



*Beginning with  
Betsy. See Section 2*

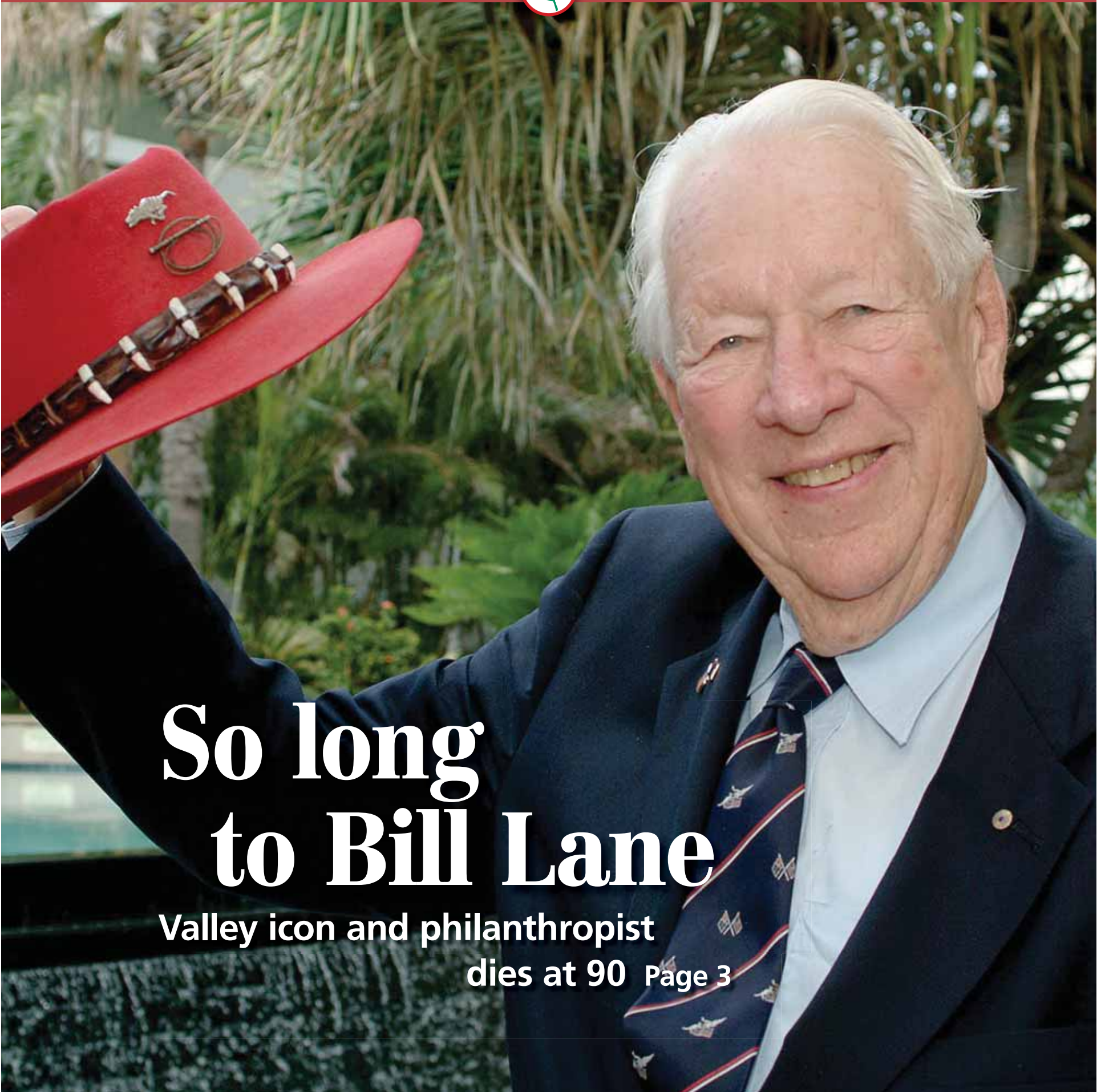
# The Almanac

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

AUGUST 4, 2010 | VOL. 45 NO. 49



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## So long to Bill Lane

Valley icon and philanthropist  
dies at 90 Page 3



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Free orientation on Wednesday, Aug.

18, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Redwood City: Thursdays starting

Sept. 23 for 12 weeks, 2 – 4:15 p.m.

#### **Adult Weight Management Group**

Thursdays, 5:30 – 7 p.m.

#### **Bariatric Nutrition SMA**

First Tuesday of each month,

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#### **Prediabetes**

First Monday of the month, 9 – 11:30

a.m., and third Wednesday of every

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#### **Living Well with Diabetes**

Tuesdays, 4:30 – 7 p.m., or Fridays,

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#### **Heart Smart Class**

Third and fourth Tuesday of every other

month, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

#### **Healthy Eating Type 2 Diabetes**

Third Wednesday of every other month,

5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

#### **Gestational Diabetes**

Wednesdays, 2 – 4 p.m.

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Saturdays, Aug. 7, 14 & 21,

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Thursdays, Sept. 2 – Oct. 7,

7 – 9:15 p.m.

#### **Moving Through Pregnancy**

Mondays, Aug. 9 & 16, 7 – 9 p.m.,

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Wednesday, Aug. 4, 7 – 8 p.m.

Sunnyvale Public Library, 665 W. Olive Avenue, Sunnyvale

#### **Understanding Celiac and Gluten**

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Wednesday, Aug. 11, 7 – 8 p.m.

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### **Nutrition and Diabetes Classes 650-934-7177**

#### **New Weigh of Life:**

#### **Adult Weight Management Program**

(Pre-assessment required prior to

starting class)

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#### **Heart Smart Class**

Second Tuesday of each month,

3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

#### **Diabetes Class (two-part class)**

Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. – noon and

Wednesdays, 2 – 4:30 p.m.

#### **Prediabetes**

Third Thursday of each month,

2 – 4 p.m. Fourth Tuesday of each

month, 3 – 5 p.m.

#### **Sweet Success**

#### **Gestational Diabetes Class**

Wednesdays, 9 a.m. – noon



### **Pregnancy, Breastfeeding and Child Care Classes**

#### **Childbirth Preparation**

Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays,

Aug. 5, 13 & 14, 6 – 9 p.m.

#### **Preparing for Baby**

Tuesday, Aug. 10, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

#### **OB Orientation**

Thursdays, Aug. 12 & 26, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

#### **Infant/Child CPR**

Monday, Aug. 16, 6 – 8 p.m.

#### **Introduction to Solids**

Monday, Aug. 16, 10:30 a.m. – noon

#### **What to Expect with Your Newborn**

Tuesday, Aug. 17, 7 – 8 p.m.

#### **Infant Emergencies and CPR**

Wednesdays, Aug. 18 and Sept. 1,

6 – 8:30 p.m.

#### **Baby Care**

Thursday, Aug. 19, 10:30 a.m. – noon.

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# Bill Lane, publisher, philanthropist, Portola Valley's biggest fan, dies at 90

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

Portola Valley's first mayor, Bill Lane, when contributing his insights at one of the many, many Town Council meetings he attended, would reaffirm what the regulars there already knew: that his cheerful and invigorating spirit inhabited the room. His actual presence was simply a living and breathing manifestation of it.

Now his spirit, and the collective memories of his fellow citizens, will have to do. Mr. Lane, 90, died Saturday, July 31, surrounded by his family at Stanford Hospital. He had been in a coma and died of respiratory failure, according to a spokeswoman for his office.

In addition to being a former mayor and member of the first Town Council, he was the former co-publisher of Sunset magazine, a former ambassador to Australia and Nauru, an active philanthropist, a longtime and devoted environmentalist, and perhaps Portola Valley's most ardent fan. Not to mention a role he took much pride and joy in: playing the part of Santa for 55 years, first at Sunset magazine and, since 1990, at the Ladera shopping center.

Mr. Lane's partner at Sunset was his brother Mel, who died in 2007 at the age of 85 and who co-founded the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST).

Despite his age, Bill Lane regularly and reliably drove himself to town meetings and frequently spoke, usually during the public comment period. He invariably had a good word for the Town Council and the town staff.

"On some quiet evenings when the council agenda was light, Bill would often be the only member of the audience other than the local Almanac reporter," Mayor Steve Toben said in an e-mail. "He would frequently take the floor to express his pride in the democratic process and in the dedication of the town's staff and its volunteer officials. ... His joyous spirit was infectious."

Longtime councilman and for-



Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

**Bill Lane** at his 90th birthday party in the community hall of the Portola Valley Town Center. (The cover photo was taken by a friend in Australia, according to Bill Lane's office.) Go to [AlmanacNews.com](http://AlmanacNews.com) to see more photos.

mer mayor Ted Driscoll noted that while there were many people involved in Portola Valley's incorporation, Mr. Lane was unique in his ongoing commitment. He gave "more than half a century of support to this town," he said. "We will sorely miss him."

"I'm really heartbroken right now," Councilwoman Maryann Derwin said in a phone interview. "It's a profound loss. I just don't know how we're going to manage the Town Council. He was a beacon."

Mr. Lane inspired her and regularly brought the discussion back to the essentials of democratic government, Ms. Derwin said.

"It just felt honorable to do the work when he was there. It doesn't usually feel like an honor," she said. "I hope we can continue to do that, but without his example, his belief in it."

Mr. Lane, a big fan of The Almanac, often added to his comments a good word for this newspaper along with a nod in this reporter's direction. In personal greetings, his smile was a constant, along with a firm handshake and kudos.

Mr. Lane had a kinship with the media milieu, having been the publisher of Sunset, and having worked his way up from selling the magazine door to door during the early years of the Great Depression, according to histories of the magazine and a curricula vitae that Mr. Lane provided to The Almanac.

Mr. Lane received a bachelor's degree in journalism from Stanford University in 1942. As a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he served

See **BILL LANE**, page 6

## CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

The Almanac newsroom is at **3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.**

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

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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Divided council reverses itself on hotel tax increase

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Menlo Park's hotel tax will remain as is for at least three more years after the City Council reversed itself at its July 27 meeting and decided not to ask voters to raise it from 10 percent to 12 percent.

At its meeting the week before (on July 20), the council had approved an ordinance on a 4-1 vote to place the proposed increase on the Nov. 2 ballot, with Councilman Andy Cohen opposed.

Consideration of the matter at the July 27 meeting was the legally required "second reading" of the ordinance. Both votes required a two-thirds majority to pass, which means

four votes on a five-person council.

Since the July 20 action, the council heard from representatives of the city's two hotels — the Rosewood Sand Hill resort and the Stanford Park Hotel — which generate 85 percent of the city's hotel tax, or transient occupancy tax.

Greg Alden of the Stanford Park Hotel told the council on July 27 that his facility "has been hit tremendously hard" by the economic downturn. The workforce has been cut by 19 percent since 2007, and payroll has been cut 18 percent during that time, he said. Overall, business is down more than 20 percent, he added.

The tax increase, he said, would take away some of the competitive edge the hotel now

has because the transient occupancy tax in Palo Alto and other nearby cities is 12 percent.

The Rosewood's Michael Casey agreed. On July 20, he urged the council not to increase the tax. "Raising it is a risk," he

*'They're taking steps we haven't taken as a city' to deal with declining revenue.*

COUNCILMAN JOHN BOYLE, REFERRING TO THE STANFORD PARK HOTEL'S REDUCTION IN WORKFORCE AND PAYROLL

said, not only to hotels but to other Menlo Park businesses that benefit from the trade the hotels bring to town.

The council majority had

pushed for a higher tax because of eroding general fund revenues resulting from the economic downturn. Property and sales tax revenues have fallen steeply, and costs — particularly for employee salaries and benefits — have been rising quickly. The city is wrestling with a structural budgetary deficit that's expected to be in place for several years.

On July 20, when the ordinance was introduced, Councilman Heyward Robinson argued strongly for the tax increase. Holding up a copy of the city's newsletter, MenloFocus, he pointed to a pie chart showing that police salaries now account for 39 percent of the city's spending — up from 34 percent in 2007, he said.

The city, he said, must find a way to raise more revenue. "It

doesn't have to be (the hotel-occupancy tax) ... but this is certainly one option," he said. If the council doesn't approve sending the proposed hike to the ballot, "we need to look at raising the utility-users tax," he added.

Mayor Rich Cline agreed that the city must increase its revenues, but said he opposes a utility tax increase. A hotel tax is appropriate, he said, because the tax hasn't been raised in 18 years, and the hotel/motel market, driven by Stanford University, is stable.

Although the city staff report said that, overall, "representatives from the two Menlo Park hotels felt there would be no discernible impact if the (tax) rate were increased by either one or

See **HOTEL TAX**, page 8

## Hanretty named Portola Valley superintendent

Tim Hanretty, who has served as chief financial officer and assistant superintendent for the Portola Valley and Woodside school districts for many years, has been named the Portola Valley School District's new superintendent, effective with the start of the school year next month.

Mr. Hanretty replaces Anne Campbell, who in January will become San Mateo County superintendent of schools after an uncontested election in June.

The appointment was made as part of the school board's recent reorganization of the district's management structure, according to a press release from the district, which oversees two schools: Corte Madera and Ormondale.

Corte Madera School Principal Carol Piraino is also making a move up in the district: She has been appointed assistant superintendent for special education and curriculum, the press release said.

Mr. Hanretty said Corte Madera will open the school year with "an experienced interim principal in place," but that "hir-



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac  
**Tim Hanretty**

See **HANRETTY**, page 7



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

From left, **Juan Carlos Luna** dumps out a mixture of clay and sandstone that was dug out from 30 feet underground, as Favian Hernandez pulls up a fresh pail of the mixture and Marco Barcenos waits with a wheelbarrow at the recently built Atherton home of Kimberly Sweidy and Raymie Stata, now being retrofitted.

## Homeowners: Atherton building department negligent

■ Couple says a multimillion-dollar reconstruction project is needed to make a new custom home safe and inhabitable.

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

When Kimberly Sweidy named the home she and her husband Raymie Stata were building in west Atherton *Casa de Buena Esperanza* — House of Good Hope — she by no means had rose-colored glasses on.

It was spring 2006. The house had been in the planning and construction process for about

five years, it was nowhere near completion, and Ms. Sweidy was becoming increasingly convinced that the process had gone badly awry.

"In Spanish, *esperar* means to hope and to wait," she said in a recent interview when asked about the name.

The melding of the concepts of hope and waiting, she added, "embraces the cultural value of patience," and in mid-2006, she knew that she, her husband,

and their two young daughters were going to have to call upon a deep store of patience — not to mention fortitude — to get them through the ordeal the home-construction project had turned into.

Now in the midst of a legal battle with her building contractor, Ms. Sweidy is also taking on the town of Atherton's building department for passing inspections and ultimately signing off on a multimillion-dollar house

that the couple is having to pour millions more into to make structurally sound and repair the many problems they've discovered since moving into it in the summer of 2007.

Many if not most of those problems would have been flagged and prevented or fixed if department staff had not "failed to perform in a reasonable or competent manner," Ms. Sweidy said.

Ms. Sweidy and Mr. Stata have filed a claim against

See **HOMEOWNERS**, page 8

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## Armed men invade local home

Two men armed with handguns invaded a home Saturday morning, July 31, in the 1200 block of San Mateo Drive in Menlo Park, police report.

One of the men held a female resident at gunpoint and ordered her to remain quiet, police said.

The other armed man took an iPhone from another female resident and then fled on foot when other residents in the house heard the commotion, said Officer Paul Phu of the Menlo Park Police Department.

No one was injured and the iPhone was the only item reported taken in the incident, which occurred at around 8:56 a.m., Officer Phu said.

One suspect was described as a Hispanic man in his 30s and approximately 5 feet 10 inches tall with a thin build. He was wearing a black beanie-type cap and dark clothing, police said.

The other suspect was described as a heavyset Hispanic man, about 28 years old, 5 feet 5 inches tall, and with a dark complexion. He was

wearing blue jeans, a white long-sleeve T-shirt under a blue collared shirt, and black tennis shoes. He had short hair, a thin mustache and spoke Spanish, police said.

Officers from neighboring cities assisted in a search but the suspects were not found.

Police ask anyone with information about this incident to call Detective Jeff Vasquez at 650-330-6363, Detective Sergeant Jaime Romero at 650-330-6361, or the anonymous tip line at 650-330-6395.

### BILL LANE

continued from page 3

as flag lieutenant and aide to the commandant of the 12th Naval District, based in San Francisco, and as the gunnery and communications officer aboard a troop transport ship in the Pacific, according to his CV.

He married musician, horticulturist and interior designer Donna Jean Gimbel in 1955, and the couple have three adult children — two daughters and a son.

Mr. Lane liked to find occasions for mirth. On July 7, this reporter was securing a bicycle to a flagpole outside the Historic Schoolhouse. Mr. Lane, who was on his way inside for a Planning Commission meeting, noted aloud that if someone were to steal the flagpole, that same person might very well make off with the bicycle then being attached to it.

### Conservation commitment

As an environmentalist, Mr. Lane had few peers in his 20 years of active support for POST as well as for national parks and conservation causes around the country, Audrey Rust, the chief executive of

POST, told The Almanac.

"His contributions to conservation and the appreciation and joy of nature are innumerable," Ms. Rust said. "He was really a remarkable man who put his efforts into his belief system. He was a conservationist of great stature."

It began with the encouragement of his parents to enjoy the outdoors and the Western way of life, whether in the wilderness or in a backyard, she said.

In Yosemite National Park, Mr. Lane had the honor, on several occasions, to MC the fire-fall, an evening spectacle involving a bonfire being shoved off the cliff at the top of Glacier Point. "That was a great moment for him," Ms. Rust said.

### A philanthropist

Councilman Driscoll, an entrepreneur and a scientist, recalled a chance encounter some years ago with Mr. Lane and his brother Mel in a Menlo Park restaurant. Mr. Driscoll had been on his way out after making a pitch to another scientist about an idea for detecting abandoned or forgotten land mines. He stopped by their table to say hello, not to continue his pitch.

After a 15-second summary of why he was there that day, Mr. Driscoll said that Bill Lane took out a business card and wrote on the back, "I commit \$10,000," and handed it to him.

"I was blown away," Mr. Driscoll said. "It was breathtaking when it happened. He spent his life giving away money."

POST's environmentally themed Wallace Stegner lecture series was underwritten by Bill and Jean Lane, and Mr. Lane attended almost every lecture for 15 years, Ms. Rust said.

"He was a person who we will miss very much, but he has given us so much," Ms. Rust added. "What a wonderful legacy."

Included in that legacy locally will be Mr. and Ms. Lane's generosity in giving some \$2.5 million to help build the \$20 million three-building complex at the Portola Valley Town Center. The U.S. Green Building Council recently awarded the complex its highest rating. ■

Go to [is.gd/dYXF8](http://is.gd/dYXF8) (case-sensitive) to read Marion Softky's story on Bill Lane as he approached his 90th birthday.

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## Tour de Menlo ready to roll Aug. 21

Hundreds of Bay Area cyclists are expected to take part Saturday, Aug. 21, in this year's Tour de Menlo, the annual bike ride that starts and ends at Menlo-Atherton High School and offers three Midpeninsula routes of 25, 35 and 65 miles.

The longer course will take riders to Belmont and then south through Woodside, Portola Valley and Los Altos on their way to the lunch stop at the Picchetti Open Space district on Montebello Road in Cupertino. The return route heads north on Foothill Boulevard through Los Altos, Palo Alto and on to Menlo-Atherton High School. The elevation gain on the longer ride is about 2,500 feet.

The 35- and 25-mile routes are

virtually flat and are designed to appeal to beginning and intermediate riders.

Lunch will be served at the scenic Picchetti Open Space and historic winery, where riders will be able to relax in a shaded setting overlooking Stevens Creek Reservoir. Lutticken's, the Menlo Park deli, will cater the hearty lunch of grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, and chicken sandwiches as well as a wide variety of salads.

The ride is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Menlo Park and The Almanac.

All proceeds from the ride will benefit Rotary tutoring and need-based scholarships as well as nonprofit organizations supported by The Almanac's annual Holiday Fund drive.

The beneficiaries are the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank, St. Anthony's Dining Room in Redwood City, Shelter Network, Youth and Family Assistance and several others.

Got to TourdeMenlo.com to register or get more information. Online registration continues until ride day, Aug. 21, although anyone who wants to receive a ride T-shirt must register online by Aug. 11. Advance registration costs \$50 including lunch and the shirt.

The ride is fully supported, with two rest stops and a water stop, and SAG support is offered over the complete route. For more information, call Tom at (650) 575-2279.

## State agrees with Andy Cohen's complaint regarding conflict of interest in Cargill case

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Rosanne Foust, a city council member in Redwood City, acted in violation of state ethics rules when she participated in a recent decision regarding a proposed residential community on what is now 1,400 acres of salt flats off Redwood City, according to the state Fair Political Practices Commission.

At the request of Menlo Park Councilman Andy Cohen, the Fair Political Practices Commission looked into whether Ms. Foust, who is the chief executive of the San Mateo County Economic Development Association, should have participated in a council decision involving the Cargill Saltworks project, which SAMCEDA endorsed.

The project, which Mr. Cohen and his colleagues on the Menlo Park City Council oppose, would add as many as 12,000 homes and 1 million square feet of commercial space. It would also create or preserve 800 acres of wetlands and outdoor recre-

ational space. Ms. Foust voted on May 24 to approve a contract for an environmental review of the project.

In a July 28 letter, Gary S. Winuk of the FPPC's enforcement division informed Ms. Foust that she "violated the conflict-of-interest provisions" of state government code section 81000, the Political Reform Act.

Asked to comment, Mr. Cohen, noting an editorial attack against him by Ms. Foust's husband, said that his critics "like to make it personal when elected officials are simply trying to do the best they can for the residents of our area."

In a July 30 letter to editors, Ms. Foust said she is "very disappointed" but accepts the ruling and that she will write a letter to the FPPC contesting the "factual inaccuracies and inconsistencies" in Mr. Winuk's letter.

"I hold myself to the highest ethical standards," Ms. Foust noted, and added that she will recuse herself from future Saltworks project matters.

The political reform act "prohibits a public official from mak-

ing, participating in making, or in any way attempting to use her official position to influence a governmental decision in which the official knows, or has reason to know, that she has a financial interest," Mr. Winuk wrote.

"... it was reasonably foreseeable," Mr. Winuk continued, "that your vote to hire an environmental firm to review the Saltworks project, a vote that moved the project along on its path toward potential approval, could affect SAMCEDA, an organization so interested in the Saltworks project (that) it held a vote to endorse the project and has sent its employees as advocates on the Saltworks project to the Redwood City council's meetings."

Since Ms. Foust acted on the advice of the interim city attorney in Redwood City, the FPPC closed the case with a letter of warning, which will remain in FPPC records, Mr. Winuk wrote.

Ms. Foust can contest this resolution before an administrative law judge or the FPPC, but that would open her up to prosecution, Mr. Winuk wrote. ■

### HANRETTY

continued from page 5

ing a highly qualified individual to serve as the permanent principal at (the school) will be my top priority."

Mr. Hanretty received a bachelor's degree in public administration from the University of San Francisco, and has completed graduate work in finance, human resource and organizational development at the University of California at Berkeley.

He joined the Portola Valley

district in 1999, and led school construction and renovation projects at Corte Madera, Ormondale, and Woodside schools.

Mr. Hanretty said the decade-long joint powers agreement between the Portola Valley and Woodside districts that allowed the sharing of his services as finance director ended last month.

Woodside has hired a new full-time chief business official, Robin Wasco, who worked previously in the South San Francisco School District, he said.

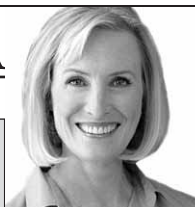
In a prepared statement,

current Superintendent Anne Campbell said: "I can't think of two better people to lead the (district). Mr. Hanretty and Dr. Piraino bring a wealth of talent to their new positions."

"Tim is a true expert in the realm of school finance and the development of creative solutions to perplexing problems. ... Carol is a highly skilled educator who holds a profound vision for what schools can be in the 21st century and who possesses the management skills needed to make that vision a reality."

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### Lowest Interest Rates In Decades

Dear Monica:

**My mortgage is six percent but I have not refinanced because I would prefer to sell the house and don't want to pay the costs of refinancing when I plan to own the home for only a few years. The market seems slow right now and I don't think it is a good time to sell. What should I do? James P.**

Dear James:

You are like many homeowners these days; waiting to see what the market will do so that they can make their move. It seems to me that you have a couple of options. First, if you don't want to sell in this market, I think you should look at refinancing. Interest rates are lower this week than they have been in the

past forty years. A 30-year fixed rate conforming loan (less than \$417,000) is about 4.5% and a 15-year conforming loan is about 3.8%. If you are paying 6% with your current loan, you could save quite a bit on your monthly payment by refinancing. This would take some of the sting out of waiting for the market to improve.

You might also change your mind and sell in this market. Buyers are seeing these same low interest rates and depending on the price, location and condition of your home, it may be very attractive to buyers who need a home. If you have enough proceeds from a sale to pay your mortgage and closing costs (i.e., you will not be short), this could be a fine time to sell. Just be sure you price it well, and have it looking its best.

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

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## HOMEOWNERS

continued from page 5

Atherton, protesting new building permit fees that the town is charging them to do the retrofitting and repair work necessary to make the house safe, including stabilization of the main house's foundation.

Ms. Sweidy is also calling for the firing of Building Official Mike Wasmann, who, she said, did a number of the inspections on the house.

"The need for these building permit fees are the direct result and consequence of the negligence, gross negligence, fraud and breach of duty ... of the (town's) building department, including its plan check, oversight and inspections," Ms. Sweidy, an attorney, wrote in a June 29 notice to town officials and council members.

"Further, the town employee with the most culpability, Mr. Mike Wasmann, is now the building official for (the town), in charge of oversight of the entire department," she wrote.

Outraged that the "dream home" her family had waited for years to inhabit is plagued by major structural deficiencies, inadequate plumbing and electrical work, and a host of other serious problems that need correcting, Ms. Sweidy told *The Almanac*, "They turned my dream home into a nightmare."

**Is building official qualified?**

Once the family had moved into the approximately 8,000-square-foot main house three years ago, Ms. Sweidy and an assistant began an investigation to try to figure out, among other things, how the house could have passed muster with the town.

One of her discoveries, made about two months ago: Mr. Wasmann's certification as a building inspector had lapsed in June 2007, five months after he had been

promoted from senior building inspector to building official. And, she found, he does not hold building official certification.

In calling for Mr. Wasmann's firing, Ms. Sweidy wrote in a letter to City Attorney Wynne Furth that the building official "is a danger to the residents of ... Atherton" and a liability to the town.

*'It's like trying to hold up a cantaloupe with toothpicks.'*

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR RICK COLINDRES, DESCRIBING THE EXISTING PIERS SUPPORTING THE HOUSE'S FOUNDATION.

After the town learned of Mr. Wasmann's failure to renew his certification, he took "the necessary

steps" to reinstate it, and completed the process in June, Ms. Furth said in a June 29 letter to Ms. Sweidy.

Mr. Wasmann could not be reached for comment, but Eileen Wilkerson, the town's assistant city manager, said that Mr. Wasmann meets all qualifications listed in the town's job description for the building department's top post.

Atherton does not require certification for its building official, even though the California Building Code says that such an employee "should be certified as a building official through a recognized certification program."

Saying that Atherton has some of the most complex and elaborately designed houses in the country, Ms. Sweidy blasted the town for not requiring more of the person who heads the department that provides oversight for home construction projects. "This is a job that requires a high level of skills, knowledge and competence," she said angrily, adding that it's not clear whether Mr. Wasmann completed an associate's degree from the College of San Mateo, which he attended from 1969 to 1971.

**Under reconstruction**

Situated on two acres near the creek, on Broadacres Road, the angular, multicolored stucco house and its accessory structures were designed to accommodate the couple's commit-

ment to philanthropy, Ms. Sweidy said.

Councilman John Boyle, who last week expressed apprehension about the tax increase before being persuaded to support it, reiterated his concerns about it. He said he had been unaware of the severe drop in business Mr. Alden spoke of, and said that now may be the wrong time to raise the tax.

Referring to the Stanford Park's reduction in workforce and payroll, he noted, "They're taking steps we haven't taken as a city" to deal with



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

The multipurpose room, which the couple had designed to accommodate philanthropic events at their home, is under construction for structural reinforcement.

ment to philanthropy, Ms. Sweidy said.

The main house has a multipurpose room, with a slightly raised stage, that can seat 85 guests for philanthropic events, she said. Three such gatherings were held there before the major reconstruction of the structures began, including an event for donors to Packard children's hospital and the associated Ronald McDonald House.

Such events are now on hold while the structures and grounds undergo major construction work. Recently, a construction crew began what is likely to be a six-month project to replace the 8- to 9-foot piers under the main house's foundation with 25- to 30-foot piers that engineers have deemed necessary to stabilize the house.

Ms. Sweidy said the foundation work was done improperly because it was based on information in a geotechnical study that was performed by a person who, she learned much later, was a civil engineer, not a geotechnical engineer. The study "ignored

the local geological data well-known in the industry since the 1960s, including the existence of the Whiskey Hill Formation and the Alluvial Formation, with their chaotic mix of claystone and sandstone," Ms. Sweidy wrote in her complaint against the town.

Rick Colindres, the on-site supervisor overseeing the work, described the problem with the existing piers now supporting the house: "It's like trying to hold up a cantaloupe with toothpicks."

Ms. Sweidy said problems with the soils report and structural design plans based on it should have been caught and corrected by the building department during the plan review process. Instead, she said, the structural strength of the house is about 40 percent of what's required, according to engineers who have examined the house since the contractor, Fulwiler James Inc., walked off the site in spring 2007.

The entire retrofitting and reconstruction project is likely

to take about two years, Ms. Sweidy said. In addition to the foundation-stabilization project, work is needed to shore up walls that have improper supports, and repairs are needed to a range of features from plumbing and electrical wiring, to tile and cabinetry, to the roof and floors.

Already reconstructed, at great cost, is the dissipation field, installed to control flooding on the property. Ms. Sweidy said she and her husband, perplexed by soil saturation, standing water, and flooding that was occurring near the dissipation field, found out five years after the field was constructed that the sump pump necessary to its operation had been omitted. The sump pump, she said, was required in the permit issued by the town, but a town inspector signed off without verifying its existence.

The project, Ms. Sweidy said, "is now millions of dollars over budget, and over what (the house) is worth." And, she added, the cost will be much higher before all the repairs are done. ■

## HOTEL TAX

continued from page 5

two percent," strong opposition to the increase surfaced in the last few weeks from top officials of those hotels.

Mr. Alden of the Stanford Park told *The Almanac* he had learned that city staff did ask an individual at the hotel about the effects of a higher tax, but that the person "didn't discuss it" with higher management. The person "gave a response, but it

wasn't reflective of the management," he said.

Councilman John Boyle, who last week expressed apprehension about the tax increase before being persuaded to support it, reiterated his concerns about it. He said he had been unaware of the severe drop in business Mr. Alden spoke of, and said that now may be the wrong time to raise the tax.

Referring to the Stanford Park's reduction in workforce and payroll, he noted, "They're taking steps we haven't taken as a city" to deal with

declining revenue.

Council members appeared interested in revising the ordinance to find a compromise that could secure four votes, but City Attorney Bill McClure said that, with the looming deadline for qualifying the question for the ballot, no substantive revisions were possible. The next time such a measure could go before voters would be November 2012, he said.

Asked by Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson if the tax could be lowered later even if voters set it at 12 percent, Mr. McClure said

the council could reduce a tax rate without voter approval.

Councilman Heyward Robinson's motion to approve the ordinance included a stipulation that, if the tax is approved by voters, the staff would prepare a resolution for the council to vote on that would allow the council to lower or eliminate the increase as it saw fit — for example, in the event that the economy doesn't pick up before January 2012, when the proposed increase would have taken effect.

That motion died for lack of a second. Although Mayor Cline and Councilwoman Fergusson indicated they wanted to forge ahead with the increase, Councilman John Boyle made it clear that his decision was shifting against the action. With a fourth vote apparently not in the cards, a formal vote was never taken.

Ms. Fergusson, who noted that many staff hours had gone into putting the ordinance together, said she was "disappointed to see the council flip-flop at the last minute." ■

## Five potential candidates for MP council

By Renee Batti

Almanac Staff Writer

Chuck Bernstein, who has been active in opposing the Bohannon-Menlo Gateway project and in helping to qualify the citizen-driven pension reform initiative for the November ballot, and high-speed rail opponent Michael J. Brady took out papers July 29 to run for a seat on the City Council.

In a prepared statement, Mr. Bernstein said he wants to help the city in "establishing a balanced budget and maintaining it, making wiser land-use decisions in a more timely manner, and ensuring that



government works for its citizens instead of the citizens working to maintain government."

Mr. Brady, an attorney, has filed at least two lawsuits against the California High-Speed Rail Authority for a range of complaints. He could not be immediately reached for comment.

Mr. Bernstein is president and co-founder of Early Learning Institute, which operates three child development centers and two private schools in the Bay Area.

In the last decade, he has served on city task forces that studied residential development, child care services, and the budget.

So far, Mr. Bernstein, Mr. Brady, council incumbents Rich Cline and Heyward Robinson, and Menlo Park Fire Protection Board President Peter Ohtaki have taken out papers. No one has filed yet to become official candidates for the three open seats to be filled by voters on Nov. 2.

The filing deadline is Aug. 6, but will be extended to Aug. 11 if Councilman John Boyle sticks to his decision not to seek a second term. ■

## Portola Valley native returns to open acupuncture clinic

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Courtney Jonson, a Portola Valley native and recently a resident of Maui, is back in Portola Valley with a title: diplomat of Oriental medicine, a term of art to identify a licensed acupuncturist.

Ms. Jonson is a co-founder of an acupuncture practice in Maui and has opened an office in Portola Valley's Village Square shopping center in the 800 block of Portola Road, she said in an e-mail. She shares an office with Hoffman & Moore Chiropractic.

Ms. Jonson is a graduate of Ormondale Elementary, Corte Madera Middle, and Menlo-Atherton High schools, she said, adding that she was a tennis



Courtney Jonson has opened an office in Portola Valley's Village Square shopping center in the 800 block of Portola Road.

champion at Alpine Hills Tennis & Swim Club and a regular soccer player at the town's two fields.

She has an undergraduate degree

from the University of California and a master's degree from the Five Branches University, a graduate school in traditional Chinese medicine located in Santa Cruz.

The focus of her acupuncture practice is healthy weight loss, which includes correcting hormone imbalances and adrenal and thyroid insufficiencies, and addressing related issues such as menopause and digestive disturbances, Ms. Jonson said.

"Resolving common underlying bio-chemical imbalances while promoting normal physiology is the cornerstone of (my) practice, offering a comprehensive and holistic approach to our biggest asset—our health," she said in the e-mail.

Go to [jonsonwellness.com](http://jonsonwellness.com) for more information. ■

## Gold-medal effort in girls' volleyball

The Palo Alto and Sacred Heart Prep girls' volleyball teams enjoyed great success this season. The Vikings compiled a 33-game winning streak and reached the Central Coast Section Division II semifinals while the Gators went 24-11 and won the section's Division IV championship.

Both teams made it to the NorCal semifinals. Members of both teams helped their City Beach 15 Black volleyball squad capture the gold medal in the 15 National Division of the 2010 USA Volleyball Junior National Championships on June 29 at

the Reno-Sparks Convention Center in Reno.

City Beach went 10-1 while capturing the division championship. Palo Alto High's Shelby Knowles, Jackie Koenig and Caroline Martin were joined by SHP's Sonia Abuel-Saud and Olivia Bertolacci on the winning team. Abuel-Saud was named the division's Most Valuable Player while City Beach's Emily Reed and Elizabeth Nizzoli made the all-tournament team.

Also playing for City Beach was Drew Edelman from Menlo School and Becky Slattery from

Mountain View High.

The team is coached by former Stanford volleyball standout Leah Hall.

Seventh-seeded City Beach had to battle from behind in its final six matches after losing the first game in each outing. It won the title with a 23-25, 25-22, 15-13 victory over top-seeded Tejas 15 Kaepa 1 (North Texas).

City Beach reached the final match after defeating second-seeded Colorado Jrs 15 Sherri (Rocky Mountain), 20-25, 25-20, 15-9, in the quarterfinal. In the semifinal, City Beach defeated sixth-seeded Black Swamp 15 Orwig (Ohio Valley), 23-25, 25-23, 15-6.

## Menlo Park City Council takes a break

The Menlo Park City Council is taking a brief recess. The council does not plan to meet again until Aug. 24.

City Clerk Margaret Roberts said the council members typically meet only once during August to allow time for vacations. What will the council members do with all that free

time on their hands? Neither Councilman Andy Cohen nor Mayor Rich Cline have special plans, although the mayor said he will be at home caring for his six-month-old child.

The Planning Commission will also be on hiatus until Aug. 23.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS BID PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR 2008 WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The City of Menlo Park invites qualified contractors to submit sealed bid proposals for the construction of the 2008 WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT PROJECT. Work required as part of this project consists of, in general, furnishing and installing water mains by open trench and jack and bore methods, valves, appurtenances, services and meter boxes, connecting direct taps and fire hydrants, street paving and striping at various locations within the City of Menlo Park; all as shown on the plans and described in the specifications. Performance of this work requires a valid California Contractor's License Class A. Project documents and copies of the prevailing rate of wages can be obtained from the Menlo Park Engineering Division, located in the Administrative Building at 701 Laurel St. Sealed bid proposals will be received at the Engineering Division office until 2 p.m. on Wednesday, August 25, 2010, at which time they will be opened and publicly read. Additional information can be obtained on the City's website: [www.menlopark.org/cip](http://www.menlopark.org/cip)

Published in THE ALMANAC on August 4, 2010 and August 11, 2010



### NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS BID PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR 2009-2010 SLURRY SEAL PROJECT

The City of Menlo Park invites qualified contractors to submit sealed bid proposals for the construction of the 2009-2010 SLURRY SEAL PROJECT. Work required as part of this project consists of, in general, slurry sealing and restriping of various roadway locations within the City of Menlo Park; all as shown in the contract documents. Performance of this work requires a valid California Contractor's License Class A or Class C12. Project documents and copies of the prevailing rate of wages can be obtained from the Menlo Park Engineering Division, located in the Administrative Building at 701 Laurel St. A non-mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held to discuss the project scope of work at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 10, 2010 at the City Administration Building, 701 Laurel Street in Menlo Park, CA. Sealed bid proposals will be received at the Engineering Division office until 2 p.m. on Wednesday, August 18, 2010, at which time they will be opened and publicly read. Additional information can be obtained on the City's website: [www.menlopark.org/cip](http://www.menlopark.org/cip)



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- \* Plenty of opportunity to learn more about Rotary. Ask any ride worker for details.



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## George Saxe, nationally known art collector

### OBITUARY



George Saxe

in Europe during World War II, he married Dorothy Ruby in 1947 in Michigan City, Indiana.

In 1959, the Saxes moved to Palo Alto, where he established a successful real estate development business. They were longtime Menlo Park residents.

A member and past president of Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, Mr. Saxe served on the board of many organizations, including the Jewish Home of San Francisco, the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, Pilchuk Glass School, and California College of the Arts, as well as the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Mr. Saxe is survived by his wife, Dorothy; sons Loren and Joel; a daughter, Ellen; and six grandchildren.

Memorials in honor of Mr. Saxe may be made to Congregation Beth Am, California College of the Arts, the Jewish Home of San Francisco, or the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

George B. Saxe of Menlo Park, who with his wife, Dorothy, amassed one of the nation's finest collections of contemporary crafts, died July 28 in Palo Alto. He was 89.

The Saxe collection of contemporary craft has its own permanent gallery in the M.H. de Young Museum in San Francisco and has been exhibited in six other museums, including the Smithsonian and the Oakland Museum.

The couple began collecting in 1980, focusing only on glass in the beginning. They later expanded into ceramics, fiber, metal and wood. Mr. Saxe was a major supporter of well-known figures in the glass art scene, such as Dale Chihuly and William Morris, but he also collected work by contemporary sculptors, such as Lynda Benglis and Kiki Smith, who align themselves more with the wider contemporary art world, according to the Glass Quarterly.

Mr. Saxe served as a trustee of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and the Saxes traveled around the world with museum groups.

Born in Mount Union, Pennsylvania, Mr. Saxe was a graduate of Mercersburg Academy and Cornell University. After serving

## Grads win Kolozsi scholarships

By Michael Abramson

Special to the Almanac

Eleven high school graduates from the Sequoia Union High School District have received Kelly Kolozsi Scholarships, given to students with high academic achievement, a record of contributing to their school and community, and a demonstrated financial need.

The students must also plan to enroll in one of the University of California schools, says Tita Kolozsi of Atherton, the mother of Kelly, for whom the scholarship is named.

Kelly Kolozsi was killed in 1989 at age 24 when his car was struck by a vehicle driven by a drunken driver. Kelly had graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School in 1982 and UC Santa Barbara in 1986.

The scholarships, which have been given for 21 years, range from \$1,000 to \$2,500, depending on the financial need of the student.

Five of the eleven winners were named Kelly Kolozsi Scholars and can apply for a renewal scholarship next year. These students are Chelsea Braun and Alena McLucas of Woodside High School, Victoria Tinoco of Sequoia High School, Natalie Poon of Carmont High School, and Courtney Durdle of Menlo-Atherton High School. Ms. Braun will attend UCLA; Ms. McLucas, UC Davis; Ms. Tinoco,

UC Riverside; Ms. Poon, UC San Diego; and Ms. Durdle, UC Davis.

Six students, five from Woodside High School and one from Menlo-Atherton High School, received awards of merit. Sarah Bance, Kristin Goedicke, Lily Shanahan, Daniel Steiner, and Haley Valleta all graduated from Woodside High School while Allison Malathong graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School. Ms. Goedicke and Mr. Steiner will attend UC Berkeley; Ms. Bance, UC Santa Cruz; Ms. Shanahan, UC Riverside; Ms. Valleta, UC Davis; and Ms. Malathong, UC Merced.

Woodside High School graduate Adedemeji Aiyedogbon, a student at UC Davis, and Carmont High School graduate Michelle Martinez, a UC Merced student, have both received renewal scholarships after being named Kelly Kolozsi scholars last year.

Maria Patino of Woodside High School received an honorable mention. Patino will attend UC Davis next year.

Members of the selection committee this year were Marty Fuller, Jennifer Heaton, Richard Hirayama, Bryan Kolozsi, Tita Kolozsi, Ellen Hohbach-Scheetz and Dan Siegal.

For more information regarding the scholarship, contact Tita Kolozsi at [titakolozsi@hotmail.com](mailto:titakolozsi@hotmail.com). ■

## Big sales tax drop likely due to error, finance director says

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

■ MENLO PARK

The city's on-paper decline of sales tax revenue of nearly \$2 million in fiscal year 2009-10 is quite possibly the result of errors, not reality, according to Carol Augustine, Menlo Park's finance director.

Ms. Augustine told The Almanac that the city has asked the California State Board of Equalization to review the records of "two of our top 25 businesses" because their sales tax contributions to the city over a six-month period "fell far short of our expectation."

One business contributed no sales tax revenue in the quarter that ended March 31, and the other produced unusually small amounts during that quarter and the quarter ending Dec. 31, 2009, she said.

Ms. Augustine told the City Council at its July 27 meeting that she suspects the low figures represent "an error or misstatement" on the part of the businesses.

Sales tax revenue in fiscal year 2008-09 was nearly \$6.9 million, according to a chart presented to the council as part of a quarterly financial review. The review shows that sales tax revenue in 2009-10

has so far come in at just under \$5 million, although the books have not yet been closed.

Ms. Augustine said she is hopeful that the Board of Equalization review will result in the 2009-10 figure increasing by about \$700,000.

Even if that happens, the city's sales tax revenue will be \$1.2 million less in 2009-10 than it was in the prior fiscal year.

The businesses have 30 days to respond to Board of Equalization inquiries, and Ms. Augustine said she hopes the questions are resolved before the annual audit of the city's budget begins in October.

While she considers it likely that the figures are in error, Ms. Augustine said she doesn't want to insinuate "that there are incompetent people running our businesses — it's just not so." Instead, she said, such errors could be the results of staff turnover, or bookkeeping done in headquarters that are removed from the local business branches.

"But that's the stuff the (Board of Equalization) is made to deal with, so we let them take care of it," she said. ■

## Brad Pitt sighted in Sharon Heights

By Hannah Totte

Special to The Almanac

Actor Brad Pitt was spotted at the Sharon Heights Shopping Center on Tuesday afternoon, July 28, while on a break from filming his new movie "Moneyball," in which he plays the Oakland Athletic's General Manager Billy Beane.

The Hollywood heartthrob was eating lunch at Eric's Gourmet, said Sheri Oscarson, an employee at Peak Performance Chiropractic, whose office is

across from the eatery.

When asked for a picture, Mr. Pitt politely refused, said Ms. Oscarson.

Staff at Eric's Gourmet confirmed that Mr. Pitt was there, but they didn't know why.

The film, which is being shot in Oakland, is based on a book of the same title that focuses on Mr. Beane's innovative strategy for winning games without big-budget players. Due for release in 2011, the movie will also star big league actors Philip Seymour Hoffman and Jonah Hill.

## Cafe Scientifique: Talk: Stem cells and their potential

Stem cells hold a promise of "enormous potential" for healing, says Dr. Jill Helms, a surgery professor and stem cell researcher at Stanford University hospital, who will speak at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 10, at SRI International in Menlo Park as part of the Cafe Scientifique program.

"At the end," she said, "I hope the audience will understand why stem cell biologists think that regenerative medicine may well be the most important scientific advancement of our

lifetimes."

Cafe Scientifique is monthly meeting where the public can explore and debate scientific and technological issues in a non-academic setting. The program runs for 90 minutes.

Doors open at 5:15 p.m. at the headquarters of SRI Menlo Park in the International Building at Middlefield Road and Ringwood Ave. Doors close when the room reaches capacity.

Go to [cafescisv.org](http://cafescisv.org) for more information.



Photo by Eric Lawson

Sally Cooper of Menlo Park and the plug-in Prius she is test-driving.

## Local resident test-drives plug-in Prius

By Michael Abramson

Special to The Almanac

Sally Cooper never minded answering market research questions. And now that responding to some questions over the phone and online earned her the chance to test-drive the new plug-in electric Prius, she is sure to answer them even more often.

Ms. Cooper, who is a financial controller for her company Menlo Money Matters, has been a Menlo Park resident for 14 years and is a native of London, England.

She normally drives a 2007 Honda Civic Hybrid, but jumped at the chance to test out the plug-in Prius when she was offered the opportunity.

That chance, however, almost ended before it began.

"I got a phone call and it sounded like a spam phone call,"

Ms. Cooper said. "I nearly put the phone down."

She didn't, and after answering several car-related questions, she was invited to take a survey online. Though still unaware that it was for Toyota, she agreed. After finishing the survey, she was informed that she qualified to test drive the new car for six weeks.

Mrs. Cooper's plug-in Prius is one of only 20 that have been lent out for market research testing by individuals, all in the Bay Area. Another 130 have been lent to universities around the country for their testing.

The car Mrs. Cooper is testing is the first Prius to use plug-in technology that runs the car for the first 14 miles solely on electric power. After that, the car's hybrid electric-gas system kicks in.

Ms. Cooper says she has been able to get about 67 miles a gallon in the plug-in Prius. That's

pretty impressive compared to the 43 mpg she gets with her Honda Civic and the 51-mpg Toyota reports the 2010 Prius gets.

It was 20 days and 800 miles before Mrs. Cooper finally had to put gas in the car.

To charge the car, Ms. Cooper only needs a regular wall outlet and about three hours. According to Toyota, Ms. Cooper said, charging the car for three hours requires about as much energy as keeping a hair dryer on for the same amount of time.

Mrs. Cooper hasn't determined how much she is spending on charging the car, but her experience has been positive regardless. "I would definitely consider buying one when they come out," she said. "I really like driving it."

The Toyota plug-in Prius is scheduled to be released in 2012. ■

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## Menlo Medical Clinic is pleased to announce

the arrival of the following board certified physicians:

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Doctor Amy Elliott completed her Internal Medicine and Rheumatology residency and fellowship at Stanford University Medical Center



**LAURA SALDIVAR, MD** – Pediatrician

Doctor Laura Saldivar completed her Pediatric internship and residency at Stanford University Medical Center and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital



**GRACE PEACE YU, MD, MSc** – Allergist/Immunologist

Doctor Grace Peace Yu completed her Allergy Immunology fellowship at Stanford Medical Center and internship and residency at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital



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## Supes reject ballot measure to hike county sales tax

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors has rejected a proposal to put a quarter-cent sales tax on the November ballot.

The supervisors took the action in a 3-2 vote Tuesday (July 27). The tax increase would have generated \$30 million per year, county spokesman Marshall Wilson said.

Opposing the ballot measure were supervisors Carole Groom, Adrienne Tissier and Mark Church. Supervisors Rich Gordon and Rose Jacobs Gibson voted in favor of putting it on the ballot.

San Mateo County, along with Santa Clara County, has one of the higher sales taxes in the state with a rate of 9.25 percent.

Ms. Groom reasoned that the county needs more time to demonstrate that it has made sufficient cuts and that county services are actually in danger without a tax increase, Mr. Gordon said.

Ms. Tissier and Mr. Church "were more vocal in their comments that this was not the right time (for a tax increase), that the public won't accept it," Mr. Gordon said, adding that he doesn't disagree with their point.

In voting for a ballot measure, Mr. Gordon noted that the supervisors had agreed to a three-part deficit reduction plan: tax increases, labor give-backs and further cuts. This ballot measure, even if voters rejected it, would

"start that conversation" about a tax increase, he said.

"I look down the road and I see where we financially are headed and we're moving toward a cliff," Mr. Gordon told The Almanac.

The county has a structural deficit of about \$150 million over the next five years, he said. To meet expenses for the 2010-11 budget year, the county is using \$90 million from reserves and making \$36 million in cuts, with more cuts to come in 2011-12, he added.

"We don't have enough resources to continue putting \$90 million in for more than a year or two," he said.

A tax measure can be put before the voters only in a general election when a supervisor is running for office, Mr. Gordon said. The next such election is in 2012.

Revenues from sales and property taxes in the county are flat and real estate transfer tax revenues are down, he said.

Another significant loss: state-wide sales tax revenues, which used to help counties pay for law enforcement, has seen "a huge decline," Mr. Gordon said, adding that the county used reserves and general fund money to backfill that loss.

The entire board agreed that it would be a struggle to mount a successful campaign so close to the November election, spokesman Wilson said. ■

Bay City News Service contributed to this report.

## MP school board: election more likely

Ana C. Uribe-Ruiz, a Menlo Park mother and business owner, has taken out qualifying papers to run for the Menlo Park City Elementary School District.

If she returns the papers and becomes qualified for election, Ms. Uribe-Ruiz will join incumbent Laura Linkletter Rich, former board member Terry Thygesen, and community volunteer Joan Lambert in a contest for three seats on the five-member board.

Three seats are also open for the board of the Las Lomitas Elementary School District,

which covers western parts of Menlo Park and Atherton as well as Ladera and other unincorporated communities.

In this district, two candidates have filed papers and one has not yet done so. The filers are incumbent Jay Siegel and Richard Ginn, a managing director and the chief financial officer of Costella Kirsch, a venture capital firm in West Menlo Park.

Ann C. Jaquith, who described herself as an educator, took out papers but has not yet filed them, according to registrar records.

  
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## Madsens celebrate 70 years together

Thor and Jonelle Madsen of Atherton will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary with a party at Trader Vic's in Palo Alto on Aug. 28. It will also be Mr. Madsen's 94th birthday.

The Madsens were married at their minister's home in Los Angeles in 1940. As Jonelle was still attending Los Angeles High School, they had to sign a commitment letter to the superintendent of schools promising she would not become pregnant or talk about marriage with other students until graduation, say family members. Thor continued his education at Los Angeles City Junior College.

The young couple moved north to Richmond, where he worked on the shipping docks during World War II. After the war, they settled in San Carlos to raise their family.

Mr. Madsen founded the Thor Madsen Plumbing Company. He was active in San Carlos civic affairs, serving on the City Council from 1970 to 1973, and as mayor in 1973. He was also appointed to serve as a liaison between the mayors of San Mateo County and San Francisco.

The Madsens moved to Atherton in 1974.

In 1981, Mr. Madsen and his business associates founded the Bay Area Bank of Redwood City. He remained an active participant in the bank until 2000.

He was a member of the Lions Club, 75 Club,

Squire's Club, Elks Club, and Athletics Club. A softball field was named for him at Burton Park, where he played ball for 25 years. He served on the San Carlos Park and Recreation Commission for 14 years, with three years as president. He was a founding father and lifetime member of the PACE organization.

Along with raising three children, Ms. Madsen was active in the 75 Club, Junior Matrons, and the Atherlons. Both Madsens were active participants in the Chicken Ball, San Carlos' big theatrical production and fund raiser for the local schools.

The Madsens have three children, Barbara Woodward of Del Mar, John Madsen of Palo Alto, and Carolyn Caine of Los Angeles. There are seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

*The information for this story was provided by the Madsen family.*



**Jonelle and Thor Madsen** were married in 1940.

## Library offers new language courses

Learning a new language is a click away. The Menlo Park Library now offers online courses in 25 foreign languages and English lessons for native speakers of 14 languages. The free service launched June 21 and can be used from people's home computers.

"I've been brushing up on basic French," said Susan Holmer, library director. "It's very simple to use."

The library signed a \$2,000

contract with the language-learning company Mango after a previous provider, Rosetta Stone, stopped selling its program to libraries, she said.

Rosetta Stone spokesperson Reilly Brennan said its program is now available only for in-library use. "We recognize the value of the services provided by the public libraries, but did not feel that it was appropriate to continue to offer Rosetta Stone in this manner."

### BIRTHS

#### Atherton

■ Celine and Gregory Boutte, a daughter, July 25, Sequoia Hospital.

#### Emerald Hills

■ Julie Ann and Jorg Brown, a daughter, July 13, Sequoia Hospital.

#### Menlo Park

■ Ilana Witten and Jacob Brenner, a daughter, July 16, Sequoia Hospital.

■ Jennifer and Elliott Boggs, a son, July 18, Sequoia Hospital.

## GEORGE MACFARLAND



George MacFarland, 73 made his debut in heaven on Wednesday, July 14 surrounded by his family. He fought a brave and heroic year long battle with cancer.

George was born on December 6, 1936 in Philadelphia to George and Mary MacFarland.

He has 2 younger brothers, John and Bob with whom he loved to spend time. He graduated from Cheltenham High School where he met the love of his life and best friend, Betsy Heacock. George went to The University of Delaware, became a member of the ATO fraternity and graduated with degrees in Engineering and Fine Arts.

George and Betsy were married in 1958 and have three daughters, Margee, Kate and Jennifer. They had 51 wonderful years of marriage. During his working career he worked for Philadelphia Electric

and Raychem Corporation. The family moved to Los Altos in 1971. His work with Raychem moved the family to France for 2 years and George and Betsy to Australia for 2 years. He retired in 1997 after 31 years with Raychem.

George and Betsy loved to travel and spend time with extended family. Once he retired, George loved to golf with his many golf buddies, volunteer with OICW/Jobtrain, tutor 4th graders in reading at a local elementary school, teach Sunday School at PBC, body surf on the Jersey shore, play bocci ball on the beach, ride his bike, and cheer his 6 grandchildren on in a variety of sporting events.

George was a man of integrity, strong faith in His Savior, Jesus Christ, and had great zest for life. He loved people and will be missed by many. Services will be held on Saturday, August 14 at 2 pm at Peninsula Bible Church. For more information please visit: [www.spanglermortuary.com](http://www.spanglermortuary.com). In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the American Cancer Society or CaringBridge.org.

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## HUGH O'DONNELL

MAY 13, 1920 – JULY 24, 2010

Hugh was born in San Francisco to Joan and John O'Donnell. He had two brothers, John and Mark, who both predeceased him.

He attended grammar school at Notre Dame des Victoires, high school at St. Ignatius, and graduated from Stanford in 1941. He was part of two Japanese-American Student Conferences held in both countries before World War II. He studied at the Universidad de Chile in Santiago before returning to the U.S. to enlist in the Navy. Hugh received an officer's commission and served in combat as an Ensign and later a Lieutenant (j.g.) as the skipper of PT 365 in the Southwest Pacific including New Guinea, Indonesia, and the Philippines. He returned briefly to the U.S. after the end of the War then moved to Paris to attend the Sorbonne on the GI Bill. He spent the next five years traveling around the world: he crossed the Atlantic by freighter, the Syrian desert by bus, India by train, and Brazil by the Amazon. He played on a traveling Chilean basketball team throughout the southern cone, attended Islamic services in the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, lived for a week in a Hindu ashram, played cards with Brazilian prostitutes, met Josephine Baker for a drink at a Paris bistro, languished for several hours in jail in Kinshasa, Zaire, reignited lifelong friendships with his friends from Japan after the War, met two Popes and a couple of U.S. Presidents and, by his own account, felt blessed to have had the chance to love every minute of it.

Hugh returned to the U.S. where he trained as a foreign exchange trader in New York City. Back in San Francisco he took a job with Aramco, then the Bank of California, and Crocker Bank, where he spent the majority of his career in international banking.

He met and married Anne Margaret Brown in 1955 in

Los Angeles. Hugh and Anne were best friends, partners, and roommates for 54 years until the day he died.

After retiring from the banking business, Hugh went to work as Director of Development for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula for a number of years.

Hugh had a long history of hands-on volunteerism. He gave his time to the Knights of Malta, the San Carlos Adult Day Care Center, St. Ignatius College Preparatory, the Marianist Center in Cupertino, the Serra Club of Palo Alto-Menlo Park, St. Patrick's Seminary, and several other organizations. He and Anne attended a number of Lourdes pilgrimages with the sick and dying.

He was a gifted natural athlete, spoke Spanish and French and could get by in Italian and Portuguese, read constantly, had a strong appreciation for music, and had a happy, optimistic nature.

Hugh is survived by his wife Anne of Menlo Park, his son Michael and daughter-in-law Cecilia (Menlo Park) and son Peter (Palo Alto) and four grandchildren: Andrew, Coca, Tomas, and Nick (all of Menlo Park). He leaves two sisters-in-law Jean O'Donnell (San Francisco) and Jeanne O'Donnell (Summit, NJ), four nieces, three nephews, and many great-nieces and nephews. And a lot of friends.

Special thanks to the staff of Nazareth Classic Care in Menlo Park where Hugh and Anne have lived for the past two years.

Friends and family are invited to a memorial Mass on Friday, August 6, 2010 at 11 AM at St. Raymond Catholic Church at 1100 Santa Cruz Ave. in Menlo Park.

A private committal will take place at Holy Cross Cemetery in Menlo Park before the Mass. In lieu of flowers, please make any memorial donations to the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula or a charity of your choice.

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

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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.

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## Revenue dilemma in Menlo Park

When John Boyle decided to join Andy Cohen and vote against placing a hotel tax increase before voters in November, it shocked his colleagues on the Menlo Park City Council who lost the 4-1 majority needed to act on a tax measure, and tossed a structural budget deficit right back in their laps.

The council had hoped to cover some of the red ink in future budgets with income from the tax, which is assessed on visitors who stay overnight in a hotel or motel room. If passed by city voters, the leftier tax was expected to produce an additional \$500,000, which would have been a big

help in closing the deficit. Now, with that choice off the table, the council's option to raise revenue — increasing the utility users tax, which would impact all residents, not just visitors — is an idea that is not popular with most council members in an election year.

Mr. Boyle was no doubt swayed by testimony from managers of the Stanford Park and Rosewood hotels, who registered strong opposition to increasing the tax from 10 to 12 percent. They said it would hit particularly hard during the economic downturn. Stanford Park manager Glen Alden said business is down more than 20 percent, leading to workforce cuts of 19 percent since 2007. Speaking for the Rosewood, which just opened last year, Michael Casey also cautioned the council about approving the tax, saying, "Raising it is a risk," not only

to the hotels but to other Menlo Park businesses that benefit from the trade the hotels bring to town.

So now that the hotel tax is off the table for at least three years, it is time for the council to tell city manager Glen Rojas to bring them a balanced budget, even if it means reducing staff positions or, heaven forbid, doing without two or three police officers.

If Mayor Rich Cline and Councilman Heyward Robinson, who both are running for re-election, want to score points with Menlo Park voters, they need to give up any thoughts of raising taxes and focus on bringing expenses into line. Local residents, like many others on the Peninsula, are suffering from the slow economy and are not in the mood to vote yes on a tax increase, even if it is imposed on visitors to the city. And although the council can raise the utility tax on its own without approval of the voters, such a choice would not be wise at this time.

And if the structural deficit of about \$500,000 wasn't bad enough, the city finance director said late last week that sales tax collections for the first six months of the year could be as much as \$2 million below the estimate, although she hopes the calculation is a mistake. If the council is forced to cover such a huge shortfall without borrowing from reserves or adding new taxes, some staff members will have to be let go.

The upshot for Menlo Park: Despite the possible bad economic news, the city should be able to trim its sails and balance its budget. With more than \$25 million in reserves, it is not time to push the panic button. Nevertheless, the council must cope with some hard choices in the days ahead.

**EDITORIAL**

*The opinion of The Almanac*

## Propaganda won't help high-speed rail

The California High-Speed Rail Authority has just spent the taxpayers' money for a major "push-poll," released last week. A "push-poll" is a survey paid for by someone who wants to use the poll results to create the impression that there is public support for a particular position (as opposed to using the poll to find out what people actually think).

The authority said that their taxpayer-funded poll demonstrates "strong support for high-speed rail." Many newspapers obligingly repeated this obvious untruth. Respected Sacramento Bee political columnist Dan Walters, however, called the poll exactly what it is: "propaganda." Taxpayer funded propaganda, at that.

Looking beyond the authority's press release headline, the reported results show that 55 percent of the persons surveyed "oppose or have concerns about" high-speed rail. That result is before the pollsters provided "additional information." After that additional information was provided, 52 percent of the persons polled continued to "oppose" or have "concerns about" high-speed rail.

In my view, a 52-percent majority that

either "opposes" or "has concerns about" high-speed rail does not translate into "strong support." Quite the opposite. Furthermore, you can bet your bottom taxpayer dollar that the "additional information" that was provided to those polled did not include a reference to the scathing criticism that the authority has received from the Legislative Analyst, the State Auditor, and the respected transportation modelers at UC Berkeley. All of these experts and governmental watchdogs have found the authority's project to be mismanaged and based on "wishes" not facts.

It is discouraging that the new executive director of the authority has apparently not been able to change the authority's basic modus operandi. Repeatedly, the authority has tried to market its way out of a confrontation with the basic facts. That is still the authority's approach (using taxpayer dollars for the marketing effort).

It's time for the state Legislature and the governor to do something about a government agency that can't properly manage the project it is supposed to be advancing. Marketing push-polls won't get us the high-speed rail project that the authority keeps on promising.

**James R. Janz, president  
Community Coalition  
on High-Speed Rail**



Menlo Park Historical Association

## Our Regional Heritage

The artist and craftsman Pedro de Lemos designed the buildings known as the Allied Arts Guild in 1929, with help from architect Gardner Dailey. Mr. Lemos, who in 1919 became the first director of the Stanford Museum and Art Gallery, inspired the murals and frescoes for which Allied Arts became renowned. He also took part in designing the gardens, pathways and fountains at the Menlo Park complex that have helped make it a major attraction for visitors to the city.

# The upside of the downtown plan

By Clem Molony

After years of public meetings to learn what community members want our downtown to be like as we modernize over the coming decades, a few well-intentioned folks are stirring up their neighbors with fears about the draft Downtown Visioning plan.

One critic is a friend, so I asked what the concerns are about. After he summarized them, I tried to define a middle position:

■ The planning process: 1960s zoning laws are out-of-date. Our downtown is primarily one-story, with some two-story buildings. At numerous public meetings the strong consensus was that some well-designed three-story buildings make sense, and won't harm our wonderful small-town feel. All these meetings have injected lots of compromises into the current plan.

■ Parking structures: To open up sidewalks and add trees, modern towns accept the need to concentrate parking in some garages. I use Palo Alto's garages when I shop there — there's always open spots, and elevators allow seniors and moms with strollers an easier place to park. Garages create spaces for downtown workers. The current plan is a balance of five surface lots and two short garages.

■ Modern sidewalks: This pedestrian-friendly idea brings more of our neighbors downtown. I don't want Menlo Park to become a big-buildings downtown like Redwood City. I do like how Palo Alto has kept most of University Avenue feeling small-towny.

■ Housing downtown: Downtown residents shop and eat there, increasing retail success and adding community energy. Many commute on Caltrain, and those who drive vacate parking during the day, freeing it up for shoppers.

■ Critics' ideas worth examining: A) Diagonal parking should be relocated, not dropped. B) Stay focused on retail; offices use more parking. C) Behind parking garages, is the proposed 25-foot-wide alley space sufficient for deliveries and emergencies? D) Design new traffic patterns with extra space for turning and exiting. E) Any hotel should build in its own parking. In addition, I suggest that in the future the city should explore slightly higher housing density in the block just outside of downtown.

Errors in the recent "Alliance" guest opinion. Ms. Couperus blames Redwood City's retail slow-down on development of their parking garage and "public square" area. That's dead wrong. The slowdown was due to two recessions (2002, 2009). Vacancy rates are improving, and public areas are a magnet for shoppers and diners. She said Menlo Park's plan reduces parking; it increases it by 200 spaces. She compares suburban Menlo Park to rural Saratoga; their downtown is about 10 percent as big.

Fears about our future: In the past critics feared our wonderful farmers market, the building and plaza where Cafe Borrone is, the modernization of Draeger's, even increased trees on Santa Cruz Avenue — all excellent ideas. We need to have faith in our future planning. I hope that those worried about the Downtown Plan will allow compromise, for the good of the whole community.

**Clem Molony is a 35-year Menlo Park resident.**








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**EYE  
CARE  
NEWS**

**Presented by**  
**Mark Schmidt**  
*Licensed Optician*

**HOW A BLINK SHUTS OUT THE WORLD**  
Researchers recently uncovered additional insight about the mind-body connection when they asked volunteers to read passages from a book on a computer screen. As they did so, the readers' eye movements were tracked by a sensor. The researchers then asked the readers, at random intervals, whether they had been paying attention to the reading material or if their minds had been wandering. With this information, researchers were able to link increased blinking with a wandering mind. It seems that, when the mind begins to wander, people blink

their eyes at more rapid rates in order to shut out sensory information from the outside world. This finding bolsters evidence that the mind and body work in tandem to achieve desired results. If you're like most people, you have a busy schedule and deal with several tasks simultaneously. You therefore probably find your mind wandering when you're reading the newspaper or an email. Staying focused on what you are reading requires clear vision. Please bring your eyewear prescription to MENLO OPTICAL at 1166 University Drive, on the corner of Oak Grove Avenue and University Drive. We carry eyeglass frames in the latest styles and fill prescriptions with lenses that are thin and lightweight. Please call us at 322-3900 if you have any questions about eyewear.

P.S. Blinking at an above-average rate may also be an indication of eyestrain, in which case a visit to the optometrist may help with reading difficulty.

*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.*



## When they told me I had a tumor...

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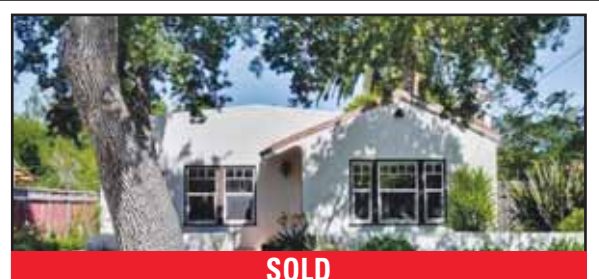
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