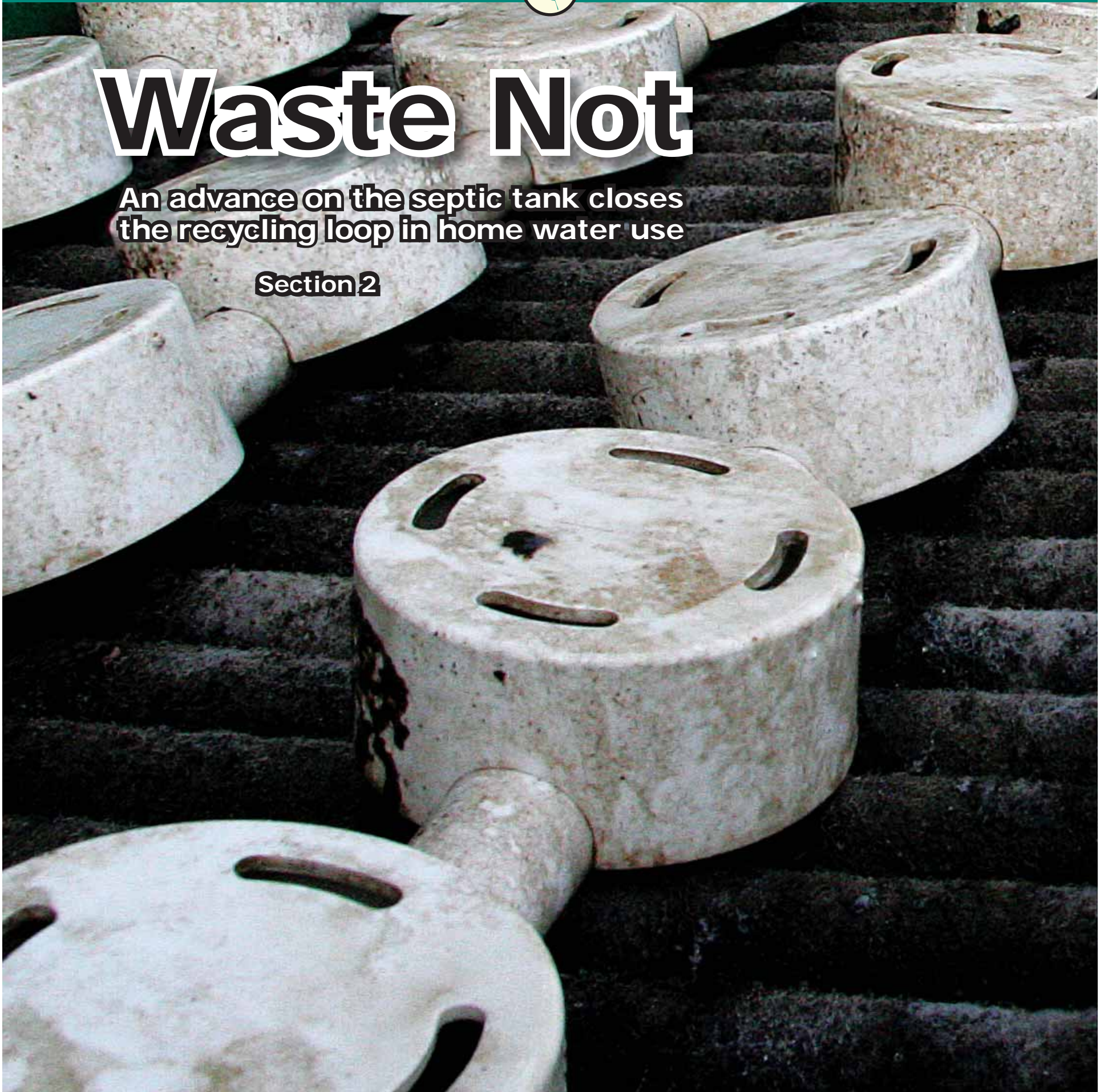


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Buffet to Bestor: Let's share the pain if the Gov gets tough on Proposition 13

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Jennifer Bestor didn't know what to expect last month when she mailed a rather whimsical letter to billionaire Warren Buffet about her research on how Proposition 13 has shifted the state's property tax burden away from commercial land owners. His subsequent response, though, has left the Menlo Park mother of a school-age son smiling — and energized.

Ms. Bestor was featured in a March 17 Almanac article that detailed her research and her quest to raise public awareness of the "incredible windfall" Proposition 13 has provided to commercial property owners — and the adverse consequences of that windfall to schools, towns and other public entities.

In her letter, Ms. Bestor urged Mr. Buffett to again take up an issue he had abruptly dropped in 2003, when he was serving as candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger's economic adviser during the gubernatorial race. At the time, Mr. Buffett opined that Proposition 13, the 1978 property tax measure considered to be the "third rail" in California politics, needed to be repealed or changed because of the economic damage it had caused the state.

Eager to squelch the public outcry over the statement, Mr. Schwarzenegger told his adviser never to mention Proposition 13 again or he would be forced to do 500 sit-ups.

Motivated by what she discovered after reviewing the tax collector rolls for Santa Cruz Avenue commercial properties in Menlo Park, Ms. Bestor wrote in her open letter to Mr. Buffett: "Please let me know how I can help you with the sit-ups. We desperately need some energy from that third rail."

In her mailbox recently, Ms. Bestor found a letter from Omaha, where Mr. Buffett lives. It reads:

"Dear Jennifer: I'm going to



Photo by Michelle Le

Jennifer Bestor's research on property tax rates shows a growing tax-burden imbalance in favor of commercial property owners.

be 80 in August. 500 sit-ups are out of the question. If you get me in trouble promise me that you will do at least half of them. Sincerely, Warren E. Buffett."

Although she claims she's "not an activist, in any sense of the word" — including on an exercise mat — Ms. Bestor wasn't about to pass up an opportunity. If Mr. Buffett proves willing to be a liaison to the governor's

'Dear Jennifer: I'm going to be 80 in August. 500 sit-ups are out of the question. If you get me in trouble promise me that you will do at least half of them.'

WARREN E. BUFFET

office, and if sit-ups are the required admission, she's going to be prepared. She's been working on her crunches with determination, she says.

Much of Ms. Bestor's motivation springs from her involvement as a parent volunteer in the Menlo Park City School District, where her son goes to school. School districts in the state are reeling from the effects of the economic meltdown, and the Menlo Park district also suffered a multi-million-dollar

loss from the Lehman Brothers collapse.

Sitting up for the schools

Meanwhile, when Ms. Bestor wrote to "The Oracle of Omaha" to ask if The Almanac could reprint his letter, he wrote back:

"If you publicize my first letter, maybe we'll even get 498 volunteers who will each contribute one sit-up and thereby bring our requirement to a manageable level. Best wishes, Warren."

She wasn't going to wait for the letter to be published. By last week, Ms. Bestor had tapped into her network of friends and acquaintances in the school community to find a committed group of about 20 who eagerly agreed to perform sit-ups for the cause.

Ever the numbers cruncher, Ms. Bestor came up with a formula that, given the ages of the volunteers, would produce a total of 500 sit-ups. In an e-mail, she explains: "The subscription formula is 80 (sit-ups) minus one's age. Thus, Warren will have to do one ... and the rest of us somewhat more.

"I've resisted anyone under 18 for fear of the child labor laws, though my son informs me that it's harder to watch me do 30 than to do 70 himself. I am not amused."

She's not sure what will happen next, but she hopes that the ball she's dropped in Mr. Buffett's court will be used to gain the attention of the governor and Sacramento lawmakers. She and her firm-bellied troops are ready and willing, she says.

Ms. Bestor has also met with assessors in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, and a San Francisco assessor who contacted her after reading The Almanac's article, to talk about ideas to change the commercial property provisions of Proposition 13, which are the same as homeowner provisions. Since the proposition was passed in 1978, the tax rate on all property has been capped at 1 percent of

See **BESTOR**, page 20

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THE ALMANAC (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Wednesday by Embarcadero Media, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices. Adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for San Mateo County, The Almanac is delivered free to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside. Subscriptions for \$60 per year or \$100 per 2 years are welcome. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558. Copyright ©2010 by Embarcadero Media, All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

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Local News

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Menlo Park men launch broad-based lawsuit against state high-speed rail agency

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park resident Mike Brady is representing his friend Morris Brown in a broad-based lawsuit against the agency charged with carrying out the California high-speed-rail project.

The suit, filed in Sacramento County Superior Court on Thursday, April 15, asks the court to make several rulings about the way the California High-Speed Rail Authority can legally use bond funds, and

funds from the federal government.

If successful, the suit would prevent the rail agency from beginning construction on the system, including the Bay Area section, until the agency secures more funding. It would also prevent the state from guaranteeing revenue to private investors in the rail system.

The suit touches on several of the men's longstanding allegations against the rail agency. Both have been outspoken opponents of the plan

Menlo Park, Atherton reaffirm objections to high-speed-rail review. **Page 16**

for high-speed rail since before California voters in 2008 passed a bond measure for \$9.95 billion to fund the system. The men ran a Web site called Derail HSR prior to the election.

Mr. Brown has sent several letters to the rail agency, arguing that the agency cannot begin construction on any segment of

See **HIGH-SPEED RAIL**, page 8



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Mike Brady, right, is representing his friend and neighbor Morris Brown in a suit against the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

Child care supervisor arrested

Police have arrested the supervisor of Menlo Park's child development center in the Belle Haven neighborhood, after the man allegedly gave unwanted letters and presents to a minor.

Jose Adalberto Lopez, 55, of San Mateo, was arrested by Menlo Park police on Tuesday, April 13. Police were called to the child development center on Ivy Drive that afternoon after receiving information from city staff, according to Nicole Acker, spokeswoman for the police department.

Mr. Lopez was charged with annoying and harassing a minor, and was booked into San Mateo County jail that night, Ms. Acker said. She said the minor was 13 years old.

Mr. Lopez has been placed on administrative leave, "pending the results of an internal investigation currently in progress," Glen Kramer, the city's personnel director, wrote in a letter to parents of children at the center, dated April 14.

Mr. Kramer told parents that the city "does not believe that any current or former students in the program" are involved in the investigation.

Mr. Lopez began working with the city as a teacher in 2001, and was promoted in 2006 to his current position, according to Mr. Kramer.



Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

Shades of green is the color scheme for Woodside resident Oliver Bock, who plans to travel with his sister Catherine from Palo Alto to Washington, D.C., on recumbent electric bicycles. Their purpose, they say, is to prove the long-distance viability of electric bicycles.

Green advocates aim to cross country on electric bikes

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

There are many means of locomotion from Palo Alto to Washington, D.C. What you pick may depend on your age, health, finances, and urgency.

Brother and sister Oliver and Catherine Bock, 55 and 61 respectively, and both residents of Woodside, are choosing bicycles, recumbent electric bicycles with memory-foam seats. They're leaving from Palo Alto on Earth Day, April 22.

They're not concerned about cost, they're giving themselves a couple of months, they're in decent physical shape, and it's a chance to talk with people along the way

See **BICYCLES**, page 8

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Jail terms ahead for Menlo College students

Prosecutors asked for two-year prison terms for two Menlo College students who assaulted two other Menlo College students in January 2009, but the judge sentenced them April 16 to terms in San Mateo County jail and three years of supervised probation.

Superior Court Judge Susan Etezadi sentenced Benjamin Kain-Williams, 21, of Atherton, to a year in jail, and Darrell Allen Willis, 25, of Wheatland, California, to six months in jail, according to Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

Both defendants had pleaded "no contest" in October to felony assault, and Mr. Kain-Williams admitted to an additional charge of causing great bodily injury to Donte Snyder,

a member of the Menlo College baseball team who was hospitalized with a fractured skull.

The defendants had been out of jail on \$25,000 bail. They received credit for one day already served, prosecutors said.

Judge Etezadi conditioned the defendants' probation on payment of restitution: \$133,150 for Mr. Snyder, and a yet to be determined sum for the other victim, Brian Phillips.

During probation, police may search the defendants' homes and vehicles with or without probable cause, and will not need a warrant to seize evidence of probation violations, prosecutors said. Their plea bargains also require that they abstain from alcohol and drugs,

undergo counseling, pay fines and fees totaling \$280, pay a \$75 monthly probation fee, and submit DNA samples. They are not allowed to contact the victims.

Before sentencing, both defendants apologized for their conduct, prosecutors said.

In the incident that led to the injuries, prosecutors said the defendants got into a loud argument with the victims after "heavy drinking" at a Menlo Park restaurant, then met again a couple of hours later at the intersection of Glenwood and Garwood avenues, where the arguing continued and the fight ensued.

Mr. Kain-Williams, a football player for the college, subsequently withdrew from the school.

Mary Smith drops appeal in death of her husband

Mary Smith of Portola Valley has paid approximately \$100,000 to compensate Woodside resident Anthony Rose, a former superintendent of the Portola Valley School District, for his attorney fees, Mr. Rose's attorney said in an e-mail to The Almanac.

Ms. Smith had sued Mr. Rose for \$7 million to \$8 million in damages over what she claimed was the wrongful death of her husband Rodney Smith, the former chief executive of San Jose-based Alterra Corp. who died in May 2007 when his bicycle

collided with Mr. Rose's car on Sand Hill Road.

A jury rejected Ms. Smith's claim in a 9-3 decision in December 2009 after a 10-day trial, and Superior Court Judge Carol Mittlesteadt, one of two "complex litigation" judges in the county, ordered her to pay restitution to Mr. Rose in the amount of \$107,225 for the costs of expert witnesses.

Ms. Smith has now dropped her appeal of that decision and paid Mr. Rose for his expenses, according to Mr. Rose's attorney, Kevin

Cholakian of Cholakian & Associates in South San Francisco.

The case hinged on whether Mr. Smith, 67, had turned his eastbound bike into the path of Mr. Rose's eastbound car, or whether Mr. Rose, 87, turned his car into the bike lane and struck Mr. Smith.

The expenses, Mr. Cholakian told The Almanac, represent the costs of hiring expert witnesses to reconstruct the accident using an identical car and bicycle and analyze the damage to both vehicles.

Facing \$1.3 million deficit, city looks for cuts, fee hikes

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park is facing a \$1.3 million deficit for the fiscal year that begins July 1, and cuts to city services could be on the way.

With employee expenses rising, and with city revenue taking longer than expected to bounce back to its pre-recession level, the city is eyeing service cuts as it tries to reduce the deficit, including severe cuts in the Belle Haven neighborhood. The entire regular City Council meeting on Tuesday, April 20, will be given over to a discussion of the budget, beginning at 7 p.m. in the council chambers.

The city's preliminary budget accounts for \$1.2 million in expense cuts and revenue boosts the city has already been making over the past several months, anticipating a deficit. They include fee hikes for city services, delayed salary

increases for city workers, and the elimination of several vacant staff positions, or delayed hiring to fill those positions.

City management is recommending \$700,000 in additional cuts. Among the recommendations: opening the Onetta Harris Community Center at noon instead of 8 a.m. daily, eliminating one police officer and one librarian position, reducing park maintenance, cutting hours at the Belle Haven library and senior center, and eliminating a teacher position at the Belle Haven child development center.

The council will discuss the recommendations at the meeting, and will also consider several other budgeting strategies. Among those is the possibility of putting two revenue-generating measures on the November ballot: increasing the tax paid by hotel guests (a 1 percent hike would generate \$250,000), and

re-instituting the utility tax (a 1 percent across-the-board tax would generate \$1.2 million).

The council could also choose to cut a program that allocates about \$100,000 annually to community organizations, or to draw from the city's substantial reserve fund.

City Manager Glen Rojas will make his recommendations on the final budget in early June.

The city is projecting that revenue will grow to \$37.6 million — \$1.1 million over what it expects in the current fiscal year, but still \$900,000 below revenue in fiscal year 2007-08. Anticipating an early recovery from the recession, the city has said that it initially over-estimated revenue by \$1.3 million in the current fiscal year.

The city expects expenses to rise by \$1.3 million, to \$38.9 million, mostly due to significant wage and benefit hikes to police officers and sergeants. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



How advertising works to attract more home buyers

Q: Our realtor is advertising our house along with a dozen other homes. Wouldn't we get better response if they advertised our house by itself?

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BICYCLES

continued from page 5

about the green lifestyle — a passion for both of them.

Electric-bike technology is at a point where the trip should be doable, Mr. Bock said. They'll be accompanied by a van with a bicycle mechanic behind the wheel. And, Mr. Bock added in an interview, this adventure, to his knowledge, has not yet been done.

"It's not a low-carbon voyage, unfortunately," he added, commenting on the necessity for the van. Nevertheless, their purpose is to demonstrate the viability of electric bikes as alternatives to fossil-fuel-powered transportation.

They hope to meet generous, like-minded people. With a plan to make 80 miles a day, they will likely be in small towns as the sun goes down. In seeking accommodations, Mr. Bock said he will ask around for residents who've installed solar panels.

Sleeping in or near the van will be an alternative. They hope to recharge the bicycles' batteries with the van when electric outlets are unavailable.

Another hope: that at the end of their adventure, President Barack Obama will have lunch with them and talk about their trip and interests.

There are pre-arranged visits, including to a Navajo drum circle in Arizona and a stop in Durango, Colorado, where the public transit system is "fabulous," the bike trails are "excellent," and the bike community is "huge," Mr. Bock said.

"The people I've been contacting I really want to know," he said. "Sustainability is a spiritual quest. It creates a sort of different way of being in the world. It's me trying to be in a community with whomever I meet."

"The story behind sustainability is that we want a planet for our kids," he added. "This is a pretty cool planet to be on. I can't think of a better planet."

Historic route

With bike lanes rare and that pesky Continental Divide insisting on being steep, the siblings are hedging their bets by heading to Barstow and Route 66, a 2,400-mile cross-country path that dates from the 19th century, avoids mountains and, according to Jennie Avila, vice-president of the California Historic Route 66 Association, is still two lanes.

Route 66 was once well-traveled. Is it now a lonely place? The stretch through the Mojave Desert can indeed be lonely, Ms. Avila said, but she noted that east of the desert, spaces between

towns are not so great that loneliness would be a problem.

Asked for his route to Barstow, Mr. Bock replied: "Circuitously, as indirectly as possible."

Ms. Bock said that she and her brother have spoken with "bicycle coordinators" in the various states to find routes that avoid heavy traffic.

"It's cross country and it's scary," Mr. Bock said, but the point, he added, is to prove that an electric bicycle can make the trip.

And encounters with pickup-driving, gun-toting, bicycle-despising rednecks? "Obviously, we're going to (meet) people who think we're nuts," Mr. Bock said.

The plan is to appeal to their motor-head tendencies by engaging them with the mechanical challenge of a cross-country trip on an electric bike.

Will they be wearing or flying the U.S. flag? Mr. Bock said he is considering it and has more than once compared his trip to the fateful one in the 1969 movie "Easy Riders."

"It's interesting to see how we'll do," Mr. Bock said. "That's part of the story, to see what happens." The Bock family has always been "real active," he said. "This is kind of stretching the limit a little."

Ms. Bock said she was "a little worried" about the toll on her body. "The bikes are impossible to sit on for more than an hour at a time," she said, referring to the mesh seat-back, to which they're adding sheepskin.

The only thing that might cause them to turn back, they said, would be their 89-year-old mother, who inspired them to live greenly, becoming seriously ill.

She is apparently not behind them this time. "She keeps saying, 'You're not really doing this stupid bike trip, are you?'" Ms. Bock said.

What if it rains? "We'll get wet," Mr. Bock said.

Storms in Kansas are a breed apart from storms in California. What about them? "We just hope they come with a tailwind, not a headwind," Mr. Bock said.

The electric motors on their bikes give them three to four miles of travel per amp, and these bikes have dual batteries for a total of 32 amps.

Pedaling up a hill with an electrical boost is like pedaling on the flat, Mr. Bock said.

"I'm going to be getting way, way behind him," Ms. Bock said.

Go to www.thegreenriders.blogspot.com to follow them online.

For more, go to www.thegreenriders.org. ■

'The bikes are impossible to sit on for more than an hour at a time.'

CATHERINE BOCK

Mark Fiore, Priory graduate, wins Pulitzer

Mark Fiore, a former Portola Valley resident, a Woodside Priory graduate and a political cartoonist for the San Francisco Chronicle's online site SFGate.com, was named the winner of the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning.

As noted in the prize citation, Mr. Fiore's "biting wit, extensive research and ability to distill complex issues set a high standard for an emerging form of commentary."

Mr. Fiore's \$10,000 prize sets a precedent in that it is the first cartooning prize to be awarded for work that appears exclusively online, according to a Chronicle story. His cartoons include animations.

His work also appears on the Web sites of Slate, CBS News, Mother Jones magazine and National Public Radio, with political animations on sites including CNN, Frontline and Bill Moyers Journal, according to an online biography. The Wall Street Journal called Mr. Fiore "the undisputed guru" of animated political cartoons.

In a Priory statement, science teacher Paul Trudelle recalls that Mr. Fiore, of the class of 1987, had a habit of producing drawings that "were always pointed and humorous." Some were confis-

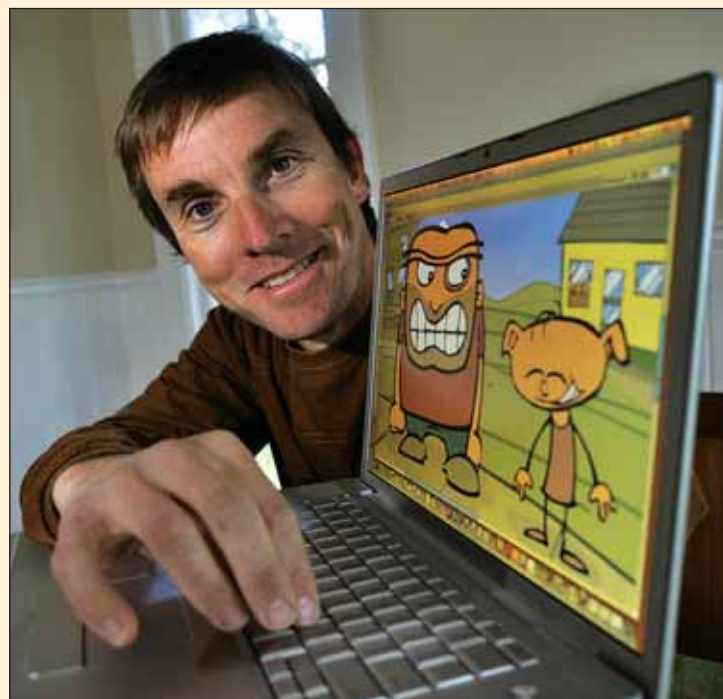


Photo courtesy of Marin Independent Journal

Mark Fiore, a former Portola Valley resident and graduate of Woodside Priory, shown with his computer and a sample of his work that won him the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning.

cated, Mr. Trudelle added.

Mr. Fiore's career includes a major in political science at Colorado College, where he received his diploma under the approving gaze of commencement speaker Dick Cheney, his bio said. A youth spent in California and the Idaho back-

woods "shaped him politically," he said.

He is also the recipient of the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, two Online Journalism Awards, and awards from the National Cartoonists Society and the Society of Professional Journalists.

HIGH-SPEED RAIL

continued from page 5

the rail line until it has enough money to complete that segment. In stating that it intends to begin construction on several segments at once, despite the fact that it doesn't have the money to complete even one of them, the rail agency is violating the legislation that governs it, Mr. Brady asserts in the suit.

The state Legislature wrote the rail agency's governing legislation with the intent of avoiding "the risk that the project could be commenced in various areas with the funding running out and the project left in suspension, abandoned and uncompleted," Mr. Brady writes in the complaint.

Were the rail agency to begin construction on separate parts of the system with the funding currently in hand, it would "completely frustrate the legislature's intent to minimize the financial risk to the state from unfinished projects, and would constitute the waste of public funds/assets," Mr. Brady states.

In the complaint, the men also ask the court to declare that the state cannot yet release any of

the bond funding approved by voters in the 2008 election, and to declare that the Peninsula Joint Powers Board, which operates Caltrain, cannot yet cede ownership of the rail corridor to the high-speed-rail agency.

California was awarded \$2.34 billion through the federal stimulus bill to fund the high-speed rail project. The rail agency has stated that it intends to match that money with bond funding, and to apply it to several different segments of the rail system.

Jeff Barker, director of communications for the rail authority, said in an e-mail that the agency is aware of the suit, but has not yet reviewed it. The state is "committed to building this project right and in a way that is within the letter of the law," he wrote.

In the complaint, Mr. Brown and Mr. Brady also contend that the rail agency has vastly underestimated the cost of constructing the rail system, and that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's promise to match any federal stimulus funds for the rail system was illegal.

"It may be appropriate for the federal government to reconsider the propriety of granting federal funding at all to the

authority," Mr. Brady writes.

The men also take issue with a suggestion in a rail agency business plan that the state may have to guarantee a return on any private investment in the high-speed-rail system, saying that the language in the bond issuance prohibits the state from subsidizing the operation of the system. They ask the court to declare that the state cannot guarantee revenue to investors.

This is the second pro bono lawsuit Mr. Brady has filed against the rail agency. In the first suit, filed on behalf of Menlo Park resident Russ Peterson, he asked the court to state that the rail agency could not begin work on the Peninsula portion of the high-speed-rail project without the consent of Union Pacific, which has ownership rights over the Caltrain corridor. That suit is still pending.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Brady were profiled in the March 31 issue of the Almanac for their high-speed-rail advocacy efforts. ■

TOWN SQUARE

Post your views and comments on TownSquare: www.TheAlmanacOnline.com



Photo by Michelle Le

Nereida Angulo is a swirl of blue and white skirts as she performs with Ballet Folklorico Alma de Mexico at Encinal School in Atherton. The performance was part of the school's cultural arts day on May 15, 2009. The photo won a first-place award in the state-wide Better Newspapers Contest, sponsored by the California Newspaper Publishers Association.

Almanac recognized for 'general excellence'

The Almanac took second place in the "general excellence" category of the state-wide Better Newspaper Contest, sponsored by the California Newspaper Publishers Association, it was announced Saturday. The Almanac also took a first-place award for a feature photograph by staff photographer Michelle Le.

Ms. Le's photograph, "Whirling through Mexico," was tak-

en at the May 15, 2009, cultural arts day at Encinal Elementary School in Atherton, and depicts two dancers with Ballet Folklorico Alma de Mexico.

In winning the awards, The Almanac competed against other weekly newspapers in the state in its circulation category.

The Almanac serves readers in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside.

Sister papers

The Almanac's sister paper, the Palo Alto Weekly, picked up seven first-place awards, including for "general excellence" and best Web site for Palo Alto Online. The Weekly also won for local-news coverage, sports coverage, editorial comment, layout/design, and feature photo.

The Mountain View Voice, also a sister paper, won a second-place award for public service.

BARBARA ("BARRIE") SEBASTIAN 1925-2010



Barrie Sebastian, a resident of Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Atherton for nearly 70 years died peacefully at home on 15 April 2010.

Born in England, Barrie attended school there and in the Philippines where her father ran a thriving business. She attended Brent International School in her beloved Baguio but left in her senior year several weeks before Pearl Harbor and sailed to join her ill father in San Francisco on the SS President Coolidge, the last passenger ship to leave the Far East before the war.

After arrival in the United States she finished her senior year at Palo Alto High School and then attended Stanford where she majored in Far Eastern Studies and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. After graduation she worked at the predecessor of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation for ten years where she rose to become manager of the lay staff at Stanford Student Health services and developed an uncanny skill for pre-diagnosing ailments in family and friends.

In 1947 Barrie met Frank Sebastian, a student at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, and they married in 1950. She retired from the health service in 1952 to raise a family. She was active for 35 years in the PTA, becoming head of the San Mateo County district in 1981 while commuting back and forth from New York City, where Frank was on a temporary assignment for Envirotech Corp. Barrie loved flowers and served two terms as president of the Atherton Garden Guild where she earned Blue Ribbons in flower arranging. She also loved gardening, swimming, art museums, and travel. Frank and Barrie visited over 70 countries and she was especially attached to England, Asia, and the Philippines.

Barrie leaves behind her loving husband of nearly 60 years, her children Alex and Sheilaugh and their spouses, three grandchildren, and many friends around the world.

A celebration of her life will be held for family and friends at a later date.

In lieu of flowers please send any donations to the World Wildlife Fund, the Stanford School of Humanities and Sciences for the benefit of Art and Art History, or an environmental organization.

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Woodside death investigated as homicide

Deputies from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office are investigating the April 13 death of Parima Parineh, 56, of Woodside as a homicide, according to a report from the Sheriff's Office.

She lived with her husband and two adult children on Fox Hill Road in the Woodside hills, according to Lt. Ray Lunny of the Sheriff's Office.

Upon arriving home around 4 p.m. Tuesday, April 13,

Pooroushasb (Peter) Parineh, Ms. Parineh's husband, discovered his wife's body in a bedroom and called 911 to report that she had shot herself, Lt. Lunny said. Medics from the Woodside Fire Protection District declared Ms. Parineh dead.

After investigating the evidence and conducting an autopsy, authorities concluded that "the injury suffered by the victim was not self inflicted," and are treating the case as a

homicide, Lt. Lunny said.

There were no signs of forced entry nor were there indications that the suspect is a stranger, deputies said. Detectives are attempting to interview all the members of the family but they are not being cooperative, deputies said.

Deputies are asking that anyone with information call Detective Hector Acosta or Detective Saul Lopez at the Sheriff's Office at 363-4911, or call the anonymous witness line at 800-547-2700.

Atherton asks D.A. to investigate police misconduct charge

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

The town of Atherton has asked the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office to investigate "the allegation of falsifying a police report" detailing the 2008 arrest of Atherton resident Jon Buckheit. The falsification charge was brought to light by a police officer during a court case earlier this year in which Mr. Buckheit won a declaration of factual innocence in the case.

Mr. Buckheit and several other residents have been demanding an investigation of the matter.

Atherton officials first mentioned the investigation April 14 on the town's blog in a two-sentence statement that didn't mention who would be conducting the investigation; nor did it mention that the matter pertained to the Buckheit case.

Later that day, Assistant City Manager Eileen Wilkerson said in a prepared statement, "The town is following its current process and due to the potential perception of conflict of interest the allegation of falsifying a police report has been referred to the San Mateo County District Attorney."

Stephen Wagstaffe, chief deputy district attorney, said last week that his office had received the request to investigate around the end of March.

When he learned that the town has asked the district attorney to investigate the falsification charge, Mr. Buckheit said the request is "totally inappropriate." Because his lawsuit names the county, "and that includes the D.A.," how can that office "pass judgment on the wrongfulness of what was done to me?" he asked. "The D.A. has a vested interest in not exposing the wrongdoing."

Mr. Buckheit also said that Mr. Wagstaffe was involved in his conflict with the town in another significant way that makes his office unsuitable to investigate the town's conduct surrounding the arrest and its aftermath. After his arrest, Mr. Buckheit had to fight the town to obtain a copy of the police report about the inci-

dent — a fight that cost the town \$8,000 to cover Mr. Buckheit's attorney's fees after he successfully sued for the report.

Mr. Buckheit said Mr. Wagstaffe "was complicit" in withholding the report, adding that when his attorney called Mr. Wagstaffe to obtain the report, "Wagstaffe said he wouldn't agree to release it."

But Mr. Wagstaffe said that Mr. Buckheit's "facts are just wrong." By the time the attorney called, "we had already reviewed it and returned it to the town," he said.

"That's how we do it: If the department decides not to investigate, we don't keep the documents," he added. "When (the attorney) called me for it, I didn't have the document to give to him."

Regarding Mr. Buckheit's claim that because his lawsuit names the county, the district attorney shouldn't be involved in the investigation, Mr. Wagstaffe said, "If we had a legal conflict, we would withdraw." Opinions issued by the state attorney general support the involvement of the district attorney under the circumstances, he said.

Mr. Buckheit also took issue with the town's characterization of the issue as an "allegation." "It's very important to (understand that) the police report being altered is not an allegation — it is the sworn testimony of an Atherton police officer," he said.

The police report and court records have been sealed by the court, but Mr. Buckheit, who may release information if he chooses, provided The Almanac with pages from the court transcript that describe some of the court testimony of an Atherton police officer, whom Mr. Buckheit identifies as Tony Dennis. Asked by Mr. Buckheit's attorney whether he believed "that someone changed your report or added this into the report," the officer responded, "That appears to be what happened, that appears to be what have (sic) happened, yes, because I do not remember putting that in there, nor was that my intention."

Mr. Buckheit was arrested

during a domestic violence incident at his home. He said that although he was the victim, and had the injuries to prove it, the police arrested him instead of the woman who he said assaulted him.

The district attorney did not file charges, but the town refused to turn over the police report to Mr. Buckheit for months. He finally obtained it last June, along with his attorney's fees.

Mr. Buckheit filed a lawsuit in federal court last October over the arrest and its aftermath. In it, he names the town of Atherton, San Mateo County, and three police officers. ▀

JANICE KELLER HOWARD

Janice Keller Howard, born Janice Mae Klakulak in 1938 in Detroit, Michigan, passed away peacefully on March 28, 2010 with friends and family by her side in Redwood City, California. Surviving 15 years after treatment for pancreatic and breast cancer, Jan provided continuous encouragement to many facing similar issues. A resident of Atherton for 34 years, she moved to San Jose five years ago. She was preceded in death in 2000 by her husband of 30 years, Norman C. Howard. Jan is survived by her sister, Sylvia Bouza of Sacramento and her two daughters, Dawn Howard and Vanessa Howard Morgan of Portland, Oregon.

The Klakulak family moved from Detroit in 1947 to California, where the family name was changed to Keller. Jan's parents, Stella and William, were business owners in Lynwood who taught their daughters the rigors of business ownership. Jan graduated from Compton High School at age 16 and then attended Compton and Fullerton Junior Colleges where she was a member of the drill team and modern dance club. She graduated from San Jose State University with a degree in psychology and then traveled extensively in Europe. Upon returning to California, she became one of California's first female probation officers, working first in Santa Cruz County and Santa Clara County. Jan joined the San Mateo County Adult Probation Department in 1968, eventually becoming a supervising probation officer and serving 27 years before retiring.

A talented artist, Jan enjoyed practicing watercolor and collage techniques weekly with friends in Portola Valley. Gardening and her vivid appreciation for color and composition inspired her daily. Her life-long love of animals, big and small, wild and tame, led to the adoption of many family pets from local animal shelters and co-workers. Her love and determination in life will be missed, but not forgotten. On May 8th at 1:00 pm, a memorial in celebration of Jan's life will be held at Holbrook-Palmer Park's Jennings Pavilion at 150 Watkins Ave., Atherton. In lieu of flowers, the family requests remembrances be made to Mutville, Senior Dog Rescue (P.O. Box 410207, San Francisco, CA 9414) or the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS, Dept MEMIT9, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20037).

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Stanford Hospital Health Notes

special feature

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Seeing Better, Knowing More: Advanced Imaging Enables Better Diagnosis and Treatment

Eleanor Walker has played golf since she was in her 50s. She saw no reason to stop when she turned 88 this year. Sure, she took a bit more time getting her clubs out of her car, and she conceded that a golf cart should be her transportation around the course. Other than that, she was just fine.

This spring, before the weather was reliable enough for golf, she had lunch at the course clubhouse with her sister-in-law. After lunch, the two women came out to their car. The next thing Walker remembers is being in an ambulance. At least, she thought she was in an ambulance. Things were a bit confused. Then, she remembers feeling pretty relaxed and people were asking her questions, asking her to move this and that.

Now she knows she had had a stroke—that within her brain, a clot had blocked blood flow to one of her arteries and its many branches. Parts of her brain were no longer getting the oxygen they needed to function. When she arrived at Stanford Hospital, she could not speak or move her right side. If the clot was not removed, the damage would continue, claiming more and more of her brain and leaving her with less and less ability to be the fully active woman she had been.

What she didn't understand at the time was the unique combination of imaging and expertise that was ready and waiting for her at Stanford Hospital & Clinics. Or how, precisely, that combination's

powerful synergy gave her back her life, just as it had been, in spite of odds that were not particularly in her favor.

Faster, smaller, clearer

If it had been 1980, Walker's outcome might have been very different. Her physicians would have seen Walker's brain with images that recorded a minuscule fraction of what they can see now. And they would have waited for those images thousands of times longer than they do today. In the past 30 years, medical imaging's increase in speed and data has matched that of computers. Instead of one image recorded about every four seconds, today's imaging technology captures 320 images in 0.3 seconds. Like a jet versus an ant. And instead of seeing just a beach in that jet's flyover, today's imaging technology sees grains of sand.

"Roughly 75 percent of our brain is wired for vision, so images are a powerful tool."

—Gary Glazer, MD, Chair, Stanford Department of Radiology

At Stanford's Department of Radiology, where clinical diagnosis and treatment reflect the latest research data, physicians are using the most advanced methods of imaging to push breakthroughs in several areas, working in collaboration with engineers and physicists. Once X-rays were the best



Eleanor Walker, 88, has played golf for more than three decades. It's the kind of exercise that has kept her energy at a level far beyond her years. This spring, however, a clot blocked an artery in her brain, causing a stroke that could have left her without the ability to be the active woman she was.

medicine could offer. Now, physicians use ultrasound, computed tomography, magnetic resonance, optical bioluminescence and fluorescence to bear down on body tissue even to its molecules. Recently, Stanford radiologist Sanjiv Sam Gambhir, MD, PhD, pioneered the use of another form of molecular imaging, one to track, even more accurately, the biochemical changes that mark cancer before its structural changes are visible.

These advances have affected every aspect of medicine, saving many, many lives. Patients can be diagnosed earlier, vastly improving the chance of recovery. Physicians can plan more accurate treatment, without the kind of exploratory surgery that was once the only way to see what was going on. They can work inside the body in ways previously not dreamed possible.

At Stanford, Walker's physicians quickly scanned her brain to find the clot. Within a couple of minutes, 500 to 1,000 images in that scan were fed through

Stanford's specially-developed software to create special images that showed how much blood was flowing through the arteries to her brain and how long it took to get there. That information answered the most important questions about Walker's condition. How much of her brain had the stroke already damaged—and how much might soon be? Could rapid treatment give Walker a good chance for a nearly complete recovery? And could it be done safely?

Seeing every step

The ability of physicians to see inside the body, with the kind of detail imaging technology now supplies, has allowed a whole new set of non-surgical, minimally-invasive treatments and an expanded role for radiologists. Among Walker's team of physicians were neurologists, diagnostic radiologists, and an interventional radiologist, Michael Marks, MD, who took the next clinical step in treating Walker. Interventional radiologists, like Marks, enter the body

guided by imaging technology, using small tubing called catheters, not scalpels, eliminating traditional surgery's risks from large incisions.

"I asked my doctor if I could play golf and she said, 'Sure you can!' Maybe I'll play even better!"

—Eleanor Walker, Stanford Hospital & Clinics patient

To get to Walker's brain, Marks made a tiny incision in an artery at the top of her leg and into that incision threaded a tiny catheter, inch by inch, following the artery into the brain, all the while guiding its progress by watching an image of that artery captured on video. The catheter carried a tiny, corkscrew-like wire inside its narrow tubing. Once Marks saw the catheter was at the clot, he turned the wire to grab hold of the clot and removed it. On the video, he could see the blood again fully flowing through the artery.

A couple of days after Walker's stroke, she was back home. A couple weeks later, she was out playing golf again. "I asked my doctor if I could play—and she said, 'Sure you can!'" Walker said. "I used to be able to do everything so fast. I'm a little slower now. I'll just have to practice. Maybe I'll play even better!"

More and more, almost every step of medical care is enhanced by imaging. Stanford cancer physicians use advanced imaging technology to plot and then deliver precisely targeted radiation in robot-assisted procedures. In order to treat lung cancer, difficult because tumors move with each breath a patient makes, the CyberKnife follows imaging information from real-time video. Imaging also enables the CyberKnife and other high-beam radiation devices to treat the brain without damaging surrounding tissues.

And when surgeons choose to treat patients with small-incision or minimally invasive surgery, optics in the instruments they use are essential, and improving all the time.

Walker's brain information came from an advanced CT tailored for acute

stroke patients at the Stanford Stroke Center, one of the first in the U.S. To offer stroke prevention, treatment and research. The Stanford protocol has made a real difference for people like Walker, whose age and functional effect from the stroke might have eliminated her as a candidate for aggressive care without the special information available at Stanford. The analytical software to construct an image of the brain tells physicians and families much more quickly what they need to know about what's possible for a stroke patient. "There are few places in the U.S. that use it in the acute way we do," said radiologist Greg Zaharchuk, MD. "That software means you can get so much more information from that CT."

Expanding view

Accomplishing the image goal with a CT, instead of an MRI, means patients can be assessed more quickly. The software also automates the information analysis, a big improvement over the previous state where someone had to be called to physically come to the Hospital to run a program.

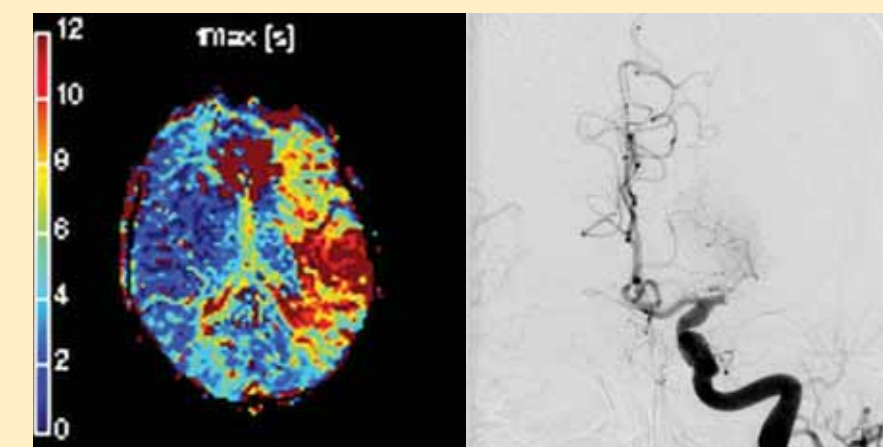
The treatment of other brain conditions, like epilepsy and Parkinson's, is also becoming more effective with imaging and software analysis. Stanford physicians have developed to understand the brain's behavior in greater detail. That imaging-assisted mapping also guides cardiovascular surgeons as they repair or replace heart valves. The special software they use, which can build 3D images to track blood flow and volume, gives an instant answer about the effectiveness of that repair or replacement.

Soon, imaging could make it possible to see the cerebral plaque that identifies the presence of Alzheimer's. Physicians at Stanford already use imaging techniques that help them place radiation-loaded microspheres directly into veins feeding tumors in the liver, a direct approach that avoids the drastic effect of chemotherapy delivered throughout the body.

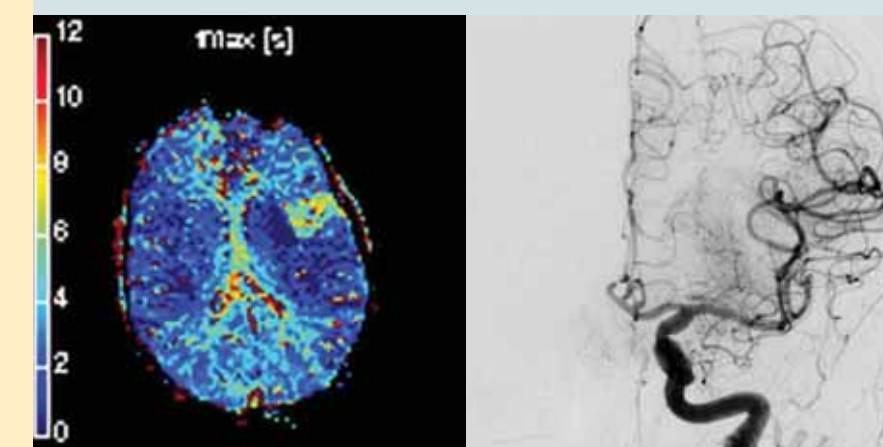
As might be expected, scanning the brain to create images of what it looks like when people think, feel or do certain things, is proving to be a cornucopia of information. Recently, brain scans revealed more about what goes on in anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder. Understanding the relationships between the various parts of the brain takes physicians one step closer to therapeutic solutions.

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.

Precise structural vision — and function



When Eleanor Walker arrived at Stanford Hospital, physicians immediately looked at her brain with a CT scanner to find the clot and to see what damage had already been done. They also put contrast dye into her artery and recorded images of its path with X-ray in a process called angiography. Digital subtraction removes everything in the image except the artery marked with the contrast material. These images were made before her treatment.



What a clot does to blood flow is easy to see in these images, taken after interventional radiologists removed the clot and restored normal passage of blood to Walker's brain. The images on the left mark, with colors, how long blood is taking to get to various parts of the brain. The red areas mark where blood flow has stopped, the blue where blood flow is normal, the yellow and green where damage will soon occur.

In addition to its imaging availability at the Hospital, Stanford's Department of Radiology has two other centers—at the Outpatient Center in Redwood City and the Stanford Medicine Imaging facility in Palo Alto.

Stanford's Department of Radiology researchers have filed 115 patents in the past five years. The Department also includes the National Center for Advanced Magnetic Resonance Technology; the In Vivo Cellular and Molecular Imaging Center at Stanford; the Center for Cancer Nanotechnology and Excellence Focused on Therapy Response. For more information about the Stanford Stroke Center, phone 650.723-6469 or visit stanfordhospital.org/stroke/. For more information about the Radiology Department, call 650. 723-4527 or visit stanfordhospital.org/radiology/.

The collaboration of science, physics and engineering, said Gary Glazer, MD, Chair of Stanford's Department of Radiology, is especially strong at Stanford. And that kind of collaboration drives the future of imaging. At the heart of it, though, is the very nature of human physiology. "What we do is try to explain complex systems through visual representation," he said. "Roughly 75 percent of our brain is wired for vision,

so images are a powerful tool to understand that complexity."

Walker is getting stronger each day, back to her old self. "I don't really pay attention to my age," she said. "I just put it out of mind." Her memory of what happened will likely always be spotty. What she does recall best is how relaxed she felt in the Hospital. "I just didn't worry about it. I assumed I would be fine."



After prompt treatment at Stanford Hospital's nationally-recognized Stroke Center, Eleanor Walker, 88, is back to her regular golfing routine, which includes driving herself from her home to the course and playing a full round, sometimes with a friend. Her Stanford physicians used advanced imaging technology to find the clot that caused her stroke, to see what damage it had already done and to see what damage would happen without treatment. Guided by real-time video, interventional radiologists made a small incision in an artery and threaded a tiny catheter into her brain to remove the clot and restore her brain to full function.

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Frances Freyberg took this photo of spring leaves while hiking at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve in Half Moon Bay in April 2009.

Freyberg among artists at Open Studios

Five award-winning Peninsula artists — Marcia Enns, Frances Freyberg, Kim Holl, Julia Munder Seelos and Alice Weil — will exhibit paintings and fine art photography at 856 Partridge Ave. in Menlo Park during the annual Silicon Valley Open Studios the weekends of May 8-9 and May 15-16. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The event is part of the 24th annual Silicon Valley Open Studios, with some 320 local artists

opening their studios to the public the first three weekends in May.

During the weekend of May 15-16, photographer Frances Freyberg of Menlo Park will donate her net proceeds to Mission Hospice, to support patients who cannot afford hospice care.

Ms. Freyberg, director of development for Mission Hospice, specializes in color portraits of people, wildlife, nature and architecture from her travels to more than 50 countries. This year's open studio will feature photos from her 2010 trip to India.

Johns signs lawsuit settlement; council OKS pact on 3-2 vote

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

John Johns, the former finance director of Atherton who sued the town over his firing, has signed a settlement agreement awarding him \$225,000, an agreement approved by a 3-2 vote of the council at a March 29 closed session meeting, according to the town.

Mayor Kathy McKeithen and council members Jim Dobbie and Jerry Carlson voted for the settlement, with council members Charles Marsala and Elizabeth Lewis opposed.

In addition to the cash, Mr. Johns will receive a letter of commendation from the town after he is rehired, then resigns.

Under the agreement, Mr. Johns also forfeits the right to sue the town, council members, current and former employees, and contractors, according to a statement issued by the town on April 19.

"The settlement allows the

Town to limit its exposure to hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional future litigation costs (including a possible award of attorney's fees to Mr. Johns if he prevailed on certain causes of action), should the case have been litigated through discovery and trial," the written statement said.

Mr. Johns was fired in October 2007. He has maintained that he was targeted for blowing the whistle on fiscal improprieties in Atherton's building and other departments, and filed his wrongful termination lawsuit in 2008.

Mr. Johns said the town pressed for a settlement provision prohibiting him from speaking publicly "on my experiences," but he wouldn't agree to it. Since the agreement was reached, Mr. Johns has issued numerous highly charged statements, both in a public meeting and on Town Square, The Almanac's online forum. ■

Seniors can apply for parcel tax exemption

Senior citizens who own property in the Las Lomas School District have until June 1 to apply for an exemption from the \$311 parcel tax passed by voters in 2007.

To qualify for the exemption, seniors must be 65 years old or older by July 1, and live on the

property they own in the school district.

Those wishing to apply for the exemption should contact the district office at 854-6311 for an application form.

The tax is expected to raise about \$1.2 million in 2010-11.



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Open studios

Alice Weil's painting "Palo Alto Hills" was inspired by summer walks to "the dish." She is among the artists exhibiting works at 856 Partridge Ave. in Menlo Park during the annual Silicon Valley Open Studios the weekends of May 8-9 and May 15-16. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Pension poll hints at marketing campaign

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park residents reported receiving phone calls last week in an apparent marketing poll concerning a "pension reform" initiative that a group of residents has launched.

Based on reports from residents, the poll seems designed to shape a marketing campaign against the initiative effort, which would scale back pension payments to future non-police municipal employees. It provides a glimpse into the tactics that might be employed in such a campaign, such as linking the initiative to former council members Lee Duboc and Mickie Winkler, and noting that it would reduce pensions for librarians.

The company conducting the poll did not say who had paid for it, according to people who were surveyed.

Sharon McAlevey, a spokeswoman for the union that represents the city's middle management employees, said that her union is not connected to the poll. A call to a representative of Service Employees International, the city's largest employee union, was not returned.

The initiative would reduce pension payments to public employees from four-fifths to three-fifths of their annual salary, would increase the retirement age from 55 to 60, and would require a popular vote for any future increase in pension benefits.

Henry Riggs, one of the leaders of the initiative drive, said the group had expected resistance from employee unions from the beginning. "To be honest, so far this looks to me pretty light," he said. "I'm expecting more drama, not less. ... We've talked about it, and have been prepared (for resistance) since the time we said, 'OK, we're gonna do this.'"

■ MENLO PARK

The group is in the process of gathering signatures to qualify the initiative for the November ballot. It's on target for its goal of 2,400 signatures by its deadline of early May, according to Mr. Riggs.

He said that his group plans to campaign in support of the initiative until November, assuming it makes the ballot.

"There's no 15-word blurb that addresses what we're trying to do," Mr. Riggs said. "The alternative points of view will be disseminated thoroughly, whereas we will be lucky to knock on the doors of 20 percent of voters."


The fact that the poll is being conducted could be a boon to proponents of the initiative, some of whom have sought to cast themselves as grassroots advocates standing up to well-funded special interests. In an e-mail to supporters, Ms. Duboc said that she anticipated a "shoot the messenger" campaign from opponents of the initiative drive. She is involved in the effort, but is not its public face.

"The unions will spare no effort or expense in attempting to derail" the pension initiative, she wrote in a January e-mail.

John Kadvan, a member of Menlo Park's Planning Commission, provided The Almanac with detailed notes he took when contacted in the survey. According to Mr. Kadvan, the caller asked several times whether he would support the initiative, testing the effectiveness of various arguments in favor of and in opposition to it. It asked for respondents' reaction to several names, including those of Ms. Duboc and Ms. Winkler, the "pension reform" group, the Tea Party movement, CalPERS (the state pension fund), and SEIU (the employee union).



According to Mr. Kadvan, the

interlocutor asked whether he would support the initiative if he knew it would apply to road workers and librarians, and if he knew that public employees do not receive Social Security. He was also asked whether he would be persuaded by arguments that the city needs to stand up to the unions, and that the initiative drive represents a mean-spirited attack by Tea Party activists. ■



EYE CARE NEWS

**Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician**

HOW SHARP IS YOUR VISION?

To determine visual acuity, a person must sit 20 feet in front of a Snellen Chart ("E Chart") and read the printed letters. The distance of 20 feet is used for testing purposes because, at that distance, the eye is relaxed and its lens is in a neutral position (not trying to focus). At 20 feet, those with normal visual acuity can clearly read three-eighths-inch letters. They are said to have "20/20 vision" because at 20 feet from the chart, they see what a normally sighted person sees at

20 feet. When a person's visual acuity is worse than normal, the second number will be larger than 20. Visual acuity is only one factor used to determine overall visual ability.

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P.S. A person with 20/40 vision can see at 20 feet what a normally sighted person sees at 40 feet.

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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Menlo Park, Atherton reaffirm objections to California high-speed-rail review

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park and Atherton are poised to reaffirm their objections to the environmental review of the California high-speed rail project, as the cities gear up for a possible second round in the battle over the state-mandated review process.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority, the agency charged with overseeing the project, is working to re-certify the "project-level" environmental impact report for the Bay Area at the request of a Superior Court judge, following a lawsuit joined by Atherton and Menlo Park. The cities are commenting on that document for a second time through that process.

In draft letters, both jurisdictions reiterate most of their complaints about the original environmental review. While the rail agency asked that comments focus only on the sections of the document that were revised as a result of the lawsuit, mostly in

areas south of Gilroy, Atherton and Menlo Park both ask the rail agency to revisit the analysis of how high-speed trains would run along the Caltrain corridor.

In Atherton's letter, penned by Public Works Director Duncan

The town calls the document's treatment of land-use impacts 'half-hearted.'

Jones, the town argues that the new document does not completely address the court ruling, because it doesn't adequately analyze potential eminent domain takings on the Peninsula, and does not adequately address vibration impacts.

The town calls the document's treatment of land-use impacts "half-hearted," asking for more detail. In its letter, Menlo Park asks for an analysis of impacts

to properties outside the 50-foot radius considered in the environmental review.

Atherton also attached to its letter detailed studies of alternatives to the Caltrain route, asking that the rail agency reconsider those alternatives.

Meanwhile, the town plans to join in re-filing the lawsuit that prompted the rail agency to revise the environmental impact report, citing new information about the way in which the agency conducted its ridership study.

Menlo Park's City Council will discuss whether the city will join the lawsuit at its meeting Tuesday, April 20. The council could approve the letter to the rail agency at the same meeting.

Atherton's City Council will consider the town's letter to the rail agency at its meeting Wednesday, April 21. At its March 17 meeting, the council unanimously voted to retain a lobbyist who is also advocating for Menlo Park and Palo Alto on high-speed rail issues. ■

Free wildflower walks at Edgewood Park

Free wildflower walks at Edgewood County Park in Redwood City are offered from 10 a.m. to

1 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday through early June. Edgewood Park and Natural

Preserve, 10 Old Stage Coach Road, Redwood City.

Go to friendsofedgewood.org or call 866-463-3439 for more information on the docent-led walks.

Man convicted of murder in shooting of taxi driver

Jurors convicted a Menlo Park man April 13 of first-degree murder for the fatal shooting of a taxi driver in Redwood City early on a Saturday morning in 2003.

Lousa Mataele, 37, of Menlo Park, sat quietly at the defense table as the verdict was read in San Mateo County Superior Court.

The cab driver, 21-year-old Davinder Singh, was shot to death on Sept. 13, 2003.

Mr. Mataele was initially found incompetent to stand trial in 2005 and was placed at Napa State Hospital. But in April 2008, the California

Department of Mental Health found that his competency had been restored and a judge reinstated criminal proceedings.

In addition to murder, Mr. Mataele was found guilty of fatally shooting Mr. Singh in the commission of a robbery and of attempting to rob Mr. Singh before he killed him.

Jurors also convicted him of attempted murder for shooting another man in the taxi, Jaime Torres, but found him not guilty of attempting to rob Mr. Torres.

— Bay City News Service

Woodside readies for May Day parade

The calendar cooperated with the Woodside community and Woodside School this year, allowing the annual May Day Parade and Carnival to be celebrated on the day itself: Saturday, May 1.

The parade begins at 10 a.m., with registration beginning at 9 a.m. at Woodside School, 3195 Woodside Road. Registration forms are available in advance at the school office, or by e-mailing kstenson@olivesmart.com or kassia@decorvm.com.

The annual Fun Run will precede

the parade; it begins at 7:30 a.m.

A pancake breakfast sponsored by the Rotary Club will be served from 8 to 10 a.m. at Woodside Village Church, and a barbecue lunch will be available at Woodside School from noon to 2 p.m.

The May Pole Dance and recognition ceremony begin at 11:15 a.m., and carnival games and crafts will be on the agenda from noon to 3 p.m. at the school.

Contact vedayonehiro@yahoo.com for more information.

'Drive Less Challenge' begins April 22

A friendly competition sponsored by a Menlo Park group, encouraging people to spend less time in their cars, will run from Thursday, April 22, to May 5.

Sponsored by the Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee, the contest is in its second year. Mountain View, Palo Alto and Burlingame have joined the roll of sponsoring cities, according to the group's Web site.

After compiling a voluminous list of methods for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Menlo Park in 2007, the annual "challenge" is now the group's main focus. The goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to encourage people to reduce their "carbon footprint."

Visit drivelesschallenge.com for more information, and to sign up.

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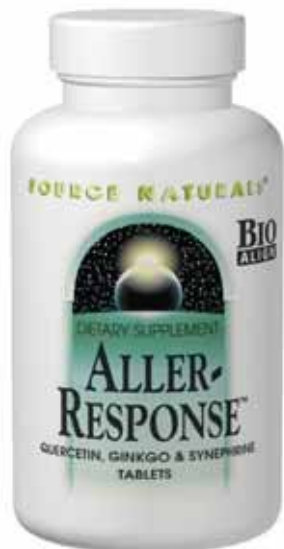


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Dr. William Tevis dies at 87

Dr. William Wade Tevis, who served on the staffs of Sequoia Hospital and Stanford Medical Center, died quietly April 11 at his home in Atherton. Dr. Tevis, who suffered from Parkinson's Disease, was 87.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, he was raised in Wichita, Kansas, where he attended public schools and Wichita State University.

From 1944 to 1947, he served in the U.S. Navy and studied medicine at Washington University in St. Louis. He completed his internal medicine residency at the Veterans Hospital in McKinney Texas. He was recalled to active duty during the



Dr. William Tevis

Korean War and served as a captain in the Air Force, heading the medical department at Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas.

Dr. Tevis practiced privately in Palo Alto for 30 years, where he served on the staffs of Stanford and Sequoia hospitals. The last 14 years of his career were with the Menlo Park and Palo Alto veterans hospitals. He was a Mason, a member of the Menlo Park Rotary Club, and a regular visitor to the Rotary Club in Dillon, Montana.

A few years ago, Dr. Tevis and his wife of 34 years, Dr. Cynthia Lacy Tevis (also a physician), began ranching in Montana. He was an avid hunter and fisherman. He also enjoyed visiting garage sales and collecting antiques, say family members.

In addition to Dr. Cynthia Lacy Tevis, he is survived by his first wife, Susan Moreton Tevis of Atherton and their children, Melinda, Robert and Martha; daughter Susan Quesada and her son; stepson Dr. Thomas Harrison Lacy and his two children; and brother Daniel Tevis of Wichita, Kansas.

According to Dr. Tevis' wishes, no service is planned, but there will be private memorial gatherings in California and Montana. The family prefers memorials be made to Washington University at St. Louis School of Medicine, Campus Box 1193, One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, MO 63130, or the Parkinson's Institute, 675 Almanor Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94085.

Barbara Heine

Former NCEFT executive director

Barbara Heine, a former executive director of the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy (NCEFT) in Woodside, died March 30 at her home in Australia.

Ms. Heine and her husband, John, moved to Woodside from Australia in 1988. An excellent

OBITUARIES

horsewoman and physical therapist, she began volunteering at NCEFT, eventually becoming executive director, then board president.

During her tenure at NCEFT, she oversaw the growth of the program from four to six patients a week to almost 80, and established the center as a nationally recognized therapy and educational center. She joined the board of the American Hippotherapy Association and in 1997 became president, a position she held for three years.

The Heines returned to Australia in 2000, where Ms. Heine continued her involvement in the field of hippotherapy, along with such philanthropic ventures as providing college scholarships to at-risk youth, say family members.

Jack Newcome

Longtime Woodside resident

A memorial service will be held for Jack Newcome at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 25, at Woodside Village Church, 3154 Woodside Road, in Woodside. Mr. Newcome died March 6, following a brief illness. He was 89.

Mr. Newcome was born in Princeton, Indiana. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps at age 19 and served on Peleliu Island in the South Pacific as a technical sergeant during World War II. He received the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon for outstanding heroism.

After the war, he joined his father in the building trades in Oakland. In 1947 he married Betty Rae Buchanan.

They moved to Woodside in 1960 when Mr. Newcome went to work for his father-in-law as a supervisor with the Wellmade Company in Redwood City. Mr. Newcome retired in the mid-1980s and began his second career as a member of the gate guard crew at Filoli, finally retiring in 2009 at age 89.

Mr. Newcome was a member of the bass section of the Woodside Village Church choir and sang with the Woodside men's group known as the Quackaters. He and his wife participated for many years in the Woodside community productions directed by George Sellman. One of his favorite roles was as a member of the quartet in "The Music Man." He also loved golf and playing tennis with his wife, say family members.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Betty, of Woodside; son Wayne Newcome of Bend, Oregon; and sister Ada Fry of Boise, Idaho.

Memorial donations may be made to the Woodside Village Church.





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'Fashion International' show at Priory

■ AROUND TOWN

Woodside Priory is celebrating its culturally diverse community with "Fashion International" on Friday, April 23, at the school's Rothrock Performing Arts Center, 302 Portola Road in Portola Valley. There will be two shows: a matinee performance at 3 p.m. and an evening performance at 7 p.m., preceded by a 6:30 p.m. reception.

Instead of asking local retailers to showcase their designs, "Fashion International" will feature clothing from India, Japan, Hun-

gary, Korea, South America, and Africa, which has been supplied by Priory parents and teachers.

It will also showcase student designer talent with fashions by Fendi Chen, Adrian Dannis, Matt Hill, Soo Bin Koh, Shoshana Levitt, Elena Long, Cullen Mo, Holly Mudge, Alexandra Quinby, and Lauren Schilling. Francesca Sterlacci Purvin, who is co-chair of the event, is founder of the school's fashion club. She has taught fashion design for more than 15 years in New York and San Francisco, and says she has never seen a more inspired group of design talent than at the Priory.

One-third of the Priory high school student body will be modeling in the show. Co-chair Chris Wilhite is training the models to appear on the runway.

Tickets are \$10 for the 3 p.m. show, \$30 for the evening show. All proceeds will benefit the Priory's Access Fund, which provides student scholarships.

Go to prioryca.org/fashionclub for more information.

Earth Day celebration at Menlo School

More than 150 Menlo School students are expected to take part in the school's third annual Bike to School Day as part of the school's celebration of Earth Day on April 22. After meeting for coffee cake (provided by Hobee's restaurant) and hot chocolate at a Menlo senior's home, the students will bike down Valparaiso Avenue at 7:40 a.m. behind a police escort.

The ride was organized by Menlo School graduates Scott (class of 2009) and Kevin (2003) Platshon, who have been selling special edition Earth Day T-shirts during the school's Green Week. Their clothing company, Waddlebird, sells T-shirts and swim trunks. They will donate proceeds from the sales

of the Menlo shirts to Conservation International.

Waddlebird's mission is to protect endangered species and their crucial habitat and help communities build a sustainable relationship with nature, says Kevin Platson.

Pulitzer Prize winner

T.J. Stiles, one of the five authors appearing at the Peninsula Volunteers Authors Salon Luncheon on April 25, has just won the Pulitzer Prize for his biography, "The First Tycoon; the Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt." The biography also won the 2009 National Book Award.

Admission to the Authors Salon is \$95. It will be held at the Fourth Street Summit Center, 88 South 4th St., in San Jose. For ticket information, call Cathy Duhring at 326-0665, ext. 238.

'All Faiths Gospel Music Festival'

Former 49er Guy McIntyre will be master of ceremonies for the 17th annual "All Faiths Gospel Music Festival" to be held from 7 to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, April 23 and 24, at Grace Lutheran Church, 3149 Waverley Street in Palo Alto.

The concert, presented by the Interfaith Network for Community Help (INCH), is a benefit for the East Palo Alto Students Scholarship Fund. The concert will feature world-renowned jazz singers, gospel choirs and praise dancers, according to INCH executive director Spencer Tyrus.

The goal of the event is to raise ten \$1,000 scholarships to be distributed to talented eighth-grade students in the Ravenswood City School District, who are at risk of dropping out of school, due to difficult life situations, says Mr. Tyrus.

Suggested donation for each evening is \$15, payable at the door. For the best seats, arrive early.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Tests Showed Coliform Bacteria in Water from the O'Connor Tract Co-Operative Water Company

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Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this incident was not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened and what we did to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for drinking water contaminants. One of our routine samples on April 6 for coliform bacteria from a sampling station tested positive. Additional testing on April 8 with 5 samples showed the same site positive, but four samples from residences in the vicinity were all negative. After chlorinating the system on April 10, an additional 5 samples taken at the same sites on April 12 were all negative. The standard for coliform bacteria is that no more than 1 sample per month may be positive.

What should I do?

You do not need to boil your water or take other corrective actions. However, if you have specific health concerns, consult your doctor.

People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1 (800) 426-4791.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately. Coliform bacteria are generally not harmful themselves. *Coliforms are bacteria which are naturally present in the environment and are used as an indicator that other, potentially-harmful, bacteria may be present. Coliforms were found in more samples than allowed and this was a warning of potential problems.*

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What happened? What was done?

Upon determination that the bacteriological standard was not met, the O'Connor Tract Co-Operative Water Company took the following steps to correct the violation:

- Within 24 hours of notification, tested at the original and four nearby sites on April 8. The original site again tested positive and the four other sites were negative.
- Chlorinated the water in the system on April 10. Retested all 5 sites on April 12, and all the sites were negative.

For more information, please contact Ana Pedreiro, Secretary-Treasurer, at 650-321-2723.

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Huge jump in building fees? Council seeks more data

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

■ WOODSIDE

If the length of a discussion indicates its seriousness, the question of how many thousands of dollars in fees Woodside property owners should pay to reimburse the town for staff time spent on building and remodeling projects is a serious matter.

The Town Council discussed the topic at length at its March 23 meeting, requested more data from staff, and talked about it again on April 13. After raising more questions than answers, the council formed a three-person committee

to continue looking into it before bringing it back for more discussion and, eventually, a public hearing.

A recent report indicates that, contrary to the town's policy, the town is not recovering specified staff

costs, a situation that could lead to some fees rising dramatically, perhaps as much as 300 percent.

Financial management policy No. 4, on Page ii of the town budget, states that development services — planning and building services performed by Town Hall staff — “should be self-supporting, including appropriate overhead costs.”

But Woodside has been subsidizing development-services costs. In the 2008-09 budget year, for example, the town paid out \$447,600 for planning services and \$239,200 for building services, according to an analysis presented to the council on March 23 by San Jose-based Management Partners Corp.

Woodside's fee structure is out of date, said Management Partners analyst Lynn Dantzker, whose report says the fees were last changed 14 years ago and are now much lower than in neighboring towns. For example, a Woodside resident pays about \$2,200 for a building permit for a new two-story home, versus \$8,300 in Portola Valley, \$9,000 in Hillsborough, and \$12,400 in Los Altos Hills.

“Most municipalities are not too interested in subsidizing services,” Ms. Dantzker told the council.

As for the residents, she said, they tend to want answers to three questions: What do I owe, when will I get the go-ahead, and what

is my path to success?

In determining individual project fees, Ms. Dantzker recommended that the town adopt an across-the-board use of a project's total value rather than its square footage. The current system uses valuation for alterations and remodels, but square footage for new construction and additions.

Under the proposed fee schedule, that \$2,200 building permit would rise to around \$8,900, an increase of about 300 percent.

Not all projects would see that kind of bump. The estimated cost of a permit for a new four-car garage, for example, would go to \$1,880 from the current \$1,540.

The cost for checking the plans of a residential project should be 85 percent of the cost of the building permit, up from the current 75 percent, while a commercial project should increase to 100 percent from the current 75 percent, Ms. Dantzker said.

The analysis includes a building-permit-valuation table with proposed fees as well as automatic minimums that would kick in if the valuation, as reported, is lower than a set cost per square foot. The town's building official could reset a valuation for a new home to a minimum of \$250 per square foot, for example, if the reported valuation worked out to be less than that.

“I don't think we have a good track record of knowing what a project really costs, (but) new construction is definitely more than \$250 per square foot,” said Councilman Peter Mason, an architect.

Councilman Dave Tanner, a builder, mentioned situations in which a client may claim it's a \$3 million project, “and I know they spent \$25 million.”

Go to is.gd/bhOfZ and turn to Page 54 for more on the valuation table.

For the next round of discussions, the council's requests of staff include sample projects under current and new fee structures; more on Woodside's rates as compared with other communities; and an estimate of how many residents per year might feel the impact of higher fees. ■

A Woodside resident pays about \$2,200 for a building permit for a new two-story home, versus \$8,300 in Portola Valley, \$9,000 in Hillsborough, and \$12,400 in Los Altos Hills.

MANAGEMENT PARTNERS CORP. REPORT

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

TOWN OF ATHERTON
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

MIDDLEFIELD ROAD AT ENCINAL AVENUE
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
PROJECT NO. 56009

Notice is hereby given that SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, California 94027, until 3:00 p.m. MAY 12, 2010, at which time they will be publicly opened and read, for performing the following work:

ROADWAY WIDENING ON MIDDLEFIELD ROAD AND ENCINAL AVENUE; REMOVAL AND RELOCATION OF EXISTING FEATURES; INSTALLATION OF STORM DRAIN FACILITIES; CONSTRUCTION OF CONCRETE CURB, GUTTER, SIDEWALK AND CURB RAMPS; CONSTRUCTION OF A DRAINAGE SWALE; MODIFICATIONS TO PERMANENT ROADWAY STRIPING; REMOVAL OF AN EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALK TRAFFIC SIGNAL; AND INSTALLATION OF A NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT THE INTERSECTION OF MIDDLEFIELD ROAD AND ENCINAL AVENUE.

The Engineer's Estimate for the project is: \$408,000

Bids must be for the entire work, and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for MIDDLEFIELD ROAD AT ENCINAL AVENUE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS, Project No. 56009", along with date and time of bid opening.

Plans and specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton Public Works Department, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton CA 94027, for a non-refundable fee of \$40.00. Additional important information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available for an additional \$20.00. If shipping is requested, there will be an additional charge of \$20.00.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Any questions regarding the project should be directed to David Huynh, Project Engineer, telephone: (650) 752-0555 or by written Requests for Information (RFI) to: Public Works Department, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, CA 94027, preferably no later than five days before bid opening. RFIs may be emailed to dhuynh@ci.atherton.ca.us or faxed to (650) 688-6539.

For information on obtaining Plans and Specifications, Standard Specifications or obtaining a Plan Holders list, please call Judy Belmont at (650) 752-0570.

By: _____
Duncan L. Jones, P.E., City Engineer

Date: _____



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WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2009-2010

Sealed proposals for the CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2009-2010 will be received at the West Bay Sanitary District, 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California 94025 until **2:00 pm on Wednesday, May 5, 2010** at which time they will be publicly opened and read. Bids shall be labeled "West Bay Sanitary District, Proposal for "CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2009-2010."

The Work will include the furnishing of all labor, materials and equipment, and other appurtenances for replacement of sanitary sewer mains by open-trench construction and trenchless construction and installation of storm drainage facilities by open-trench construction, as indicated on the project plans.

The contract documents may be inspected at the office of the West Bay Sanitary District; San Francisco Builders Exchange, 850 So. Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, California 94110; Reed Construction Data, Attn: Customer Care, 30 Technology Parkway South, Suite 100, Norcross, Georgia 30092; Peninsula Builders Exchange, 735 Industrial Road, Suite 100, San Carlos, California 94070; Santa Clara Builders Exchange, 400 Reed Street, Santa Clara, California 95050; Builders Exchange of Alameda, 3055 Alvarado Street, San Leandro, California 94577; Construction Bidboard, Incorporated, Attn: Michael Schafer, 4420 Hotel Circle South, Suite 215, San Diego, California 92108; McGraw-Hill Construction Dodge, 11875 Dublin Blvd., Suite A-118, Dublin, California 94568; and, Contra Costa Builders Exchange, 2440 Stanwell Drive, Suite B, Concord, California 94520.

Copies of the Contract Documents may be obtained at the office of the West Bay Sanitary District upon payment of a check or money order in the amount of \$40.00 for each set. The check or money order must be issued to the West Bay Sanitary District. All payments are nonrefundable.

A pre-bid meeting will be held at **10:00 am on Tuesday, April 20, 2010** at the West Bay Sanitary District Office in Menlo Park, California.

Each bid proposal shall be accompanied by a certified or cashier's check or a proposal guaranty bond payable to the order of the West Bay Sanitary District in an amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the amount of the bid as a guaranty that the bidder will execute the contract if it be awarded to him in conformity with the proposal. The successful bidder will be required to furnish a performance bond in an amount not less than one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price and a labor and material bond in an amount equal to one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price.

The District ("Owner") reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to determine which proposal is, in the judgment of the District, the lowest responsible bid of a responsible bidder or group of bidders and which proposal should be accepted in the best interest of the District. The District also reserves the right to waive any informalities in any proposal or bid.

Bid proposals received after the time announced for the opening will not be considered. No bidder may withdraw his proposal after the time announced for the opening, or before award and execution of the contract, unless the award is delayed for a period exceeding forty-five (45) days.

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Contract Code Section 22300, and upon the request and at the expense of the Contractor, securities equivalent to the amount withheld by the District to insure performance under the Contract may be deposited with the District, or with a state or federally chartered bank as escrow agent who shall deliver such securities to the Contractor upon satisfactory completion of the contract. Only those securities listed in Government Code Section 16430 or other securities approved by the District are eligible for deposit. The deposit of securities with an escrow agent or the District shall be made in the form and on such terms and conditions as the District may require to protect the interest of the District in the event of the Contractor's default. The Contractor shall be the beneficial owner of any securities that are deposited and shall receive any interest thereon.

Pertaining to Sections 1770, 1773, and 1773.1 of the California Labor Code, the successful bidder shall pay not less than the prevailing rate of per diem wages as determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations. Copies of such prevailing rates are on file at the District office of the West Bay Sanitary District and which copies shall be made available to any interested party on request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of such determinations at each job site.

In accordance with the provisions of California Public Contract Code Section 3300, the District has determined that the Contractor shall possess a valid Class A License or a combination of the Class C licenses at the time that the contract is awarded. Failure to possess the specified license(s) shall render the bid as non-responsive and shall act as a bar to award of the contract to any bidder not possessing said license(s) at the time of award.

West Bay Sanitary District
Board of Directors
San Mateo County, California
/s/ Phil Scott
District Manager
Dated: March 25, 2010
Published in THE ALMANAC on April 7, 21, 2010

■ POLICE CALLS

This information is from the Atherton and Menlo Park police departments and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent until convicted.

MENLO PARK

Robbery report: Woman robbed of purse, Carlton Ave. and Newbridge St., April 13.

Auto burglary report: Stereo speakers stolen, 300 block of Ivy Drive, April 13.

Sexual assault report: 500 block of Santa Cruz Ave., April 10.

Elder abuse report: 1200 block of Crane St., April 11.

Child protective services report: Reported at main police station at 700 Laurel St., April 15.

Fraud reports:

■ Possible identity theft, 1500 block of San Antonio St., April 15.

■ Unauthorized use of Social Security number, 100 block of Bay Road, April 14.

WOODSIDE

Collision report: Woman who admitted to drinking alcohol then running her vehicle into pole in suicide attempt, 100 block of Woodside Drive, April 6.

Environmental health incident report: Unloaded shotgun and un-caged parrot found in unoccupied but filthy home, 600 block of Eastview Way, April 8.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Theft report: Two rings valued at \$5,500 stolen, The Sequoias retirement community at 501 Portola Road, April 7.

Illegal drug incident report: Two juveniles under suspicion after deputies stopped their speeding vehicle and found glass pipe and eight "banana bread food products" suspected of containing marijuana, Bow Way and Westridge Drive, April 10.

LADERA

Theft report: Two surveillance cameras stolen for loss estimated at \$1,000, Shell service station at 201 La Cuesta Drive, April 7.

■ BIRTHS

Menlo Park

■ Witney McKiernan and David Zwerin, a son, March 16, Sequoia Hospital.

■ Maryam Sanglaji and Ali Zadeh, a son, March 29, Sequoia Hospital.

■ Alisa and Chris Francis, a daughter, March 25, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

ter, March 25, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

Emerald Hills

■ Laura Metz and Paul Chapuis, a son, March 26, Sequoia Hospital.

BESTOR

continued from page 3

assessed value, and that value can be increased by no more than 2 percent annually. The property's value is kept in place under that formula until the property is sold, and over the years, the tax burden has become significantly greater on homeowners.

Education foundation

Ms. Bestor also turned her energy toward the Menlo Park Atherton Education Foundation, a nonprofit group of volunteers that raises money for

programs in the Menlo Park City School District.

Last month she met with foundation co-president Scott Lohmann to discuss her unusual fundraising idea: a campaign to solicit donations for the schools from commercial property owners in the district who benefit from lower tax levels, thanks to Proposition 13.

The idea was floated among the foundation's leadership, and this week, a letter seeking donations is scheduled to go out to about 50 commercial property owners with low tax rates, Ms. Bestor says. ■



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LETTERS

continued from page 23

our city's economic security.

Andy Cohen
City Council member

Cheers for pension reform effort

Editor:

Congratulations to those citizens who are working hard to promote pension reform in Menlo Park, and shame on the unions who are out to intimidate them and the voters.

The unions, of course, have no concern about the well-being of our city. They are only out to protect the overpaid, over-benefited public employees.

While unions once played a positive role in our society, like typewriters, that time has passed. Whether it is GM, the U.S. Postal Service, or Menlo Park, the unions are dragging down our country with their bloated salaries, benefits, and pensions.

It is time that public employees were paid according to their equivalent worth in the private sector. There simply should be no \$100,000-plus salaries and \$40,000 in overtime for firemen. We are the fools if we let this continue. Let them all go, and see how many qualified men and women apply for their positions at half the current salaries. And the same goes for the rest of the city workers.

If the unions won't respect the new financial realities of Menlo Park and are going to intimidate our citizens and fight our city, then our elected leaders have an obligation to fight back with all their might.

Sloane Citron
Laurel Street, Menlo Park

Film forum at M-A theater was first rate

Editor:

What a gem we have in our backyard! A couple of weeks ago the new Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center hosted the inaugural Windrider Film Forum, featuring three days of Sundance Film Festival, award-winning, independent films. The showings were followed by conversations with the actors, writers, directors and producers in intimate question and answer sessions.

"Windrider Forums are all about community; connecting and creating space for conversation," said John Priddy, co-founder of the forum. We certainly felt engaged with thought-provoking films such as; After the Storm, Sympathy for Delicious and, the heart wrenching, Short Term 12. Each film was enhanced and illuminated with the "back stories" shared by the filmmakers.

Many thanks to the organizers: Curt Longacre, Terri Bullock, the Priddy Brothers, Will Stoller-

Lee, and the Fuller Theological Seminary, to mention a few. Our community was enriched through your efforts to bring the first Windrider Film Forum to the Bay Area. We look forward to its return next year.

Our Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center is truly a jewel. Don't miss an opportunity to experience it for yourself.

Judy Hyrne and Kayla Skidmore
Hobart Street, Menlo Park

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GUIDE TO 2010 SUMMER CAMPS FOR KIDS

Camp Connection

For more information about these camps, see our online directory of camps at PaloAltoOnline.com/biz/summercamps
To advertise in a weekly directory, contact 650-326-8210

Sports Camps

Player Capital/Plan Toys Tennis Camp Player Capital Tennis and Plan Toys summer camp provide the perfect balance for your child's physical, educational, and social development. Join us Mon - Fri 9am-12pm. (Age 3.5 - 9) www.playercapital.com	Palo Alto 650-968-4783
Spring Down Camp Equestrian Center Spring Down camp teaches basic to advanced horsemanship skills. All ages welcome. Daily informative lecture, riding lesson, supervised hands-on skill practice, tacking/untacking of own camp horse, and fun horse arts and crafts. www.springdown.com	Portola Valley 650-851-1114
Stanford Baseball Camps All Day or Half-Day Baseball Camps at beautiful Sunken Diamond. For ages 7-12, Stanford Baseball camps feature personalized Baseball instruction, fun activities and drills, and exciting Baseball games. Camps for beginner and advanced players. Camps for older players also available. Camp availability from June 14th-August 6th. Receive \$25 off by calling 650-723-4528. www.StanfordBaseballCamp.com	Stanford 650-723-4528
Stanford Water Polo Camps Morning and/or afternoon water polo sessions at Avery Aquatic Center. June 14-17 for ages 8-14. Beginners welcome. Fun water skill instruction, activities and games. Camps for more advanced players available too. http://www.gostanford.com/camps/waterpolo-camp.html	Stanford 650-725-9016

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Email: AmazingSciClass@AOL.com

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650-279-7013

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www.indiacc.org/culturalcamps

Palo Alto & Milpitas
408-416-0215

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Community School of Music & Arts (CSMA) 50+ creative camps for Gr K-8! Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Collage, Comics, Jewelry, Digital Arts, Musical Theater, American Idol Workshop, more! Two-week sessions; full and half-day enrollment. Extended care available. Financial aid offered. Early registration discount (May 15). www.arts4all.org	Mtn. View 650-917-6800 ext.0

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Marion Softky, Marjorie Mader

Staff Writers

David Boyce, Sean Howell

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Kate Daly, Katie Blankenberg

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Carol Blitzer, Sue Dremann

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Advertising

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Coordinator Diane Martin

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

Newsroom: (650) 854-2690

Newsroom Fax: (650) 854-0677

Advertising: (650) 854-2626

Advertising Fax: (650) 854-3650

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

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.

Gradual change in downtown plan

There is a tendency for some people, including many downtown Menlo Park property owners, to promote the idea that the minute the city's recently released plan for downtown and El Camino Real is approved by the City Council, bulldozers will show up to begin ripping up parking plazas and digging foundations for five-story buildings on El Camino Real.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth about the city's ambitious design to remake the downtown, which is sorely in need of a facelift. The plan is just that — a plan or vision — for what downtown could become, if property owners take advantage of new planning and zoning that permit such development and the city is able to raise the funds to do its part.

Without such a blueprint, the City Council and Planning Commission would be like a ship without a rudder, forced to approve projects on a case-by-case basis, which is not a good idea for some of the community's most visible and valuable properties. For several decades, Menlo Park has struggled to write a new downtown plan, but every effort failed before it was even brought to the council. So by advancing to the public hearing stage, the 2010 plan has surpassed all prior efforts and is by far the best opportunity the city has ever had to approve a guideline for future development.

The plan covers three areas, and so far, it appears that the vision for downtown is the most controversial, particularly the plans to build parking garages and mixed-use buildings on portions of some parking plazas. But while some property owners fear losing flat-lot parking, planners see opportunity wasted in acres of asphalt in the downtown core that could be much more than a resting place for automobiles. By building garages, parking can be stacked without losing capacity, freeing up spaces for higher and better uses.

One example of this transition is to convert some parking spaces into a small, open air marketplace and delineate walking lanes in some remaining plazas. Planners believe that these amenities would attract more shoppers to the downtown, and space for the popular farmers' market would be retained.

The vision extends to the spaces around the Caltrain station, where mixed-use buildings of up to 60 feet high would be permitted on the east side of Alma Street. On the west side of the tracks, a grassy plaza would be installed at Santa Cruz Avenue and Merrill Street and wide sidewalks and crosswalks would invite pedestrians to stroll from the train station to the Civic Center or Santa Cruz Avenue.

On the east side of El Camino, planners worked hard to reduce the mass of five-story buildings by stepping upper floors back from the street and interspersing open space to reduce the feeling that a huge wall has been erected along the street.

No one, including the city's planners, knows exactly how long it will take to implement any of these ideas, but the plan does set some short-term goals (five years) for building a garage on Parking Plaza 3, widening Santa Cruz Avenue sidewalks, and building the paseo on Chestnut Street South. When work begins in the El Camino corridor, it will be up to private developers to decide if they can work with the new guidelines and make a profit.

The plan offers details on numerous options to finance various public projects, from parking garages to streetscape improvements. Some costs would be shared by property owners, with the city and user fees contributing a share as well. Projects could be built on a pay-as-you-go basis or more quickly, using bonds paid off over a longer time frame.

The 2010 Vision Plan is a dramatic and well-designed first step to move Menlo Park's commercial areas into the 21st century. Its designs take into account hundreds of comments from a widely attended series of public meetings about the plan. Property owners should know that the plan's primary purpose is to provide a more attractive and engaging downtown core that is much more than a convenient parking plaza.

As discussion of the plan continues, we hope the downtown business community will take into account how the plan will advance the longtime viability of Menlo Park as a shopping destination. Ultimately, the City Council will decide. We encourage members to consider valid criticism of the plan, but we urge them to go forward and adopt this vision, which will enable the downtown and El Camino corridor to remain attractive to residents and shoppers for years to come.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Op-ed on public salaries missed the point

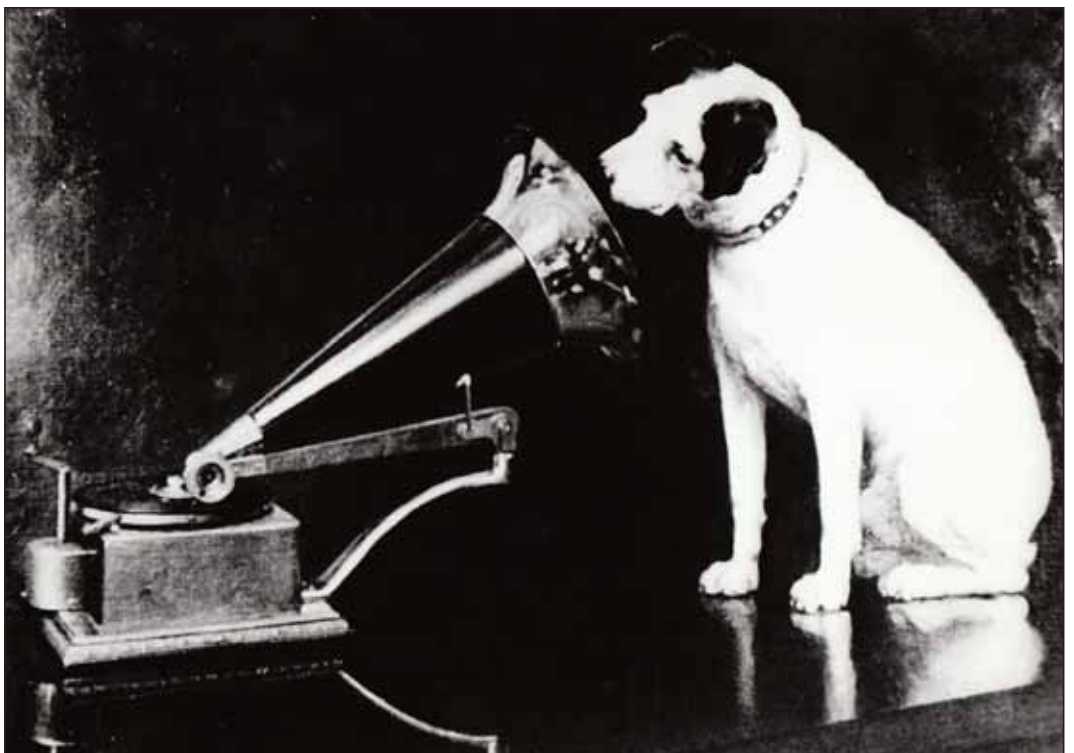
Editor:

Reading Galen Rosenberg's April 7 guest opinion, I couldn't help but notice that Mr. Rosenberg was concentrating on the wrong issue.

He seemed to believe that fairness was the central issue in the pension debate. While the comparison of public sector benefits to those received by workers in the private sector may be an issue of discussion in the ongoing debate, the reason "Fair and Responsible Pension Reform" wants to lower the benefits of incoming workers is because the city of Menlo Park simply cannot afford to pay them that much.

I am sure that both Mr. Rosenberg and the organization in question could rant for hours, if not days on comparing the respective benefits of public and private sector employees, but the fact remains that we as the city of Menlo Park simply cannot afford to offer these benefits, whether they be exorbitant or not.

See **LETTERS**, next page



Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

This iconic photo of "Nipper" was used by Atherton resident Leon Douglass as the registered trademark of the Victor Talking Machine Company, which he and his partner founded around the turn of the last century. The trademark was sold to RCA Victor in 1927.

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

Therefore, I would like to clarify the debate: The initiative proposed by “Citizens for Fair and Responsible Pension Reform” does not “bash” public workers for getting a better deal, it merely raises the age at which they can retire from 55 to 60 and decreases the percentage of their salary they receive as benefits after retirement. If he does not believe me, I encourage Mr. Rosenberg to pick up a petition and see for himself.

The entire initiative is written out on the form, and if he is so inclined, he may sign the form after he takes the time to carefully read over the initiative. I encourage other readers to do the same — not out of spite for city employees, but as a measure that must be taken to ensure the fiscal survival of the city of Menlo Park.

Paul Gilles
Partridge Avenue, Menlo Park

City should organize a lunch for start-ups

Editor:

It has been well over a month since I first suggested to now-departed Alex Andrade, then a city business development specialist, that Menlo Park host a brown bag lunch for incubators, startups, venture capitalists, and citizens to discuss what the city might do to foster business development.

I was inspired to do this by John Tarleton’s offer to host and cater such an event at his company. Menlo Park residents felt such an event should be held on city property.

Last Sunday the New York Times Magazine included an article by Paul Krugman about the Green Economy, which gave me the idea that SRI International, a Menlo Park icon, should be included, and our city manager agreed, saying that SRI might also be willing to cater and host the event, should we hold it.

Support pours in for Measure C

Math teacher, parent urges a ‘yes’ vote

Editor:

I’m writing to encourage all members of our community to vote yes on Measure C, the parcel tax for the Menlo Park City School District.

I am a math teacher and boys’ lacrosse coach at Menlo-Atherton High School. I have a daughter who is a freshman in high school and two young boys who will be attending Oak Knoll in just a few years.

I have taught and coached over a thousand high school students in the past 14 years. Many of these students are well prepared for high school due to their experiences in elementary and middle school. Unfortunately, some are not well prepared. The students who come unprepared for the rigors of a high school like Menlo-Atherton will face an uphill battle to succeed.

A strong elementary and middle school education plays an integral role in a student’s success in high school, college and beyond. Without the passage of Measure C, our schools — Laurel, Encinal, Oak Knoll and Hillview — will be under-funded. We cannot let that happen.

Steven Kryger
Doris Lane, Menlo Park

Board president explains the need for Measure C

Editor:

The city of Menlo Park is known for its award-winning schools, which have achieved national and state recognition because of the tremendous support of teachers, administrators, parents and community members.

We need Measure C to preserve our schools, which we have worked so hard to develop. The Menlo Park City School District faces a \$2

Ballots must be in by May 4

Mail-in ballots for parcel taxes in Menlo Park and Portola Valley must be received by the county registrar by 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 4, to be counted.

million budget deficit next year due to growing enrollment and reduced state funding. Currently, we spend 87 percent of the budget on teachers and other essential staff. Future cuts will come at the expense of teachers.

In March, the school board issued 14 preliminary layoff notices to teachers that will be finalized if Measure C does not pass. Those layoffs mean more students will be added to each class, teacher preparation time will be reduced, programs will be cut, and students’ classroom experience will be compromised.

I am voting “yes” on Measure C to give our district the resources it needs to maintain the quality of our children’s education.

Jeff Child, president
Menlo Park City School District Board of Trustees

Ekedahl family is behind Measure C

Editor:

My parents and I have lived in Menlo Park for over 40 years. I attended both Oak Knoll and Hillview and my mother and father put in countless hours in the classrooms helping to make sure the schools had everything they needed.

Since that time, we have seen enrollment grow quickly at Oak Knoll and the other schools in the Menlo Park City district. While many things have changed, the one thing that has remained consistent is the support the Menlo Park community has provided to keep our schools strong and to provide the best education possible to our children.

This community has a history of offering support in times of need. By 2017, enrollment in our four schools is expected to have increased 44 percent over what it was in 2000, and because we are a “basic aid” district we receive no additional funding for each new student.

This month we are being asked to step up again by passing Measure C. As parents and grandparents of three boys at Oak Knoll, we are frightened that we may lose some of the very important educational programs that our schools have been able to offer, including art, PE, music, and a fulltime trained librarian.

Please join us in voting for Measure C.

Phil, Maureen, Robert and Diana Ekedahl
Bay Laurel Drive and Chateau Drive, Menlo Park

Pediatricians urge a yes vote on ‘C’

Editor:

As pediatricians with children in the Menlo Park City School District, we support the passage of Measure C.

Without Measure C funding, enrichment programs and teachers, including our physical education specialists, will be cut. Physical activity is known to improve academic achievement and positively influence concentration, memory and classroom behavior, as well as improve overall health and well-being.

Our current skilled physical education specialists provide an enjoyable, organized introduction to physical activities, including individual and team sports, promoting basic skills, and fostering an enjoyment of physical activity that extends beyond the school day.

Please join us in supporting measure C to keep our children active and healthy.

Katrien Burlinson and Laurie Chiang, M.D.s
Community pediatricians and district parents



Then I ran into Dave Johnson, our business development manager, who expressed concern over his difficulty making this event come to fruition since Alex has since departed.

I now appeal to you, the residents of Menlo Park, to make this event happen. The Tarleton family business is a paragon in incubator wisdom and experience, Menlo Park is a center of startups and venture

capitalist companies, and our M-2 zone is where low rents and space combine to allow the evolution over many past decades of many successful startups.

Precisely now, in a great recession

(as these economic times have been dubbed), is the best time to bring great minds and groups together under one roof to look for innovative ideas and seek new ways to enhance

See **LETTERS**, page 21

How the deal was made for Prop 13

By Douglas Dupen

The recent Almanac story I saw published in the Palo Alto Weekly recounting Jennifer Bestor’s research into Proposition 13 triggered many recollections concerning Menlo Park and that measure. I would like to illustrate those recollections with a few anecdotes:

When Prop 13 was being widely debated in town, I was serving as president of the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce. A member of that board urged the chamber to take a public position on the proposition. (He was recommending endorsement.) The board decided to look into the matter and assigned one of the

members to research the proposition. He did so and reported back as follows:

The Legislature in Sacramento was nearly unanimous on desiring to launch the proposition to cap property assessments for private citizens, especially seniors. The leading advocates, Paul Gann and Howard Jarvis, were furious that assessment capping was being proposed only for residences. They believed that totally unfair.

If assessment capping was appropriate for residences, which they agreed was so, it was equally just and right that the same capping take place on assessments of commercial and industrial property. They convinced the Republicans in the Legislature to introduce this expansion in the

proposition.

The Democrats in the Legislature, by and large, would have none of that, feeling the proposition was for homeowners’ relief. They were unwilling to approve Proposition 13 if commercial and industrial property were added. The Republicans, on the other hand, were equally unwilling to approve Proposition 13 unless commercial and industrial property were included.

This resulted in a long and bitter standoff since neither party could approve the proposition alone. Finally, desiring to have the homeowner benefit adopted with dispatch, the Democrats caved, accepted the expansion designed by Mr. Jarvis and Mr. Gann, and sent Proposition 13 to the public.

The chamber board digested this report and overwhelmingly voted to endorse. There were two “no” votes: mine and that of Jeanne-Betty Crumpler. Jeanne-Betty had been the proprietor of the Welcome Wagon service in Menlo Park; her husband was a

teacher in Menlo Park schools.

The very next day after the passage of Proposition 13, I was telephoned by the chief executive of a large publishing firm in Menlo Park. He knew me from business contacts and had read that I had recently been re-elected to the Menlo Park City Council. He asked me to make a delivery for him to the city. He handed me a check for \$10,000 (in 1978 dollars) made out to the city of Menlo Park, and asked me to deliver it to the city.

I expressed some wonder. He explained, “Do you realize how much money the passage of Proposition 13 will end up saving my firm? By comparison, \$10,000 is a pittance. I know how much Menlo Park will be affected by the passage of Proposition 13.”

After delivering the check, I went home and wrote a letter to the editor, complaining that “the citizens of California have raped themselves.”

Douglas Dupen, a former Menlo Park resident, now lives at Stanford.



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