



Remembering Betty Fry — and
The Country Almanac. Page 15

*The*Almanac

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

JANUARY 12, 2011 | VOL. 46 NO. 20



WWW.THEALMANACONLINE.COM

TRIUMPHS, TRIALS, AND TWO CENTS



Heyward Robinson,
left, and John Boyle.
Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac.

Two councilmen look backward and forward | Section 2

≡ CARDINAL RULES!



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Members of M-A Dance Team from bottom left: Kimmie Glass, Jellie Hardison, Brandi Armstrong, Leah Worthington, Holly Cogan, Taylor Gananian, Elise Cabral, Emily Aguilar, Anna Argente and Lauren Smith.

M-A dance team: from hip-hop to ballet

Hip-hop, jazz, lyrical and ballet performances will highlight the eighth annual Menlo-Atherton High School dance team show and fundraiser to be held at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, in the high school's performing arts center.

Proceeds from the show help underwrite scholarships, team uniforms, camps, and com-

petition expenses. Tickets at the door are \$5 for students and \$10 for adults.

Team members are Kimmie Glass, Jellie Hardison, Brandi Armstrong, Holly Cogan, Leah Worthington, Taylor Gananian, Elise Cabral, Emily Aguilar, Anna Argente, and Lauren Smith.

Betsy Glikbarg wins Lifetime Achievement Award

Betsy Glikbarg received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Zone 10 (California and Arizona) U.S. Hunter/Jumper Association Jan. 7 in recognition of her efforts in promoting equestrian activities. The ceremony took place at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas.



Betsy Glikbarg

Ms. Glikbarg, an Atherton resident, is the founder and longtime co-chair of the Menlo Charity Horse Show. Last year the horse show raised \$500,000 for Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This year's horse show takes place Aug. 9 through 14 at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton.

Tabitha Willems at teen pageant

Tabitha Willems, 18, a senior at Menlo-Atherton High School, will represent San Mateo County in the Miss Teen California pageant to be held in May 2011.

A dancer since age 3, Tabitha also plays the bass clarinet in the Menlo-Atherton Concert Band. She has been on the volleyball



Tabitha Willems

team, but track is her real passion, says her mother Jonna Planting.

Tabitha works part-time as a hostess at Fleming's Prime Steakhouse at the Stanford Shopping Center. With a 4.0 grade point average, she plans on attending Canada College and is interested in a career in nursing or criminal justice.

Tabitha lives in Menlo Park with her mother and stepfather, Jonna and Jim Planting.

The Miss Teen California pageant is based on academics and community service, as well as beauty and poise, says Ms. Planting.

Peninsula Family Service names new officer

Heather Cleary has been appointed vice president of finance and operations for Peninsula Family Service, which provides services for families throughout the Peninsula. Ms. Cleary formerly served as comptroller and director of donor services at the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.

In her new position, Ms. Cleary will be responsible for financial operations and management, as well as fiscal planning, accounting, payroll operations, building operations and office management staff. She lives in San Mateo.

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WOODSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Woodside Preschool Registration 2011

Please join us for a Woodside Preschool
Orientation and Visitation,
Friday, January 28th from 8:45-10:00 a.m.
(parents only).

Woodside Elementary School District will be accepting applications for the Fall 2011 Preschool Classes February 1st through February 11th, 2011.

Woodside Preschool is a half-day, fee-based program running from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Children must be at least 2 years, 9 months old as of September 2nd, 2011 in order to apply. Preschool students are placed in either the 2-Day, 3-Day, or 5-Day based on age and availability. Priority is given to children living within the Woodside School District boundaries.

Interested families are encouraged to attend our Orientation and fill out an application. Applications will be available for pick up at the elementary school office or download online beginning February 1st. For more information regarding Woodside Preschool please contact Lisa at ldayeh@woodside.k12.ca.us, (650) 851-1571 ext 251 or visit our website at www.woodside.k12.ca.us.

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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.



Is There a Future for Christianity?

A Day With Dr. Diana Butler Bass
Saturday, January 22, 2011
8:45 am to 2:00 pm

The Trinity Conferences Program at Trinity Church in Menlo Park invites you to join us as Dr. Diana Butler Bass, noted speaker and academic, helps us explore whether there is a vital future for Christianity in North America in a cultural climate where "none of the above" and "spiritual but not religious" are the fastest growing religion categories. What do these trends really mean? How do they impact our lives? Can we learn from the spiritual longings of our culture?

Cost is \$25 per person including lunch
Register at www.trinitymenlopark.org
(click on the Trinity Conferences Website link)

Dr. Bass will also be the preacher on January 23 at our 10 am worship service.

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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Atherton residents face sharp garbage rate hikes

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Although the official word has been that customers of the new garbage-collection service in Peninsula cities will be paying 15 to 30 percent higher rates—with the maximum increase figured at 38 percent—Atherton residents are facing rate hikes that could range from 63 percent for using the smallest garbage cans available, to 98 percent for a 96-gallon can.

The proposed rate increases are due to a new service agreement with Recology San Mateo County, which on Jan. 1 took over the weekly collection of garbage and recycling material from Allied Waste for 10 Peninsula towns and unincorporated areas in the county.

Atherton residents' rate hike is also a result of new disposal

fees imposed by the county, and Atherton's \$334,000 outstanding debt to Allied Waste, according to Lisa Costa Sanders, the town's deputy planner.

A divided City Council on Dec. 15 gave preliminary approval to a rate hike, but rather than endorsing a staff recommendation that would have raised rates on the smallest garbage cans an average of 42.5 percent—and progressively more on larger cans—the council majority agreed that, in order to pay the debt to Allied Waste in full, the rates should be increased further.

Staff had recommended that the new rates cover a three-month payment to Allied Waste this year. The newly calculated proposed rates reflect a full payment to Allied Waste, Ms. Costa Sanders told The Almanac.

The vote to put the adjusted rates

Officials optimistic about new trash collector. **See Page 8**

before the public for a hearing was 3-2, with council members Jerry Carlson and Bill Widmer opposed.

The public hearing is set for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16.

Under the proposal, service for hauling away a 20-gallon garbage can would rise to \$28.22 per month from the current \$17.31, and a 32-gallon can, to \$45.15 from the current \$27.69—both a 63 percent increase.

Under the proposed progressive schedule, it would cost customers \$99.33 for a 64-gallon can, up 79 percent from the current \$55.38; and \$162.53 for a 96-gallon can, up 98 percent from the current \$82.18.

Progressive rates

The progressive rates are intended to motivate people to recycle more, and with the new service, doing so would be much easier. Recology's expanded recycling service allows customers to put food scraps, soiled paper and many other materials that formerly were hauled away as garbage into their "green waste" containers for composting. As a result, some customers can downsize their garbage containers.

The higher rates also reflect the frequency of service for recycling and green-waste collection. Each is now collected every week rather than every other week.

While several council members expressed concerns over the proposed rate increases and the terms of the new provider's service—including a more dif-

ficult process to ensure that frail and elderly residents can have their cans picked up in their back yards—Councilman Widmer presented an unexpected challenge to Recology representatives who attended the meeting.

He had conducted experiments with the new containers, he said, and found that their capacity is 15 to 20 percent less than the stated volume, because of their design. "Due to the shape of the receptacles ... you can't fit as much in," he said, asking Recology officials to look into the matter.

Atherton residents were mailed a notice of the public hearing late last month. The notice details the cost schedule for all Recology services.

Go to tinyurl.com/4m6q57q and search for "Item 30" for the Dec. 15 staff report on the rate changes. ■

School districts file lawsuit over millions in losses

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

The public school districts serving children in Menlo Park, Atherton, Woodside and Portola Valley are among the 12 districts in the county suing San Mateo County and its former treasurer, Lee Buffington, in an effort to recover about \$20 million lost by the treasurer when Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy in September 2008.

The districts are joined by the county Office of Education, now headed by former Portola Valley School District superintendent Anne Campbell, who is the spokesperson for the plaintiffs.

The money in question was placed in the county's investment pool, along with money from other government agencies. The total investment-pool loss resulting from the Lehman Brothers collapse was about \$155 million.

Unlike some investment pool participants, however, the school districts were required to put their bond revenue and other working funds into the pool.

"The money lost by the county treasurer included funds for instruction and operations, taxpayer-approved bonds, and other funds critical to educating San Mateo County's children," Superintendent Campbell's office said in a written statement. "The county treasurer charged the districts substantial fees to manage their

money, for which the county treasurer was required to provide competent, professional investment services."

Locally, the Menlo Park City School District took the biggest hit by far: It lost nearly \$4 million. The Ravenswood School District lost about \$854,500; the Las Lomas district, almost \$400,000; the Portola Valley district, nearly \$150,000; and the Woodside district, about \$100,000.

The lawsuit alleges that the county failed to act "with care, skill, prudence and diligence" in managing the investment pool.

It asserts that the treasurer's office violated state and county investment policies; failed to adhere to legally required prudent investment practices; failed to properly diversify the \$155 million in investments "among sectors of the economy"; and failed to sell the Lehman notes "after learning of deterioration in the finances, credit rating, and stock price of Lehman."

The school districts and Office of Education had filed a claim against the defendants in September, putting them on notice that a lawsuit was likely to be filed unless an agreement could be reached.

"The districts have attempted to resolve the dispute without litigation, but the county has not come forward with any offer to address

See **LAWSUIT**, page 8



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Superintendent Ken Ranella has overseen planning and construction of major new facilities on all four campuses of the Menlo Park City School District.

Ken Ranella says it's his 'time to retire'

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Expressing confidence that he is leaving behind "a culture that is committed to ongoing continuous improvement of all aspects of the district," Ken Ranella last week announced his retirement as superintendent of the Menlo Park City School District,

effective June 30.

Hired to the top post in 2002, Mr. Ranella has overseen the planning and construction of new facilities on all four of the district's campuses, and the introduction of a number of academic programs, including Spanish immersion for the district's youngest students, and a new model for educating its most senior students, called the

Hillview Academy.

"It is my time to retire. ... time to consider other personal and professional pursuits, time to explore myself outside of my long-term professional role and most importantly unencumbered time to fully engage with Ginny, my wife and best friend for over

See **RANELLA**, page 8

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PUBLIC HEARING

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Review and approval/denial of a Revision to Project SDES#2006-0006 and Site Development Permit SITE#2007-030 to perform site grading in excess of 1,500 cubic yards per Woodside Municipal Code Section 151.22.

All application materials are available for public review at the Woodside Planning and Building Counter, Woodside Town Hall, weekdays from 8:00 – 10:00 AM and 1:00 – 3:00 PM, or by appointment. For more information, contact the Woodside Planning and Building Department at (650) 851-6790.

Cell phone antennas proposed for Nealon Park

■ Outreach meeting held with short notice.

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Many Menlo Park residents may not know about T-Mobile's plans to install cell phone antennas in Nealon Park. They reportedly received little more than a week's notice about a community outreach meeting held Wednesday, Jan. 5, to discuss the proposal.

The meeting started at 6 p.m., making it hard for some people to get there on time after work. Those factors may have combined to explain why only 10 to 15 people attended the meeting.

But some of those who went said they found the presentation useful. "I should say that meeting

was a good one. I thought the people who held the meeting were forthcoming," said JoAnne Wilkes, who lives near the park. "They answered questions as best they could. In fairness to the people who did the presentation, I thought they did a good job."

No date is set for the Planning Commission to consider T-Mobile's proposal. The company wants to mount three antennas on lighting fixtures around the park's baseball diamond, raising them to 70 feet, and a radio cabinet in the parking lot behind the field.

Nealon Park sits between Middle Avenue and Roble Avenue. Residents wondered whether nearby El Camino Real might provide a more logical home for a cell phone tower, given that the park borders a nursery school and a senior center, as well as residential areas.

Aside from aesthetic concerns, a frequent fear voiced by communities considering cell phone towers is the perception that the radio emissions are linked to cancer. Experts, however, disagree on whether that link really exists.

Declining property values was also raised as a concern at the community outreach meeting — but that's equally nebulous. Rose Meily, spokeswoman for the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors, said the group has not reviewed any validated research demonstrating cell phone towers have any impact on neighboring property values, negative or positive.

Menlo Park City Planning Technician Kyle Perata, who attended the meeting, said T-Mobile scheduled it at the request of the city.

The telecomm has not yet responded to follow up questions from The Almanac. ■

State bar dismisses complaint by Heyward Robinson

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

The California State Bar has concluded that noted First Amendment attorney Terry Francke did not "willfully violate" its rules of professional conduct, in response to a complaint filed last month by a former Menlo Park councilman.

Heyward Robinson, who lost his bid for re-election, filed the complaint on Nov. 19. He said he is disappointed, but not surprised, by the outcome and won't pursue the issue further.

The complaint resulted from media coverage in the days before the Nov. 2 election.

The Daily Post ran two stories

and an editorial that said three Menlo Park council members, including Mr. Robinson, had violated state law by exchanging e-mails discussing campaign issues. One story quoted Mr. Francke as declaring "a very serious Brown Act violation" had occurred.

Mr. Robinson later discovered the attorney hadn't read the e-mails before reaching that conclusion. Once Mr. Francke did view the e-mails, the day before the election, he retracted his statement and apologized, saying there was, in fact, no Brown Act issue. The Daily Post also retracted its stories.

The corrections came too late, according to Mr. Robinson, to

repair any damage done to his campaign.

Mr. Francke has been active in pushing for open communication in government for 30 years. He served as legal counsel for the California Newspaper Publisher's Association and the California First Amendment Coalition.

In 2004, he and his daughter, Emily, founded the California Aware nonprofit organization to advocate transparency in government and defend the state's historic Ralph M. Brown Act that mandates open meetings and adequate notification.

"Fast work," Mr. Francke said when asked for comment regarding the complaint's dismissal. ■

Pharmacy donates to local charities

■ BRIEFS

Pharmaca Integrative Pharmacy has donated more than \$7,000 in products and cash to local charities, according to a company spokesman.

The donations were made when pharmacist Chet Yee transitioned from his Menlo Park pharmacy to the new Pharmaca store, which opened in November at 871 Santa Cruz Ave.

Donations include \$2,750 in vitamins, medicines and health aids to the Menlo Medical Global Outreach Alliance of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church; \$2,000 in vitamins, medicines and health aids to Harvest Home Mission for relief work in rural Mexico; and \$1,500 in products to be used in Woodside Village

Church's program to help underprivileged and homeless people in the Bay Area.

A portion of Pharmaca's grand opening sales (\$1,000) was given to the annual Jerry Rice Toy Drive.

Founded in 2000, Pharmaca Integrative Pharmacy is based in Boulder, Colorado. The company owns 23 pharmacies in the western states.

Tall ships visit Redwood City

Starting Jan. 21, the tall ships, Lady Washington and Hawaiian Chieftain, will tie up at the Port of Redwood City

for two weeks. The ships will be open to school groups and offer three-hour sailing excursions to the public.

The ships will host three-hour "Battle Sails" with booming cannon on Jan. 22, 23, 29 and 30, starting at 2 p.m. each day. Tickets range from \$60 for adults to \$40 for children 12 and under. Family-oriented sails will be held on Jan. 23 and 30 at 10 a.m. Tickets range from \$55 to \$35.

Walk-on tours with crews dressed in period costumes will be held throughout the stay. A \$3 donation per person is suggested.

Visit historicalseaport.org or call 800-200-5239 for tour times and to purchase tickets.

Woodland School installs play structure

Woodland School in Ladera has installed a play structure, designed for children ages 5 to 12, that replaces equipment dating back to the 1950s, according to Anita Grossman, director of development.

The new structure was fully funded by proceeds from the school's Oct. 23 auction, she said.

Designed by Miracle Play-systems in Alamo, California, the structure has a covered deck, a sloped climbing wall, climbing poles, ladders and a slide, she said.

"Our goal was to offer a play structure that would entertain and stimulate children of all abilities and be an asset to the Ladera community," said John Ora, head of school, in a statement. "We are grateful to our parents, faculty, staff, community members and over 75 businesses who generously supported the auction."

About 260 students in preschool through eighth grade attend Woodland School, a co-ed, non-denominational,



Woodland School students try out new play structure, paid for with funds raised at the school's October auction.

independent day school located at 360 La Cuesta Drive in Ladera.

Visit woodland-school.org for more information.

Beltramos townhomes before Menlo council Tuesday

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Ten years ago, the Beltramos started dreaming of building townhomes at 1460 El Camino Real. On Tuesday, Jan. 11, the Menlo Park City Council will decide whether that dream takes a step closer to reality.

The city and developer haggled for months over the number of below-market-rate (BMR) townhomes to be included. The original plan followed city policy by setting aside three BMR units, but the Beltramos have now asked to include only one in light of declining real estate

values.

In October, the Planning Commission voted to accept a deal that allows the Beltramos to include only one BMR townhome, in exchange for 10 to 20 percent of sales revenue on each remaining unit if the unit's sales price exceeds \$1 million, according to the staff report.

The commissioners also agreed to accept in-lieu fees on five market-rate townhomes and up to \$382,704 in commercial linkage fees for a two-story office building the developer plans to build on the same site.

The deal was not wholeheartedly approved by the Planning Commission, despite a 5-0 vote.

Katie Ferrick abstained after saying she was troubled by the BMR issue but didn't want the project to fail.

Before reaching the planning commissioners, the project first passed the Housing Commission. However, Commissioner Anne Mozer said she wished she could retract her vote.

"I finally decided I needed to stand up and say I made a mistake," Ms. Mozer told the Planning Commission in October.

Too many people are waiting for BMR housing, she said, and there aren't enough units in Menlo Park. ■

Caltrain rethinks partnership with California high-speed rail

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Bob Doty, director of the Peninsula Rail Program, has traded in his Caltrain ticket for a position with engineering firm HNTB.

Mr. Doty has managed the partnership between financially strapped Caltrain and the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) since 2008. His new position will continue to focus on high-speed rail, but not involve the Peninsula segment for at least one year after leaving Caltrain on Jan. 21.

"His departure means we will rethink the structure and the personnel to go forward with high-speed rail," Caltrain Executive Director Mike Scanlon said in a press release. "We entered into the agreement with High Speed Rail to help save Caltrain. We still have to save Caltrain."

Mr. Doty had the difficult job of deciding whether high-speed rail or Caltrain was the top priority, according to Menlo Park Mayor Rich Cline, who suggested a continued partnership between the high-speed rail agency and

Caltrain may no longer benefit local cities.

"It serves little purpose for Caltrain now, aside from potentially limiting our local transit leaders from looking at real alternatives for long-term funding," Mayor Cline said. "Caltrain needs to officially cut the cord from the CHSRA and work with local leaders and agencies to find ongoing operational revenue without the distraction of a false windfall."

Caltrain declined to elaborate on the future of its partnership with CHSRA. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



To Renovate Prior To Sale?

Dear Gloria,
I have decided to finally make the move from my home of many years. It was built in 1930 and is a bit run-down. My son suggests that I remodel the kitchen and bath as he read in an article on real estate that these two remodels return the most. I got an estimate from a local builder and the cost to do this would be about \$40,000. My real estate agent disagrees and suggests painting both inside and outside. She also suggests that I wait until I move out to put it on the market. That hurts my feelings because I think I have some nice things that make the house feel warm and inviting. So this is a two part question and will appreciate your opinion.

Gerta H, Redwood City

Dear Gerta, I tend to agree with your realtor on both points. In today's market, \$40,000 is a lot of money. Your buyers will probably be buying for the neighborhood

and the schools and possibly the charm of your old house, which they can then renovate to their own taste. I am sure your realtor was not casting aspersions on your furnishings but rather, after the painting is done (possibly new carpet?) the best thing you can do to add value to your home is staging. The furnishings stagers use tends to be very neutral in design, very sparse and free of all personal belongings. That way, potential buyers can much more easily imagine themselves in those surroundings. Even facing a major remodel will look more palatable to them if they are taken with the initial appearance of the house. Also pay attention to the landscaping to make sure it makes a good first impression. Plant some flowers near the front door or use flowering plants.

Don't forget to disclose everything you know about the house and the neighborhood. If the buyers are truly interested in the property, they will realize that every house and neighborhood has its drawbacks. They just don't want any surprises.

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

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Officials optimistic about new trash collector

By Caitlin McAdoo

Bay City News Service

A switch to a new garbage and recycling service provider that began Jan. 3 in parts of San Mateo County has seen some glitches, but officials have said they are confident the problems will be worked out.

Recology San Mateo County is providing the new service to 92,000 residential customers and more than 10,000 commercial customers in Atherton, Menlo Park, the West Bay Sanitary District, East Palo Alto, Redwood City, San Carlos, Belmont, San Mateo, Burlingame, Foster City, Hillsborough, and parts of unincorporated San Mateo County.

Recology took over the service from Allied Waste after being awarded a 10-year contract with a \$51 million base compensation for the first year, according to Monica Devincenzi, recycling outreach and sustainability manager for the South Bayside Waste Management Authority, a joint powers authority known as RethinkWaste.

The new automated service offers improved recycling services, including weekly pickup of recycling and green waste.

It also offers expanded green waste recycling that includes food waste and even pizza boxes.

With the new system, customers no longer have to separate recyclables such as bottles, cans and paper by type and can instead throw them all into a single bin that can be wheeled out to the curb.

"Overall the service has been going pretty well," Ms. Devincenzi said.

She noted that Recology has received numerous complaints from customers, mainly for missed pickups, but said that the company has been proactive about responding to those complaints.

One issue customers have had is that when they call to report a problem, they can't get through to anyone. Recology has brought in 15 additional customer service representatives over the past few days, and on Jan. 6, the company put 11 additional trucks on the street to pick up garbage that had been missed, Ms. Devincenzi said.

Hold times for customer service are now less than a minute, she said.

Gina Simi, a spokeswoman for Recology, said that some customers had experienced missed pickups the week before Recology began its service, which accounts for some of the complaints.

Some elderly people and people

with disabilities who previously had backyard pickup with Allied Waste did not get backyard pickup last week, Ms. Devincenzi said.

Recology is working on updating its system for special pickup instructions and is asking people who wish to have backyard pickup services provided to call the company to update their information, she said.

The new system is expected to greatly reduce the amount of garbage customers send to the landfill.

Ms. Simi said the company is estimating a 25 percent to 35 percent increase in composting and recycling in the service area.

In the first three days of the new service, there was a 78 percent increase of compost and green waste and a 31 percent increase in recycled materials, Ms. Devincenzi said.

"For a rollout of this size ... there are bound to be some problems and glitches," said Malcolm Smith, public communication manager for Redwood City.

He said he has received numerous complaints from residents reporting missed service, but a handful of people have also contacted him to say that the switch went smoothly for them.

"I have a great deal of confidence that they will work out the bugs," Mr. Smith said.

Despite the complaints, Ms. Simi said that 97 percent of customers experienced no problems with the new service. She also noted that the week after Christmas is traditionally the heaviest garbage week of the year, and this year the amount of garbage collected was double what was collected last year.

Ms. Devincenzi said she wanted to remind customers that the new pickup times and routes are different from what people have been used to. Officials are asking customers to wait until 6 p.m. before reporting a missed pickup.

In another change from the previous collector, Recology trucks will go down one side of a street picking up trash with their mechanical arms and then return at a later time to pick up trash on the other side of the street.

For safety reasons, the new routes require the trucks to make mainly right turns.

The new three-cart system, known as CartSMART, also means that three different trucks will collect the contents from the three types of bins at different times, Devincenzi said.

The new service, however, also means rate increases for most customers. ■



Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

Story time

Evelyn, who is 4 1/2 and lives in Woodside, read "Bark, George" by Jules Feiffer to Max, a Peninsula Humane Society therapy dog who heard from five children on Saturday, Jan. 8, at the Portola Valley library. The Humane Society is making monthly visits to libraries and inviting children who may find reading to a friendly dog helpful in improving their skills.

Teenage burglars busted in Menlo Park

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

While some teenagers are lamenting the end of holiday vacation, others are seizing the opportunity to enrich themselves — only with other people's stuff, instead of knowledge.

Two 16-year-old East Palo Alto teenagers allegedly broke into a house in the 500 block of Pope Street in Menlo Park around 10:36

a.m. Monday, Jan. 10. Their time might have been better spent in school, since the police arrested the pair within minutes after a neighbor spotted the suspects, dressed in black, strolling through the victim's backyard.

After a brief foot chase, officers found stolen property on the suspects and in their burgundy 2000 Mazda 626, according to the report.

The loot ranged from high tech

— a Nintendo Wii with games, a digital camera, a computer, and Bose speakers — to low tech in the form of a golf shirt, heirloom watch, and ear buds.

Police spokesperson Nicole Acker said all stolen items were recovered. They were booked into Hillcrest for residential burglary and don't appear to have prior records.

Police ask that anyone with information about this incident call the police at 330-6300. ■

LAWSUIT

continued from page 5

the losses suffered by the districts," according to the prepared statement.

After filing the claim last year, Superintendent Campbell told The Almanac that her office, school district representatives and the county had been working together for nearly two years to find ways to recover the money, but that the talks were not producing a satisfactory result. She said the districts not only want their money back, but want "to be sure that the policies of the county investment pool have been changed to make sure this doesn't happen again."

County Manager David Boesch said at the time that the county had brought in a firm to do a forensic analysis of investment practices, and would be presenting new policies, based in part on the firm's recommendations, to the Board of Supervisors early this year.

He said, however, that "the county feels it's in a very strong position" to

RANELLA

continued from page 5

thirty-five years," Mr. Ranella said in a prepared statement.

The school board, which, according to Mr. Ranella, had been aware of his decision to retire for some time, will review proposals from three superintendent-search firms at its Jan. 18 meeting. The firms' representatives will be interviewed, and one will be chosen that night, he said.

The hiring process is expected to be completed in early spring, he said.

School board President Maria Hilton said the board will be looking for a new "chief executive who can keep us on the solid

defend itself against a lawsuit. "We can demonstrate that the office has used best practices" in investing funds, he said.

Go to jgn.com/news to read the lawsuit. ■

footing" that Mr. Ranella put the district on.

Ms. Hilton said her tenure as a district parent coincides exactly with Mr. Ranella's as superintendent, so she has come to know him well. "He's exceptional," she said, noting that she worked directly with him first as president of the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation, then as a board member for some five years.

During his nine years at the helm, Mr. Ranella has done an outstanding job consolidating the district's business and special education services, addressing an increasingly difficult financial situation, and developing a facilities plan to tackle the challenges of rapidly growing enrollment and aging buildings — "while always keeping his eye on what's important to learners," Ms. Hilton said.

With his retirement, Mr. Ranella will be wrapping up 36 years as an educator in public schools, 20 of which were in the role as superintendent in three districts, he noted. ■

Kindergarten registration season nears

Local school districts have begun the process of registering kids for kindergarten.

You may have heard about a new state law affecting kindergarten registration. That law goes into effect in 2012, said Carol Metzler, executive assistant to the superintendent in the Menlo Park district.

Under that law, for the 2012-13 school year, students must be 5 by Nov. 2, 2012, to register for kindergarten. For the 2013-14 school year, they must be 5 by Oct. 2, 2013. And then for the 2014-15 school year and future years, they must be 5 by Sept. 2, 2014.

Menlo Park district

For 2011, priority kindergarten registration for children who will be age 5 by Dec. 2 opens Feb. 1 in the Menlo Park City School District.

Orientation meetings for parents whose children will be enrolling in Encinal School kin-

SCHOOLS

dergarten are set for Thursday, Jan. 20, from 2:15 to 3:15 p.m.; and Thursday, March 3, from 7 to 8 p.m. Parents may sign up for one of the meetings by calling 326-5164.

Oak Knoll School will host an orientation meeting on Thursday, Jan. 27, at 7 p.m. Laurel School's meetings are set for Wednesday, April 6, at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday, April 28, at 2:30 p.m.

The district's Spanish Immersion Program is also accepting applications for the 2011-12 school year. Parents may obtain an application in their home-attendance school office and may attend a mandatory parent information meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 16, from 7 to 8 p.m.; or on Monday, Feb. 28, from 9 to 10 a.m.

To register a child in kindergarten during the priority registration, parents should go to their home-attendance school office

for a registration packet. A driver's license or other government-issued photo ID will be required to verify residency in the district.

Parents who are uncertain which school is in their attendance area should contact the district at 321-7140, ext. 5603.

Go to mpcsd.org for more information, or call your home-attendance school site, or the district office at 321-7140, ext. 5603.

Ormondale School

A meeting for parents of children who will attend kindergarten at Ormondale School in Portola Valley in the fall of 2011 will be held at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 25, at the school, 200 Shawnee Pass in Portola Valley. Registration packets will be available at that time.

To be eligible for kindergarten, a child must be age 5 by Dec. 2, 2011, and must live within the Portola Valley School District boundaries.

OBITUARIES

Ruth (Martin) Johnson

Life-long resident of Midpeninsula

Ruth (Martin) Johnson, a Palo Alto native and lifelong resident of the Midpeninsula, died Jan. 2 at The Sequoias in Portola Valley of complications from Alzheimer's disease. She was 91.

The younger of two daughters of former Stanford history professor Percy Martin, she grew up on the Stanford campus, attended Castilleja School, Palo Alto High School and Stanford University, where she received her bachelor's degree in 1940. She met her husband of 62 years, Chet Johnson, while both were active in theater at Stanford.

The couple moved to Los Angeles after getting married, but was determined to return to Palo Alto as soon as possible. "Palm Drive in '45" became their mantra, and they ended up back in Palo Alto right on schedule.

In 1948, the family moved to Menlo Park and then 10 years later to a new home the couple designed on Westridge Drive in Portola Valley.

Ruth was a devoted mother and volunteer, supporting the activities of her two children and becoming very active in the American Field Service (AFS) foreign exchange program.

After her two children were grown, she and her husband traveled extensively and enjoyed several unusual summers exploring the canals of France on a houseboat and at a summer apartment in southern France near St. Tropez.

Her love of Switzerland, which developed when she attended grammar school there while her father was on sabbatical from Stanford, led her to research and organize annual summer hiking trips in the Swiss Alps for family and friends, a passion that evolved into a full-fledged tour business for more than 15 years, until she was well into her 70s.

In 1997, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and began a steady decline. Her husband, Chet, devoted himself almost exclusively to caring



for her until his death in 2002.

She is survived by her sons and their spouses, Mark and Becky Johnson of Seattle, and Bill Johnson and Terri Lobdell of Palo Alto, four grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

The family prefers contributions be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 1060 La Avenida St., Mountain View, CA 94043.

Barbara Dulik

Retired head of Phillips Brooks preschool

Barbara Neal Dulik died of a heart attack on Dec. 25 in San Miguel Allende, Mexico, where she made her home. Ms. Dulik was a longtime resident of Menlo Park and Atherton before moving to St. Miguel Allende with her husband, Robert Dulik, in 2002.

Ms. Dulik was born in Los Angeles. Upon graduating from Los Angeles High School, she attended Stanford University, where she also received her master's degree in education.

Ms. Dulik developed the preschool program at Trinity Parish School in Menlo Park in 1976. She taught preschool at Phillips Brooks School in Menlo Park from its founding in 1978. She was head of its Early Learning Center and in 1986 became director of admissions for the school. She retired in 2002.

After retiring, Ms. Dulik enjoyed volunteering at a bilingual bookstore, traveling throughout Mexico, and cultivating a close group of friends in the community. She was a voracious reader, avid knitter, and enthusiastic world traveler, say family members. She was known for her dedication to children's educational issues, her warm and inclusive nature, and spirit of fun and adventure, they say.

A devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, Ms. Dulik is survived by her husband of 52 years, Rob-





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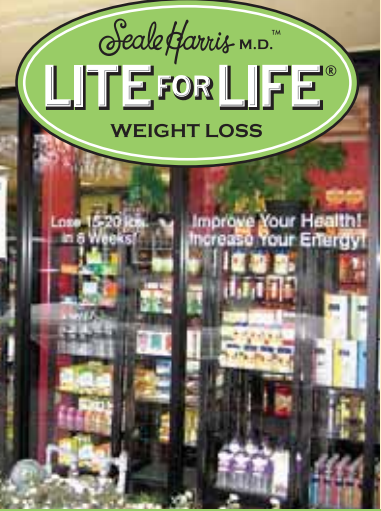
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Lucile Packard Children's Hospital 20th Anniversary

LECTURE SERIES

Innovations in Prenatal Care

January 25, 2011 at 7pm

From evaluation and diagnosis through treatment and community-based follow-up, the Center for Fetal and Maternal Health provides comprehensive care for complex fetal patients, expectant mothers and families. Join us for an update on the latest innovations in fetal and maternal care.



Susan Hintz MD, M.S.,
Epi Medical Director,
The Center for Fetal and
Maternal Health at Packard
Children's

This free lecture will be held in the Freidenrich Auditorium at Packard Children's Hospital.

Pre-registration is required. Reserve your space online at calendar.lpch.org or call (650) 724-3783.



20th Anniversary
**Lucile Packard
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at Stanford**

For additional 20th Anniversary Lecture Series offerings, visit anniversary.lpch.org

Anna Eshoo comments on Arizona shooting

By Sue Dremann

Embarcadero Media

Meeting face to face with the public is “the one of the most basic functions relative to democracy,” U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, said Monday in an interview.

And although she will remain cautious, the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona on Saturday, Jan. 8, won’t stop her from meeting with her constituents, she said by phone Jan. 10.

Rep. Eshoo condemned the polemics in today’s politics, which she said has contributed to a climate of violence that resulted in the shooting of 18 people, including Giffords.

Six people died after a 21-year-old man, Jared Loughner, fired 31 shots at Giffords, her staff and members of the public who had gathered for a “town hall” meeting with the congresswoman at a Safeway supermarket in Tucson. Giffords remains

hospitalized in critical condition with a gunshot wound through the head.

“Leaders can either lead or mislead. ... When you have candidates’ faces as a target for shooting, we’ve gone too far. ... I hope this tragic event causes people to think—and to think hard,” she said.

Rep. Eshoo said her office has reported many suspicious incidents during her tenure in Congress, which have been investigated by the Capitol police. At times, local law enforcement has been involved when applicable. The decision as to what is a credible threat is up to the Capitol police, she said.

But members of the House of Representatives are not provided with security—something that surprises many of her constituents, she said. Top House of Representative leaders do have some security, but “rank-and-file members are not protected, whether we are in the airport or standing in line at the supermarket,” she said.

She said that lack of security in today’s vitriolic political climate has given her pause. She thinks about her vulnerability every time she walks from the parking lot across the street to the Capitol steps, she said.

“I’ve always thought that members of Congress were sitting ducks,” she said.

But separating herself from the public is counter to the function of political leaders in American democracy, she said.

“It’s a slippery slope. What Gabby Giffords was doing is what every one of us does. ... When I look at the Capitol after 9-11 and at the masked, official gunmen with machine guns at the ready, it’s a very unpleasant feeling. We struggle with this,” she said.

“We need to do common sense. I don’t think it’s time to hunker down. ... I’ve commuted every week for 18 years to be with my constituents. I don’t want anything to come between us,” she said. ■

Four scouts with local Troop 206 reach Eagle rank

Four scouts with Troop 206—Kevin Flaherty, Aaron Robitsch, Steven Rhodes and Max Moore—were promoted to Eagle Scout rank in ceremonies held in 2010.

Kevin Flaherty, a graduate of Menlo School, earned 22 merit badges. For his Eagle project, he collected several tons of electronics for proper recycling, allowing for the safe disposal of toxic metals. Kevin is currently a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Aaron Robitsch, a graduate of Sequoia High School, earned 23 merit badges. His Eagle project was leading a team in constructing a

series of wooden foot rests to be used during classical guitar lessons in Sequoia’s music department. He is a student at Canada College.

Valedictorian for his graduating class at Woodside High School, Steven Rhodes’ project was creating human-powered bicycle-like electric generators to be used in Woodside High School’s science lab. He earned 22 merit badges. Steven is studying electrical engineering and computer science at UC Berkeley.

For his Eagle project, Max Moore led a team of 20 in landscaping and constructing a patio at Congregation Etz Chayim. He is a senior at

Woodside High School and has earned 24 merit badges.

To become an Eagle Scout, a candidate must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges and demonstrate leadership in the troop. He must plan, develop and lead a service project showing both leadership and commitment to duty.

Troop 206, which is sponsored by Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park, serves youth from Atherton, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Woodside and Portola Valley. In its 50-year history, Troop 206 has had 165 scouts reach Eagle rank.

OBITUARIES

continued from page 9

ert Dulik; children Gregg Dulik of Palo Alto, Thomas Dulik of Lafayette, and Ann Elizabeth Gardiner of London, England; and nine grandchildren.

A celebration of Ms. Dulik’s life will be held in March.

George Blythe Gray

Veterans Affairs volunteer

George Blythe Gray of Menlo Park died Dec. 20 after suffering from heart disease for many years. He was 63.

Mr. Gray was a veteran who served in Vietnam and Korea. For nearly 15 years he served as a volunteer at the information desk of the Palo Alto Veterans

Affairs Hospital.

He is survived by his life partner of 19 years, Donna Marie Lee; sons Charles David Gray and Lary Donn Gray; brother Marlin Heflin of Oklahoma; sisters Sharon Brown of Arizona and Mary Garnica of Arkansas; “honorary daughter” Tasha Lee McDonald of Monte Sereno; and three grandchildren.

A private service will be held at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego. Donations in his memory may be made to the Disabled Veterans Association, the American Heart Association, or a favorite charity.

Filoli holds open house for volunteers

Filoli Center will hold its annual volunteer open house at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 22, at Filoli, 86 Canada Road in Woodside.

Filoli offers many ways to volunteer, including becoming house and garden

docents, joining the ambassador program or art committee, and working in the cafe and the garden shop.

Reservations are required. E-mail volunteer@filoli.org or call 364-8300, ext. 300, and leave a message

Support Local Business



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF JANUARY 24, 2011

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the City of Menlo Park, California, is scheduled to review the following items:

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Use Permit Revision/William Park and Jung Choi/600

Cotton Street: Request for a revision to a use permit granted in 1999 for the construction of a two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width and lot area in the R-E (Residential Estate) zoning district. The use permit revision is for an addition to the first floor and basement of the residence, an addition to an existing accessory building, and approval of an expansion to an existing detached garage. The applicant is also proposing to remove a heritage-size cedar tree located in the front, right corner of the site that is 25.6 inches in diameter and potentially hazardous.

Use Permit/Anatole Zelkin/1923-1929 Menalto

Avenue: Request for a use permit to operate a retail flower shop in an existing commercial building on a property that is substandard with regard to parking in the C-2 (Neighborhood Shopping) zoning district.

Use Permit Revision/Verizon Wireless/2884 Sand

Hill Road: Request for a use permit revision to extend the time limit for an existing wireless facility on a rooftop of an existing building in the C-1-C (Administrative, Professional, and Research, Restrictive) zoning district.

Use Permit Revision/Ellen Ackerman for MTR/1235

Hamilton Court: Request for a revision to an existing use permit for indoor storage and use of hazardous materials for the manufacturing of membrane materials and processes at an existing building located in the M-2 (General Industrial) zoning district. MTR conducts Research and Development (R&D) at other sites within the AMB Willow Park complex.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that said Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on public hearing items in the Council Chambers of the City of Menlo Park, located at 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, on **Monday, January 24, 2011, 7:00 p.m.** or as near as possible thereafter, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon. If you challenge this item in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

The project file may be viewed by the public on weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with alternate Fridays closed, at the Department of Community Development, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park. Please call the Planning Division if there are any questions and/or for complete agenda information (650) 330-6702.

Si usted necesita más información sobre este proyecto, por favor llame al 650-330-6702, y pregunte por un asistente que hable español.

DATED: January 6, 2011 Deanna Chow, Senior Planner
PUBLISHED: January 12, 2011 Menlo Park Planning Commission

Visit our Web site for Planning Commission public hearing, agenda, and staff report information: www.menlopark.org

TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR COMMITTEES

BICYCLE COMMITTEE

Meets third Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.; appointed for two-year term.

The Committee advises and recommends to the Town Council on the policies for planning, developing, maintaining, and usage of Town's bikeways system.

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

Meets fourth Monday of each month, 6:00 p.m.; appointed for two-year term.

The Committee advises and assists the Town Council, Planning Commission, and staff on conservation, open space, noise, public services and facilities as pertaining to the elements of the Town's General Plan.

LIVESTOCK AND ANIMAL CONTROL COMMITTEE

Meets fourth Wednesday of each month; 5:30 p.m.; appointed for two-year term.

The Committee advises the Planning Director on applications for commercial stable permits, dog kennel permits, and exception requests to the private stable regulations.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Meets fourth Thursday of each month, 6:00 p.m.; appointed for two-year term.

The Committee advises and assists the Town Council, Planning Commission and staff in implementing the policies and goals of the Open Space and Conservation elements of the General Plan, specifically with respect to acquisition and maintenance of conservation easements and open space preservation.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meets on call of Chair; appointed for two-year term.

The Committee advises the Town Council and staff on issues of community public safety, including police and fire services provided within the Town.

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Meets first Thursday of each month, 7:30 p.m.; appointed for three-year term.

The Committee guides the activities of the community recreation programs.

TRAILS COMMITTEE

Meets second Thursday of each month, 3:00 p.m.; appointed for two-year term.

The Committee reviews land divisions, subdivisions and conditional use permits for locations for equestrian, pedestrian and bicycle trails and makes recommendations to the staff and to the Planning Commission.

WOODSIDE HISTORY COMMITTEE

Meets second Thursday of each month, 9:30 a.m.; appointed for two-year term.

The Committee advises the Town Council and staff regarding actions, policies and plans relating to historic preservation.

Committees are volunteer positions and serve in an advisory capacity to the Town Council.

Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon and 1-5:00 p.m., from the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, or telephone (650) 851-6790, or through the Town's web site at www.woodsidetown.org. Deadline for applications is Friday, January 14, 2011, 5:00 p.m.

■ 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: Wallet and cell phone stolen from backpack, Menlo-Atherton High School at 555 Middlefield Road, Jan. 6.

Child or elder abuse report: 300 block of El Camino Real, Jan. 6.

MENLO PARK

Commercial burglary reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$7,400 in break-in and theft of pressure washer, two water pumps and electric generator, Sun Microsystems campus at Network Circle, Jan. 4.

■ Break-in and theft of \$100 in cash, Merry Go Round vintage clothing store at 713 Santa Cruz Ave., Jan. 5.

Residential burglary reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$3,000 in break-in and theft of laptop computer and flat-screen TV, 800 block of Menlo Ave., Jan. 3.

■ Loss estimated at \$200 in break-in and theft of necklace, 100 block of Blackburn Ave., Dec. 31.

■ Loss estimated at \$100 in break-in and theft of wallet, 200 block of Middlefield Road, Dec. 31.

Grand theft reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$3,300 in residential theft of laptop computer, Apple iPad, charger and sunglasses, 1100 block of Merrill St., Jan. 5.

■ Loss estimated at \$700 in theft of bicycle, Cal Train station, Jan. 2.

■ Loss estimated at \$500 in theft of metal statues of Three Wise Men from front porch, 200 block of Felton Drive, Jan. 2.

■ Loss estimated at \$500 in theft of bicycle, 100 block of Gilbert Ave., Dec. 31.

■ Loss of \$473 in theft of bike and helmet, 2200 block of Sharon Road, Dec. 31.

Auto burglary reports:

■ Loss estimated at \$270 in break-in and theft of stereo faceplate and electric shaver, 1300 block of Willow Road, Jan. 2.

■ Loss estimated at \$145 in break-in and theft of cash blanket, wool coat and raincoat, 300 block of Ivy Ave., Dec. 31.

Fraud reports:

■ Loss of \$743 in unauthorized use of credit card, 900 block of Fremont Place, Jan. 3.

■ Loss of \$406 in unauthorized long distance calls, 3700 block of Haven Ave., Jan. 3.

WOODSIDE

Theft report: Credit card stolen from glove box of unlocked vehicle, 100 block of Farm Road, Jan. 2.

Portola Valley to consider location of new batting cage

The Little League baseball field at Westridge Drive and Alpine Road in Portola Valley is scheduled for extensive renovation, and the Town Council on Wednesday, Jan. 12, will consider replacing the batting cage at its current non-conforming

location: inside the setback of Los Trancos Creek.

The batting cage and two storage containers at Ford Field at 3399 Alpine Road happen to intrude on the setback of the creek, which runs behind the field. A new batting cage would

have a lower profile, and the creek setback will gain 8 feet of open space by moving the storage containers, according to a staff report.

The council meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Historic Schoolhouse at 765 Portola Road.

Babe Ruth baseball league holds tryouts

Submitted by Jim Gasiewski of Woodside, commissioner of the Palo Alto Babe Ruth Prep League.

Winter may have barely begun, but Palo Alto Babe Ruth (PABR) baseball is already gearing up for 2011, its 56th season. Babe Ruth baseball offers youth ages 13 to 15 the challenge of playing on a full-size diamond, and the kind of competition that will help them take their skills to the next level.

Recognizing that PABR is located in an area with many competing interests for teens, the league is dedicated to providing an exciting baseball experience for the greatest number of capable players.

Tryouts for the upcoming

■ SPORTS

Babe Ruth 2011 season are scheduled for Jan. 30 and Feb. 5, depending on weather.

Visit pababeruth.org to register by Jan. 29, which is necessary to participate in tryouts.

Players are drafted into teams shortly after tryouts. To be considered for a team, a player must make at least one scheduled tryout.

To be eligible for Babe Ruth, players must be 13, but not older than 15, by May 1. PABR Players must also be a resident of Atherton, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Portola Valley, Redwood City or Woodside.

Thirteen-year-olds play in a "Prep" league made up of at

least four teams. Fourteen- and 15-year-olds play together in an "Upper" league with seven or eight teams. Based on performance, some Prep league players will get the chance to extend their season and join the roster of an Upper league team.

Both Prep and Upper leagues play a short, busy season culminating in a championship tournament.

Since many Upper league players also play for high school teams, their season begins after high school ball ends. The Prep league season starts earlier, and winds up as the Upper league begins play.

After the regular season, All Star teams are formed for each age group (13, 14, and 15), with the possibility of play in district, state, regional and national tournaments. PABR has a long history of producing competitive All-Stars. In recent years, PABR 14 and 15 All Stars can boast of winning several district and state championships. In 2008, PABR sent a very strong team to the National Championship tournament in Massachusetts.

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TOWN OF WOODSIDE

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Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month, 4:30 p.m. Appointments are for a four-year term.

Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon and 1-5:00 p.m., from the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, or telephone (650) 851-6790, or through the Town's web site at www.woodsidetown.org. Deadline for applications is Friday, January 14, 2011, 5:00 p.m.

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3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas,
Menlo Park, Ca 94025**Newsroom: (650) 223-6525**

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e-mail news and photos with
captions to:**Editor@AlmanacNews.com**

e-mail letters to:

letters@AlmanacNews.comThe 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
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Viewpoint

Ideas, thoughts and opinions about local issues from people in our community. Edited by Tom Gibboney.

The garbage man taketh away

Suddenly, Menlo Park and Atherton residents are waking up to the fact that the waste collector is now taking away their garbage, recyclables, and much more of their cash.

With the new year's kick-off of Recology's slick, new, single-stream recycling system, city officials hope that only a very small percentage of household waste will wind up in the small black cans that have been given to homeowners in the two cities. Instead of garbage, Recology is asking residents to stuff more and more of their waste into the compost (green) and recycling (blue) bins than ever before.

EDITORIAL*The opinion of The Almanac*

The new system will be much better for the environment, but it will cost more, in most cases a

lot more, unless homeowners reduce the expense by taking a smaller garbage can. If so, they will have done exactly what environmental experts had hoped, which is reducing the amount of waste that enters shrinking landfills on the Peninsula.

But at the moment, the increased cost is taking center stage. In Menlo Park, for example, on July 1 of last year residents paid \$5 more per month for each garbage can, and the City Council decided later in the year that rates could increase again by up to 15 percent this July, although the exact amount has not been determined. Similar bumps for Atherton has some residents livid about how quickly rates have skyrocketed in the last two years.

What happened? There is no short answer, but the rates must cover a new, \$65 million facility to house the single-stream sorting process, and an extremely lucrative labor contract for the garbage collectors, who will receive a 19 percent pay increase over the next five years. The deal was approved by the outgoing Republic Services (formerly Allied

Waste) before its contract ended last year. Critics say Republic had no incentive to drive a hard bargain with the union representing the garbage workers, and that in any case, there is no way for the 10 cities in the waste management district to hold the line on labor costs, which are passed through to the cities and on to local residents.

Other factors said to contribute to the jump in rates include higher costs for fuel and other supplies that go into operating a large garbage and recycling collection system. In addition, the Atherton and Menlo Park city councils, which must adjust the collection rates to cover billings from the waste collection companies, did not always raise rates high enough to adequately cover costs, so in some cases are billing residents to cover a prior shortfall.

If you are an angry ratepayer, the best way to save is to recycle more and throw away less. That way you can contract for a smaller garbage can, which will cost less per month. It may be difficult for owners of larger lots with more vegetation to control their compost production, although the green carts will be picked up every week now, instead of every other week.

The bottom line: The higher rates are beginning to reflect the true cost of our impact on the environment. It is time to recognize that there is a monetary cost for environmental impact, and it is starting to catch up with us.

The next shock will be a major hike in water rates, which are expected to double by 2015 when the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission completes its major project to overhaul the pipes that bring water to the Bay Area from the Hetch Hetchy water system. This is a major renovation that is expected to cost more than \$6 billion. Conservation is the only way to reduce the impact of this rate increase.

LETTERS*Our readers write*

Tragic loss of another majestic oak at Oak Knoll

Editor:

On the night of Jan. 4, one of the few remaining oak trees at Oak Knoll Elementary School became another victim of "facility development" by the district.

I have no doubt an argument could be made otherwise, but I know that the tree was compromised by years of previous neglect and finally succumbed to excessive disturbance within the tree canopy that fatally damaged the root structure of the tree. I wonder how much longer the remaining oaks will last, as they have suffered at least as much trauma, especially the oak on Oak Avenue with its roots entirely covered by asphalt.

I fear that the response will be to interpret this event as justification for removing trees that were "unhealthy" or at the natural end of their life, rather than to accept responsibility for the tree's demise as a direct result of construction that could have been achieved elsewhere, despite claims otherwise.

Kristin Duriseti
Oak Knoll Lane, Menlo Park



Portola Valley Archives

Our Regional Heritage

In this 1960s view, the surroundings of the gas station at the corner of La Mesa and Alpine in Ladera are quite different from those of our times. The station has now been replaced by a modern building awaiting tenants.

Hard to find transparency in a closed session

Editor:

Am I the only one to see the humor in the opening paragraphs

of the Dec. 29 article, "Menlo Park council forms labor subcommittee?"

Paragraph one says the new group's goal is, "increasing the transparency of the bargaining

process in Menlo Park." Paragraph two starts with, "the decision came during a closed session meeting. ..." Then paragraph three reiterates

See **LETTERS**, next page

Remembering Betty Fry — and The Country Almanac

By Marion Softky

Betty Fry, who died Dec. 30 in Nevada City, is still making her mark on the Midpeninsula every week, as the local newspaper she-co-founded 45 years ago continues to arrive in mailboxes — and online — in the communities of Portola Valley, Woodside, Atherton, Menlo Park and surroundings.

Betty and The Almanac helped build a “really cohesive sense of community,” says Mort Levine, who succeeded Betty as publisher of the young newspaper in 1980. Betty’s passing has spurred many of her friends and admirers, including me, to reflect on the turbulent 1960s and the three young mothers who faced a problem of communicating within their small communities.

Betty Fry, along with Jean Heflin and the late Hedy Boissevain, solved it Silicon Valley-style with a startup. Now they’d be called soccer moms; then they were very involved in their furiously growing community and divisive issues in the schools. Portola Valley incorporated in 1964 to gain control over development that was threatening to sprawl over its treasured hills.

About the same time the school district lost a bond election, partly because local daily newspapers, such as the Palo Alto Times, were interested in big stories; they couldn’t be bothered with such petty local issues.

“Mimeographs wouldn’t do it. We needed a better way to communicate,” says Jo Schreck, a Portola Valley neighbor and close friend of Ms. Fry.

In The Almanac’s 40th anniversary issue, Ms. Fry said, “The school superintendent said if we had a paper like the Los Altos Town Crier, we could have passed the bond.”

Jean Heflin, another young mom, served as matchmaker for the Almanac founders. She introduced Ms. Fry, a Portola Valley friend with organizational and business smarts, to Hedy Boissevain, who had edited the women’s page for the Palo Alto Times. “Jean was the cream in the cookie,” says Bill Heflin from their current home in Mt. Vernon, Wash.

The three founders plunged into startup mode. They sought backing and legal help to launch their newspaper, and soon ran into the female factor. In those days, many pooh-poohed the idea of three women starting a newspaper. But they also found strong support, notably from Albert Schreck and John Wilson of Portola Valley, Pete Pond of



Betty Fry, right, with Hedy Boissevain at their desks in the Country Almanac office. Photo is undated.

Woodside, and retired Sunset publisher Bill Lane.

Years later, Mr. Lane wrote, “We needed a reliable, tangible, local ‘voice’ to report about incorporation, school, church, children’s athletics, and other activities, and in the process help our families work together as a well-informed community.”

Starting a newspaper

On Sept. 8, 1965, Volume 1 No. 1 of The Country Almanac appeared in mail boxes all over Portola Valley and Woodside. Four pages with Susie Brown at her first day of kindergarten on the cover, it was The Almanac’s first back-to-school issue; now there have been 45 such issues.

Like a classic Silicon Valley startup, early Almanacs were laid out on kitchen tables and family rooms. The founders’ kids helped tie and load newspapers. “We printed the first edition in our back office,” recalls Al Boissevain, now living in Indiana. “We couldn’t have done it without Betty.”

For the next 15 years, The Almanac grew and prospered under Betty’s steady business hand and Hedy’s careful and sprightly reporting matched with great pictures.

“I admired Betty for her steadiness, persistence and organization,” Ms. Heflin says, “And for her ability to see goals.”

Mr. Levine credited Ms. Fry with the all-important business sense that made The Almanac succeed. “Despite a primitive technology, the Almanac staff assembled by Betty Fry was able to present a high quality

of conscientiously gathered news and sparkling features that rapidly won a firm place among area residents.”

Ms. Fry’s major task was to get people to advertise. The first big break came in November 1965. When Long’s grocery store in Ladera took out a full-page ad, the paper bumped from four to eight pages. This was followed by George Roberts, father of the current owner, who took out a full-page ad for Roberts of Woodside. “I was thrilled,” Ms. Fry said later. “It broke down financial barriers. Once we picked up a market, real estate ads began coming in.”

Lots of local people also got involved. Kip Pond recalls sitting on a couch as Ms. Fry asked her to write an advertising column about either restaurants or other interesting possibilities. “I thought restaurants would be fattening,” Ms. Pond recalls. “I just did what I wanted to.” Kip’s Corner shopping column was popular for years.

Fran Dempsey also remembers helping with advertising, and moving into photography at The Country Almanac. “It was so wonderful with those women,” she recalls. They carried no cigarette or liquor advertisements, and no weddings or obituaries. And no editorials.

I, too, worked for the Almanac, starting in 1969, and continuing for 40 years. The Hedy-Betty years were very special; I could not imagine a better pair of bosses. Betty, in particular, ran a tight but pleasant ship. She was very sharp, very thorough and very efficient. I am immensely grateful to both

of them for starting me on a career that has been of great personal satisfaction, and — I hope — public value.

By 1980, Al Boissevain had retired and wanted to move to the foothills to grow grapes. The Boissevains and Frys sold the Country Almanac to former publishers Mort and Elaine Levine, who ran it for the next 13 years, until its sale to Palo Alto-based Embarcadero Publishing Co. in 1993.

During her Almanac years, Ms. Fry continued to cope with being a businesswoman in a man’s world. Ms. Heflin tells of her attending a meeting of a publishers’ association. “When someone asked her to make coffee, her response was, ‘Let Fred do it.’”

Other activities

Everyone I’ve talked to about Betty Fry admires her.

“She was just a jack-of-all trades. She was into everything,” says Ms. Schreck. “She was very much to the point — let’s get this done.”

I asked her husband of 50 years, Dr. Bill Fry, what her interests were. He laughed, “What were not her interests?”

When the Frys moved to Portola Valley about 1958, Ms. Fry plunged into community activities. Besides becoming president of the PTA, she played tennis, did crewel sewing, and joined an investment group. She also helped Penny Patterson to set up the Gorilla Foundation in Woodside, where Dr. Patterson is teaching Koko, a gorilla, to communicate in American Sign Language. “She stayed on the board,” Dr. Fry says.

After leaving the Almanac, the Frys moved to Nevada City in the Sierra foothills, where they already had a house. Ms. Fry sold real estate for a while and became involved with the local community. She enjoyed and supported Music in the Mountains and its outstanding programs, Dr. Fry says. She also joined the Nevada County Land Trust, which preserves land in the foothills much as the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) does in our area. She was its president for several years, Dr. Fry says.

And one other thing: Ms. Schreck adds, “Betty was a terrific cook; her beef bourguignon was superb.”

The family suggests that gifts in Ms. Fry’s memory be made to the Nevada County Land Trust at 175 Joerschke Drive, #R Grass Valley, CA 95945.

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

the goal as, “finding ways to make labor negotiations more transparent.”

Then Mayor Rich Cline talks about, “looking at the process leading up to negotiations ... putting in place a timeline that allows the public to get more involved ... perhaps a study session ... open time to gather input. ...” And then, yes, we’re getting there ... “negotiations!”

I guess what’s good enough for

Sacramento and Washington is good enough for Menlo Park. And dealing with organized labor has to be the third rail of every politician’s life.

But wouldn’t it be refreshing, just once, to cut through the vamping, the time-consuming “processes,” and all the BS, and just have some good old, town hall, sit-down meetings with city management, labor — and the public — all in the same room, at the same time?

Isn’t that what “transparency” means?

Dan Dippery
Santa Margarita, Menlo Park

Real civic damage?

Editor:

If diminished capacity to function effectively as a city council is real civic damage, and I would argue that it is, the mess that the Menlo Park City Council made out of electing a mayor for 2011 caused much more than a “little, if any, ‘real’ damage.”

Ms. Ferguson will, as The Almanac editorialized, “find it difficult to perform effectively.” Mr. Ohtaki and Ms. Keith showed themselves to be raw rookies at public service. In failing to step aside in favor of Mr. Cohen, who was, by cus-

tom, next in line to be mayor after Ms. Ferguson, Mr. Cline demonstrated a lack of class that will limit his potential for leadership.

The bottom line is that, at a time in our local history when we desperately need a strong council to establish and enforce policy for a staff that, given its own lead, seems intent on ignoring residential and local business interests, we are burdened with a group of five councilors who may well be unable to work cohesively.

James Madison
Holly Avenue, Menlo Park

Former mayor in Kelly Fergusson’s corner

Editor:

Kudos to former Palo Alto Mayor Gary Fazzino for standing up for Menlo Park City Council member Kelly Fergusson, noting that she did what other prospective mayors have always done in our local communities — indicating a willingness to serve as mayor.

And good for Kelly Fergusson for being such a stalwart elected official.

Dorothy Bender
Palo Alto

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