



2011 Holiday Guide
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The Almanac

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

NOVEMBER 16, 2011 | VOL. 47 NO. 12



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Section 2



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Almanac photos by Michelle Le

Chris Rivera, co-owner of Angel Heart Cakes, adds freshly made cupcakes to the store's display.

Sweet treats abound at Angel Heart Cakes

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyle Editor

Opening a bakery is no cakewalk. Just ask Chris Rivera and Debbie Umphreys. Since these Menlo Park moms launched Angel Heart Cakes bakery at Marsh Manor in Redwood City in February, they've been working "sometimes 12 hours a day, six days a week," says Debbie. "We do it all — bake, wash

floors, do the dishes." The hard work is paying off. Their luscious creations, featuring angel food cakes in many flavors, are now "must haves"

show. The bakery is making 1,500 cupcakes for a series of American Girl Doll teas in Los Altos in November.

Both Debbie and Chris had been part of the business world before founding Angel Heart Cakes two years ago. They had also devoted years to raising children and taking part in their school activities. Both women were ready to explore new business opportunities.

The Menlo Park moms say they were ready to explore new business opportunities.

for local events, including a recent foundation benefit at the Menlo Circus Club, and the Sacred Heart Schools fashion

raising children and taking part in their school activities. Both women were ready to explore new business opportunities.

Debbie was known for the angel food cakes she baked for friends, using a treasured family recipe. Since both women were talented cooks, baking cakes commercially seemed a promising idea.

In the beginning, they baked their cakes at Studio Cakes in Menlo Park. Now with their own space at Marsh Manor, they have expanded their offerings to include brownies (filled with Nutella, caramel, mint or peanut butter), pocket pies filled with seasonal fruit, dacquoise cakes (custom order), whipped cream puddings, scones, and caramel bars.



Freshly made chocolate chip cupcakes with vanilla butter cream on top.

See **CAKES**, page 6

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

California high-speed rail hit with legal setback

By Gennady Sheyner

Embarcadero Media

A coalition that includes Menlo Park, Atherton and Palo Alto scored a legal victory over the California High Speed Rail Authority on Nov. 10 when a Sacramento County Superior Court judge ruled that the state agency has to reopen and revise its environmental analysis of the controversial line.

The ruling by Judge Michael Kenny follows three years of litigation by the Midpeninsula cities and various nonprofit groups, which challenged the rail authority's selection of the Pacheco Pass as its preferred alignment for the San Francisco-to-Los Angeles line. Menlo Park and Atherton were also involved in an earlier lawsuit, which forced the rail authority to "decertify" and revise its program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The authority certified the document for the second

time in September 2010.

Judge Kenny's latest ruling means the rail authority now has to go back for more revisions — a process that could further extend the timeline for a project whose estimated price tag now stands at \$98.5 billion. He agreed with the petitioners' contention that the rail authority failed to sufficiently analyze the traffic impacts of the proposed line at Monterey Highway south of San Jose.

In its revised program-level EIR, the rail authority had shifted the rail line's proposed alignment to address Union Pacific Railroad's opposition to having high-speed rail in its right-of-way. The shift would require Monterey Highway south of San Jose to be narrowed. Judge Kenny found that the revised EIR "fails to adequately address the traffic impacts associated with the narrowing of the Monterey High-

way."

"The traffic impacts stem directly from the fundamental choice between the Pacheco Pass and Altamont Pass alignments connecting the Central Valley and Bay Area and are required to be addressed at the program level," the judge wrote.

Lawsuit from Menlo Park, Atherton, Palo Alto forces rail authority to revise environmental analysis

He also found that the rail authority did not include adequate analysis in the EIR of traffic impacts at streets along the Caltrain right-of-way.

The petitioners hailed the ruling as a major victory in their long legal battle against the rail authority.

"In rejecting the EIR, the Court has upheld the principle that significant project impacts cannot be swept under the rug for later con-

sideration, after the key decisions have already been made." Stuart Flashman, the lead counsel for the coalition, said in a statement.

At the same time, Judge Kenny sided with the rail authority on a number of key issues. He rejected the coalition's arguments that the rail authority had failed to

respond to public comments in the EIR and that it should have considered more alternatives. He

also found that the rail authority's analysis of design alternatives complies with state law.

The judge also declined to get involved in the dispute over the rail authority's ridership projections, which have been criticized by the Institute for Transportation Studies at UC Berkeley and by the Palo Alto-based watchdog group Californians Advocating Responsible Rail Design. Critics had argued that the rail authority's

consultant, Cambridge Systematics, used flawed methodology in calculating ridership projections.

The rail authority had argued that the dispute between ITS and Cambridge over ridership methodology is a "classic disagreement between the academician and the industry practitioner."

Judge Kenny upheld this position and wrote in the first of his two rulings Nov. 10 that Cambridge's approach is "supported by substantial evidence."

The judge ruled that these factors did not require the rail authority to re-circulate its program-level EIR — a voluminous document that describes the voter-approved project and analyzes various alignments. But he found that the rail authority should have analyzed in the document the traffic impact on streets near the Caltrain right-of-way. The rail authority was planning to conduct this analysis

See HSR, page 8

Pilots violate altitude limits, Portola Valley complains

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

AIRCRAFT NOISE

With thousands of inbound commercial flights a year now passing over parts of Woodside and Portola Valley, frustration with aircraft noise has boiled over concerning what appears to be routine violation of an agreed-upon 8,000-foot floor for planes destined for airports in San Francisco and Oakland.

The Portola Valley Town Council at its Wednesday, Nov. 9, meeting, gave its unanimous consent to send a letter of complaint to Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, who was instrumental in 2000 in arranging an agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration to establish the altitude limits.

Exhibit A for the council was a 10-page letter to the FAA by James E. Lyons, a resident of unincorporated Woodside along Skyline Boulevard at an elevation of 2,300 feet. Mr. Lyons cites evidence of a 13.5 percent increase in flights over his house in three years, more than 21,000 per year now, and aircraft that should be 8,000 feet above sea level averaging 6,712 feet, implying that there are also

flights below that average.

They can be disrupting. In 2009 and 2010, 244 incoming flights passed over Mr. Lyons' house between 4 and 5 a.m. at altitudes of less than 6,000 feet, he said. (The noise abatement office at the San Francisco International Airport provides altitudes for flights passing over an aircraft navigation beacon in Woodside, but only between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.)

The council's letter to Ms. Eshoo, drafted by outgoing Councilman Steve Toben, alleges 11 years of stonewalling during meetings of the SFO Community Roundtable in response to requests for altitude data on all flights. (The roundtable is affiliated with the noise abatement office.)

"They have essentially acted to shield the FAA from inquiries by citizens and cities affected by aircraft noise," Mr. Toben wrote to Ms. Eshoo.

Also cited is a recent San Mateo County grand jury report that found roundtable effective-

See NOISE, page 8



Screen capture by Michelle Le/The Almanac

The official website for the town of Woodside has the same name and the same address, but it's a different world with respect to ease of use and contemporary capabilities. The redesigned site went live Sept. 23 and cost the town about \$30,000.

Woodside's website is new, improved

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Green is a prominent color on the homepage of the redesigned website for the town of Woodside (at Woodsidetown.org), and

the color green is perhaps the one characteristic carried over from the previous website. But this green is light and bright and includes images of trees. On the old site, the green was dark, deep and flat and had a feel of the 1990s, when the

World Wide Web was new.

The redesigned website went live on Sept. 23 at a price of \$30,200 for a month's work by aHa! Consulting Inc. of Lake Oswego, Oregon, Assistant

See WEBSITE, page 8

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Menlo Park school foundation fundraising in high gear

Submitted by Allison Leupold and Theanne Thomson, co-presidents of the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation.

With state funding cut to a bare minimum this year, the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation is progressing with its annual campaign to help ensure that the Menlo Park City School District schools can continue to provide a quality education.

"It's well known that our schools cannot continue to rely on money from the state to stay strong," said Theanne Thomson, co-president of the foundation. "We are reaching out to our parents, local businesses and community members to supplement the funds no longer provided by the state and preserve our outstanding schools."

This year the state cut \$1.4 million from the district's planned budget.

To increase community awareness of the need for local funding, the education foundation joined forces with the four Parent Teacher Organizations at Encinal, Hillview, Laurel and Oak Knoll schools and launched the "Are You In" campaign. This campaign was designed to increase

awareness among district parents of the important role played by the education foundation and PTOs in our local schools.

PTOs fund school-specific activities, such as class supplies, field trips and family events. The foundation funds classroom teachers as well as certified teachers in music, art, elementary science and the libraries. Currently the foundation supports the salaries of 21 educators.

Another step undertaken by the foundation is the launch of a local business sponsor program. The education foundation's Business Development team, led by district parents Kathryn Rakow and Gloria Gavin, continues to expand its business supporters, including local businesses and Realtors.

The foundation has raised 30 percent, or \$1.2 million, toward its annual goal.

"The coming together of the entire community — families and businesses — to support the district is the only way that we can continue to offer the high quality of education that Menlo Park has become known for over the years," added Ms. Thomson. ■

Visit mpaef.org for more information on the foundation.

CAKES

continued from page 3

The bakery occupies 1,500 square feet of space in the newly-remodeled shopping center at 3760 Florence St. off Marsh Road in Redwood City. Five hundred feet is devoted to retail sales; the kitchen encompasses 1,000 square feet. The work space was designed by Chris Rivera's husband, Ed, a structural engineer.

The women are also renting kitchen space to local vendors who include:

■ Indelisa Montoro, a floral designer with a shop at Allied Arts Guild (Royal Bloom), who makes and sells "couture" jam at the bakery.

■ Brian Tedrun of Ladera, who just launched a new granola company, Ladera Granola.

■ Molly Drewes, who makes Organika, fresh pressed juices with kale, fruit and greens.

Now serving breakfast

Angel Heart Cakes is not only the place for an afternoon sweet. The bakery now serves breakfast "on-the-go" or on the outdoor patio from 7:30 to 11 a.m. Tuesdays through Fridays.

House-baked goodies include pocket pies, scones, and quick

bread. Other offerings include an egg dish with vegetables and cheese, and a classic strada. Granola, made with flax seed, almonds and cranberries, is served with yogurt. Coffee, tea, and Organika juices are also available.

The bakery shares retail space with Queen Bee ice cream, which features Marianne's Ice Cream from Santa Cruz. The ice cream business is owned by husband and wife team Ken and DeAndrea Aslund of Redwood City.

Angel Heart Cakes are also available at Bianchini's, Roberts of Woodside, and Signona's markets in Redwood City and Palo Alto.

Despite their long hours and hard work, Chris and Debbie are enthusiastic about their new venture and look forward to the holiday season when they promise some exciting new tastes as well as their popular peppermint cake made with flakes of peppermint candy. ■

Visit AngelHeartCakes.com for more information. The Angel Heart Cakes bakery, located at 3760 Florence St. in Redwood City, is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. It is closed on Sunday and Monday.

Judge dismisses suit over Lehman losses

■ Local school districts lost about \$4.6 million

A San Francisco judge has dismissed a lawsuit brought by 12 San Mateo County school districts against the county seeking to recover about \$20 million in losses due to the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers.

San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard Kramer on Thursday affirmed a tentative ruling that the county and former treasurer-tax collector Lee Buffington were immune from civil suits.

The school districts — including Menlo Park City, Las Lomas, Portola Valley, and Woodside — sued the county and now-retired

■ SCHOOLS

treasurer Lee Buffington in January for actions that led to the schools' losses.

Tom Proutzos, an attorney for the school districts, said they plan to appeal.

Of the local school districts, Menlo Park City lost the most by far — about \$4 million. The Las Lomas district lost nearly \$400,000; the Portola Valley district, almost \$150,000; and the Woodside district, almost \$100,000.

The county treasurer's office is in charge of funds that school districts are required to put in an investment

pool. The lawsuit alleged the treasurer invested an "imprudent portion" of the funds in Lehman, and kept them there "after learning of deterioration in the finances, credit rating, and stock price of Lehman."

Overall, the Lehman bankruptcy led to \$155 million in losses for the county and other agencies participating in the investment pool. But most of those agencies are not required to participate, unlike school districts. The treasurer's office charges "substantial fees" to manage the money, according to Anne Campbell, superintendent of the county Office of Education.

City's business development manager resigns

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

"It's time to move on," said Dave Johnson, Menlo Park's first business development manager, who announced that his last day on the job will be Dec. 2 after spending eight years working for the city.

In an Almanac interview, he explained that the timing is good, since the city recently completed several major projects and Interim City Manager Glen Rojas is also leaving.

Mr. Johnson doesn't have another position lined up, but is taking time off to figure out what he wants to do next, either in the public or private sector. He said he won't be leaving Menlo Park.

"It's been a very rewarding job for me. I feel I am valued at

■ MENLO PARK

the city. And it's not easy to disengage and move on. It takes courage to do this kind of thing without a safe spot to land," he said.

His time in office included developing the city's business development strategic plan and attracting and retaining numerous firms to Menlo Park, such as the Rosewood Sand Hill Hotel and Spa, Marriott Hotel in the Menlo Gateway project, Facebook, Ace Hardware, Amici's, Pendleton, and more.

Along with those high points, there must have been some low points, but Mr. Johnson couldn't



Dave Johnson

readily remember any, besides seeing other colleagues leave. "I'm not a person who focuses on the low points," he admitted. "I'm such a positive person, and I really meant what I said about the privilege of public service."

He described Mr. Rojas's departure as a "strong motivating force," and said that, along with his own resignation, gives incoming city administrators a clean slate to make changes.

Mr. Rojas said in a press release that he'll evaluate options for maintaining an aggressive business development program.

"Dave will be hard to replace. There are few individuals in the economic development community with Dave's private sector experience and his ability to understand and support the needs of the City's business community," Mr. Rojas said in the statement. ■

Running Flood Park could be expensive

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

When San Mateo County asked Menlo Park to take over Flood Park in hopes of saving the park from closure, the city decided to do its homework before saying yes.

Now it looks like running the 21-acre park on Bay Road could cost the city \$595,000 a year, nearly three times as much as the county paid for maintenance, according to a city staff report. In addition, there could be up to \$20 million in one-time costs for renovations such as adding a drainage system to the

parking lot.

The report attributes the higher costs in part to a projected increase in park use and the need to maintain it at the same level as other city parks.

The park closed to let the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission install a water pipeline. But faced with a demand to cut 10 percent from the county's operating budget, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors at first recommended permanently shutting the park down.

The board then reversed course, and approved enough funding to keep the park open until March 2012.

The Menlo Park Parks and Recreation Commission will consider the staff report at a special meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 16.

City staff is asking the parks commission to consider: whether the city truly needs more open space. If it does, where should the money come from? Can the new nonprofit, the Friends of Flood Park, help?

The City Council will then hold a study session on Dec. 13 to review the options.

The Parks and Recreation Commission meets at 6:30 p.m. in the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center at 700 Alma St. in the Menlo Park Civic Center.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



Why have insurance if you can't use it?

Dear Gloria, I have just had damage from a dishwasher overflowing, ruining not only the hardwood floors in the kitchen but going thru to the finished basement. My realtor has advised against filing an insurance claim since we are going to put our house on the market in December. What is insurance for if we can't use it?

Dana B.

Dear Dana, Many homeowners are unaware that if they make three claims in a 3-5 year period they may not be able to get homeowner's insurance. Some insurance companies are keeping track of the claims filed by the property address and others are keeping track of claims by the owner's name. Here is how this could impact you. Say that one year you had a roof leak and you filed an insurance claim to get the roof repaired. The next year, you have a water heater that gives out and there is sufficient damage that you make an insurance claim. The third year, you have a toilet leak that has leaked for a while before you notice that your hardwood floors

are warped and there is damage to the ceiling in the room below the toilet. Again you file an insurance claim. Now you want to sell your home and you have a buyer who would like to buy your home. Your new buyer could be denied homeowner's insurance completely, or they may have to pay a substantial premium for their insurance because of your claims. Other companies might deny you coverage on your new home, because of the number of claims that you have filed. SO before you file a claim, think about the possible consequences. We have done this with automobile insurance for a long time, now we have to think about homeowner's insurance the same way. If you have any questions about how your insurance company operates, call them. You might be careful about that too, because we are told that some companies keep track of calls of inquiry, even though they are not supposed to. Perhaps you would want to ask hypothetical questions, such as, "I am just checking on my coverage, would I be covered if..."

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California high-speed rail hit with legal setback

HSR

continued from page 5

later, in the “project-level EIRs” — environmental documents that focus on individual segments and that include a greater level of specificity and engineering detail.

Judge Kenny wrote in his second ruling that this analysis should be conducted in the broader document because it is pertinent to the selection of the Pacheco Pass alternative. He wrote that the “loss of traffic lanes as a result of placement of the high-speed-rail right-of-way is more than just a design element appropriately handled in a second-tier project-level analysis.”

“Instead, it appears that the permanent loss of traffic lanes is a direct consequence of the physical placement of the high-speed rail right-of-way in the Pacheco Pass alternative and, consequently, must be analyzed in the context of Respondent’s programmatic EIR.”

Given the split ruling, both sides in the lawsuit issued statements celebrating victory. While the

coalition touted the court’s decision to force the rail authority to once again revise its program-level EIR, the rail authority emphasized the court’s validation of its ridership model and its response to public comments.

“The two biggest issues in these lawsuits were ridership and route alternatives, and the Court ruled in our favor on both issues,” Thomas Umberg, who chairs the rail authority’s board of directors, said in a statement.

Members of the coalition, meanwhile, celebrated the ruling for requiring the rail authority to once again revise the document that selects the Pacheco Pass. They have argued that the Altamont Pass in the East Bay is a more viable alternative and that the rail authority used faulty ridership projections in choosing Pacheco.

Richard Tolmach, president of the California Rail Foundation, said, “Twice in a row, the Authority ignored the requirements of environmental law.” ■

Go to tinyurl.com/HSR-193 for links to the two rulings.

WEBSITE

continued from page 5

Town Manager Kevin Bryant said in response to emailed questions. This consultant has designed websites for cities and towns throughout the United States, according to its proposal, and was chosen by an ad hoc town subcommittee from among 21 proposals received.

In settling on a design, the aHa! representatives met once with Town Council members Dave Burow and Deborah Gordon and community members Millo Fenzi and Perry Vartanian, and followed up with two web conferences, Mr. Bryant said.

The project came in under budget. The council in May had authorized spending up to \$32,500.

The new site’s content is under the control of town staff, meaning that experts will not be needed to update it. Where experts will be needed — to add, modify or repair features of the site — the program that runs it is open-source code in common use. Open source code is not proprietary to a single company and if the town needs maintenance help, the code’s popularity will likely mean a large community of developers in and around Silicon Valley will be available to work on it.

For the present, the town has

a maintenance agreement with aHa!, Mr. Bryant said.

Easy to use

Links on the site advertise their status in contemporary fashion, cleanly and without visual or navigational complications. A continuously updated chronology helps you figure out where you are and how to retrace your steps.

Links are organized according to your purpose for being at the website: as a resident, as someone with a business in town, as someone with business at Town Hall, or as a visitor. The “How Do I” section has guidance for everyone.

The home page is important as the only place for three particular sets of links: news, the town’s official calendar, and a few commonly used official business portals.

The homepage is always accessible by clicking on the name of the town on the top left of the page.

Staying informed

A new feature on the site will make it easier for residents to sign up for email notification of announcements from several town functions, including town administration, building, planning, public works, emergency services, as well as the Town Council and the volunteer committees that advise the council.



A future Town Center in Atherton?

This view of a new Atherton Town Center building, looking through the entry, was designed by two architectural firms — Siegel & Strain Architects and Goring & Straja — that recently submitted conceptual designs for a possible new Town Center in Atherton.

■ Visit www.ci.Atherton.ca.us to go to the Atherton home page. To see more conceptual designs, see links under “Town Center Task Force” including “Concept Designs Presentations.”

■ The firms’ conceptual designs are expected to be on view in the City Council Chambers from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, through Dec. 14. The council chambers are on Ashfield Road near Dinkelspiel Station Lane in Atherton.

Menlo Park author’s work in anthology benefiting refugees

Jeanne DuPrau of Menlo Park is one of 18 well-known authors whose work appears in “What You Wish For,” a new collection of stories and poems for ages 12 and up.

The book was published by Penguin/G.P. Putnam’s Sons, and 100 percent of its proceeds will be donated to the United Nations Refugee Agency to fund libraries in Darfur refugee camps.

The charity organization, the Book Wish Foundation, has orga-

nized the book, which features an all-star roster including bestselling authors R.L. Stine (“Goosebumps”), Ann M. Martin (“The Baby-sitters Club”), and Alexander McCall Smith (The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency). The roster also includes Newbery medalists Karen Hesse (“Out of the Dust”), and Cynthia Voigt (“Dicey’s Song”).

The authors’ contributions explore the theme of wishes in the context of friendship, love, family,

bullying and other topics teens care about, according to a press release.

Jeanne DuPrau is best known for her Ember series, which recounts the adventures of two children in a fictional underground city after a catastrophic event alters life on Earth. The first book in the series, “The City of Ember,” was made into a movie in 2008.

“What You Wish For,” in hardcover (\$17.99), is available at Kepler’s bookstore in Menlo Park.

NOISE

continued from page 5

ness “diminishing.” Recommendations included chairing the roundtable with elected officials and providing data on individual violations of noise regulations as opposed to averages.

The notifications are available on daily, weekly and monthly schedules and in several formats, including blogs, web pages and alerts.

Also available are notices when agendas are published for meetings of the three principal town bodies — the Town Council, the Planning Commission, and the Architectural and Site Review Board. ■

■ INFORMATION

Go to Woodsidetown.org to see the new website.

The grand jury focused on noise from SFO takeoffs affecting North County communities. The word “departure” occurs 19 times in the six-page report. The word “arrival” is absent, as are “Portola Valley” and “Woodside.”

The letter to Ms. Eshoo includes nine detailed questions. Among the concerns: flight paths over the southern part of the county; why altitude restrictions apply only to flights originating from the west; a “traffic permitting” dispensation from the 8,000-foot floor; and a request for FAA data on non-conforming flights.

The FAA’s Western regional administrator, William C. Withycombe, responding to Mr. Lyons in a Nov. 4 letter, called the airspace around the navigational beacon “one of the most congested in the nation.”

“There are no simple solutions to this complex issue,” Mr. Withycombe wrote. “The burden of aircraft noise must be shared by all members of the community.”

“We are committed to reducing noise, but it is not an acceptable environmental practice to move flight tracks from one community to another for the sole purpose of shifting noise away from the old community onto the new community,” he added.

Using an “optimum configuration,” flight paths with lower altitudes reduce engine operating hours, fuel consumption and emissions and, studies show, produce lower noise levels, Mr. Withycombe said.

Councilman Toben, asked to comment, noted that the FAA did not address Mr. Lyons’ chief complaint — the violation of the 8,000-foot rule — and did address a point Mr. Lyons did not make: that noise be shifted to another community.

Go to tinyurl.com/Noise-SFO for a PDF copy of the grand jury report.

Go to tinyurl.com/Noise-SFO-PV and turn to Page 115 for Mr. Lyons’ letter, followed by the letter to Ms. Eshoo. ■

Charter school would focus on jobs

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

If you're lucky, as a teen you take a job or an internship that becomes an instructive watershed moment. You think you like baking, so you intern in a bakery and have to show up every day at 3 a.m. When it's over, you reflect: "I may not know yet what I want to do in life, but I know now that college is important, and that I don't want to be a baker."

Or you could find your heart's content and fall in love with the exotic hours, the scents, the experimentation, knowing that people look forward every day to what you create.

Around such experiences — trying a job, finding that you love it (or don't), and learning that doing any job well can be a tough proposition — has a school curriculum been built. About 30 people attended a Nov. 10 presentation/fundraiser in Atherton's Holbrook Palmer Pavilion for a new charter high school in the Sequoia Union High School District.

The charter would be modeled on Big Picture Learning, a network of some 100 charter high schools, with headquarters in Rhode Island and San Diego and offices in the Netherlands and Australia. Academic classes are a part of the program, but a principle focus is discovering what really interests students and crafting paths toward futures, whether academic or career-oriented.

If this school, tentatively called Sequoia Big Picture High

School, is chartered and finds a home, ideally in Redwood City, the first year would comprise two classes of around 50 students each, eventually building to maybe 300 students, backers have said. The first priority is finding a principal, said steering committee member Charlene Margot.

Also on the committee are former Sequoia district board member Sally Stewart of Portola Valley, and education activist Karen Canty of Atherton. Former Sequoia Superintendent Pat Gemma is an occasional

The charter would be modeled on Big Picture Learning, a network of some 100 charter high schools.

adviser, he said by phone.

The school would seek seventh- and eighth-graders who are disengaged and considered candidates for not graduating high school, Ms. Margot said. In other words, kids who don't swallow the idea of school hook, line and sinker? "Exactly," she said. "Square pegs in a round-hole pegboard. They're kids who don't fit the current model."

The curriculum would not exclude regular classes but does require internships driven by student initiative, with the help of advisers. One Big Picture graduate recently started at the University of Oxford after an internship with a University of California at Berkeley professor that grew out of the student's interest in mollusks, Big Picture co-founder Elliot Washor said in an interview.

The key is learning how to learn: by reading, by trial and error, and by asking for help, Mr. Washor said. A student may not need trigonometry, but it's important that she know how to get it, he said. Oral-exam-like sessions are not uncommon. "We look at each and every student probably more carefully than anybody else has done," Mr. Washor said.

He related the story of a Big Picture school in Camden, New Jersey, where, he said, the graduation rate in 2008 was 13 percent. The charter graduated 77 percent of its students in 2009 and 83 percent in 2010, he said.

"We get the same results in all the places that we're in," he added. "If it's hard, that's where we go. We're not looking for easy."

The key to a successful life is knowing how to advocate for yourself, Ms. Margot told the audience. "If you have a school that shows kids how to do that, you've got something."

Ms. Margot told the Almanac that steering committee members talked about the concepts behind this school with teachers in the Menlo Park and Las Lomas elementary school districts. "They all said, 'We have kids that need this school,'" she said.

"We're doing something that's beyond just getting somebody a diploma," Mr. Washor told the audience. "The crime of school is not that you get an F and don't know (the material). It's that you get an A and don't know it. This is a big deal." ▀

Drive-by shooting on Sunday wounds two in Menlo Park

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Gunfire shattered a quiet Sunday morning in Menlo Park along Sevier Avenue around 10 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 13.

Police said they arrived within one minute of a 911 call to find two people shot after a light-colored, older sedan cruised the

street carrying a passenger firing 40-caliber bullets. The car fled southbound on Ivy Drive.

One victim, an 18-year-old man, had multiple gunshot wounds and investigators believe he was the primary target, according to Sgt. Matthew Ortega.

A 50-year-old woman was also shot once as she got out of

her car at the corner of Sevier Avenue and Newbridge Street. "She was in the wrong place at the wrong time," Sgt. Ortega said.

Both victims are recovering after receiving medical care.

Investigators continue to piece together possible motivations for the shooting. No description of the shooter was available yet. ▀

Bill Harris wins state library award

Bill Harris of Menlo Park has been recognized by the California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners for his service as a board member of the Friends of the Menlo Park Library since 1987. He has been president of the

board for 19 years.

"Bill has been and continues to be 'the face' of this organization, which is proud of his service and excited about the state recognition," says Friends spokesman Tim Goode.

Mr. Harris received his award Nov. 12 at the CALTAC awards luncheon at the California Library Association conference in Pasadena.



Bill Harris

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Photo: Marc Silber

Council weighs new contract for Menlo Park employees

Judging by the flood of emails protesting the amount of time off in the proposed two-year contract for the 35 city employees represented by the American Federation of State, City, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union, the Nov. 15 meeting of the Menlo Park City Council could see some spirited public engagement.

The council is expected to vote on the contract Tuesday night. The contract doesn't increase paid time off, but drew fire for how much employees currently get, with a minimum seven weeks. The contract institutes a two-tier pension structure for new hires, freezes pay, a cap on city contributions to health

BRIEFS

plans, and increased pension contributions by employees.

The regular meeting starts at 7 p.m. in council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St. The council will convene an hour earlier for a closed session to discuss selling land on Terminal Avenue to Beechwood School.

Go to tinyurl.com/3t8vese to review the staff report on the union contract.

Openings on Caltrain bike committee

Caltrain needs four volunteers

for its bicycle advisory committee — a public agency staff member representing the City and County of San Francisco; a public agency staff member representing San Mateo County; a representative of a San Mateo County bike advocacy organization; and a representative of the Santa Clara County general public.

The committee meets every other month at 6:45 p.m. in San Carlos, according to Caltrain. Members are selected by the Staff Coordinating Council of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, which includes representatives from three local transit agencies.

Go to tinyurl.com/7nxrp59 to download the application, which is due by Monday, Nov. 21. Call 650-508-6223 for more information.

Pop Warner football: M-A Vikings advance to semifinals

Championship Pop Warner football frenzy continues to heat up for the Menlo-Atherton Vikings, as the local PeeWee squad prepares for the Pacific Northwest semifinals on Saturday, Nov. 19.

Visit mapopwarner.com for the time and site, which have still to be determined by Pop Warner officials.

The undefeated Vikings PeeWees (11 and 12-year-olds) advanced to the regional championship on Saturday, Nov. 12, with a 26-6 victory in San Jose over the Redwood City Junior 49ers for the Peninsula Conference title.

In an earlier game, the Vikings

SPORTS

Junior PeeWees dropped a 39-8 verdict to their Redwood City counterparts.

Coach Steve Stenstrom had his Vikings PeeWees at full throttle against Redwood City, jumping out to a 6-0 lead on a Blake Stenstrom-Lucas Andrighetto pass. Stenstrom hit Tate Tussing with a 10-yard scoring toss, and Jack Devine dashed 48 yards with an attempted onside kick for a third touchdown. Stenstrom's 5-yard run capped the scoring, augmented by Devine's 2-point conversion kick.

The coach lauded his offensive line for a powerful effort, and

commended Andrighetto for key plays and safety Keyshawn Ashford for critical performances.

For the Junior PeeWees, quarterback Andres Atkins' scoring run was the highlight, as Coach Harold Atkins' team found the going tough after a promising start. Despite Saturday's result, "it was a great season," Atkins said. "The coaching staff is really proud of this squad."

A possible consolation game is in the works for the Junior PeeWees this weekend, with confirmation available on the Vikings website.

— Jim Gallagher, Vikings Boosters

Jennifer Jones honored by DealMakers

Jennifer Jones & Partners of Woodside, a marketing communications firm providing branding, positioning and strategic counsel for venture capital and private equity firms, has been named the best communications firm in venture capital and private equity in North America by DealMakers Monthly magazine.

DealMakers Monthly, based in Essex, England, annually awards firms that have displayed a high degree of quality, tenacity and strategic ability in venture capital, private equity, banking and finance. Winners were selected via a readership survey of 81,500 individuals and businesses that

PEOPLE

subscribe to the magazine.

Jennifer Jones & Partners, founded in 1989, has worked with 25 firms, including Menlo Ventures, Mayfield Fund, Goldman Sachs, Scale Venture Partners, and Versant Ventures.

Visit jenniferjones.com for more information about the firm.

Graduate

Maxwell S. DeCurtins of Menlo Park recently graduated from Boston University with a master's degree in musicology.

Thankful
what are you thankful for this year?

Take some time to be thankful this year. Join us for a special Thanksgiving Eve service on Wednesday, November 23 @ 7 p.m.

Menlo Park Presbyterian Church
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Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Seeking Solutions to Peaceful Sleep Sometimes Leads to Special Surgery

For as long as he could remember, Christian Roth needed a very long time to fall asleep. “You learn to adapt,” he said. “I thought I was wired this way and I felt pretty powerless.”

He tried all sorts of approaches: no caffeine after 3 pm, no electronics use within an hour of bedtime, over the counter sleep aids, candles and lavender, hot baths, even a pre-sleep shot of whiskey.

Even when he was able to get some sleep, he said “I never felt refreshed, I really had to pace myself at work, and if I wanted to go out at night with friends, I’d have to take a nap in the afternoon.”

Going to sleep became something he dreaded, “and nighttime was the longest part of my day,” he said.

The rest of his life was good: He met his wife, Liza, in college. They’d married and almost three years ago, their daughter, Emily, was born. Roth’s insomnia and lack of sleep was a challenge. “During the day, he’d be in this fog,” Liza said. “It became harder and harder for him to fall asleep.” He’d put on some weight over the years and, unusual for someone his age, developed high blood pressure. The snoring his wife had learned to tolerate, despite its progressive worsening, evolved into something else, something frightening. “He’d stop breathing,” she said. “There’d be loud snoring then all of a

sudden just nothing. Then there would be a big burst of air, like he’d been holding his breath. It didn’t dawn on me he had sleep apnea. He was a pretty active guy—a non-drinker and a non-smoker.”

“I really had to pace myself at work...and nighttime was the longest part of my day.”

— Christian Roth, patient,
Stanford Sleep Medicine Center

Hearing about that breathing stop and subsequent gasp for air pushed Roth to call a doctor. “That’s when I took it seriously, and the dominoes started to fall.” He went to Stanford’s Sleep Medicine Center in Redwood City, just a few miles from his home and the nation’s first medical clinic established to specialize in sleep disorders.

Remarkable revelation

After describing his symptoms to physicians there, he was asked to spend a night in one of its state-of-the-art bedrooms so a more detailed and technical picture of his sleep health could be built, in part through dozens of electrodes attached to his body. The results were striking: Roth was demonstrating the kind of obstructive sleep apnea more typically seen in someone 50 years his senior. His Sleep Center physician, Robson Capasso, MD, board certified in sleep medicine and an otolaryngology surgeon, had found a long list of physical impediments that stacked the odds against Roth ever drawing a fully-functional breath.

His tonsils were obstructively large, his palate was too soft and his septum—the wall that separates one nostril from another—was deviated far beyond normal. His tongue was set far back in his mouth; his jaw was also set back in a way that narrowed his airway. Any one of those conditions would have been a significant barrier to the flow of air in and out of Roth’s nose and mouth. His physiology was a veritable basket of

bad news that added up to a case of severe sleep apnea whose effects had already reached beyond just feeling sleepy.

Roth’s problems with sleep made him one of many millions. Capasso said that one in four middle-aged men suffer from some form of sleep apnea—those moments when our breathing either pauses or becomes shallow, limiting the amount of oxygen coming into the body. That normal out-with-carbon-dioxide and in-with-oxygen balance is disrupted, with serious consequences. The brain needs oxygen to function and an excess of carbon dioxide in the blood derails the respiratory center in the brain. The struggle inside the body to reset itself includes the heart, whose regular rhythm is then altered, triggering another set of physical changes.

“The first night he was home after the surgery, I almost couldn’t sleep because it was so quiet in the room.”

— Liza Roth, wife of Christian Roth, patient
at Stanford Sleep Medicine Center

“Having sleep apnea diagnosed and treated is very important,” said Clete Kushida, MD, PhD, Medical Director, Stanford Sleep Medicine Center and Director, Stanford University Center for Human Sleep Research. “It can have profound impacts on the cardiovascular system. There is also evidence that people can have problems with brain function.”

Typically, the first step in treatment is the CPAP machine—a continuous

positive airway pressure pump that gently pushes air into the now and down the airway to prevent it from collapsing.

Finding a solution

Surgery is not what Capasso suggests as a first option for his typical patient. “Surgery comes with its own side effects and results are not completely predictable,” he said. If someone can learn to use the CPAP machine, that can be the easiest solution. For others, their sleep apnea may be caused by their weight; Stanford has a 12-week weight loss program Capasso suggests to patients.



Norbert von der Groeben

From the time Christian Roth was an infant, he had trouble sleeping. By the time he reached his 30s, his sleep problems had begun to affect his health and almost every other aspect of his life



Norbert von der Groeben

Roth’s wife, Liza, had become accustomed to her husband’s snoring, but when she noticed he’d begun to stop breathing, as if he were holding his breath, she was alarmed.



Norbert von der Groeben

Before Roth’s sleep surgery, he created a complicated strategy for sleeping and for managing his energy so he’d have enough at the end of the day to do things with his daughter, Emily.

Uncovering Sleep's Mysteries

For many of us, sleep is often elusive in quality or quantity. Understanding some of its complexities can be the first step toward a more peaceful relationship with this important component of life.

What is sleep apnea?

- Snoring is usually the first sign of sleep apnea. The noise of a snore is made most often when breathing in, which vibrates the soft palate and the uvula, the small piece of tissue that hangs down at the back of the throat. When an obstruction completely blocks airflow, which can last for several seconds, the sleeper will struggle to take a breath, snorting and gasping.
- If the snoring is loud enough to wake another person, then sleep apnea is likely to be present as well. The irregular breathing prevents a restorative night of sleep, which causes sleep deprivation and may lead to daytime sleepiness, difficulty with memory, concentration and attention. Sleep apnea is now considered the leading treatable cause of hypertension. It is also a risk factor or causative agent of stroke and heart disease.

Are you at risk for sleep apnea?

Your risk for sleep apnea is higher if you are male, more than 50 years old and have a body mass index greater than 28.

Watch the new Stanford Hospital Health Notes television show on Comcast: channel 28 on Mondays at 8:30 p.m., Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. and Fridays at 8:30 a.m.; channel 30 Saturdays at 10:30 p.m. It can also be viewed at youtube.com/stanfordhospital.

Should you see a doctor?

The Epworth Sleepiness Scale can help gauge your sleep health. If you score 10 or more on this test, then your sleep health definitely needs attention. You may want to consider talking with your doctor or a sleep specialist.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 0 = would never doze or sleep. | 2 = moderate chance of dozing or sleeping |
| 1 = slight chance of dozing or sleeping | 3 = high chance of dozing or sleeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watching TV | <input type="checkbox"/> Sitting and talking to someone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sitting inactive in a public place | <input type="checkbox"/> Sitting quietly after lunch (no alcohol) |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Lying down in the afternoon | <input type="checkbox"/> while driving |

For more information about sleep diagnosis, treatment and research at Stanford, phone **650.723.6601** or visit stanfordhospital.org/sleep.

Join us at stanfordhospital.org/socialmedia.

However, if someone young and not substantially overweight has sleep apnea caused by physical abnormalities, and that person has tried and failed with the CPAP, the surgery becomes a more sensible possibility, in some cases even the initial treatment approach.

Capasso straightened Roth's septum, removed his tonsils and reorganized his soft palate tissue. The results were even better than Capasso thought they would be. "The first night he was home after the surgery," Lisa said, "I almost couldn't sleep because it was so quiet in the room. I just kept staring at him to see if he was still breathing."



Norbert von der Groeben

Since Roth had surgery to correct some of the physical abnormalities that interfered with his ability to sleep, he can work a full day, without naps, and come home ready and able to be an active dad.

can run and bike and play volleyball—it's like night and day."

Roth's investigation into his sleep problems prompted his brother to do the same, and physicians found that his four-year-old was already suffering from apnea. He has been treated.

Apnea does have a strong genetic component, but it goes beyond the obvious skull and airway features, Capasso said. "There are researchers here at Stanford who are looking at the genetic role in how you control the muscle strength in your upper airway, to keep it open while you sleep, and how your brain responds to variations in oxygen and carbon dioxide. The whole mechanism of obstructive sleep apnea is very complex."

Researchers are also working on a way to capture sleep on an MRI video. "It's under investigation, but we've had some interesting results," Capasso said.

Innovations in the works

CPAP machines are continually developing, becoming smaller and lighter and more comfortable. Beyond that treatment method, however, are new ideas that give Capasso and his Sleep Center colleagues great hopes for very different options. Stanford is part of a multi-center randomized controlled trial to test a nerve stimulator that would act as a pacemaker for the nerve of the tongue. The device pushes the tongue forward to instigate breathing if it senses that a patient is not breathing well during sleep. The pacemaker would be implanted in the chest, with one silicon wire going up to a nerve in the neck and the other to the rib cage. "We are very excited about that technology," Capasso said.

The best future for the treatment of sleep apnea will be those new technologies combined with methods to better evaluate what treatment will work best for an individual patient, Ca-

passo said. "The important thing is to have all possibilities available."

Roth still marvels at his own history with sleep. "It's amazing how many things are tied to it—so many symptoms just all went away after my surgery." He'd done what so many do—learned to live with it—"until I realized it was life-threatening," he said.

"When Christian mentioned sleep apnea, I looked it up on the Web and read about it and it mentioned all the different health effects," Liza said. "It was an 'aha!' moment."



Norbert von der Groeben

Christian, Liza, Emily and Pismo are a much happier family now than they've ever been; sleep surgery not only enabled Christian to get enough sleep, but he no longer has high blood pressure, he's lost weight and he's able to lead a full life without hindrance.

Stanford Hospital & Clinics is known worldwide for advanced treatment of complex disorders in areas such as cardiovascular care, cancer treatment, neurosciences, surgery, and organ transplants. It is currently ranked No. 17 on the U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Hospitals" list and No. 1 in the San Jose Metropolitan area. Stanford Hospital & Clinics is internationally recognized for translating medical breakthroughs into the care of patients. The Stanford University Medical Center is comprised of three world renowned institutions: Stanford Hospital & Clinics, the Stanford University School of Medicine, the oldest medical school in the Western United States, and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, an adjacent pediatric teaching hospital providing general acute and tertiary care. For more information, visit <http://stanfordhospital.org/>.

Fire board sees new faces; incumbent voted out

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

As mail-in ballots were counted, a razor-thin margin separated the two top vote-getters in the election for two open seats on the Menlo Park Fire Protection District Board of Directors. The district includes Atherton, East Palo Alto and unincorporated areas, as well as Menlo Park.

Voter turnout was low this year. According to the county, 6,959 ballots were cast, out of 36,625 eligible voters, meaning only 19 percent of those who could exercised their right to vote in the fire district election.

Unofficial results show community activist Virginia Chang Kiraly with 2,862 votes and national security expert Rob

Silano with 2,837 votes. Both candidates received union endorsements despite supporting pension reform, as well as backing from local elected officials.

Vote totals for the other candidates as of the Nov. 10 update showed Bart Spencer with 2,639; Scott Barnum, 1,578; and Steven P. Kennedy, 901. The remaining ballots are unlikely to change the outcome; the final count is due at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 17, according to the San Mateo County Elections Office.

Ms. Kiraly hesitated to say she'd won with votes still waiting to be counted. In a campaign where most candidates emphasized financial sustainability and pension reform, she attributed the strong showing to her community activism, which



highlighted the issue of school fire alarms not being connected to the fire district.

"I think that really resonated with everybody," she said. "I'm hoping to bring more visibility to the issue, particularly with portable classrooms."

Another factor may have been her gender — Ms. Kiraly will be only the second woman to serve on the board, something she said people mentioned as a reason to vote for her.

Her fellow candidate-elect wasted no time in proclaiming victory. "Of course I'm very pleased that voters have selected me," Mr. Silano said. "I congrat-



Virginia Chang Kiraly and Rob Silano won election to the board.

ulate Virginia Kiraly and look forward to tackling the district's problems in a constructive fashion."

Incumbent Bart Spencer will lose the seat he's held for 12 years on the board if the remaining ballots don't change the outcome. "Until the votes are counted, I'm proud of being able to give the community 12 years of service. I really have an affinity for the fire service and what

they do, and I'm pleased to be able to contribute," he said.

He commented that campaign spending was a factor. "It comes down to how much money you want to spend on a local election, what one feels is an appropriate amount to spend versus the amount of return. When you're spending more than \$40,000 or \$50,000 on a local election, is that an appropriate amount? It's just a question each individual person has to ask."

Mr. Spencer estimated he spent between \$6,000 and \$7,000 on his campaign. Ms. Kiraly said she'd spent roughly \$12,000.

Scott Barnum, a businessman and disaster-preparedness volunteer, had 1,578 votes as of the latest count on Nov. 10. "My platform was the independent and frugal platform, and a personal predilection, rightly or wrongly, for trying to do it the old-fashioned way where you don't have to spend your way to victory," Mr. Barnum said.

He congratulated the winners and said the district was fortunate to have a variety of candidates, compared to uncontested races.

Steve Kennedy, who had a higher profile but a checkered history during a previous term on the board, got 901 votes (8.3 percent). "I finished dead last in a field of five candidates. There's no way to sugar coat that news," he wrote in an email to the Almanac. "I knew that I'd have no chance to win when I didn't get the endorsement of labor. But I badly overestimated the willingness of my union brothers to cross a picket line and work for me on the side. I didn't get the endorsement of labor because I was perceived as being anti-semitic."

Measure F, which allows the fire district to spend up to \$40 million over four years in tax revenues it already collects, was approved by 76.7 percent of the voters, 4,986 to 1,511. The measure does not rack up new taxes or costs, but was necessary due to a state law known as the "Gann limit" that effectively caps appropriations for operational expenditures. The current cap of \$40 million was approved in 2007, but set to expire at the end of this year. ■

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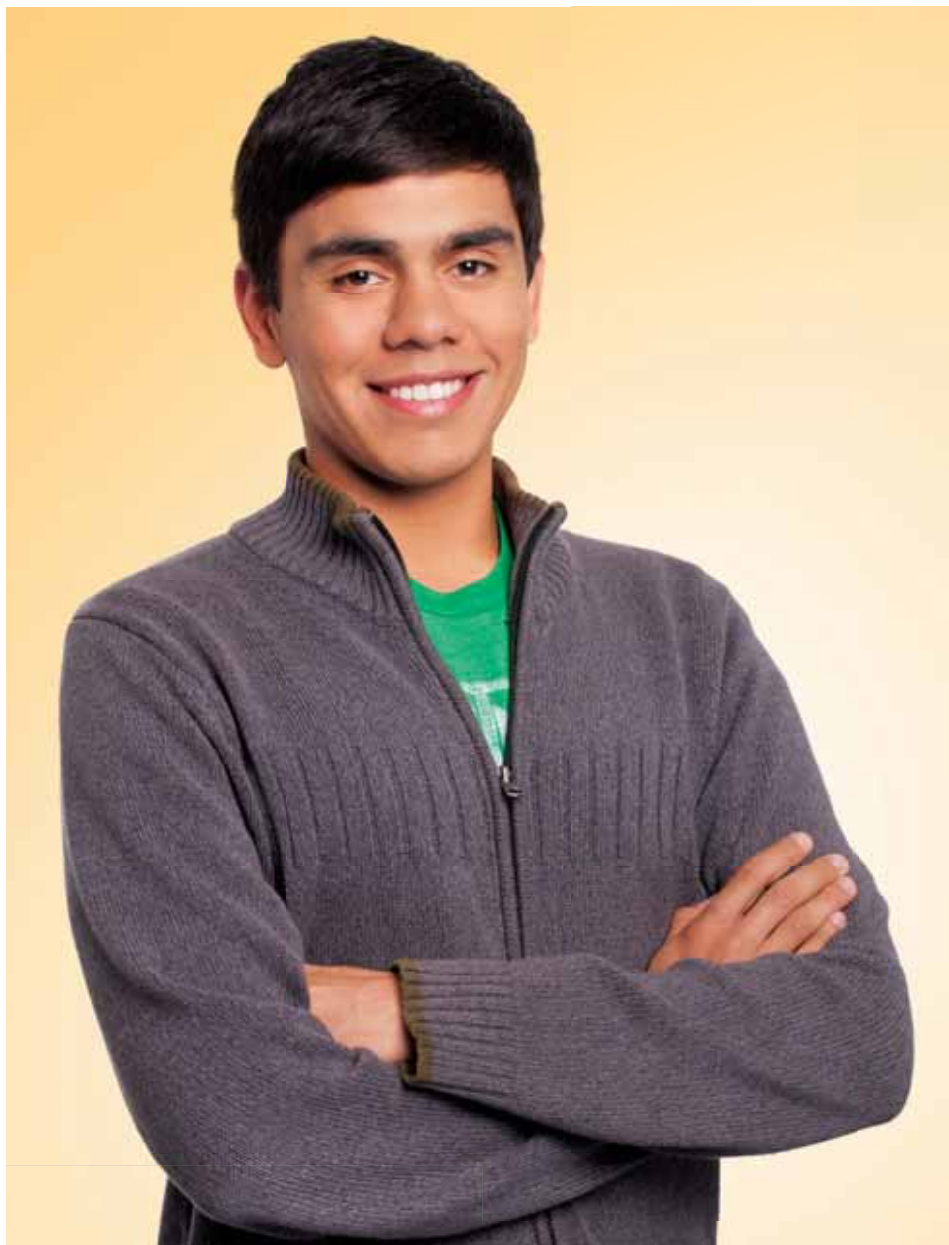
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Suzi McCloskey

1945-2011

Mountain Girl

Suzi McCloskey aka Suzanne Lewis, a 28 year resident of Woodside passed away at home surrounded by family and friends on Wednesday, 19 October, 2011. She battled cancer off and on for the past 6 years. She was born in Alameda, Ca and attended various schools in Southern California. She raised her daughter Dina in San Jose, Ca. by herself after her first marriage ended. She worked at Shappell homes and during this time, approximately 1980, she met her future husband Jack McCloskey. They worked together at Pim Electric in Alameda and Foster City and bought their home in Woodside in 1984. In 1988 when Jack formed McCloskey Electric, she got her license and went to work at Skywood Realty in SkyLonda which some time later became ReMax. She specialized in mountain properties and loved showing off the mountain to her clients. She retired in 2004 when the effects of "chemo brain" as she called it, no longer allowed her to do real estate transactions as she felt was necessary. She loved to

travel with many trips to Cabo, Costa Rica, The Inland Passage in Alaska, Jackson Hole, Florence, Venice and Tuscany, Italy. Just before her passing she and her husband with Jack's brother Larry and wife, Lynn, finished a tour of Ireland and then over to Paris.

She is survived by her daughter Dina and husband Jack along with the loves of her life, granddaughters Jaymes and Reese; also by husband, Jack, his son John and daughter Kim and their children, Samantha, Nick, Brendon, Jeremy and by her sister Laurie and brother Jim.

She will always be remembered for being one of the kindest, warmest people and a wonderful person. She had a huge smile for all. A celebration of her life will be held at The Mountain Terrace in SkyLonda on 19 November, 2011.



PAID OBITUARY

Newcomers win election to Woodside school board

By Barbara Wood

Special to the Almanac



Rudy Driscoll and Kevin Johnson.

Woodside Elementary School District candidate Rudy Driscoll was staying close to his phone on election night Nov. 8, but not waiting for vote counts. His 16-year-old son was in the hospital with complications from a broken leg, which has required multiple surgeries.

Mr. Driscoll was the top vote-getter in the election for two open spots on the governing board of the one-school district. He and fellow newcomer Kevin Johnson were elected over incumbent Ginger Bamford. Only 25 percent of registered voters in the district, 584 people, cast ballots.

"I am glad the community has such great belief and support for me," Mr. Driscoll said. "I'll do my best to live up to their expectations."

Mr. Johnson said he sees "a lot of opportunities and challenges" in his new board position. "I'm very, very happy, obviously, and I look forward to working with

the board."

His first priorities, he said, will be working to improve communication with the community, working on the school's new strategic plan, and developing a facilities plan for the school.

As of Nov. 10, the county's "semi-official" results had Mr. Driscoll with 40.9 percent of the votes, followed by Mr. Johnson with 32.2 percent. Ms. Bamford was not far behind with 26.9 percent of the vote.

Actual vote totals were 369 votes for Mr. Driscoll, 290 votes

See **WOODSIDE**, page 18



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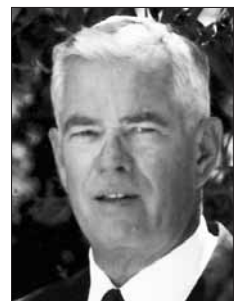


Robert Bishop

(3/22/1930 Neuilly, France –

11/6/2011 Redwood City, California)

Longtime Woodside resident Robert Bishop died at home in the early morning of Sunday the 6th of November, 2011 at the age of 81 after a three year battle with Merkel cell carcinoma. He was born in France to American parents and grew up on Cape Cod. After attending the University of Chicago and Hastings Law School, he joined the District Attorney's office in Sacramento. He later became Assistant District Attorney for San Mateo county and Chief Deputy Attorney. An avid tennis player Robert Bishop was a longtime member of the Alpine Tennis and Swim Club. Robert also enjoyed skiing, traveling, studying romance languages and playing chess. In addition he cultivated his longtime love of the music of Mozart by traveling widely with his friend Gerald Ratto, a San Francisco photographer, to see and take pictures of those places where Mozart had lived and played. He is survived by his loving wife of 48 years Simone Bishop, his daughter Katherine Bishop of Palo Alto, his son Christopher Bishop of Milford, Connecticut and his nephews John, Joshua and Jeremy. His ashes will be interred in Cape Cod with those of his father and twin brother. In lieu of flowers donations may be sent to the Midsummer Mozart Festival series.



PAID OBITUARY

Rare rejection of school bond measure

■ Voters re-elect incumbents to community college board.

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer



School bond construction measures have had an easier time of it since 2001, when state Proposition 39 lowered the threshold for passage to 55 percent voter approval (from two-thirds). Voters rarely reject such measures. Nov. 8, 2011, was an exception.

Measure H, the San Mateo County Community College District's bid for another \$564 million to continue its decade-long reconstruction program, missed the mark by a little over 2 percentage points. The unofficial tally from the county Elections Office showed 52.57 percent favoring the measure, and 47.43 percent opposed.

For their part, the three incumbent candidates for the college district's governing board, Dave Mandelkern, Karen Schwarz and Patricia Miljanich, all of whom supported Measure H, cruised to re-election with unofficial pluralities of 26 percent, 23 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

The vote counts for the five

candidates, as of the Nov. 10 update, are: Mr. Mandelkern, 46,221; Ms. Schwarz, 41,388; Ms. Miljanich, 35,945; Joe Ross, 28,040; Michael G. Stogner, 15,320; and Jaime Diaz, 9,542.

The district, which governs Canada College in Woodside, Skyline College in San Bruno and the College of San Mateo in San Mateo, has asked voters for construction funding before, and gotten it: \$207 million in 2001 (passed by 65 percent of voters), and \$468 million in 2005 (by 64 percent).

But the 2008 economic meltdown and the still-struggling economy may have made Measure H unpalatable enough to miss the mark by two and a half percentage points.

All three campuses still have classroom buildings that are 40 to 50 years old, board President Richard Holober told the Almanac in October.

When asked to justify another half billion dollars of indebted-

ness, the candidates noted the need for up-to-date science, technology, engineering and math curriculums, and that the district lost \$200 million in state funding in 2006, and \$25 million in 2008 when Lehman Brothers investment bank collapsed.

Measure H would also have allowed bond funds to replace \$2 million in annual maintenance expenses, enabling the district to enroll 6,000 to 7,000 more students, about 10 percent of whom would be full-time, Mr. Holober said.

"We will continue to do the best we can," Mr. Mandelkern said in a telephone interview after the election. "This is a democracy and we gave people a choice. I get it. People are reaching their limit at what they're willing to spend in support of schools."

The measure would have raised residential and commercial property taxes by \$12.92 a year for each \$100,000 of assessed value for the life of the bonds, typically 30 years. Interest payments typically double the indebtedness. ■

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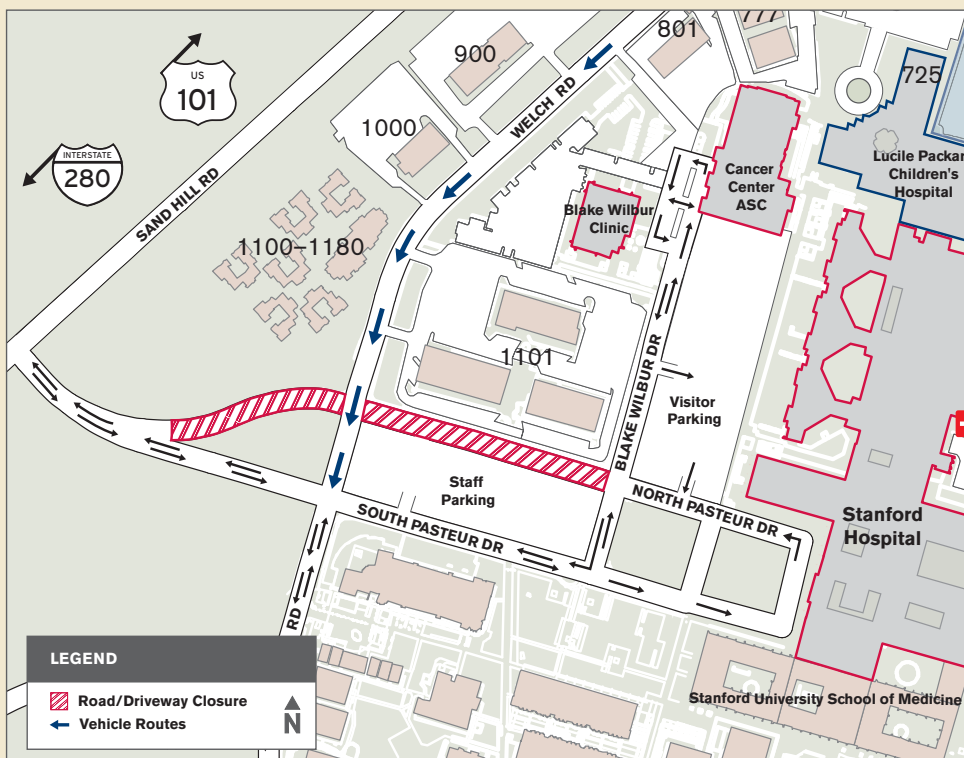
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High school race: Challengers lead pack

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Challengers finished a strong first and second in the Nov. 8 election for three seats on the five-member board of the Sequoia Union High School District. Just 50 votes separate the two three-term incumbents who came in third and fourth.

Real estate agent and elementary school board member Carrie B. Du Bois of San Carlos and Stanford University law school lecturer Allen Weiner of Menlo Park took two seats with 25.4 percent and 22.2 percent of the votes, respectively. The Sequoia board governs four comprehensive high schools in San Mateo County, including Menlo-Atherton and Woodside high schools.

Incumbent and Redwood City resident and businesswoman Lorraine Rumley, with 19.24 percent, was edging out retired community college professor and incumbent Olivia Martinez of Menlo Park, with 19.15 percent, according to a Nov. 10 update from the county Elections Office. East Palo Alto resident and community activist Larry Moody came in fifth with 14 percent of the vote.

The latest vote counts are:



The top finishers are, from left, Carrie B. Du Bois, Allen S. Weiner, Lorraine Rumley, and Olivia Martinez.



Carrie B. Du Bois, 14,631; Allen Weiner, 12,776; Lorraine Rumley, 11,081; Olivia G. Martinez, 11,029; and Larry James Moody, 8,082. Further updates to the vote tally are scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 15, and on Thursday, Nov. 17.

About 26 percent of registered voters cast ballots countywide.

Candidates react

"I don't know if it's real yet," Ms. Du Bois said in a post-election interview. "I'm excited about the opportunity to help kids."

Ms. Du Bois said she spent election night at a party of mixed demographics as residents of wealthy Atherton sat next to

residents of the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park. "It was a very special night," she said. "Some of my friends had never been to Belle Haven."

Asked to comment on his victory, Mr. Weiner said that the campaign was "very, very policy based where we talked about ideas," and that he saw a message from voters in that the challengers finished first and second: "The schools are not in good shape and we want you to take them to the next level," he said.

The focus, he said, would be on the achievement gap, the dropout rate and career technical education.

Ms. Rumley has not yet responded to a request for comment.

Ms. Martinez did respond. "I've had a wonderful 12 years on the board. I'm very satisfied," she said in a phone interview. "The good Lord has another plan for me now and I completely accept that."

Mr. Moody, a former board member of the Ravenswood City School District, which represents East Palo Alto and Belle Haven, compared the election to a marathon. "I didn't win but I finished the race," he said. "It's high time that Ravenswood is represented on that board."

More than 8,000 people cast votes for Mr. Moody, with maybe 500 of them from East Palo Alto if the tally for that city's Sanitary District is any guide.

He knocked on a lot of doors, he said.

"We had to travel in some areas that (residents) were not accustomed to seeing an African American male talking about education," he said. "To be able to get into those (living) rooms, it's a huge gain. It's something we can build on." ■

WOODSIDE

continued from page 16

for Mr. Johnson, and 243 votes for Ms. Bamford. Voters were allowed to pick two of the three candidates to fill two slots on the five-member board. Incumbent Ellen Ablow did not run for re-election.

Mr. Driscoll is an investor and business consultant and former Menlo Park police officer. Mr.

'Master plan' meeting reflects divisions over new library

By Barbara Wood

Special to the Almanac

Atherton residents who requested a special city council meeting about creating a master plan for all town facilities got the discussion they had asked for on Nov. 8, but no resolution, because the council did not vote on the issue.

No action was taken because the meeting had been advertised as a "discussion" of a citizen proposal for a master plan, so council members said they could not vote on the issue.

The meeting was scheduled at the request of at least 300 Atherton residents who signed a petition requesting a master plan to include sizing and location of all town facilities — including administration, finance, building, public works, police and library — before making any decisions to move the library to Holbrook-Palmer Park.

The decision about a site for a new library has already been made, however. The council voted 3-2 at its Oct. 19 meeting to make town-owned Holbrook-Palmer Park the "preferred site" for a new library.

In addition to planning a new library, the town has been studying building a new police station and administrative offices. A separate committee has been working on

■ ATHERTON

each project. The library project has funding in a special account that can only be spent on the library, but the town offices would need private funding.

Council members James Dobbie, Bill Widmer and Kathy McKeithen, who was on the task force which recommend the park site for the library, voted for the park site. Council members Elizabeth Lewis and Jerry Carlson voted against it.

The issue has divided the town, and no one seems happy about it. "I think it's horrible to divide a community this way," resident Janet Larson said.

"There's all this bickering going back and forth over this library." However, she said, many feel they were not allowed to voice their opinions before the decision on the park site was made. "We have not been included in this process and I think that makes everybody angry," Ms. Larson said.

Others, however, urged the council to move on with designing the new library without more delay. "This issue has been studied and an evaluation and a recommendation made and approved," said Walter Sleeth. "What can

See **MASTER PLAN**, page 19

Atherton meets on library issue

■ Should town survey residents on where to put library?

By Barbara Wood

Special to the Almanac

Atherton's City Council will hold a meeting Wednesday, Nov. 16, that includes the topic that has split the town: the location of a new library in the town's only park. And the meeting will be held at the park, itself: Holbrook-Palmer Park at 150 Watkins Ave.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the Jennings Pavilion.

Johnson is a practicing business attorney with an electrical engineering degree.

Ms. Bamford is a community volunteer and former Wall Street attorney. All three have children at Woodside Elementary School, the only school in the district. Mr. Driscoll and Mr. Johnson have children in kindergarten while Ms. Bamford's youngest child is in seventh grade. ■

On the agenda is approval to start a report on the environmental impacts of putting the library in the park. The council also will discuss a recommendation by the town's Park and Recreation Committee to survey residents on whether to put a new library in the park.

Rate hikes for garbage and recycling pickup are also on the agenda. Rates rose an average of 45 percent in July and residents started paying for green waste carts after the first two. All green waste carts had previously been free.

At the October council meeting, a report by Councilman Bill Widmer proposed rates of: \$29 for a 20-gallon can, a 45 percent increase; \$57 for a 32-gallon can, a 30 percent increase; \$115 for a 64-gallon can, a 39 percent increase; and \$170 for a 96-gallon can, a 36 percent increase.

The first two green waste carts would remain free. After that, they would cost \$10 each for third and fourth carts and \$15 each for five carts or more. A slightly higher rate increase had been proposed originally in a mailing to residents. ■

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Ladera site: Neighbors seek assurance of student limit

By Barbara Wood

Special to the Almanac

SCHOOLS

Saying they must check with their absent attorney about a detail, the board of the Las Lomas Elementary School District at its Wednesday, Nov. 9, meeting put off starting the lease process for the old Ladera School site that has been home to Woodland School for 30 years.

The Ladera neighbors and Woodland School representatives want the board to put a limit of 325 students into the wording of the resolution the board must pass to start the process.

The district is using an open bidding process rather than a request for proposals (RFP), which might have given it more flexibility in choosing a tenant for the school site. The bid process requires, with few exceptions, that the highest bid be accepted, so the neighbors want restrictions to protect the neighborhood included in the process.

The limit on students is important because it is the only way the neighbors know to control the number of cars that must negotiate the steep, winding streets of their neighborhood to transport their children to and from school.

It is also important because most schools will tailor the amount of rent they are willing to pay for a school site to the amount of tuition they can expect to receive, bidding higher if they believe they can house more students.

The district has promised to put the limit on students into any lease that is signed as well as in the marketing materials advertising the bid process. But neighbors say they want the promise in the resolution because it can't be changed later.

"My desire is to have the 325 in the concrete document," said Ladera resident John Barman.

An attorney representing Woodland told the board that state law governing schools requires any important terms of the lease be in the resolution approving the process. Board members said that they need to talk to their attorney about that, and since he is out of town they will have to wait to do that.

The resolution before the board on Wednesday included restrictions including:

■ The property must be used

as a kindergarten to grade eight school and can include preschool and daycare.

■ The fields will remain under control of the school district and are not part of the lease.

plan renovations before occupying the campus.

Board members did promise to talk to their attorney as soon as they can and did not rule out holding a special meeting to approve the lease process. Their next regular meeting is Dec. 14.

The school site was purchased by the district in 1952 but has not been used as a district school since Ladera School closed in 1979. Woodland, which now has 275 students, currently pays

\$650,000 a year for the site. Its lease originally expired in July, but the district has extended it twice, through July 2013.

The school operates under a conditional use permit from San Mateo County because Ladera is an unincorporated neighborhood and the site is zoned for residential use.

A hearing on the use permit will be held by the San Mateo County Zoning Hearing officer at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 1, in Room 401, Fourth Floor, 455 County Center in Redwood City. ■

Neighbors want a limit of 325 students written into the board's resolution.

■ The minimum bid is \$625,000 per year, which is what Woodland currently pays.

■ The lease is for a 25 year term and can be renewed for 25 more years.

■ Rent will go up not less than three percent and not more than six percent each year.

■ If the new tenant wants to make improvements to the school that will keep it from occupying the campus, the tenant can receive a rebate of up to half of their rent for a year.

Tim Brady, Woodland School's governing board chair, objected to the stipulation about the rent rebate. He said it would help any school but Woodland and could result in the district not receiving as much total rent from the high bidder as a lower bid who did not

MASTER PLAN

continued from previous page

possibly be gained by unraveling this process now?" he asked. "We certainly run the risk of community fatigue over this issue."

About 50 residents attended the meeting, which ran from 6 to 8 p.m. on election night, Tuesday, Nov. 8.

Several speakers, including council member McKeithen, brought up the fact that the website for the town's Environmental Programs Committee has a page pointing

out a number of problems with putting the new library in the park. But the committee has not met since well before the council voted on the issue and the library site has not been on the agenda of a recent meeting of the committee.

"What right does a town committee have to make statements like this on their website?" Ms. McKeithen said.

Others at the meeting questioned a survey done by local

See **MASTER PLAN**, page 20

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Tom Parker, Award winning novelist and short story writer, UC Extension and Foothill College Instructor and former Stanford Instructor

Meg Waite Clayton, is the nationally best selling author of *The Four Ms. Bradwells*, *The Wednesday Sisters*, and *The Bellwether Prize* finalist *The Language of Light*. She lives with her family in Palo Alto, and is at work on a fourth novel to be published by Ballantine in 2013.

Pamela Gullard, Pamela Gullard's stories have appeared in the *North American Review*, *Arts and Letters*, *The Iowa Review*, *TriQuarterly* and other journals and anthologies. With co-author Nancy Lund, she has written three nonfiction books; the latest, *Under the Oaks: Two Hundred Years in Atherton*, appeared in 2009. Pamela teaches personal narrative and literature at Menlo College.

CHILDREN/TEEN

Katy Obringer, Former supervisor of Palo Alto Children's Library

Caryn Huberman Yacowitz, Playwright and Children's book author

Nancy Etchemendy, Children's book author

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2. Limit of one entry per person.
3. **Stories must be typed, double-spaced. Maximum 2,500 words. Longer stories will be disqualified.**
4. \$15 entry fee, along with hard copy, for all ADULT stories; \$5 entry fee for YOUNG WRITERS under 18. Make checks payable to "Palo Alto Weekly."
5. Entries may not have been previously published.
6. Signed entry form must accompany story. Author's name should NOT appear anywhere on pages of story.
7. All winners are required to email their story to the Palo Alto Weekly in a Microsoft Word Document as an attachment.

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The Almanac

Ladera Community Church
starts youth music program

By Marjorie Mader

There's something new
to sing about at Ladera
Community Church.The church has started a youth
music program that serves stu-
dents from pre-kindergarten to
high school at 3300 Alpine Road
in Portola Valley.Those in third grade and
under can participate in group
singing and musical activities
that take place from 10 a.m.
to 11 a.m. in Sunday School.
Fourth-graders and above can
participate in the youth choir.Participants can develop
group-singing skills, build musi-
cianship and stage presence, and
perform at the church and other
local venues.In addition, they can learn to
play the ukulele."One of the best things about
being a singer is to be able to play
an instrument that accompanies
your own voice," says Margaux
Millman, director of Ladera's
youth music program. "Ukulele
is hugely popular and an instru-
ment that kids can have great,
early success with."As part of the new program,
the church purchased 20 uku-
leles for choir members. Choir
rehearsals regularly incorporate
playing and learning the instru-
ment. Besides developing musi-
cal skills, emphasis in the youth
choir is on team-building, musi-Margaux
Millmancal camarade-
rie, and music
as a medium
for personal
expression.Although the
choir meets at
Ladera Church,
it is open to
all children
in Ladera andnearby communities. A signifi-
cant aim of the choir is to pro-
vide free musical opportunities
to children.Local children, interested in
participating, are encouraged
to attend rehearsals of the youth
choir Sundays from 11 a.m. to
noon in the church.Ms. Millman is a doctoral
candidate in music education.
In addition to her work with
Ladera Community Church,
she is a private voice and piano
instructor for children and
adults.Email Margaux@Ladera.org
to reach Margaux Millman,
director of the youth music pro-
gram, for more information. ■

■ BIRTHS

Emerald Hills

■ Lisa HuntingfordLyssand and
Johan Lyssand, a daughter, Oct.
26, Sequoia Hospital.The 2012
"Living Well"
is hereWe are pleased to once
again offer our annual
publication covering the
local needs and interests
of the 50-plus market.If you would like a
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The Almanac

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MASTER PLAN

continued from page 19

residents after the town did not
follow through on a recommen-
dation by its Park and Recreation
Commission to conduct a survey
to determine if residents want the
library in the park."I looked at this survey that was
purported to let us know what
Atherton residents thought," said
Mayor Jim Dobbie. The questions
were biased, he said, and the survey
did not go to all Atherton residents.
"That's not the way that we should
conduct a survey," he said.Council member Jerry Carlson
said that perhaps the council should
reconsider doing its own survey.
"Right now we don't know what the
will of the majority of our residents
is," Mr. Carlson said. "We're mak-
ing some of the largest and lasting
decisions that the council will ever
make," he said. "I think doing a poll
shows respect for the residents."But council member Dobbie dis-
agreed. "We're elected here by the
residents of this town so we don't
need a referendum on everything
that comes up," he said.Council members said the cost
of a master plan might rule it out.
Interim City Manager John Dan-
ielson said it would probably take
six- to eight-months and cost
between \$100,000 and \$150,000.But others said the decisions
about the library and the new
town center are so important
that it would be worthwhile.
"I haven't heard anyone say
they don't want a library," said
former council member Didi
Fisher. "I'm challenging all of
you to do the right thing. The
right thing at this point is the
master plan."Council member Elizabeth
Lewis agreed. "If the library
in the park is the perfect solu-
tion what is the harm of going
through a master plan?" she
said. "It's not about the library,
it's about the process."Council member McKeithen
let her frustration show near the
end of the meeting. "This whole
process I find incredibly dis-
tasteful," she said. Citing threats
to recall council members, she
said: "If you want to recall me,
just do it quick." ■



Still by Your Side



We are pleased to announce **Stanford Hospital & Clinics** and **Lucile Packard Children's Hospital** have reached new health insurance provider agreements with Anthem Blue Cross. The contracts are retroactive to September 1, 2011. We wish to thank our patients during this period of negotiation. We are still by your side to take care of you and your family.

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Newsroom: (650) 223-6525

Newsroom Fax: (650) 223-7525

Advertising: (650) 854-2626

Advertising Fax: (650) 854-3650

Email news and photos with
captions to:

Editor@AlmanacNews.com

Email letters to:

letters@AlmanacNews.com

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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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Post your views on the Town Square forum at www.TheAlmanacOnline.com

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letters@almanacnews.com and note this it is a letter to the editor in the subject line.

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Editor at the Almanac,
3525 Alameda de las Pulgas,
Menlo Park, CA 94025.

CALL the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

Pushy 'snitch ticket' letters out of line

Of all the potential revenue sources available to Menlo Park, the \$200,000 or so it receives from four red-light cameras has to be the most misunderstood and least compelling.

The cameras are owned and operated by a private contractor, although the city does share in the revenue from fines, which is often more than \$400 per ticket. But the system is not infallible. Some judges have thrown out the tickets when a police officer is not present in court, or a technical issue arises, such as signal timing at the camera's intersection.

Police believe use of the cameras increases the safety of the intersections, which are specifically chosen due to the high traffic volume and accident history. Some

drivers say the cameras smack of "Big Brother" enforcement and are just a way for the city to generate revenue from defenseless drivers.

However, many drivers may not know that the system is not infallible. According to the Menlo Park Police Department, in about 25 percent of the cases, the camera catches the infraction and the license number of the car but misses a clear shot of the driver, which is required to prosecute. So in order to recover a portion of this revenue the city is going to great lengths to put pressure on vehicle owners to identify the driver at the time of incident.

Many owners receive official-looking letters saying they could face court action if they do not turn over a name.

The only problem, as Almanac reporter Sandy Brundage found out when writing a story about "snitch tickets" last week, is that while it may be legal for the city to pressure the owners of vehicles that are photographed running a red light, the owner has absolutely no legal obligation to "snitch" or share the identity of the driver of the vehicle with the city.

Use of such high-pressure-tactics, which apparently has been approved by the top officers in the Menlo Park Police Department, was revealed at a recent Transportation Committee meeting, where Commissioner Ray Mueller challenged the wording on the city's

"snitch" letters.

The confusion arises from the tone of the letter, which says, "You must complete all the information in the bottom section" and return the completed form. And in bold red type, it orders the recipient of the letter to, "Identify new driver — if you were not the driver," and then asks for the drivers' name, address, physical description, license number and date of birth.

There is only one clue that the letter is not a real citation. It says, "Do not call the court regarding this notice." That is because the court, which only keeps records of actual tickets, would have no information on a ticket that is not completed.

The officer in charge of Menlo Park's red-light tickets, Sgt. Sharon Kaufman, believes the instructions on the snitch letters are acceptable, which she justifies by saying that very few of the letters are actually returned.

"The form does not coerce people. It asks people to fill out the form completely."

Commissioner Mueller has another view. He said the snitch ticket letters could be more cordial, and say something like, "This is a pending investigation and we'd appreciate your help to identify the driver, but you are not obligated to."

Menlo Park, like several other nearby communities, contracts with Redflex to administer the red-light program, which includes the cameras and photographs of the infraction.

But when the camera fails to identify a face behind the wheel, the city should simply discard the ticket and move on. Why send out threatening letters when the city has no legal authority to coerce vehicle owners into revealing the name and address of whoever was driving the vehicle that day?

Commissioner Mueller got it right. The city should revise its letter that demands vehicle owners "snitch" on who was driving during a red-light infraction. This type of high-pressure tactic has no place in a city government like Menlo Park, which should pride itself on serving residents, not browbeating them to share information that they are not obligated to give up.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

High-speed rail, the grand swindle

Editor:

We have been swindled

The passage of Proposition 1A in November 2008 authorizing almost \$10 billion in state bonds to create a high-speed rail link between San Francisco and Los Angeles is now clearly shown to be a grand swindle.

Not only were the voters swindled into passing the proposition but the Legislature was swindled into passing and allowing Prop. 1A to ever appear on the ballot.

In 2008 the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) promoted the project saying the cost would be \$32 billion. The just released business plan now says the cost will be \$98.5 billion.

See **LETTERS**, next page



Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

Grace Spreckels Hamilton, granddaughter of sugar king Claus Spreckels, built this home above Walsh Road in Atherton between 1907 and 1910. It remained in the family until the 1960s, and has been meticulously maintained by its current owners.

Contrasting views of offer to rebuild the Alpine Road trail

There is wide support for rebuilding the trail

(This letter was addressed to the Board of Supervisors and submitted on Nov. 2)

By P.J. Utz

The headline 'Alpine Trail is the trail nobody wants' on a guest opinion by Lennie Roberts in the Nov. 2 Almanac is an insult to all of us who have argued about this issue on both sides over the past few months.

I would say unequivocally that **some** people oppose the trail. It is also fair to state that **many** people support fixing the trail. The Ladera Community Association sent an email to residents Sept. 28 describing their poll of the neighborhood: "While the community perspective was not unanimous, it was overwhelming in support of improving the trail."

I fully acknowledge the problems that the residents of Stanford Weekend Acres face every day — traffic noise, congestion, pollution, difficulty with entering and leaving their community, and their plummeting property values. I see it twice every single day as I bike to work on the existing trail, on their frontage roads.

If they think that their plight will magically disappear if a "no" vote occurs on Dec. 13, then they have been mesmerized by Ms. Roberts and the

Contrasting points of view

Editor's Note: The Board of Supervisors has given Stanford until Dec. 13 to accept three additional options for a total of six alternate Alpine Road trail plans, or very likely the \$10 million in funds provided to improve the bicycle-pedestrian trail on Alpine Road will be turned away. Here are contrasting points of view about whether the trail should be improved.

Committee for Green Foothills. When Stanford completes its hospital expansion, things will only get worse. Not linearly but logarithmically.

Weekend Acres will exist as its own little, isolated atoll, with a dead-end trail on both sides, and with indifferent nearby communities in Ladera and Portola Valley that will have moved on to issues of greater importance. I would not relish Weekend Acres having to fight those who wish to maintain a scenic corridor where traffic lights and lower speed limits ruin the ambiance. I will wave as I bike past the traffic on their frontage road, which doubles as a community-owned, multiuse path.

Having just acknowledged that there are opponents of the trail, I must say that there are many citizens who strongly favor a trail. I don't mean favor a new trail. I mean favor fixing the existing trail that right now runs right through the paved frontage roads in Weekend

Acres. I mean fixing not just the trail but the entire corridor. We must not let the supervisors cede this existing trail so that Weekend Acres has a place to park their cars on the community's existing C1 trail. This latter battle will wage long after the Dec. 13 vote.

Sadly, if the trail is not improved, almost everyone will lose, particularly Weekend Acres residents who would have to go it alone to salvage "their way of life." Supervisor Pine stated at the Nov. 1 hearing that a regional grants program does not exist, so Ms. Roberts and the Committee for Green Foothills may have lost their chance to divert these funds to fix the Upper Alpine Trail. Are there winners? You bet. Stanford residents who will get \$10 million-plus in new recreational facilities, as dictated by the university's General Use Permit, signed 12 years ago.

P.J. Utz is a Ladera resident and Stanford professor

Call for trail ignores issue of Stanford Weekend Acres

By Gunter Steffen

I would like to take issue with Christine Martens' comments in last week's Almanac, regarding what people in another community (not hers) do or do not want fronting that entire community. She alleges that Lennie Roberts, in an earlier article, asserts falsehoods, was wrongheaded and used "utterly discredited" ideas and that "some" people have even come to believe them. What facts does she advance to buttress those claims?

None!

Did she follow the voluminous string of emails written by Stanford Weekend Acres residents protesting what Stanford is trying to force down their collective throats? Did she read the extensive studies that have been conducted in cities across the country that have all pointed out the dangers and pitfalls of such trails in areas similar to those in Stanford Weekend Acres? Did she examine the accident and fatality statistics associated with such trails? Closer to home, did she read the study, conducted by Alan Wachtel and Diana Lewiston for the city of Palo Alto, regarding Class 1 and bicycle trail designs or the recommendations in the California Highway Design Manual?

Has she read the comments

submitted by Steve Schmidt, former mayor of Menlo Park, or Jon Silver, former Portola Valley councilman, who all argued passionately against this proposal? This information is all readily available to her. Does she even know what's at stake in Stanford Weekend Acres and why people living here are up in arms over this issue? Does she even care?

Based on her assertions I can only conclude that the answer to all of the above is a resounding no. I would strongly suggest that Ms. Martens do her homework rather than parroting Stanford's tiresome rhetoric and slandering the likes of Lennie Roberts, legislative advocate for Committee for Green Foothills and one of the Bay Area's most respected environmental leaders.

In addition, her call for all San Mateo County residents to pressure their supervisors is ludicrous since the money does not benefit those residents one iota but forces an unwanted and highly undesirable solution to one of Stanford's problems only onto Weekend Acres residents. In this instance, the only beneficiary of the acceptance of funds from Stanford is ... Stanford.

Ms. Martens is entitled to her opinions, however uninformed they may be, but she should not try to foist them onto other people without demonstrably factual underpinnings of any kind.

Gunter Steffen lives in Stanford Weekend Acres.

continued from page 22

In 2008, we were told a trip from LA to SFO would be two hours and 40 minutes. Under the new plan, the trip will take at least 4 hours and more likely 5 to 6 hours. In 2008 we were told ridership would be 117 million passengers per year; now the number is reduced to at most 35 million.

In 2008 we were told we could go from LA to SF by the year 2020; now we are told it won't be until 2032.

And so the list goes on and on. The CHSRA has been a rogue agency, making promises that cannot be kept. The CHSRA promised private investment, yet currently no private equity has appeared.

It is time to stop this project. The Legislature has the power to cut funding from the project. This was the action recommended by the LAO and should be immediately implemented.

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