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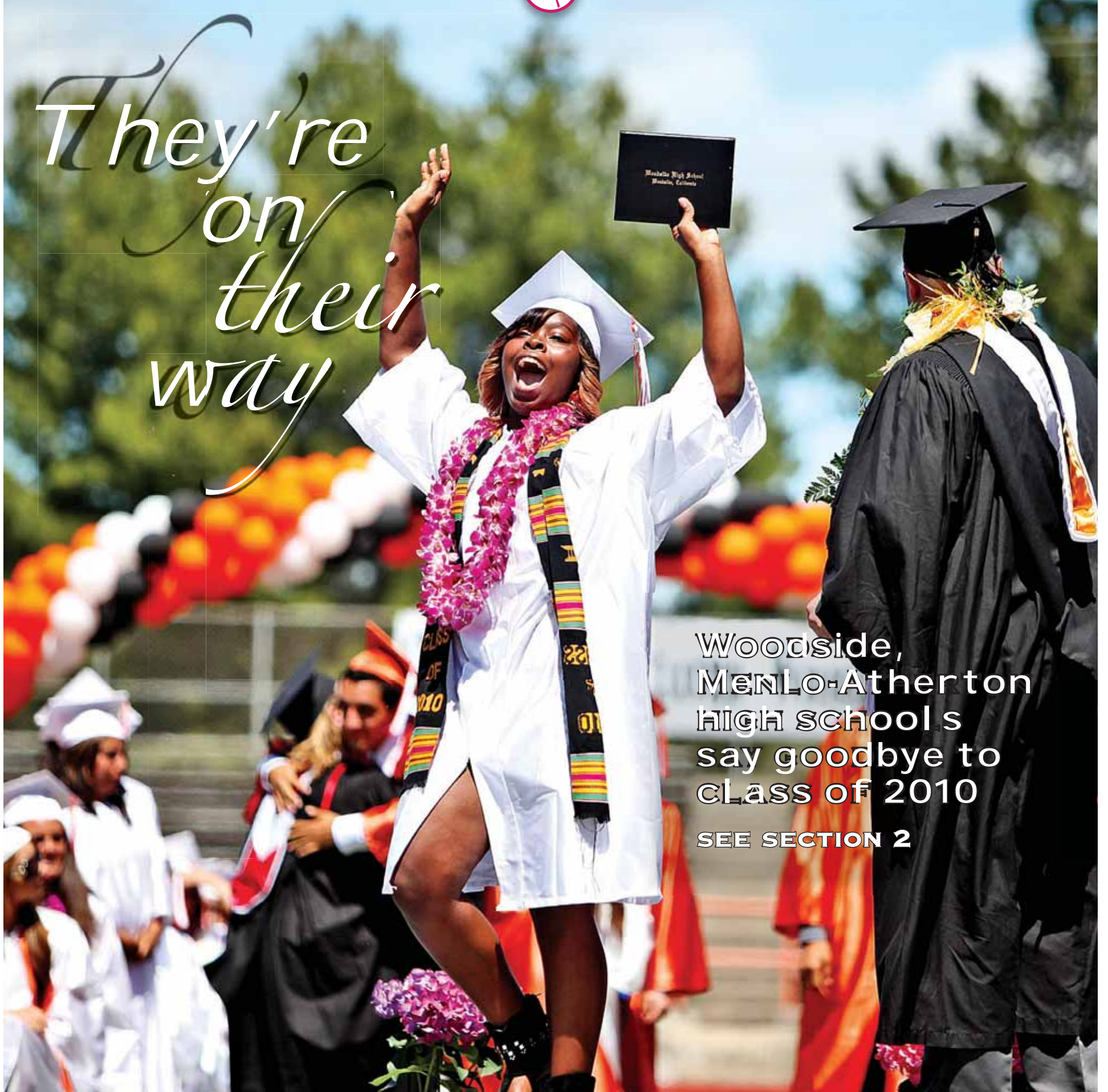
THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

JUNE 9, 2010 | VOL. 45 NO. 41



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A locus for big issues, Bohannon project may hinge on yet another

■ Profit-sharing agreement may be key for some on council.

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

As it made its way through Menlo Park's city process over the past few years, a real estate project proposed by the Bohannon Development Co. has become a touchstone for the issues facing the city and its residents.

Some of those issues: the state of the city's "small-town" character; the future of its "light-industrial" region; how the city deals with greenhouse gas emissions from commercial buildings; how or whether it should provide housing for low-income families; the role of marketing in local politics; and how the city would address prominent power lines that stretch along its waterfront.

If that sounds like a long list, the developer, David Bohannon, would agree with you. When Mr. Bohannon and the many consultants in his employ weren't working to address some of the aforementioned issues, they were trying to warn city officials against trying to solve other city issues through this proposal.

As the project nears a final council vote on June 15, another major issue has wiggled its way onto that list, one that could be a decisive one in the council's vote. That issue might be summed up like this: How much profit are real estate developers entitled to, when the city grants zoning concessions?

It's a thorny subject, not to mention a complicated one, but two council members have signaled that their support of the project may hinge on the Bohannon company's willingness to share profits with the city. A third member of the five-person council said he is undecided.

While several council members say they see a slice of the profits as the city's just deserts, Mr. Bohannon says he wonders if the issue is yet another wrench critics are throwing into the city's bureaucratic gears, in the hopes of delaying or squelching the project.



Rendering by DES Architects

Looking across U.S. 101 toward Bedwell-Bayfront Park at the **Menlo Gateway** project proposed by the Bohannon Development Co. The project would consist of three eight-story office buildings, a 230-room hotel, a sports club, and several parking garages.

"This has been a long process, and the public and the council weighed in on what was important to the city," Mr. Bohannon said in an interview. "As the process unfolded over many months, we spent hundreds of hours and we dealt with all those issues, in great detail, at a great investment of time and money, and with a lot of expertise. We really rolled up our sleeves to deal with all the issues that were presented."

"The profit-sharing provision seems to have come out of left field,

'No one (on the council) had the courage to say the project was too big at the outset, and now the chute is getting narrower and narrower, and we have to make an up-or-down vote.'

COUNCILMAN ANDY COHEN

at the 11th hour," he continued. "I'm not sure what to make of it."

The idea wasn't raised until late April, when council members got their first look at an analysis of the value of the land-use entitlements they're being asked to grant. A city-hired consultant estimated that the value of the entitlements for the office buildings could be anywhere

between \$0 and \$24 million, based on standards used in the real estate development world.

When some residents argued that the estimate was too low, the council asked for new numbers, and got them. The value of the entitlements could be worth as much as \$101 million using a different set of assumptions that the consulting firm, Cushman & Wakefield, admitted were highly unlikely.

Vince Bressler, a member of the Planning Commission, looked at the problem another way entirely. The consultant's report suggests that the office buildings alone would generate in the ballpark of \$35 million per year in rent, not including expenses, beyond what a project that maximizes the current zoning would bring in — a figure nearly equal to the city's annual general fund revenue. Once the project is clear of debt, shouldn't the city be entitled to some of that money?

"I look at this as a community resource, as community property," he said in an interview. "I don't think (Mr. Bohannon) is any more entitled to that upside than anyone else in Menlo Park."

"There's a tremendous concentration of wealth in this country," Mr. Bressler continued. "Things are just being

See **BOHANNON**, page 11

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What would new plan mean for Menlo's development wars?

■ If enacted, strict development regulations along El Camino Real could make the process easier for developers and the city.

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

If there's one thing people who have been involved in Menlo Park's El Camino Real development wars in recent years have learned — or should have learned, anyway — it is that they don't want to go through them again.

There are plenty of vacant or disused lots along the thoroughfare, but the process of figuring out what should replace them has often been torturous and unproductive.

One project that didn't comply with the city's zoning laws was approved by the City Council in 2006, then withdrawn after a voter referendum drive gathered the required number of signatures. A different council majority in 2009 approved a nearby project that did comply with the zoning laws, though several council members said they might have preferred to see a larger, housing-based development.

In 2007, the council initiated the \$1 million planning process currently under way, so that the city could have a vigorous development debate just once, instead of every

time a new project is proposed.

The portion of the plan that deals with the downtown area on and around Santa Cruz Avenue has gotten the most attention, but the plan would also impose rigid guidelines for development along El Camino Real. There would be absolute limits on height and the density, with clear standards for architecture and environmental efficiency, and precise regulations for the public benefits developers would provide. None of those topics is included in the current code; some of them have been the subject of 11th-hour, seat-of-the-pants wrangling by the council.

The proposed plan, created by city staff and consultants, includes both "more specificity, and more expectations" of developers, Associate Planner Thomas Rogers said in an interview. It divides El Camino Real into six zoning areas, whereas the current general plan provides for only one that blankets both El Camino and the downtown area. The new plan indicates what types of uses the city wants where, whereas the current code, over 40 years old, doesn't mention such modern contrivances as yoga studios.



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

One of several vacant car dealerships along El Camino Real, in Menlo Park. The redevelopment of blighted and vacant parcels along the thoroughfare has been a source of strife, but a new city plan would create rigid guidelines for development and public benefits.

"There will probably be less project-to-project conflict, but you'll still have projects pass through an evaluation process" under the new rules, Mayor Rich Cline said. "There's still going to be an opportunity for people to have a say. ... (But) the plan will give us a measure of control that doesn't exist today."

The city is encouraging people to weigh in now on the plan, saying that changes will continue to be made as it moves toward a council vote over the next several months. Those changes should adhere to

the basic guidelines laid out by residents in a series of community workshops, Mr. Rogers said, but there is plenty of room for debate.

A quick check by The Almanac of several local residents and developers indicated that the debate over redevelopment on El Camino Real will be a lively one. People's comments would also seem to back up the city's contention that the plan is "moderate and balanced": Some say it allows for too much development, while others say there's not nearly enough.

Sam Sinnott, a local architect

who has worked on land development proposals along El Camino Real, lauded the entire plan, calling it "brilliantly done," though in his opinion it doesn't allow for enough development along El Camino Real.

"To encourage developers to replace over time those existing buildings, and to get the public amenities the city's asking for, requires a little more density," he said. "But it's a step in the right direction."

See ECR, page 8

Service cuts, but no tax hike in proposed Menlo Park budget

■ City plans to cut equivalent of seven employees, dip into reserves to cover deficit.

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

A preliminary budget for the upcoming fiscal year released by the city of Menlo Park calls for reductions in city services, but would not hike the utility tax.

The \$38 million budget forecasts a \$470,000 deficit, with the city expecting to dip into its approximately \$25 million general fund reserve to fill the gap. The City Council will review the budget in a public hearing at its meeting Tuesday, June 8.

In a staff report, Finance Direc-

tor Carol Augustine said the budget minimizes "visible service impacts," and funds infrastructure projects at a steady rate. Hours at some city facilities are decreasing, as is park maintenance, with the city cutting 6.75 "full-time-equivalent" employee positions.

The budget takes a long-term approach to the city's finances, according to Ms. Augustine. A balanced budget is not necessarily a sustainable budget, she wrote, noting that the level of city services provided would fluctuate greatly if the city tried to balance the budget on a year-to-year basis.

While salaries in the police department are projected to increase by \$620,000, total expenses are expected to rise by less than 1 percent, discounting anomalies in the current fiscal year. That is largely due to the reduction in staff size, and concomitant service cuts. The senior center in Belle Haven will close eight additional days per year, and the main library will close nine more days per year, generally following holidays.

Under an earlier recommendation, the city would have reduced hours at the Belle Haven library, and closed the senior center one day per week. Under the new recommendation, hours at the Belle Haven library would not be slashed, though they would shift so that the library is open for some night and weekend hours.

See BUDGET, page 8

Marsala won't seek third term on Atherton council

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Atherton City Councilman Charles Marsala announced on June 2 that he will not seek re-election in November.

The two-term councilman, who earlier this year was embroiled in a controversy surrounding his asking a resident who planned to sue the town for a loan, said he wanted to announce his decision "in time for prospective candidates to have time to spend researching and organizing their campaigns," he said in an e-mail.

He said his decision "was actually made in 2000, when I supported term limits during my

campaign" as a candidate for a City Council seat.

Mr. Marsala lost that election, but was appointed to a seat in 2002, when he was one of three candidates filing election papers for three open seats. He was appointed again in 2006 when there were no challengers running against him and the other two incumbents.

"I have enjoyed my time serving on the Atherton Council and various committees," he wrote.

See MARSALA, page 8



Charles Marsala

Time to act

It's simple. The vast majority of Menlo Park residents support the Menlo Gateway project. It is endorsed by the City's environmental leaders and welcomed by its neighbors in Belle Haven. Yet after four years, dozens of community meetings, hundreds of hours of negotiation, and concession after concession from the Bohannons, a vocal minority in the community continues to find excuses for delaying the project.

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Trish Hooper remembered for her remarkable spirit

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

If there were flags to symbolize an uncompromising passion for justice, women's rights and democratic values, they should be fluttering defiantly over The Sequoias retirement community in Portola Valley in memory of resident Trish Hooper.

And there might be another flag, apart from the others, for having lived well and compassionately.

Patricia Lowrey Hooper, an articulate former Republican who excoriated the GOP in newspapers for its right-wing shift, a wife and mother of a well-traveled and active family, a memorable presence to those who knew her, and the author of three memoirs died June 3 at the age of 87. She had suffered a brain hemorrhage from a fall a few days earlier and died surrounded by her family.

"I just can't believe that this force of nature is gone," Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, said in a phone interview. "I'm enormously sad about it.

"She could prick the conscience of a community with her thoughts and her pen. She could move an individual with a paragraph," Ms. Eshoo continued. "This is an incredible loss. I don't think there are words to describe it. Things will not be the same again, though she wouldn't like to hear me say that.

"She had a real sense of joie de vivre. She was fascinated by so many things and she was fascinating herself."

Ms. Hooper had been active in the hospice, birth control rights and animal rights communities, including as a board member of Mission Hospice and the Peninsula Humane Society, said Marion Softky, a Sequoias resident and an Almanac senior correspondent.

Humane Society President Ken White, in an interview, called Ms. Hooper's death "a big, big, big loss." He had had lunch with her in Woodside recently to talk about adopting a new dog, he said. "We had our usually fabulous time."

Asked what he would miss about her, Mr. White replied: "Wow. Trish is, was, truly one of the smartest, funniest, most alive people I have ever had the

pleasure to know. To be honest, I think that I will miss everything about her. ... She lived her life fully and died suddenly, as she would have wanted."

"If The Sequoias had a key person among the residents, she was it," Ms. Softky said of Ms. Hooper. "This is a real shock and a blow to everybody."

Portola Valley Mayor Steve Toben, citing Ms. Hooper's success in having her opinions published in major media outlets — a high hurdle — called her "a great citizen. It's a huge, huge, huge loss."

Growing up, Trish traveled widely and lived in New Jersey, California and Hawaii, according to her family. She

attended the Katherine Delmar Burke School in San Francisco, among other schools, and graduated from Sarah Law-



Photo courtesy of Helen Hooper

Trish Hooper, a prolific, articulate and ardent critic of right-wing politics in letters to local and national media outlets, died at The Sequoias retirement community in Portola Valley on June 3 after falling a few days earlier. She was 87.

N. "Pete" McCloskey get started in politics as the Peninsula's congressman. Mr. McCloskey became a son-in-law in 1982 with his marriage to Helen Hooper.

Trish Hooper was an accomplished watercolorist whose paintings helped raise money for

causes she loved, including animal welfare, death with dignity, and getting the government out of private decisions such as abortion, relatives said.

Along with writing on national issues, she wrote about staff members at The Sequoias, who "truly loved her democratic spirit," relatives said.

She wore her accomplishments easily. "She did not smoke her own exhaust," Ms. Eshoo said. "I loved every line in her face. Every line in her face meant something. She and John are together now and I have a sense that they have a lot to talk about."

Ms. Hooper is survived by daughters Margo Hooper of Portola Valley and Helen Hooper McCloskey of Rumsey, California; sons John C. Hooper of San Francisco and Lawrence Hooper of Washington state; a sister, Helen Virginia Brown of Honolulu; a brother, Charles F. Lowrey of San Francisco; and five grandchildren. ■

On returning to Woodside in 1967, the couple "immersed themselves in local issues," relatives said, including helping Paul

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Buying vs. Renting

Q: I am trying to decide whether I should buy a home or rent one. I feel the economy is getting better but could worsen again and I don't want to lose money. What is your advice?

A: If you plan to live in your next home for five years or more, you should seriously consider buying rather than renting, assuming you have sufficient finances to purchase. If you buy a home, you have control of the payments by locking a 30 year loan and making a larger down payment to keep your costs lower. If you are renting you may have to move if the property is sold, and rents may rise more than average projections indicate. If you own, you have to maintain the property and keep it updated.

There is a Rent vs. Buy table for

several of the top cities in the U.S. offered by Trulia.com. A calculation is made using the average price for a two bedroom apartment for sale vs. a two bedroom apartment for rent. Factors such as down payment, tax savings, interest rates, property taxes and future appreciation are compared to rental rates and a number emerges. This method shows that it is cheaper to buy in cities like Minneapolis and Phoenix and cheaper to rent in New York. San Francisco is almost in the middle making it a toss-up.

The Mid-Peninsula does not have a large pool of rental properties and this scarcity of supply encourages people to buy rather than rent. Examine your own needs, look carefully at your finances, and you will likely see which scenario works better for you.

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New El Camino Real plan

ECR

continued from page 5

Vince Bressler, a member of the Planning Commission who aligns himself with the “slow-growth” camp, said he believes plans for more concentrated development around the train station area and along the east side of El Camino, south of the downtown area, will generate controversy.

“My concern is that we’re going to over-densify the downtown area and make it really impassable, with heavy traffic,” he said. He’s skeptical of the assumption that people living in the new apartments would get around without using their cars.

Housing advocate Elizabeth Lasensky, who recently moved from Menlo Park to San Carlos and made it clear that she was speaking as an “outsider,” said she thinks the plan doesn’t provide for enough housing.

“From the outside looking in,

there’s not enough housing, and there’s not enough affordable senior housing,” said Ms. Lasensky, a former member of the city’s Housing Commission. “Options for that age group are pretty minimal in Menlo Park. ... As a housing advocate, I would have to say also that there’s not enough transit-oriented housing.”

Howard Crittenden, a developer who owns both the Guild Theatre building and the former Park Theatre building, said he thinks the plan would make it easier for developers to navigate the city’s process.

“I’m excited about the plan,” he said. “I would love to see something be put in place, because what’s in place now is why Menlo Park is in the state it’s in.”

Mr. Sinnott agreed that the new rules will be a plus, despite his reservations about some of them.

“I like having a regulation-based ordinance, to be as clear as possible,” he said. “If there are hard limits, they’re hard limits.

What we currently have is a discretionary review process, where a project, even if conforms with regulations, can be denied for any reason. ... It ends up being a very long process.”

Several other El Camino landowners contacted by The Almanac for this story either did not respond to or declined requests to be interviewed, with some saying they were not versed enough in the plan to speak about it.

Mayor Cline said he isn’t sure the plan will end the raging debates over development along El Camino, but that it will help to focus them.

“What we’re trying to achieve is, first, a level of agreement on a broad scope,” he said. “On both sides, there’s going to be an extreme point of view — on the one side, that we don’t need these kinds of (concessions), on the other side, that this isn’t progressive enough.

“I’m getting e-mails from (and meeting with) people who are concerned about the plan, and they should be concerned: It’s a big deal,” he continued. “We should have a dialogue about those concerns. The bulk of the buildings, the massing of the buildings, that’s all fair game.”

In years past, City Council campaigns have been waged, and won, over issues related to land development in the city center. This fall might bring more of the same, because the council vote on the plan has been delayed until after the election, due to concerns related to the state-mandated environmental review process.

If the city does manage to implement the plan, would residents have to find other things to argue about? A future council wouldn’t overturn it, right?

“This has been a community-based, multi-year planning process, we’ve gotten a lot of input,

and we have a lot of documentation (of that input),” Mr. Rogers said. “We hope there would be no support for a council to change the plan in the near future.” ■

■ INFORMATION

Menlo Park’s plan

Menlo Park’s long-term plan for El Camino Real and the downtown area will be the subject of several public meetings between late July and December. The plan is available in draft form at the city administration building in the Civic Center complex, and is subject to change.

Visit menlopark.org/specific-plan for more information, and to see the draft plan in PDF form.

To comment on the plan, e-mail the City Council at [city.council@menlopark.org](mailto:council@menlopark.org), or Associate Planner Thomas Rogers at THRogers@menlopark.org.

Public works in Menlo Park, by the numbers

By Sean Howell

Almanac Staff Writer

By residents and reporters, city business is most often measured in decisions made.

But, of course, the vast majority of a city’s work goes on outside the air-conditioned confines of council chambers. At a recent meeting of Menlo Park’s City Council, Deputy City Manager Kent Steffens tried to quantify the work performed by the city’s public works department over the past year. This is a summary of his presentation.

■ Free shuttles ferried 34,000 riders down Marsh Road and 26,000 riders down Willow Road, while 23,000 people took the midday

shuttle, and the one-day-per-week shopper’s shuttle accommodated 500 riders.

■ The department planted 86 trees, and made over 500 tree service calls.

■ It installed video detection systems at every signaled intersection in the city, so that lights change when bicyclists and drivers arrive.

■ It repaired more than 319 potholes, covered over graffiti at 251 sites, and raked 1,560 cubic yards of leaves.

■ It maintained 15.6 miles of right-of-way, 5.3 miles of medians, 1,555 storm drain inlets, 14 parks, and two ponds, and renovated nine sports fields.

■ The department installed a new structure to provide shade at the Belle Haven Child Development Center, renovated three restrooms at the child development center, completed 260 work orders, and made 1,100 repairs to city vehicles and equipment. It replaced the carpet and painted the walls in the police station, and replaced the roof at Footsteps Preschool in Willow Oaks Park.

■ It replaced 61 stretches of sidewalk.

■ It rebuilt 36 cages on lampposts in the downtown area, tested 3,900 water samples, checked 250 backflow devices, and replaced seven fire hydrants, according to Mr. Steffens. ■

MARSALA

continued from page 5

Highlights include “working with the League of California Cities to pass Measure 1A in 2004 to limit the amount of funds the state can withhold from cities, working with fellow council members and citizens to improve Atherton emergency preparedness, Atherton environmental programs, and Atherton arts and philanthropy,” he said.

He speaks proudly of being one of three council members in

the state to receive the California League of Cities’ Leadership in Action certificate in 2009.

In March, resident Jon Buckheit challenged a decision by Mr. Marsala during a public meeting, and revealed that the councilman had asked him for a \$500,000 loan last summer. Mr. Buckheit had already filed a legal claim against the town, and filed a lawsuit in federal court in December.

Atherton’s city attorney reviewed the matter and determined that Councilman Marsala broke no law by requesting the loan. ■

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City manager wants to renegotiate loan terms

A recent story in a local newspaper about the status of a home loan from the city of Menlo Park to City Manager Glen Rojas inspired speculation on The Almanac’s website that Mr. Rojas is having trouble repaying the loan.

That’s not the case, Mr. Rojas said in an interview, but he is renegotiating the terms of the loan in private meetings with City Council members. Mr. Rojas is not in violation of the existing terms, he said.

BUDGET

continued from page 5

City management is advising against increasing the utility tax rate, because raising and lowering it too often creates administrative difficulties, and confusion among the populace, Ms. Augustine wrote. The city expects to focus more on its longer-term financial picture next year, when it has a better idea

of the extent to which Menlo Park can expect to recover from the economic recession, according to City Manager Glen Rojas.

When the city hired him in 2007, he received a \$1.27 million home loan. The contract stipulated that he would make a 10 percent down payment on the Menlo Park home when he sold his house in Riverside, where he had lived previously.

But he hasn’t sold the Riverside home yet because of the housing bust, and knows that he won’t be able to sell it any time soon. Rather than make the city wait, he decided to amend the contract so that he

could pay the down payment back before he sold the Riverside property, in a way that “doesn’t kill me with taxes.” (In an article published in late 2008, Forbes Magazine called Riverside the third-worst post-bust real-estate market in the country, second only to Stockton and Los Angeles; housing prices fell nearly 25 percent.)

He noted that the loan is secured both by the Riverside property, and the Menlo Park home.

He noted that the loan is secured both by the Riverside property, and the Menlo Park home.

the state could raid municipal coffers, continue to hang over the city. “Strong municipal budgets cannot be secured within an insolvent state,” Ms. Augustine wrote.

The council meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, located in the Civic Center complex between Laurel and Alma streets. The council will discuss the budget, and could approve it at its June 22 meeting. ■

Woodside town manager 'cautiously optimistic' about weathering recession

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

As predicted last year at this time by Woodside's town manager, the local economy has bumped along and is pretty much where it was a year ago, and as the new budget year approaches, the town's fiscal house remains in order.

The projected reserve on a general fund budget of \$5.6 million is \$1.9 million, Town Manager Susan George said in a report to the Town Council. The council met June 3 to review the 2010-11 budget.

"I continue to be cautiously optimistic that the town will weather the current economic times relatively unscathed and with adequate reserves intact," she said in the report. "We are able to continue all current programs and levels of service with no adjustment for the next fiscal year and beyond. We can also take on a few discrete new projects with confidence."

Her report recommends setting aside \$40,000 to redo the town's Web site by a designer experienced with local government priorities, and \$80,000 to repaint Independence Hall and upgrade the 20-year-old heating and ventilation systems at the town center complex. Town Hall still has offices that are not air conditioned, Ms. George told the council.

A new roof is coming to Town Hall, but spending the \$35,000 set aside for it should be delayed until after a finding on the useful life of the current roof, the report said. Plans for roof-mounted solar panels, a \$100,000 line item, should be put on hold pending a report later this year on the avail-

ability of funding assistance.

The town should drop plans for an on-site wastewater recovery system at the town center complex, the report said. One purpose of that system — to set an example in a town with troublesome geography for septic tanks — can be addressed less expensively through public education, and helped by a willingness of residents who own such systems to share information.

The council pushed back. In the interest of saving money, the town should not restrict its Web site redesign inquiries to companies specializing in government sites, council members Peter Mason and Deborah Gordon said.

The council is considering raising fees for permits and other charges to residents who build or remodel homes. The increases would be in keeping with a policy that requires fees to more or less pay for the work done by staff.

The staff members doing that work report to two departments, each with its own budget: public works, and planning and building. The overall budget needs a breakdown of these shared responsibilities to better assess the true costs of staff time, council members said.

Expenses up

The animal control budget is way up, but most of the \$36,000 increase is a reckoning for the past three years. Over that time, the Peninsula Humane Society has received a "much higher than estimated" volume of calls from Woodside for matters such as lost dogs and feral cats, Ms.

George told the council.

The current estimate of \$87,000 is a 71 percent increase over the preliminary budget number of \$51,000 from earlier this year.

"I haven't seen (a Humane Society) truck in town for an entire year," Councilman Dave Tanner remarked skeptically.

"Believe me," Ms. George said, "this is still a lot cheaper than having your own animal control program."

The budget shows a \$900,000 expense for redesigning the interior of the library, a community-participation project that is in its early stages. The money will be drawn from the library's \$2.1 million reserve, all of which must be used for library purposes, Ms. George said.

Good news about revenues

In a bit of surprising news, the town experienced an 8.7 percent increase in property tax revenues over the past 12 months, Ms. George said. The projected rate for 2010-11 is almost flat and changes from day to day, but the trend has been upward recently, she added.

Sales tax revenue has also trended upward. The first quarter was "pretty strong, pretty encouraging," Ms. George said.

Retirement costs will rise between 1 and 2 percent as a result of stock market losses by CalPERS, the public employee retirement fund. The town will owe \$34,000 and pay it over five years.

Salary costs will not rise: no raises and no stepped increases for the next 12 months, Ms. George said.

Talk on mountain lions set for Wednesday

San Mateo County residents will have a glimpse into the life of a typical mountain lion at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 9, in the auditorium at the Peninsula Humane Society at 12 Airport Blvd. in San Mateo.

Woodside, Portola Valley and parts of Atherton are mountain lion country and, as has been documented more than once on these pages, resident have had close encounters.

A lion attacked a goat in a Portola Valley back yard in February, only to be scared off by the homeowner. In March,

a lion casually strolled up the front steps and through the yard of a Woodside psychotherapist's home while she was in session, with the result that she put up a warning in her waiting room.

Lion sightings have been up significantly in The Almanac's circulation area. Does your yard or deck have occasional visits by a tawny 150-pound feline with a vertical leap capability of 12 feet to 15 feet? Do you have questions about living where lions also roam?

The talk, titled "Mountain Lions: Elusive Residents of the

Bay Area," is meant to help people understand the role of the big cats in the region's ecosystem.

Yiwei Wang, a humane society volunteer and doctoral student in the Bay Area Puma Project, will deliver the talk. It will include a brief history of the relationship between people and mountain lions in California, as well as tips on coexisting safely with the animals.

The Humane Society requests a donation of \$5. Call Amy Diferding at 340-7022, ext. 369, for more information.

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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE OF HEARING TO AUTHORIZE COLLECTION OF A REGULATORY FEE AT EXISTING RATES TO IMPLEMENT THE LOCAL CITY OF MENLO PARK STORM WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010-11

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Menlo Park will hold a Public Hearing to authorize collection of a regulatory fee at existing rates to implement the local City of Menlo Park Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) for Fiscal Year 2010-11.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that the City Council will hold this Public Hearing on Tuesday, the 22nd day of June, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Menlo Park City Council Chambers, Civic Center at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard.

Any person interested may appear at the public hearing and be heard on any matter related to this matter.

Visit the City's website at www.menlopark.org for City Council, public hearing, agenda, and staff report information.

Dated: June 1, 2010
MARGARET S. ROBERTS, MMC, City Clerk

Published in THE ALMANAC on June 9 and June 16, 2010.





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Bohannon project

BOHANNON

continued from page 3

given to people who are already wealthy by the virtue of the fact that they have wealth, and can play the system. This is a complete little example of that.”

That sounds pretty good, Mr. Bohannon said, as does the idea of “windfall” profit sharing. But he contends that neither of those scenarios have much to do with reality.

“We have not been successful in getting across the point that we cannot provide (profit-sharing),” he said. “Either people are ignoring what we’re saying, or it’s a message they don’t want to hear.”

The lending industry is “very brittle,” Mr. Bohannon said. A profit-sharing deal with the city, even if it kicked in only when rental rates soared, would likely dissuade people from financing the project. Equity investors would also look askance at sharing profit with an entity (Menlo Park, in this case) that isn’t investing anything in the project, he said.

“Investors in a project look to the upside to offset the potential risk,” said Joanne Brion, an urban economist employed by the development company.

Even if the city would share in those profits only if they exceeded everyone’s expectations?

“If (the threshold) is so ridiculously high that it would never happen, it would be disingenuous on our part to promise that,” she said.

“It’s just not the society we live in,” she continued. “It’s the city’s job to allow development to happen, not to become private developers.”

In response to Mr. Bressler’s idea that profit-sharing could start once the project is “free and clear” of debt, Mr. Bohannon said: “Free and clear? When is that?” The project will cost more than \$400 million to finance, according to Ms. Brion, a debt that would likely be paid off over

a 20- or 30-year period.

Mr. Bohannon and Ms. Brion elaborated on the level of risk the Bohannon company and other investors would be taking. The company will spend \$7 million to \$8 million doing the preparatory work required to begin developing — money it will not get back if the project doesn’t get off the ground. If costs are higher than expected, or if the market takes a dive, returns on investments will be delayed, Ms. Brion added.

As an example, Mr. Bohannon said that 400,000 square feet of Bohannon land in Menlo Park sat vacant for five years early in the last decade, while the company maintained the property and paid taxes on it.

Andy Cohen, one of the two council members (along with Kelly Fergusson) who have been most insistent about a profit-sharing agreement, said in an interview that he’s not insensible to Mr. Bohannon’s claims.

“Real estate development is a speculator’s paradise. There’s so much risk,” he said. “Bohannon says (profit-sharing) may make the project impossible, and I’m taking him at his word here. I have no reason to doubt him, and our own experts confirm it.”

That hasn’t prevented Mr. Cohen from pressing for such an arrangement, which he says would make up for the fact that the office buildings wouldn’t generate sales tax for the city, as an industrial use might. Mr. Bohannon views the hotel his company is building, and the annual \$1.6 million it’s predicted to bring to city coffers in hotel tax, as fair compensation, but Mr. Cohen notes that the revenue stream is not completely guaranteed.

He says he’s “on the fence” over the project, and that he’s agonizing over the decision. While the revenue-sharing issue is important to him, he continues to be troubled by some of the big issues mentioned above.

He has misgivings about the negotiation process that he was a part of, and about what the project would mean for the city’s ability to carry out comprehensive land-use planning in the area, among other things. He said he feels squeezed between critics of the project, many of whom are close advisers of his, and by the outpouring of support from the Belle Haven community. He’s having trouble gauging the level of community support for the project, he said.

“No one (on the council) had the courage to say the project was too big at the outset, and now the chute is getting narrower and narrower, and we have to make an up-or-down vote,” he said. “I’m not certain in my own mind that the amount of public ben-

efit, even \$1.6 million, is enough for what the city is giving up.”

To complaints by Mr. Cohen (and to a lesser extent Ms. Fer-

See **BOHANNON**, page 14

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THE BOHANNON PROJECT

The Bohannon project, also known as “Menlo Gateway,” is a development proposal for three eight-story office buildings, a 230-room Marriott hotel, and a sports club, totaling nearly one million square feet. It’s proposed for land near the intersection of Bayfront Expressway and Marsh Road.

Menlo Park’s City Council is scheduled to vote on whether to approve the project at its meeting Tuesday, June 15. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, located between Laurel and Alma streets in the Civic Center complex.

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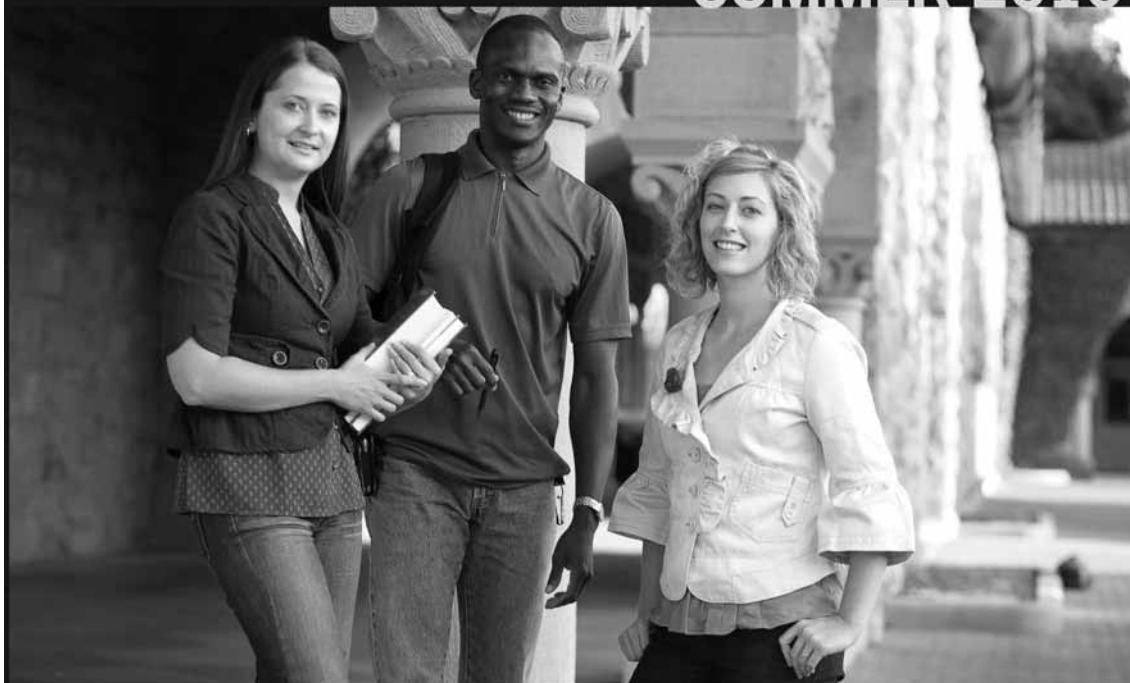
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Photo by Michelle Le

Paulina Hsu, center, leads the Thursday morning Rumba class in a dance-off. Rumba is one of the classes offered at Little House.

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For Little House center, it's a changing game

By Sean Howell
Almanac Staff Writer

Little House Activity Center, located behind Nealon Park in Menlo Park, has had to adjust over its 60-plus years in existence to the ever-changing definition of what a senior citizen is.

It has also had to adjust to an ever-changing economic climate, a fact that has been especially true in the current economic recession. With donations down by 25 percent from pre-recession levels (and falling), the center is expanding its roster of programs to attract new customers, and increasing charges for some programs as it works to cover its costs.

It's also upping the low membership rates, which cover only 6 percent of the center's operation.

"We're offering more and more classes that have nothing to do with age at all," said Wendy Lewis-Rakova, interim programs manager, who called The Almanac suggesting an article on the center's new programs.

"We get plenty of people taking jazzercise, tai chi, yoga, and Zumba, which is the hottest thing I've ever seen come down the pike here. It's for all ages, races, kids, adults, fitness buffs, puddings like myself. It's world dance, with world music, mostly African and Latin rhythms — loud, fun, young, you're moving every part of your body. ..."

If Ms. Lewis-Rakova is starting to sound like a pitchwoman, that may be because Little House's staff is becoming more aware of

"how much it costs just to open the doors," as she puts it. The situation is not too dire, she said, but everyone is mindful of the budget.

The center is working harder to lure new patrons. It has for several years made a conscious effort to appeal to people under age 65, and is beginning a new series of month-long arts and crafts classes, with supplies provided, to get people in the door. The classes are open to everyone, not only members.

"We are now playing a different game than we've ever played before," Ms. Lewis-Rakova said. "We want to be 'it' for anybody."

When it was founded, the Peninsula Volunteers — the organization that runs Little House — was made up primarily of "society ladies" who donated their own money, and got their friends involved, according to Ms. Lewis-Rakova. Gradually, the center has had to do more outreach to the community at large, rather than just trying to catch big fish.

On the whole, the strategy has been successful, both in financial terms, and in expanding the Little House community. But signs of strain have cropped up recently.

Some of the activities, like the Friday night movies, now have sponsors. The center started a Wednesday night bingo event to raise money, canceled it because it was taking up too much vol-

See **LITTLE HOUSE**, next page

LITTLE HOUSE

continued from previous page

unteer time, and is trying to get it going again, using seniors as volunteers.

“We just have to think about things differently,” Ms. Lewis-Rakova said. “We’ve been trying, and doing, all sorts of things.”

Those things include classes on how to deal with the Medicare system, longer hours at the woodshop, more adult education classes, and more classes oriented toward home economics.

Visit tinyurl.com/LHclasses for a list of classes available, or call 326-2025 for more information. ■

Little House director wins diversity award

Kersti Delgado, the director of Little House, was honored by the San Mateo County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce with a “diversity” award May 20.

The award “recognizes individuals making an impact in the community from a range of sectors,” according to the chamber’s website.

Mayors from several San Mateo County cities selected the recipients; Ms. Delgado was chosen by Menlo Park Mayor Rich Cline.

Music in the Schools benefit

The Peninsula chapter of the San Francisco Opera Guild will present a concert by San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows on Saturday, June 19, 2 to 4 p.m., at United Palo Alto Community Church, 3391 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.

The afternoon, to benefit the Opera Guild’s Music in the Schools program, will include appetizers, desserts and refreshments. Tickets are \$50 and may be held at the door. For more information, call Samira at 430-0089.

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On May 25, 2010, Town of Atherton’s council has rejected and requested that the project be re-bid. The plans and special provision will still apply. A new bid schedule and new Time of Completion will apply.

Notice is hereby given that SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, California 94027, until 3:00 p.m. JUNE 16, 2010, at which time they will be publicly opened and read, for performing the following work:

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

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

Per Section 6.01 of the Town of Atherton’s Standard Specifications, the General Contractor shall perform, with his own organization, work of a value amounting to not less than 50% of the total contract, excluding specialty items as indicated on the bid schedule.

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

Plans and specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton Public Works Department, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton CA 94027, for a non-refundable fee of \$40.00. Additional important information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available online at www.ci.atherton.ca.us. If shipping is requested, there will be an additional charge of \$25.00.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Date: _____



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

**TOWN OF ATHERTON
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**2010 SPRING PATCHING
PROJECT NO. 56047**

Notice is hereby given that SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, California 94027, until 2:00 P.M. Wednesday, June 16, 2010, at which time they will be publicly opened and read, for performing the following work:

Grind and replace approximately 33035 square feet of asphalt to a six-inch depth. This work to include all necessary traffic control and will involve grinding, sweeping, tack coating, replacing asphalt to appropriate depth in an appropriate number of lifts and finish rolling per town of Atherton Standard specifications (see below) and special provisions included in this document. Some areas require hand work around utility access hole covers.

ENGINEER'S ESTIMATE is \$173,445.75

Bids must be for the entire work, and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for 2010 SPRING PATCHING, Project No. 56047, along with date and time of bid opening.

Plans and specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton Public Works Department, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton CA 94027, for a non-refundable fee of \$30.00. Additional important information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available for an additional \$20.00. If shipping is requested, there will be an additional charge of \$20.00.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Any questions regarding the project should be directed to the Street Superintendent, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, CA 94027, telephone (650) 752-0541 preferably no later than five days before bid opening. Requests for Information may be faxed to (650) 688-6539. Plan holder's lists may be obtained by calling (650) 752-0570.

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

Date: _____

Event offers foreclosure assistance

People dealing with the foreclosure process can get help at a "resource fair" Saturday, June 12, at the Burgess Recreation Center in the Civic Center complex. Sponsored by Northern California Urban Development and the office of San Mateo County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, the event will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The fair is "designed to give homeowners and tenants access to professional assistance and available resources," according to a press release. HUD-approved counselors and lenders will be on hand, including representatives from Wells Fargo, Citibank, Chase, and PNC (formerly National City Mortgage).

The event is free. Attendees are encouraged to bring copies of "all necessary mortgage and financial documents."

For more information, call 328-1890.

Bohannon project

BOHANNON

continued from page 11

gusson) about the negotiation process, Mr. Bohannon said: "It's pretty late in the game to criticize the process. I have difficulty with their comments, given that they were on the (council) subcommittee" throughout the negotiating process.

To the suggestion made by Mr. Cohen and several residents that the city might want to do more land-use planning before approving the project, Mr. Bohannon noted that the city is already planning for the area in a piecemeal fashion. He added: "It's no secret that 'let's do more planning' is a euphemism for, 'let's not do anything.'"

Despite Mr. Bohannon's stated aversion to the idea of profit-sharing, Ms. Fergusson said she was "optimistic that the (city's) negotiating team will be able to come back with something favorable."

She said she supports the concept of revenue-sharing for several reasons, maintaining that "zoning is the currency of local government." ■



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July 26 - 30
9am - 2pm daily

For incoming 7th - 10th graders

The teens will meet at different nonprofit organizations each day (between Mountain View & Redwood City) to do service projects and to choose which organization will receive their grant

Camp tuition is \$400, plus a \$200 tax-deductible donation (to fund the grant the teens will make)



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- Create a space that is safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities that reflects your personal style and taste. Whether your home's occupants are 4 or 84, it can be remodeled to fit you and your family's needs and lifestyle.
- Gain knowledge and inspiration as we review completed projects and specific features needed to ensure your home is designed for living and can be your home for life.

Saturday, June 26

9:30 am to 12:00 pm

Registration and breakfast at 9:15 am
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Hobee's all-day event benefits Project Read

Hobee's California restaurant in Town & Country Village shopping center in Palo Alto will hold a fundraiser to benefit Menlo Park Library's Project Read program from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday, June 10.

Customers who bring in a flier announcing the fundraiser will have 20 percent of their bill donated to the library's adult literacy program.

The flier is available at the library, or can be printed from the Project Read website. Go to projectreadmenlopark.org and click on Upcoming Events in the

right-hand column, then click on the flier.

Project Read-Menlo Park matches volunteer tutors with adults who need help learning to read and write. Although the program receives a small amount of funding from the city, it increasingly must rely on funding from foundations and private donors.

Established in 1985, Project Read-Menlo Park has helped more than 2,000 adults in the local community improve their lives through literacy.

Go to projectreadmenlopark.org or call 330-2525 for more information.

Nativity Carnival opens June 11

■ AROUND TOWN

The Nativity Carnival, scheduled for June 11, 12, and 13, is a sure sign that summer is on its way. For 30 years, the carnival has been a popular local tradition, drawing thousands of visitors to the Nativity school grounds at the corner of Oak Grove Avenue and Laurel Street.

Carnival hours are 5 to 11 p.m. Friday, noon to 11 p.m. Saturday, and noon to 6 p.m. Sunday. There will be 13 carnival rides, multiple game booths, and a silent auction.

Dinners, featuring tri-tip, rotisserie chicken and pasta prepared by the Nativity Men's Club, will be served all three days. A pancake breakfast will be served from 8 to 10:30 a.m. Sunday, with a menu of mimosas, orange juice, pancakes and sausage.

Continuing a 20-year tradition, parish volunteers will also be serving a variety of casual food, including hamburgers, Philly cheese steaks, turkey legs, and steamed clams. Vendors will offer traditional carnival fare, such as popcorn, cotton candy, shaved ice, candy apples, corn dogs and a variety of beverages.

Music will be performed by a series of bands. Caravanserai starts the festivities from 7 to 10 p.m. Friday night. Hit and Run, a rock band, will entertain from 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday. Students from Menlo Park Academy of Dance will perform from noon to 1 p.m. on Sunday, and the Second Story band takes the stage from 2 to 6 p.m.

The winner of a raffle, with a grand prize of a 2010 Mini Cooper or \$15,000 in cash, will be announced Sunday afternoon.

Mike Cherry and Donna Blodgett are carnival co-chairs. For more information, go to nativitycarnival.org.

Stories from the past

The San Mateo County History Museum will present "Stories from the Past," a pre-school children's story time, at 11 a.m. Friday, June 11, in the Wells Fargo Learning Center, in the lower level of the museum, 2200 Broadway in Redwood City.

The children will hear the story "Iris and Walter," about a young girl's move from the city to the country, and then create model houses to take home.

The program, designed for children ages 2 to 5, is free for those 5 and under.

Helicopter air show

The Vertical Challenge helicopter air show will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 19, at the Hiller Aviation Museum at the San Carlos Airport.

More than 50 helicopters will be on display, and there will be performances by Otto the Clown Helicopter and Go Fast Wing Suite Sky Divers. Helicopter rides will be available at \$40 per person.

Tickets at the door will be \$20 for adults, and \$10 for seniors and youth 5 to 17. Children 4 and under get in for free. Advance tickets are available at hiller.org.

Hiller Aviation Museum is located at 601 Skyway Road in San Carlos. For more information, call 654-0200.

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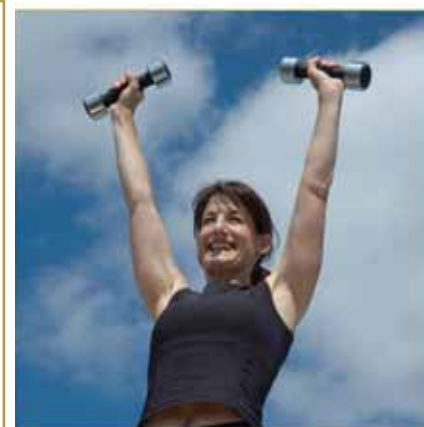
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OBITUARY

Amelia "Millie" Sicard

Retired Safeway employee

Amelia "Millie" Sicard, who was well known as a cashier at the Sharon Heights Safeway for many years, died May 23 in Kent, Washington. Ms. Sicard moved to Kent in 2008 to live with her sister, Dorothy Schubert, after residing in Menlo Park for many years. She was 88.

Ms. Sicard was born in Napoleon, North Dakota, one of 12 children. She married Melvin

Sicard and lived in Menlo Park for most of her life. During World War II, she was a "Rosie the Riveter," according to her granddaughter, Patty Tims.

After retiring from Safeway, she was a tireless volunteer at nursing homes, often providing flowers and cakes (from Safeway) for residents on their birthdays, says Ms. Tims.

She is survived by her sister, Dorothy Schubert; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and five great-great-grandchildren. The family is planning a private memorial service.

BIRTHS

Ann Helen and Ulf Liljensten, a daughter, May 3, Sequoia Hospital. (Note: This birth was previously published with an incorrect date of birth.)

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

Grand theft report: Resident paid to have body work done on vehicles but worker never returned to finish work, first block of Manzanita Road, June 2.

MENLO PARK

Auto burglary reports:

■ GPS device valued at \$230 stolen, 1600 block of El Camino Real, June 2.

■ Convertible top slashed but nothing stolen, 600 block of Sharon Park Drive, May 29.

Commercial burglary report: Wallet and cash stolen from desk, Sunset Publishing in first block of Willow Road, June 3.

Theft reports:

■ Bicycle valued at \$1,900 stolen from carport, 100 block of Buckthorn Way, May 31.

■ Bicycle valued at \$1,200 stolen, 100 block of Hamilton Ave., June 3.

Fraud reports:

■ Check fraud, first block of Hallmark Court, June 1.

■ Unauthorized use of credit card, 100 block of Newbridge St., June 2.

Child Protective Services report: 200 block of Van Buren Road, May 28.

Adult Protective Services report: 800 block of Fremont St., June 1.

WOODSIDE

Auto burglary report: Window smashed and wallet and credit cards stolen, 100 block of Churchill Ave., May 31.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Fraud report: Six unauthorized purchases totaling \$604 made on credits card, 200 block of Echo Lane, May 26.

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CLASS	DAY	TIME	INSTRUCTOR	LOCATION	FEE	STARTING DATE
YOGA FOR EVERYONE						
9 Weeks	Mon.	9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Carla Germano	Independence Hall	\$162	June 14
9 Weeks	Tues.	9:30 AM - 10:30 AM		Wdse. Village Church Guild Hall	\$162	June 15
9 Weeks	Wed.	6:00 PM - 7:00 PM		Wdse. Village Church Guild Hall	\$162	June 16
9 Weeks	Thurs.	9:00 AM - 10:00 AM		Wdse. Village Church Guild Hall	\$162	June 17
9 Weeks	Fri.	9:30 AM - 10:30 AM		Independence Hall	\$162	June 18
Bring exercise mat and wear comfortable clothing						

WOODSIDE MORNING

WORKOUT

13 Weeks	No Class Sept. 3rd	Mon.	8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Joy Lopez	Independence Hall	\$360	July 5
Easy to follow low impact aerobics & total body toning.	Fri.	8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Independence Hall		\$20 drop in	July 9	

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

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



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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Menlo Park, CA 94025.

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

Time to clear the air on Lewis' house

City Council member Elizabeth Lewis becomes defensive about claims that she did not following legal procedures when she built a new home in 2006, which apparently went beyond the original plan to simply remodel the structure at Emilie and Alejandra avenues in Atherton, and instead became a new home.

In denying wrongdoing, Ms. Lewis claims she and her husband "... followed every rule, every regulation ... every approval process" prior to the project's being signed off by the building department in March 2006.

EDITORIAL
The opinion of The Almanac

Unfortunately, the traditional paper trail of the approval process for the home is no longer available to the public

or the mayor, which makes Ms. Lewis' claims sound hollow, since at this point, she has shared little evidence that could back them up.

Critics of the Lewis construction project, which was completed long before she was elected to the City Council, strongly suggest that the home did not go through the legally required permit process. Now Mayor Kathy McKeithen, largely seen as a supporter of former finance director John Johns — who recently was awarded \$225,000 in a wrongful termination settlement with the town — is rightly calling for an outside investigation of the process that led to approval of the home.

It is no surprise that Ms. McKeithen, who with Mr. Johns spearheaded an investigation of the building department in 2006-07, is now taking a hard line on Ms. Lewis' house, which

was approved when Mike Hood was the top building department official. Mr. Hood abruptly resigned and left the state in 2006, taking much of the department's institutional memory with him and perhaps damaging the ability of investigators to find out what really happened.

In a story last week, The Almanac provided some details of the home's path through the building department, but also found that most department records of the home's approval process are no longer in the files and are only available on microfiche, which cannot be copied or removed from the office.

When Ms. McKeithen requested planning and building department records from the Lewis project, she received only one document, from 2003, a pitiful result for records of decisions made less than five years ago. It does nothing for the town's credibility when such records, especially in a high-profile case, have gone missing.

City Manager Jerry Gruber and City Attorney Wynne Furth say they believe the town can conduct its own investigation into the matter, despite the obvious conflict of interest that might entail. Atherton has a small staff, so an in-house investigation could mean that friends are investigating friends, which would not be the best way to conduct an unbiased assessment of this matter.

If planning and building department records of the Lewis project are not readily available, as they should be, it makes sense to bring in an outside investigator to determine if proper procedures were followed in approving the Lewis home. That will provide the best outcome for the town, and for Ms. Lewis.

LETTERS
Our readers write

Approve Gateway project and generate jobs

Editor:

As both a Menlo Park resident and executive officer for the San Mateo County Building and Construction Trades Council, I am writing to urge the City Council to vote "yes" on the Menlo Gateway Project, which comes before them for a final vote in mid-June.

This project has gone through four years of negotiations and revisions with Menlo Park city officials, and now it is time to vote. The city has done a very good job in extracting many essential community benefits from this project.

This project will generate jobs for construction workers and employment in the hotel and offices once the project is built. There will be a new source of tax revenue from this project that does not rely on the residents of Menlo Park. The city's own analysis shows a very positive net revenue flowing to Menlo Park from the project. The city has negotiated groundbreaking policies to reduce greenhouse gases and reduce car trips. Yet, there are those who continue to suggest requirements that will



Our Regional Heritage

The Bayshore Freeway between San Francisco and San Mateo opened in 1929 and reached Menlo Park in 1931. The two-lane highway became known for its bloody accidents.

Menlo Park Historical Association

make it impossible to build. I urge the council to reject these ill-conceived and unnecessary ideas.

We have empty car showrooms on El Camino. Small businesses are struggling to stay afloat. Unemployment for construction workers on the Peninsula is close to 30 percent. We as a community have a chance to give us all some economic hope by supporting the Menlo Gateway Project, and on behalf of 14,000 San Mateo Coun-

ty union construction workers, I urge the Menlo Park City Council to approve this great project.

Bill Nack
Stanford Avenue, Menlo Park

Disgusted by Redwood City's rules on Cargill testimony

Editor:

I left Monday's meeting of the Redwood City Council on the Car-

gill development feeling absolutely disgusted.

Almost 50 citizens opposed to the project took the time out to come to the council meeting, and let their elected officials know their feelings and concerns and to bring some useful information to their attention.

The mayor kept the Cargill vote on the consent agenda, policed arbitrary limits on public comment, cut

See **LETTERS**, next page

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

off speakers after one minute, and council members refused to comment or respond to the many serious concerns expressed by their own residents.

One woman even prepared a very informative video about how the Cargill property could be restored to wetlands (virtualsaltworks.org), but was cut off after 30 seconds.

The mayor's attitude was derisive and hostile. Rather than welcoming public comment, he seemed not to want to hear criticism of the project. Did he forget that he is an elected official, in his position because the citizens voted him there? Once it came time for the vote, the council did not discuss the Cargill development at all.

I left the meeting feeling that the mayor and council members had made up their minds well before the meeting, did not care what the public had to say, and made a mockery of the democratic process.

Perhaps we should listen to other opinions and learn from our past mistakes, or we will be making the same mistakes all over but expecting different results.

**Janet Larson
Patricia Drive, Atherton**

Timing important for Gateway project

Editor:

Menlo Gateway, David Bohannon's latest ambitious development proposal, might result in some long-term benefits to Menlo Park if it were realized at the right time.

Even without a profit-sharing deal, which in my opinion would not be justified, it would contribute to tax revenues and could help make Menlo Park a center of green development.

However, the project depends on the availability of affordable air and auto transportation, neither of which is going to last. Whether the time is measured in decades or years is a matter of some dispute. Either way, Menlo Park's tradition of foot-dragging makes me expect the hotel to open for business about the time that nobody can get to hotels anymore. I would like to be pleasantly surprised.

Menlo Gateway could benefit Belle Haven in the short term and all of Menlo Park in the long term. Mr. Bohannon is willing to take a very big risk on our behalf. He deserves the chance to try while there is still a chance to succeed.

**Nina Wouk
Henderson Street, Belle Haven**

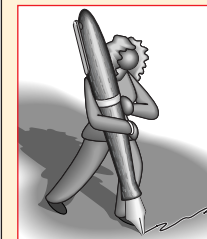
■ TOWN SQUARE

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

A brassy send-off for Frank Moura

By Laura Hale

“Flying to my husband,” confessed Sydney Moura at a surprise retirement celebra-



GUEST OPINION

tion Sunday for Frank Moura, who for the past 39 years has been the music director at Menlo-Atherton High School.

The reception, at Holbrook-Palmer Park, followed a surprise concert in the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center directed by Frank's son, Chris Moura, himself a band director at Oak Grove High School in San Jose. For the past year, through the magic of Facebook and many grateful jazz band alumni, Chris amassed four jazz bands, one from each of the decades Frank has taught, and a full house of eager listeners.

The ruse to lure Frank to the arts center on a lazy Sunday afternoon involved much deception by

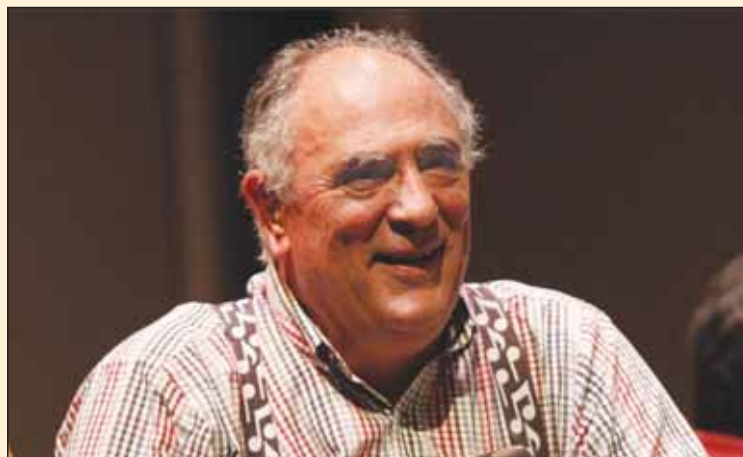


Photo by John Hale

Frank Moura at a surprise tribute last week.

Sydney, Chris, and Teresa Moura, Frank's daughter-in-law, who planned the party and reception. Others in on the plan included Frank's other two sons, Nick and Steve (trombonist and sax for the 1970s alumni band), Cara Arcuni, the stage manager of the PAC (and vocalist for the 2000s band), current M-A jazz band members and their families and musicians from the 1971 band onward.

On Sunday, a much befuddled and delighted Frank was led to a high backed red chair decorated with a golden bow on stage. Jazz educator Dr. Herb Wong, past

president of the International Association of Jazz Education and longtime family friend of the Mouras, was master of ceremonies. He first introduced the present Advanced Jazz Band (and winners this past April of first place in the Reno Jazz Festival), who played a three-piece set highlighted by graduating senior vocalist Holly Smolik.

The 2000s alumni band featuring Ms. Arcuni followed. By the time the 1990s-80s band got into full swing, featuring professional vocalist Lori Carsillo, so did Frank, giving the bands their

closing signals and moving microphones to amplify the soloists.

The 1970s band, featuring some musicians who had been band members during Frank's first year as music director, including some who had been on his first excursion to the Montreaux Jazz festival, brought down the house with “Cold Tater Stomp” and “Ya Gotta Try,” and culminated with a tribute adapted especially for the evening, “Jazz Man.”

Following the concert, Frank was whisked to Holbrook-Palmer Park for an evening of good food, wine, nostalgic reminiscences, and jamming by present and past jazz members.

From the alumni, Frank and his wife received an oversized ticket (designed by Kira Wong) representing the gift of a trip to Montreaux for the summer of 2011. Given the strength of the current M-A Jazz Band, they hope to also appear at that festival.

Mr. Moura and the current Advanced Jazz Band will appear at 3 p.m. June 12, at the Nativity School Fair on Oak Grove Avenue.

Laura Hale is chair of the Menlo-Atherton Band Boosters.

Time to end downtown visioning effort

Editor:

A recent letter urged the Menlo Park City Council to “rethink” the visioning process.

This downtown visioning process needs much more than just a “rethink.” The city needs to cut its losses and kill off the process. It is obvious, just like “Smart Growth” and “City Center Design,” failed processes that preceded this, that this is a failed and very expensive failure at that.

The plan has become politically untenable as evidenced by delay of any further consideration until after the November 2010 election, using the lame excuse of needed extra work on the environmental impact report.

After Phase I, which had some semblance of true Menlo Park voter input, city staff members and the consultant transformed the plan, into what they wanted, not what voters want for Menlo Park.

The City Council should not continue down this road of tossing more funds down this failed process. Over \$1 million has been wasted thus far and they want to spend more.

How can the council continue to consider this failed process, when the real stakeholders, the

downtown merchants and property owners, are so opposed? See the full page notice paid for by the Menlo Park Downtown Alliance, published in the May 26 Almanac. Articles which appeared recently in other newspapers point to the truth about this process.

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

Vote for Measure G to help community colleges

Editor:

Our community colleges train students for many important careers across the employment spectrum from police officers and firefighters to nurses and medical technicians.

Over the past several years, Canada College, College of San Mateo, and Skyline College have had to reduce their budgets by approximately \$20 million due to state budget cuts. Unfortunately, these reductions are happening during a time when enrollments are surging. Students cannot get the classes they need, so they will take longer to graduate and become productive members of our communities.

Measure G on the June 8 ballot is a \$34 parcel tax — less than \$3 per month — for the community colleges. Measure G would partially

restore some of the lost revenue to our community colleges and would be in effect for four years to help the colleges bridge the gap in lost state revenue.

No money will be used for administrator salaries, and seniors can claim a tax exemption. The San Mateo County Community College District has pledged to use all of the new funding to restore classes in important areas, such as career technical education; basic core academics in reading, writing, and math; and preparation for students to transfer to a four-year college.

The community colleges play a very important role in helping to create jobs and grow our economy. Please join me in voting yes on Measure G to help preserve classes for students.

**Virginia Chang Kiraly,
commissioner California
Commission for
Economic Development**

Latest trend: out of the car and onto the bike

Editor:

There are so many more of us than there once was. Where are the walkers and bikers all coming from?

Out from every nook and cranny — courts and lanes, streets and roads, they roll with their bright vests, energized and invigorated with each pump of the leg, crowd-

ing the once under-used bike lanes and sidewalks; smiles broad on their faces, looking all around at the world while they used to be arguing in the car. Crying to their parents, “Please let me get out of the car! I want to ride my bike! Please can we ride our bikes today?”

These little ones are pulling us by the hand and reminding us that there is not too much distance between our homes and our schools, our schools and our stores, our banks and our churches that we cannot reach on our own accord. Getting us out into the fresh air! Making us active and engaged where we used to sit passively.

While it's tough the first day to get out of the comfy car with climate control, with each passing mile, it is easier and easier; harder to sit patiently when we choose the car — our legs want to go, but car traffic makes us wait! We quickly learn that we are faster when we are in the bike lane (and it feels good).

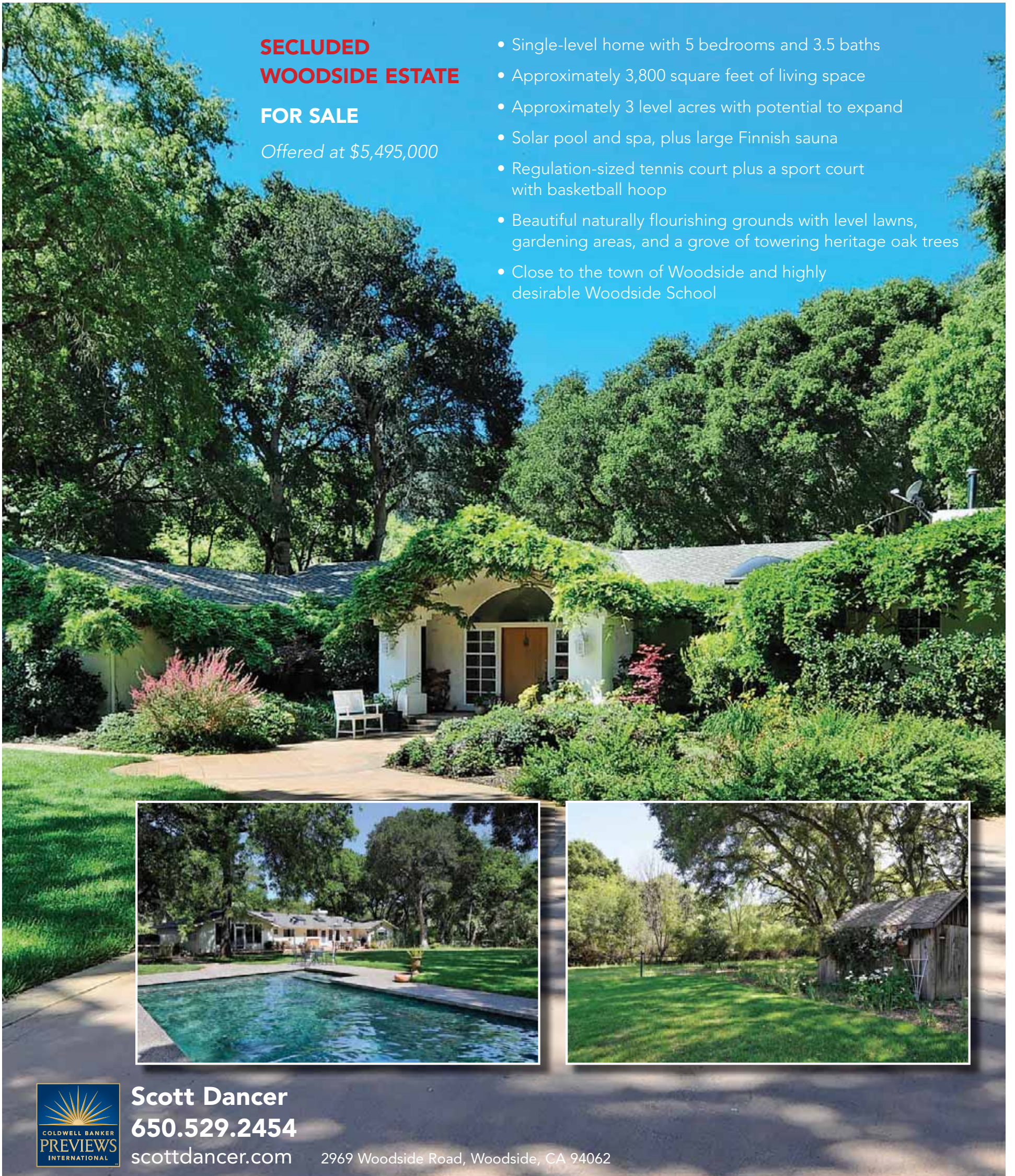
Thank you Menlo Park, for smiling and waving as we pass. It makes us feel like super heroes and princesses on parade in neon! It's so nice to see your smiles and wave hello to you. It feels good to be reducing waist! Hope to see you in the bike lane soon. Don't forget to smile and wave hello when you pass us.

**Michelle Daher
O'Connor Street, Menlo Park**

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