

Dining Out
on the Midpeninsula
in this issue

The Almanac

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

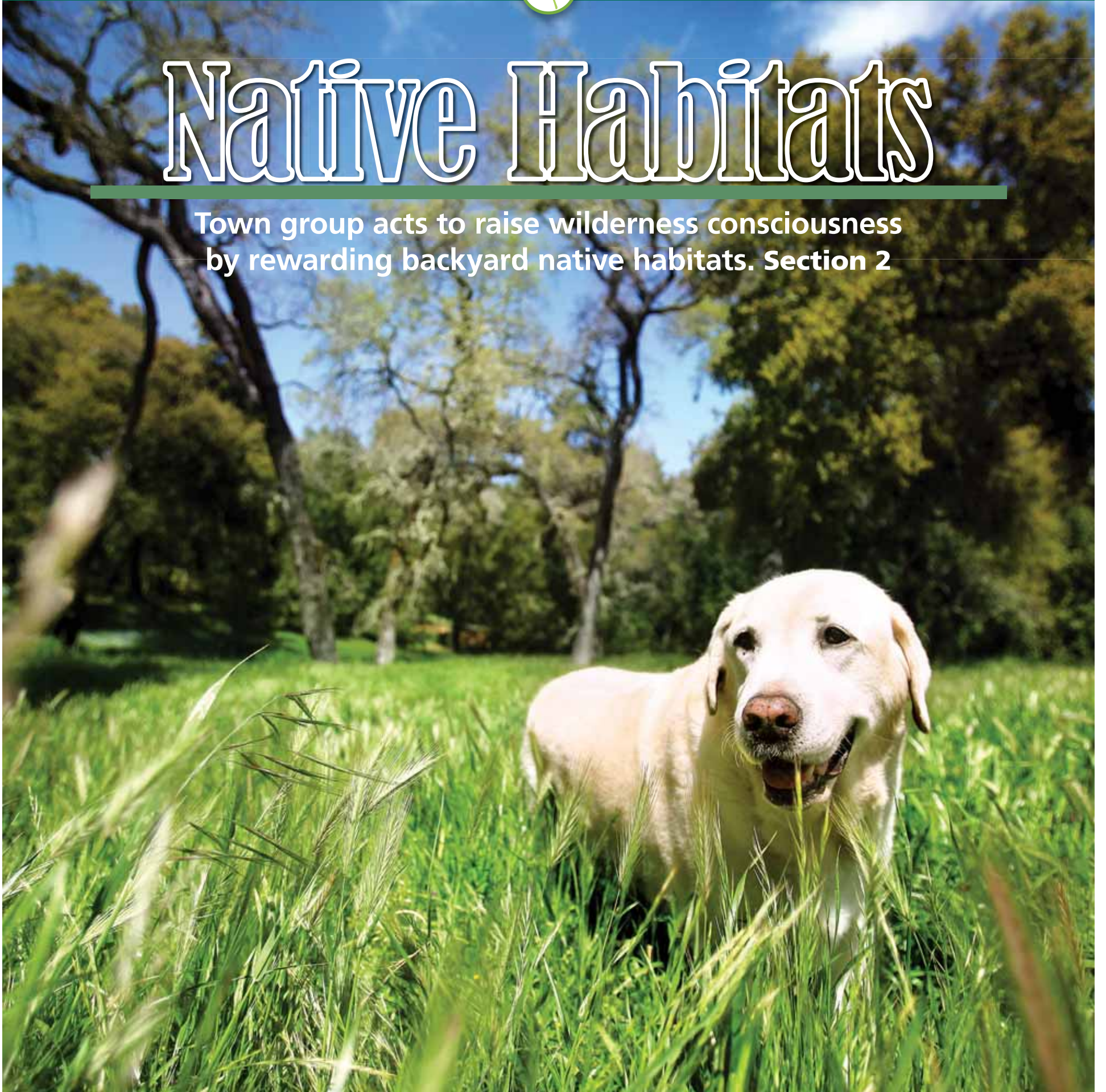
MAY 25, 2011 | VOL. 46 NO. 39



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Native Habitats

Town group acts to raise wilderness consciousness
by rewarding backyard native habitats. **Section 2**



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Time to vote for your favorites

Readers' Choice balloting starts this week on AlmanacNews.com

Almanac readers are a discerning lot, and that's why we turn to their expertise every summer as we search for their favorites shops, services and restaurants.

From contractors to Chinese food, dry cleaners to dentists, we're asking you to single out your favorite places to eat, shop, buy services and have fun.

Easy online voting starts at noon Tuesday, May 24.

Visit AlmanacNews.com/readers_choice to access the online ballot.

New this year is a ballot for



mobile devices that can be accessed by scanning the QR code in the Readers' Choice ad on Page 11.

Vote for at least five categories by July 3. Be sure to activate your ballot by responding to a confirmation email, and you will be entered into a prize drawing. Prize winners will be contacted via email after voting ends July 3.

If you can't find your favorites in the drop-down menus, submit them as write-in votes. Write-in votes help new businesses qualify for next year's ballot.

Scott Dancer Ranked Among Top Realtors in U.S.

27-year veteran Realtor awarded last month.

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage announced that Woodside Realtor Scott Dancer has ranked as one of the company's top agents in the U.S. for home sales last year. In 2010, Dancer sold



more than \$65 million worth of residential real estate, which ranked him ninth in Northern California for Coldwell Banker, outpacing more than 3,600 agents. In addition, he finished in the top 1 percent nationally, surpassing more than 100,000 sales associates across the country. Dancer has been associated

with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Woodside office since 1984.

Wendy McPherson, manager of the Woodside office, said Dancer is in demand by many of the most discriminating home buyers and sellers. "Scott is one of the most talented, experienced and knowledgeable agents in the business," she said. "He works extremely hard for his clients, and it's one reason he's achieved such success throughout his career."

Dancer was recognized for his sales accomplishments during a company ceremony last month in Las Vegas as well as an event at the St. Regis in San Francisco.

Advertisement

Sacred Heart Prep invests big time in iPads

By Caitlin Moyles

Special to the Almanac

All 157 ninth-grade students at Sacred Heart Preparatory in Atherton will be issued a school-owned Apple iPad 2 this fall, enabling them to create film projects, upload data from probes in science labs, and download e-books, all on one portable digital device.

The iPads are part of Sacred Heart's 1:1 tablet program, which seeks to integrate new technology into the school's curriculum by equipping each student with a personal computer.

Sacred Heart Schools have already issued tablet PCs to fifth- through eighth-graders, according to Joy Lopez, director of educational technology at Sacred Heart.

She said she expects the iPads will streamline the learning process and give students more room for creativity.

"With cameras, GarageBand and iMovie, (the iPad 2) really became a tool for students to create and get information in a

new and innovative way," said Ms. Lopez. "It has the power of a creation tool rather than a consumption tool."

To make films for a global studies class, for example, freshmen have to check out video cameras and go to the computer lab to upload and edit their footage. The iPad, however, will create a more seamless classroom experience, as students will have

devices to subsequent ninth-grade classes so that all high school students will have one by 2015.

Ninth-grade teachers will also be issued iPads. Each curricular department will have a designated "technology mentor," who will train teachers to use the iPads to suit their curriculum.

To prepare for the program's inauguration, the school has been equipped with wireless infrastructure and technical support, which will provide students and teachers with technical assistance during school hours and keep the iPads up to date with the latest software installations.

Ms. Lopez added that Sacred Heart's administrators, many of whom also teach, were issued iPads about a month ago to see how they would use them in their respective disciplines and give feedback.

"Everyone on the administrative team was able to give input on the decision to move forward with the iPad," Ms. Lopez said in an email. "It was truly a team decision." ■

All incoming ninth-graders will receive them.

all the tools at their disposal all the time, she said.

She listed the device's lightness, portability, and capacity to suit diverse learning needs via audio books and verbally recorded notes among its desirable features.

"This is the 21st century," Ms. Lopez said. "We need to educate our students for their world, not for our world. We have to teach them to live in a world where their jobs aren't even invented yet."

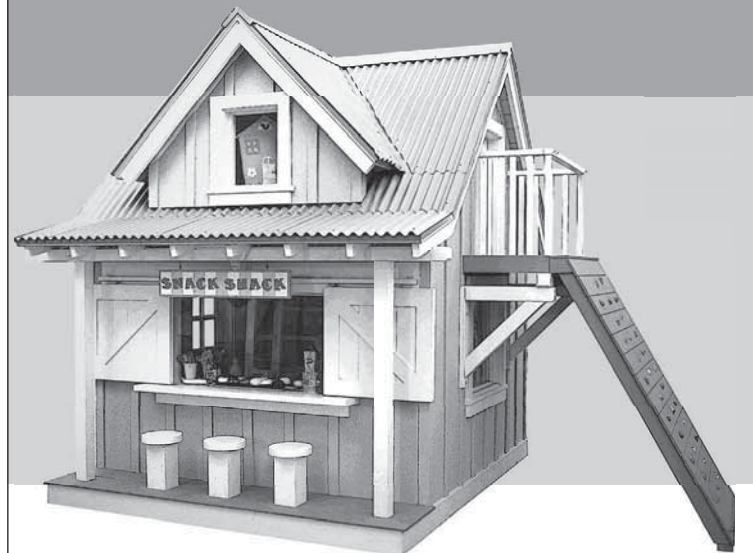
After the program's inaugural year, the school will issue digital



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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



'Flight Night'

Danny Youstra, age 6, sits on the shoulders of his father, Bill Youstra, at the Flight Night Electric Airshow in Portola Valley Thursday. See More photos on Page 8.

Menlo Park police raided wrong home, residents say

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Two East Palo Alto addresses differed only by a single number, but that number led Menlo Park police to raid the wrong house, according to a claim filed against both cities by the home's residents.

The claim states that Menlo Park police operating within East Palo Alto conducted an early morning search on Nov. 2, 2010, that left the home's residents battered and emotionally traumatized.

Represented by attorney Edward Aljouny, the three residents — Carlos Nava, Melissa Verduzco and their 2-year-old daughter — are asking the cities of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto to jointly pay \$500,000 for damages.

Filed on April 27, the claim describes Mr. Nava's being slammed to the ground, kneed, and punched by "a Sergeant Cowans," while others, "including Det. Chris Sample" pointed guns at Ms. Verduzco and her child.

The document also says the

officers have harassed Mr. Nava upon seeing him in public after the incident and that he now stutters as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Without judging its validity, the city of East Palo Alto rejected the claim at its May 17 meeting, but noted that did not prevent court action.

Menlo Park is still reviewing the claim, City Attorney Bill McClure said, and typically takes action within 45 to 60 days of the filing. Its council may not get a say in the disposition.

"Generally claims are not presented to the City Council unless there is a specific reason to do so — our policy is to have the City Attorney, the City's outside claims adjuster and the City's internal risk manager review and act on claims, either settling them, potentially holding a closed session if we need/want to review and advise council and obtain any kind of direction or authority, or issuing a denial," he said in an email to the Almanac.

The police department referred all questions to Mr. McClure. ■

Little League wants to rebuild playing field at Atherton park

■ Soccer and lacrosse groups want to be included.

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

The town of Atherton is moving forward cautiously to examine a proposal by the Menlo-Atherton Little League to rebuild, at its own expense, the ballpark at Holbrook-Palmer Park.

The City Council on May 18 voted to allow the proposal to go before the Planning Commission, but some members made it clear that the league must work with local soccer and lacrosse leagues that also use the park in coming up with a plan that will work for everyone.

At least two council members and several residents who spoke indicated that they're not convinced that a spiffed-up ballpark would be appropriate for Atherton's only park.

Atherton resident Bob Hellman, whose Build Our Ballpark organization is backing the local

league's effort to rebuild the ball field, presented a plan that includes a permanent back stop, seating, dugouts, scoreboard, restrooms, removable outfield fencing, and a Victorian-style grandstand. It also includes a complete overhaul of turf, drainage, and irrigation, and a commitment for ongoing care and maintenance.

The plans include a permanent back stop, dugouts, scoreboard, restrooms, removable fencing, and a Victorian-style grandstand.

The projected cost is \$500,000, which includes funding for other park improvements included in the proposal, such as tennis court resurfacing (\$75,000), extension of the nearby parking lot (\$50,000), and park beautification (\$50,000).

The town's Park and Recreation Commission unanimously recommended that the council allow the Planning Commission review to begin.

The existing baseball field is part of an expanse of land in the park now used for daytime practice and games by a number of youth sports teams. Little League supporters say, however, that the existing field is in the poorest condition and is the least safe of all the fields the league uses.

A number of people spoke in favor of letting the proposal go forward to the Planning Commission to work out details.

There were also speakers involved with AYSO soccer and the local lacrosse organization who noted that they hadn't known about the plan's development over the nine months the league says it has worked on it.

Mr. Hellman noted after the meeting that the league has been working with the town's Park and Recreation Commission but has also talked to leaders of the park-supporting Atherton Dames and the park foundation to try to ascertain the needs of other park users.

See **LITTLE LEAGUE**, page 8

Facebook wants to lift lid on number of employees

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Facebook's quest to swap a limit on the number of employees permitted to work at its new Menlo Park campus with a cap on the number of vehicle trips took a step closer to the finish line at the last Planning Commission meeting.

Facebook bought the 57-acre former Sun campus at 10 Network Circle in December. It has asked the city to permit more employees than were previously allowed on the site — 3,000 more, and another 2,800 on the 22-acre site the company bought across the street, for a total of 9,400 employees by 2017, according to documents filed with the city.

On May 16, the commissioners heard Menlo Park residents share what they thought the project's environmental impact report (EIR) should consider, including bicycle access, pedestrian safety, and wildlife preservation.

Matt Henry, speaking for the Belle Haven Neighborhood Association, brought up the interchange between Willow Road and U.S. 101, saying it had been overlooked in the proposed EIR. "At eight different places on this interchange, cars and people compete for

space," he said and advocated for a pedestrian bridge running from the Belle Haven side of the highway to Bay Road on the other side.

Representatives from the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project urged the commission to keep the wildlife refuge that borders the campus.

The commissioners also viewed a presentation by the social networking giant that included a glimpse of what the campus might look like once Facebook finishes renovations by 2013.

"Facebook is really all about communication and making connections," Director of Real Estate John Tenanes said. As a result, the company wants to open up the buildings to facilitate employee interaction. He showed renditions of garage-type doors that would open from the office buildings into a central courtyard as an example.

Menlo Park will also accept written comments on what items to include in the EIR until May 26. Email comments to Development Services Manager Justin Murphy at jcmurphy@menlopark.org or send to 701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Businesses boom and bust in Menlo

■ MENLO BRIEFS

As businesses like Great Clips open in Menlo Park and others, such as Marche, close, you may be curious as to exactly how often that happens.

According to John McGirr, revenue and claims manager for the city of Menlo Park, a total of 217 new business licenses were issued in 2009 and 207 closed out. The following year saw 223 new licenses and 185 close-outs. He noted that some businesses, such as banks, don't need a local license.

Rotary furnishes furniture for troops

Troops catching a break at the USO lounge at the San Francisco International Airport can now lounge in \$50,000 of new leather furniture, thanks to local Rotary clubs.

Mark Flegel, of Flegels Fine Furniture in Menlo Park, agreed to help when fellow Rotarian Don Bowcutt asked for five new recliners. After working with 10 clubs, and Hancock & Moore leather furniture in North Carolina that discounted the cost by 60 percent, they donated 10

recliners, a sofa, loveseat, and six dining chairs.

Budget, budget

It could be a long night on Tuesday, May 24, when the Menlo Park City Council meets to review the proposed 2011-12 budget, the capital improvement plan, and the city's proposed contract with the police sergeants union.

Visit tinyurl.com/MP-budget1112 to see the budget proposal.

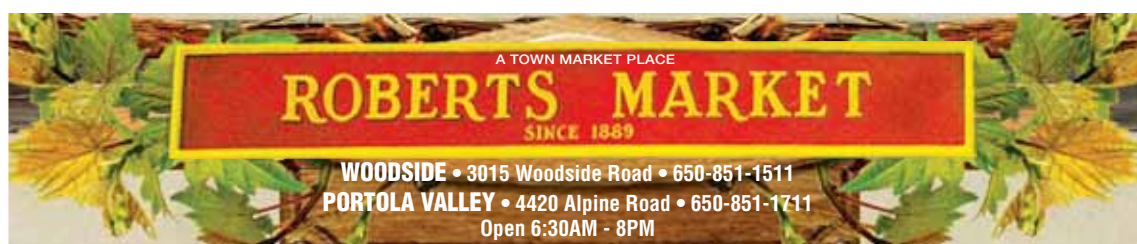
The meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St.

Red-light camera bill passes state Senate

A bill that regulates how cities use red-light cameras passed the state Senate with a unanimous 36-0 vote.

Sponsored by Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, Senate Bill 29 requires that:

Continued on next page



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1.5 QT

\$3⁴⁹

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1 LB CUBES

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or

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Wine and Spirits

2010 Rosé (Part 2)

Rosé season is in full swing. Each week we are receiving new, exciting wines. Below are our most recent acquisitions. The 2010 vintage is exceptional for rosé, and particularly from the south of France. C'mon, join in the celebration!

2010 Le Roc, Fronton.....\$9⁹⁹

2010 Dom. De Fontsaïnto, Gris de Gris, Corbieres.....\$13⁴⁹

2010 Ch. Mas Neuf "Compostelle", Costieres de Nîmes.....\$14⁹⁹

2010 Saint Andre de Figuiere "Magali" Cotes de Provence.....\$15⁹⁹

2010 Commanderie de Peyrassol, Cotes de Provence.....\$17⁹⁹

2010 Dom. de Bagnol, Cassis.....\$24⁹⁹

2010 Dom. du Gros Noré, Bandol.....\$26⁹⁹

The above wines assort for a 10% discount on 6 bottles, or more.

Sequoias may reopen dining room soon after highly contagious viral infection

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The dining room at The Sequoias retirement community in Portola Valley remained closed Monday, May 23, with residents still taking meals in their apartments in response to a highly contagious viral infection that came to the attention of Sequoias management around May 11.

The dining room may reopen by the middle of the week once all residents and employees have been free of symptoms for 72 hours, said Barbara Hood, the chief executive of the parent company Northern California Presbyterian Homes & Services, a nonprofit based in San Francisco.

As of Monday, four residents in the independent-living apartments and two employees had symptoms, and there haven't been any new cases following these six, Ms. Hood said.

"We're about there," she said. "(The residents) can wait a couple of days and we'll be in the clear."

Meanwhile the policy of discouraging visits by outsiders remains in place, Ms. Hood said.

Management closed the dining room Monday, May 16, just ahead of a recommendation to do so by the San Mateo County Public Health Department, Rick Isaacs, the health services administrator, said in an earlier interview.

The Norovirus family of viruses infect the gastrointestinal tract and are easy to pass from one person to another, Mr. Isaacs said. The symptoms — nausea, vomiting and diarrhea — generally go away after three days, during which dehydration is the greatest threat to health. But people can re-infect themselves if they come in further contact with the virus, Mr. Isaacs said.

Residents with symptoms are counseled to stay in their apartments. Staff apply a red dot to the door of affected apartments and disinfect the apartments every day with a diluted chlorine solution, Mr. Isaacs said. Noroviruses are resistant to alcohol-

based disinfectants, so the best defense is hand-washing, Mr. Isaacs said.

The kitchen has a supply of disposable dishes and silverware for situations like this and they are treated as hazardous during disposal, Mr. Isaacs said.

No more than a dozen residents have had symptoms at any one time and about six are symptomatic as of May 17, Mr. Isaacs said.

The management has kept the county public health department informed since the first case showed up, Mr. Isaacs said.

Lines of communication would open to the state Department of Public Health if two or more cases were to turn up in the 43-bed nursing home, and to the Department of Social Services if cases came to the 26-bed assisted living facility or the 18-bed memory-care facility, Mr. Isaacs said.

In October of 2003, an e-coli infection took the life of one resident and seriously infected 12 others. The management closed the dining room in that case as well.

Menlo Park home invaded, victim assaulted

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

An early-morning call led Menlo Park police to the scene of a home invasion on Sunday in the 1000 block of Windermere Avenue.

The adult male victim was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries caused by an assault during the invasion, according to a police department press release.

One or more persons forced entry into the home and ransacked the place before fleeing, police said. The victim then called police around 7:30 a.m.

About an hour before the inci-

CRIME NEWS

dent, residents of homes in the 600 block of Central Avenue and the 800 block of Laurel Avenue reported someone tried to break into their houses as well. Investigators don't know yet if the incidents are related.

Police ask anyone with information to contact Sgt. Tim Brackett or Detective Christine Powell at 330-6300.

Man robbed while sitting in parked car

Two men allegedly robbed an 18-year-old man who was sitting

in his car at Grayson Court and Arnold Way around 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 20.

One man punched him in the ear, while the other punched his face before stealing a wallet and cell phone, police said.

The duo fled in a 2006 Volvo, but didn't get very far. Based on the victim's description, Menlo Park police arrested Samson Ahokava, 19, and Navandeep Kang, 18, for robbery, assault, and conspiracy to commit a crime.

PRODUCTION ERROR

Due to a production error, the obituary for Franklin Smith that ran in Almanac on May 18 had the wrong memorial service date. The memorial service takes place on Friday, May 27.

— Please see correct obituary on page 16 of today's Almanac

Embarcadero Publishing regrets the error.

San Jose resident Vera Gil suggested the legislation as part of Sen. Simitan's annual "There Oughta Be a Law" contest after she got multiple red-light camera tickets for a car in Southern California she doesn't own and has never driven.

"People who get tickets for someone else's car need a way to straighten things out," Ms. Gil said in a press release. "In my case, the license plate was one letter different than mine. I understand how that mistake happens, but it took weeks and weeks to clear-up. There was no information on who to call."

The bill now goes to the Assembly for a hearing and vote.

Continued from previous page

■ Warning signs be posted within 200 feet of intersections with cameras.

■ Installation sites be chosen on the basis of safety and not revenue-generating factors.

■ Tickets include information on whom the recipients can contact if they have questions.

■ "Snitch tickets," which ask the recipient to identify the driver, explain that the recipient doesn't have to incriminate themselves or the driver. Snitch tickets are traffic violation notices meant to identify the driver during the alleged violation.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



What If You Can't Get A Loan?

Dear Monica: I am retired and have very appropriate assets for a comfortable retirement. I own several investment properties and am trying to do a tax-deferred exchange selling one property and buying another. However, to my great surprise I have been turned down for a loan by two large mainstream lenders because I don't have income from employment. I was even going to put down 75% and borrow only 25%. What should I do?

Ron D.

Dear Ron: This is a story I have heard from several retired clients all of whom have significant assets but

no income from employment. They have all been turned down for loans by major lenders. There are still a few lenders who will be able to help you so you will likely be able to find the loan you need. But it is important for retirees to know that the lending climate has changed dramatically in the past few years. Asset based loans that were easy to get a few years ago are hard to find and only available to strong borrowers. If you are planning to buy a retirement property it would be best to buy it while you are still earning an income from a job. If you wait until you are retired to buy something, you may find that you don't qualify for the loan

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

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TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

This is to notify you that an application for a Site Development Permit, File X9H-626, has been submitted for review by the Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley. This proposal requests Planning Commission approval of approximately 2,560 cubic yards of earthwork in association with new residential construction. The property is owned by Sam & Carolyn Quezada located at 15 Sausal Drive and is identified as APN: 079-111-010.

Planning Commission public hearing has been scheduled to review this application on **Wednesday, June 1, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.** in the Town Hall Council Chambers, Historic School House, Portola Valley, CA.

Public Hearings provide the general public and interested parties an opportunity to provide testimony on these items. If you challenge a proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at a Public Hearing(s) described above, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the Public Hearing(s).

Information pertaining to the proposal may be viewed at Town Hall Building & Planning Department, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission to be heard at the time and place herein above mentioned.

Dated: May 13, 2011

Carol Borck
Planning Technician

SFPUC stops work around heritage oak

■ Granny safe until June 6.

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

A meeting with San Mateo County left the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) reviewing options for sparing a 65-foot-tall heritage oak tree known as “Granny.”

The centuries-old tree sits in the middle of a site in North Fair Oaks designated for a planned water pipeline meant to carry water from the Hetch Hetchy, part of a \$4.6 billion seismic improvement project.

For now, the agency has ensconced the tree within an “avoidance area” at 827 15th Ave., and directed its contractor, Mountain Cascade, to stop work within that boundary.

Ed Harrington, SFPUC general manager, told the county in a let-

ter on May 18 that he personally promised the zone around the tree would, in fact, be avoided until June 6 at the earliest. That gives the agency enough time to review the arborist report and evaluate the cost of alternatives to removing the tree, he said.

SFPUC spokeswoman Maureen Barry described the meeting with the county as “very cordial.” At issue was whether the agency would be subject to the county’s heritage tree ordinance. The SFPUC is claiming immunity as a public agency.

The neighbors agreed to meet with agency representatives, but still want at least two weeks’ notice before the tree is brought down, according to Mary Ann Mullen, who organized the campaign to save Granny.

They continue to pursue a temporary restraining order, Ms. Mullen said. ■

Ferranti wins leadership award

Matthew Ferranti, a senior at Sacred Heart Preparatory in Atherton, is one of nine students nationwide to earn the Sons of Italy Foundation’s 2011 National Education and Leadership Award.

The Sons of Italy Foundation is the philanthropic branch of the Order Sons of Italy in America. It awards scholarships to high school, undergraduate, and graduate students of Italian descent across America for their academic and extracurricular achievements.

Matthew was chosen from a pool of about 700 applicants of Italian heritage based on his grade-point average, standardized test scores, and extracurricular commitments,

which include journalism, student government, music, and tutoring.

He will attend the 23rd annual National Education & Leadership Awards Gala at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, May 25, where Italian American government and corporate leaders will recognize the recipients for their accomplishments. The award includes a scholarship, but the amount isn’t disclosed until after the awards ceremony.



Matthew Ferranti

of the Atherton Dames, said the council should review the proposed ballpark project “independently of the money” that will be donated to fund it. The proposal “should stand on its own merits,” she said.

Council members Elizabeth Lewis and Jerry Carlson expressed strong support for moving the proposal forward. But Mayor Jim Dobbie, who questioned whether an improved ball field is a good idea for the park, and Councilman Bill Widmer said the league said should do more public outreach before the town staff and commission get involved.

Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen, who criticized the league’s lack of outreach to other park users, countered that involving town representatives now would make the outreach process more effective. Her list of concerns about the proposal includes the



‘Flight Night’

Above: Donn Lee watches high-tech, radio-controlled model planes and helicopters showcased at the Portola Valley Flight Night Electric Airshow on May 19. **Right:** The Mikado, a radio-controlled model helicopter about 2 feet long, makes a landing at the Portola Valley Town Center soccer field. See Page 5 and go online (AlmanacNews.com) for more photos.



Alpine Road trail work to begin soon

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The next six months will see limited access to the hiking trail that runs along Alpine Road from Portola Valley’s border with Ladera west to Arastradero Road.

In an agreement that obligates Stanford University to pay as much as \$2.9 million for the project, the town has engaged contractors to reroute and resurface parts of this mile of old, cracked and often bumpy asphalt, add a pedestrian bridge and some new landscaping, and stabilize the creek bank.

(In a related development, the section of the trail between Arastradero and Westridge Drive will be closed until June 3rd so that workers from Pacific Gas & Electric Corp. can relocate a utility line, the town said.)

appropriateness of “putting this kind of ball field in the park,” she said.

In addition, “I’m not happy with the way (the process has) been handled so far,” she said, adding that by working with only certain parties, such as the tennis community — which stands to gain resurfaced courts — it

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

Stanford’s paying for the trail upgrade fulfills one element of an otherwise contentious 2006 initiative that will allow the university to proceed with plans to develop

Ladera and Stanford Weekend Acres flatly rejected the university’s offer.

open space on the Santa Clara County side of San Francisco Creek, which forms a boundary with San Mateo County.

Residents of the unincorporated neighborhoods of Ladera and Stanford Weekend Acres flatly rejected the university’s offer — good until December 2013 — to spend \$8.4 million to improve the rough and mismatched sections of the Alpine Road path from the

appears to her that the league is “trying to buy your way in.”

In the end, the push to involve town resources prevailed, and the council vote to move the proposal forward to the Planning Commission was unanimous.

Go to tinyurl.com/3vnzdb3 and find Item No. 17 to learn more about the proposal. ■

intersection with Junipero Serra Boulevard to the Portola Valley border.

Confronted with the notion of a smooth, wide, speedy — and traffic-inviting — bikeway instead of their uninviting, untrafficked and meandering passage, Ladera and

Weekend Acres residents decided against the change. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and the Committee for Green Foothills backed them up.

If the San Mateo County-based parties hold to their position beyond the deadline, Stanford’s agreement with Santa Clara County has the \$8.4 million going to that county’s Parks Department.

As for the Portola Valley portion of the trail, Stanford will deposit money with the town as needed to pay for the work, thereby relieving the town of any upfront costs, Public Works Director Howard Young has said.

The town will post signs along the trail as needed to advise walkers and bikers of upcoming closures, and the dirt trail on the north side of Alpine Road will remain open and available, according to a statement from the town.

For more information, call the Public Works Department at 851-1700, ext. 216, or send e-mail to towncenter@portolavalley.net. ■

LITTLE LEAGUE

continued from page 5

As for the other sports groups, working with them “will be the natural steps we take when the process really gets going,” he said.

“No one group is trying to take (control) of the fields,” he said, and he is optimistic that the various leagues will work together for everyone’s benefit. If some people have felt left out of the process so far, he said, he is apologetic, but “they didn’t miss out on anything — we’ve just begun.”

M.J. Davey of Atherton, who over the years has worked with the local lacrosse league, said she supports the park being used by all youth sports, but urged the council to “slow down, do it right, get all the user groups together ... to come up with a cohesive plan.”

Denise Kupperman, a member



'Hearts for Japan'

Artwork and messages from students at Oak Knoll School in Menlo Park are displayed at a disaster relief center located at a school gym in Miyagi prefecture, Japan. Nami Onodera, an Oak Knoll parent who is originally from Tokyo, sent us this picture. In March, the students raised \$4,500 in a "Hearts for Japan" drive for disaster relief. The money was donated to "Save the Children," an organization that specializes in helping children in crisis.

Council says no to ethics oversight board

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

■ ATHERTON

Atherton City Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen said she is "horribly disappointed with this council" after a request she and Councilman Bill Widmer put before their colleagues to consider forming an ethics oversight board for the town was rejected by the council majority.

"Why on Earth the council is afraid to air the issue (before the public) is of concern to me," she told the Almanac after the 3-2 vote at the council's May 18 meeting.

"Are we afraid we have too much dirty laundry and to air it would be a mistake?"

The request, in the form of a "colleagues' memorandum," was for the council to authorize the town manager and attorney to investigate options for establishing an ethics oversight board to confidentially review citizen complaints of actions by town employees, and return to the council with a recommendation. The memorandum suggested the board's membership consist of a council member, a resident who is a judge or an attorney, and the town's manager or human resources director.

Mayor Jim Dobbie and council members Elizabeth Lewis and Jerry Carlson opposed the request. While some council members noted during the brief

council discussion that the town shouldn't be incurring such a cost as it faces severe budgetary cuts, Ms. McKeithen argued that "it's costing a lot more in litigation" because such a review process doesn't exist now.

The town has recently settled litigation with two former employees, and is currently fighting several high-stakes lawsuits. "Our litigation fees ... have been astronomical," Ms. McKeithen said. Some of the lawsuits might have been prevented had there been another viable avenue available to people who felt wronged by the town, she said.

In opposing the request, Mayor Dobbie argued that creating such a board would be "putting in another layer" to complicate a process best handled by the city manager. If the manager doesn't perform that job to the council's satisfaction, he said, he should be fired and replaced.

"That's naive," Ms. McKeithen shot back. "We don't just fire people. We let people stay on and on and on. It's not easy to fire people."

After the meeting, Ms. McKeithen said that if the council were to fire a city manager every time it disagreed with his or her decision, "we would be incurring phenomenal expenses and quite an unfortunate reputation throughout the community, if

not the state and the country.

"It's ridiculous to even consider that that would be something we could do."

Mayor Dobbie acknowledged after the meeting that the town's process for reviewing citizen complaints in the past has "not been working." But, he added, the current interim city manager has been putting measures in place to correct past problems, and that's the direction he wants to go in.

"At the moment, we're trying to run a very lean, mean town administration," he said. "I believe we can do that (by) putting the right people in the right place."

In addition to the cost of staff time required for an oversight board, Mr. Dobbie said he opposes the idea because, "in my mind, it's just another political football," with council members choosing the board's members.

Ms. McKeithen told the Almanac that rejection of the request undermined council members' stated support of transparency in government. "Every single one of us talked about transparency when we ran for council," she said. "What kind of transparency is there when we're not willing to ... at least air an idea about ethics in public."

But according to Mayor Dobbie, "it's not a question of airing it in public. We are elected by the

See **ETHICS**, page 14



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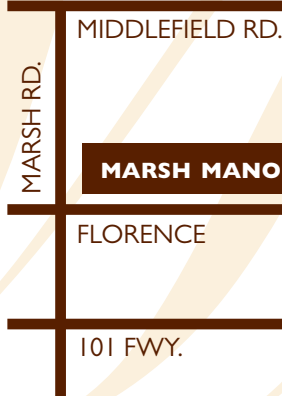
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Local students win National Merit scholarships

Two seniors at the Menlo School, one at Menlo-Atherton High School, and three other local residents have won National Merit scholarships of \$2,500 each, according to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

The awards to Menlo School students went to local residents — Ryan T. Goulden of Portola Valley and Jon-Jon W. Lam of Woodside. Francis K. Masuda, the M-A student, lives in Menlo Park.

The scholarships were also awarded to Gregory G. Owen, a Menlo Park resident who attends Crystal Springs Uplands School; Carey V. Phelps, a Portola Valley resident who attends Castilleja School; and Amanda D. Zerbe, a Woodside resident who attends San Francisco University High School.

Corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarships were also awarded to M-A senior Evan J. Amato

and Menlo School senior Jonathan D. Halprin. The corporate-sponsored scholarships allow business organizations to provide selected students with annual stipends of \$500 to \$10,000 per year or a single payment of \$2,500 to \$5,000. The scholarships allow companies to sponsor students who reside in the community the company serves, or who plan to pursue a college major or career the com-

pany wishes to encourage.

The scholarship designees were selected by a committee of college admissions officers and high school counselors, who based their decision on the student's academic record, difficulty level of the subjects studied, standardized test scores, leadership in school and community activities, an essay, and a recommendation written by a high school official.

"The number of winners named in each state is proportional to the state's percentage of the nation's high school graduating seniors," the National Merit Scholarship Corporation said in a statement. It added that the number of students selected from each school is not a measure of the school's quality; rather, the program honors individual students who show an aptitude for academics and the potential to succeed in rigorous college studies.

— Caitlin Moyles



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Transportation commission questions downtown plan data

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

■ MENLO PARK

The initial discussion of the newly released downtown/El Camino Real specific plan environmental impact report (EIR) left more questions than answers at the Menlo Park Transportation Commission.

The traffic study shows 13,385 more car trips per day into the downtown area under the development scenario outlined in the specific plan. That includes 899 more car trips during the morning commute, and 1,319 more car trips during the evening. But those numbers might be a low-ball estimate.

Commissioner Ray Mueller said he's waiting to find out what the traffic impact could be once a projected 28 percent increase in traffic from growth

and other projects is also taken into consideration. Staff suggested comparing data from multiple tables within the report, but both Mr. Mueller and staff found that too confusing.

"I'm concerned that number isn't easily accessible," he said. "To be fair, I'm not bringing that up because I'm against the plan or for it. It's just data that we need. The problem I have right now is that without the basic underlying data, it's hard to know what questions to ask. I don't really know what the picture is that I'm looking at."

Mr. Mueller said city staff committed to providing that information at the commission's next meeting.

Commissioner Charles Bourne

had a few questions of his own. Well, more than a few. He focused on how high-speed rail would affect the study, along with El Camino Real lane configurations, traffic, and parking — in particular, how the proposed design would impact downtown businesses such as Wells Fargo and Trader Joe's that currently rely on plazas 6 and 7 for customer parking.

On the other hand, colleague Martin Engel had fewer questions, but a firmer stance vis-a-vis the plan. "Bottom line? I'm

against it," he said.

Once traffic from all incoming projects such as the Stanford hospital expansion and the Bohannon Gateway development are considered, according to Mr. Engel's calculations, the city is looking at 50,000 daily car trips.

"And that's insane! While the downtown planning has been dragging on for over two years and the city has spent over a million on it, there has been an ever louder voice in opposition," he commented. "That voice should be listened to. As with

most projects, the initial concept and vision sound absolutely attractive. However, the devil is in the details and the realities. Traffic is merely one of those devils." ■

■ MEETING

The Menlo Park Transportation Commission will hear a formal presentation of the downtown specific plan EIR when it next meets on Wednesday, June 8, at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, 701 Laurel St.

Opponents release poll on Saltworks

■ Developer questions credibility of poll.

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

If the decision were up to the participants in a recent survey of 350 residents of Redwood City, they would reject a proposal now under consideration to build some 12,000 new homes on what are now off-shore salt flats in their city. The project would include substantial open space, recreational space, and 1 million square feet of commercial space.

The telephone poll was paid for by Save the Bay, an Oakland-based nonprofit environmental group that opposes the development proposed by Minneapolis-based Cargill Salt Corp. and an Arizona developer. Sacramento-based J. Moore Methods conducted the poll from May 11 to 15 and noted a margin of error

of 5.3 percentage points.

According to the poll results reported by Save the Bay, 57 percent of those surveyed said they oppose the project.

The opposition dropped to 51 percent after being read a description of the plan from Cargill's proposal. But after participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements — such as, "Traffic from 12,000 new homes will make congestion on local streets and freeways much worse" — the overall opposition rose to 64 percent.

A whopping 83 percent of participants said the matter should be decided by voters and not the City Council in Redwood City, and 54 percent said they would weigh a candidate's position on this project in the next City Council election.

Developer responds

The developer — DMB Associates Inc. in Scottsdale, Arizona — challenged the credibility of the poll and its sponsors.

"Redwood City voters have already spoken about this," said DMB spokesman Jay Reed, "and they kicked (Save the Bay Executive Director) David Lewis back to Oakland."

Mr. Reed was referring to Measure W, a November 2008 initiative that would have required a two-thirds majority of voters to approve City Council decisions on uses of unimproved land. A Save the Bay poll at that time said the measure had 71 percent support, Mr. Reed said, but it lost to a 63 percent majority.

"This is David Lewis grasping at straws trying to stop the (environmental review) process," Mr. Reed said. "David Lewis has as much credibility about public opinion in Redwood City as Tiger Woods does talking about marital fidelity."

"First of all," Mr. Lewis said when asked to comment, "the numbers don't lie. This poll's been released in its entirety. All the information is there. Anyone can look at it and see what it says. Basically, there's no good news for DMB in this poll."

Sixty-five percent of poll participants described themselves as environmentalists, while a plurality of 43 percent labeled themselves "pro-growth."

As to which was the greater priority, 61 percent favored jobs and the economy over civil rights and the environment.

Asked to describe themselves on a political spectrum, results showed 54 percent of the participants chose moderate, 24 percent conservative and 21 percent liberal. As for their voter registration status, a 52 percent majority registered as Democrats, with 26 percent Republican and 22 percent Independent.

Go to tinyurl.com/SaltFlats to examine the poll and its results. ■



EYE CARE NEWS

Presented by Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician

A RETROSPECTIVE

Can classic eyeglasses be called "retro" if they never went out of style? While that point may be debatable, there is no questioning the fact that classic-style square, rectangular, and perfectly round eyeglasses are the "in" look when it comes to eyeglass frames. For a slightly more sophisticated look, square and rectangular glasses in delicate, thin frames lend themselves to fine style. Any frame color is acceptable, but black, brown and tortoiseshell remain the most popular. Women are more likely to experiment

with burgundy, teal and purple frames in similar square and rectangular shapes. Scaled-down rectangular frames in black and brown continue to represent the "professional" face of women in the workplace.

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P.S. Large sunglasses that reach down to cover part of the cheek are currently very popular among women.

Mark Schmidt is an American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners Certified Optician licensed by the Medical Board of California. He can be easily reached at Menlo Optical, 1166 University Drive, Menlo Park. 650-322-3900.

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Menlo Park man robbed on Willow Road

It apparently didn't matter that a 51-year-old Menlo Park man had linked his wallet to his belt loop. While walking in the 1100 block of Willow Road on Thursday, May 19, a young man came up behind the man, pulled on his attached wallet and got away with it, police said.

The suspect ran behind an apartment building but the victim and suspect encountered each again a few minutes later, according to Nicole Acker, spokeswoman for the Menlo Park Police Department. The victim demanded the return of his wallet, but the suspect told him he'd have to fight for it, at which point the victim retreated and the suspect ran off, police said.

There were no injuries.

Police are looking for a Hispanic man about 25 years old, 5 feet 10 inches tall with shoulder length black hair and weighing about 185

pounds. At the time of the incident, he was reported to be wearing a white T-shirt and blue jeans.

To report information about this case, call police at 330-6300 or the anonymous tip line at 330-6395.

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References available upon request

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NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING

The Menlo Park City Elementary School District will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2011-12 on Tuesday, June 14, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Menlo Park City Elementary School District Office, located at 181 Encinal Avenue, Atherton, California. A copy of the proposed budget will be available for public examination at the Menlo Park City Elementary School District Office at the above location from June 9, 2011 through June 14, 2011 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Any taxpayer directly affected by the Menlo Park City Elementary School District Budget may appear before the Menlo Park City Elementary School District Board of Trustees and speak to the proposed budget or any item therein.



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED SUBDIVISION X6D-210, AND PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) X7D-171 1260 WESTRIDGE DRIVE (APN: 077-050-200) AND PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (RESCHEDULING OF CANCELLED MAY 18, 2011 PUBLIC HEARING)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley has rescheduled the public hearing on this matter to June 1, 2011 to consider the project proposed by Shorenstein Realty to subdivide the subject 11.60-acre property located at 1260 Westridge Drive into three parcels to accommodate two new residential building sites. Also proposed as part of the project is a PUD to regulate the specific manner in which the three parcels may be used. The PUD, as provided for under the town's zoning ordinance, allows for flexibility to ensure the unique property conditions are appropriately reflected in the final standards controlling use and development of the subdivision lots for conformity with the basic intent of the Portola Valley General Plan, and Zoning and Subdivision ordinances. Each of the three new parcels will have a minimum area of over three (3) acres, whereas the minimum parcel area for the property's zoning district is 2.5 acres.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the June 1, 2011 public hearing will be continued to the July 6, 2011 Planning Commission meeting to permit time for circulation of the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project. Further, all reports, plans and documents associated with this project are available for review in the Portola Valley Planning Department at 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. The specific reports, plans and supporting documents for the June 1, 2011 Planning Commission public hearing will be available in the Planning Department on May 27, 2011.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration regarding the above described project will be available for public review from May 18, 2011 to June 18, 2011. The Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley will initiate consideration of the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration at its meeting on June 1, 2011 at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall (Historic Schoolhouse), 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California. This consideration will be continued to the July 6, 2011, planning commission meeting, also starting at 7:30 p.m., along with the hearing on the subdivision and PUD project, to allow time for conclusion of the circulation period and response to comments that may be received from the circulation process. Before the Planning Commission acts on the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration or the project, Commissioners will consider all evidence, written and oral, pertaining to the proposed mitigated negative declaration, and project. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission at the times and place herein above-mentioned. Copies of the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration will be available at Portola Valley Town Hall, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California starting on May 18, 2011.

Dated: May 12, 2011
Signed: Carol Borck, Town Planning Technician

Council settles on trash-rate hikes

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

■ ATHERTON

Struggling to reduce a shortfall as high as \$1.3 million that the town is projected to owe for garbage collection services, the Atherton City Council last week approved garbage rate hikes ranging from 15.5 percent to 59 percent, depending on level of service.

The council took the action at its May 18 meeting after a public hearing and a less-than-rosy report on garbage collection services by Councilman Bill Widmer.

Mr. Widmer and Councilman Jerry Carlson, who served on a council subcommittee studying the garbage rate issue, recommended a rate schedule that differed from any of the three that the council had previously considered.

"No solution ... will completely address the shortfall," Mr. Widmer said. But the rates the subcommittee was proposing would be a sound middle ground that would reduce the shortfall more than rates endorsed in March, which represented a 39 percent increase for all service levels.

The subcommittee's recommendation was rejected, 3-2, with the council's first vote, with Mayor Jim Dobbie and Kathy McKeithen arguing that the rates needed to be higher to cover more of the town's costs. But after the council rejected a motion for a higher rate schedule, a third vote was taken on the Widmer/Carlson recommendation, and those rates were unanimously approved.

The new rates are expected to lower the shortfall projected if rates remain the same from \$1.3 million to about \$941,000.

Under the new rate schedule, effective July 15, residents using a 20-gallon garbage can will pay \$20 per month, up 15.5 percent from \$17.32. The cost for a 32-gallon can goes up 59 percent, from \$27.69 to \$44. Service for a 64-gallon barrel goes up 50 percent, from \$55.38 to \$83; and for a 96-gallon barrel, from \$82.18 to \$125, a 52 percent increase.

A key question yet to be resolved is the outstanding debt the town owes Allied Waste.

Residents will be charged more for multiple green waste containers. Under the original proposal, customers would have been charged \$1 for each container over the first two, which are free. Under the approved schedule, customers will be charged \$6 for each green waste container over two.

The new rates are considerably lower than those endorsed by the council in December, which ranged from increases of 63 percent for using the smallest can available to 98 percent for using the 96-gallon barrel. After a public outcry and the raising of many questions by residents and council members alike, the council in March endorsed more moderate increases.

The new rates may be in for another review and change in

the fall. The subcommittee recommended that the town look for other adjustments to the waste collection service and consider charging customers more for green waste service.

Mr. Widmer said each green waste barrel costs \$19.35 to service, and noted that Atherton generates nearly 10.5 percent of all organic tonnage collected in the jurisdictions served by the South Bayside Waste Management Authority (SBWMA), a joint powers authority representing 12 Peninsula jurisdictions, including Atherton.

Mr. Widmer and Mr. Carlson spent many hours over the last few months working with Recology, the town's new garbage collection contractor; town staff; and SBWMA.

Another key question yet to be resolved is the outstanding debt the town owes Allied Waste, which provided waste collection service until January, when Recology took over.

Allied Waste says that Atherton must pay \$334,000 in "true up" costs. But questions have been raised about the debt in light of Allied Waste's assurances to the town in March 2010 that the 16.9 percent increase passed at the time would be sufficient for the company to cover its costs and make the profit agreed to in its contract with the town.

Mr. Widmer said an audit being performed by SBWMA is expected to be concluded by September, and that the debt may not be as high as earlier believed. ■

ETHICS

continued from page 9

people to represent them. We don't need a plebiscite for every issue.

"I'm certainly not afraid to bring things to the public. ... But if we bring everything to the public (for a decision), what's the point of having elected officials?"

Before the vote, resident Jon Buckheit said that an ethics oversight committee "is essential" to address concerns of people who have grievances with town actions. Town officials and staff "need to be accountable, and not (just) to themselves."

Mr. Buckheit is suing the town for \$10 million in federal court over the handling of his 2008 arrest during a domestic dispute in his home. He was never charged with a crime, and obtained a declaration of factual innocence in court. ■

■ POLICE CALLS

ATHERTON

Theft reports:

■ Bike stolen from driveway, first block of Encino Road, May 13.

■ Two locked bikes stolen from bike rack, Laurel Elementary School. 95 Edge Road, May 14.

Attempted residential burglary report: Residence window smashed, De Bell Drive, May 17.

MENLO PARK

Commercial burglary report: Loss estimated at \$11,000 in break-in and theft of six computers and associated equipment, Badgeville Corp., 855 Oak Grove Ave., May 19.

Residential burglary reports:

■ Loss estimated at \$9,000 in break-in to garage and theft of one bicycle, 800 block of Fremont Ave., May 18.

■ Loss estimated at \$7,470 in break-in to unoccupied residence and theft of two computers, three cell phones, video game console, camera, jewelry, MP3 player and charger, DVDs and \$100 cash, 1000 block of Creek Drive,

May 13.

■ Loss estimated at \$1,230 in entry through unlocked door and theft of laptop computer, coin purse and jewelry, 200 block of Oak Court, May 16.

■ Loss estimated at \$620 in break-in and theft of laptop computer, 1100 block of Merrill St., May 13.

■ Unknown losses in entry through open bedroom window and theft of two pieces of jewelry, 1600 block of Stanford Ave., May 19.

Fraud report: Loss estimated at \$5,000 in unauthorized use of debit card, Fremont St., May 17.

Theft reports:

■ Loss estimated at \$600 in theft of cell phone, 500 block of El Camino Real, May 13.

■ Loss estimated at \$200 in theft of GPS device from unlocked vehicle, 700 block of Magnolia St., May 13.

■ Video game console stolen, 1200 block of Willow Road, May 18.

Child Protective Services report: 700 block of El Camino Real, May 19.

West Bay successfully pairs opera rarities

By Mort Levine

Special to the Almanac

■ REVIEW

Concluding its remarkable 55th season with two rarely seen works, West Bay Opera has brought to Lucie Stern Theatre in Palo Alto a run of operas the company has never before performed. Each has been remarkable, but the two short operas currently on view are particularly worth attending.

"Dido and Aeneas" by Henry Purcell, one of the fathers of British opera, was written in 1689 for a Gentlewoman's School in London. The tale from Virgil's Aeneid has been done by more than 60 composers the world over. A Carthaginian queen who dies for love, and then turns her back on her lover when he seeks her out in Hades, is just too good a tale to pass by.

The second work is "La vida breve" ("Life is Brief") by Manuel de Falla, arguably 20th century Spain's best composer. His tragic heroine is a gypsy girl, Salud, who is seduced by the slick Paco from the other side of the tracks in Grenada, Spain. The passionate 16-year-old is totally devoted to him. When he marries someone of his own class, Salud confronts him after the fancy wedding and dies at his feet. After all, this is opera.

In both of these works, the composers have brought the driving force of music to carry the story in most compelling ways. Oddly, both also use dance

far more creatively than most operatic works. In the Purcell it probably related to use of the young women at the school where it premiered. That performance had only one male, the Trojan War hero, Aeneas. Dance also figures powerfully in the de Falla because of an inspired collaboration with the Stanford Flamenco group and a trio of outstanding students of Spanish dance, as well as a superb Spanish guitar player, Adrian Murillo.

General Director Jose Luis Moscovich assembled an array of outstanding talents who created this successful, albeit unusual, pairing. Young Mexican stage director Ragnar Conde was adept at utilizing all of the limited stage space in the seemingly effortless movement of a 15-member chorus, a troupe of dancers, and eight principal

voices in each production.

Some excellent lighting effects were designed by Robert Ted Anderson, especially in the Purcell, heightening the impact of the sorceress (well sung by Carla Lopez-Speziale) and her two witches (Alexandra Mena and Kristen Choi).

Key role of the lead soprano in both was competently handled by mezzo Cathleen Candia, who has heretofore sung lesser roles at West Bay and other regional companies. Her Aeneas was the handsomely strapping baritone Zachary Gordin, who seemed to have a bit of hesitancy in matching Dido's ardor. However, he proved powerful in his interpretation of the role of el cantoar, the flamenco singer in the de Falla.

Other noteworthy voices included high soprano Shawnette Sulker as Dido's lady in waiting and Salud's grandmother, the aforementioned Lopez-Speziale, who proved a strong character actress along with her fine mezzo soprano instrument.

The booming bass voice of Carlos Aguilar was totally effective as Salud's protective uncle Salvador. Tenor Pedro Betancourt was unconvincing as the seducer in "La vida breve" and his high tenor seemed to be overwhelmed at times in the tricky Lucie Stern acoustics.

The WBO orchestra offered up an admirable performance under the crisp baton of conductor Moscovich. ■

■ PERFORMANCES

West Bay Opera's season ends with "Dido and Aeneas" by Purcell followed by "La vida breve" by de Falla. Two more shows will run at 8 p.m. Saturday, May 28, and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 29, at Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. Tickets range from \$35 to \$60 at the box office (650-424-9999) or online at WBOpera.org, where additional information can be obtained.



Photo by Veronica Weber/Embarcadero Media

"Backyard Outpost," a playhouse that will be auctioned off as part of the "Dreams Happen" benefit for Rebuilding Together Peninsula.

Playhouses to be auctioned off

For the 10th year, Stanford Shopping Center is the setting for playhouses that range in themes from a classic firehouse to a creek-side cottage. The 15 custom-made playhouses will be auctioned at the Dreams Happen gala to be hosted by the shopping center June 4.

Dreams Happen brings together architects, designers and builders to create one-of-a-kind playhouses to benefit Rebuilding Together Peninsula, a nonprofit dedicated to rehabilitating homes and facilities for low-income families.

The playhouses will be on display through June 11.

The Dreams Happen auction will

take place at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, June 4, in the shopping center's center pavilion. Television personality Diane Dwyer will serve as master of ceremonies. Guests will dine and dance under the stars, with food provided by the shopping center's restaurants.

Since its inception, Dreams Happen has raised \$2.8 million for Rebuilding Together Peninsula with winning playhouse bids ranging from \$6,000 to \$70,000, says spokesperson Kate Comfort Harr.

Visit rebuildingtogetherpeninsula.org for more information and to buy tickets at \$110. You can also call for tickets: 366-6597.

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Lu Hugdahl of Mountain View opened up a safe deposit box at a bank in Los Altos in November of 2006. Two years later she went to open her safe deposit box and was horrified to discover four or five rings and three necklaces missing. On a police report she estimated two of the rings were worth approximately \$1,500.00, "one being a keepsake from a cherished friend who passed away", as reported by the Los Altos Town Crier. Hugdahl was stunned.

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Memorial Day at Union Cemetery

History Union Cemetery in Redwood City will hold its annual Memorial Day program at 10 a.m. Monday, May 30, at the cemetery, located on Woodside Road, a couple of blocks west of El Camino Real in Redwood City.

John Edmonds, cemetery president, will conduct the program with Romie Besseto as guest speaker. During the ceremony, children will place flowers, provided by the Native Daughters of the Golden West, on the soldiers' graves. Daughters of the American Revolution will provide ice cream for the children after the ceremony.

For more information, call Marie Amaya at 369-7332.

Go to tinyurl.com/Union-Cemetery to see a map of the location.

Meditation retreat at Allied Arts

Juniper's Urban Meditation Retreat, led by Buddhist master Segyu Rinpoche will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily May 26-28 at Allied Arts Guild, 75 Arbor Road in Menlo Park.

The retreat will focus on how to find tranquility and spiritual meaning in the modern world and give participants the opportunity to practice simple meditation techniques from a qualified teacher. Segyu Rinpoche trained for some 25 years with several Tibetan Buddhist teachers.

Cost of the retreat is \$250 for all three days and includes lunch. For information and reservations, call Christina Juskiewicz at 299-9333.

BIRTHS

Woodside

■ Laura and Victor Patterson, a daughter, May 11, Sequoia Hospital.

Franklin Smith

Aug. 26, 1924 – April 8, 2011

****Please see corrected Service Date****

Franklin Smith, a 50-year resident of Menlo Park, died April 8th, 2011. He was born Aug. 26, 1924, in Texhoma, Oklahoma. He moved to the Bay Area after serving his country in World War II in the Pacific Theatre. Frank graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1950, where he was an active member in the TKE Fraternity. After college, Frank joined Lederle Labs as a Pharmaceutical Salesman and successfully called on the Bay Area for more than 30 years, retiring in 1990. Frank moved to Menlo Park in the late 1950's with his wife Norma, where they raised their three children.

He was a member of Ladera Oaks Swim & Ten-

nis Club, where he enjoyed playing tennis with his wife and friends. Frank also enjoyed traveling, as well as working on home improvement projects. He is survived by his three children, Scott Smith; Douglas Smith of San Francisco; Sharon Smith of Menlo Park and two grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held Friday, May 27 at 11 A.M. at St. Raymonds Church, 1100 Santa Cruz Ave, Menlo Park.

Memorial donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. Link:



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Talk: 'Discoveries that rewrote history'

Stanford professor and archaeologist Patrick Hunt will discuss his book, "Ten Discoveries that Rewrote History," at 11 a.m. Saturday, June 4, in the downstairs reading room at the Menlo Park Library, located at Alma Street and Ravenswood Avenue.

Mr. Hunt, who has been teaching archaeology, mythology and art history since 1994 in the Classics Department of Stanford University, will talk about his list of greatest archaeological discoveries, which includes the Rosetta Stone, Troy, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Mr. Hunt received a big turnout when he spoke at the library three years ago, said Roberta Roth, outreach librarian at the Menlo Park Library.

"(Mr. Hunt) has traveled around the world," said Ms. Roth. "The last time he was here he brought a slideshow from his archaeological digs and travels." Ms. Roth added that attendees can expect a similar presentation this year.

The audience will have an opportunity to ask questions, have refreshments, and purchase Mr. Hunt's book after the talk.

■ AROUND TOWN

The event is part of a series of monthly Saturday programs sponsored by the Friends of the Menlo Park Library. The library has been offering the Saturday programs for the past 16 years, Ms. Roth said, and has covered a variety of topics from health to black history month.

The event, which is free to the public, is being co-sponsored by the library's Adult Summer Reading Program and is in line with this summer's topic, "novel destinations."

Free van service is available for Menlo Park seniors and people with disabilities. Call 330-2512 or send an email to rlroth@menlopark.org for more information.

— Caitlin Moyles

InnVision garden gala

The annual InnVision garden gala will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, June 5, at a private home in Atherton. With a theme of "InnVision in Wonderland," the benefit will feature a high

tea, musical entertainment, croquet, surprise guests, and a live auction.

InnVision helps men, women, and children break the cycle of poverty and move toward self-sufficiency. Its programs include the Opportunity Services Center, Palo Alto Food Closet, Breaking Bread Hot Meals program, and Hotel de Zink shelter.

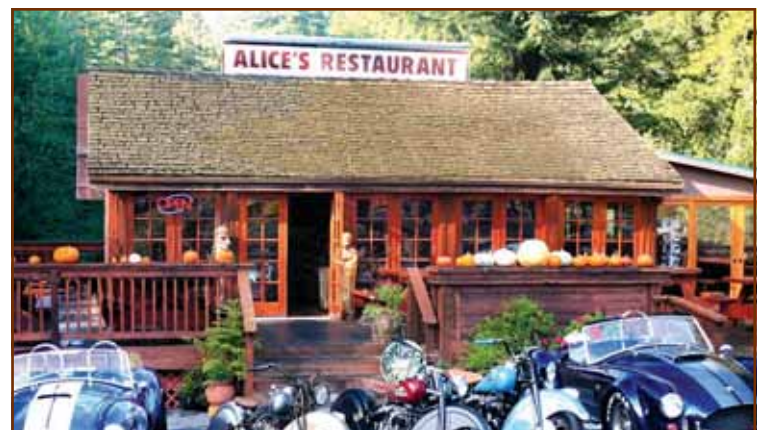
Visit InnVision.org or call Ann-Marie Meacham at 408-380-8702 for tickets at \$150.

Opera and song at Little Store

The Little Store will present an evening of opera and song from 5 to 8 p.m. Sunday, June 5, at the restaurant, 3340 Woodside Road in Woodside.

Eileen Meredith, soprano, Raymond Chavez, tenor, and Ron Valentino, pianist, will entertain with opera arias and Broadway melodies.

The event is \$75 per person and will include dinner with a choice of salmon en croute or roasted lamb chops. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 851-8110. ■



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223-6507.

Fair Oaks heritage tree saved, for now

We hope the commission in charge of the \$4.6 billion seismic upgrade of the Hetch Hetchy water line that passes through North Fair Oaks will respond to an outpouring of concern from residents who are trying to save a heritage oak tree that is growing in the right-of-way.

Fears that the tree was in trouble came Friday, May 13, when the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission posted a notice on the doors of nearby residents saying the tree would be taken

EDITORIAL*The opinion of The Almanac*

down on the following Monday, May 16. The notice gave tree supporters virtually no time to reach commission officials or to retain an attorney

who might help them halt the plan to take the tree down. Although they may have seen plans that threatened the tree in early pipeline planning, neighbors had not been given any recent warning that the beautiful oak tree, estimated to be 300 years old, was even vulnerable.

The notice shocked resident Mary Ann Mullen, who quickly went to work, notifying friends and the news media, and posting a warning on the Almanac's Town Square forum calling for help to save the tree. She headlined her Town Square posting, "Heritage Oak at risk — urgent," which went out at 1:27 a.m. Saturday.

From there, the story took off, as neighbors and other supporters offered to help save the tree. One early focus that continues today is to retain an attorney who could help get a temporary restraining order, halting threats to the tree until all options could be considered. Questions also were raised about whether the SFPUC needed a permit from the county to remove a heritage tree.

The attention was not lost on the SFPUC, which got the message and has agreed to put a moratorium on taking the tree down

until at least June 6 in order to study whether there is a way to route the line around or under the root structure of the tree.

These are the choices that should have been shared with neighbors before the decision was made to chop down the tree. It remains unclear why the commission chose to act so quickly, but the answer may come when the SFPUC responds to a public records act request filed by the Almanac for all documents related to the tree.

After the initial confusion, it appears that Ed Harrington, the commission's general manager, is sincerely trying to find a way to save the tree, known as "Granny" to neighbors.

In a letter to the county on May 18, he personally promised that a protective zone, known as an "avoidance area" at 827 15th Ave., has been established around the tree and that he has ordered the contractor to stop work within that boundary. The order will give the agency enough time to consider the cost of alternatives to taking down the tree.

The agency is also working with the county to determine if it must comply with the heritage tree ordinance. The SFPUC insists that as a public agency, it is not subject to the county regulations, a contention that remains to be sorted out.

Over the last 10 years, Ms. Mullen says, she has seen at least four species of owls roosting in the tree, as well as other raptors and animals. She claims the killing of the tree is unnecessary, and wrong.

We agree. If there is a reasonable way, the SFPUC should redesign its pipeline to go under or around the root structure of this magnificent oak tree. It may cost more, but the end result will be proof that a government agency can tailor its development plans to satisfy a neighborhood's concern, rather than knocking down a heritage tree that means so much to nearby residents and the birds and animals that make their home in or around it.

LETTERS*Our readers write***'Sunk costs' rule applies to downtown plan***Editor:*

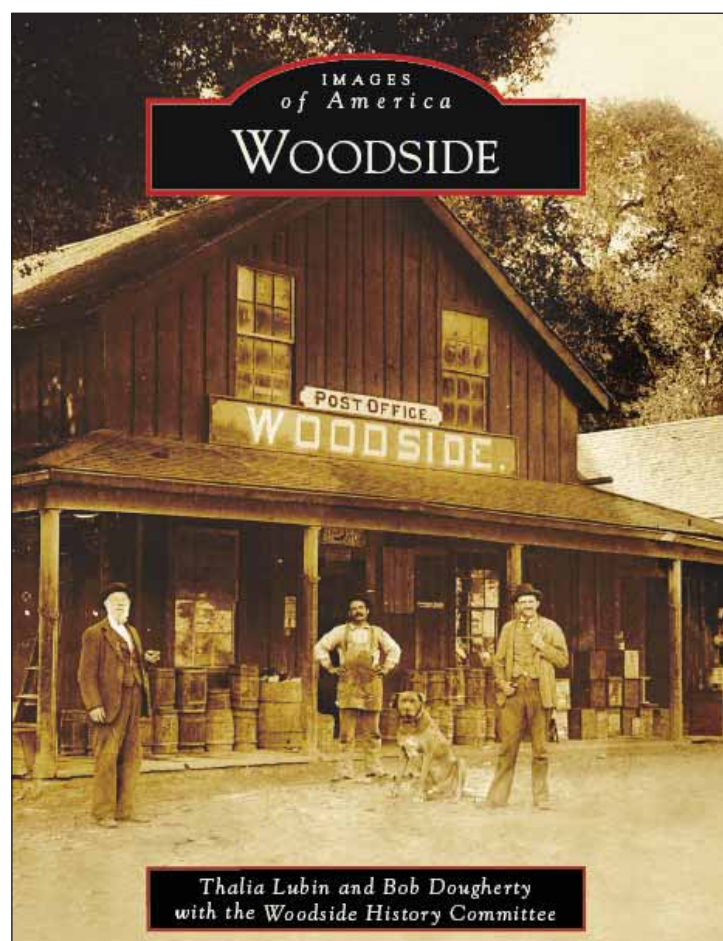
In your editorial of May 11, regarding the unfavorable EIR on the downtown plan, you expressed much dismay about the \$1 million fee paid to consultants that could be "wasted" and about the setback that would occur if the development plan is scuttled along with the \$1 million "invested."

In any college business school program, one of the basic concepts taught is "sunk costs." These are preliminary costs incurred for a project prior to the point at which a decision must be made to proceed or not proceed. At that point, all such sunk costs are irrelevant to a decision as to whether the project should be a "go" or a "no go." The only relevant decisions

See **LETTERS**, next page**Our Regional Heritage**

Woodside History Committee President Thalia Lubin and Bob Dougherty, author of a history of La Honda, are looking for additional photos and artwork as they complete the final draft of a book on Woodside's history. The cover picture shows the Woodside Store at the corner of Tripp and Kings Mountain roads. The authors are working with Arcadia, the same publisher that produced the La Honda book, and are aiming to have Woodside's book available by the December holidays. Anyone with material of interest should contact Thalia Lubin at the Woodside History Museum, (650) 851-1294 or woodsidehistory@woodsidetown.org

Woodside History Committee



Thalia Lubin and Bob Dougherty
with the Woodside History Committee

LETTERS

Continued from previous page

factors are the future projected costs and the future projected benefits of the project.

While it is regrettable that \$1 million was spent, it should not be taken into consideration in any analysis on what to do now. Be on the lookout for dubious positions that only serve as a way for officials to "save face" or to project some form of "skin in the game."

James R. Brenzel
Garland Drive

(The author is a Menlo Park business owner)

Parts of plan conflict with Farmers' Market

Editor:

Following publication of the environmental impact report, I am writing to express my continued concern with specific aspects of Menlo Park's downtown plan.

As a member of the Menlo Park Live Oaks Lions Club and a longtime supporter and volunteer at the Sunday Farmers' Market, I wish to make the following comments.

I fear that the proposed partial closure of Chestnut Street along with a 4,000-square-foot marketplace structure will disrupt traffic and make access to and from the Sunday market a problem, both for the farmers' vehicles and the general public.

Developments on this scale are bound to negatively affect the smooth running of this very successful market and could in the long term put the market at risk.

It puzzles me as to why the plan still wants to introduce more retailers, through the covered market, when we have vacant sites on Santa Cruz Avenue.

On the question of a general increase in traffic, forecast under the present downtown plan, I have serious concerns regarding the proposal to reduce the through lanes on El Camino Real from two to one at the Santa Cruz crossing.

I regularly use El Camino to visit downtown or to travel to Palo Alto from Loyola Avenue and it is already a bottleneck at certain times of the day. With the increase in traffic and a reduction to one lane, I dread to think what it will be like trying to drive through Menlo Park. Please reconsider this plan.

Finally, the recommendation of the EIR to make changes on a temporary basis is a good one, as this will allow both the public and the city to assess their effectiveness before changes become permanent.

John Hickson
Loyola Avenue, Menlo Park

Mississippi shows risk of building below sea level

Editor:

Redwood City residents need look no further than the national news to realize that building new homes for 30,000 people behind a dike below sea level is a bad idea.

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers in Tennessee is blowing up levees in order to protect cities and towns as the Mississippi River crests at levels not seen since the 1930s. News reports over the last few weeks feature the tragic plight of families evacuating their homes in low-lying areas at or below sea level.

With all this national news, the latest local news story is no surprise. A new poll shows Redwood City residents oppose Cargill's proposed Bay development below sea level by a 2 to 1 margin. Even a developer with public relations resources cannot control the news.

Kaia Eakin
Redwood City

Council member supports videotaping of meetings

Editor:

As an Atherton resident and City Council member, and a person who campaigned to open our meetings to more of the public through the use of commonly available technology, I am happy with the Atherton Police Officers Association initiative to videotape and post the meetings, which makes the meetings available to all residents and furthers the concept of open government.

While I hope my colleagues on the council and the city manager will help the town embrace other automated information and communications technology, I appreciate the initiatives and the efforts expended so far and invite any resident who could assist in this activity to participate.

Bill Widmer
Atherton City Council member

PRODUCTION ERROR

Due to a production error, the obituary for Franklin Smith that ran in Almanac on May 18 had the wrong memorial service date. The memorial service takes place on Friday, May 27.

— Please see correct obituary on page 16 of today's Almanac

Embarcadero Publishing regrets the error.

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REALTORS



Janise Taylor
650.543.1189
jtaylor@apr.com



ATHERTON **PRICE UPON REQUEST**
Exquisite English Country estate built in 2003. Situated on 1.3 +/- acres of lush, manicured grounds. Call for details.



Monica Corman
650.465.5971
mcorman@apr.com



WOODSIDE **\$4,750,000**
Absolutely gorgeous 5bd/5.5ba traditional-style home on 6.47 very private acres with fabulous Bay and city views.



Judy Bogard-Tanigami
650.209.1603
Judyand Sheri.com



Sheri Hughes
650.209.1608
Judyand Sheri.com



LOS ALTOS **\$3,499,995**
Beautifully remodeled 4bd/3.5ba home. MBR and guest suite on main level. Dedicated office on upper level. 5-car garage. Open Sun.



Joe & Mary Merkert
650.387.5464
jmerkert@apr.com



ATHERTON **\$3,295,000**
This prime W. Atherton 4bd/3.5ba home is surrounded by mature trees and gardens that contribute to the natural beauty of the property. Pool. Las Lomas Schools. Close to 280.



Joe & Mary Merkert
650.387.5464
jmerkert@apr.com



MENLO PARK **\$2,599,000**
Spectacular 5bd/3ba home on the Sharon Heights Golf Course. 3700+/-sf living space on 15,500+/-sf lot. Las Lomas Schools. Proximity to Hwy 280.



Barbara Williams
650.814.0741
bwilliams@apr.com



LOS ALTOS HILLS **\$2,199,000**
Classical twist on mid-century design. Completely remodeled 3100+/- sf home. 4bd/3.5ba with vaulted ceilings and HW floors.



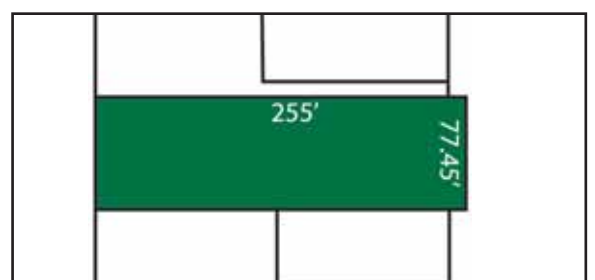
Marybeth Dorst
650.543.1227
mdorst@apr.com



WOODSIDE **\$1,775,000**
Nestled among mature oak trees, this spacious 3bd, ranch-style home is conveniently located in central Woodside. Upgraded and maintained with traditional detailing and charm.



Monica Corman
650.465.5971
mcorman@apr.com



MENLO PARK **\$1,495,000**
Deep 19,758+/- sq. ft. lot in the award-winning Menlo Park School District; can build one or two homes.



Dottie Monroe
650.208.2500
dmonroe@apr.com



MOUNTAIN VIEW **\$1,028,000**
Charming 3bd/2ba home with top-of-the-line European kitchen, spacious FR, large MBR suite with Jacuzzi tub + separate shower.



Marcia Newton
650.465.9549
mnewton@apr.com



REDWOOD CITY **\$719,000**
Lovely 3bd/2ba home with enclosed front patio gives total privacy from the street. HW floors, new paint and new carpeting.

PALO ALTO 650.323.1111 | **MENLO PARK** 650.462.1111 | **LOS ALTOS** 650.941.1111

APR COUNTIES | Santa Clara | San Mateo | San Francisco | Marin | Sonoma | Alameda | Contra Costa | Monterey | Santa Cruz