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The Almanac

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

DECEMBER 14, 2011 | VOL. 47 NO. 16



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Curtis Carlson leads
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Keith steps into spotlight as Menlo Park mayor

■ Rich Cline reflects on two years in office.

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

The Dec. 6 council meeting sparked no debate about who would succeed Rich Cline. Nominated by Kelly Fergusson, Kirsten Keith found herself facing zero opposition for taking over as mayor. Colleague Peter Ohtaki then likewise breezed into the vice mayor's slot after Mr. Cline offered him up for consideration.

Ms. Keith and Mr. Ohtaki, as the newest members of the council, were first in line for those positions since the council's non-binding policy states that those who have yet to hold the offices take priority.

State Sen. Joe Simitian applauded the outgoing mayor: 'Anyone who has spent two years working on high-speed rail at the local level deserves a lifetime achievement award.'

Mayor Keith thanked everyone from her extended family watching in the audience to city staff to Menlo Park's residents before Vice Mayor Ohtaki gave his own brief thanks. The council moved on to recognizing Mr. Cline's two years of service as mayor, presenting him with a proclamation that recognized his dedication to transparent government and fiscal responsibility, and his "quirky sense of humor."

Those applauding Mr. Cline included State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, as well as represen-



New mayor Kirsten Keith and outgoing mayor Rich Cline.



tatives for Assemblymen Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, and Rich Gordon, D-Menlo Park.

"Anyone who has spent two years working on high-speed rail at the local level deserves a lifetime achievement award," Sen. Simitian quipped.

Mr. Cline compared living in Menlo Park to winning the lottery, saying he was honored to have served as mayor. He thanked staff for "making me and the council look smarter," and commented that the city was going to keep moving forward under the new leadership.

He took a few moments to reflect on how it felt to finally lay the gavel down, telling the Almanac that he'd had two primary goals for his second term: shorter meetings as well as trying "to get the city more about getting projects completed and less about meeting to discuss it," and squashing political sniping at meetings so that everyone felt free to air their opinions in a responsible, mature manner.

"You can really control the tenor as mayor — even in a rotational city council," Mr. Cline reflected. "I think we did cut meetings down dramatically and we have a pretty good list of accomplishments with a few more big ones to come."

He praised his successor. "Kirsten is great and she will do a wonderful job as mayor. She will render me obsolete by Wednesday of next week." ■

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Where innovation is abundant

SRI International sees unprecedented opportunities, says CEO Curtis Carlson

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Innovation never has been the exclusive province of humanity. Bacteria, for example, in partnership with trees and other green plants, can claim a major innovation: photosynthesis. It's an old one, but it's a good one. The plants, with the aid of sunshine, release life-giving oxygen by absorbing the carbon dioxide that oxygen-dependent creatures like us exhale.

Today, CO₂ levels in the atmosphere are rising faster than plants can absorb it, thanks to the release of long-buried CO₂ through the burning of fossil fuels. The result: a greenhouse effect and unwelcome long-term changes to the planet's climate. An innovation that removes more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere would be nice right about now.

SRI International, a nonprofit innovation powerhouse located in Menlo Park, has not invented such a device but it is testing one. While the device is not

elegant in the manner of a redwood tree or a rain forest, SRI's backyard is home to a tree-sized rectangular metallic object that quietly absorbs CO₂ from the air. It operates on waste heat and does not generate CO₂ in the process, traditionally a stubborn problem in green technology.

The manufacturer, Global Thermostat Corp., is an East Coast startup in a partnership with SRI since October 2010. SRI, founded by Stanford University and celebrating its 65th year, is running the initial test of a device that efficiently cuts CO₂ concentrations while producing salable quantities of the gas.

"It's a world of abundance," Curtis R. Carlson, the president and chief executive at SRI, says in a recent interview at company headquarters on Ravenswood Avenue. "I have never seen so many opportunities. Every field is wide open."

SRI is practiced in opportunity exploitation and its website shows a long list of innovations.



Almanac photo by Michelle Le

"The world really is changing fast," says Curtis R. Carlson, CEO of SRI International.

A few of them: the computer mouse, artificial muscles, GPS signal calibration, minimally invasive surgery using tools controlled by surgeons not in the room, and robots that use static electricity to climb walls.

The company employs 1,300 people in Menlo Park and has facilities in Japan, the United Arab Emirates, throughout the

United States, and in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, where SRI operates the radio-telescope observatory.

SRI's clients include corporations large and small, for-profit and nonprofit, national and international, as well as government agencies at all levels here and abroad. But its focus is in the United States, once

supreme in scientific and technical research and development, but now engaged with eager and capable rivals.

"The world really is changing fast, both in terms of competition and in terms of technology," Mr. Carlson says. "You have to keep raising your standards."

See **SRI**, page 6

Burnetts say they didn't provide alcohol at party

■ They say they patrolled party, but police say that's not good enough.

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

William and Cynthia Burnett said in an NBC "Today Show" interview Nov. 8 that they did not provide alcohol during a high school post-football-game party at their Menlo Park home on Friday night, Nov. 25, when Mr. Burnett, 54, was arrested on suspicion of contributing to the delinquency of minors.

They also told NBC's Matt Lauer that they did not see any alcohol in their patrols of the downstairs, where teenagers were celebrating a Menlo-Atherton High School football victory.

There were chips, there was

soda. There were homemade chocolate chip cookies, and homemade brownies were on the way before police arrived and broke things up, Mr. Burnett said.

The couple made the news after Menlo Park police broke up the party in the 1200 block of Woodland Avenue and arrested Mr. Burnett, a Stanford University assistant professor in mechanical engineering and the executive director of the university's Institute of Design.

Police acted after receiving an anonymous phone call complaining that underage drinking might be going on at the party.

See **BURNETT**, page 8

Hotel financing holds up Bohannon project

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

When the Menlo Park Planning Commission sat down for its annual review of the Bohannon Menlo Gateway project Dec. 5, there were no surprises, but maybe some disappointment from those tracking the development.

In 2010, the City Council and voters approved the 941,000-square-foot office-hotel complex, which would be built on two properties: 100 to 190 Independence Drive and 101 to 155 Constitution Drive.

Under the terms of the development agreement signed with the city, most of the hotel space must be built before anyone can lease office space.

Developer David Bohannon told the commission in a letter that tenants are interested in the office space. "Unfortunately

Facebook may have to wait awhile for the new hotel to be built.

we have had to advise them that because the office component cannot proceed without the hotel, and the timing of the hotel component remains problematic, we are not able to proceed with the office at this time," he said.

While Marriott International remains excited about opening a hotel on the site, he said, financing construction during this recession remains "a very challenging prospect."

Meanwhile, Facebook hopes the hotel happens sooner rather than later. An economic study commissioned by the social networking giant predicted that the company will need at

least 14,000 hotel room nights per year to accommodate visitors, generating \$1.95 million a year in Menlo Park, including \$300,000 in annual transient occupancy tax revenues for the city.

Those figures may be on the low side since the analysis didn't include vendors and potential advertisers who travel to Facebook headquarters. If Menlo Park can't accommodate Facebook's guests, that revenue shifts to other cities.

Planning Commission chair Vince Bressler appeared to question Mr. Bohannon's willingness to build the hotel. "We're talking about being right next door to Facebook headquarters," he commented during the review. "That seems like a place you could build a hotel."

Mr. Bohannon responded that

See **BOHANNON**, page 6

SRI chief executive: 'I have never seen so many opportunities'

SRI

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Better schools

To sharpen the competitive edge in the U.S., start with the schools, Mr. Carlson says, citing as one example SRI's program at Girls Middle School, a private nonsectarian school in Palo Alto.

SRI has run a two-day boot camp, where teams of girls write business plans and pitch their ideas to real venture capitalists, Mr. Carlson says. Mentors, including himself, help them along. A team starts with \$100 and, if successful, repays it with interest, donates 20 percent of the profits to charity and splits the rest among the team, Deb Hoff, the head of the school, said by telephone.

The ventures tend toward products that seventh-grade girls would buy — jewelry and purses, picture frames and cork boards — but one team wrote a book on middle school that was published, Ms. Hoff says.

"When you interview these young women at the end of it, they're just terrific," Mr. Carlson says. "They discover the joy of working and solving puzzles. ... I could have cried."

Mr. Carlson says he remem-

'The world really is changing fast. ... You have to keep raising your standards.'

SRI CEO CURTIS R. CARLSON

bered one girl who kept returning to the phrase, "I don't know if you noticed," as in, "I don't know if you noticed, but this was a lot of work, and a lot of fun."

That combination — learning to work hard and learning that it can be fun — is at the heart of the change to the education system that Mr. Carlson sees as vital.

Not appreciating the joy of hard work is a common barrier, typically confronted for the first time in college, and the sooner surmounted the better, he says.

In looking at innovative teaching methods, SRI worked with teachers and thousands of Texas and Florida students. One finding: kids don't learn math effectively from traditional teaching methods unless the teacher is extraordinary, Mr. Carlson says.

One answer that SRI is working on, Mr. Carlson says, is software, refined by extensive



Almanac photo by Michelle Le

At St. Patrick's Seminary

Julie Cronin, holding her daughter Caroline, listens to a sermon at the recent Christmas tree lighting ceremony at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park. Her son, Will, is at left.

trial and error, to enable average teachers to achieve the test results of extraordinary teachers.

Keeping up

The United States is one among many participants in a fiercely competitive global innovation economy, an economy in which green technology figures prominently. The arguments are more or less settled as to the threat to life as we know it from climate change. Does SRI see this as a high priority, and green technology as an important opportunity?

Scientists certainly contribute to the effort, but SRI has other projects going, Mr. Carlson says. "People here are pretty consumed with what they're doing."

Climate change problems "are really hard problems," he added. "We really don't have the technology we need at this point." Natural gas, which emits lower amounts of CO₂ than coal and oil, is becoming popular, he says, and represents a window of

20 to 50 years to develop green alternatives.

As for green technology, the United States is not out in front, but it doesn't have to be that way, he says. "Five companies are leaving California every week because they can't do business here because it's too expensive." His recommendations: a simpler tax code and "more effective" regulations.

"We have a lot of work to do to get California and the United States in better balance," he added. "We're not competitive. We need to change that."

The challenges are constantly evolving. Medicine today, for example, is based on physiology, chemistry and physics, but the focus will change to information technology and genetics, he says.

For example, any drug has a potential to be toxic, but with a patient's genome available, an analysis might predict problems, Mr. Carlson says. Which gets to the relevance of computerized assistance for doctors, which will be essential, he says,

because the problems will be so much more complex.

Mr. Carlson played the violin professionally at age 15 and still plays. Asked about its importance, he replies that it's tough learning a Beethoven quartet or a Brahms sextet. Learning to do so became a metaphor for the rewards of work. "It was the major influence in my life," he says.

"The rewards are proportional to the effort you put in," a touchstone, he says. "Once you learn (this lesson), you know, it's hard to go back."

Among SRI's fields of inquiry are pharmaceuticals, anti-terrorism, robotics and material science, each of which presents at least the potential for misuse. Is ethics a factor in who the company agrees to work for?

"If we discover any ethical lapses, we won't work with them," Mr. Carlson says. "People with questionable ethics are a disaster to work with. You can't be successful with people you can't trust." ■





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BOHANNON

continued from page 5

the current economy simply doesn't support constructing a new hotel outside Washington, D.C., or New York City, even though existing facilities are doing well.

"We're just not there yet," he said. "At the same time, I

don't want to leave you with the impression that we're not trying to bring investors to the hotel."

Asked to elaborate on his dealings with Facebook, the developer said he's had several meetings with their real estate staff, who introduced him to an architect from New York City who could design the hotel.

"They clearly understand that their business will benefit from

having the hotel there, no question about it," Mr. Bohannon said. "I don't think it's enough to persuade, at least so far it hasn't been enough, to persuade investors." And so far Facebook hasn't offered to help with financing.

In the end, the commission voted 7-0 that the developer was upholding his end of the agreement by making a good faith effort to move the site forward. ■

Fire district disputes Facebook EIR

■ Traffic is not the only impact on Menlo Park.

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Lessons learned from the draft environmental impact report for Facebook's upcoming campus development: (1) 9,400 employees can make a lot of traffic. (2) A lot of traffic makes a lot of noise. (3) Traffic's not the only problem, at least according to the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

The report suggests that traffic is the main challenge facing the city if Facebook proceeds as planned on its two Menlo Park campuses — the main headquarters on the former Sun/Oracle site at 1601 Willow Road, now known as 1 Hacker Way, and the east campus across the street on Constitution Drive — and that other aspects of the project present “less than significant” impacts to entities such as the fire district.

The actual significance of those “less than significant” impacts depends on whom you ask, though. The fire district begs to differ, according to Chief Harold Schapelhouman, who said the district had hired an attorney to review the report and draft comments to the city.

The Almanac asked the city for a copy of those comments, and got the following brain twister of an email from City Attorney Bill McClure:

“There is no public record of fire district comments — there were a couple of memos from the District's outside counsel to me as the City Attorney providing comment on the administrative draft EIR and the administrative draft of the Fiscal Impact Analysis — neither of which are public documents since they relate to non-public draft documents and simply summarize comments/feedback on information provided by the District in preparing the DEIR and DFIA. Their comments will be reflected in the documents when the documents are released and made public. If inter-agency comments/memos on administrative draft documents were public documents, that would discourage seeking input and comments on non public documents from other agencies — therefore the need to maintain confidentiality with respect to such documents — used to correct erroneous information, etc. None of the drafts are public documents, nor are the internal or inter or intra agency memos on such draft documents — and none of those documents are main-

How to express your views

The draft environmental impact report and fiscal impact report are available for viewing at the Community Development Department, 701 Laurel St. in Menlo Park, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday (the office is closed on alternate Fridays).

Go to tinyurl.com/Facebook-145 to see the project documents online.

The review period runs until Monday, Jan. 23. Written comments should be submitted to the Community Development Department no later than 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 23.

Upcoming meetings on draft environmental impact report:

- Dec. 14: Transportation Commission, 7 p.m., council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St.
- Jan. 4: Housing Commission, 5:30 p.m., city hall conference room at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St.
- Environmental Quality Commission, 6:30 p.m., Arrillaga Family Recreation Center, Cypress Room at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St.

tained in the ordinary course of business. To the extent any comments are not incorporated into the draft documents, or to the extent the district does not agree with the conclusions or information contained in the DEIR or the (draft fiscal impact analysis), I am confident the District will raise those issues/concerns as part of the public comment period for those documents — which comments will be public documents.”

The fire district says it will be unable provide adequate services to the Facebook campuses under current staffing levels.

The Almanac got copies of the documents anyway, just not from the city. In a letter to Menlo Park, the district's attorney wrote, “The District strongly objects to the conclusion. The District believes that the factual information that it provided supports a finding of significant impacts to the District that should be addressed by mitigation measures or conditions that require Facebook to provide funding, equipment and/or other measures to reduce the Project's impacts.”

Those significant impacts include, according to the fire district, an inability to provide adequate services to the Facebook campuses under current staffing levels. To do so, the district told the city, will require acquiring another aerial ladder truck, remodeling Station 77, which is closest to Facebook, so there's room for an additional staff member as well as the new truck, and installing traffic signal controls to make sure emergency personnel can cut

through the expected traffic to reach Facebook in time.

When the social networking company asked the city to let it bring 9,400 employees to work on the sites, it also offered to implement a cap on the number of vehicular trips to and from the east campus to 15,000 per day. The draft environmental impact report suggests a trip cap of 2,600 to the east campus and 1,100 to the main headquarters during peak morning and evening commute hours.

With the traffic comes noise. The draft report points to stretches of Willow Road and Marsh Road that would defy efforts of noise walls to dampen the sound for those living nearby because of property access requirements and state regulations limiting wall height. The only feasible mitigation, according to the report, is to reduce traffic.

Facebook is acting proactively to ease other “less than significant” impacts predicted by the report. The draft report concluded the project won't bring so many people into the city that its housing supply would run out, but Facebook is discussing whether to build 200 to 250 units of high-density housing within walking distance of the campus on nearby Hamilton Avenue with the Sares-Regis Group, according to a presentation displayed on Dec. 6 at a community open house at the main campus.

It also plans to hire two emergency medical technicians to work on site to reduce the impact to fire services. According to the project's draft fiscal impact analysis, most emergency calls are related to medical incidents. But the fire district said those technicians don't change the requirements for emergency services provided by the district. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke

Should We Love The House We Buy?



Dear Gloria, We have found a house we could make work for our family. However, we don't absolutely love it; it's just okay. Do people usually “settle” rather than find the perfect house? We are anxious to buy now but there is nothing else available in this area in the price range we can afford.

Penny T.

Dear Penny, First of all, no matter what the price range, there is rarely a perfect house. Some people do walk in the front door and say “I love this house!” but the more common reaction is to have a wish list. For example, wishing the family room was part of the kitchen or that there was a separate office or that the bathrooms were more mod-

ern. Some things can be changed but some would be cost prohibitive and possibly an over-improvement for the neighborhood. I would suggest that you look at the house and try to understand what you perceive as the shortcomings. Then get some estimates on what it would take to evoke more of a positive response from you. Sometimes it can be as simple as paint colors or opening up a space for more light. I have no crystal ball but all signs point to a more active real estate market next year, which could result in higher prices. It might be advisable to make do now rather than get caught up in a competitive market in the future.

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

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Jerry Rice sues over Atherton home

By Barbara Wood

Special to the Almanac

Retired San Francisco 49er Jerry Rice and wife Jacqueline filed a lawsuit Nov. 18 over the failed sale of their \$13.9 million Atherton home.

The suit, filed in San Mateo County Superior Court, asks the judge to enforce a provision in the contract calling for binding arbitration with the company that backed out of the sale, Bay-side Peninsula LLC.

Represented by the law firm

of Casas, Riley & Simonian, the Rices want Bayside Peninsula to forfeit the \$330,000 deposit put down when it offered to buy the home in May and also to foot the bill for attorney fees associated with the lawsuit, according to court documents.

A hearing on the request for binding arbitration is scheduled for Jan. 11.

The Rices built the 16,000-square-foot home in 2001. The listing description includes a slate roof, home theater, gym and sauna, elevator, at least

four fireplaces, and accents of Swarovski crystal and Versace limestone.

The three-story home has seven bedrooms, 11 bathrooms, and, of course, a pool.

An article in Haute Living Magazine in March 2010 quoted Mr. Rice as saying: "Whoever buys this home is going to love it because it's like living in a personal paradise, without having to go too far away."

Visit tinyurl.com/Rice-143 to see the listing for the home, with photos. ■

Church founder dies at 76

Elder Hattie L. Bostic, co-founder and pastor of the Mt. Olive Apostolic Original Holy Church of God in Menlo Park, recipient of doctorate degrees in divinity and theology, and a member of the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame, died Friday, Dec. 9. She was 76.

From her home in 1963 in the Belle Haven neighborhood, Elder Bostic and four others founded the church in her living room. Mt. Olive's first home was a storefront on Newbridge Avenue, but members later built a church on Hamilton Avenue that in 1992 was rebuilt as a larger church and community center.

Elder Bostic served as "cheerleader, chief fundraiser, contractor and bricklayer," the story said.

Matt Henry, former president of the Belle Haven Homeowners Association and a former Menlo Park planning commissioner,

said at the time that he "(could) not say too much about" Elder Bostic in praise of her work and presence in the community.

Life in Belle Haven and how to make it better was a passion for Elder Bostic and Mt. Olive's membership of some 200.

The church took on challenges common to low-income neighborhoods: lowering the crime rate, improving the schools, making housing more affordable, finding shelter for the homeless and helping those with substance abuse problems.

"She helps," Mr. Henry said at the time. "She always does."

Visit AlmanacNews.com for more information.



Almanac 2004 photo by Carol Ivie
Hattie Bostic

Mitsunobu opens in Sharon Heights

Mitsunobu Japanese restaurant has opened in the Sharon Heights Shopping Center in Menlo Park, replacing the highly rated Kaygetsu.

The restaurant, named for its new owners, Tomonari and Keiko Mitsunobu, serves Japanese California cuisine. The couple is retaining Kaygetsu's executive chef, Shinichi Aoki, and most of the staff. The restaurant offers seasonally changing fare, which is described as "traditional Japanese cuisine inspired by California."

Tomonari Mitsunobu was a chef in Japan, but has been working in management since coming to the United States five years ago. This is his first time as an owner.

The menu features a prix fixe course and a la carte items, based on local ingredients, as

well as selected items from Japan.

A recent lunch menu featured the familiar and the unusual for those who are not connoisseurs of Japanese cuisine. Entrees included shrimp tempura (\$23), cubed filet mignon (\$26), sashimi of the day (\$22) and "a taste of Mitsunobu," sashimi, shrimp tempura, fish tempura wrapped with seaweed and glazed salmon "(\$32).

Small plates featured authentic Japanese selections, such as kinpira gobo (stir-fried burdock root) and two versions of chawanmushi (egg custard flavored with soy, dashi and mirin and served in a tea-cup like container). Traditional hijiki, listed on the menu, is a brown sea vegetable that is considered a health and beauty aid, according to Japanese folklore.

The only nod to California

cuisine seemed to be a beet and mozzarella salad (\$8.50).

During December, Mitsunobu is featuring a prix fixe dinner menu for \$75, as well as a la carte selections. For the first course, diners may choose the "jewelry box," filled with an array of goodies, or sashimi of the day. The second course is rice in a clay pot (autumn mushroom rice or Miyagi oyster rice). The main course features Alaskan cod or Sterling Silver New York steak shabu-shabu.

Dessert is kabocha flan or baked apple with Earl Grey ice cream. The kabocha flan is described as "foamed green tea with a hint of mint and cinnamon smoke."

Keiko Mitsunobu says a special tasting menu on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve will include nine small dishes "showcasing our dynamic inspiration of a festive savory meal." There will also be a sake pairing to include rare premium sakes.

Restaurant Mitsunobu is at 325 Sharon Park Drive, at Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. Telephone is 234-1084. Lunch is served Tuesday through Friday. The restaurant is closed Monday.

BURNETT

continued from page 5

Mr. Burnett spent the night in jail and is now out on his own recognizance, according to jail officials. The San Mateo County district attorney has yet to announce charges, but a court date is set for Jan. 3.

Police have photos of alcohol, recordings of interviews with the teens that night, and assertions, based on police observation, that the teens were inebriated, Cmdr. Dave Bertini of the Menlo Park Police Department told the Almanac.

Police have also requested prosecution of Ms. Burnett, 48, on the same charges, Cmdr. Bertini said, but did not arrest her due to her medical condition. She is recovering from back surgery, her daughter Eliza said in an email to the Almanac. Ms. Burnett was also needed at home to look after her teenage son, Cmdr. Bertini said.

In the Today Show interview, Mr. Lauer asked Mr. Burnett if he might have been looking for trouble by hosting such a party. "Our son is a great kid," Mr. Burnett replied. "We put really clear rules in place. ... We were patrolling the party."

He had gone down twice and seen no drinking, he said. "Nobody was drinking that I know of," Mr. Burnett said. "There (was) no alcohol. ... My wife and I put really clear limits in place."

Not good enough, according to Cmdr. Bertini in a police station interview for the program. The kids can sneak the alcohol in, Cmdr. Bertini said, and there was evidence that the alcohol had come from the house. Parents need to check into who their kid's friends are and what they are bringing to the party, he said.

Mr. Burnett said that he was "certain" that the teens would check with him or his wife before going home. "For us, the big issue is to keep the kids safe," he said.

Mr. Lauer speculated that effectively patrolling such a party might require security guards. "It's a tough problem," Ms. Burnett said. "You don't want to be sitting downstairs in the middle of your kid's party. That's unreasonable."

What is needed, she added, is a community discussion that includes adults, parents, officials from law enforcement and city hall, and the teens themselves.

"We need to learn how to have a dialogue to create an environment where teens can be teens," she said. ■

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Bicyclist robbed at knifepoint

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

■ CRIME NEWS

A bicyclist pedaling along the Ringwood Avenue pedestrian bridge lost \$25 after being confronted by a man brandishing a knife on Tuesday morning, Dec. 6.

The robber grabbed the 31-year-old man by his collar and said, "Give me your stuff!" according to Menlo Park police. The victim convinced the suspect to just take the cash.

He described the suspect as a black man in his mid-20s, 5 foot 10 inches tall, weighing 160 to 180 pounds, with short, dark curly hair. The suspect wore a black hooded sweatshirt with a blue bandanna covering the lower half of his face, police said.

While that suspect remains at large, Menlo Park's narcotics enforcement team wrapped up

a weeks-long investigation into another case with an arrest on Wednesday, Dec. 7.

Police focused on a Dunsmuir Way home in the wake of complaints about illegal activity. "Many different neighbors were complaining about drug activity, cars coming and going at all hours, loud music from cars," said Detective Sgt. Eric Cowans. "Plus our patrol officers were noticing an increase in activity at the house."

The investigation culminated in a search warrant, police said. The team arrested 49-year-old Raymond Hernandez for alleged possession of methamphetamine. Police declined to disclose how much meth was found, but said they also found evidence of drug sales. ■

Las Lomitas board to meets on leasing Ladera School site

By Barbara Wood
Special to the Almanac

The Las Lomitas Elementary School District board is scheduled to approve starting the bid process for leasing the Ladera School site this week, with the major question remaining whether the board will honor the neighborhood's request to put a binding limit on the number of students that could be allowed at the site.

The meeting is Wednesday, Dec. 14, starting at 7 p.m. at the La Entrada School Multi-Use Room, 2200 Sharon Road in Menlo Park.

The school has been leased to Woodland School, a private school for kids in pre-kindergarten to eighth-grade, for more than 30 years. The school site was purchased by the district in 1952 and used until Ladera School closed in 1979. Wood-

land, which has 275 students, now pays \$650,000 a year for the site. The lease originally expired in July, but the district has extended it twice, through July 2013.

At the November board meeting, Ladera residents and Woodland School representatives asked the board to put a limit of 325 students into the wording of the resolution the board must pass to start the bid process. That request has since been reiterated in a letter to the board from the Ladera Community Association.

Limiting the number of students is one of the only ways the neighbors can control the number of cars that must negotiate the steep, winding streets of their neighborhood to and from the school site. But the district could probably get a higher bid

See LEASE, page 13

Treasurer Lee Buffington dies at 81

Lee Buffington, San Mateo County long-time treasurer and tax collector and a resident of Menlo Park, died Wednesday, Dec. 7, according to Sandie Arnott, who succeeded him in that office. He was 81.

Mr. Buffington headed the treasurer's office for nearly 25 years. In 2009, he decided not to seek a seventh term. At the time of his retirement in January 2011, the office had 60 employees.

Despite the 2008 fiasco that saw a loss of \$155 million in investments with Lehman

Brothers, Mr. Buffington said he's enjoyed the challenges of the job, which includes collecting property taxes, managing the county investment pool, and acting as a bank for the county's 26 school districts.

"Lehman was a great big disappointment for us, but we weren't the only ones (who lost money)," he told The Almanac.

Mr. Buffington said he had no inkling that he'd remain in the job such a long time.

"The only reason I took the job initially was that I needed health

insurance. My wife was terminally ill," he said. "I thought I'd get that and get out, but then I stuck around for a while."

During his quarter-century tenure, the treasurer's office evolved from a completely manual operation to the most automated in the state, Mr. Buffington said.

"It's the variety that keeps you going. There are different kinds of problems every day," he said in an Almanac interview. "It's never boring, I'll tell you that."

At his request, there will be no services. ■

Church opens 'pop-up' store downtown

Menlo Park Presbyterian Church has opened a "pop-up" store at 846 Santa Cruz Ave. in downtown Menlo Park to sell handcrafted products from developing countries daily through Dec. 24.

Church volunteers are staffing the store, open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Products from many countries include clothing and jewelry

created by female artisans in Guatemala, many their families' only wage earners. Wastebaskets and several types of bags were made from non-recyclable plastics bought from trash-picking communities in Jakarta.

The store features sculptures and jewelry, made of discarded aluminum, copper, and glass, and created by street people in Nairobi's Haruma slums. There are bags sewn by Cambodian women.

Also for sale are beaded bowls formed in the Darogetti slums of Kenya and wooden bowls and salad servers made in Kenya, with profits used to buy school uniforms and haircuts for more than 200 orphans.

"When people buy our products, they'll be partnering with the poor, helping to empower them to make a difference in their needy communities," says store manager Robin Simpson.



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Published in THE ALMANAC on December 14, 21, 2011

Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Special Care for the Spirit Is Good Medicine, Too

In the midst of the noise and bustle and bright lights of the intensive care unit at Stanford Hospital, about to get a new heart, Cindy Flynn was not afraid. It wasn't the first time she'd been there. Seventeen years earlier, then just 50 years old, Flynn had arrived at Stanford, pain gripping her chest. A heart attack, doctors told her. And the damage done meant she would need a transplant one day. It was world-turning information.

Now, Flynn's life was about to change again and a familiar face appeared: Father John Hester, a tall, ruddy-faced man with a deep, calming voice full of warmth. "I was surprised," Flynn said, "but I actually knew him from our church. He sat and talked to me for a while. We prayed together and he gave me communion, and it felt like I wasn't alone."

For the staff and volunteers of the Spiritual Care Service at Stanford Hospital, that's been the exact idea for several decades now—adding something extra to the work done by medicine and medical professionals, reaching out to patients who need their faith's familiar rituals, like communion, and to those patients

whose faith might be shaken in the crucible of illness.

The service now stands as one of the most well-known, respected and innovative programs in the country. Those who trained in its model of clinical pastoral care lead respected programs around the world; young physicians find valuable new perspective when they shadow chaplains; and hundreds of volunteers make it possible for someone to be at a patient's bedside whenever needed, and for as long as needed.

An extra element of value

Stanford's model of care reflects major changes to what once was commonly called pastoral care and served up Christian denominational beliefs and little else. "The Catholics did sacraments and the Protestants read from the Bible and made a prayer," said the Rev. George Fitzgerald, DMin, director of the Spiritual Care Service since 1988. "Now we're interfaith, and what we do is about support and cooperation. Now we teach the value of active listening, and we never try to convert anyone."

"We're not there to proselytize. We're there to support, to care. It's not something we force on people."

—Mike Flynn, volunteer,
Stanford Spiritual Care Service

Underlying all those changes has been a broader acceptance of "spirit as a significant part of a person's life and something that can really contribute to health and healing," Fitzgerald said. "There are all kinds of studies that show that when patients have a supportive religious community, they tend to do better. And there are other studies that show that at hospitals where chaplains visit patients, those patients drift toward earlier discharge and need less pain medications."

Physicians, too, Fitzgerald said, "have really recognized

the importance of spirituality in a patient's life. They don't always have the time to sit down and take an hour with a family, but they are interested in working together with us, to see us as a part of the health care team."

And that includes the many volunteers—more than 200—who have regular visiting hours or are on call. Mike Flynn, Cindy's husband, has been a Spiritual Care volunteer for five years. He had always gone to Mass on Sundays, and taught a religion class to kids at church; it was not until he retired in 2001 that he had the time to pay attention to that part of him that wanted something more to do—to help, he said. One morning at his church in Palo Alto, the call went out for volunteers for the Spiritual Care team at Stanford. "I just said, 'I'm going to give it a try.' I went to the classes, and it turned out to be exactly, for me, the best thing I could do because of the personal nature of it. It's like saying, 'What would Christ ask of me? Christ would ask of me to bring his spirit to other people.'"

The volunteers are trained to respect all the responses they might get when they enter a room, Flynn said. "We're not there to proselytize. We're there to

support, to care. It's not something we force on people. For people who can't get to a service, we can bring it directly to them—the kind of spiritual nourishment people can't get any other way."

Broad diversity of views

Flynn makes his rounds to Catholic patients. Other volunteers and chaplains serve specific faiths or respond to needs that are more universal. Stanford has a chaplain, the Rev. Susan Scott, who is focused on patients facing death and their families. Scott has special knowledge of the paperwork and other arrangements to be made, stepping in to help make the process less difficult. Through her work with patients, the hospital created a pamphlet to help patients complete an advanced directive, a document that specifies what



Norbert von der Groeben

Cindy Flynn survived a heart attack at age 50, but nearly two decades later, a heart transplant was her only option. During her stay at Stanford, her treatment included visits from the hospital's Spiritual Care Service team.



Norbert von der Groeben

Cindy Flynn has recovered well from her heart transplant, with enough energy to keep up with her grandchildren, including Delphine, a regular visitor to the Flynn's home.



After he retired, Mike Flynn, Cindy's husband, became a volunteer eucharist minister at Stanford Hospital. Because of his work, the value of spiritual care at a hospital.

Serving Spiritual Needs And Sharing the Knowledge

Stanford Hospital's Spiritual Care Service is designed to provide the broadest possible resources for patients and their families. Its services include:

- supportive visits by chaplains and volunteers to serve faith groups whether Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jew, Muslim, Sikh and other options
- religious resources such as Bibles, Buddhist chanting tapes, Muslim prayer rugs, Shabbat candles and other prayer materials
- onsite observances of holidays including Christmas, Chanukah, Eid al-Adha, Diwali and others
- memorial services
- an interfaith chapel open 24/7 that contains sacred writings and prayer books of several faith traditions
- trained volunteers from a variety of faiths

For more information about all the Stanford Hospital Spiritual Care Service's programs, call **650.723.5101** or visit stanfordhospital.org/spiritualcare.

Join us at <http://stanfordhospital.org/socialmedia>.

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 www.youtube.com/stanfordhospital.

"We train them to be respectful, to be reverent, to be gentle in every way so patients can tell us anything they want, how they want, or they can go silent. We're there for them in that moment."

— Father John Hester, Associate Director,
Stanford Spiritual Care Service

actions are to be taken if a patient is unable to make decisions because of illness or incapacity. Just as Scott has a special assignment, so do others. Rabbi Lori Klein works with patients at the Cancer Center; Father Hester is the one who responds to calls from the intensive care units. It's one way to make sure that everyone most in need will have a resource, said Barbara Ralston, the hospital's Vice President for Guest Services. The success of the program, she said, is visible in the philanthropic support it receives from the community and the substantial resources it offers at the hospital. "This service really means a lot to people," she said, "and we're very proud of it."



Norbert von der Groeben

life's medical history, he brings a special understanding of

In 2010, Spiritual Care Services made 245,000 visits to patients, and its volunteers—from 12 countries, speaking 10 languages—gave 103,000 hours. Hester knows quite well the difference those volunteers have made. In the early years of his nearly four decades at the hospital, he might see 80 people in a day, forgetting to eat or drink. Finally, a nurse sat him down and said, "Right now, I should have you see a doctor. What have you been doing?"

"That's when I said, 'We've got to replicate presence, and we've got to bring in more caring volunteers,'" Hester said. "Now we have Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, a diversity of Christians, Wiccan—everyone. We train them in the ministry of presence—to be totally open to the other human beings, to listen. We train them to be respectful, to be reverent, to be gentle in every way so patients can tell us anything they want, how they want, or they can go silent. We're there for them in that moment."

Steady support

Hester and his colleagues try to anticipate when they might be needed at weekly meetings with all the clinicians on a unit. "Sometimes they'll say, 'Would you go and meet with the family? We're going to be giving him bad news and we'd like you to be there.'"



Norbert von der Groeben

The Stanford Hospital Spiritual Care Service program includes more than 200 volunteers in addition to its regular staff and chaplains.

"I don't know how to explain it, but it does make a difference. It's just having somebody there and talking to you as a person, and not just a patient."

— Cindy Flynn, patient,
Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Cindy Flynn didn't have much doubt that she would be OK, but she does believe that she would have felt more pain and would have been more afraid

had she not known that so many prayers were being said for her, including Hester's. Knowing that she was in the thoughts of others, she said, built a feeling that "was very, very peaceful. And that felt good. I felt relaxed enough so I could just concentrate on getting better. It truly does make a difference. I don't know how to explain it, but it does make a difference. It's just having somebody there and talking to you as a person, and not just a patient."

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/>.



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■ The fate of the asphalt path along Alpine Road between Portola Valley and Menlo Park returns to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 13, after the Almanac's print deadline.

■ Woodside Elementary School's campus needs \$5.4 million of work with another \$827,000 in projects, such as installing solar panels, considered lower priority, the one-school district's board learned at its Dec. 7 meeting.

■ Atherton is giving residents until Jan. 11 to comment on what should be in an environmental impact report on the proposed new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park.

Peninsula Christmas Services





Celebrate Christmas With Us!

Wherever you are in your journey, whether church is familiar or not, we welcome you to join us for one of our Christmas services. Whether you prefer a simpler children's service or a more traditional one with the Church Choir, infused with a sense of the sacred that fills Christmas Eve night, we invite you.

Christmas Eve (All services will be about an hour)	
4:00 pm	Children's Communion Service with Pageant
6:00 pm	Christmas Communion Service with the Festival Choir
9:30 pm	Carol Sing
10:00 pm	Christmas Communion Service with the Festival Choir
Christmas Day	
10:00 am	Christmas Day Communion with Hymns

Trinity Church In Menlo Park, An Episcopal Community
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650-326-2083
www.trinitymenlopark.org



Stanford Memorial Church Christmas Eve & Christmas Services



Saturday, December 24, 5:00 pm
Christmas Eve Ecumenical Family Service
Special children's sermon by Rev. Joanne Sanders.
Please bring new, unwrapped toys for children in need.

Saturday, December 24, 9:00 pm
Christmas Festival Service with Holy Communion
Sermon by Dean Scotty McLennan. An elegant service glowing with candlelight and holiday music!

Saturday, December 24, Midnight
Catholic Christmas Mass

Sunday, December 25, 10:00 am
Christmas University Public Worship

Sunday, December 25, 12:00 pm
Catholic Christmas Mass

<http://religiouslife.stanford.edu>



Valley Presbyterian Church in the Redwoods

945 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA
650-851-8282
www.valleypreschurch.org

Christmas Eve Worship

5:00 pm	Family Candlelight Service
10:00 pm	Candlelight Service Lessons & Carols

Christmas Day Worship

10:45 am	Christmas Celebration!
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Board meets on school lease

LEASE

continued from page 9

from a school that believed it had a chance to change the limit in the future and thus have more students to charge tuition.

The district offered 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.

In a Dec. 9 letter to John Ora, Woodland's head of school, and copied to the Ladera Community Association, Las Lomitas superintendent Eric Hartwig laid out the district's position. "On Wednesday night," he wrote, "the Governing Board must consider whether it is prudent and reasonable for the

district to limit a tenant to 325 students for the next 50 years, or whether it is better to provide the School District and the community with the certainty for a 325-student cap for the foreseeable future, but permit flexibility for the community and the tenant to come back to the District and request an increase in students in the future should circumstances change."

A letter from the Ladera Community Association, approved by unanimous vote, says including the cap of 325 students in the board resolution is "the most important request from the Ladera community".

A proposed timetable would have the district signing a lease with a tenant by July 2012. The lease would be for a minimum of 25 years and renewable for up to another 25 years. ■

SUMMER 2012

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Family Service with Children's Pageant

6:00 pm

Candlelight Worship & Communion

11:00 pm

Communion, Readings & Carols
in English and German by Candlelight

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 25

10:00 am

Carols & Lessons

www.gracepa.org



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The Episcopal Parish of Portola Valley & Woodside

CHRISTMAS EVE

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traditional candlelit service with
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4:00pm A Service of Christmas Lessons & Carols

Saturday, December 24th Christmas Eve

4:00pm Christmas Pageant & Holy Eucharist

10:00pm Candlelight Choral Eucharist

Sunday, December 25th Christmas Day

9:00am Holy Eucharist with Carols, Rite I

Sunday, January 1st Feast of the Holy Name

9:00am Holy Eucharist with Carols, Rite II



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Menlo Park Presbyterian Church

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Friday, December 23 at 5, 6:30, and 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 24 at 5, 6:30, 8, 9:30, and 11 p.m.

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The Cafe

700 Santa Cruz Avenue

Saturday, December 24 at 3 and 5 p.m.

(child-friendly services with glow-stick candles)

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Volunteer chosen for presidential award

Playing cards at the Peninsula Volunteers Little House has led to national recognition for one Menlo Park man.

Leonard Friedman, 87, has devoted 19 years of service at Little House, hosting a bridge club and introducing people to the game each month.

"You get a good feeling when you volunteer," he said in a press release. "You teach people a new game, but you also learn from the experiences. Volunteering makes you healthier, happier and wiser."

Selected by RSVP of San Mateo and Northern Santa Clara County, Mr. Friedman was expected to receive the President's Volunteer Service Award during a ceremony on Monday, Dec. 12, at the Peninsula Volunteers Little House.

Facebook meeting

The amount of potential traffic that would be generated by Facebook's plans to employ up to 9,400 workers on its Menlo Park campuses presents a challenge to the city's hopes for making the social networking giant feel at home.

The Transportation Commission meets Wednesday, Dec. 14, to view a staff presentation of the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for

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

Toy drive

Drop off new, unwrapped toys, food, and money at spots around Menlo Park until Wednesday, Dec. 21, as part of the Menlo Park Firefighters Association annual toy drive.

Drop-off locations include the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce at 1100 Merrill St., the Cheeky Monkey toy shop on Santa Cruz Avenue, fire stations and various city-owned buildings such as the police department and Arrillaga Family Recreation Center. The chamber accepts donations Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Kiwanis, Nativity sell Christmas trees

For the 56th year, the Menlo Park Kiwanis Club is selling Christmas trees. The lot is on the El Camino Real at Embarcadero in Palo Alto, in front of the Stanford University football stadium.

Volunteers staff the lot from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays and from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekends. Proceeds will be used to help youth, seniors and

■ POLICE CALLS

This information is from the Atherton and Menlo Park police departments and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent until convicted.

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary reports:

■ Break-in by prying open locked sliding glass rear door with losses estimated at \$4,735 in theft of two TVs, two laptop computers, jewelry and two jackets, Carlton Ave., Dec. 7.

■ Entry through unlocked door with losses estimated at \$1,600 in theft of two laptop computers and jewelry, Coleman Ave., Dec. 2.

Theft report: Losses estimated at \$1,500 in theft of locked bicycle, Sharon

Road, Dec. 2.

Fraud report: Losses estimated at \$700 in unauthorized use of debit card to make several purchases, Willow Road, Dec. 3.

Stolen vehicle report: Tan 2006 Chrysler Town-and-Country, Madera Ave., Dec. 7.

WOODSIDE

Fraud report: Unauthorized submission of change of address form, Kings Mountain Road, Dec. 6.

ATHERTON

Auto burglary report: Wallet stolen, Valparaiso Ave., Dec. 7.

Fraud reports: Possible identity thefts, Elena Ave. and Atherton Ave, Dec. 6 and 7.

the underprivileged in the community.

Nativity School's Christmas tree lot, at 210 Oak Grove Ave. in Menlo Park, has operated with a volunteer staff of parents and parishioners since 1998.

The lot, open through Dec. 17,

features Douglas, grand, Fraser and noble fir trees, wreaths, and garlands. Flame-proofing and delivery services are available.

Hours are 4 to 8 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 4 to 9 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday. Proceeds benefit Nativity School.

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WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY TIPS

CHRISTMAS TREES:

- Select only fresh trees that are deep in color, have a strong scent of pine, and needles that don't fall off when tugged.
- Keep your tree in a waterholding stand and full of water.
- Buy artificial trees with safety approved label (UL or SFM).
- Never use electrical decorations on a metal tree.
- Take your tree down as soon as Christmas is over
- Never place candles near your tree.
- Place your tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces and portable heaters.

DECORATIONS & TRIMMINGS:

- Use non-flammable trimmings; never use paper, fabric, cotton, or anything that will burn.
- Avoid decorations that will break easily or have sharp edges.
- Keep pets and small children away from lights and breakable ornaments.
- Use only lights that have a safety approved label (UL or SFM).
- Discard any lights with frayed or worn cords or bare wires.
- Never use more than 3 sets of lights per single extension.
- Never place presents too close to tree lights or electrical outlets.
- Always turn off lights when leaving the house or going to bed.
- Never leave candles unattended.

OTHER HOLIDAY TIPS:

- Choose toys wisely: make sure toys are age appropriate and are not flammable.
- Have your fireplace professionally checked and inspected yearly.
- Never burn paper, Christmas Trees, or wreaths in your chimney and always use a fire screen.
- Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure they are working.
- Portable heaters need space—at least 3ft from flammable items such as sofas, blankets, and pillows.
- Protect young visitors in your home by ensuring that all lighters, matches, medications, and other potentially hazardous items are in a safe place.
- Keep children away from hot stoves while you're cooking.
- Never leave stoves unattended while cooking.

For more information about fire safety contact:

Selena Brown
 Public Education Officer
Sbrowns@woodsidefire.org
 650-423-1406



Go to
www.reecycleworks.org to
 find out how you can
 recycle your Christmas
 Tree

Holiday Fund Donations

As of Dec. 2, 2011, 47 donors have given \$27,880 to The Almanac Holiday Fund

7 Anonymous.....	\$2,925	Karen K. Sortino.....	100
Mary & Doug Heller.....	**	Bob and Marion Oster.....	**
Tim and Perryn Rowland.....	100	Robert P. Oliver.....	1,000
Janice E. Jedkins.....	400	Mr. Bud Trapp and Mrs. Onnolee Trapp.....	**
Steve Markoulis.....	500	Julie Zier.....	100
Edmon R. Jennings.....	200	Andrea G. Julian.....	300
Thomas Werbe.....	1,000	Barbara J. Ells.....	300
Erika L. Crowley.....	**	Gail Prickett.....	300
Douglas E. Adams.....	300	Diana M. Laraway.....	**
Nancy Davidson.....	250	Thelma L. Smith.....	**
James E. Esposto.....	**	William A. Alfano.....	300
Kathleen P. Mueller.....	100	Ernst & Betty Meissner.....	**
Nancy L. Luft.....	100		
Barbara C. Simpson.....	**		
Joel Wells Schreck.....	100		
L. Robert Dodge.....	**		
Lorraine Macchello.....	100		
Catherine C. Eastham.....	**		
Karin Eckelmeyer.....	100		
Dorothy Saxe.....	**		
Kathy Elkins and Rick Peterson.....	**		
Penny and Greg Gallo.....	500		

** Designates amount withheld at donor request

Donate online at siliconvalleycf.org/almanac-holiday-fund

Importance of literacy in tough economic times

By Roberta Roth, literacy outreach specialist, and Andrea Herz, founding president and current board member of Literacy Partners.

You who are reading this article are presumably not finding it to be a challenge. Unfortunately, this is not true for 15 percent of the adults in our community. That is why Project Read-Menlo Park exists, to increase functional literacy in adults to enable them to improve their lives and those of their families, and to increasingly contribute to their community.

Indeed, in these times it has never been more important to reach out to those in our community who struggle with basic literacy. During an economic downturn, those who are able to read and complete job applications, obtain driver's licenses, and otherwise comprehend the information associated with their work, will be employable.

Kelly, an adult student with Project Read, describes the impact of increased literacy in his life. "Without Project Read-Menlo Park, I wouldn't have my chauffeur's license. I wouldn't have my job. I wouldn't be a citizen of the United States, and I wouldn't understand what I'm voting for. I am very grateful for all of these things."

Project Read, which has been providing free adult and family literacy education for over 25 years, currently has over



Gifts to the Holiday Fund benefit Project Read-Menlo Park and nine other community-service organizations.

80 adult students in its tutoring program and English as a Second Language classes. These adults not only increase their literacy, including computer literacy, but also apply their increased knowledge and confidence at home, raising a new generation of readers and strengthening families.

Azucena, an adult student and Belle Haven resident, explains: "Learning English has helped me create good communication and a good relationship with my daughters. I feel confident when I talk with them. At this point, I know my English is improving."

While Project Read focuses on adults, it is also home to our Families for Literacy (FFL) program for pre-school children and their parents. A recent storytime at the Belle Haven Community School Family Center attracted 21 children and 10 parents. In addition to the monthly storytime, FFL provides arts and crafts activities, nutritious

Continued on next page

Giving to the

Holiday Fund

Your gift helps children and others in need



Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers contributed more than \$95,000, and with available matching grants, \$138,678 was raised for 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched, to the extent possible, by generous com-

munity corporations, foundations and individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. No administration costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies listed below.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula

Provides after-school and academic support and activities for 1,100 youths each day, ages 6 to 18. Operates clubhouses in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, East Palo Alto, and Redwood City and after-school programs at schools in these communities designed to extend the learning day and supplement the schools's curriculum.

Ecumenical Hunger Program

Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 1,500 households.

Ravenswood Family Health Center

Provides comprehensive primary medical, dental, behavioral and preventive health care for all ages at clinics in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. Of the more than 30,000 registered patients, over 97 percent are low-income and uninsured from the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks areas.

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room

Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week in a social and friendly atmosphere to anyone in need. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions from the community, St. Anthony's is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers groceries to take home and distributes clothing to families.

Second Harvest Food Bank

The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributes 45 million pounds of food each year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to some 250,000 people each month through more than 650 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Project Read Menlo Park

Provides free literacy services to adults in the Menlo Park area. Trained volunteers work one to one or in small groups to help adults improve their basic reading, writing and English language skills so they can achieve their goals and function more effectively at home, at work, and in the community.

Shelter Network

Provides short term-shelter and transitional housing services to more than 4,500 homeless men, women and children each year. Offers a range of housing and support programs for families and individuals to become self-sufficient and return to permanent housing.

Teen Talk

Provides educational programs for youth and adults to help teens make healthy choices that will result in lower rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Its iTeen Talki program serves more than 3,500 youth at public school sites in San Mateo County.

StarVista

Formerly Youth and Family Enrichment Services, StarVista provides many programs to help people who struggle with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, relationship and communications issues. Helps strengthen youth, families, and individuals to overcome challenges through counseling, education, and residential services.

Fair Oaks Community Center

Provides housing assistance, childcare programs, older adult nutrition, emergency shelter referrals, legal services for low income tenants and loc-cost exercise programs for youth and adults.

Name of donor _____ Amount \$ _____

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I wish to designate my contribution as follows:

☐ In honor of: ☐ In memory of: _____

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Signature _____

The organizations named below provide major matching grants to the Holiday Fund.

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www.siliconvalleycf.org

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation



Rotary Club of Menlo Park

The Almanac will make every effort to publish donor names for donations received before Dec. 31, 2011, unless the donor checks the anonymous box. All donations will be acknowledged by mail.

Ginny Davison

Jan. 22, 1930-Dec. 1, 2011

Virginia B. "Ginny" Davison, 81, of Portola Valley, CA, passed away at home on December 1, 2011.

Ginny was born in Spokane, WA on January 22, 1930 and grew up in Boise, Idaho. She attended Stanford University, where she met her husband, Orrin "Dave" Davison. They were married in 1952 and eventually moved to Portola Valley where they raised their four children, Susan Barb, Kathleen Hayes, Mike Davison and Scott Davison.

Ginny was active in the community and was a past president of the Woodside-Atherton Auxiliary and served on the board of the Children's Hospital at Stanford. Ginny was predeceased by her sister, Barbara Knipe, her parents, Ambrose "Ham" Burroughs and Bertha "Bunny" Burroughs, her granddaughter, Maura Davison and her son-in-law Charles Barb. She is survived by her brother, Ambrose "Ham" Burroughs, her husband, her 4

children and their spouses, her 12 grandchildren, Sarah and Brian Barb, Molly, Danielle and Shannon Hayes, Kristen, Melissa and Matthew Davison, and Adam, Joe, Jake and Sam Davison, as well as many close friends.

A memorial service will be held on December 18, 2011 at 2PM, at St. Dennis Church, 2250 Avy Ave, Menlo Park, 94025 and will be followed by a celebration of Ginny's life at the Sharon Heights Country Club, 2900 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, starting at 3:15 PM.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations to Pathways Hospice Foundation, 585 N. Mary Ave, Sunnyvale, CA 94085, or to the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.



PAID OBITUARY



Lauren Micklejohn

Children and parents at a recent Families for Literacy storytime at the Belle Haven Community School Family Center.

Continued from previous page

snacks, and a book for each child's home library.

Individuals and groups can get involved with Project Read by becoming a one-to-one tutor, volunteering in our computer lab, referring employees who want to improve their English skills, or volunteering for special events.

Project Read-Menlo Park relies on support from individuals,

local businesses, foundations, the Friends of the Menlo Park Library and government. In 2010, a nonprofit arm, Project Read-Menlo Park Literacy Partners, was established to increase our funding base and ensure sustainable funding for the future. ■

Visit projectreadmenlopark.org or the Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St., or call (650) 330-2525 for more information.

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The Almanac's print
and online coverage
of our community.

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Emil Magrin

August 16, 1927 – December 4, 2011

Emil Magrin received his Heavenly calling in Redwood City, CA after complications from a fall.

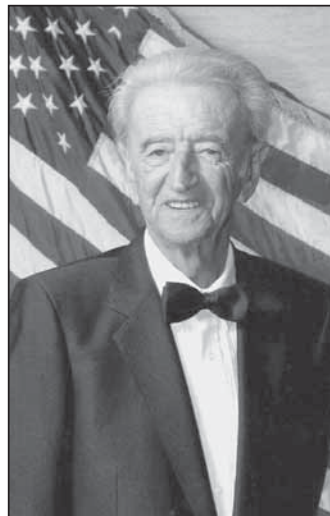
Emil was born in St. Louis, MO, and moved to San Francisco when he was 2 years old, and then to Rockaway Beach, now Pacifica, when he was age 6. He went to kindergarten in San Francisco to learn English, since he could only speak Italian. His father was a farmer, and Emil helped to raise artichokes, cabbage, sprouts, and peas. Emil graduated from Jefferson High School in Daly City 1945. He enlisted in the Merchant Marine, serving on ships that transported troops to the Philippines. He was on Leyte when the first Atom Bomb was dropped. After his discharge, he worked as a carpenter. He obtained a contractor's license in 1952. That year he started driving racing cars (hardtops and stock cars). His father didn't want him to drive racing cars, so he went under an assumed name, Emil Zola, so his father wouldn't recognize his name in the newspapers. In 1959, he bought an airplane and got a pilot's license. Over the years he owned four different types of airplanes and got a multi-engine rating. He moved to Woodside in 1968 and lived there the rest of his life. He retired in 1978.

During his life, Emil was a member of the San Mateo County Mounted Patrol, then the Lion's Club, where he was named District Lion of the year. Later he joined the Redwood

City Chapter of SIR. He was chosen to be SIR of the year for 2005. He joined the Redwood City Elks Club in 1985. Emil also loved golfing and bowling.

Emil is survived by his loving wife of 24 years, Lou Ann Magrin, who helped bring him back to the Lord toward the end of his life. He is also survived by his children, Victoria Beninga (John) of Meadow Vista, CA, and Ron Magrin of Koloa, Kauai, Hawaii; his sister Mary Bistolfi (Pete) of Daly City; Grandchildren Kirsten and Caleb Beninga of Meadow Vista, CA; RJ Magrin of Mountain View, CA; and Heather and Robin Magrin of Woodside, CA. He is also survived by Lou Ann's children Debby Murray of North Highlands, CA; Dan Poulson (Cheryl); of San Jose, CA; and Bob Poulson of Santa Clara, CA; and Lou Ann's seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

A celebration of Emil's life was held on December 10 at the Redwood City Elks Lodge. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting a donation to the Redwood City Elks Lodge.



PAID OBITUARY



Isabel Marant
Vanessa Bruno
Rachel Comey

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Garbage rate hike on Menlo agenda

The Menlo Park City Council plans to decide Tuesday, Dec. 13, whether to hike garbage rates by up to 10 percent for 2012. A staff report recommends an 8 percent hike effective Jan. 1.

On the plus side, staff found the city owes former vendor Allied Waste \$737,000 — \$158,000 less than expected.

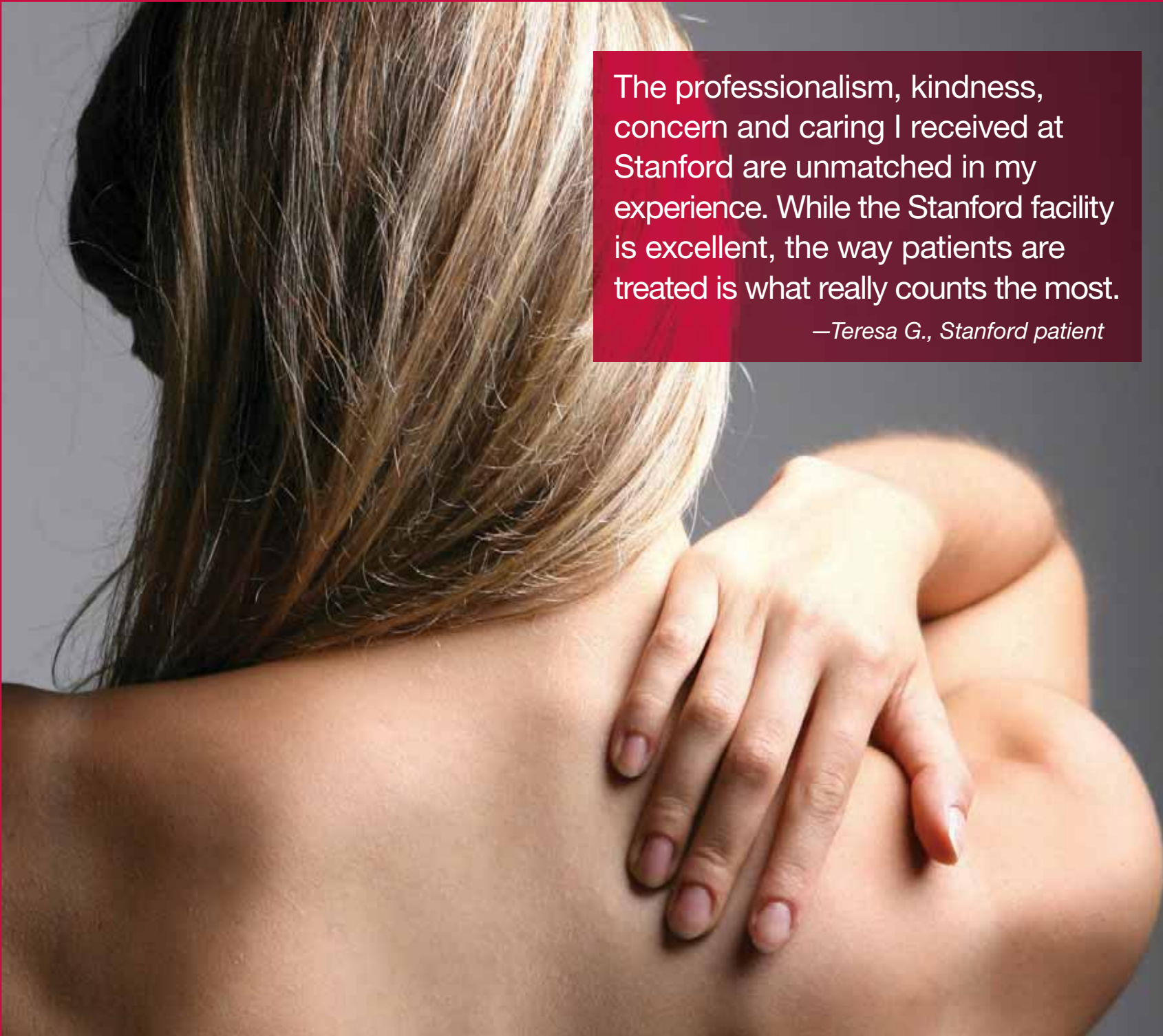
Go to tinyurl.com/cwp3j6 to view the staff report.

Other items on the agenda include whether to spend another \$225,980 for consultants to revise the El Camino Real/downtown specific plan.

The regular council meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center, 701 Laurel St. Prior to that, the council meets in closed session at 5 p.m. regarding negotiations with Service Employees International Union representatives, and then for a study session at 6 p.m. to evaluate taking over Flood Park from the county.

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The professionalism, kindness, concern and caring I received at Stanford are unmatched in my experience. While the Stanford facility is excellent, the way patients are treated is what really counts the most.

—Teresa G., Stanford patient



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The Almanac, established in September, 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County. The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior Court of San Mateo County to publish public notices of a governmental and legal nature, as stated in Decree No. 147530, issued December 14, 1969.

Subscriptions are \$60 for one year and \$100 for two years.

**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.

TOWN SQUARE FORUM

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

EMAIL your views to:

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

MAIL or deliver to:

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

CALL the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

Viewpoint

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

The challenge of living with Facebook

Menlo Park city officials thought themselves pretty lucky when they convinced Facebook to move into the former Sun Microsystems complex at the Bayshore Expressway and Willow Road earlier this year.

When the deal was cut, everyone knew that Facebook would want to raise the number of employees at the complex past the limit of 3,600 for Sun. And, given the site's distance from Caltrain, it was also clear that the biggest challenge would be how to handle thousands of commuting employees every day without creating traffic gridlock on the roads that provide access to the company's headquarters at the end of Willow Road.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

But now the potential impact of Facebook-bound commuters on local roads has been outlined in the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the campus development project. Traffic overload on some streets and intersections looks inevitable unless Facebook converts many of its employees to mass transit since the company is asking for approval to base 6,600 employees on the Sun campus and another 2,800 in buildings leased across the street.

In exchange, the company proposes to limit vehicle trips to the former Sun campus to 15,000 per day. That's not impossible — the company already claims that 40 percent of its workers use alternative transport. It's ambitious, but feasible given Facebook's determination to make its move to Menlo Park a success.

The downside: Without mitigations, Facebook traffic could clog Highway 84 (Bayfront Expressway), Marsh, Willow and Middlefield roads, not to mention traffic on the Bayshore Freeway, according to the DEIR. The city needs to look hard at whether Facebook

can lower its impact on local transportation corridors to manageable proportions before approving the population increase.

Also, it remains to be seen if the report's conclusions that impacts on utilities, public services, and public schools are "less than significant" hold up under scrutiny. Certainly, Facebook employees are dispersed over a wide area and are not expected to cause a run-up in local real estate prices or contribute substantially to enrollment at elementary and high schools, but over time that could change. The company is already working with developers to design housing in Belle Haven to accommodate the influx of workers.

And finally, despite the impact report's conclusion that there's negligible impact on fire and police services, the fire district has prepared a lengthy memo disputing that conclusion. More personnel and equipment will be needed to serve the two campuses, the district says, and that costs money. The city and Facebook will need to respond to the district before a final EIR is approved.

On the upside, the day before the EIR was released, Facebook shared an economic impact study that shows its presence will bring a substantial boost in new jobs, retail spending and other economic activity, including a demand for 14,000 hotel room nights per year. If true, such hotel use would generate \$1.95 million a year in Menlo Park and \$3 million a year in the county, as well as \$300,000 a year in room taxes for the city of Menlo Park.

The reports will take time to digest, and are available for viewing at Menlo Park City Hall until Jan. 23 and also online. The Planning Commission begins public hearings on the DEIR on Monday, Jan. 9. The commission will also consider Facebook's proposal to replace the 3,600-employee-cap at the former Sun campus with a limit on vehicle trips to 2,600 during any two-hour period and 15,000 per day.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Ladera asks for hard cap on school lease

Editor:

On Dec. 14, the Las Lomitas Elementary School District governing board will decide whether or not to impose a binding limit of 325 students on the next long-term tenant of the former Ladera School.

An unambiguous, binding cap is the only way that Laderans can be assured that school traffic and parking are safe and do not grind our only two entry/exit streets to a halt every morning and afternoon.

At its November meeting, the board evaded including the cap, even though the district's representatives committed to doing so at a community meeting at the Ladera Recreation Center in October. This commitment was also covered by the Almanac in early November.

On Wednesday night, if the district does not include the 325-student cap as a binding and material term in their requirements of the successful bidder, the future tenant, along with the district, can be assured of one thing: Laderans will vigorously work to protect our neighborhood during every step of the county permitting process.

Our Regional Heritage

In 1938, Pacific Greyhound Lines moved its depot and cafe to 1181 El Camino Real (between Santa Cruz and Oak Grove avenues) in Menlo Park, and christened one of their new coaches "The City of Menlo Park." Mayor James E. Cooper accepted the city's namesake bus, saying that Pacific Greyhound had played a key role in developing Menlo Park by bringing thousands of people to the community every year.



Menlo Park Historical Association

It would be far better to have clear, unambiguous terms in the lease bidding package. The only way to ensure that happens is for the board to include this in their resolution on Wednesday.

Lennie Roberts
Co-Chair, District Advisory Committee

Menlo Park falling short on Facebook review

Editor:

The city of Menlo Park has taken the responsibility as the lead agency for the environmental impact review of the proposed Facebook expansion. This expansion involves 6,600 employees to occupy the East Campus (former Sun Microsystems site) and 2,800 employees on the West Campus.

No employee cap is proposed as part of the project.

A lead agency is required by law to examine the impacts of the propose project on all of the other impacted entities. Yet the draft impact report blatantly states that this very substantial project will have NO impacts (mitigations – "none required") on the city of East Palo Alto, the town of Atherton, the school districts or the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. This is exactly the posture that the city of Menlo Park took with the Gateway Project.

In its haste to approve this project and to enhance the city's revenues, Menlo Park is riding roughshod over all of the other impacted entities. It seems that the only alternative for the other impacted entities is to sue the city of Menlo Park in

order to require it to properly fulfill its lead agency responsibilities. The city runs the very real risk of having this project delayed for months if not years unless it starts fulfilling its lead agency responsibilities.

Peter Carpenter
Larch Drive, Atherton

Bike coalition urges county to accept funds

Editor:

On Dec. 1, I shared this letter with the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. The letter represents the position of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition on the Alpine Road trail.

We encourage the Board of Supervisors to accept a portion of

See **LETTERS**, next page

High-speed rail critics have come a long way

By Martin Engel

**GUEST
OPINION**

As early as 2003, when Menlo Park was threatened with grade separations that would have achieved what the high-speed rail authority is now threatening to do on the Caltrain corridor, there was hardly any opposition.

The City Council promoted this idea aggressively, and refused to hear any opposing opinions.

By 2004, high-speed rail began to lurk seriously in the Sacramento legislative background. It was opposed by Gov. Schwarzenegger — that is until 2008, when he “flip-flopped” and supported it.

From those early days, the only local vocal opposition came from three people, who spoke before the City Council, wrote angry letters to all the local papers that always were rejected, to many elected officials, and seldom had opinion pieces published by those local newspapers.

Those opposition voices went pretty much unheard. The Almanac, initially favoring both rail separations and high-speed rail, became convinced of how bad that would be for Menlo Park, the Peninsula and California.

The Almanac published our guest opinion pieces and letters to the editor. They published editorials, written by

their editor. They understood just how harmful this project would be for us, and were not afraid to say so and have others say so in their pages. Gradually their stance was followed by other Midpeninsula newspapers and finally, today, the main-stream media newspapers in the Bay Area have followed suit.

The three of us (Mike Brady, Morris Brown and myself) worked with a few legislative members (Republicans, as it happens) who opposed high-speed rail and Proposition 1A on the 2008 ballot.

We wrote drafts of the opposition for the ballot books. Mike, the attorney, organized the three of us into a 401(c)3, called DERAILED. We made numerous trips to Sacramento. We had the pleasure of being publicly insulted by Rod Diridon.

Needless to say, we were among the Menlo Park minority that voted against Proposition 1A and this threatening nightmare of a project, knowing full well what a disaster it would be environmentally and financially.

We lost. Proposition 1A, which the Palo Alto City Council supported unanimously with a resolution, passed. We continued to “politik” as vocally as we could against high-speed rail. We rejected it through Menlo Park, on the Caltrain corridor, and in California.

Most newspapers, until the most recent three or four months, supported this project by parroting the rail authority press releases. At first, state Sen. Joe Simitian wouldn't even listen to us. Now, finally, things are different. There is a daily media outpouring of high-speed rail criticism. There are a number of lawsuits pending against the rail authority.

I'm trudging out all this history, not for any personal reasons; I'm too old to really care. (I'm long past career building.) But, it's to remind everyone of how long this fight has taken to bring us to this point: whereas last year's polls continued to find more Californians sympathetic to high-speed rail, things are different now.

The media now do their due diligence from reliable sources, not the rail authority press releases. Numerous government agencies in Sacramento, the Legislative Analysts' Office the most prominent, have been courageously critical of the project and its mismanagement. The newest Field Poll now shows that a majority of Californians oppose this project.

It's about time! I just hope that it's not too late. I might point out that four years after having unanimously supported high-speed rail, the Palo Alto City Council now unanimously opposes it.

“Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall set ye free!”

You're welcome.

Martin Engel lives on Stone Pine Lane in Menlo Park and is a longtime critic of the high-speed rail project.

LETTERS

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the money offered by Stanford in regard to the Lower Alpine trail to study various alternatives regarding a multi-use path.

We recognize that the existing substandard trail alongside Alpine Road is currently being utilized by children, families, and recreational cyclists and walkers/joggers. We believe that the current trail is unsafe, and believe that San Mateo County should accept money from Stanford University to study various options connected with improving bicycle and pedestrian travel in the Alpine corridor.

While Stanford's money may only be available for the design and construction of off-road multi-use trails, we also urge the county to maintain its focus on the on-road cycling infrastructure in this corridor. We ask the county to support a study that examines further improvements to the Alpine Road/ Interstate 280 interchange. Public Works staff has already proposed several relatively inexpensive improvements to the interchange — however, there may be opportunities to incorporate more significant intersection improvements into a more comprehensive corridor study.

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition members have significant concerns regarding the design of the trail. We encourage San Mateo County staff to investigate innovative design standards, such as the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines, in identifying alternatives for the multi-use path. The study should include a safety analysis for trail users.

In studying the Lower Alpine C1 Trail redesign options, the Coal-

tion would request to be involved in the plan review and offers our expertise in cycling infrastructure to provide constructive feedback to San Mateo County regarding trail design and implementation.

**Corinne Winter
president and executive director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition**



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