



**WOODSIDE** garden party and concert benefits  
the San Francisco Symphony. Page 5

# The Almanac

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

MAY 19, 2010 | VOL. 45 NO. 38



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**With the state and county facing serious structural deficits, voters get their say about who handles the hot potato next [Section 2]**

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# Property owners organize to oppose plan

By Sean Howell  
Almanac Staff Writer

A group of downtown property owners that opposes the city of Menlo Park's long-term plans for its downtown area now has a public relations firm working for them, as well as a handle: the Menlo Park Downtown Alliance.

The group, which has been active for months in opposing the plan, lobbying the City Council and stumping against it at the weekly farmers' market, reiterated its concerns in a press release May 11. While the group supports several aspects of the plan, it's not in favor of losing surface parking in the downtown parking plazas to large parking garages. It also opposes mixed-use develop-

ments and a covered marketplace, among other things.

The property owners have retained a public relations firm, Public Good PR, to better convey their message — and perhaps attempt to shift discussion around the plan to their terms, rather than the city's.

Instead of listing areas of the plan the property owners disagree with, the release outlines their vision of the downtown area, allowing for a "modest" parking structure, taller buildings if they provide dedicated on-site parking, and facade improvements. Property owners who oppose the plan have bristled in the past at being characterized as naysayers.

The release serves to further emphasize how far apart the city and this group of property

owners is. While the city plans to eliminate some street parking on Santa Cruz Avenue to allow for wider sidewalks, the "alliance" says it would only favor widening sidewalks on a parcel-by-parcel basis, with each property owner able to decide whether to allow widened sidewalks in front of his or her building.

And while the city's draft plan would allow 48-foot-high parking garages of up to five stories, the property owners say they would support a "split-level" parking structure of two stories, with a maximum height of 6 feet.

The group said in the next several weeks, it will release the names of property and business owners who oppose the plan.

Preservempdowntown.org is the group's website. ■

## Menlo downtown plan receives 'Grand Boulevard' award

A preliminary plan for Menlo Park's city center has received an award from the Grand Boulevard Initiative, a collaboration of Peninsula cities and counties from Daly City to San Jose aimed at revitalizing El Camino Real.

The city was one of seven recipients of awards at a May 13 ceremony, a spokesperson for the initiative said in a press release. San Carlos joined Menlo Park in the "visionary" category, for its recently completed general plan and climate action plan.

Menlo Park's plan is aimed at establishing guidelines for capital improvements and development

in the city center and Caltrain station area over the next two to three decades.

The recognition is specifically for the first of two stages of that plan, through which the city and its residents developed a "vision" for the city center through resident surveys, community meetings and workshops. The second, more detailed stage is still in progress, and wasn't a candidate for the award, according to the city.

The other projects to be honored at the ceremony include a linear park over BART tunnels and a condominium project near BART in South San Francisco; a

San Bruno condominium project; a planned Habitat for Humanity affordable housing development in Daly City; and a planned mixed-use project in Mountain View that encourages pedestrian activity.

The idea behind the "Grand Boulevard" initiative is to turn El Camino into a European-style, pedestrian-friendly boulevard. Mayor Rich Cline represents Menlo Park on the Grand Boulevard Task Force, according to the city's website. Councilman John Boyle also attends many of the meetings.

Visit [menlopark.org/specific-plan](http://menlopark.org/specific-plan) for more information on Menlo Park's plan.

## Menlo Park scraps solar panels on new gymnasium

By Sean Howell  
Almanac Staff Writer

An interesting subplot to the story of the Burgess Gym construction appears to be nearing a close, with Menlo Park city management recommending against installing solar panels on the Burgess Gymnasium.

Originally, the city had said that John Arrillaga, the Palo Alto billionaire who is building the gym for the city and paying for the bulk of its construction, would provide solar panels. When that turned out

not to be the case, management asked the City Council to approve city funds for the panels, saying the city would eventually make its money back on the investment.

At the insistence of Councilman John Boyle, the council asked city staff to study the project a little more before authorizing the funds. And, in fact, staff found that the project wouldn't pencil out — it would take 48 years for the city to recoup its investment, not the 15 or 20 originally predicted.

The lack of solar panels creates a problem, because it could jeopardize the building's attainment

of LEED Silver certification, an expensive process that the city is paying for. Accordingly, management is recommending other measures that would count on the "LEED Scorecard": upgrading heating, ventilating and air-conditioning systems, and installing dimmers for the lights, which would cost less than the solar panels and recoup the city's investment more quickly.

The council will consider the issue at its meeting Tuesday, May 18, at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, located in the Civic Center complex. ■

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- E-mail letters to the editor to: [letters@AlmanacNews.com](mailto:letters@AlmanacNews.com)

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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Teachers' jobs saved, but district still faces shortfall

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Teachers and other credentialed staff members of the Menlo Park City School District who received preliminary pink slips in March because of uncertainty over passage of a new parcel tax can shed their notices. At a special May 10 meeting, the school board left intact the positions that were on the chopping block before the May 4 passage of Measure C.

The preliminary layoff notices had been sent to two librarians, an assistant principal, several teachers

and other staff, and the district was also poised to reduce hours for several other positions. The cuts would have affected 14 people, and a total of about 11.5 full-time equivalent credentialed staff positions, according to Superintendent Ken Ranella.

Measure C, which is expected to raise about \$1.4 million annually, will be used to fund 7.5 of those positions, Mr. Ranella told the board.

Another two positions are expected to be funded by the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation. Foundation co-president Scott

Lohmann said a grant of \$137,000 to pay for two teachers is expected to be approved by the foundation board on May 27. The money was raised through the foundation's Fund-A-Teacher initiative.

The nonprofit foundation created the initiative in response to the threat of teacher and librarian layoffs, and raised a major portion of the \$137,000 sum during its recent auction. The initiative also received a \$300 boost from first-grade Brownie Troop 31538 of Oak Knoll School, which donated its spring cookie sales money.

Mr. Ranella said the remaining two full-time equivalent positions will be paid for with funds from Measure A, the district's existing parcel tax.

Although certificated positions were saved, there will be at least one layoff of a classified staff member, and another classified position will be trimmed 50 percent for the next fiscal year, according to the preliminary budget endorsed by the board this week. Mr. Ranella said it's possible that further cuts in classified employees will be made.

The district is still facing a

\$600,000 to \$700,000 deficit for the next fiscal year, said Mr. Ranella, who explained that the draft budget introduced at the meeting will get a work-over before the final version is voted on June 8.

Taking the advice of the county, the district is not counting on any growth in property tax revenue in the next budget, he said.

Board President Jeff Child said after the meeting that the district will "have to get used to finding \$500,000 in reductions (each year) in the future if property taxes don't increase." ■

## Simitian's patience running out

By Gennady Sheyner

Palo Alto Weekly

State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, who has consistently expressed support for "high-speed rail done right," warned last week he is running out of patience with the controversial project and may withdraw his support unless there are some high-speed changes.

Sen. Simitian expressed his frustration about the \$43 billion project during a May 11 informational hearing on the project, which has generated intense opposition in local communities.

The hearing, held in Sacramento, focused on a recent report by the State Auditor's Office that identified a myriad of flaws in the California High-Speed Rail Authority, the agency charged with building the 800-mile rail line's initial phase between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Sen. Simitian said the audit underscored for him that the complaints from the Peninsula are substantive issues, not isolated concerns.

The audit concluded that the rail project has suffered from poor planning, inadequate risk assessment, and a flawed business plan — mistakes that could result in major delays, cost overruns, or even an incomplete system.

"At some point, folks need to come to grips with the fact that this isn't just the case of isolated concerns or misguided complaints or rampant NIMBY-ism," he said. "They are real and legitimate concerns and they need to be addressed sooner

See **SIMITIAN**, page 10



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

**Kathy Jaunich** pauses in the landscaped gardens of her Woodside home, which will be the setting for "Symphony in Flowers" benefit for the San Francisco Symphony.

## Woodside garden party, concert benefit symphony

By Jane Knoerle

Almanac Lifestyles Editor

The garden party and twilight concert fundraiser for the San Francisco Symphony was such a hit two years ago that the symphony's Mid-Peninsula League is orchestrating a repeat performance.

For years, the league's signature event was "Symphony in Flowers," a garden tour held every

other year. The difficulties of staffing and finding homeowners willing to open their gardens to the public led members to look for a new format, which has proved to be a winner.

This year's benefit, still called "Symphony in Flowers," will be held Saturday, June 5, at the Woodside estate of Kathy and Robert Jaunich. Guests will stroll the lawns of the 6.5-acre estate, enjoy appetizers and wine, and

attend one of two concerts featuring musicians from the San Francisco Symphony. The Peninsula All Star Jazz Band will provide pre-concert entertainment.

Plein air painters will add to the party atmosphere and master gardeners will be located throughout the gardens to answer questions.

Mary Lou Johnson and Lois Lin are co-chairs of the party with Marcia and John Goldman as honorary chairs. Mr. Goldman

is president of the San Francisco Symphony's board of governors.

The garden party will take place from 4 to 7 p.m. Tickets are \$125 per person, by advance reservation only. For tickets, call 968-4596.

All proceeds benefit the San Francisco Symphony and its outreach programs. The Mid-Peninsula League sponsors a

See **SYMPHONY**, page 10

*John O'Connor* FD502  
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## Pension initiative validated; council may act on measure

A voter-led initiative drive aimed at scaling back pension payments for public employees has been certified, and could go before voters on the November ballot.

The City Council could simply adopt the measure at its meeting Tuesday, May 18, meaning that it wouldn't go to an election. It could also certify the election results and place the item on the Nov. 2 ballot.

The initiative would create a "two-tier" pension system for non-police city employees, with new employees receiving pension payments at a lower rate than current employees, who can retire at 55 with a maximum of 81 percent of their highest annual salary for life.

The council has already signaled its attempt to move to a "two-tier" system, but the voter initiative differs in two important ways. The initiative would require a citywide vote for any future pension benefit "enhancement," and would also prevent benefit increases from being applied retroactively to current employees.

Proponents of the initiative collected 3,119 signatures, about 90 percent of which the county found to be valid in a random sample, according to City Clerk Margaret Roberts.

The council meeting is set to begin at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, between Laurel and Alma streets in the Civic Center complex.

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Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

**Diane Shattuck** of Portola Valley displays her handmade crib quilt in the “Carolina Lily” pattern, which will be for sale at the “Attic Treasures” sale.

## CHC Auxiliary holds ‘Attic Treasures’ sale

Members of the Children’s Health Council Auxiliary promise a “treasure trove” of antiques, collectibles, glassware, china, jewelry, and more at its first “Attic Treasures” sale from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, May 22, and Sunday, May 23.

The event takes place at the Children’s Health Council, 650 Clark Way (across from Nordstrom, next to Hyatt Classic Residence) in Palo Alto. Mary Ann Perotti of Los Altos is chairing the event.

Nineteen vendors are scheduled to display their wares and the auxiliary will have its own table of “treasures,” including a handmade crib quilt in the “Carolina Lily” pattern by member Diane Shattuck of Portola Valley.

Deborah Olson of C.J. Olson Cherries in Sunnyvale will be on hand Saturday selling some of the famed cherry stand’s products. “They have the best chocolate-covered cherries you ever tasted,” says auxiliary member Grace Vitale. C.J. Olson Cherries has been in business since 1899.

“Attic Treasures” will also feature a plant and garden accessories sale. Auxiliary members’ husbands will be grilling hamburgers and hot dogs for sale at lunchtime.

The Children’s Health Council Auxiliary, with 130 members, has been supporting the agency and its mission to help children for more than 50 years. Fundraising events include a domino tournament, jazz concerts, and staffing the Bargain Box, a resale shop located at 341 California St. in Palo Alto.

Admission to “Attic Treasures” is \$5 at the door and there is free parking. For more information, call 948-2002.

### AROUND TOWN

#### Menlo School play

Nicola Vann will direct “The Nerd,” a comedy by Larry Shue, in performances on May 27, 28 and 29 in Florence Moore Theater, Menlo School, 50 Valparaiso Ave. in Atherton.

Tickets at \$5 for students and \$8 for adults are available at the door, and at the Menlo School book store.

#### Dance recital

Dance as it has evolved over the past 200 years will be the theme of a recital by 20 dancers from the Academy of Danse Libre as they appear at 7 p.m. Friday, May 21, in Hanson Hall at The Sequoias. Costumes of the period will be worn and the music and history influencing each type of dance will be explained as dancers perform Victorian waltzes, Ragtime, the Charleston, and more.

After the program, the audience will be invited to dance. The program is free and open to the public. For more information, call 851-1501.

#### Great Treasure Hunt

Carillon Preschool at Christ Church in Portola Valley will hold its Great Treasure Hunt and Flea Market from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, May 22, in the Christ Church parking lot at 815 Portola Road.

The fundraiser benefits Carillon Preschool’s community outreach scholarship, which helps provide preschool for children whose families might not be able to afford it.

Vendor spaces are available for \$100. Donations of new or gently used items for sale are wel-

come. For more information, or to donate, call Andi Mallinckrodt, Pomegranate events, 533-1180.

#### Girl Scout Awards

Steffi Andersen, Meredie Cohen, Nicole Orsak and Isabella Rhyu have each completed the requirements for the Girl Scout Bronze Award, the highest honor a Junior Girl Scout can earn, according to troop co-leader Shoshanah Cohen of Menlo Park.

All four are fifth-graders at Oak Knoll School and members of Junior Girl Scout Troop 31959.

The troop’s Bronze Award project was providing basic supplies to a school, adjacent to Menlo Park, with much lower state funding. The girls held a drive to collect school supplies and delivered them to the neighboring school, providing nearly \$2,200 of supplies and gift cards.

Members of other Girl Scout troops helped with the supplies drive.

#### Volunteers for Filoli

Filoli will hold a volunteer open house Saturday, May 22, at the Filoli Visitor & Education Center, 86 Canada Road in Woodside.

Registration and coffee at 9:30 a.m. will be followed by a welcome and introduction to volunteer opportunities, including the art committee, flower arranging, and staffing the garden shop and visitor center.

About 1,200 people volunteer at Filoli, helping sustain this historic site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

E-mail [volunteer@filoli.org](mailto:volunteer@filoli.org) to register for the open house, or call 364-8300, ext. 300, and leave a message.

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## STEVE GRAY... KNOWS THE MARKET

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# Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

## On Hand: Deep Knowledge Enables Effective Treatments To Preserve Crucial Function *Precise Surgery in Tiny Spaces*

Nancy McRay was just three years old when she sat down at her family's piano and began to play, naturally and easily and with great joy. She also had a knack for sight-reading, looking at the printed notes set before her and immediately playing them, as if she'd already practiced them many times before. By the time she was 14, word had gotten around about that skill and she became the official accompanist for a regional musical theater company.

McRay kept playing, earning an undergraduate degree in music performance, and then a master's degree. She taught piano, she directed musical productions and she never stopped accompanying, sometimes playing for hours on end in the course of a rehearsal.

Then, one day about 15 years ago, McRay felt something different when she spread her left hand out wide to cover a big distance between one note and another—it was a little pain between her thumb and her fingers. “I knew my mother had had arthritis, and I wondered if it could be that,” she said.

### Use, time and genetics

She was exactly right. McRay, like two in three post-menopausal women, was experiencing the first signals from a basal thumb joint beginning to lose its protective buffer of cartilage. With each pivot of the thumb, each outreach, each grasp, the cartilage between the thumb joint and its partner bone, the trapezium, grew thinner and thinner, more and more painful.

After years of medication, splints and acupuncture, McRay finally found her way to Stanford Hospital & Clinics orthopaedic hand surgeon Amy Ladd. Also a pianist, Ladd understood McRay's dilemma better than most.

Ladd borrowed from one part of McRay's body to repair the thumb joint's worn edge. Carefully picking her way through the network of nerves and muscles to reach a tendon in McRay's forearm, Ladd removed a small piece of it, coiling it into a plate-like shape and placing it as a new pad-



Nancy McRay has played the piano since she was a small child, not just for her own entertainment, but as a professional. Often, her jobs required her to play for hours at a time. About 15 years ago, her left thumb showed the first signs of the wear and tear. Playing became more and more painful, as did other daily activities.

ding between the thumb joint and the trapezium.

*“I knew my mother had had arthritis, and I wondered if it could be that.”*

— Nancy McRay, Stanford Hospital hand patient

“I can't sing Stanford's praises high enough,” McRay said. She had thought about having the surgery for more than two years, and knew it would mean a year of carefully-paced recovery before she could venture another try on a piano. But now, when she comes for a follow-up appointment, she and Dr. Ladd work hard to find a few minutes to sit down to play some simple duets. She's also learning jazz piano with a teacher who almost immediately identified how McRay could change her playing style to protect her repaired thumb and its mate from further damage.

The saddle joint looks very much like its name, and it is the key to the thumb's ability to work in opposition to each of the fingers.

### Essential and multipurpose

The motion of the basal thumb joint acts like a ball and socket, similar to the hip or shoulder joint. However, Ladd said, “This saddle joint is much more complicated. It's more like two spoons loosely cupped together. Sometimes one rolls on the other like a snowboarder on a half-pipe, sometimes they grind like a mortar and pestle.” And compared to the hip, shoulder, or knee, she said, “It's a tiny little joint much harder to study with imaging techniques and motion studies.”

Ladd and her Stanford colleagues at the Robert A. Chase Hand & Upper Limb Center take a collaborative and comprehensive approach to patient care, combining research and clinical practice of three fields of surgery—plastic, orthopaedic and general surgery— as first established by Chase, the Center's founder. An early pioneer in hand surgery, Chase established Yale University's Plastic Surgery section and then came to Stanford in 1963 to chair its surgery department. From 1977 to 1992, he was chief of the Division of Human Anatomy. He is the co-author of the Handbook of Hand Surgery and a founding member of the American Society of Hand Surgeons. He remains at Stanford as an active teacher and physician. His interest in the hand began when he served as a military doctor, treating soldiers wounded in the Korean conflict in the early '50s. Then, there were just two centers in

### Architectural challenge

The human hand is a tricky piece of engineering, especially the thumb joint. “We're looking for ways to better understand it,” Ladd said. Anatomists call the thumb joint—the trapezium-metacarpal joint—a saddle joint. It is the only one of its kind in the body.”



After hand surgery at Stanford Hospital & Clinics, Nancy McRay can play the piano again, without pain. She's learned new playing techniques to help her avoid extra stress on her hands. Playing is no less fun now than it ever was.

## What you can do to protect your hands

- ✓ Sprains, fractures or other injuries to the bones in the hand raise the likelihood of osteoarthritis. So can repetitive motions in certain occupations – construction workers who hold jackhammers damage the cartilage from the harsh vibrations of that kind of equipment. When possible, wear protective gear.
- ✓ Keep scissors handy to get through some of the tough packaging that seems impossible to open by hand – and can cause injury.
- ✓ Use jar openers whenever possible. Twisting while grasping puts heavy strain on the thumb and wrist.
- ✓ Ask about an ergonomic keyboard for work on a computer. Posture and a proper chair are also important tools to reducing the stress of hours of typing.
- ✓ Consider stretching and light weightlifting to keep flexible and build strength in the muscles around your joints.
- ✓ Self-massage of the hands can also loosen tightness after hours at work.
- ✓ Monitor how long and how tightly you pinch or grasp an object. More stress to the joint equals faster breakdown.



Nancy McRay's hand surgeon, Amy Ladd, MD, couldn't have been a better fit for her. Ladd is also a pianist who understood the mobility and strength needed to play. Whenever Ladd can find time, the two sit down to play together.

Norbert von der Groeben

- ✓ Electric can openers, food processors, oval-shaped rubber handles, gel pens and ergonomically-shaped knives can all reduce the work load on the thumb joint.
- ✓ Listen to your body. If you are using your hands and the activity is painful, your body is trying to tell you something. Ignoring pain allows the damage to continue. Ask yourself if there is a different way you can do an activity with less stress to your hand.

Source: Carolyn Gordon, hand therapist, Stanford Medicine Outpatient Center in Redwood City

For more information about the hand, visit [stanfordhospital.org/chase](http://stanfordhospital.org/chase)

the U.S. who offered specialized care of the hand.

Compared to other parts of the body, Chase said, the hand is a tightly-packed labyrinth of bone, muscle, tendon, ligament and nerve. Its ability to perform its tasks combines the need for brute force and minute manipulation. The muscles and joints are a pulley system with flexibility that enables an unmatched diversity of movement. The hand's architecture also can control an extreme range of intensity of motion and force—as fist or as coordinator of such fine motor skills as sewing, writing and playing musical instruments.

*“I’m a great believer in not expecting something like this is going to make everything perfect again. I am trying to do everything I can to take care of it.”*

– Nancy McRay, Stanford Hospital hand patient

And then, there's the way the hand, and its skin, interacts with the brain. The brain devotes as much of its real estate to movements of the hand as

it does to the arms, trunk and legs together. The hand's sensory function are also dense—that's how we can



Norbert von der Groeben

The first sign of trouble for Nancy McRay was a pain in at the base of her left thumb. That joint is a very common place for osteoarthritis to show up, especially in post-menopausal women. Stanford hand surgeon Amy Ladd, MD, restored McRay's ability to play by placing a piece of tendon from McRay's forearm in the joint as a buffer.

recognize an object just by holding it. Chase likes to tell the story of a patient whose badly injured thumb was replaced with a finger. A few months later, seeing the patient using the new digit just as he would have his thumb, Chase asked him about it. The patient was quite happy with the restoration of function. “It feels like a thumbger!” he told Chase.”

### Array of repair options

Ladd and others have ideas about what might work to prevent the kind of deterioration that, for someone like McRay, ends in surgery. The need will be great: millions of Baby Boomers are getting to that age when they will likely develop the same kind of osteoarthritis McRay has. The next generation will have grown up typing on keyboards for hours on end from an early age or texting hundreds of times daily on cell phones. That kind of heavy use could produce repetitive stress injury. It's already showing up in popular parlance as ailments like cell phone elbow—and Guitar Hero wrist.

Implants are in development, Ladd said, as are studies to pinpoint the mechanisms at play in thumb joint breakdown. “This little saddle joint is a sloppy one, with built-in vulnerabilities,” she said. “We think micromotion could be the key to why it fails.”

*“It's a tiny little joint much harder to study with imaging techniques and motion studies.”*

– Amy Ladd, MD, Stanford Hospital, Robert A. Chase Hand & Upper Limb Center

The surgery that McRay had is not for everyone. Some patients may opt for another of the surgical approaches that stabilize the thumb joint. What finally made McRay decide to go forward was the degree of pain that had become constant and its impact on her ability to do the many small tasks required for daily life - to open jars, grasp a door knob, put away dishes or walk her dog.

The surgery and the months of post-operative hand therapy have made her far more selective about how she uses her hands. She definitely stays away from the kind of intense, rapid piano playing she once did so often. But play she does, and loves it as much as she ever did. “I’m a great believer in not expecting something like this is going to make everything perfect again. And I am trying to do everything I can to take care of it.”

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

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## After losing contract, garbage company hiked pay 17% to 19%

By Sean Howell  
Almanac Staff Writer

The company that collects garbage for Menlo Park and Atherton granted its employees pay raises of 17 to 19 percent over the span of a five-year contract, signed in December 2008 — shortly after the company learned that its own pact with those and 10 other jurisdictions would not be renewed.

When Recology Waste Zero (formerly called Norcal) takes over the reigns from Allied Waste (now Republic Services) in 2011, it will likely be forced to honor that contract for nearly three more years, common practice when a new company takes over.

When Menlo Park Councilman Heyward Robinson looked into the issue, he found that there are no checks in the waste collector's contract with the regional waste agency to keep labor costs down. Those costs are simply passed through to the member jurisdictions, with the waste company's profit — set at a percentage of total costs — also rising.

"When I looked at it, I was just blown away," Mr. Robinson said. "The way it looks to me, there's no incentive to control these labor costs. ... Where are the levers of power here, where's the accountability?"

Kevin McCarthy, director of the regional agency that oversees garbage collection and processing (the South Bayside Waste Management Authority), acknowledged that Mr. Robinson "raises a good point," but noted that various market pressures keep labor costs down.

He added that the lack of a check on labor costs is "an artifact of a type of contract that's no longer common in industry," noting that wages will be adjusted to the consumer price index under the next contract.

"On the face of it, it doesn't seem unreasonable," Mr. McCarthy said of the contract. "Certainly, I think we would have liked to have seen a shorter term. To say it's awkward to have a lame-duck service provider negotiating future agreements ... well, it's a very awkward situation."

The regional waste agency's divorce from Allied was not a happy one. Allied alleged that the bidding process had been corrupted, hiring a PR firm to help it make that point, and eventually inspiring an investigation of the matter by the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury.

Evan Boyd, general manager of Allied Waste, said the company did the best it could to reach a fair agreement with the Teamsters union. He maintained that five-year contracts are standard in the waste-collection industry, and that the Teamsters would not have accepted a shorter term.

Asked why the company offered substantial raises while the country was sinking deeper into an economic recession, Mr.

Boyd noted that negotiations had begun before the precipitous stock market slide in the fall of 2008, and said that the union has substantial leverage.

He also noted that the increased cost

of labor is only one of many reasons that Menlo Park and Atherton residents have seen steep garbage rate increase in recent years; Menlo Park's rates have increased by more than 70 percent in the last two years. Higher fuel costs and landfill charges have also been factors, and Menlo Park has had to work to pay off a debt to the waste company.

To Mr. Robinson, the situation indicates a need for a policy advisory board on the waste agency, similar to other regional committees and agencies.

"So many of these regional labor contracts get approved with very little public scrutiny," he said. "Regional agencies just don't have the same (burden) of expectation" that cities have.

The contract calls for a \$5.75-an-hour across-the-board pay increase, bringing salaries to a range of \$37.30 to \$39.96 per hour.

"Are these folks paid well for what they do? They certainly are," Mr. McCarthy said. "On the other side of it, it's a tough job to be out there every day on the street, it's a job that most people don't want to do. ... Allied understands they're in an awkward position, and I don't think they have any incentive to provide overly generous terms." ▀

### Roses in full bloom

will highlight the Woodside gardens of Kathy and Robert Jaunich at the June 5 garden party and concert to benefit the San Francisco Symphony. Ms. Jaunich is shown in front of one of two lath houses on the property.

Photo by Michelle Le /The Almanac



### SYMPHONY

continued from page 5

program at Costano School in East Palo Alto that offers music education and concert experiences to 300 children.

### Garden stroll

Partygoers will have a bit of déjà vu when they visit the Jaunichs' home in Woodside. Their garden was one of three featured in the "Symphony in Flowers" garden tour in 2006. More than six landscaped acres will greet visitors as they enter through iron gates, adorned with flying birds, that were designed by the owners.

Guests will park their cars in a meadow that features a large metal horse sculpture by Joseph Fichter.

The Jaunichs bought the estate in 1992. The house on the property is a replica of the former owners' home in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. The guesthouse across the pool is a "mirror" building of the house.

The gardens, originally designed by Jack Stafford, were

renovated by landscape architect Todd R. Cole of Suzman and Cole Design in San Francisco. One of the first changes Mr. Cole made was to remove a 15-foot-high oleander hedge extending from the guest house to the main residence, thereby opening up the gardens' grand vistas.

Ms. Jaunich is a hands-on gardener who has chosen and supervised planting all the new trees and bushes on the property. "Ever since we moved here, we've done nothing but plant trees." The many kinds of trees include magnolia, crepe myrtle, olive, red bud, gingko, loquat, guava, fig and citrus.

The gardens were awarded the California Landscape Contractors Association State President's Trophy in 2002.

When re-designing the garden, Ms. Jaunich says she often visited Filoli, admiring its series of garden rooms that create a sense of intimacy. In her gardens she has a little sitting area in the rock garden and a swing and fountain in the shade garden. She and her

granddaughters enjoy tea parties in the "pixie" garden, which also boasts a giant sand box

There are two greenhouses and two lath houses. "We used to grow only orchids in the greenhouses, but they are so much trouble and expense that now we also grow other plants and seedlings," she says.

There is a thriving vegetable garden of lettuce, tomatoes, herbs, eggplant, peppers, onions, leeks and more. "In the summer we eat from it every night," she says. Netting helps discourage the birds, while the family black lab patrols the property to shoo away rabbits and squirrels.

The hen house is down from a dozen chicks to one occupant: "Big Red," who lays an occasional egg. "The grandchildren love her," says Ms. Jaunich.

A gardener who likes "to get my hands dirty," Kathy Jaunich is out in her gardens daily. She also enjoys visiting other people's gardens on tour and browsing garden centers. "I go all over. I cruise them all," she says. ▀

### SIMITIAN

continued from page 5

rather than later."

"We are getting very close to a point where if there's no significant changes and improvements in the way business is done, I will no longer be able to call myself a supporter of 'high-speed-rail done right,'" Sen. Simitian added. "Once members start to back away in such a way, I think it puts the project in great jeopardy."

The Senate committee, which also includes state senators Alan Lowenthal and Bob Huff, gave the authority 60 days to bring back more details about the rail authority's financial contracts.

The three senators were troubled by the auditor's findings that the authority frequently approved payments to contractors without verifying that the work was completed.

The authority's program manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff, is charged with providing monthly reports to the agency's board of directors. The auditor's office found that many of these reports contained erroneous information.

"We saw that those monthly progress reports were inaccurate and that inconsistent information was being sent to the authority," State Auditor Elaine Howle told the committee.

Ms. Howle said her office reviewed 22 invoices and found

that 20 had problems of some sort. "When you sample 22 invoices and you have concerns about 20, that's huge," she told the committee.

All three senators voiced disappointment about the facts uncovered by the state auditor. Sen. Huff, the lone Republican in the trio, said if the rail authority doesn't provide good answers in 60 days, the agency would see his tone change as he becomes more adversarial to the project.

Sen. Lowenthal said he will continue to push the authority for more information before releasing funds for the voter-approved project. "The litany of poor management practices identified by the audit is actually astounding." ▀

## Smog checker agrees to prison for issuing false certificates

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

A licensed smog-check technician working in Menlo Park pleaded “no contest” May 10 to a perjury charge in connection with some 15 fraudulent certificates issued from Atherton Smog, a testing station on Marsh Road, San Mateo County prosecutors said.

In a plea bargain with Thanh Dang, 33, of San Jose, prosecutors dropped 14 of the 15 perjury counts against him in exchange for a maximum possible sentence of four years in prison, Chief Deputy District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe told *The Almanac*.

The county Probation Office is preparing a report for Criminal Presiding Judge Susan Etezadi, who will consider it and the defense’s motion for leniency before deciding on an appropriate sentence on June 30, Mr. Wagstaffe said. Mr. Dang is in custody on \$500,000 bail.

Mr. Dang’s attorney was not available for comment.

Prosecutors have found no reason to implicate other employees of Atherton Smog, Mr. Wagstaffe said, adding that Mr. Dang also told prosecutors that he had been acting alone.

With two felony counts, or strikes, against him from two attempted robberies in Los Angeles County in 1996, this

felony could have been Mr. Dang’s third strike, meaning a sentence of 25 years to life, but prosecutors felt that would have been inappropriately severe, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Were the vehicle owners clued in that their certificates were invalid? In most cases, the majority of victims don’t know, Mr. Wagstaffe said, but in this case “the belief is that they knew that they were getting a certificate on a car that might not otherwise qualify.”

They also paid Mr. Dang \$150 versus the ordinary fee of \$80, which is part of how prosecutors traced their whereabouts. In order to get them to cooperate as witnesses, the victims were not charged, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

The state Bureau of Automotive Repair also received anonymous calls, starting in July 2007, alerting them to the scam, known as “clean piping.” It’s hard to detect since most people cannot tell a car that has been properly checked from one that hasn’t.

Mr. Dang is alleged to have given illegal certificates to more than 100 vehicles. “Those cars left the premises the same as when they entered,” Mr. Wagstaffe said. “If somebody doesn’t call up, this could have gone on forever.”

Mr. Dang was using the extra \$70 per vehicle to help with his gambling debts, Mr. Wagstaffe said. ■

## Nights likely to be less dark at Town Center

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

Real darkness at night is rare in many Silicon Valley communities, but in Portola Valley, it’s real, it’s consistent and it’s no accident. The residential design guidelines call for “a minimal approach ... to outside illumination of any use, site, or structure within the town.”

After a discussion of the matter at the May 12 Town Council meeting, these guidelines are almost certain to be stretched in a revision to the lighting plan for the 18-month-old Town Center complex.

The complex, built with residential lighting guidelines in mind, needs more illumination of the unpainted asphalt wheel stops in the parking lot, the low beige walls near the courtyard, the porches and the pathways, as summarized in a report by Public Works Director Howard Young.

Security and safety concerns came from residents, visitors, library employees and town staff, Mr. Young said. Among the nighttime incidents: people have tripped and fallen five times, with minor injuries so far.

Councilwoman Maryann Derwin recalled walking from the Historic Schoolhouse to the community hall one night. “I felt like I may as well be blindfolded,” she said.

“Even if you know the trail, you have to go slowly,” added Councilwoman Ann Wengert.

Asked to comment, former councilman Richard Merk, who helped design the lighting, said, “It’s really easy to carry a flashlight.” On the other hand, noting that he himself has tripped over an unpainted wheel stop,

### ■ PORTOLA VALLEY

he said that public safety is critical.

Town Manager Angie Howard, who has also tripped and fallen in the parking lot, said,

*‘We have to strike a very careful balance between celebrating the darkness, like we do here in town, and making it safe.’*

COUNCILMAN TED DRISCOLL

“I think it’s really essential that we do something and do it very soon.” Public safety overrides town rules that keep light levels low, Mr. Young noted in the report.

Mr. Young proposed two plans for the path from the court yard

to the Historic Schoolhouse and the side path that goes around the redwood grove near the schoolhouse: increase the number of bollards — short posts with downward-facing lights on them — or install 10-foot-tall light poles. Wattage levels may have to rise as well, he said.

Point-to-point lighting on strategically placed bollards can light paths without illuminating the entire complex, Councilman John Richards said.

“We have to strike a very careful balance,” Councilman Ted Driscoll said, “between celebrating the darkness, like we do here in town, and making it safe.”

Mr. Young told the council that he will be coming back soon with firmer plans. ■

## Chamber seeks nominations for awards

Menlo Park’s Chamber of Commerce is soliciting nominations from its members for the annual Golden Acorn Awards.

The awards recognize people and businesses for service to the community.

E-mail [info@menloparkchamber.com](mailto:info@menloparkchamber.com) to submit a nomination. Put “Golden Acorn Nomination” in the subject line. Deadline for submissions is June 1.

Go to [is.gd/caGz9](http://is.gd/caGz9) (case-sensitive) for more information.

Asked to comment, former councilman Richard Merk, who helped design the lighting, said, “It’s really easy to carry a flashlight.” On the other hand, noting that he himself has tripped over an unpainted wheel stop,

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### TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE SAFETY ELEMENT OF THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY GENERAL PLAN AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD OF PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR ADOPTION OF THESE MATTERS

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment to the Safety Element of the Town of Portola Valley General Plan on Wednesday, June 2, 2010 at 7:30 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers (Historic Schoolhouse), 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. The Planning Commission will consider all evidence, written and oral communications pertaining to the proposed Element. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission to be heard at the time and place herein above mentioned.

Public Hearings provide the general public and interested parties an opportunity to provide testimony on these items. If you challenge a proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at a Public Hearing(s) described above, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the Public Hearing(s).

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a proposed Negative Declaration regarding the above mentioned Safety Element has been prepared and is available for review. The Planning Commission will consider the proposed Negative Declaration at its meeting of June 2, 2010 at 7:30 p.m., in the Town Council Chambers (Historic Schoolhouse), 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the Planning Commission meeting or presented at the meeting. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission at the time and place herein above mentioned at the time and place which will be noticed. Copies of the proposed Negative Declaration are available at Portola Valley Town Hall, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California.

Dated: May 11, 2010

Leslie A. Lambert  
Planning Manager

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# Goats return to Menlo Park; maybe trees will stay, too

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

### ■ MENLO WATCH

Menlo Park loves its goats. The voracious herbivores make an appearance in the city for two to three weeks every spring, gnawing the tall weeds in Sharon Hills Park to lessen the risk of wildfire.

But Alex Cannara, who lives in unincorporated San Mateo County near Sharon Hills Park, chided the city for the practice this time last year, saying that environmentally speaking, it would be better off employing a more conventional method. Trucking hundreds of goats around the Bay Area takes more fuel than conventional mowers would, he said, and the goats gnaw on new trees, preventing them from growing.

The city didn't assent to Mr. Cannara's request to replace the natural grass-eaters with something mechanical — the program is a popular one, especially with children — but it did give Mr. Cannara permission and materials to fence off developing trees. With the help of volunteers from a group of Menlo Park Mormons, those trees will be protected when the goats arrive this week.

In an open letter, Mr. Cannara thanked the volunteers and city Parks and Trees Supervisor Supervisor Dave Mooney.

The goats will be in the park for the next two to three weeks, according to Mr. Mooney. People are

asked to keep their dogs on a leash.

### Traffic signal at Hillview intersection?

Should the city of Menlo Park push to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Santa Cruz Avenue and Elder Avenue, near Hillview School?

That's what city management and the Transportation Commission are recommending to the City Council, which will weigh the issue at its meeting Tuesday, May 18. If the council approves the recommendation, the city would then negotiate with the Menlo Park City School District, in the hopes of working out a cost-sharing agreement.

A signal at the intersection would improve traffic flow during pickup and drop-off hours, and would prevent people from cutting through other streets in the neighborhood to avoid waiting in long lines, Transportation Engineer Rene Baile and Transportation Manager Chip Taylor wrote in a staff report.

The impetus for the project comes from the planned expansion of the Hillview campus, with the student population expected to increase by 43 percent by 2016.

The rebuild is scheduled to commence this summer, with completion slated for late 2012 or early 2013. ■

## Bicycle race to pass through Woodside

A fast-moving convoy, not of diesel-powered 18-wheelers but of human-powered two-wheelers, will pass through Woodside via Kings Mountain and Woodside roads between 1 and 2 p.m. on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 18.

The eight-day, eight-stage Amgen Tour of California bicycle race started Sunday, May 16, in Nevada City, north of Sacramento, and ends

811 miles later on Sunday, May 23, in Thousand Oaks after a stage in Los Angeles.

The Woodside Town Council approved an encroachment permit that will allow the racers to pass through town.

The convoy is expected to be one and a half miles long and take five

See **RACE**, next page

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The Center for Hearing Health at PAMF will feature presentations by PAMF audiologists and physicians about hearing loss and treatment options, as well as information and demonstrations from hearing device manufacturers and other vendors on the latest products and services for individuals with hearing loss.

Light refreshments will be served. The event is open to PAMF patients and members of the community. RSVP for the event by calling **650-853-4873**.

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OBITUARIES

**Lena M. Pulido**

Menlo Park resident

Lena Mary Pulido, a resident of Menlo Park from 2001 to 2009, died April 21 at Alexander Cohen Hospice in Hughson, California. She was 81.

Ms. Pulido was born in Niles. She grew up on the family farm in the Hayward area and spoke only Portuguese until she entered first grade. She married Antonio Pulido in 1959. In 1960 they moved to Patterson, where they raised their five daughters.

The couple relocated to San Francisco in 1995 to live with their daughter and son-in-law, Olga

and Bob Crowe. When the Crowes moved to Atherton in 2001, the Pulidos came to Menlo Park.

Ms. Pulido was a devout Jehovah's Witness and will be remembered for her kindhearted and generous spirit, say family members.

She is survived by her husband of 50 years, Antonio Pulido; daughters Lillian Brown of Modesto, Lorraine Pulido of Patterson, Olga Pulido-Crowe of Atherton, Elsie Kersevan of Brentwood, and Linda Walden of Ceres; nine grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Memorials may be made to Alex-



Lena Pulido

ander Cohen Hospice House c/o Community Hospice, 4368 Spysers Way, Modesto, CA 95356

**Sylvia Bancroft**

Animal rights advocate

Sylvia Bancroft, a longtime advocate for humane treatment of animals, died peacefully in her Menlo Park home on May 8. She was 93.

Ms. Bancroft was the director and principal founding member of the Humane Education Network in Menlo Park, whose mission is to promote ethical treatment of animals.

She is survived by her husband, Charlie Bancroft. A memorial service will be held by friends and co-workers in the near future.

March 23.

The cyclists will be riding up Tunitas Creek Road from Highway 1 and should cross Skyline Boulevard and enter Woodside sometime between 1:05 and 1:40 p.m., Mr. Bryant said.

**RACE**

continued from previous page

minutes to pass any given point. The best place to watch, said cyclist Bob Page, is on the uphill section of Highway 84 past the junction with

Portola Road.

The California Highway Patrol will arrive in advance of the cyclists to block the roads, which are expected to reopen around 1:45 p.m., Assistant Town Manager Kevin Bryant told the council on

**ANN ENTREKIN VON THADEN**

NOVEMBER 24, 1937 - MAY 4, 2010

Ann died with family by her side in Mills-Peninsula Hospital. She was a resident of Half Moon Bay, CA, but called Atherton and Menlo Park home for many years.

Ann was born to Paul and Ruth Entrek in Lebanon, PA. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Connecticut College in New London, CT in 1959. She owned and operated The White Rabbit, a Menlo Park toy-store during the 1970's, and later formed APB Associates, a specialty packaging and product design company.

Her volunteer efforts helped the American Association of University Women, Half Moon Bay; Menlo Park and Half Moon Bay Chambers of Commerce; Half Moon Bay Pumpkin Festival, and San Mateo County Elections office.

Ann is survived by her mother, Ruth Entrek of Sarasota, FL, son Paul Gregg von Thaden, daughter-in-law Stephanie von Thaden and their children Lauren and Ryan of Atherton, CA, and son Brinton von Thaden of Menlo Park, CA.

An informal memorial service will be held at La Costanera, 8150 Cabrillo Highway, Montara, CA, starting with a beach service adjacent to the restaurant at 3:30 p.m. on May 20. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the California Historical Society.

PAID OBITUARY

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- 5:30pm:** Panel Discussion Moderated by Oscar Garcia, President & CEO, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce/Caregiver  
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**WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?**

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

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## Endorsements

### Rich Gordon for state Assembly

With the state tied up in knots by an ineffective governor and a dysfunctional Legislature, it is difficult to imagine why anyone would volunteer for duty in Sacramento. But despite the budget mess and myriad other challenges, three candidates — Supervisor Rich Gordon, former Palo Alto City Council member Yoriko Kishimoto and businessman Josh Becker — are seeking the Democratic nomination for the 21st District Assembly seat now held by Ira Ruskin, who is termed out. Since Democrats far outnumber Republicans in the district, the Democratic primary winner is a cinch to win in November.

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

In part, it is the state's precarious situation that drives our decision to endorse Rich Gordon in this race, due to his 12 years of experience

as a supervisor, an earlier stint on the county Board of Education and, before that, as CEO of Youth and Family Assistance, one of the county's top nonprofits. Another plus for Mr. Gordon is his serving two years as president of the state Association of Counties, where colleagues from both parties have endorsed his candidacy.

During his long tenure on the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Gordon has proven that he is a leader who can bring dueling sides together, a skill that is badly needed in Sacramento's caustic partisan battles. For example, several years ago he chaired a "very disparate" group that was working to advance a plan by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to annex Coastside property, including many farms. After six months of meetings, a plan was approved, and now representatives of both sides have endorsed Mr. Gordon's candidacy.

Mr. Gordon has an exemplary environmental record, having worked on a sensible solution to the Devil's Slide tunnel. Closer to home, he has been a stalwart opponent of Stanford's effort to substitute a trail next to busy Alpine Road in San Mateo County for building a true nature trail across its lands in Santa Clara County. Stanford had promised to build a hiking trail as part of a deal with Santa Clara County for permission to develop 5 million square feet of new campus buildings over 25 years.

Although his opponents bring diverse backgrounds to the race, they simply do not have Mr. Gordon's experience or the political skills that he would bring to Sacramento. Ms. Kishimoto served eight years on the Palo Alto City Council, but she has not articulated a clear plan to resolve the state's problems.

**LETTERS**  
*Our readers write*

### Time to rethink the parking structures

*Editor:*

I live in Menlo Park and have gone to the latest downtown planning meeting. I have a copy of the draft plan and was noticing the trend to build a large structured parking garage up to four stories high. Most buildings downtown are one to two stories high, which is part of the unique Menlo Park character and charm.

I frequent downtown several times a week and have never had to drive around for more than one minute to find parking and only at street fairs. So the downtown parking vacancy rate, as my eyeball estimate over various times and days, would be probably 50 to 60 percent on average. This of course does not justify

a parking structure. The fact that the residents of Menlo Park who patronize it don't want one (read recent letters in the Alma-

Mr. Becker has never held public office, but fervently believes "green tech" and other venture initiatives can help pull the state out of trouble. But he came up short when asked to share his own practical solutions for the state's budget mess.

In contrast, Mr. Gordon supports raising revenue by reinstating the vehicle license fee and reviewing the "long-term fairness of Proposition 13" in a way that would not threaten the ability of senior citizens to stay in their homes. He also said that California is the only oil-producing state that does not impose an oil-extraction tax, an oversight he would work to correct.

Mr. Gordon said he would start a "conversation" about two other problem areas — the two-thirds majority in the Legislature required to pass a budget, and term limits — if he is sent to Sacramento. He believes that extending term limits would stop incoming Assembly members from immediately beginning to campaign for a state Senate seat when their three two-year terms expire. Instead, he would allow a legislator to serve in either house for up to 14 years.

We believe Rich Gordon is the best qualified candidate in this race and urge voters to endorse his candidacy for the 21st District Assembly seat on June 8.



### Don Horsley for supervisor in District 3

In the first seriously contested election for a county supervisor in more than a decade, five candidates are vying to fill the seat held by departing member Rich Gordon.

Candidates must live in the district, but are elected county-wide, a challenge in this far-flung county, which runs from South San Francisco all the way to Santa Cruz County on the Coast. The five candidates make up the largest field seen in a race for supervisor in many years, and include:

■ Don Horsley, the former sheriff and current member of the Sequoia Healthcare District board of directors.

■ Jack Hickey, a perennial candidate and also a member of the Sequoia district board.

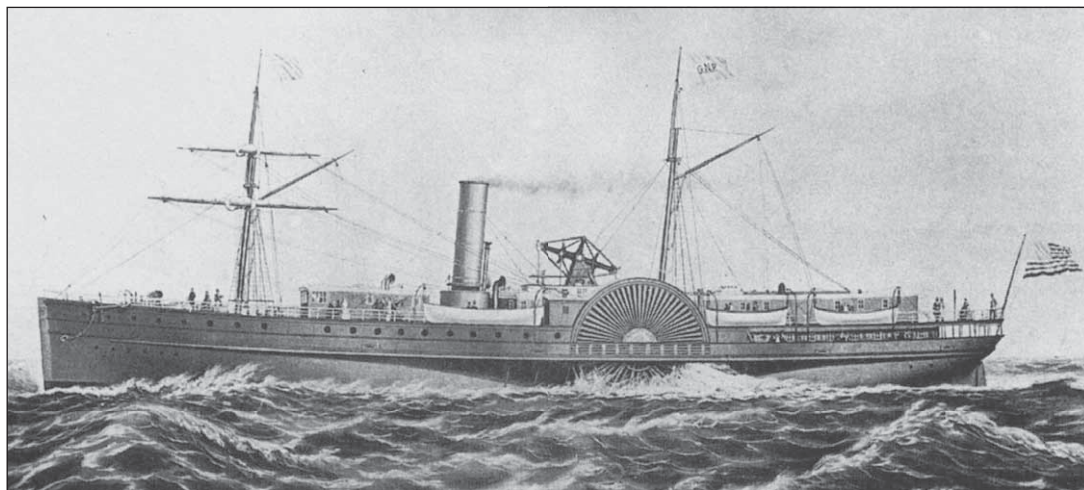
■ Matt Grocott, a member of the San Carlos City Council.

■ April Vargas, a legislative analyst and businesswoman who has served on the Midcoast Community Council.

■ Michael Stogner, who bills himself as a victims advocate.

Don Horsley is our choice in this field, although Matt Grocott also impressed us with his no-nonsense approach to controlling public sector spending. And April Vargas would add a strong environmental voice to the board, as well as experience in many other issues.

See **ENDORSEMENTS**, next page



Menlo Park Historical Association

### Our Regional Heritage

Pacific Mail Steamship commodore James T. Watkins commanded the company's first trans-Pacific voyages between San Francisco and the Orient in ships similar to the one above. When Commodore Watkins was not at sea, he lived next door to Faxon Dean Atherton on 20 acres he purchased in 1866 at Valparaiso Park. His ship's carpenters constructed a 3,500 square foot home there, which, after several moves, survives today at a site near Menlo College, on Alejandra Street.

nac from Menlo Park residents as well as Yahoo groups from residents) leaves little doubt that one should not be built.

The current parking lots serve the following purpose and have

See **LETTERS**, next page

## LETTERS

Continued from previous page

these advantages:

■ They are more organically representative of a small town like Menlo Park.

■ They match the character of Menlo Park.

■ They are extremely practical. No one wants to walk from Trader Joe's with their bags of food up a parking garage. This will also decrease the shopping frequency (store revenues) as it will not be possible to simply "just stop in and grab a few things" from any downtown store, but it probably would be good for the large Safeway.

■ This absence of current surface parking lots will mean an end to the Farmers' Market and other mixed-use events that are a large part of the city's character.

■ Seniors will also have difficulty going up four flights in a parking structure, elevators or not.

■ Safety, of course, in a high-rise structure is compromised as support pillars and walls act as hiding spots for thieves.

A motivation for the Menlo Park Planning Department is to build a big parking structure in order to infill the rest of the parking lots with revenue sources. However, we who live in Menlo Park do not want something that is clearly not needed.

Secondly, its downstream potential purpose is challenged

## The storied life of Jack Mangini

By Nancy Lund

When Jack Mangini died in March at 92, Portola Valley lost not only a beloved elder citizen but one of the last of our pioneer residents. Jack's grandfather, Andrew Mangini, came to Portola Valley around 1885 and joined other ethnic groups from many countries. They were truck farmers, raising strawberries and vegetables for San Francisco and the local market.

Jack's mother Ida and her husband, another Andrew Mangini, had five children. In 1924 they bought property at the site of today's Alpine Hills Swim and Tennis Club, a saloon and other small buildings. They began improvements, primarily two dance floors (one covered, one open) and barbecue pits. The Mangini Picnic Park became enormously popular. Thousands of people would show up on weekends to enjoy the enticements; their cars would line Alpine Road from Los Trancos to Arastradero roads.

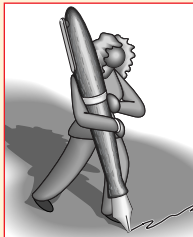
In 1939, the Manginis built the stone house

at 4141 Alpine, now the home of Windmill Preschool. Jack remembered bringing the stones down the hill from a quarry in Alpine Hills. For 20 years, Manginis' Roadhouse was one of the area's biggest attractions. It fell into disuse when the Manginis sold.

However, in 1964, the little stone house was called into service once again; the roadhouse became the first Portola Valley Town Hall.

Jack had a remarkable memory and loved to tell stories about growing up here in the 1920s and 1930s: Mayor Rolph stopping for strawberries; bootlegging ("everyone had a still"); going to work at 5 a.m. on the estates in a horse-drawn wagon and returning at 7 p.m.; watching the Chinese strawberry pickers; waiting half an hour by the road for the next car to drive by.

When he married Laura Ramies 63 years ago, their marriage united two pioneer families. The Ramies family originated in Spain and arrived in Portola Valley in the 1920s via Hawaii and Morgan Hill. They worked for the Schillings, Jacklings or Phlegers, picking prunes and apricots. Son Martin bought the Portola Valley Garage in 1963, and it



GUEST  
OPINION



Laura Ramies and Jack Mangini, circa 1940.

has become an institution. He and his sister Laura are now the last survivors of those early families who came here to make a living off the land and stayed to watch a little town emerge.

Nancy Lund is town historian of Portola Valley.

by the residents who want to retain Menlo Park's existing "village" character as stated in the very first page of the draft plan. We want to retain this character rather than fill the rest of the (existing) parking lots with buildings.

Carl Treadwell  
Avy Avenue, Menlo Park

### Thank you for May Day work

Editor:

May Day is a special day in the town of Woodside, with the parade, horse shows and community activities, which all require the attention of local police, fire and rescue units.

This is a special thank you for the Woodside Fire, San Mateo

County large animal rescue unit, police and local veterinarians. They worked four hours that afternoon with kindness, patience, and mental and physical creativity to release a horse cast against tree roots, the trail embankment and a slippery slope on one of the interior trails of Woodside.

The horse and rider walked away and are doing well. The trail is in good condition and the site was left in better condition than before the event. Great job!

Thank you from every horse and rider of these wooded hills.

Janet Estep  
Raymundo Drive, Woodside

### ENDORSEMENTS

continued from previous page

As county sheriff from 1993 to 2007, Mr. Horsley oversaw a staff of 600 employees and was responsible for law enforcement in unincorporated areas of the county. In his current role as a board member of the Sequoia Health Care District, he helps distribute grants to local health-care agencies, which he hopes will help the county lower its health-care costs.

Mr. Horsley believes public employee pensions are contributing to the county's structural deficit, and he said that allowing public safety workers to retire at the age of 50, at 90 percent of their highest pay after 30 years of service, "is a bad policy" and should be rolled back. Although the pensions for current employees can't be touched, he said, the county can at least stop the "spiking" of retirement benefits — the practice of buying out unused sick time, vacation time and compensatory time to bump up the final salary upon which the pension is based.

On local issues, Mr. Horsley said he does not believe the Board of Supervisors should comment on Cargill's proposed 12,000-home development in Redwood City until the environmental review process is complete. And, he voiced support for the high-speed rail project, which he said would be good for the area's economy. And the trains would be an environmentally better way to move people up and down the state, he said.

While he lacks Mr. Horsley's years of county-wide experience, Mr. Grocott impressed us with his four-pronged plan to control spending, beginning with cuts in management after a careful review. "The next step would be to go to the departments and say we have the option of contracting out (a job), but to make the departments compete" in bidding for the job, he said. He added that such a practice was used in San Carlos, and city departments "found efficiencies" when

they participated in the bidding process.

Nevertheless, Don Horsley wins our endorsement for the District 3 seat on the Board of Supervisors. He is a proven administrator and should be elected June 8.

### Groom for supervisor in District 2

Former two-time mayor and San Mateo City Council member Carole Groom was appointed to the board in December 2008 to serve out the term of Jerry Hill, who was elected to the Assembly. Groom does not have a serious challenger in the race, although Daniel Kaul — who has not campaigned and canceled an interview with *The Almanac* — is listed on the ballot.

Carole Groom impressed us with her knowledge and concern about rising costs in the county budget, which is facing a \$150 million structural deficit in the next three years. A former executive with the Mills Peninsula Hospital in Burlingame, Ms. Groom is an expert in the health care field, which is a large part of the county's business.

Carole Groom has proven herself after more than a year on the board, and we support her return to the District 2 seat.

### Mandelkern for county treasurer

Local residents place a lot of trust in their county treasurer, who manages a portfolio of more than \$2.5 billion made up of short- and long-term deposits from local governments and districts in the county.

With the retirement of Lee Buffington, the longtime treasurer who saw \$155 million in county funds vanish when Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2007, for the first time in 25 years voters will elect a new treasurer.

Four candidates are running to take Mr. Buffington's place, including Joe Galligan, a certified public accountant and former Burlingame mayor and city council member; Sandie

Arnott, deputy county treasurer; Richard Guilbault, an investment adviser; and Dave Mandelkern, an entrepreneur and community college district trustee

After reviewing questionnaires returned from all candidates, our choice is Dave Mandelkern, an experienced businessman who could be trusted with the huge county portfolio. For example, he believes the treasurer should set clear guidelines to deal with downgrades to investment ratings on securities, saying it was the county's lack of action when Lehman securities were being downgraded that led to the \$155 million loss.

Mr. Mandelkern agrees with a report to the county Board of Supervisors after the Lehman collapse, which said that \$2 billion is too large a sum for an individual to handle. He suggests that the county would benefit by the "redundancy and bench strength" of outside portfolio managers, and suggests that the county's fund could be pooled with an even larger fund to lower transaction costs.

These and other common-sense suggestions have convinced us that voters should elect Dave Mandelkern county treasurer on June 8.

### Vote yes on Measure G

After being hit hard by state budget cuts, the San Mateo County Community College District is desperately trying to keep the doors open for the high school graduates and others who cannot afford to attend an expensive four-year college or university.

Measure G, an extremely modest \$34 annual parcel tax, will help close the funding gap at the district's three campuses, including Canada College in Woodside.

We urge voters to support Measure G on June 8.

**GULLIXSON**

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