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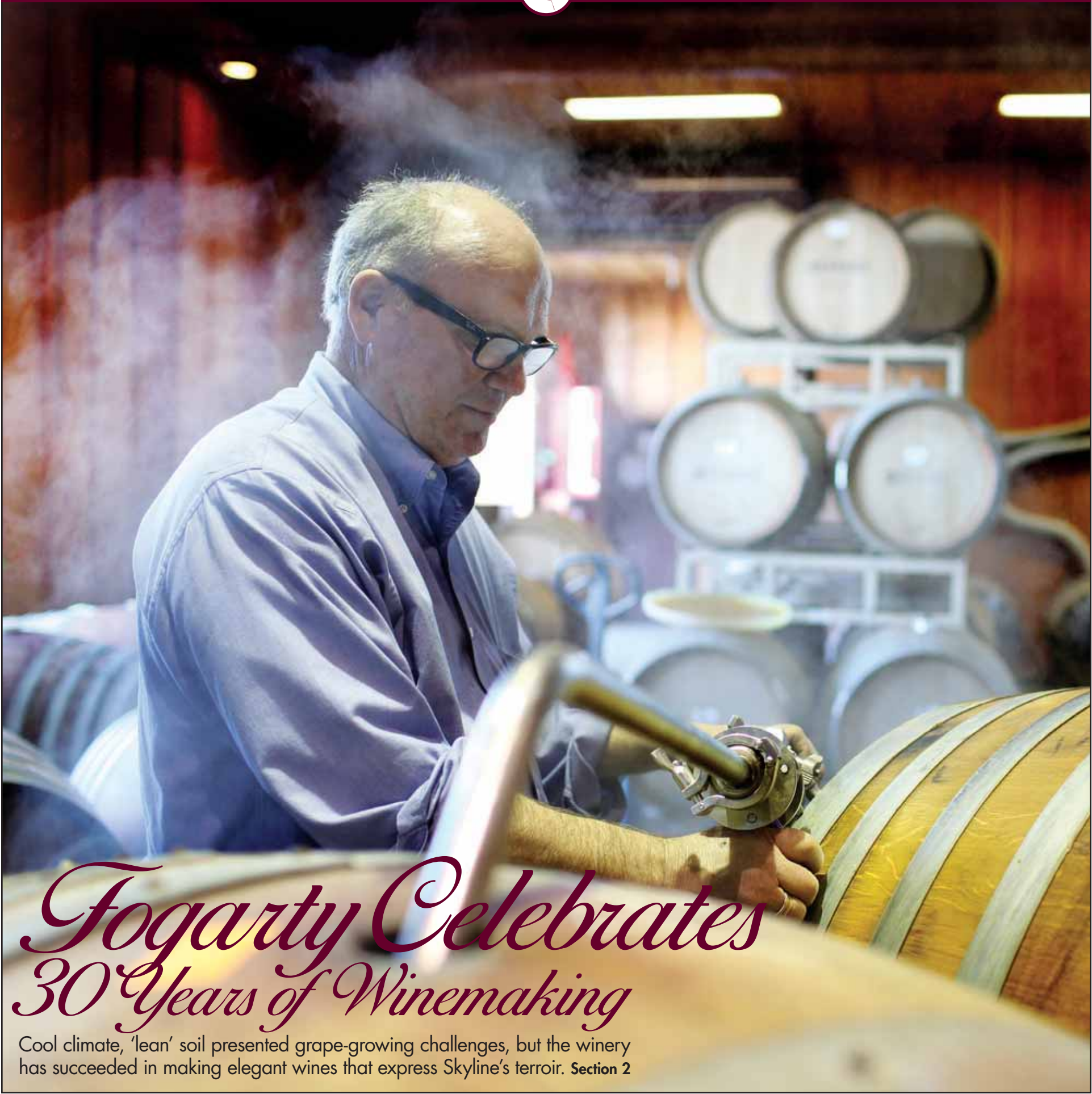
The Almanac

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

APRIL 6, 2011 | VOL. 46 NO. 32



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Jim Kohlberg directs feature film

By Kate Daly

Special to the Almanac

Jim Kohlberg of Portola Valley leads a double life. The family man is known in the creative world as a director, producer and writer, yet in the business world, he's known as chairman of Kohlberg Ventures and involved with Internet, consumer products and healthcare companies.

His latest movie, "The Music Never Stopped," has been showing in the Bay Area since March 18 at independent theaters and art houses. It debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, in January. This month the film is being shown in 20 more cities across the country.

The low-budget film starring J.K. Simmons and Lou Taylor Pucci is based on a real case that neurologist Dr. Oliver Sacks wrote about in the essay, "The Last Hippie."

A teenage boy runs away from home, and develops a brain tumor that impacts his memory. Nearly 20 years later he reunites with his parents and works with a musical therapist who discovers that playing oldies, such as Beatles, Dylan and Grateful Dead songs, can reignite the patient's memory.

"The audience really reacts well to this film; it makes people cry, it makes people laugh," Mr. Kohlberg said. "When they walk out of the theater they want to talk about it more."

At a recent private showing at the Aquarius in Palo Alto, the movie received a standing

ovation. Local family friends bought out all the seats and invited Mr. Kohlberg to come speak to the crowd. Mickey Hart, the drummer for the Grateful Dead, made a guest appearance, too.

Both of the men had spoken at Sundance about the film. Mr. Hart "is so involved in musical therapy, he wanted

picked up the film in early January, and now it's being shown nationwide.

"We need all the viral help we can get," Mr. Kohlberg told the audience.

The movie already has more than 20,000 fans on Facebook, but box office numbers determine when and where the film will play.

"This is not a blockbuster," Mr. Kohlberg admitted, but the numbers are still coming in.

"The Music Never Stopped" is the first film he has directed and produced. Mr. Kohlberg co-founded a production company in 1999 and has produced the films "Two Family House," "Runaway" and "Trumbo."

He also directed the play, "All My Sons," in Mountain View a while back.

Mr. Kohlberg said, with no formal background in drama or film, it's writing that got him hooked on making movies. He sees himself primarily as a storyteller, and right now is in the midst of sealing several deals, including publishing a book, "a San Francisco-based noir novella right after the dot.com bust."

Other film projects he's currently working on are a political thriller and two based on the books, "Home in the Morning" and "Outlander."

He is busy developing a lot of ideas because he acknowledged, "the odds of any of these films happening is small."

Go to themusicneverstopped-movie.com for more information, including local showings.

'The audience really reacts well to this film; it makes people cry, it makes people laugh.'

PORTOLA VALLEY
MOVIE DIRECTOR
JIM KOHLBERG



to be more involved in the marketing," Mr. Kohlberg explained.

Mr. Hart talked to the audience about "the power of music to reconnect," particularly when working with Alzheimer's and brain injury patients. He gave the example of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Arizona, who is recovering from being shot in the head several months ago. "One of her main treatments is music therapy," he said.

The film's storyline revolves around music, so getting approval to use certain songs was key. Mr. Kohlberg said as soon as the iconic rock musicians such as Mr. Hart embraced the project, everything fell into place rather quickly.

A year ago, the crew spent five weeks filming in New York, using one camera for most of the scenes. A distributor, Roadside Attractions,

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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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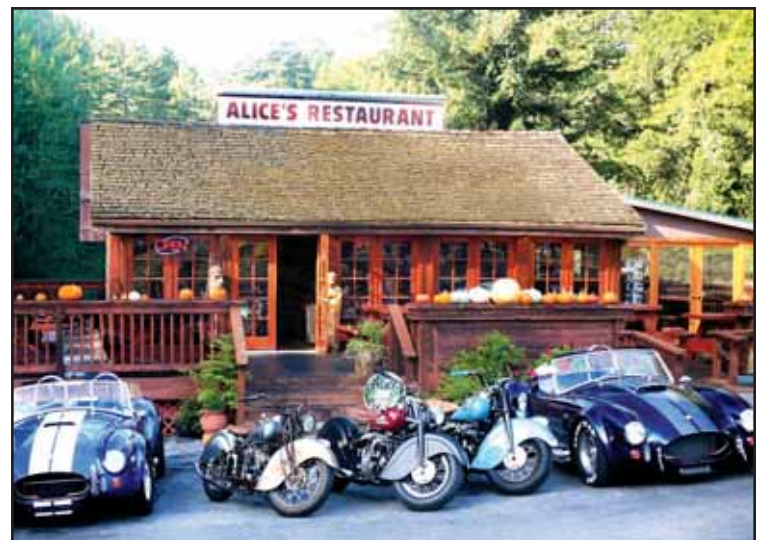
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Local News

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Internet trailblazer Paul Baran dies at 84

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Paul Baran, a former resident of Atherton, a native of Eastern Europe and the thinker behind digital packet switching, the elegant concept that underlies the World Wide Web, has died.

Mr. Baran was a 2007 inductee into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in Akron, Ohio, and co-founded the Palo Alto-based Institute for the Future. He died March 26 at the age of 84.

Mr. Baran started seven companies, five of which went public, his collaborator Stephen Millard told the Almanac for a 2007 cover story associated with Mr. Baran's Hall of Fame induction. Technologies based on his inventions include high-speed Internet access (DSL), wireless networking, and Internet phone service, Mr. Millard said.

As an inventor, Mr. Baran kept at it in defiance of his age. At 80, he told the Almanac that he was involved with "a couple of start-ups," about which he would smile secretively but not elaborate.

Asked whether his later inventions measured up to packet switching, he replied: "No, that's a pretty hard one to beat. After that, it's all down hill."

Packet switching is fundamental to the efficiency and hardiness of the Internet. In a nutshell, it takes a digital entity such as an e-mail attachment or the playing of a Youtube video and disassembles it into thousands of meticulously identified packets of bits and bytes. Those packets are then sent along random paths through a mesh-like network of

'I didn't invent everything. I just took whatever ideas were around and patched them together.'

PAUL BARAN



Photo by Veronica Weber/The Almanac

servers, and reassembled in the right order at the right time at the right computer.

On most days, it happens so cleanly and quickly that we are never the wiser.

The Internet was vulnerable, Mr. Baran said, because damage to one server could isolate whole groups of other servers.

Packet switching dramatically lowers risk of network failure in cases of physical damage to its components, whether by lightning or terrorist attack.

"I didn't invent everything. I just took whatever ideas were around and patched them together," he said. "The obvious step was 'Make (the network) like a fish net so there is no central node,'" In such a

distributed network, information may be blocked on one path but can take another at every node.

Packet switching also lowers costs. "You can now build this network out of (comparable) junk," he said. "It used to be we had to gold-plate everything. This one works around failure. That's

why it's become the way we build networks today."

"What could be simpler or more elegant? What could be harder to imagine," Paul Saffo, an admirer of Mr. Baran and a co-founder of the Institute for the Future, said for the 2007 story.

Mr. Saffo described Mr. Baran as "delightful" and "refreshingly self-effacing. He is so generous in sharing credit with others, almost to a fault. He is old-school Silicon Valley, the 'Show no chrome' generation. He's kind of the polar opposite of (Oracle Corp. founder) Larry Ellison. I'll bet you he (Baran) flies coach.

"We need more of that in the Valley," Mr. Saffo added. "I'm grateful for his many innovations, but I admire him most for his outlook on life, and it's something that the rest of us should strive to emulate." ■

Town Council ran afoul of open-meeting law, CNPA attorney says

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The Portola Valley Town Council may have jumped into a briar patch on March 23. The council voted unanimously to adjourn to an urgent closed session at the end of its regular meeting so as to discuss 900 Portola Road, the former site of Al's Nursery that was sold recently.

Jim Ewert, legal counsel for the California Newspaper Publishers Association, told the Almanac that the council's actions appear to not have comported with the state's open-meeting law, the Ralph M. Brown Act.

By law, legislative bodies are allowed to go into closed session to discuss negotiations for the purchase, sale, exchange or lease of real property. As with meetings in open session, the public must be notified of the meeting's time and purpose 72 hours in advance.

To call an urgent closed session without advance notice, the regulations are much more restrictive. "An emergency closed session is very, very, very rare because the circumstances under which (it) can be held are so narrow and specific," Mr. Ewert told the Almanac.

Among the provisions in the Brown Act that cover this matter,

one allows a legislative body to call an urgent closed session if three conditions are met: a majority approves of the idea, there is a need to take "immediate action," and the need arose after the posting of the regular agenda.

Mayor Ted Driscoll cited this provision as justifying the March 23 urgent closed session. Were the standards met?

"We believed there was new information that had come to our attention since the agenda had been published and that it could require immediate action, so we were legally justified in calling for that closed session," Mr. Driscoll said in an email. "After further discussion and consensus in the closed session, we concluded that it was in fact best at this time to take no action."

Urgent sessions are "in fact, rare" in Portola Valley, he added and cited a statement from the town clerk, who said that there has been only one other instance in the past 15 years.

The Brown Act requires that the council report on what happened in a closed session after the session is over. Asked for that report on the Al's Nursery matter, Mr. Driscoll said: "... I believe I can't comment except to say we took no formal

See **BROWN ACT**, page 8



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Creekside biologist Stuart Weiss releases the endangered Bay checkerspot butterflies into Edgewood County Park in a second attempt to reintroduce the butterflies into their natural habitat.

Endangered butterflies released at Edgewood

By Chris Cooney

Bay City News Service

Biologists carrying coolers full of butterflies hiked into Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve last Wednesday afternoon in an effort to reintroduce the endangered checkerspot butterfly into San Mateo County.

About 40 adult red-and-white

checkered butterflies were collected from Coyote Ridge in Santa Clara County and released into the park by volunteers and biologists working with the San Mateo County Parks Foundation.

Stuart Weiss, a Stanford biologist who is spearheading the repopulation effort, tried to reintroduce the checkerspot butterfly to San Mateo County in the spring of 2007.

That attempt failed due to unusually dry weather conditions, which killed off the food supply before the 1,000 caterpillars that had been hand-carried into the Edgewood Park were able to mature and reproduce, Mr. Weiss said.

"When we tried this back in 2007, we just happened to pick

See **BUTTERFLY**, page 8



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M E D I C I N E

Tutor arrested on child molestation charges

■ Former Menlo Park City School District employee resigned last month.

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

A former Menlo Park City School District employee was arraigned Friday on 12 counts of child molestation.

Yung Chi Chu, 46, was arrested by the Sheriff's Office on March 30 at his San Carlos home, for allegedly molesting the 10-year-old daughter of a friend.

According to the district attorney's office, the girl's father found hundreds of late-night text messages allegedly sent to the girl by Mr. Chu, who was also tutoring the child. He sent her photos of naked men and asked for nude

photos of her, but the victim didn't cooperate, the district attorney's report stated.

In an advisory sent to parents Friday, the school district said Mr. Chu resigned his position on March 2 during a disciplinary investigation into unrelated misconduct after working as a computer technician for three-and-a-half years.

Superintendent Ken Ranella described Mr. Chu's duties as assisting staff at the Teacher Educational Resource Center, and Encinal and Laurel Elementary schools.

"(Computer technicians) are not assigned duties that would require them to be alone with children without the presence of a credentialed teacher," he wrote in the advisory, and noted that the

Online memorial database launched

Readers may submit and search online for local obituaries

A new online obituary database, Lasting Memories, offers Almanac website visitors access to previously published obituaries and a convenient way to post remembrances.

"Lasting Memories is in response to inquiries by readers who have asked for a way to search for obituaries and a seamless way to submit obituary information," said Tom Gibboney, publisher of the Almanac. "We hope it'll be a great community service and a lasting history of local residents."

Go to AlmanacNews.com/obituaries to see the Lasting Memories pages.

This service is also available on the websites of the Almanac's sister papers, the Palo Alto Weekly and the Mountain View Voice.

Visitors looking for a particular obituary can search by first or last name, years of death and birth, keyword or tag. Visitors can also browse recently posted obituaries.

New obituaries may be submitted by clicking "submit obituary" and filling out the form

provided, including name, dates of birth and death, city of residence, and relevant biographical information.

There are spaces provided for memorial-service information and requests for memorial donations, as well as the option to upload a photo and a YouTube video link.

Visitors to the site may leave comments and condolences on obituaries by clicking "submit a remembrance," and there is the option of sending a private e-mail. ■

New high-speed-rail group focuses on Caltrain corridor

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Joining the alphabet soup of groups scrutinizing high-speed rail along the Peninsula is the San Mateo Rail Corridor Partnership, or SMRCP for short.

Advocates say it's meant to fill a void in the discussion by concentrating on high-speed rail within the Caltrain corridor, a topic they say is overlooked by the most visible regional coalition, the Peninsula Cities Consortium (PCC).

So far, San Mateo, Millbrae, Redwood City, South San Francisco, and Burlingame have signed on to SMRCP. "Some of (the PCC) members oppose the use of the

Caltrain corridor, so their focus is on alternative routes, the ridership study, and business plan," said Larry Patterson, director of public works for San Mateo and spokesman for SMRCP.

Its counterpart, the PCC, consists of five elected officials from Menlo Park, Atherton, Palo Alto, Burlingame and Belmont — cities that would be heavily impacted by construction of high-speed rail.

The groups aren't mutually exclusive, according to Mr. Patterson, a view echoed by Burlingame's mayor, Terry Nagel, who represents the only city currently participating in both groups.

"I have consistently urged coun-

cil members to attend both PCC and the San Mateo-led partnership meetings because I believe the cities along the Caltrain corridor need to look each other in the eye and figure out which forum and what process will help all of us agree on a transportation solution that works for everyone," Ms. Nagel said.

But other members of the consortium wonder why another high-speed rail group is necessary. Menlo Park's mayor, Rich Cline, who recently finished a term as PCC chair, said the other cities were invited "many times over" to join in the pre-existing regional organization, but refused.

Mr. Chu remains in custody on \$250,000 bail after a judge denied his defense attorney's request to lower the amount. He's expected to enter a plea in San Mateo County Superior Court on April 7.

The Sheriff's Office asks that anyone with information regarding this investigation contact Det. Sgt. Bryan Raffaelli at 363-4058 or the Sheriff's Office anonymous tip line at (800) 547-2700. ■

mean we aren't looking for alternatives," she said. "A lot of things could happen to derail that project; there's a million reasons that this might not happen. But right now it's going forward and has a lot of political force. It's smart for the cities to get involved."

Down the road, the two groups might consolidate. It has been all too easy, according to Ms. Nagel, for larger cities like San Francisco and San Jose to divide and conquer their smaller neighbors along the Peninsula.

"Either you get what people decide they're going to give you, or you go forward and get what you want," she said. "Politically it's really dumb if we don't unite." ■

Investment consultant fined \$332,000

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Mark Duffell, a former consultant for the Menlo Park-based private investment firm Accel-KKR LLC, agreed to penalties of \$332,000 in connection with charges of insider trading, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

In March 2009, while representing Accel-KKR, Mr. Duffell bought 65,000 shares of the Silicon Valley software company SumTotal Systems after participating a few days earlier in discussions with SumTotal about Accel-KKR's acquisition of the company, the SEC said.

In April 2009, after a public announcement about the signing of a preliminary merger agreement between the two companies, the value of Mr. Duffell's shares jumped 188 percent and yielded him a profit of \$162,500, the SEC said.

"By profiting from his knowledge of the very acquisition he was

discussing, Mr. Duffell violated the duty of trust he owed his private investment firm client and ran afoul of the federal securities laws," said Marc J. Fagel, director of the SEC's San Francisco regional office,

in a March 24 announcement.

While not admitting or denying the SEC's allegations, Mr. Duffell agreed to pay \$332,163 in penalties, including \$162,500 in illegal profits, \$7,163 in interest, and a civil penalty of \$162,500, the SEC said. ■



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BROWN ACT

continued from page 5

action. It was intended to get the whole council up to date on an issue.”

Did the Portola Valley council meet the standard for an urgent meeting that demanded “immediate action”?

It did not, Mr. Ewert said. Mr. Driscoll’s statement about getting the whole council up to date on an issue “presumes or implies that no action was required but that it was an informational session,” Mr. Ewert said. “If you’re going to inform somebody, that’s not a need for a closed session.”

“They cannot interpret these sections broadly to limit the right of public access,” Mr. Ewert added. “They can only interpret them narrowly. The Constitution prohibits (broad) interpretation.”

Affordable housing?

What was it that interested the town in Al’s Nursery? It was sold in mid-March to an “angel buyer” who stepped in and bought it from longtime owners John and Karin Wu after long-standing purchase plans by Windmill School, a private preschool, fell through, Mr. Wu said in an interview.

Since April 2010, Mr. Wu said, Windmill had been arranging the purchase as a permanent move from its current location at 4141 Alpine Road. The deal died March 15, just days before the transaction was to close. The Wus turned down the school’s request for a six-month extension, Mr. Wu said.

In the summer of 2009, the town inquired about buying the property, Mr. Wu said. That conversation did not pan out, he said, after the town had the property appraised and then made an informal offer that was “way too low,” Mr. Wu said.

Asked to confirm Mr. Wu’s account, Mayor Driscoll called the talks “exploratory” and that the town tried to “accommodate his requests with our own budget.” The Wus stipulated that they wanted to live on the property, Town Manager Angie Howard said in an email.

With the nursery property in hand, the town could have done a land swap to address part of its state

mandate to provide below-market-rate (BMR) housing, former councilman Richard Merk said.

By selling two parcels in the wealthy Blue Oaks neighborhood, where BMR housing is not all that welcome but was part of the deal in creating the subdivision, the town could then have put the housing at 900 Portola Road instead, Mr. Merk said.

The town has a complicated problem in finding land for a multi-family housing: there is none now, if there were any it would follow a rezoning, and the last time such a thing was tried, a group of citizens rose up in protest.

The council in 2003 rezoned the Nathhorst Triangle, 3.6 acres near the corner of Alpine and Portola roads, to allow 15 to 20 free-standing houses, townhouses or condominiums. A group of residents angry about higher than normal housing densities and the effect on property values put a referendum on the ballot and a narrow majority reversed the zoning decision.

A certain skittishness may have been at work a year and a half ago, Mr. Merk said, when the town, upon learning of Windmill’s interest in the property, pulled out of the discussion.

The will to build affordable housing is probably lacking, Mr. Merk said. “I think the council is very gun shy of those people,” he added, referring to the residents behind the Nathhorst referendum.

The town pulled out of the Al’s Nursery discussion because it did not want to compete with Windmill School, Mr. Driscoll said.

Mr. Wu said that since that time, he has not heard from the town. He would not reveal the actual purchase date of the property, leaving that to the new owner.

A rezoning from resident-commercial to straight commercial will be necessary if Al’s Nursery becomes Windmill School — it is a distinct possibility as a lease arrangement, Mr. Wu said — but such a change is not expected to have problems in Town Hall, Mr. Driscoll said. Town Planner Tom Vlasic agreed. ■



Contemporary musician Luciano Chessa will perform at the inaugural program of the Menlo-Atherton Academy of Contemporary Music at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 9, in the performing arts center M-A.

Contemporary music academy launched

Submitted by Alexander Sigman, co-founder and executive director, Menlo-Atherton Academy of Contemporary Music.

Whether composing an opera, writing a biography of futurist Luigi Russolo, or performing pieces involving video, blimps, stuffed animals, or sensory deprivation, Berkeley-based Italian composer and performer Luciano Chessa is tirelessly breaking new ground in contemporary music.

Mr. Chessa will be featured at the inaugural program of the Menlo-Atherton Academy of Contemporary Music on Saturday, April 9, starting at 2 p.m. at the performing arts center on the Menlo-Atherton High School campus.

Mr. Chessa will present a concert of pieces for piano, Vietnamese dan bau, and video. The program will include the

world premiere of composer Sylvano Bussotti’s “Variazioni Chessa” (commissioned by the performer), Joan La Barbara’s 1974 performance art piece, “Hear What I Feel,” and original works for piano and video, realized in collaboration with Stanford visual artist Terry Berlier.

Mr. Chessa recently directed a performance, at the prestigious Maerzmusik festival in Berlin, of an orchestra made up of Mr. Russolo’s noise-making intonarumori instruments that Mr. Chessa himself completely rebuilt in 2009.

The April 9 performance at M-A’s performing arts center will be followed by a post-concert discussion and reception.

The performing arts center is at 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton. Tickets are \$10 for general admission, \$5 for students with ID, and free for Sequoia Union High School

District students and staff.

This is the first in a series of semi-monthly concerts, lecture-demonstration, and workshops that will be performed at the performing arts center by guest composers, performers, and sound artists, under the sponsorship of the Menlo-Atherton Academy of Contemporary Music, founded in 2010 by former Stanford colleague Jason Federmeier and myself.

This nonprofit organization is supported by, but independent of, M-A High School and the city of Menlo Park.

Future guests will include New York-based saxophone and piano duo The Kenners, sound artist Bill Fontana, and composer, sound sculptor, improviser, Stanford professor and Menlo Park resident Mark Applebaum.

Visit maacmusic.org/events for more information about the academy and its programs. ■

BUTTERFLY

continued from page 5

the fourth-driest year since 1895,” he said.

Along with the 21 females and 20 males released March 30, volunteers in February brought in more than 4,000 caterpillars and scattered them throughout the hills and low-growing native grasses of the 467-acre park.

The checkerspot butterfly, which is a federally listed endangered species, numbered around 4,500 adults in the Edgewood area in

1997, Mr. Weiss said.

Nitrogen contained in exhaust from vehicles traveling on nearby Interstate 280 created an artificial fertilizer, which allowed invasive grass species to grow and crowd out the native species upon which the checkerspot butterflies depend, he said.

The checkerspots were extinct in the area by 2003.

Using funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Food and Agriculture and Pacific Gas & Electric, park managers have been

able to eradicate the invasive weeds in sections of the park, allowing native grasses and wildflowers to gradually repopulate.

The return of the checkerspots’ natural food supply and a renewed effort to reintroduce the butterflies in greater numbers gives Mr. Weiss and his volunteers hope that this year’s efforts will succeed.

Mr. Weiss carefully removed each butterfly from containers in the ice cooler and placed them individually on budding wildflowers such as desert parsley, dwarf plantain and tidy tips. ■

Dance to benefit Japan recovery efforts

From the residents of one seismically active zone to the residents of another, the Teen Committee in Portola Valley is sponsoring a “Dance for Japan” set for 7:30 to 9:45 p.m. Friday, April 8, in the community hall at 765 Portola Road.

The dance will be free and open to kids from Portola Valley and their guests, but all must have permission slips signed by one of their parents.

Go to tinyurl.com/pvteen-11 to

get a blank permission slip.

Permission slips are also available from the office at Corte Madera middle school.

Donations are welcome and will be sent directly to a relief organization working in Japan in the aftermath of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, Teen Committee Chair Sharon Driscoll said.

Parents with questions or who wish to chaperone or underwrite the dance expenses can contact Ms. Driscoll at sdriscoll@savoca.com.

Menlo fire board to impose terms

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

The latest resolution from the Menlo Park Fire Protection District Board of Directors outlines almost three years of back-and-forth contract negotiations with the firefighters union that stalled with impasse after impasse. Now it looks like the next step is imposing terms.

On Tuesday, April 19, the board will vote whether to implement new benefits at a level first offered in November. The terms include an additional \$350 per month for health and welfare benefits, and \$400 more per month for post-employment health benefits, but no salary increase.

Currently, the firefighters have the option to take that money home, according to a union representative. "A member who takes that \$750 home in cash won't be able to under this imposition," said John Wurdinger, vice president of the Menlo Park Firefighters Association Local 2400. "It works out to a 7.7 percent pay decrease. Ten to 15 percent of our membership has either gone bankrupt, had houses foreclosed on, lost homes. We were already

down \$300 to \$500 per month because of increases in healthcare costs. It's sad. I don't know how else to put it."

Negotiations between the board and union first ground to a halt in 2009 after Local 2400 filed a grievance with the state's Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) alleging unfair labor practices.

Talks broke down again in October 2010 after union representatives asked to meet with the district's board members individually after refusing to meet with designated negotiators. The board declined the request, saying in a response letter that it would violate state law.

The district sent another letter last November to union leadership saying it would double the amount put toward health benefits in hopes of coaxing the union back to the bargaining table after the firefighters rejected an offer of \$750 per month towards their health plan.

Now, as the PERB case heads to court in May, the district plans to impose the new terms. "While the hearing is set for next month, it could be another two years before the case is fully and finally

adjudicated, once you consider the possibility of appeals. The district doesn't believe it can or should wait for completion of such a lengthy and uncertain process," said Rick Bolanos, who serves as the labor representative for the district.

Mr. Wurdinger said the union believes it will win the case. "If we weren't very confident, we wouldn't have held out this long."

Board director Peter Carpenter, speaking only for himself in an email, called the PERB case without merit and thinks it will be dismissed. "The union would have been well advised to start behaving like the other public service unions in California and have returned to the bargaining table with concessions rather than an unwavering demand for an 11% salary increase."

Mr. Wurdinger acknowledged that public sentiment has shifted against unions, but said the firefighters don't deserve to be treated with a lack of respect and common courtesies.

"I'm not evil. I'm just a fireman," he said with a rueful laugh. "I'm the guy who gets your cat out of the tree or performs CPR on your grandmother." ■

Menlo council prepares for police negotiations

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

As a preview of coming attractions, Menlo Park city staff released a report on public safety employee compensation in advance of the council meeting on April 12 to set negotiating parameters.

Contracts with the Menlo Park Police Officers' Association and the Menlo Park Police Sergeants' Association expire on June 30, during a time when the public remains focused on overhauling the public employee pension system.

The staff report highlights the history behind negotiations with the police unions. In 2008, the council approved a salary increase to stop "a vicious cycle" of losing officers to other agencies that paid more; at the time Menlo Park had lost 30 of 50 officers. According to the report, the strategy did help staunch the turnover.

But times have changed. "It is hard to accept that working in the physical boundaries of Menlo Park is not highly attractive for a 22 year old with a starting wage of 97,000 per year. If recruits leave, there is a different problem," Henry Riggs,

planning commissioner and contributor to the Measure L pension reform initiative campaign, wrote in an email to the council. "We need to abandon the council policy whereby we pay more than other cities for police. At least pay parity, not a guaranteed 20% more."

Councilman Peter Ohtaki shared his concerns about

claim that comparing public sector salaries and benefits with private sector equivalents — a move some think would encourage cuts in city employee salaries — isn't possible.

According to Menlo Park, databases only make "overly broad comparisons on a national or regional scale." Other obstacles to making those comparisons, as detailed in the staff report, include companies regarding salary information as proprietary, and a lack of local data.

Peter Carpenter, who serves on the board of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District as well as on the board of Annual

Reviews, a nonprofit scientific journal publisher, disagreed. He said the nonprofit uses private salary information as "an integral part of our salary administration."

Annual Reviews contracts with the Hay Group to compare private and public sector salaries using a database that includes an adjustment for the higher cost of living in the Bay Area.

City staff will present the report to the council during its Tuesday night meeting on April 5, which starts at 7 p.m. in council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St. ■

'It is hard to accept that working in ... Menlo Park is not highly attractive for a 22 year old with a starting wage of 97,000 per year.'

HENRY RIGGS

increasing retirement benefits for police officers from 24 to almost 30 percent over the next four years despite the heavy investment losses suffered by CalPERS, the state pension fund. "In other words, the city will need to pay 30 percent above a police officer's salary to CalPERS to fund the '3 percent @50' benefit," he said, and later concluded, "We appreciate the excellent work of our police officers, but in this fiscal environment, all city staff will need to help in balancing the budget."

Advocates for pension reform took issue with the report's



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MENLO PARK PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF APRIL 18, 2011

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

PUBLIC MEETING ITEMS

Architectural Control/Pak Lee/869 Santa Cruz Avenue: Request for approval of architectural control to remodel the front elevation of a commercial building in the C-3 (Central Commercial) zoning district.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Use Permit/Steve Simpson for SDG Architects/445 Cotton Street: Request for a use permit for the construction of a new two-story, single-family residence and for an approximate two-foot, three-inch encroachment into the required 10-foot left side setback for the proposed basement located on a substandard lot with regard to lot width in the R-1-S (Single Family Suburban) zoning district.

Use Permit/Ellen Ackerman for Kateeva, Inc./1430 O'Brien Dr, Suite A: Request for a revision to a use permit, previously approved in January of 2009, for the indoor storage and use of hazardous materials for the research and development and prototype manufacturing of organic light emitting diode (OLED) displays in an existing building in the M-2 (General Industrial) zoning district. Kateeva also operates in Suite G, which received use permit approval for the use and storage of hazardous materials in November 2010. No changes to Suite G are proposed.

STUDY SESSION ITEMS

Study Session regarding application of the State Density Bonus Law, Government Code Section 65915, to housing projects in Menlo Park

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, April 18, 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: March 31, 2011 Deanna Chow, Senior Planner

PUBLISHED: April 6, 2011 Menlo Park Planning Commission

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

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PaloAltoOnline.com/biz/summercamps

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www.riekes.org

Bay Area Equestrian Center

At Wunderlich County Park Stables. Kids 8-15 have outdoor fun joining BAEC for horse camps. Camps focus on caring for and riding horses so come ready to ride and have fun learning good horse care.

www.bayareaequestrian.net

Camp Jones Gulch

Join the fun this summer! Camp Jones Gulch offers friendship and growth to kids ages 6-16. Enjoy our Traditional Camp or Mini, Horse, Surfing, Leadership and Travel Camps. One- and two-week sessions. Limited financial assistance available.

www.campjonesgulch.org

Champion Tennis Camps

CTC provides an enjoyable way for your Junior to begin learning the game of tennis or to continue developing existing skills. The 4-6 year olds have fun learning eye-hand coordination and building self-esteem!

www.alanmargot-tennis.net

Don Shaw's Volleyball Training Academy

Join former Stanford University Men's and Women's head coach, Hall of Famer and 4-time NCAA Champion Don Shaw this summer at our camp for HS GIRL's July 13th, 14th & 15th and for HS BOY's July 18th, 19th & 20th. This camp gives players, who have the desire, the chance to improve their skills and learn proven techniques that will help them become more consistent and enhance their chances to play at a higher level.

www.mvvclub.com

Earl Hansen Football Camp

Learn the fundamentals of football with Earl Hansen, Palo Alto High School and State Champion coach. This is a non-contact camp where kids develop fundamental skills with proven drills and techniques. Full practices in the mornings with 7 on 7 games in the afternoon. July 11 to 15 @ Palo Alto High School. Ages 10 to 14. Lunch provided daily.

www.earlhansenfootballcamp.com

Jefunira Camp

Celebrating our 20th year of Jefunira Camp summer fun in 2011! Come join us for some good old fashion summer fun! Our combination of an exceptional college aged staff and innovative, inclusive programming will create a memorable summer experience for your child. Programming for children ages 4-13. Pre and post camp care offered.

www.jefuniracamp.com

Kim Grant Tennis Academy Summer Camps

Fun and Specialized junior camps for Mini (3-5), Beginner, Intermediate 1 & 2, Advanced and Elite Players. Weekly programs designed by Kim Grant to improve players technique, fitness, agility, mental toughness and all around tennis game. Camps in Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Redwood City. Come make new friends and have tons of FUN!!

www.KimGrantTennis.com

Matt Lottich Life Skills Basketball Camp

MLLS offers high-level, high-energy basketball instruction for ages 6-16. This summer we celebrate the 8th year!! With two to three “leagues” in each session, young beginners to advanced elite players get to learn fundamental skills, advanced footwork and valuable life lessons from an unparalleled staff of Pro and Collegiate level players. Camps at Woodside Elementary and Sequoia High School. Early bird, multi-session, and group discounts available.

www.mllscamp.com

Nike Tennis Camps at Stanford University

Come join the fun this summer and get better! Dick Gould's 42nd Annual Stanford Tennis School offers day camps for both junior and adults, June 11-16. Weekly junior overnight and extended day camps offered June 19-Aug 12 for boys & girls ages 9-18 and run by Head Men's Coach John Whitlinger and Head Women's Coach Lele Forood. There is a camp option for everyone!

www.USSportsCamps.com/tennis

Spring Down Camp Equestrian Center

Spring Down camp teaches basic to advanced horsemanship skills. All ages welcome! Daily informative lecture, riding lesson, supervised hands-on skill practice, safety around horses, tacking/untacking of own camp horse, and arts/crafts.

www.springdown.com

Stanford Water Polo Camps

Ages 7 and up. New to the sport or have experience, we have a camp for you. Half day or full day option for boys and girls. All the camps offer fundamental skill work, position work, scrimmages and games.

https://stanfordwaterpolocamps.com

Summer at Saint Francis

Sports & Activity Camp (ages 6-12): This all sports camp provides group instruction in a variety of field, water and court games. Saint Francis faculty and students staff the camp, and the focus is always on fun. The program is dedicated to teaching teamwork, sportsmanship and positive self-esteem.

www.sfhs.com/summer

Summer at Saint Francis

Advanced Sports Camps (5th-9th grades): We offer a wide selection of advanced sports camps designed to provide players with the opportunity to improve both their skill and knowledge of a specific sport. Each camp is run by a Head Varsity Coach at Saint Francis, and is staffed by members of the coaching staff.

www.sfhs.com/summer

Team Esface Elite Basketball Skills Clinics

Spring Training (April-May). High-energy, high-level basketball training for ages 6-16. Use your offseason as a time to develop your basketball skills and IQ with the unparalleled coaching staff of Team Esface. Learn the fundamentals of the game, offensive attack moves and advanced footwork through dynamic drills and competitions led by young, positive coaches including former Division 1 athletes. April and May. Two days per week. Sibling and group discounts available. More information and sign up at: **www.teamesface.com**

YMCA of Silicon Valley

Say hello to summer fun at the YMCA! Choose from enriching day or overnight camps in 35 locations: arts, sports, science, travel, and more. For youth K-10th grade. Includes weekly fieldtrips, swimming and outdoor adventures. Accredited by the American Camp Association. Financial assistance available.

www.ymcasv.org/summercamp

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650-364-2509

Woodside

650-446-1414

La Honda

415-848-1200

Atherton

650-400-0464

Sunnyvale

408-329-0488

Palo Alto

650-269-7793

Palo Alto

650-291-2888

Palo Alto/Menlo Park/ Redwood City

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Woodside/ Redwood City

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Stanford

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Portola Valley

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Stanford

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Mountain View

650-968-1213 ext. 446

Mountain View

650-968-1213 ext. 446

Woodside/ Redwood City

1-888-537-3223

Peninsula

408-351-6400

(continued on next page)

Please call us at 650.326.8210 for other camp advertising opportunities

Foundation aims to raise \$300,000 for local schools

The nonprofit foundation supporting schools in the Menlo Park City School District is hosting its annual party and auction — its largest fundraising event of the year — on Saturday, April 9.

“Rock the Foundation” begins at 7 p.m. at the Cabana Crowne Plaza Hotel in Palo Alto, with “VIP” ticket-buyers invited to a 6 p.m. warm-up event that includes early bidding in the silent auction.

The Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation hopes to raise at least \$300,000 at the event, according to foundation co-president Alison Leupold. The goal is to raise \$100,000 of that amount during the “Fund a Teacher” portion of the benefit, which this year is slated to go toward funding teachers in the art and music programs, she said.

Participants in the open auction can bid on items in categories ranging from

get-aways, dinners and fine wine to sports memorabilia and tickets to athletic events. The auction is set to begin at 8 p.m., as the silent auction begins to close.

Dancing to the music of Pride & Joy begins at 9 p.m. There will be an open bar and a variety of foods to snack on during the event.

Tickets are \$120 for general admission and \$185 for VIP admission.

Go to mpaef.org and click on “Auction” to order tickets. You can see the auction catalog and learn more about the event on the website.

Over the years, the foundation has raised millions of dollars for the district's schools: Laurel, Encinal, Oak Knoll, and Hillview. Ms. Leupold said that last year the foundation's contribution constituted 8 percent of the district's budget, and this year, members hope to grant \$2.5 million to the schools.

Candidate forum for county supervisor

Candidates running for San Mateo County supervisor for District 1 have been invited by area chambers of commerce, including Menlo Park's, to a free public forum at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 5, at the San Mateo City Hall at 330 W. 20th Ave. in San Mateo.

The month-long, mail-only election began Monday, April 4. Ballots must arrive by Tuesday, May 3.

Voters may also drop off ballots at town or city halls in the county or at the Election Office at 40 Tower Road in San Mateo.

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Report on Stanford hospital expansion called ‘defective’

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

After examining the potential traffic snarls presented by the planned Stanford hospital expansion, staff is asking the City Council to send a letter to Palo Alto stating that if Stanford agrees to pay more for mitigations, then the city will not try to delay the project — even though the draft letter calls the project’s final environmental impact report (EIR) defective due to underestimating the traffic impact.

The \$3.5 billion project may bring 10,000 new vehicle trips to the area per day, with 51 percent of the estimated traffic passing through Menlo Park. Based on the EIR, four of the city’s roads are

expected to see significant impacts: Marsh Road west of U.S. 101; Sand Hill Road east of Santa Cruz Avenue; Willow Road east of Middlefield Road; and Alpine Road west of Junipero Serra Boulevard.

The expansion will add 1.3 million square feet of development and more than 2,200 employees to Palo Alto by 2025, and includes rebuilding Stanford Hospital and Clinics, expanding Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital, renovating the Hoover Pavilion, and replacing School of Medicine facilities.

Counting cars

The letter challenges the methodology used by contractors Fehr & Peers, hired by Stanford to collect traffic data instead of the Palo Alto’s EIR consultant, a move which the letter calls “highly unusual” since using the city’s consultant is meant to avoid conflicts of interest.

Describing the traffic analysis as inadequate, the letter states that the traffic generated by the existing hospital was only counted on a single day in October 2006, instead of over multiple days. Menlo Park estimates traffic is actually 45 percent higher than calculated by Fehr & Peers. The consultants also failed to include two Stanford parking lots in the count.

A primary issue, according

to the letter, is that the consultants evaluated traffic on Menlo Park residential streets using Palo Alto’s guidelines, which staff consider less stringent and “which results in understating significant impacts, reducing the need for mitigations.”

The proposed mitigations include building an undercrossing for bicyclists and pedestrians near Middle Avenue on property owned by Caltrain, meaning that Menlo Park doesn’t have authority to construct the tunnel. The EIR also offers only 5 percent of estimated construction costs towards the tunnel.

Even if the undercrossing did get built, the letter states, the report’s estimated 3 percent traffic reduction “is an unbelievable conclusion given the current traffic volumes. ...

Menlo Park estimates traffic is actually 45 percent higher than calculated by the Stanford consultant.

Money talks

Stanford has offered \$312,000 as a one-time payment to Menlo

Park as a “fair share contribution” toward traffic mitigation while holding out \$8.3 million to Palo Alto.

Menlo Park would like to see its payment fall closer to \$2.1 million, with an additional \$70,970 per year to expand Menlo Park’s shuttle bus program and one-third of any penalties Stanford pays for failing to meet its traffic-reduction targets.

“At this point attempting to redo these inappropriate trip and intersection delay reductions would be difficult and time-consuming,” the letter concludes, while reiterating that the city doesn’t want to stop or delay the expansion. “Paying 51% of our normal [traffic impact fee] is reasonable since 51% of project trips go through Menlo Park.” ■

MEETING

The Menlo Park City Council is scheduled to discuss the draft letter on the Stanford Medical Center expansion during its regular meeting on Tuesday, April 5, in council chambers at the Civic Center, 701 Laurel St. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. ■ Visit tinyurl.com/3w18kqk to read the staff report.

GUIDE TO 2011 SUMMER CAMPS FOR KIDS

Camp Connection

For more info see our online camp directory at PaloAltoOnline.com/biz/summercamps

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Teens spend two weeks immersed in the dynamic world of video game creation at iD Gaming Academy, computer science/application development at iD Programming Academy or photography/filmmaking at iD Visual Arts Academy. Overnight programs held at Stanford, Harvard, MIT and others. Week-long programs for ages 7-17 also available. Free year-round learning! Save w/code CAU22T.

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ISTP Language Immersion

International School of the Peninsula camps offered in French, Chinese, Spanish or ESL for students in Nursery through Middle School. Three 2-week sessions, each with different theme. Students are grouped according to both grade level and language proficiency.

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Mid-Peninsula High School offers a series of classes and electives designed to keep students engaged in learning. Classes Monday-Thursday and limited to 15 students. Every Thursday there’s a BBQ lunch. The Science and Art classes will have weekly field trips.

www.mid-pen.com

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Summer at Saint Francis provides a broad range of academic and athletic programs for elementary through high school students. It is the goal of every program to make summer vacation enriching and enjoyable!

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www.supercamp.com

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Cutting-edge, imaginative, accelerated, integrated, and hands-on academic summer enrichment courses with independent in-depth and project-based morning and afternoon weeklong programs for children ages 4-12: Young Explorers, Thinking Math, Leonardo da Vinci’s Inventions, Nature Connections, Girls’ & Soccer Robotics, and more!

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Atherton meetings in YouTube spotlight

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Although many local city council meetings are televised or webcast for the benefit of residents who aren't able to attend them, the Atherton City Council decided in 2004 that it would be too expensive to contract with the local cable station to televise its monthly meetings.

Viewing meetings remotely now may be an option, at least through budget season, thanks to the Atherton Police Officers Association's videotaping of "select" town meetings and posting them on YouTube.

The association (APOA) announced the YouTube postings of two meetings — the March 7 meeting of the Finance Committee and the council's March 16 meeting — on its website on March 19. Officer Brad Mills, the APOA president, said in an email that the association wanted to provide members and town residents access to meetings they were unable to attend.

He said that deciding on which future meetings to videotape "is a fluid process." But concerns about the town's finances and recent talk about the possibility of outsourcing the police department make it likely that more meetings at which the budget is discussed are priori-

ties for videotaping.

"Our members are interested about the town budget issues and the long-term financial stability/security of the town," Officer Mills wrote. Citing many years of service to the town by some officers and police staff, he added, "Our members want to see the town of Atherton get through this."

"Also, this is something that has the potential to directly affect our (members') home budget and family life."

The reaction to the videotaping by some posters on the Almanac's online Town Square forum suggested that at least a few people were nervous that the police officers' organization was behind the camera. And Mayor Jim Dobbie was quoted in a local newspaper as saying the taping is inappropriate. (Mr. Dobbie could not be reached for comment before press time.)

But several residents and one council member who talked to the Almanac said the taping is legal, and they were comfortable with it, although some cautionary thoughts were expressed.

Resident Jon Buckheit, a regular council meeting attendee who is suing the town and three police officers, said, "My sense is the police union is recording these meetings to

ensure issues that are important to them are brought to the attention of their supporters in the community.

"Given the importance of providing an environment in which members of the public can speak forthrightly, if an unintended consequence of this decision is some individuals feeling they cannot, I trust the police officers would reconsider their decision."

Mr. Buckheit said he doesn't believe the association's intent is intimidation. But "it may keep people from speaking frankly about outsourcing" police services during budget discussions, he said.

Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen said, "I don't have a problem with it at all," adding that many city council meetings are broadcast, something she had pushed for in the past for Atherton. She said she would prefer that the town provide the service, but it's unlikely to do so because of costs.

Ms. McKeithen noted that, with the town discussing tough financial strategies that include outsourcing police and other town services, the timing of the videotaping decision might raise questions. "If there's another motivation behind it (other than transparency), that would be unfortunate," she said. "But I'm not uncomfortable with it." ■

Lane environmental center opens at Edgewood

The environmental education center named in honor of Portola Valley philanthropists Bill and Jean Lane has its grand opening from 3 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, April 5, at the Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve at the northern border of Woodside along Interstate 280.

Speakers will include Ms. Lane, San Mateo County Supervisor Carole Groom, members of the San Mateo County Parks Foundation, and Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve.

The \$2.5 million center explores the rarified flora and fauna of Edgewood's serpentine soil — soil derived from rocks that results in a dearth of common nutrients such as nitrogen, potassium and phos-

BRIEFS

phorus and a high concentration of heavy metals.

The one-square-mile park is home to more than 500 plant species and 70 species of birds, the parks foundation said. Edgewood's rare plants include the fountain thistle and the San Mateo thornmint; among the rare animals are the Bay checkerspot butterfly; the blind harvestman, a kind of spider; and the western bluebird.

The park entrance is located off of Edgewood Road approximately a half mile east of I-280. Take the eastbound exit for Edgewood Road.

Kepler's to charge for author events

Starting this month, Kepler's will start charging those who don't belong to its rewards program to attend author events. Owner Clark Kepler said in a newsletter that as book sales drop, publishers are reluctant to send authors on tours.

The price of admission? Either one \$10 Kepler's gift card, or the purchase of the event book from Kepler's prior to the event, along with the receipt. Both options cover admission for two people.

The bookstore is also creating a dedicated event space, named "The Roy Kepler Pavilion" in honor of its founder.

Menlo School hosts Special Olympics

Menlo School in Atherton will host a 20th anniversary Special Olympics track and field meet Sunday, April 10, at Menlo's Cartan Field, in conjunction with the Special Olympics of Northern California.

The public is invited to cheer on some 100 Special Olympics athletes, supported by about 250 student volunteers.

Students prepare weeks in advance, designing T-shirts, creating posters, and making personal signs for each athlete, said Jessie Brugos, director of service learning at Menlo who first attended the event in 1993 as a student volunteer.

"It is a great opportunity to be buddies with someone who you wouldn't otherwise have met," said Menlo School senior Kyra Vargas.

Opening ceremonies start at 10 a.m. and a celebration of 20 years of collaboration takes place at noon.

The Menlo School Orchestra and the Menlo Dance Troupe will perform, and balloon sculptures and arches will be furnished by Party Fiesta Balloon Decor.

Middle school volunteers and their families host the Olympic Village, which has a photo booth, face painting, snow cones, caricatures by Gordon Ng, and games.

Go to tinyurl.com/menlo-olympics for more information.



'Metaphor in Movement'

"Hiding Within the Crowd" is one of 30 prints and paintings by Colleen Sullivan of Menlo Park on display at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St. in Mountain View, through April 11. Her works will be on the main curved lobby walls of the performing arts center as you walk in from the outside. Ms. Sullivan grew up in Montreal, where she studied fine arts and communication. Her work focuses on multiple aspects of printmaking, as well as drawing and painting.



POLICE CALLS

Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent until convicted.

MENLO PARK

Grand theft reports:

- Loss estimated at \$14,000 in theft of diamond pendant, 600 Vine St., March 30.
- Loss estimated at \$1,500 in theft of computer from unlocked vehicle, 100 block of Jefferson Drive, March 30.

Residential burglary reports:

- Loss estimated at \$9,760 in break-in and theft of video game console and games, jewelry, athletic shoes and bike, 1200 block of Carlton Ave., March 28.
- Loss estimated at \$2,500 in break-in and theft of laptop computer and bike, 1100 block of Madera Ave., March 25.
- Loss of \$100 in break-in and theft of fire extinguisher, 1300 block of Willow Road, March 28.

Commercial burglary report: Arrest made in attempted burglary of miscellaneous items, Walgreens Pharmacy at 643 Santa Cruz Ave., March 29.

Fraud reports:

- Forged check leads to loss of \$6,500, in the 700 block of Partridge Ave., March 25.
- Loss estimated at \$6,400 in unauthorized use of credit card, 1000 block of Ringwood Ave., March 28.
- Loss of \$4,340 in unauthorized use of credit card, 100 block of O'Keefe

St., March 30.

- Loss of \$1,848 in unauthorized use of credit card, 1700 block of Stanford Ave., March 30.
- Loss estimated at \$1,500 in unauthorized use of credit card, 2000 block of Menalto Ave., March 28.
- Loss of \$744 in unauthorized access to bank account, first block of Helen Place, March 30.
- Loss of \$200 in unauthorized use of credit card, 600 block of Gilbert Ave., March 28.

Auto burglary reports:

- Break-in and theft of laptop computer and case and gear, GPS, radar detector, iPod and cigarettes, 300 block of Ravenswood Ave., March 29.
- Loss estimated at \$200 in break-in and theft of GPS unit, 100 block of Hedge Road, March 26.

Stolen vehicle report: Red 2002 Jaguar X stolen, 300 block of Newbridge St., March 26.

Spousal abuse report: 700 Coleman Ave., March 25.

Elder abuse report: First block of Willow Road, March 27.

WOODSIDE

Theft report: Stereo speaker and miscellaneous coins stolen from unlocked vehicle, 100 block of Eugenia Lane, March 30.

Correction

In a March 30 story on why Bay Area Rapid Transit did not extend into San Mateo County, the Almanac mistakenly attributed to Portola Valley planning consultant George Mader a claim that should have been attributed to David D. Bohannon, who developed the Hillsdale Shopping Center.

Mr. Bohannon, not Mr. Mader, said that the BART extension would entice shoppers away from Hillsdale and into San Francisco.

Services April 17 for Laurel Crittenden

A memorial service will be held Sunday, April 17, in Portola Valley for Laurel E. Crittenden, who grew up in Portola Valley, taught in Portola Valley schools as a substitute teacher, and helped design gardens there from her outpost at the Ladera Garden Center, where she worked for about 10 years.

Ms. Crittenden died March 18 at her home in Washington state. She was 58.

The memorial service will start at 3:30 p.m. at the Valley Presbyterian Church, 945 Portola Road in Portola Valley.

An obituary will be published in a future issue of the Almanac.

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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
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223-6507.

Atherton cops behind the camera

Atherton Mayor Jim Dobbie is reportedly not happy that he and fellow City Council members and other officials who attend city meetings are starring in YouTube videos produced by the police officers association.

The videotaping started a few weeks ago, and a straightforward announcement from the Atherton Police Officers Association explained that, since members are unable to attend all meetings, the videos “allow us to better understand and participate in the decisions made by the town.”

Mayor Dobbie apparently had a different take, telling a local newspaper that he didn’t think it was appropriate. He also said he thought some members of the public and the Finance Committee thought it was the association’s way of telling town officials, “you better do what we want you to do.”

Perhaps, but why would the mayor or any other city official feel threatened by someone simply videotaping a meeting, which is already public? In fact, city officials might want to thank the police officers for providing a service that is available as a matter of course in many other cities. Menlo Park has been taping and live webcasting its council meetings for years, which is a godsend for residents who may not be able to attend but want to keep up on the city’s business.

It may be that the association is interested only in council discussion of police issues, which would mean many other meetings will proceed without a video camera running. We expect the city’s dire budget situation, which could impact salary and benefits for police officers and raise the possibility of outsourcing, is one of the reasons the association wants to keep tabs on the council.

Maybe Mr. Dobbie and other council members will get a nudge from Bill Widmer, their recently elected colleague, who during his campaign pledged to bring more transparency to council meetings. Among the ideas he advanced are digitizing many public records and streaming video of council meetings on the Web. He also suggested that council meetings be shortened and held on two days if necessary.

These were good ideas during the campaign and are even better now, since the police officers have pushed the issue to the forefront. It would cost the city very little to stream the council meetings on the Web and it would give residents an easy way to view the meetings at home, work or any other venue that can receive a Wi-Fi signal.

Rather than view the present videotaping as threatening, the council should quickly move forward with its own taping system, which would move them out of the dark ages and onto the Web.



Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

John and Frank Merrill — and a stuffed monkey astride their pet dog Julia Whoopus — are ready for their roles in a 1920s-era child circus held in Atherton. The boys’ parents, Charles and Phyllis Moulton Merrill, and their families were longtime Atherton residents.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Group supports city's acquisition of Flood Park*Editor:*

The Friends of Bedwell Bayfront Park support the transfer of Flood Park from San Mateo County to the city of Menlo Park.

This is a unique opportunity to add approximately 20 acres of parkland to the city and will not occur again, given the built-out status of most property in the city. In the future, park space will become even more important to the community as it absorbs the projected population growth.

The two parks, Bedwell Bayfront and Flood, compliment each other. The open space of Bedwell encourages passive recreation while Flood is an active recreation, program-orientated park that offers facilities that are not available elsewhere in Menlo Park. Both parks serve diverse communities of users and there is a potential for shared services.

If the sports programs that could use Flood Park and the local community come together, they could raise funds to support the maintenance of the park. Despite the financial situation of the city, every effort should be made to come to a fair and workable arrangement that would allow Flood Park to be transferred to the city of Menlo Park.

Current and future residents will thank present council members for their foresighted actions when they are able to enjoy Flood Park.

Anne Moser for Friends of Bedwell Bayfront Park
Spruce Avenue, Menlo Park

No need for mayor to bring up Derry project*Editor:*

Shame on Menlo Park Mayor Rich Cline for recently dredging up the divisive Derry project in his census data comments and claiming the referendum accomplished "nothing." In reality, it led to reducing the prospective density to a reasonable level.

Menlo Park planning should not be focused on growth and how many residents we can crowd in. Instead, our primary concern should be the livability of our city, regardless of whether folks have homes in Belle Haven, in apartments close to the train tracks, or in the hills of Sharon Heights.

(The Derry project, to build 135 units of new housing on Oak Grove Avenue near the Caltrain station, was put aside during the economic downturn.)

James Madison
Holly Avenue, Menlo Park

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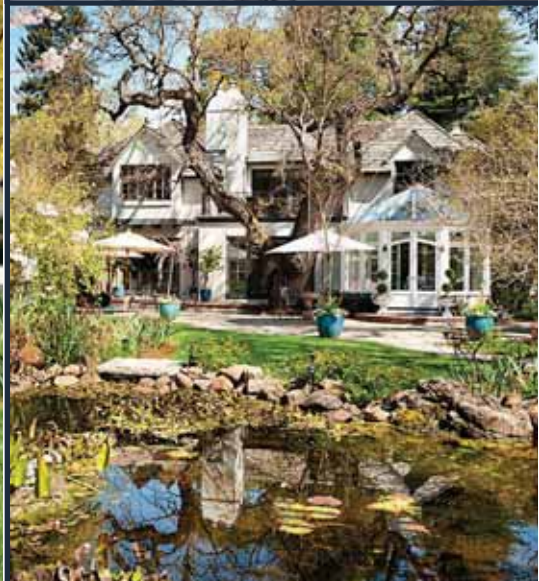
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