

Dining Out
inside this issue

The Almanac

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

MAY 26, 2010 | VOL. 45 NO. 39



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jumps for the U.S.

[See Section 2]



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Information deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

Pension initiative will go on ballot

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

On May 18, the sun went down on Menlo Park. Dinner tables were cleared, teeth brushed, kids put to bed, the night swallowed up by crickets ... and yet a devoted cadre of people remained in the City Council chambers, waiting with varying degrees of patience as council members debated daylight planes and setbacks.

The council spent over two hours during its weekly meeting trying to redesign a second-story addition to a house, eventually failing to reach a solution. The 13 or so hearty souls who waited for their item, which the council took up shortly after 11 p.m., had an equally daunting task: trying to convince council members that they shouldn't trust themselves to negotiate pension benefits with employee unions.

The people were there to show support for a "pension reform" initiative, which would reduce pension benefits to future (non-police) city employees — and prevent the council from increasing those benefits in the future without voter approval.

The council declined to adopt the measure outright, electing instead to send it to the November ballot. It might not have had much of a choice either way: It was required by law to either adopt the initiative or put it before voters, and City Attorney Bill McClure said it may have been illegal for the council to adopt it, because state law requires cities to attempt to negotiate new terms with workers. He said he didn't think that portion of the law applied to voter initiatives, however.

While several people urged the council to adopt the measure, Henry Riggs, a leader of the pension reform group, said he was glad the council decided to send the issue to the ballot.

"It does mean we have more work to do, we've got a lot more work to do — instead of a six-week effort, it's a five-month effort," he said in an interview.

"But it was the right thing to do, so that the full city votes on this issue."

The council will eventually consider whether to take a formal stance on the initiative, but some of them offered preliminary views at the meeting.

Councilman John Boyle acknowledged, to some extent, arguments by pension reform advocates that the initiative would take some of the pressure off council members in negotiations with labor unions. Council members Heyward Robinson, Rich Cline and Kelly Ferguson all voiced fears, to varying degrees, that the initiative could make hiring difficult.

"I'm really worried about ballot box budgeting," Ms. Ferguson

benefits)."

The city's costs for pension benefits have risen from about \$1.75 million in the 2004-2005 fiscal year to about \$4.25 million in the current fiscal year, a figure that represents nearly 13 percent of the city's budget. Those costs are expected to rise to about \$5.75 million in the 2014-15 fiscal year, though Personnel Director Glen Kramer notes that that estimate is very tentative.

The initiative would not reduce pension costs in the short term, and Mr. Riggs acknowledged that even with the initiative, the city's costs won't be sustainable in the long run.

The initiative would not affect pension payments to police officers and sergeants, the total costs of which are slightly higher to the city than costs for non-police employee pensions — despite the fact that police represent less than one-fifth of the city's

workforce. Salaries and pension benefits for police have shot up over the past decade as Peninsula cities competed with each other to hire officers.

Mayor Rich Cline said he was skeptical that other cities would quickly follow suit in instituting a two-tier pension system, or that an action by Menlo Park voters would have an effect on the state's pension policies.

The statewide system "has got to be fixed," he said in an interview. "Unfortunately, in Menlo Park, we have people who think it needs to happen here. I don't know where that comes from."

Regarding hopes that the initiative will catch on like a wildfire in other cities, Mr. Cline said: "Our responsible (general fund) reserve policies haven't caught on like a wildfire. You know why? Because we're a small town. If we were Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, I would say, yes: this is a structural shift. But the odds are against it."

While the council was still stuck on the issue of whether to grant a use permit to a homeowner

'It was the right thing to do, so that the full city votes on this issue.'

HENRY RIGGS, A LEADER OF THE PENSION REFORM GROUP

son said. "I'm really worried that this initiative would have a detrimental impact on the City Council's ability to take the responsibility for balancing the budget every year, and putting that in the hands of the voters in a way that could be similar to the dysfunction in the state of California."

Mr. Riggs argued that the city should advertise jobs more widely — not just to municipal workers — and noted that all it would take to again increase pension benefits in the future is a simple majority vote of the people. (City Manager Glen Rojas said in an interview that the city "is open to receiving applications from private sector workers," and that its advertising practices don't preclude that.)

"This is almost like global warming," Mr. Riggs said in the interview, maintaining that it's obvious the city and state are in for a bleak economic future if they don't address pension costs now. "The commitment to fiscal responsibility is not there when a councilman says, 'we need the flexibility to again offer (higher

See **PENSION**, page 12

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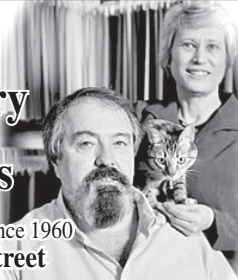


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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Bohannon doesn't agree to share profit with city

■ The City Council will hold a public hearing on the Bohannon project Tuesday, May 25.

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Land developer David Bohannon has reiterated this company's refusal to engage in a profit-sharing plan with the city of Menlo Park, in the event that the Menlo Gateway office/hotel project far exceeds revenue projections.

City Council members at their May 11 meeting had asked the city's negotiators to try to work

out a provision for a profit-sharing deal with the Bohannon Development Co., if the project generates "windfall" profits. Several community members have said they think the city is vastly underestimating the value of the zoning concessions it's considering granting, urging the council to press for more money.

The city would have to make major zoning and general plan changes to allow for three eight-

story office buildings and a 230-room hotel near Bayfront Expressway and Marsh Road, with the project totaling nearly 1 million square feet of floor area.

The council will hold a public hearing on the project Tuesday, May 25, at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, on several issues, including environmental concerns, land-use considerations, traffic and greenhouse gas mitigations, and architectural plans.

But it's possible that approval of the project will hinge on monetary terms. Several resi-

dents have repeatedly warned council members that they're getting snookered.

"I don't see this project as a contribution to the city," resident Chuck Bernstein told the council at its May 11 meeting. "I do understand, though, how a handful of Europeans managed to obtain Manhattan from the Indians for a few beads, because I think that's potentially what's happening here."

In approving zoning changes, the city would essentially be selling Mr. Bohannon 32 acres of land, Mr. Bernstein argued. At \$2 million an acre, that's \$64

million. "Menlo Park ought to get that money up front."

The city has said that the value of the zoning concessions could be worth anywhere from nothing at all (if real estate markets don't recover) to \$100 million, under standards used in the real estate development world. Several residents have argued that the concessions are worth far more than even the \$100 million figure.

In a May 20 letter to the city, Mr. Bohannon, vice president of the Bohannon company, said

See **BOHANNON**, page 12

Las Lomitas scores highest in California

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Local elementary school districts are among the highest-ranked in the state based on the 2009 Academic Performance Index scores, with the Las Lomitas district topping the list of the state's K-8 districts.

The two-school district, comprising Las Lomitas elementary in Atherton and La Entrada middle in Menlo Park, scored 966 out of a possible 1,000 points. That score is up 10 points from 2008.

The Menlo Park City, Portola Valley, and Woodside school districts also earned a 10 in the state's ranking from 1 to 10.

The latest scores from the state Department of Education are based on tests taken in early 2009. Last fall, a preliminary report was issued, and Las Lomitas was singled out as the top district at the time. Although the score announced then dropped by one point after the state's additional statistical analysis, the top ranking did not.

Las Lomitas Superintendent Eric Hartwig noted that the latest report provides a more meaningful level measure of comparison for the district, in that it compares schools with similar socio-economic factors. Both district schools earned a ranking of 10 in that category.

The similar-school ranking

See **SCORES**, page 11



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Aram Chirkanian at his work station in Diane's Beauty, a shop in the Ladera shopping center.

Ladera barber to put down the scissors after 50 years

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Longtime Ladera barber Aram Chirkanian, when he retires at the end of May, will, for a change, have a home on dry land, Fridays and weekends free, and far too many miles between him and his loyal band of clients.

"It's very, very sad for me to leave this

place," he said.

After 20 years living on a 38-foot yacht in Redwood City and 50 years cutting men's hair in Portola Valley, Woodside and Ladera — in that order — Mr. Chirkanian, 80, is moving south to Ontario, just east of Los Angeles.

It's a long way from where he started in 1929, born in a Paris-area hospital to a young refugee mother who, with her new

son and daughter, made a life for her family in what was to become occupied France after World War II broke out.

It's not that Mr. Chirkanian wants to move south, but his son, an Ontario resident, insists that his elderly dad live there, too, Mr. Chirkanian told The Almanac while sitting in the sunshine in front of

See **BARBER**, page 15

Time to Move Forward

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Surprisingly, negotiations have stalled over a proposed set of new and more modern professional nursing standards that have been accepted by academic medical centers across the country. One might wonder why CRONA, an organization modeled after recognizing achievement in nursing, would balk at the idea that our nurses need to be leaders in their profession.

The new Professional Nurse Development Program will serve to advance nursing practices at both Hospitals and will equip our nurses to continue to provide excellent patient care well into the future.

The community depends on us for a superlative standard of care, just as the greater community of medicine—nationally and internationally—looks to us to continually advance best practices, procedures and standards.

Our nurses are extraordinary people dealing daily with extraordinary circumstances. The Professional Nurse Development Program will only help them do better what they do best—caring for patients.

Sincerely,

Martha H. Marsh
President and CEO
Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Christopher G. Dawes
President and CEO
Lucile Packard Children's Hospital

For more information visit:

www.StanfordPackardFacts.com

Medical facility expansion could mean 10,000 new vehicle trips per day

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Local residents and government officials are getting a detailed look at the potential impacts of a massive rebuilding of Stanford University's medical facilities in Palo Alto, near the Menlo Park border, following the release of an environmental report on May 19.

The \$3.5 billion project, which Palo Alto city officials routinely call the "largest project in the city's history," would bring about 1.3 million square feet of new development and more than 2,200 new employees to Palo Alto by 2025.

The project includes reconstruction of Stanford Hospital and Clinics, an expansion of Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, renovation of Hoover Pavilion, and replacement of School of Medicine facilities.

Perhaps of most interest to local residents, the report details how the project would affect local roadways and intersections, bringing 10,000 new vehicle trips per day to the area.

Glen Rojas, Menlo Park's city manager, said in an interview that the city has met with both Palo Alto and Stanford officials over plans to blunt traffic and other impacts on

Menlo Park. The city is not prepared to comment on the specifics of the report, he said, adding that in the next two months it would draft a letter outlining the city's concerns.

While many of the cars going to and from the site would likely come through Menlo Park, the city does not have a vote on the project. Palo Alto's City Council reviewed the environmental report in a meeting Monday, May 24, and will eventually decide whether or not to approve the project.

Without mitigations, the report estimates that daily traffic would increase by 1 percent on Marsh Road west of U.S. 101, by 6 percent on Sand Hill Road east of Santa Cruz Avenue, by 5 percent on Willow Road east of Middlefield Avenue, by 2 percent on Alpine Road west of Junipero Serra, and by 1 percent on Ravenswood Avenue, east of El Camino Real.

By encouraging workers to take public transportation and building bike and pedestrian tunnels, Stanford could reduce the increased traffic to 2 percent or less on each of those roadways, according to the report. The university will be required to pay a "fair share" toward a long-planned bike

and pedestrian underpass at Middle Road in Menlo Park.

The report describes in depth the impact of the project on local intersections, recommending various mitigation strategies, such as adjusting signal timing, widening intersections, and adding turn lanes.

Stanford has already agreed to a series of programs and projects aimed at lessening traffic impacts, including a \$2.25 million payment to the city of Palo Alto to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections from the transit center in downtown Palo Alto to the intersection of El Camino Real and Quarry Road.

Stanford has also agreed to purchase Caltrain "Go passes" for all hospital workers, and to expand its Marguerite bus service.

Stanford officials say the project will bring the medical complex into line with California's seismic requirements, relieve a shortage of hospital beds, add much-needed patient rooms, and enhance the medical and health care facilities and care.

Go to cityofpaloalto.org to view the report. ■

—Gennady Sheyner
contributed to this report.

Jac' Audiffred, 90-year resident of Woodside, dies

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Jacques "Jac" Audiffred, a resident of Woodside for all but the first three of his 93 years, died in his sleep Saturday, May 15, at his home on Audiffred Lane, relatives said.

A memorial service is set for 11 a.m. Tuesday, May 25, at Crippen & Flynn Woodside Chapel at 400 Woodside Road in Redwood City. Interment is scheduled for noon the next day, May 26, at Cypress Lawn at 1370 El Camino Real in Colma.

As a boy, according to a 1999 Almanac story by Barbara Wood, Mr. Audiffred led a boy's life for the times: removing residents' gates and burying them as a Halloween prank, spending the day on a homemade raft in a pond off Albion Avenue, getting Depression-era motorists to stop on the chance of acquiring an old car tire (rubber was scarce) that the boys placed in the road but then quickly grabbed and hid in the bushes when the motorist

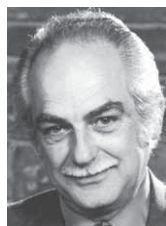
showed signs of stopping.

He was a regular as an older teen with the volunteer fire department, serving as a volunteer for 30 years. He went on to become historian for the Woodside Fire Protection District for 30 years, relatives said.

Mr. Audiffred studied theater at San Mateo College, where he graduated, then attended the University of California at Berkeley until the Army Air Corps drafted him in 1942, relatives said.

The war over, he married Edna Wheeler and began a family in a house on the street where he grew up, and a career as a precision machinist for a defense contractor. In his free time, he grew roses.

In an interview, his children



Jac' Audiffred

recalled how he would occasionally regale them at dinner with Depression-era stories, such as how to earn a nickel by killing and selling a quail.

Adults who grew up together back then kept in close touch by joining clubs, his children said, and their father was no exception. He belonged to the Woodside/Portola Valley Lions Club, the Peninsula Rose Society, and various Masonic clubs.

Why did Mr. Audiffred stay in Woodside? His respiratory health, his children said. A doctor had recommended the town as a way to avoid the persistent fog in San Francisco, where he was born.

Mr. Audiffred is survived by his son Dean Audiffred of Woodside; and his daughters Beatrice Trask of Newark and Charmaine Klumann of Apache Junction, Arizona.

Donations in Mr. Audiffred's name may be made to the Woodside/Portola Valley Foundation (at the Woodside Fire Protection District) or Pathways Hospice. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Low Inventory Continues

Q: Why is the inventory of homes for sale so low in this area? Shouldn't homeowners who want to move be taking this opportunity to sell?

A: The market has improved in the past few months and multiple offers are common in certain price ranges. The number of sales are up considerably over the same period last year but there still is not enough inventory to keep up with demand. You would think that more homeowners would be listing their homes to take advantage of this higher demand. However there are reasons why they are sitting on the sidelines, at least for now.

Many owners don't want to sell at current prices and are waiting to see if prices will improve even more than they have these past months. This is especially true if owners bought in the last five years when

prices were about the same as they are now. If owners bought at the height of the 2007-2008 market, their properties would not sell for as much as they paid. If they don't need to sell for financial reasons, it makes sense for them to stay where they are.

Some owners who want to move do not know where they want to go. Low property taxes keep many in their homes even though Prop. 60 would allow them to move within the same county and not increase their property tax. For those who want to move to another county, only eight counties would allow them to keep the same property tax basis.

The fact is that more people want to live in this area than want to leave it. Because the area is desirable, inventory will likely not keep up with demand any time soon.

For answers to any questions you may have on real estate, you may e-mail me at mcorman@apr.com or call 462-1111, Alain Pinel Realtors. I also offer a free market analysis of your property. www.MonicaCorman.com

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Open Letter to Our Community from Martha Marsh and Christopher Dawes

The Stanford University Medical Center Renewal Project has reached a significant milestone—the publication of a comprehensive Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) prepared by the City of Palo Alto. We are very pleased that this important document is now available for public review and comment. This represents significant progress toward assuring that Palo Altans will continue to have access to vital medical services in modern, seismically safe facilities.

In the upcoming months, the City will accept public comments and then prepare a Final EIR, which will provide essential information for City Council consideration in making the decisions necessary to permit the Renewal Project to go forward.

An extensive and thorough analysis of the project and its potential impacts has been underway for nearly three years. Since August 2007, the City through its formal process, and the Hospitals through informal outreach to community groups, have conducted more than 200 meetings to present the plans to expand Lucile Packard Children's Hospital and rebuild Stanford Hospital.

As we approach the fourth year of the review process, we wish to underscore the sense of urgency we feel to keep the project moving forward. Our Emergency Department was built for less than half the number of patients who come to us now every day and both our hospitals frequently reach full capacity. In addition, the State of California has mandated that all hospitals meet the highest level of seismic safety standards and we must comply with the law.

When a family medical emergency, local disaster, earthquake or serious illness occurs, we all want assurance that the hospitals we rely upon will be there for us. We want the best care when it matters most, in an environment designed for 21st century medicine that is comfortable for both patients and families. Stanford Hospital and Packard Children's Hospital are dedicated to meeting those needs, but need your involvement at this critical time.

For more information on how to get a copy of the DEIR, please visit the City of Palo Alto website at www.cityofpaloalto.org. Additionally, to assist in understanding and public discussion of the Draft EIR, we will be publishing a *Guide to Key Community Issues for the Stanford University Medical Center Renewal Project*. This guide will be published after June 1 and will be available at www.stanfordpackard.org. Printed copies may be requested by calling our outreach coordinator at (650) 725-2960.

We are truly grateful for the many expressions of support we have received from concerned community members. We appreciate your participation in the process to date and thank you for taking the time now to help ensure that Palo Alto continues to have the finest health care anywhere right at its front door.

Sincerely,

Martha H. Marsh
President and CEO
Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Christopher G. Dawes
President and CEO
Lucile Packard Children's Hospital

www.stanfordpackard.org



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Twenty-five area students received scholarships from the Rotary Club of Menlo Park in ceremonies last week. The students are, from left, front row: Miguel Pissani, Romina Arciniaga, Catherine Cunningham, T'Andra White, Evelyn Reynada, Eliana Corona Vazquez, Lissette Valadez, Kathy Martinez, Allison Malathong, Erika Gallegos Contreras and Jose Churape Lopez. Second row, from left: Clare Dezutti, Ana Mark Da Silva, Karla Gaitan, Courtney Durdle, Evelyn Reid, and Joshua Martinez. Third row, from left: Yecica Urena, Michael Ho, Darrell Ford, Jeffrey Avila, Alfonso Avila, Zachary Clarence, and Josh Hubert. Not pictured: Alicia Mergenthaler.

Rotary awards \$114,000 in scholarships

Local high school students took home a record \$114,000 in scholarships May 17 during an awards ceremony that also included presentation of high school scholastic awards for more than 100 students.

This year's scholarships got a boost from longtime Rotary Club members Tom Borden and Howard Crittenden, joined by his wife Diane, whose contributions pushed the total over \$100,000 compared to the \$67,000 given out last year.

The scholastic awards were handed out by school principals and headmasters from Menlo-Atherton, Sacred Heart, Menlo School and Eastside College Preparatory. And students receiving college scholarships attended M-A, Sacred Heart, Menlo School, Eastside Preparatory and East Palo Alto Academy.

Parents and friends packed the SRI auditorium for the awards, which were preceded by an address from LaDoris H. Cordell, a retired Superior Court judge. She congratulated the students for their accomplishments and then challenged them to "pay it forward" and help others achieve success.

Club president Bob Kelly welcomed the students and guests, and Rotary Foundation president David Johnson presented the majority of the scholarships. Club member Michelle Tsui presented the Tsui/Tsiang Math & Science Scholarship and club member Doug Adams gave out the three Drue Kataoka Arts Scholarships.

Here are the recipients of this year's Rotary Club of Menlo Park scholarship awards:

Tsui/Tsiang "Family Math and Science Scholarship" (\$6,000):



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

These students received scholarships from the Rotary Club of Menlo Park to attend a community college. From left, they are: front row: Fauzmeen Bibi, Benjamin Doronila and Christopher Pontilo. Back row, from left: Ernesto Zuniga, Vincenzo Lo Grasso, Nirvan Rouzbeh and Jose Enrique Balladares Ortiz.

Catherine Cunningham, Eastside.

Rotary Club Foundation Scholarships (\$6,000): Darrell Ford, Eastside; Alicia Mergenthaler, Menlo School; Michael Ho, Sacred Heart; Ana Mark Da Silva, Menlo-Atherton; Erika Gallegos Contreras, Eastside.

Diane and Howard Crittenden Grant (\$5,000): T'Andra White, Menlo-Atherton; Josh Hubert, Menlo-Atherton; Kathy Martinez, Menlo-Atherton; Courtney Durdle, Menlo-Atherton; Allison Malathong, Menlo-Atherton. Rotary Foundation Award (\$4,000): Evelyn Reynada, Eastside; Miguel Pissani, Sacred Heart; Romina Arciniaga, Sacred Heart.

Rotary Foundation Award (\$3,000): Joshua Martinez, Eastside; Lissette Valadez, East Palo Alto Academy; Karla Gaitan, Sacred Heart; Jeffrey Avila, Sacred Heart; Evelyn Reid, Sacred Heart;

Alfonso Avila, Sacred Heart; Yecica Urena, Eastside.

Rotary Foundation Award (\$2,000): Eliana Corona Vazquez, Eastside.

Drue Kataoka Arts Scholarship (\$1,000): Jose Churape Lopez, Eastside; Zachary Clarence, Menlo-Atherton; Clare Dezutti, Sacred Heart.

Community College Scholarships, Tom Borden Grant (\$2,000): Fauzmeen Bibi, Menlo-Atherton; David Harris, Menlo-Atherton; Ernesto Zuniga, Menlo-Atherton; Benjamin Doronila, Menlo-Atherton; Vincenzo LoGrasso, Menlo-Atherton.

Rotary Foundation Award (\$1,000): Luvia Castro-Orozco, Menlo-Atherton; Christopher Pontilo, Menlo-Atherton; Jose Enrique Balladares Ortiz, East Palo Alto Academy; Giovanna Corado, Menlo Atherton; Nirvan Rouzbeh, Menlo-Atherton.

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More spending cuts needed, council says

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Atherton staff must sharpen their pencils and find more spending cuts to avoid reaching into reserves and the parcel tax fund to balance the 2010-11 budget, the City Council told the city manager at a May 19 meeting.

Not satisfied with the draft budget presented that night, the council sent it to the town's Finance Committee to help with the arduous process of creating a plan that confines spending to the \$9.2 million of projected revenue, instead of the \$10.5 million in spending proposed by the staff.

The budget discussion that night was launched with bad news: Finance Director Louise Ho told the council that she

ATHERTON

learned earlier that day from the county that property tax revenue is expected to decline this year, although just weeks ago it was projected to increase by 1.25 percent.

After the meeting, Ms. Ho

Atherton property tax revenue is expected to drop about 1.5 percent, says Finance Director Louise Ho.

said that, based on the latest information from the county, Atherton is projecting property tax revenue to drop between 1.0 and 1.5 percent. That represents a decrease of about \$106,650, she said.

Ms. Ho said that the draft budget was based on the earlier projection of a 1.25 percent increase in property tax revenue. But the unexpected decline from that revenue source would be offset by a higher-than-expected pay-out to the town from the so-called ERAF (Educational Revenue Augmentation Funds) refunds from the county. The "Excess ERAF" revenue had been projected at \$530,000, but is now projected at \$630,000, Ms. Ho said.

The draft budget includes no money for employee raises. It puts aside money to go toward the town's nearly \$8 million in unfunded liability for post-retirement health care costs promised to employees. Based on an actuarial report, the town should set aside a specified

amount each year for the next 30 years to pay off the unfunded liability.

The draft budget reflects City Manager Jerry Gruber's recommendation that the town fund only half the amount specified in the actuarial report — \$327,000 instead of \$655,000 — but some council members were unhappy with that plan.

Some were also unhappy with the recommendation to tap the special parcel tax fund for some \$888,500 for police services. When Councilman Jim Dobbie challenged that recommended expenditure, Mr. Gruber countered that voters overwhelming passed the tax to balance the budget while still providing public works and police services.

After the meeting, Mr. Dobbie told The Almanac that he didn't think residents intended the tax "to be a fill-in for a deficiency in revenue." He said it is "unacceptable" to have a budget that allows more spending than general fund revenue can provide for.

"The town needs to do more to find efficiencies" or it could have no reserves by 2011, he said.

Councilmen Dobbie and Jerry Carlson reiterated their belief that the town must come up with a five-year financial projection and spending plan, without which council members don't have enough information to make the best choices while crafting budgets from year to year.

Before the council meets again to discuss the budget, the Finance Committee is expected to examine the draft budget for possible cuts, and review options for reopening employee contracts to find cost savings. ▀

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Atherton group examines Cargill plan

The pros and cons of Cargill's massive development plans for 1,436 acres of salt ponds in the Bay will be discussed at the Thursday, May 27, annual meeting of the Atherton Civic Interest League.

The presentation, co-hosted by the League of Women Voters, is set to begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Holbrook-Palmer Park Pavilion at 150 Watkins Ave. in Atherton.

Stephen Knight, political director of the nonprofit Save the Bay, and Tim Frank, an environmental consultant working for the developer, DMB, will present their opposing positions on the proposal to build a community

of up to 12,000 homes, commercial space, playing fields, and several hundred acres of restored wetlands on the property.

A 30-minute question-and-answer session will follow the presentation.

The Cargill-DMB proposal is being reviewed by Redwood City, which has authorized an environmental impact report. A number of local town councils, including in Atherton, Menlo Park and Woodside, have come out in opposition to the project or voiced concern about it.

The presentation will be preceded by a brief meeting and election of new directors and officers of the ACIL.

Priory campus recognized for bird-friendly habitats

The Woodside Priory in Portola Valley is for the birds and the people there are fine with it, as is the local Audubon Society.

The Sequoia Audubon Association plans to recognize the Benedictine school for grades 6-12 for its new bird houses, brush piles and neutered feral cats, a school spokesman said. A ceremony is set for 10 a.m. Tuesday, May 25.

The changes have brought about “an observable increase in the local and migratory bird population” on the 50-acre campus, said spokesman Sean McInain Brown. Asked to justify that conclusion, Mr. Brown said faculty and staff did a before-and-after visual count.

Audubon took notice after Hovey Clark, a science teacher, explained the changes being made by parents, faculty, staff and students in the Sustainability Club, Mr.

Brown said.

Audubon suggested the recognition “because they hadn’t heard of any other school doing what we were doing to promote healthy habitats,” Mr. Brown said.

Being good stewards of the Earth helps students grow into environmentally responsible adults, Mr. Brown said, quoting Brother Edward, the director of guidance and counseling.

It’s consistent with the school’s mission “to assist students of promise in becoming lifelong learners who will productively serve a world in need of their gifts,” Mr. Brown added.

It’s a win-win situation for us and the birds, said Mr. Clark in the statement. We get the benefit of viewing remarkable birds like peregrine falcons and red tailed hawks doing what they do best, and the birds get an environment that helps them thrive.

API scores up again for high schools

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Woodside and Menlo-Atherton high schools, continuing their upward trends as measured by the state’s Academic Performance Index (API), showed 2009-10 scores that were better than in 2008-09, according to recent reports from the California Department of Education.

The API, a three-digit number on a scale of 200 to 1,000 points, is the result of a formula that includes data calculations such as statewide ranking and standardized test results. Scores are available for individual schools, subgroups of more than 100 students within schools, school districts and the state as a whole.

Progress is always relative. Any score below 800 merits a specific goal for the following year, usually an increase of between 5 and 10 points. A second report in the fall shows whether the schools met their goals.

As has been true for the last decade at Woodside and

M-A, there is significant distance between scores of white students and those of Hispanic students, but the year-to-year trends for both groups have been up—and for the latter group, way up.

API scores for Hispanic students at Woodside since 1999 have gone up 43 percent (to 702 from 490). At M-A, they’ve risen 39 percent (to 621 from 447).

By comparison, scores for white students have gone up 17 percent at Woodside (to 839 from 718) and 5 percent at M-A (to 902 from 858). Both schools ranked at or near the top among similar schools, as did Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City.

Of students in the federal reduced-price lunch program, students whose first language is not English and students with disabilities, only the students on the lunch program did not meet their most recent goal.

Not all students make it on to the API radar. At both Woodside and M-A, African-American, Asian-American and Pacific Islander student subgroups, for

example, did not meet the 100-student minimum.

The two schools’ overall APIs for the decade have risen 24 percent and 22 percent, respectively, compared with 21 percent for the Sequoia Union High School District which, for 2009, came in at 770.

Statewide, the high school API is 714, a 6 percent increase over the past five years.

At Summit Prep, which has three years of records with the state, the distance between white and Hispanic students is less pronounced at 884 and 747, respectively, for 2009. These numbers have not changed appreciably since 2006.

Go to cde.ca.gov and click on the link “Accountability Progress Reporting” for complete scores. Follow the directions for API information.

Standardized test scores in English and math are essentially the same for seventh-graders who went on to M-A, Woodside and Summit Prep, according to data provided by the Sequoia Union High School District. ■

SCORES

continued from page 5

shows “that the performance (by students) isn’t just because we’re in an affluent district,” Mr. Hartwig said. “I’m terribly proud of our kids and our teachers, who really, really work hard.”

The Portola Valley district, which includes Ormondale and Corte Madera schools, was the ninth-highest scoring district in the state. Its score of 946 was down three points from 2008. Both schools were ranked 9 in comparison with similar schools.

The Woodside district’s score

came in 19th place statewide. Its score of 932 points was down from 951 in 2008. The district’s only school was ranked 9 in the similar-school category.

The Menlo Park district’s score put it 21st in the state, with a score of 931 — a 17-point gain over last year’s score. Both Oak Knoll elementary and Hillview middle schools were ranked 9 in comparison with similar schools, while Laurel and Encinal didn’t fare as well. Laurel earned a 5 and Encinal a 7 in the similar-school category.

Go to is.gd/cjzrp (case-sensitive) for a full list of the state’s API rankings. ■

John O’Connor FD502

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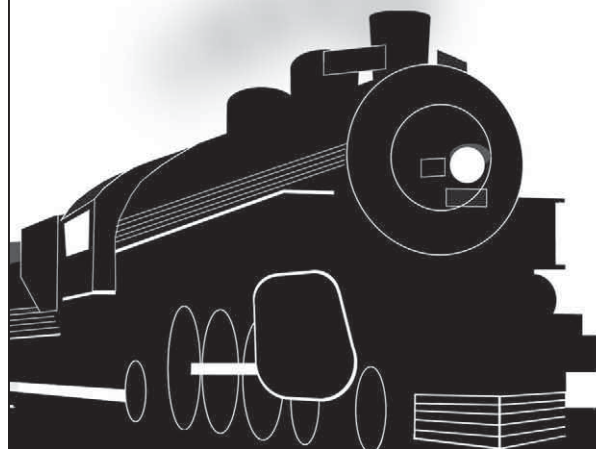
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Bohannon doesn't agree to share profit with city

BOHANNON

continued from page 5

that, while his company earnestly investigated the concept, a profit-sharing agreement would likely make it more difficult to get financing for the project, and could delay its construction. He stressed that the company has already agreed to major public benefits, saying that a revenue guarantee the company has agreed to is unprecedented in the state of California, based on his research, for a development project a city is not investing in.

In an interview, Mr. Bohannon said he could not find examples of any case in California in which a developer had agreed to share profits with a city under similar circumstances. He noted that his company will bear "enormous" financial risks in developing the project, a risk the city is not sharing in.

"We believe that we can overcome hesitancy in the lending community about the Menlo Park guarantee at some cost to ourselves and the project," Mr. Bohannon wrote in the letter to the city. "We do not believe that we would be able to do so, if some sort of back end windfall provision is added.

"The long and the short of it is this," he continued. "If the city wants the economic performance that is currently proposed

by Menlo Gateway, with the substantial backup of the Bohannon guarantee, this is as far as we can go."

City consultants estimate that the project will provide \$1.67 million per year to city coffers, a number that doesn't include mitigation fees, or various other payments the Bohannon company has agreed to provide. After the May 11 meeting, the company agreed to add a one-time payment of \$250,000 to the Belle Haven neighborhood, in addition to the \$1 million it has already agreed to provide for Belle Haven and Bayfront Park.

Since that meeting, the company has also agreed to guarantee the city additional hotel tax revenue, regardless of whether the city raises its hotel tax rates in the future — netting an additional \$150,000 annually, the city estimates.

This was the second time council members have asked for a profit-sharing agreement, a provision the Bohannon company rejected in its first round of negotiations with the city.

"I think we're approaching a very fair deal here, but I'm not ignoring some of the concerns that have been raised, that it may be (worth) quite a bit more" than a city consultant's estimate of \$27 million, Councilman Heyward Robinson said at the May 11 meeting.

Councilwoman Kelly Ferguson argued that a profit-sharing agreement could help compensate for some of the potential adverse impacts on the city, such as increased housing demand.

"Despite the great progress that has been made (in negotiations), when we do look back at the caveats and conditions council members talked about, a lot of those have not been achieved," she said at the meeting.

Councilman John Boyle said that his vote didn't hinge on the inclusion of a profit-sharing agreement.

"I agree with the concept, but I'm very suspicious we would be able to come up with a way to make this palatable to the applicant, and viable," he said.

At the May 11 council meeting, Mr. Bohannon said he viewed the project itself, rather than monetary payments, as the main benefit to the city.

"We will have to work long and hard to make (the city's financial) expectations a reality, but if the city demands too much, we may regrettably be forced to fold our tent and go home," he said. "I urge you not to push us to that brink."

"It is good for the city, and it's good for my family, but only we can determine what makes sense for us to proceed," he said. "We will not apologize for seeking to make a profit." ■

PENSION

continued from page 3

at the meeting, debating whether to require plantings and preclude storage of anything other than vehicles in the applicant's garage, advocates of the initiative knitted, worked on laptops, and walked around outside the council chambers to get some fresh air.

While some of the audience members got wrapped up in the

hot debate between neighbors over the use permit, sighing and groaning at every revelation and reversal, one man — the husband of a former council member — sat very still with his head in his hands.

"I was not comfortable in that meeting, at any given time," Mr. Cline said. He said he considered re-jiggering the agenda, but didn't want to make the people there for the use permit issue wait, because they had already sat through two

long Planning Commission sessions. He was well aware that the sighs of frustration were coming from people who don't much trust the council to begin with, but it couldn't be helped.

"I'm embarrassed for having suggested that you be here, but thank you so much," Mr. Riggs said to the people who were still in the council chambers when his turn to speak finally came around. ■

New dates for San Mateo County Fair

The San Mateo County Fair will be held June 12-20 this year, instead of in late August.

Changes in the fair's agenda include new educational events, such as the top chef high school challenge, robot-building, booths exhibiting class projects, and a \$20,000 creative writing scholarship.

There will be many new rides and Kid Land, a carnival especially for younger children.

The main stage entertainment will include the Michael Jackson laser spectacular, Tower of Power, Eddie Money, Rick Spring-

BRIEFS

field, and Paul Rodriguez.

Open space district seeks art for book

A coffee-table book is in the works to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and the district is inviting the public to submit district-related works of art — such as paintings, drawings and poems — for possible

inclusion in the book.

Entries in the recently concluded 2009 photo contest are also eligible.

The district is leaving the door open for submissions through 2010 and possibly into 2011. Preferred subject matter is "the wide range of habitats across district lands, including riparian, grassland, chaparral and redwood environments," the district says.

The district is seeking work from artists of all ages. Children will need a consent form signed by a parent or legal guardian.

Go to www.openspace.org/book for more information.



EYE CARE NEWS

James Dean in a pair of handsome tortoise-shell eyeglasses that make the quintessential rebel look elegant, mature and thoughtful.

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P.S. Your eyeglasses should fit so that the top of the frames just hit your eyebrows.

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.

Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician

BUDDY HOLLY FRAMES

In some sense, the image of Buddy Holly in his plastic black eyeglasses is as iconic as his music. Taking their cues from Malcolm X, Woody Allen, and Andy Warhol, contemporary stars such as Johnny Depp and Justin Timberlake are bringing large-frame glasses back into fashion. Even in their tortoise-shell incarnations, these are eyeglasses that get a person noticed. There is nothing nerdy about these smart-looking frames. If you have any doubts, dig up some pictures of

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Steep hike in water rates in Menlo Park

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

Water rates for customers of the Menlo Park Municipal Water District are set to rise at an even steeper rate than in recent years.

Those rates will more than double by 2014-15, after a unanimous City Council vote at its meeting Tuesday, May 18. The new rates in 2014 will be more than triple the rates in 2006.

Rates had been rising at a clip of 11.9 percent per year. They will now increase at a rate of 16.5 percent annually.

On average, residents of a single-family home in the city's water district now consume about 10,500 gallons per month and pay \$34.36 per month, according to city staff. Under the new rates, the average

homeowner will pay about \$73.74 per month in 2015, assuming water use remains the same.

The city cited several reasons for the rate increases, including capital improvements to the water system, and the fact that water expenses have surpassed revenues in recent years. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission sets costs for cities, with cities allowed some flexibility in how they will set rates for their users.

Only about one-third of the city is covered by the municipal water district, with most of the city covered by CalWater.

City adopts tobacco license law

Menlo Park police can now enforce a county law requiring licenses for tobacco vendors.

■ MENLO WATCH

The City Council adopted the county's law at its meeting Tuesday, May 18.

Several groups, including El Concilio of San Mateo County, Youth Organizing San Mateo (YO!Mateo), and the San Mateo County Tobacco Education Coalition lobbied the county to pass the ordinance, and then pressed cities to do the same in order to beef up enforcement.

High school students and community organizers spoke at several council meetings, warning out against underage smoking.

Work on a broader revision to Menlo Park's smoking ordinance has been put on hold, as the city discusses the changes with local restaurants.

Mark Severi, Draeger's Menlo Park manager, dies at 53

Customers at Draeger's were saddened recently to hear of the death of Mark Severi, director of the Menlo Park supermarket. Mr. Severi, who had been with Draeger's for 10 years, died April 20 of cancer at the age of 53.

In a letter to employees and customers, signed by members of the Draeger family, they wrote: "Mark loved working at Draeger's. Since joining the company in August, 2000, he worked six days per week until he became sick with cancer. In the last few months, even as his illness took his energy and left him with severe pain, he continued working because he had a store and staff to care for. His positive attitude and selfless service inspired

all who knew him."

Many longtime customers felt a personal loss in Mr. Severi's death, including Helen Steinberg of Woodside who said, "He had to be one of the kindest people and caring and hard working that we have ever met ... and he really loved his job."

Mark Severi of Redwood City began his career in the grocery business at QFI 37 years ago. He was an avid sports fan and enjoyed a round of golf. Every summer he vacationed with his family and his dogs, Boots and Bailey, at Camp Richardson at



Mark Severi

Lake Tahoe.

He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Denise; children Jenna and Michael Severi; stepchildren Paul and Stephanie McManus; sister Lori Yock; and brother Scott Severi.

Services were held April 25 at St. Pius Church in Redwood City. Arrangements were under the direction of Crippen & Flynn, Woodside Chapel, Redwood City.

Memorials in Mr. Severi's name may be made to UCSF Foundation, c/o Alan Venook M.D. Research Fund, PO Box 45339, San Francisco, CA 94145-0339.

Women's polo tournament in Atherton Saturday

The Menlo Polo Club will hold a women's polo tournament on Saturday, May 29, at the Menlo Circus Club, 190 Park Lane in Atherton.

This is the club's first U.S. Polo Association-sanctioned women's tournament, said Christine Vermes, co-chair of the local tournament.

Eight teams, made up of local and out-of-town amateur and professional women players, will compete for trophies.

The tournament, known as the ExpertQuote Ladies Cup, is an entry-level qualifier tournament for the Women's Championship Tournament, Ms. Vermes said. ExpertQuote, a benefits consulting firm, is the title sponsor.

Admission is free to the public, with limited bleacher seating on the west side of the

■ SPORTS

field. Spectators are encouraged to bring comfortable chairs.

Opening ceremonies start at 10:30 a.m. Matches, which last about 90 minutes, will start at 10:40 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Founded in 1923, the Menlo Polo Club is a member of the U.S. Polo Association and plays in the USPA Pacific Coast Circuit, home to 34 clubs and some 525 registered polo players, Ms. Vermes said.

"Women in polo represent the largest growing sector in the sport, now accounting for 30 percent of the USPA's registered members," said Lyn Jason Cobb, president of the Menlo Polo Club. "As our own club membership

reflects this trend, it makes sense for us to finally have a USPA sanctioned tournament that is also a WCT entry level qualifier for our up and coming women players."

Go to menlopoloclub.com for more information.

Girls' soccer tryouts

Palo Alto Soccer Club team 94G Red Power, a Class 3 team for girls 16 and under, is looking for players to add to its roster for the spring and fall seasons, including tournaments. Players must be born after July 31, 1993.

Nina Gann is coach for the team, which practices twice weekly in Palo Alto.

E-mail gianina03@yahoo.com prior to May 27 to contact coach Nina Gann for more information.

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MENLO PARK DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE

THE CITY OF MENLO PARK'S PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN IS NOT OUR PLAN

The City of Menlo Park's Plan for the downtown is badly flawed and would hurt the vitality of our shopping district.

In the City's Plan, buildings and parking structures would replace convenient surface parking.

- ◆ All diagonal parking spaces would be eliminated on Santa Cruz Avenue.
- ◆ More than half of the parking plaza spaces would be eliminated.
- ◆ Two 5-level parking structures would be constructed in Plaza 1 (behind the post office) & Plaza 3 (behind Flegel's).

The following downtown Menlo Park property and business owners urge the City to work with the Menlo Park Downtown Alliance to revise the Specific Plan. We want to maintain the small-town charm and economic vitality of our downtown.

Businesses:

Flegel's Fine Furniture
Draeger's Supermarket
Stephen Miller Gallery
Carpaccio
Village Stationers
Cashin Realty
Walgreens
Brenzel Accounting
Scarlett Sun Care
JD's Hair Design
Peabody Fine Art
Menlo Oak Capital Group
The Pet Place
Piccola Bella Hair Design
Pink and Harmony
Gentry Magazine
The Posh Bagel
Baskin-Robbins
Fleet Feet Sport
The Great Frame Up
Book Rack
Kicks
Elite Nails & Spa
Ritz Camera
Menlo Joe's Shoe Repair
Menlo Vacuum & Fix It
Custom Sofa Outlet
Oncina
Delia's Cleaners
Occasions, etc
BAK/Physiotherapy
Lite for Life
Menlo Art Cleaners
Café Silan
Menlo Park Academy of Dance
Menlo Optical

Businesses:

Afterwards
Gary Eggers, DDS
The Oriental Carpet
Sultana
Harvest Furniture
Gerry's Cakes
Nak's Oriental Market
Watchmaker
Gray's Paint
Josef Boutique
Quintessence
Tom Wing & Son
Quiznos
Stacks'
The Jeweler
Starbuck's Coffee
Avant Optometry
Angelo Mio
Sugar Shack
Hirzel Jewelry
Yves Delorme
La Sede Bella
Cadeaux
Home & Garden
Amici's Pizzeria
Bob Stankovic Tailoring
Marqs in Menlo
Storm & Company

Property Owners:

Bob Lico, 643-693,711-715 Santa Cruz Ave.
Victorine Raugi, 1127-1135 Chestnut Street
Anne Wilbur, 812-816 Santa Cruz Ave.
John Chiappe, 1148-1150 Crane Street
Bob Mascall, 657-659 Oak Grove Ave.
Harry Morrey, 1138-1159 El Camino Real
Lawrence Zaro, 825-827 Santa Cruz Ave.
Dorothy Forsythe, 800, 842-846 Santa Cruz Ave.
Mary Seaton, 1201 University Drive
Richard Draeger, 1010 University Drive
Mark Flegel, 870 Santa Cruz Ave.
Nancy Couperus, 859-863 Santa Cruz Ave.
Walter Harrington, 600-620 Santa Cruz Ave.
Jim Squires, 865-869 Santa Cruz Ave.
Virgil Downs, 605 Santa Cruz Ave.
Lee Boucher, 889 Santa Cruz Ave.
Joe McLoughlin, 1177-1185 El Camino Real
Cortland Bohacek, 890 Santa Cruz Ave.
Lindsey Mickles, 1150 University Drive
George Asborn, 820-826 Santa Cruz Ave.
Bonnie Willis Nelson, 825 Oak Grove Ave.
Laurie Chestnutt, 883 Santa Cruz Ave.
Lee Follmer, 883 Santa Cruz Ave.
Tom Madson, 705 Oak Grove Ave.
Russ Collier, 750 Menlo Avenue
Yarkin Family, 651 Oak Grove Ave.
Michel Fischtein, 1047 El Camino Real
Sophie Lo, 880 Santa Cruz Ave.
Skip Cashin, 611 Santa Cruz Ave.
Dan Beltramo, 1540 El Camino Real.
Joseph Digiovanni, 1059 Crane St.
Natale & Shirley Repetto, 671 Oak Grove Ave.
Mark Ghanbari, 845-855 Santa Cruz Ave.
Bill Moulthrop, 875 Santa Cruz Ave.
Jo & Gary Eggers, 695 Oak Grove Ave.
Linda Khachooni, 1030 Curtis Street
Henry Kuechler, 1143 Crane Street

For more information, to join our email list or to sign our petition, go to: www.preserveMPdowntown.org

Please also share your concerns with the Menlo Park City Council: City.Council@MenloPark.org

Ladera barber to put down the scissors after 50 years

BARBER

continued from page 5

Diane's Beauty, his workplace at the Ladera Country Shopper mall.

Religion is a comfort to some in such circumstances. "I'm not (a religious man) and I don't intend to become one," Mr. Chirkanian said when asked, "even though I'm very, very unhappy now because I have to give up this place here and move to Ontario."

And going from a life on the water at Pete's Harbor to an apartment in the Inland Empire? "I don't know how I'm going to take that," he said.

And his clients, will they feel the loss? "God, yes," said David Liddle, a Menlo Park venture capitalist and client for maybe 36 years. "I can't imagine somebody else cutting my hair."

"Aram's actually a very subtle person," Mr. Liddle added. "He has plenty of his own interests. He has a very sort of inquiring mind. It's a lot of fun to spend a few minutes a month with him."

"Oh, yeah," said Portola Valley resident Harry Cohn, a regular since 1964, when asked if he would miss his barber. "We've become buddies," he said. "He's a good barber (and) he stayed in the neighborhood. He went from Portola Valley to Woodside to Ladera. I just kind of followed him."

"He has a good sense of humor and he's the kind of guy you like to talk to," said Portola Valley resident Carl Larson. "We're going to miss him," he added, speaking for his fellow customers. "He has a lot of friends. He's worked (here) a long, long time and he is a fixture to the area."

Wartime France

With Mr. Liddle in the chair, he and his barber will occasionally shift the conversation to French, a language that Mr. Liddle said he speaks passably and that Mr. Chirkanian speaks fluently, having spent his first 20 years in the Paris metropolitan area.

Mr. Chirkanian was born in Romainville, east of Paris, and spent his childhood in Bagneux to the south. His mother was a refugee, first from Armenia at the age of 5 and then from Russia. She married at 13, he said.

Asked how his family fared in occupied France, he replied: "We all got used to doing whatever we had to. We didn't suffer that much."

But they could not subsist on what they got with ration

cards, he added. His mother, a widow, turned to the black market. She would travel to rural areas, buy raw meat, pack it into suitcases and take the subway to Paris where, against German rules at the time, she sold it. Sometimes Aram and his older sister would help.

"Meat weighs a lot," Mr. Chirkanian said. Once, lugging a full suitcase, he and his sister got caught at a subway station by a French police officer. The officer escorted them to a room, but left them alone with the door ajar — a wink and a nod. "We took off," he said.

Though he eventually had regular success with women, particularly on the dance floor, Aram had no girlfriends during the war. He wasn't eating well and probably appeared to several years younger than he was, he said. "We weren't into serious things like ladies," he added.

His schoolwork included three and a half years studying electrical and mechanical engineering, he said. He also learned, in visits to taverns, that he had a talent for dancing and dancing's way to a woman's heart.

Off to California

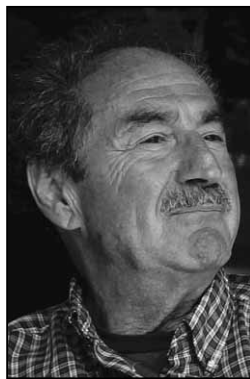
Near the end of the 1940s, Mr. Chirkanian and his sister followed their mother to Palo Alto where she had settled after remarrying, to an Armenian-American man she'd met in Paris.

Asked for a reaction to arriving in the States, he replied: "I didn't have time to notice too much. I think they were waiting for me for the (Korean) War. They drafted me right away."

The Army sent him to a base in Germany as a teacher of French. But the base didn't need a French teacher, so he drove a truck for a while, then helped design an airport runway, he said.

After being honorably discharged, he returned to Palo Alto and found work in a lowball-poker card room, first as a shill then as a dealer. It was while he was cleaning a coffee pot and chatting with an older dealer, a former barber, that a career in cutting hair came up, he said.

"Aram, you'd make an excellent barber," he recalled the older dealer saying. A few minutes passed and Mr. Chirkanian asked the dealer why he had said that. "Because you're so f--



Aram Chirkanian

ing slow," the dealer replied.

While the precise meaning of that remark appears to have eluded Mr. Chirkanian, it was enough. He checked out a barber school in San Francisco, liked it and spent a year there learning the trade, he said.

He was married for five years, had one son and divorced.

His dancing sustained him, as did dating. "I know it's bragging," he said, "but that part of my life was good."

He would chaperone kids to museums on Sundays and date their moms, he said. "That was part of why I was single," he said. "Between dancing and being a nice guy to their kids, it was a good deal."

So, a lot of girlfriends? "I'd be bragging if I said I had a different girl for each day of the week, but it was pretty true," he said.

Haircuts, no shaves

Mr. Chirkanian cuts men's hair, as he was trained to do. He tends to hand off young children to women practitioners, in part because women relate to them better, he said.

He will take a 5-year-old. "They have settled down a little," he said, but 2-year-olds "are pretty loud."

He does know how to use a straight razor, but the state licensing board now discourages shaves, he said. A barber in Sharon Heights attributed the caution to the possible spread of AIDS through micro-cuts.

It's not clear whether Mr. Chirkanian is or is not a conversational barber. A first-time customer, he said, will come in, sit down, "and he starts talking and he finds out that I'm not a talker and he quits talking. My

job is not to talk, but to cut hair. We're either going to make it or we're not going to make it."

But his regulars said in interviews that they talk with him all the time.

The fact that he came of age in a culture of soccer rather than baseball or basketball doesn't help, Mr. Chirkanian added.

Has a customer ever said he didn't like his haircut? "If he did, he didn't like it loud enough to tell me," he said. ■

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IT'S ABOUT LIFE



Menlo Charity Horse Show art

This collage by Sam Price, titled "Jubilee," is the official art for the Menlo Charity Horse Show, to be held Aug. 10-15 at the Menlo Circus Club, 190 Park Lane in Atherton. The painting, named "Jubilee" in commemoration of the show's 40th anniversary, will be featured on the event's program, invitations, thank-you notes, mugs and website. Valued at \$5,000, it will be auctioned at the Friday night sponsor's dinner, which will be a tribute to Betsy Glikbarg of Atherton, founder of the show.

Sewage district replacing three miles of pipe in Menlo Park

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Construction will begin this summer on about 20 Menlo Park street segments in the College Park and Bay Laurel neighborhoods, part of a \$3.3 million project by the West Bay Sanitary District to replace nearly three miles of aging sewage lines.

The project will take about five months to complete, and will not force the closures of any streets, said Ned Moritz, a member of the West Bay board. "We will be working with con-

tractors to minimize the disruption, but the pipe replacement is necessary to ensure the health and safety of our residents," Phil Scott, manager of the district, said in a press release.

About 50 of the district's 200 miles of pipe will reach their expiration dates over the next 20 years, and the district is already gearing up to start engineering studies for the next round of pipe replacements in 2011. The project the district is beginning this summer is the largest repair program it has undertaken in several years, Mr. Moritz said.

Residents have seen fairly

significant rate increases in recent years to fund more pipe-replacement projects, and to pay for a \$200 million to \$300 million renovation project at the sewage treatment plant, Mr. Moritz said. Fees are added to property tax bills.

The new pipes will last for at least 60 years, and could last up to 100 years, according to Mr. Moritz. To find out if your street is slated for repairs, call the district at 321-0384.

The district covers Menlo Park, Atherton, and Portola Valley, as well as parts of Woodside and East Palo Alto. ■

Local Girl Scouts win Bronze Awards

Thirteen Girl Scouts from Troop 32515 at Encinal School in Menlo Park were awarded the Bronze Award, the highest award for Junior Girl Scouts, on April 30.

The fifth-grade girls worked on a service project to share their love of reading with kindergartners and first-graders at Costano School in the Ravenswood School District.

They collected 10 boxes of books and also bought books specific to the curriculum in those grades. They also used money earned in cookie sales to buy copy paper and crayons. Two used bookcases, painted in the school's colors, were presented to

the school. The girls also visited the school and read to kindergartners on two occasions.

Receiving the award are: Emery Dutta, Siena Hooper, Giuliana Johnson, Libby Kirk, Olivia Leupold, Morgonn McMichael, Lindsay Miller, Julia Nicholls, Laurel Patrick, Olivia Shiah, Rachel Towe, Daphne Valentine and Katelyn Wiseman.

Second Harvest names award winners

Carolee Hazard of Menlo Park, and two schools — Menlo-Atherton High School and Woodside Priory — were hon-

■ BRIEFS

ored recently at the Second Harvest Food Bank awards event, held at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts.

Ms. Hazard received the new Outside the Barrel award for her grass-roots hunger-relief efforts. She created the \$93 Club on Facebook and worked with local media and the Second Harvest Food Bank to publicize her efforts. The \$93 Club has raised \$77,000 for those in need.

An Outstanding Youth award was given to Menlo-Atherton High School. For the past 30 years, M-A has collected food and staged a holiday food distribution for school families in

Dr. Walter Bortz, finishes his 40th marathon

By Dr. Walter Bortz
Special to The Almanac

On Monday, April 19, 2010, I ran the Boston Marathon. Forty years and 40 consecutive annual marathons later — at locations around the world — I crossed the finish line in Copley Square, Boston.

What a difference. The first time it took me 5 hours and 5 minutes to finish. I finished in silence. This last time it took 7 hours and 30 minutes, and I finished to the cheers of a thousand Patriot's Day celebrants with flash bulbs popping.

The first time I hadn't the slightest idea what the effort entailed, and I was in tears. The last time I was a grizzled vet, who knew that the back spasm that I encountered at 24 miles was only a minor annoyance and nothing to halt the run. So I finished with a big smile.

Not bad for an 80-year-old. I was beaten by 30,000 other runners including an 83-year-old woman. The winner, a Kenyan, broke the course record in 2 hours and 5 minutes. He could have lapped me twice.

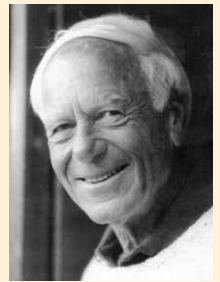
The first time I was beaten by only 800 other runners, and I was only among the last runners.

The first run was done because my physician father, who was my alpha/omega figure for 39 years, died abruptly, and I was devastated. But I was smart enough to know that running was a fabulous treatment for depression.

I'm a terrible runner. The iconic image of the runner is the fleet-of-foot whippet with wings on his shoes. My image is a slogger with army boots on. Because I'm a Walter Mitty-type athlete, my father's death quickly spurred my entry into the only world-class athletic event to which an ordinary Joe could aspire.

But then the organizers changed the rules, and created the qualifying times, which effectively excluded me. Except that a group of M.D.s, under the leadership of Dr. Ron Lawrence, found an exemption for doctors, because of our support services for the runners.

Shamelessly, I accepted my entry number, color-coded to identify my outlier category, and I finished.



Dr. Walter Bortz

At the end of the first run I swore that I would never again submit to the tortures of this 26-mile test. But just like childbirth, as soon as it was done, I searched for next year's opportunity. And the searching has led to runs in Athens, the original marathon, Dublin, New York, Australia, Beijing, Boston again, maybe 10 times, and Big Sur, California — my favorite. Despite its hills, its scenery is spectacular.

So, this marathon story is my highly personal odyssey of a life journey. It has virtually become my religion. Exploring it has many important derivative aspects. I've learned the thermodynamics of exercise, the anthropology of running, and mostly about its health benefits. As a geriatrician the insight provided by these decades of commitment has defined a new way of looking at growing older.

Aging's principal pathology is frailty, which is not a defined disease but is of immense importance.

Its cause is to be found principally in lack of exercise. Physical activity of any type from walking to marathon running is the preventive and treatment of frailty. It is cheap, safe and effective. What other remedy can make these claims?

I'm already planning marathon 2011. ■

Dr. Bortz, a resident of Portola Valley, a gerontologist and a clinical associate professor at the Stanford School of Medicine. He is the author of several books, including "The Roadmap to 100: The Breakthrough Science of Living a Long and Happy Life."

need. Students worked with Second Harvest and the Ecumenical Hunger Program to feed 400 families in December. Menlo-Atherton students Courtney Arrington, Chelsea Barnes and Ani Loshkajian received the

award on behalf of their school. The Golden Apple award went to the Woodside Priory, which donated the most food per student, which it did during the school's annual holiday food drive.

Pete Dias

Longtime Menlo Park grocer

Pete Dias, a resident of Menlo Park since 1941, died May 17 after a brief battle with stomach cancer. He was 90.

Mr. Dias was born in Navamorcude, Spain, and at age 15 came to California with two of his brothers to learn the grocery business. The brothers worked at their uncle's grocery in Sunnyvale until 1941 when Pete and his brother, Tony, moved to Menlo Park to work at Menlo Fruit & Meat Market, at the corner of El Camino Real and Oak Grove Avenue.

In 1942 Mr. Dias was drafted into the U.S. Army Infantry and served until a knee injury occurred a year later. He returned to Menlo Fruit & Meat, where he worked until the business was sold in 1955.

He then worked at Menlo Food Center for 10 years, finally retiring from Midtown Market in Los Altos in 1981. He also owned a prune orchard in the 1960s.

Mr. Dias was a member of the Retail Clerks Union. He never married, but provided a home for his parents and sister after bringing them from Spain in 1947. He is survived by his sister, Pauline Diaz of Menlo Park, and brothers Mariano Dias and Ben Dias of Gilroy.

OBITUARIES



Peter Dias in the Army in 1942.

A funeral Mass was held May 24 at St. Denis Church, with interment at Holy Cross Cemetery in Menlo Park. Memorials in his name may be made to Pathways Hospice Foundation, 585 N. Mary Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94085.

Frances Beckstrom

Former dental technician

Frances Marie Beckstrom, a 51-year resident of Menlo Park, died May 17 with her son at her side at Nazareth Classic Care Residence in Menlo Park. She was 98.

Ms. Beckstrom was born in Bremerton, Washington, the oldest of six children. She attended local schools and worked for more than 20 years as a dental technician in Olympia, Washington.

In 1946, she married John A. Beckstrom, who preceded her in death in 1982. She is survived by her son, Robert Clyde Beckstrom, of Menlo Park; three grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

A private family service will be held at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, with burial at Alta Mesa Cemetery in Palo Alto. Donations may be made to Vitas Hospice, 39899 Balentine Drive, Newark, CA 94560.



Frances Beckstrom

BELOVED... NAOMI A. VARGAS...

One year has passed since you were taken from us, yet it still feels like yesterday.

Our hearts mourn your loss. Your boys miss their Mother. So as each day begins and ends, we will cherish our memories of you. Forever, all our love...

Alex, Nick, Mom and Deb

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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.

ATHERTON

Fraud report: Unauthorized use of credit card, Adam Way, May 13.

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary reports:

■ Residence broken into and items valued at \$11,860 stolen, including video game system, two Apple iTouch devices, sunglasses, watch, video games, camera, jewelry and cash, 200 block of Hedge Road, May 13.

■ Storage unit broken into and \$50 worth of golf balls stolen, 400 block of Oak Grove Ave., May 10.

■ Residence broken into and stereo system valued at \$350 stolen, 400 block of Oak Grove Ave., May 8.

■ Attempted but failed entry into home, 1100 block of Willow Road, May 18.

Grand theft reports:

■ Jewelry stolen, 2100 block of Harkins Ave., May 8.

■ Apple iPad valued at \$500 stolen, 1300 block of Adams Court, May 12.

■ Bicycle valued at \$500 stolen, reported via online form, May 12.

Auto burglary reports:

■ Window smashed and pearl necklace and bracelet valued at \$5,000 stolen, 700 block of El Camino Real, May 11.

■ Window smashed and leather backpack, art tools and flashlight with total value of \$120 stolen, Callie Lane, May 11.

■ Apple iPod valued at \$200 and \$20 in cash stolen, 1500 block of Adams Drive, May 7.

Stolen vehicle report: Gold 2004 Buick Century, Lorelei Lane, May 17.

Century, Lorelei Lane, May 17.

Brandishing report: Man charged with marijuana possession brandished Smith & Wesson handgun, 1300 block of Willow Road, May 20.

Spousal abuse reports:

■ 300 block of Hamilton Ave., May 8.

■ 1300 block of Willow Road, May 12.

■ 1200 block of Madera Ave., May 15.

■ Madera Ave., May 17.

Child Protective Services report: 1100 block of Carlton Ave., May 12.

Adult Protective Services report: 1300 block of Willow Road, May 20.

Fraud reports:

■ Unauthorized use of credit card, Oak Ave., May 11.

■ Possible identity theft, 1300 block of Crane St., May 13.

■ E-mail request for money, 300 block of Arbor Road, May 18.

WOODSIDE

Prowler report: Homeowner chased person dressed in black off property and suspect drove away in SUV hatchback of unknown make, model and color, 100 block of Croydon Way, May 8.

Auto burglary report: Window smashed, purse stolen and credit card used at gas station that did not have security camera, Albion Ave., May 15.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Auto burglary report: Wallet, jacket and gym bag stolen from locked vehicle, Windy Hill Open Space Preserve parking lot, May 15.

LADERA

Identity theft report: Unauthorized phone account opened for losses of \$256 in total, 100 block of North Balsamina Way, May 13.

Roe LaVern Judy

May 11, 1920 – May 7, 2010



A Life of Service
Died of Lung troubles
and Pneumonia

Vern descended from early Buckeye, now Winters, CA. pioneering families, the elder son of Roe LaVern Sr. and Jeannette (Briggs) Judy.

He attended Esparto High School and was class president all 4 years. At Stanford University, a highlight was playing the clarinet in the band when they marched in the Rosebowl Parade.

He graduated with a B.A. in business, married Mary Lou Hyatt of Los Angeles, and joined the Navy in 1942. He served in the South Seas for 4 years as Lieutenant and navigator aboard a sea-going tug, U.S.S. ATA 123, supplying and pulling stranded vessels off the beaches.

After the war he returned to work at his father's Ford dealership in Esparto. In 1951 he moved his family to Menlo Park and for 17 years commuted to work at the North American Securities Co., Russ Building, San Francisco. In 1967, though being one of the company's vice-presidents, he left to start his own financial advising business in Menlo Park, Judy and Robinson Securities. Upon retiring in 1985 the company had 10 branches and 250 employees. Everybody was invited to and enjoyed going to the complimentary company retreats at Bass Lake, CA. Being thrifty allowed for great generosity.

Vern served on so many boards, the Los

Lomas School Board for 20 years, and the Kiwanis Club.

He taught business classes at Menlo College. He and 5 other Menlo businessmen started the Pacific Union Bank, corner of Crane and Oak Grove.

When younger, he enjoyed skiing. Later it was tennis, gardening and tractor driving, cultivating and manicuring he and Mary Lou's 2 acres of young orchard at their Atherton Ave. house.

He liked to pass by the places of his youth going up to Cache Creek Casino. He retired and Mary Lou, by then being a retired Menlo physician, moved to the Forum Retirement Community in 1993. There he served as a tour guide and board member and wrote many wonderful Money Management articles for the Forum's Phoenix Magazine.

He is preceded in death by his brother James, wife Mary Lou and grandchild Brittany Judy. He is survived by children Peter (wife Mary) of Los Gatos, Ellen Keeland (husband Lloyd) of Reedsport, OR., Sally Gaines (husband Rick Kattlemann) of Mammoth Lakes, CA. and grandchildren Joshua Whitkins (wife Helen) and great-grandchildren Oscar and Angus) of Freemantle, Australia, Joby White of Chiang Mai, Thailand, Vireo Gaines of Bishop, CA. and Sage Gaines of Santa Barbara, CA.

A memorial service was held at the Forum Retirement Community, 23500 Cristo Rey Dr., Cupertino, CA. at 3:00p.m. Sunday, May 16th. Interment at the cemetery, Winters, CA. 11:00a.m. May 17th.

PAID OBITUARY

BIRTHS

Menlo Park

■ Katherine and Graeme Waitzkin, a son, April 16, Sequoia Hospital.

■ Debora Pirir and Jesus Medina, a daughter, April 20, Sequoia Hospital.

■ Erin and John Mayfield, a daughter, April 24, Sequoia Hospital.

■ Ann Helen and Ulf Liljensten, a daughter, May 1, Sequoia Hospital.

Woodside

■ Kathleen Shea and Joseph Lopez, a daughter, April 26, Sequoia Hospital.

GRADUATES

■ Robert Danforth, son of John D. Danforth of Menlo Park, graduated May 16 from Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania, with a bachelor's degree in biology, with a concentration in neural and behavioral sciences, and a minor in chemistry. He received the Hughes Scholarship from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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Important issues on the June ballot

Voters will consider five propositions on June 8, including two that are largely financed and promoted by special interests that would benefit greatly if they passed. The other three include one that would close a tax loophole in Proposition 13 so that buildings undergoing seismic retrofitting for safety reasons will not be reassessed for a new, presumably higher, property tax value. Proposition 14 would end partisan June primary elections by placing everyone who is running on a single ballot, and Proposition 15 seeks approval to test the use of public funds during the 2014 and 2018 campaigns for California secretary of state.

EDITORIAL
The opinion of The Almanac

The propositions generating the most interest are 16 and 17, which are both dressed up in language designed to appeal to consumer interests, when in fact they will greatly benefit the sponsors — PG&E for Proposition 16 and Mercury Insurance for Proposition 17.

Here are more details on the propositions 16 and 17:

Proposition 16

Pacific Gas & Electric has bankrolled this proposition, which, if approved, would force a public agency to obtain a two-thirds vote of the electorate before it could enter the retail power business. Without obtaining approval, cities could not form municipal utilities or community-wide clean electricity districts called community choice aggregators, which could be used to sell energy generated by wind or photo voltaic systems.

At this time, no city in The Almanac's circulation area has shown any interest in forming its own utility to sell power. But in our view, if municipalities wish to sell clean energy, and their constituents are willing to pay for it, they should not be stopped by an initiative that will tie their hands.

Small municipalities that might go into the power business are hardly a threat to PG&E. Nevertheless, the giant utility has spent millions of dollars on generally misleading advertising to promote its passage.

We urge voters to defeat this special interest initiative that would do nothing to lower energy prices for consumers while giving PG&E a major tool to control competition from local utilities.

Proposition 17

A vote for this proposition is a vote for Mercury Insurance, the company that has spent more than \$10 million to skirt a provision of Proposition 103, the landmark consumer initiative passed in 1988 that rolled back California insurance rates and set strict guidelines on factors insurance companies could use to set auto insurance costs for consumers.

Under current law in California, an insurance company can offer longtime policy holders a persistency discount to its own customers, but under the terms of Proposition 103, auto insurers can't offer that

same discount to new customers who had continuous coverage for some period of time but from a different auto insurance company. Proposition 17 would give insurance companies the right to offer such discounts to customers of other insurers who have not let their policies lapse for more than 90 days in the previous five-year period.

But opponents of the measure fear that the roughly 20 percent of all drivers in the state who do not qualify for persistency discounts — those who have been out of the market or who temporarily lost coverage — will be forced to pay a substantial surcharge when they come back into the market.

This measure's prime sponsor, Mercury Insurance, is no favorite of state regulators. In fact last month, a story in USNewswire said: "The California Department of Insurance (CDI) [on April 12] said that Mercury Insurance Company, the sponsor of Proposition 17, has overcharged and discriminated against California customers for over 15 years, including failing to deliver discounts required by state law and imposing unlawful surcharges."

That's enough for us. We believe consumers were well-served by Proposition 103, which should not be muddled by changes proposed by Mercury or other insurance companies. Please vote no on Proposition 17.

Proposition 13

This is largely a housekeeping measure that will simply allow owners of buildings being seismically retrofitted to avoid a reassessment for tax purposes.

We urge a yes vote on this measure.

Proposition 14

This measure would end partisan primary elections and place all candidates on the June ballot. Only the top two winners, regardless of party affiliation, would advance to the November election. Supporters say it would promote moderation and take power away from strident party officials, but in two states which have tried it, it had little effect on promoting moderation. Another likely impact: third party candidates would rarely make it to the November runoff, which could severely hamper their ability to campaign, debate and take on major party candidates.

We think such a major change in the electoral system needs more study, and urge a no vote on Proposition 14.

Proposition 15

Dubbed the California Fair Elections Act, this proposition would test public funding of political campaigns in races for Secretary of State in 2014 and 2018. The funds used would be raised from fees assessed on lobbyists and from voluntary contributions to the candidates during the campaign.

It is time to assess public funding of election campaigns. We urge voters to support Proposition 15, which will provide a good test of this process.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Downtown should stay the way it is

Editor:

I am a solid supporter of the Menlo Park Downtown Alliance, whose work was described in the May 19 edition of The Almanac.

My message to the City Council is simple: please do not build hulking parking structures in Menlo Park. They are unsightly and not what people prefer to use when running errands and shopping at local stores.

When Safeway had a parking garage at the old store on the corner of Middle and El Camino, very few people used it. People preferred

See **LETTERS**, next page



Top: Ken Mullen, Karla Jones, Jack Welsh, Carol Bodie, Ed Loveless, ---Hays, Walter Arbanas, Nancy Imbach, Jack Youree
Middle: John Vincent, Loretta Hankland, Irwin Karp, Helen Miller, Jean Miller, Lynette Arnason, Martha Bartson, Ron Rice
Bottom: Bill Holding, Dominic Carl

Portola Valley Archives

Our Regional Heritage

Almanac readers who remember the opening of La Entrada School in 1960 may recognize some of the teachers from the first staff. In 1955, eighth-grader Kathy Worsley won the contest to name the school, which means "The Entrance" or "The Threshold."

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

the ground-level parking lot, even in rainy weather.

The character of Menlo Park is preserved by the open nature of the parking plazas, the trees lining the center of Santa Cruz Avenue, and the independent businesses that make up the bulk of our retailers. We don't need this "new development" concept. Sprucing up a few storefronts will do the trick nicely.

Mrs. Mical Atz Brenzel
Garland Drive, Menlo Park

Initiative process is over-used, counterproductive

Editor:

My problem with the pension reform initiative is that it subverts our representative democracy and ties the hands of those we elect to represent us.

I think we all agree that the initiative process has become over-used in this state and is, in great part, responsible for the fiscal and political mess the state finds itself in. Even the California Supreme Court has criticized the state's reliance on the referendum process, arguing that it has "rendered our state government dysfunctional."

I think Menlo Park's pension reform initiative is just a local version of the same thing and I oppose it, not because I disagree with its stated goal (which the recent council decision has rendered moot anyhow) but because I believe the initiative process should be used only very rarely, if at all. We always have the option to "vote the bums out" if they don't

Time to take on the city's unions

By Mary Gilles

For over a year now, we have been reading and hearing about the imbalance of public employee benefits — at city, state and federal levels. There is no question that the economic meltdown has heightened the taxpayers' awareness. But has the downturn caused the problem? No.

The cause of the unsustainable benefits is due to the power of the SEIU and their relationship with elected officials in Menlo Park.

The SEIU and AFSCME, the unions representing our city workers (mostly white collar public employees), have become an incredibly powerful force in American politics.

Public employees at all levels have job security, pretty decent salaries and overwhelming retirement benefits thanks to these unions who have amassed their power by infiltrating the election cycles and candidate campaigns. The relationship between our current elected officials and the support they have received by the SEIU or local labor councils is undeniably strong.

The correlation between candidates who lose at election time and their reluctance to seek or obtain union support is also quite obvious. This was clearly illustrated in the Menlo Park 2006 election when two incum-



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bents were portrayed by union-sponsored campaign literature as near criminals because these incumbents privatized the Burgess pool and attempted to privatize the Menlo child care program at Burgess. Privatization is the union's enemy.

There is an inherent conflict of interest established between elected officials and the unions that have helped them get elected. The candidates must answer a questionnaire given to them by the labor council and if those answers aren't the right ones, support won't be given.

Questions similar to: "If you had the choice to privatize the Menlo Park pool operation, would you do so?" If the candidate answers with a "no," he is making a promise to the union even if it is not in the taxpayer's best interest to finance the pool operation with public employees. Candidates abandon representing the taxpayers before they are even elected.

The unions continue to perpetuate a false picture that public employees are downtrodden. This became quite illustrative at a recent

City Council meeting, where scores of public employees sat in the chambers holding signs that read, "We are working families."

In the old days, unions were the force of good by protecting hard working people from unfair treatment and terrible working conditions. One is hard pressed to describe our public employees of today as having terrible working conditions.

It is time to re-evaluate the model here. How are we going to keep our promise to pay over 250 current Menlo Park employees their pensions after they retire at age 55? Does it make sense for the private sector to work until they are 75 or 80 years old to recoup their own lost investments from the economic downturn and to additionally finance the pensions of the public employees so they can retire happy at age 55? I don't think so.

It's time for our elected officials to make some drastic changes. There is no question in my mind that the first step is to get the unions out of the election process. When we vote in any election — city, state or federal — we should be really clear on who has received help from the unions and labor councils and vote NO for those candidates.

Mary Gilles lives on Partridge Avenue in Menlo Park.

do what the majority of us want.

Steve Walter
Mills Court, Menlo Park

Mandelkern is best choice for treasurer

Editor:

Our local school districts have felt the devastating impact of our current county treasurer's loss of \$155 million in the Lehman Broth-

ers bankruptcy. As a school board member I've had to make tough budget cuts, reduce services to our students, and lay off teachers, in part because of these losses.

I'm also a certified public accountant and an MBA. We need to elect someone as county treasurer who doesn't view the county's \$2.4 billion Pooled Investment Fund as something that they must manage personally by themselves. Manag-

ing this size fund requires professional expertise that goes beyond what any one accountant or individual investor is capable of.

We need an individual who has experience in evaluating and hiring professional investment managers who will ensure safety, liquidity, and return for the investors in the fund at the lowest possible cost.

I believe that Dave Mandelkern's background in building compa-

nies in Silicon Valley and taking them public, dealing with investment bankers and managing hundreds of millions of dollars of shareholder's money, gives him the proper background and experience to provide the right leadership for the county treasurer's office.

That's why I'm voting for Dave Mandelkern for San Mateo County treasurer-tax collector.

Dennis P. McBride
President, Redwood City School District

A better Bayfront with utilities underground

By John Kadvany

Alongtime concern for many Menlo Park city councils, and city development managers, is how to jump-start development in the "M-2" light industrial district where the Menlo Gateway project is proposed.

The proposed hotel, athletic club, and three office buildings, of course, would do a lot to improve the M-2's future. Can anything more be done, especially now that the Gateway project may be close to approval?

One possibility is to take advantage, right now, of the Gateway Bayfront development, which is not expected to occur for several years. What might be planned in the meantime is to move underground the high-voltage transmission lines along the roadway. Not just right at the Gateway, but along much of Menlo Park's waterfront.

Doing so would be another major step, in addition to the Gateway itself, toward enhancing the Bayfront, with the goal of creating a wholly more attractive, waterside boulevard highway. The bordering M-2 area would also

be more attractive to developers, investors, and M-2 property owners, sending a clear signal that our city is serious about major improvement and redevelopment there.

The area would be more attractive to mixed-use development, with new housing possible in the Belle Haven area, then local retail, and further M-2 redevelopment. Looking post-industrial is part of what's needed to make the area just that.

Undergrounding is too expensive to expect the Gateway to pay for it as a public benefit. The cost could be some tens of millions of dollars. Most likely a municipal bond would have to be passed, in the same way as we support improvements to our schools, parks and recreation areas.

Would that be worth it? We don't know today even if undergrounding is possible. That remains a basic fact to be established. But if undergrounding is possible, combined with the Gateway, it would provide a foundation for Bayfront redevelopment for several decades.

The Gateway project raises this issue because once dates are set for its Bayfront side, it will be too late to start thinking about such a fundamental Bayfront



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improvement. It's Menlo Park's issue and, right now, our City Council's.

Steps to make undergrounding happen would be hard and require tremendous leadership from the city. Menlo Park would have to work with our neighboring cities to see what they want to do with their powerline frontage.

There's also Caltrans, PG&E, and electric utility regulators. With resources scarce, and an overburdened Planning Department, it would be a challenge for the city to take on the task, even in its preliminary stages. A private-public collaboration, led by the city and neither delaying the Gateway project nor imposing significant costs, would be an innovative approach to take advantage of this opportunity.

Imagine a Menlo Park with Sand Hill Road on our western edge, and on the eastern side, bordering the San Francisco Bay, a mile-long new boulevard, full of new businesses, many people working and living, and an economic engine revving up to speed.

That's the goal. The first step is to take a little time now to figure out if, and then how, it might happen.

John Kadvany is a member of the Menlo Park Planning Commission.

Time for Redwood City to halt Cargill project

Editor:

Living in Menlo Park, I may live closer to Cargill's proposed new city of 30,000 people than Redwood City Mayor Jeff Ira and council member Jeffrey Gee do in Redwood Shores. Yet they have implied that Menlo Park and other cities' concerns don't matter.

It is time for Redwood City officials to stop being defensive about regional concerns over this project. It does not take an expensive, time-consuming environmental study to know that this massive proposed bay-fill development would have major implications for the entire Peninsula.

It is past time for Redwood City officials to acknowledge that we share the same roads, buses, trains, highways, and traffic jams. We share the same water system and breathe the same air. We share the same Bay, parks and open spaces. This is a decision that affects all of us.

Pat Walker
Arlington Way, Menlo Park



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