

**ARMED MAN invades Atherton home,
confronts residents** *Page 9*

The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSLETTER FOR MOUNTAIN VIEW PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

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Will town say 'yea' to Willie Mays Way?

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

With the backing of most residents of the street, a local Little League leader wants the town of Atherton to rename Mount Vernon Lane to Willie Mays Way, after one of the street's most famous residents.

Sean Barstad, president of Highlanders Little League in Redwood City and a friend of the Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, spoke to the City Council on Jan. 18, advocating the name change to honor a man who is "a great asset to the town" and an advocate for the youth community.

Mr. Barstad told the council that he met Mr. Mays several years ago, when he asked the former San Francisco Giants star to throw the first pitch of the Little League season. "He said no one had ever asked him to throw the first pitch before," Mr. Barstad said.

He cited Mr. Mays' community involvement, including the establishment of a foundation for underprivileged youth, and his work with the Boys & Girls Clubs.

Mr. Barstad said he's been working on the street-renaming effort for some time, and when Jerry Gruber was Atherton's city manager, the project was moving forward. But when Mr. Gruber resigned, the effort was sidelined.

Now, he said, he's working with Theresa DellaS-



Courtesy, San Francisco Giants

Willie Mays has lived in Atherton for many years.

anta, the town's new interim city manager, to put the matter on the council's February agenda.

Meanwhile, Mr. Barstad has gone door to door on the street, speaking with residents of nine of the 14 households, adding that he's not even bothering the homeowner of one of the residences — Mr. Mays himself. No one has said "no," he said.

According to Mr. Barstad, the 80-year-old baseball star also known as "The Say Hey Kid" has lived on Mount Vernon for more than 40 years. ■

Increased ridership boosts Caltrain revenues

By Gennady Sheyner
Embarcadero Media

A year after barely avoiding draconian service cuts, Caltrain officials have several reasons to feel optimistic even as they continue to scramble for new funding sources to keep the trains running.

The agency, which draws funds from transit districts in Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties, withstood a financial crisis last year after the San Mateo County Transit District (Samtrans) drastically cut back its contributions, prompting other agencies to follow suit. The result was a \$30 million deficit on a budget of roughly \$100 million.

The good news for the cash-strapped agency is that its popularity continues to soar, thanks in large part to contributions from major employers such as the Stanford University Medical

Center and Facebook, according to Yoriko Kishimoto, who currently leads the group, "Friends of Caltrain."

Ms. Kishimoto said that increased ridership has created a 25 percent revenue increase for Caltrain over last year, putting a dent into its operating deficit.

Stanford University Medical Center, for example, announced last month that it has already offered Caltrain Go Passes to all its employees. As of mid-December, about 2,000 employees had signed on for the monthly passes. Ms. Kishimoto estimated that the hospitals' contribution brings Caltrain \$1.4 million in annual revenues. Facebook, she said, has shuttles operating for each train.

"The good thing, overall, is that every month since then (last year's financial crisis), Caltrain ridership has been going up and revenues are going up," she said.

But the recent uptick in revenue doesn't erase the need for

a dedicated funding source, which Caltrain still lacks. One idea on the table for addressing the agency's long-term needs is a sales-tax increase for San Mateo County.

Ms. Kishimoto said Caltrain will conduct polls and surveys in the coming months to gauge the likelihood of such a measure passing. Another proposal, from state Assemblyman Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, would raise the sales tax in all three counties to support Caltrain.

Either tax proposal would have to be approved by voters before it's enacted.

Ms. Kishimoto said Caltrain, as a regional service, is at a major disadvantage when it comes to competing for federal funds, which she said tend to go to urban projects such as subways or intercity services. While Caltrain stretches from San Francisco to San Jose, much of its ridership comes from the Peninsula. ■

Fire district helps residents prepare for disasters

For six evenings and a day, starting Tuesday, Feb. 7, firefighters from the Woodside Fire Protection District will lead a series of free disaster-preparedness classes on skills that save lives and protect property, including search-and-rescue, fire suppression and disaster psychology.

The classes are open to residents of Woodside, Portola Valley and unincorporated communities in the district, including Ladera, Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde. Advance registration is required, but previous experience with first aid or disaster training is not.

The classes are an initiative by the Community Emergency Response Preparedness Program (CERPP), a group of resident volunteers with neighborhood

divisions that cover the entire fire district.

Students from outside the fire district are welcome to register and will be seated on a space-available basis, CERPP member John Carnes said, adding that this program has trained 180 residents since July 2007.

The three-hour evening classes start at 6:30 p.m. and meet at the Emerald Hills neighborhood fire station at 4091 Jefferson Ave. The concluding class, an all-day hands-on exercise with lunch, starts at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 17, at the main fire station at 3111 Woodside Road.

Write to pvanhorn@woodsire-fire.org or call Pam Van Horn at 851-1594 to register for the classes. Include your contact information.

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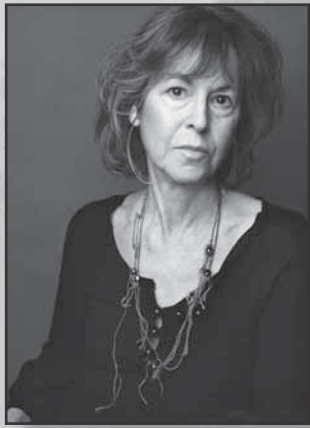
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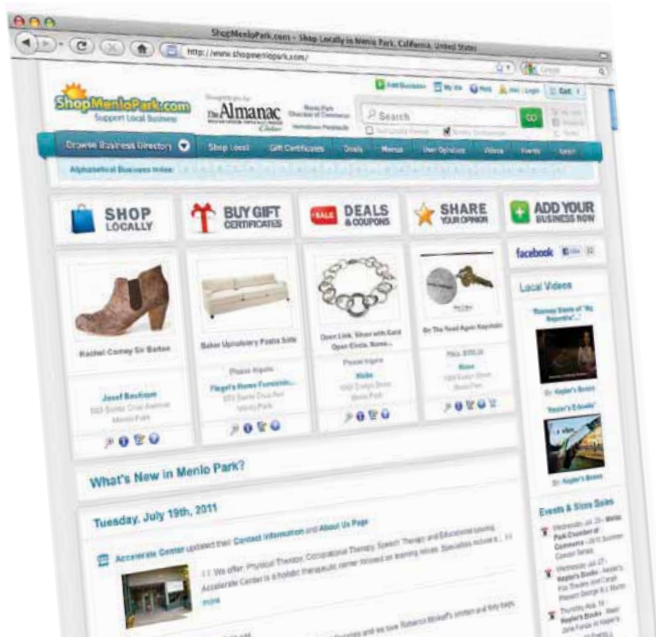
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MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Facebook unveils regional bike plan

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff

Making the streets of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto safer for bicyclists has hit the top of Facebook's community "to do" list as the company settles into its new headquarters on Willow Road in Menlo Park. The social networking giant announced plans on Monday, Jan. 30, to collaborate with local municipalities to create safe, continuous routes through the community to and from its campus at 1 Hacker Way.

John Tenanes, Facebook's real estate director, said the company is making a "significant investment" in the effort, which depends on East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Caltrans to help it figure how and where to spend the money.

Some improvements are already under way. The company got approval from Caltrans to restripe bike lanes from Newbridge Street at Willow Road to the Bayfront Expressway. University Avenue will also get a makeover within the next few weeks. Portions of Willow Road, Middlefield Road, and

MEETING

The Menlo Park City Council meets at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 31, in the council chambers at the Civic Center, 701 Laurel St., to study the draft environmental impact report on Facebook's planned campus expansion. The company has asked the city to let it bring 9,400 employees to work in Menlo Park in exchange for implementing caps on the number of vehicular trips.

Hamilton Avenue may be next.

The pedestrian tunnel passing under the freeway also got a boost, with accelerated plans to reopen the path this year.

"Cycling on the east side of Menlo Park is going to be a whole new experience," Mr. Tenanes said, and emphasized that the idea is to work hand-in-hand with local agencies to see that happen. The exact budget for the project depends on what changes partnering agencies will support.

The initiative was developed with plenty of help from Adina Levin and Andrew Boone of the



Almanac photo by Michelle Le

Indoor bike racks are part of Facebook's strategy to cut car usage.

Silicon Valley Bike Coalition. Earlier this year they spotted several trouble spots for bicyclists while riding to Facebook, including the bike lane on Willow Road ending on Okeefe Street before it widens to two lanes, and the cloverleaf interchange at Willow Road and U.S. 101.

With their input, Facebook has designed a survey that will soon go out to its workforce to help focus its efforts by identi-

fying where clusters of cyclists are riding from, Mr. Tenanes said.

About 47 percent of Facebook employees use alternative transportation to get to work, said Jessica Herrera, Facebook's transportation coordinator. Six percent bike; she'd like to see that number reach 10 to 12 percent.

Terry Barton, who often bikes to his job at Facebook, said changes the company has made

on campus have already shaved about 15 minutes off his home-to-desk travel time by grouping indoor bike racks, lockers, and showers close together in each building.

Employees began spotting bike herds after Facebook bought 60 bikes for anyone to use around campus. "They're so popular that people are riding them to the cafeteria, then

See **FACEBOOK**, page 8

Menlo Park council opts not to pay for Flood Park

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff

Menlo Park's loss of millions in redevelopment money is San Mateo County's gain, a fact which didn't escape the notice of the City Council on Jan. 24 while it debated Flood Park's future.

On the table was a proposal to pay the county \$150,000 for one year to keep the 21-acre park on Bay Road open. The county tried to give the land to Menlo Park as a cost-saving measure, but the city hasn't been sure whether to add another set of maintenance costs to its own budget and wanted more time to consider the offer.

Options the city wants to

explore, according to the staff report, include leasing up to a quarter of the park land and public-private partnerships. Entities that have expressed interest at community meetings include a private school and sports teams.

Menlo Park is still considering whether to accept the land.

Speaking as an individual, Planning Commissioner Henry Riggs told the council that Menlo Park's taxpayers already contribute to keeping Flood Park open and that he wasn't sure the city, with an annual budget of \$30 million, should bail out the county, with an annual budget of \$1.7 billion.

The council agreed. While the city is still interested in Flood Park, the council voted 5-0 to

See **FLOOD PARK**, page 8

Deputy city clerk now in charge

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Deputy City Clerk Theresa DellaSanta is now Atherton's interim city manager, and former manager John Danielson will continue working for the town of Atherton as an independent consultant, but for \$2,000 less per month than the town appeared poised to pay him just a day before his contract was signed.

Both decisions were made by a unanimous City Council on Friday morning, Jan. 27, at a special meeting called after Mr. Danielson abruptly left his post as interim city manager. His departure was in response to a decision — unexpected by town officials — by the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) that essentially forced him to resign.

The town announced late Wednesday, Jan. 25, that the City

ATHERTON

Council would vote Jan. 27 on a proposed contract that would pay Mr. Danielson \$14,000 per month, for up to three months, to help find a permanent city manager, and to serve as an adviser to the new interim manager. Mr. Danielson had been making \$15,000 per month as interim city manager.

But on Jan. 27, shortly before the council met to vote on his and Ms. DellaSanta's contracts, the town issued revised proposed contracts, adjusting Mr. Danielson's salary downward to \$12,000 per month.

Mayor Bill Widmer said the number was recalculated based on the estimated cost of hiring a search firm to recruit a permanent city manager; Mr. Danielson will be paid \$5,000 per month to do so. The remain-

ing \$7,000 per month is to cover Mr. Danielson's work advising the new interim manager, as needed.

Ms. DellaSanta will make about \$8,012 per month in her new post, about 25 percent more than her current monthly salary of about \$6,410.

Mayor Widmer noted that the financial terms of both contracts represent a net gain of about \$1,400 per month for the town.

Urgent situation

The town faced an urgent situation with CalPERS' decision not to exempt Mr. Danielson, the retired city manager of Elk Grove, from a rule that prohibits public employee retirees from working for a single public employer for more than one year if he or she is to receive a pension. Mr. Danielson began working for the town on Jan. 3,

See **MANAGER**, page 8

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Atherton officer named in lawsuit retires

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

An Atherton police officer named in a federal lawsuit for his role in a domestic violence incident and the subsequent alteration of a police report has announced his retirement.

Officer Dean DeVlugt, who turned 50 just days ago, announced his retirement on Jan. 26, effective Feb. 29.

He could not be reached for comment.

Officer DeVlugt is one of four officers named in a still-unresolved lawsuit filed by Jon Buckheit over his arrest during a 2008 domestic violence incident at his Atherton home.

Mr. DeVlugt's role in the incident was placed squarely under the spotlight when it was revealed that he had altered the police report filed by another officer to falsely state that a young boy who was present during the domestic dispute had been physically assaulted by Mr. Buckheit.

Officer DeVlugt was later cleared of wrong-doing by an internal affairs investigation conducted by an outside party hired by former police chief Mike Guerra.

Interim Police Chief Ed Flint

could not be reached for comment on the retirement of Officer DeVlugt, who has worked for the town for 11 years.

During the public comment period of the Jan. 18 City Council meeting, Mr. Buckheit cited a more recent incident involving Officer DeVlugt, a "K-9" officer who handles police dogs as part of his work. The dog in Mr. DeVlugt's care, Lotty, died in November after ingesting part of a sago palm in the officer's backyard. The palm is highly toxic to people and animals, and Officer DeVlugt has been criticized for having such a plant in his yard.

Noting that Officer DeVlugt had earned an additional \$408 per month to care for the dog, and that the town had invested tens of thousands of dollars in Lotty over a two-year period, Mr. Buckheit said citizens were looking for "some accountability" over the incident.

Contacted after Officer DeVlugt's retirement announcement, Mr. Buckheit said he had "nothing to say" about it. But, he added, "I do believe that Atherton finally, after many years, has a competent and effective individual as police chief, and I look forward to him making changes for the better in the police department." ■

■ 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.

WOODSIDE

Residential burglary report: Losses estimated at \$5,500 in theft from unlocked safe. Youth living at residence suspected and arrested by Sheriff's Office deputies after mother found \$1,400 in youth's jacket pocket, Dover Road, Jan. 24.

Auto burglary report: Unknown losses in break-in and theft of hand and power tools from inside camper shell on pickup truck, Park-and-Ride parking lot, Jan. 20.

Theft report: Unknown loss in theft of cell phone from victim's purse while at party, Stockbridge Ave., Jan. 24.

Fraud report: Resident reported four unsuccessful attempts to change password for her financial account, Phillip Road, Jan. 21.

WEST MENLO PARK

Residential burglary report: Burglar apparently entered home through dog door and took laptop computer after rummaging through drawers, Lucky Ave., Jan. 24.

Auto burglary report: Loss estimated at \$250 in break-in and theft of hands-free phone device and GPS, Perry Ave., Jan. 19.

Fraud report: Losses estimated at \$2,900 in unauthorized credit card opened in victim's name, Palo Alto Way, Jan. 21.

Stolen vehicle report: 3000 block of Alameda de las Pulgas, Jan. 18.

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$9,900 in break-in and theft of ring, three cameras, notebook computer, laptop computer, computer and camera accessories, and \$1,000 in cash, Santa Cruz Ave., Jan. 24.

■ Losses estimated at \$9,500 in break-in and theft of jewelry, TV set, gold coins and autographed football, Sunset Lane, Jan. 24.

■ Entry through unlocked bathroom window with losses estimated at \$1,250 in theft of laptop computer, two e-book readers, and notebook computer, Madiera Ave., Jan. 23.

Theft reports:

■ Loss estimated at \$1,000 in theft of bicycle from apartment complex, Fremont St., Jan. 20.

■ Loss estimated at \$650 in theft of roof-top cargo rack and storage box, Nancy Way, Jan. 20.

Animal cruelty report: Emaciated dog taken into custody by animal control officers after being found inside vehicle and lacking food and water, 1300 block of El Camino Real, Jan. 25.

Vandalism report: Loss estimated at \$160 in slashing of vehicle's four tires in apartment parking area, Willow Road, Jan. 23.

Stolen vehicle report: Gray 1992 Nissan Frontier, Willow Road, Jan. 20.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Fraud report: Losses estimated at \$9,500 in cashing of fraudulent check against victim's account, Portola Road, Jan. 23.

Menlo may close housing department

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff

The New Year got off to a grim start for the employees of Menlo Park's housing department. The City Council asked staff on Jan. 24 to move ahead with closing the department, which reduces the city's housing program to the bare minimum required by law, shifting the work to other departments, and eliminates three jobs.

The decision comes as a result of a California Supreme Court ruling that allows the governor to shut down the nearly 400 redevelopment agencies (RDAs) in the state and transfer the assets to local counties, costing Menlo Park almost \$3.1 million. Councilman Rich Cline called the ruling "a death sentence for the housing program."

Menlo Park's below-market-rate housing program, with a budget of about \$25,000 for the

rest of the fiscal year, would become the responsibility of another department, or a contractor. The option to close the housing department included dissolving the Housing Commission, but the council stated a desire to see the panel continue.

Other steps the city would need

Three employees face layoffs.

to take include figuring out how to dispose of the parcels it owns on Hamilton and Terminal avenues. Beechwood School is negotiating to buy the Terminal Avenue property, but Menlo Park would need to dispose of the Hamilton Avenue land sooner rather than later, according to staff, since it counts as an RDA asset.

The closure would cut the city's housing program expenses to an estimated \$103,978 for the next fiscal year. The other two options presented by staff,

which kept some portions of the department open, cost between \$441,553 and \$1.1 million.

Senate Bill 654, currently moving toward the state Legislature for a vote, could change the council's mind if it passes. The bill would leave existing housing funds in the hands of local communities for affordable housing programs, rather than transferring the money to the county. According to city staff, the bill has support in the Legislature, but not enough to override a likely veto by Governor Jerry Brown.

"Tough times call for tough decisions," noted Councilman Andy Cohen, who suggested seeing whether the housing department's employees could find work in one of the city's other departments.

The council did not vote on the issue that night, but took their direction to close the department to a study session on Monday, Jan. 30. ■

Portola Valley lends residents \$100,000 for road repairs

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The Portola Valley Town Council stuck its neck out last week by agreeing to lend money to a group of residents before determining whether they will formally agree to set aside future funds to repay the town.

In an unusual series of votes Jan. 25, the council decided to lend \$100,000 to the residents of steep and winding Upper Wayside Road for road repairs and maintenance. Wayside is a private road not maintained by the town.

But first, by a 3-2 vote, the council decided to hold off the loan until June, when residents could vote on raising their assessment fee to pay back the loan.

"I think I speak for the residents. We're disappointed in the specific outcome," resident Byron Shaw said, then asked the council to reconsider its decision to hold the loan until June.

June would have been too late, Mr. Shaw had argued. Finding a contractor in the summer is often tough. "If you call them now, they

show up in a week," he said. "Call in June, they show up in October."

A minute or so later, a different 3-2 majority voted to reopen the topic. After a bit more discussion, the council decided 3-2 to lend the residents the money right away.

Making the loan never seemed an issue; the residents have repaid over half of a larger loan made for the same purpose in 2006. The split decisions turned on the loan's timing, and a public agency's instinct to do things by the book.

The residents, in recognition of inflation and to help pay off this new loan, had agreed among themselves to raise by 52 percent their self-assessed annual road maintenance fee. But state law requires an election and a two-thirds majority to enact the assessment. In San Mateo County, the next available date is in June.

With its decision, the council is lending money before ensuring that the residents have agreed to raise their assessment.

"I don't think it's a matter of trust" that the money would

be repaid, Councilwoman Ann Wengert said before voting to delay the loan until June. "How can we advance those monies without certainty? How can we, as stewards of that public money, jump over that line?"

An early loan could set a precedent, and could put residents in a bind if the election misses the mark, she noted. "I very strongly feel that (waiting) is better for all of us," she said to Mr. Shaw. "You don't run the risk of alienating the town if something happens that you can't control."

"I guess I'm prepared to take it on good faith," Councilman Ted Driscoll said, then warned the Wayside Road residents in the audience to not expect another loan if they don't repay this one.

Prudence may have gotten the better of Mr. Driscoll as he ended up voting with Ms. Wengert and Councilman John Richards to delay the loan until June, with Mayor Maryann Derwin and Councilman Jeff Aalfs opposed.

After consulting with the Town Attorney, Mr. Aalfs moved to reopen the matter. Mr. Driscoll voted with the majority again, but this time agreeing with Mr. Aalfs and Ms. Derwin to lend the money now. ■

Tribute to those who served in World War I

"Honoring Our History," a tribute to the men and women who served in World War I, will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10, at the San Mateo County History Museum, 2200 Broadway in Red-

wood City.

The traveling gallery, housed in a customized 18-wheel truck, features weapons, tools, equipment, and uniforms; a walk-through trench that simulates the war environment; and videos and

audio tracks.

The exhibit is sponsored by Waddell & Reed, Ivy Funds, the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, and the San Mateo County History Museum.

Admission is \$2.50 for the daytime exhibit.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Holding vs. Selling

Dear Monica: We own a rental property in a good neighborhood that rents well but is not worth as much as we paid for it in 2005. If we sold now, we would lose 25%. Should we hold on to the property longer and hope that it regains much of the original value? Or should we sell now and take the loss? Graham B.

Dear Graham: This is not an easy position to be in. To do the analysis, first you should look at your personal finances and decide if taking a loss would make good economic sense for you. You may have gains to offset and this would be an opportunity to do so. Consult your financial

adviser to evaluate this.

If the property is in a good location and rents well, you should consider holding on to it for a while longer. The San Francisco Bay Area economy is strengthening and home values in top locations may see gradual appreciation over the next several months. Rents have gone up and you may be able to raise the rate on your unit, which would make owning it more appealing. Watch the market carefully to determine if prices are rising. If they are, you may find that in a few years, you will lose far less than you would if you sold now, even including the costs you will incur during this time.

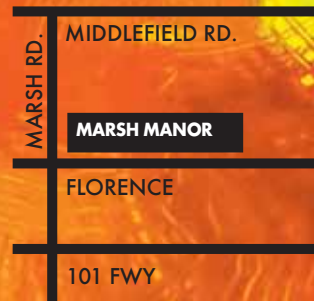
For answers to any questions you may have on real estate, you may e-mail me at mcorman@apr.com or call 462-1111, Alain Pinel Realtors. I also offer a free market analysis of your property. www.MonicaCorman.com



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Menlo School holds 'engineering fair'

By Jill Kasser of Menlo School.

Students, parents and faculty filled the student center at Menlo School on Jan. 13 for the school's annual Engineering Product Fair.

In Engineering I at Menlo School, students create engineering "corporations" to create several products.

For a house project, students design a home for a specific area that is prone to some type of natural disaster, such as a hurricane or tornado. The home must include a wedge, pulley, wheel, stairs and distinct floors.

Students then build a model of the home, and the "corporation" plans marketing tools to raise funding. At the fair, students present their products and ask visitors to "invest" in their company.

One group of Menlo School juniors created an engineering "corporation" called Intuition Design, and they presented two products.

One is a home built for people living in regions of the country where flooding from heavy rainfall can cause natural disasters as severe as Hurricane Katrina. The house has several features including a water wheel for creating energy to sustain the residents during periods of electrical power loss.

They also designed a train using two motors in tandem and a 4-wheel drive chassis that includes a planet of gears, wheels and axles, one double-pole double-throw switch in series with 6 volts, and lights (light emitting diodes) to indicate forward and reverse motion.

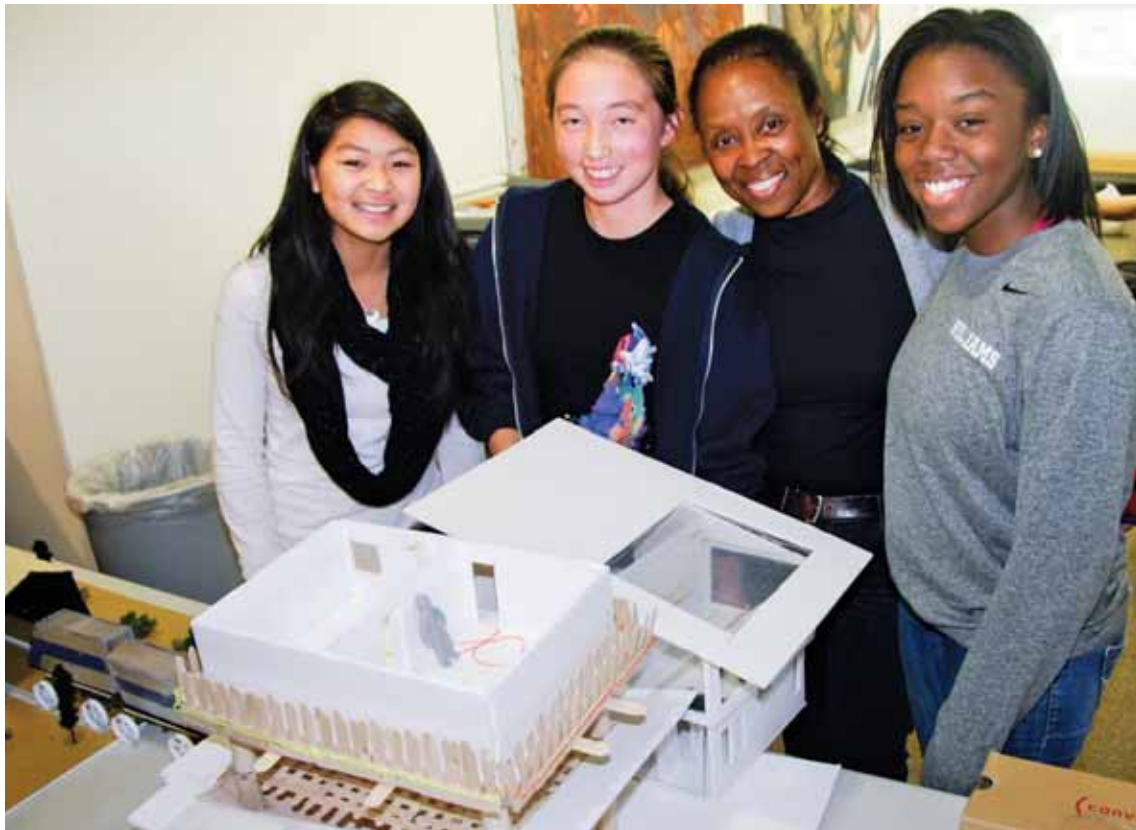


Photo by Pete Zivkov

One team of students created an engineering "corporation" called Intuition Design, and they presented two products (described in the story). Shown are, from left, Annaliese Yukawa, Alyssa Meyer, engineering teacher Joanie Banks-Hunt, and Jasmin Williams.

Deputy city clerk now in charge

MANAGER

continued from page 5

2011.

The council in December requested the exemption, with City Attorney Bill Conners advising that a provision in state law allows CalPERS to grant such an exemption. But a state statute went into effect on Jan. 1 clarifying ambiguous wording in the law, and that change clearly makes an exemption illegal, Mr. Conners explained.

Because town staff was forced to work so quickly to negotiate both contracts by the time the council met on Jan. 27, the council and public didn't receive the proposed contracts until about two hours before the meeting.

Mr. Conners said he worked much of the night to fine-tune Mr. Danielson's contract in such a way that it will pass muster with CalPERS — which is important if Mr. Danielson is to continue his status as a retiree and receiving his pension.

"CalPERS has raised concerns that hiring (Mr. Danielson) back in any capacity will be a sham," Mr. Conners told the council. Therefore, he said, the contract must be solid and clearly state Mr. Danielson's role as a consultant rather than an employee.

The rush was so great that the proposed contract presented to the council that morning had already been revised. Mr. Conners read the revised "Scope of Services" section from a handheld mobile device after rewording that section. This prompted Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis to say, as she expressed concerns over the speed with which the council had to act, that she was apprehensive about approving a document when "the main portion of it was just read from a cell phone."

Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen had earlier presented a list of concerns with the contract, and Mayor Widmer advocated more specificity in both duties and accountability in Mr. Dan-

ielson's contract.

But Mr. Conners stressed the need to keep the contract flexible enough and still meet CalPERS' strict requirements that Mr. Danielson not in any way act in a capacity that could be construed as employment by the town.

In the end, council members acknowledged the need to act quickly, and expressed trust in

One of two priorities the council gave John Danielson when it hired him was to find a permanent city manager.

Mr. Danielson to work in the interests of the town.

Why the rush?

With the town scrambling to secure the CalPERS exemption to keep Mr. Danielson on board — only weeks before his contract was to expire — the question arises: Were the council and

the interim city manager asleep behind the wheel?

"I wouldn't say that," Mayor Widmer told the Almanac.

But one of two priorities the council gave Mr. Danielson when it hired him for 960 hours, up to 12 months, was to find a permanent city manager. The search for a manager typically takes three or more months. So why wasn't the search begun in September at the latest?

"There were other things that were very pressing that took priority with regards to the staffing and the outsourcing," Mr. Widmer said.

Indeed, the other key duty the council assigned to Mr. Danielson was fixing the town's estimated \$856,000 structural deficit — a problem the interim manager approached by outsourcing two departments and laying off 13 of the town's 16 general employees.

Complicating the situation was Mr. Danielson's medical crisis in mid-November, which kept him from work for weeks. When town officials finally came to grips with the fast-approaching

end of Mr. Danielson's contract, "there was an assumption that the law allowed for an extension" to the contract, Mayor Widmer said.

Retroactive retirement

Meanwhile, Mr. Danielson dodged a potential bullet by revising his date of resignation. Although the town announced on Jan. 25 that his resignation would be effective Jan. 27, that date was changed to Jan. 19.

The Almanac reported on Jan. 26 that CalPERS, in a Jan. 19 letter, stated that Mr. Danielson had to "cease employment immediately" if his status as a retiree was to remain in effect. Amy Norris of CalPERS told the Almanac that the agency must have his letter of resignation by Jan. 30, showing that he had resigned by Jan. 19.

When the town sent out the revised reports and contracts on Jan. 27, the date of resignation was not specified. The Almanac requested the resignation letter, and learned that the resignation date had been changed to meet the CalPERS requirement. ■

FACEBOOK

continued from page 5

coming back out to find there aren't any left," Mr. Barton said.

Eventually the herd will expand to include a variety of bikes that workers can take out the gate on to local trails or into downtown Menlo Park, according to Ms. Herrera. An on-campus bike shop in Building 4, complete with mechanic,

will let riders fix their bikes or build their own.

"The message is we're really serious about our (transportation demand management) program," Mr. Tenanes said.

The Menlo Park City Council meets on Tuesday, Jan. 31, at 6 p.m. in council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St. to study the draft environmental impact report for Facebook's planned campus expansion. The company has asked the city

to let it bring 9,400 employees to work in Menlo Park in exchange for implementing caps on the number of vehicular trips. ■

Photo on cover: New indoor racks on the Facebook campus are part of the company's strategy to increase the number of workers commuting by bike. Photo by Michelle Le.

FLOOD PARK

continued from page 5

withdraw the offer of \$150,000. Councilman Rich Cline described it as a matter of simple economics. "They have money and we don't."

Faced with a demand to cut 10 percent from the county's operating budget, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors last year first recommended permanently shutting down the

park, which costs a minimum \$205,000 annually. City staff estimated that the price tag could reach \$595,000 a year, with an additional \$20 million in one-time renovation costs.

The board later reversed course in June and approved enough funding to keep the park open until March. A new nonprofit, the Friends of Flood Park, is also working to save the park, and spending hours sprucing it up. ■

Student held after assault at Summit Preparatory

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

A 19-year-old student at Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City is being held on suspicion of assaulting a woman at knifepoint on Jan 23 in the school's underground garage.

Armed with a knife, David Velasquez of Redwood City confronted a 29-year-old San Francisco woman in the garage at 890 Broadway around 6 p.m. that day, Redwood City police said.

He grabbed the woman and was forcing her toward her vehicle, police said. The woman struggled and was forced to the ground. A witness entered the garage, saw what was happening and yelled at the attacker, who ran off, police said.

The victim, who is an employee at Summit Prep, suffered minor injuries in the scuffle.

An investigation led police to Mr. Velasquez, who is being held

in San Mateo County jail on suspicion of kidnapping, assault with intent to rape, false imprisonment, and making terrorist threats.

The motive appears to have been sexual assault, police said.

Police ask that anyone with information about this incident call police at 780-7100, or the anonymous tip line at 780-7110.

School comments

Todd Dickson, executive director of Summit Prep, said the incident is unprecedented for the school.

He said Jan. 24 he has been working, in consultation with the faculty, most of the day preparing a statement for parents and students. His plan, he said, is to address what happened, point out how Summit is a safe school, and explain what might be done to make the school even safer.

"It's a scary event (and) an opportunity to improve the safety of the family-like culture of this school even more," he said. ■

Council votes 4-1 on new city manager contract

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff

Menlo Park City Council meetings can be packed full of surprises, but the Jan. 24 meeting proceeded much as expected — with one exception.

Newly hired City Manager Alex McIntyre's contract needed a final stamp of approval from the council. Which it got, but not with a unanimous vote. Much to his colleagues' surprise, Councilman Andy Cohen voted against the contract that he'd previously supported.

He said that after a resident questioned why Mr. McIntyre needed a loan from the city to buy a home within Menlo Park, that he, too, wondered why the man couldn't buy a home on his own.

The contract gives the new city manager an annual salary of

\$199,000, plus a monthly \$320 car allowance, along with insurance benefits, according to the city. Menlo Park will loan \$1.35 million to Mr. McIntyre for buying a home in the city, with interest at 3.5 percent; his predecessor, Glen Rojas, also received a home loan. In addition, Mr. McIntyre get \$9,500 per year in contributions to a 401-A retirement plan.

Mayor Kirsten Keith thanked Mr. Cohen for his input, but reminded everyone that the council had unanimously agreed to the terms during negotiations. "People can change their minds," she said. "But it's important to note there was unity."

Historically, the council noted, it's been important to Menlo Park to have the city manager live within city limits.

It then voted 4-1 to approve the contract. ■

Teen sexuality topic of local forum

Counselors, physicians and professionals in the field of teen sexuality will gather for a panel discussion at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, at Menlo-Atherton High School in the Performing Arts Center at 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton.

The event "Teen Sexuality: Get the Facts (What Every Parent Wants to Know)," includes a short film — a public service announcement by producer Kari Nevil — directed at teens and

parents with information and resources on how to investigate further.

Discussions will include sex education, mental health, birth control and pregnancy prevention, and sexual gender and identity. The Menlo-Atherton PTA and the Sequoia Healthcare District are sponsoring the event.

Go to m-aparentedseries.eventbrite.com for more information.

Armed man invades Atherton home

A man armed with a gun and a knife got away with some \$322,000 in jewelry and watches after invading an occupied Atherton house in the 200 block of Atherton Avenue and confronting the residents shortly after 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27, police said.

The residents, a couple in their 60s, managed to escape the house without injury and drive to the police station, Lt. Joe Wade of the Atherton Police Department said in a telephone interview.

Police responded to the scene in force and with a police dog, and set up a perimeter, but the robber was gone, Lt. Wade said. It's not clear where the burglar entered the house or how he got

to the second floor, he said.

The residents described the man as slender, 18 to 25 years old, and wearing a black mask. The investigation continues, but with a special urgency: The burglar invaded an occupied dwelling.

"Everyone takes it more seriously when there's someone in the house," Lt. Wade said. "Property crimes happen all the time and people burglarize houses every day throughout the state," but burglars willing to enter an occupied house "are a much smaller group."

The incident unfolded as the husband was climbing the stairs after his wife told him she had heard a noise upstairs. While on

the stairs, he met the burglar, who then grabbed the husband and demanded money, Lt. Wade said.

The wife made a run for it and had started the car when her husband ran out and joined her. He had bargained with the burglar by offering him \$100 in cash, and escaped somehow, Lt. Wade said.

"As frightening as the situation was, they were both able to handle themselves very well," he said.

Near a fence in the yard, police found a laptop computer and a model car stolen from the house and lying in the grass. In an adjacent property, they found a knife and a pellet gun believed to have been used in the crime.

Firefighters quickly control Atherton fire

Firefighters were able to quickly control a two-alarm attic fire at a large two-story home on Isabella Avenue in Atherton on Sunday afternoon.

Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman credited a worker on the scene for responding rapidly to an alarm and turning a garden hose on the fire.

Firefighters with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District arrived at the home at 96 Isabella Ave. within about four minutes of the call, which came

in at 1:09 p.m., he said.

Firefighters had to lay out more than 600 feet of hose to reach the fire, he said. But they had the fire under control in about 20 minutes.

No one was injured. The fire caused an estimated \$100,000 in structural damage, primarily to the attic space, and maybe another \$10,000 in water damage, the chief said.

The second alarm was called as a precautionary measure due to heavy smoke, and the

risk that the fire could spread rapidly in the all-wood Japanese pagoda-style home, he said.

No one was home except the worker, he said.

Chief Schapelhouman said he suspects the fire was accidental and the cause will be found to be electrical.

The home at 96 Isabella Ave. last sold in 2007 for \$14 million, according to Zillow.com, which said the size of the home is 8,000 square feet.

Kepler's discloses more details about transition

The transition team taking Kepler's Books into a new phase of life revealed a few more details about upcoming changes.

Team leader Praveen Madan, a partner of Booksmith in San Francisco and Berkeley Arts and Letters, confirmed that the new structure consists of a for-profit, community-owned-and-operated bookstore alongside a nonprofit organization offering author appearances, lectures, educational workshops and other events.

Mr. Madan told the Almanac that the team also wants to explore venturing into the self-publishing realm by offering support services for writers. Other innovations being considered include on-demand publishing and e-book friendly browsing.

"The traditional model of retail bookselling appears headed for extinction," said Mr. Madan in a press release. "Now, more than ever, communities need accessible physical spaces where people come together to share their love of stories, ideas and culture.

BRIEFS

Kepler's 2020 is a strategic move to reposition a strong community bookstore to embrace industry trends and new technologies, instead of resisting them. Our goal is to make Kepler's the prototype community bookstore of the future."

The next step is launching a fundraising campaign for the nonprofit entity. The existing Literary Circle Membership program will continue, with a new drive starting in February to raise \$100,000 for ongoing bookstore operations.

Menlo studies Facebook report

The Menlo Park City Council meets on Tuesday, Jan. 31, to study the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for Facebook's planned campus expansion.

The company has asked the city to let it bring 9,400 employees to work in Menlo Park

in exchange for implementing caps on the number of vehicle trips.

The public comment period for the DEIR ended Monday, Jan. 30.

The potential traffic and housing demand generated by the influx of new hires dominated discussion of the project, as well as what public benefits or in-lieu fees the council should seek since Facebook is not expected to generate sales tax revenue for the city.

The study session starts at 6 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St.

Solar workshop

Looking to get into hot water? Craig Rush of Horizon Energy Systems will give a free presentation on solar power for the home on Tuesday, Jan. 31.

Contact Mr. Rush at Craig@gosolarnow.com or call 245-0892 for more information. The event runs from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce at 1100 Merrill St.

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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.

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Editor at the Almanac,
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Menlo Park, CA 94025.

CALL the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

Atherton struggles without leaders

In what appears to be a complete meltdown in communications between the City Council and an interim city manager, Atherton has tapped a deputy city clerk to manage the town while it scrambles to initiate a search for a permanent manager.

This remarkable chain of events began in December 2010, when Interim City Manager John Danielson was hired and told to make finding a permanent city manager one of his two top priorities. The other was reducing an \$800,000-plus shortfall in the town's budget.

To close the gap, it was agreed that the cost of employees was the problem, and a decision was made to lay off or force out 13 union staff members from the

building and public works departments and replace them with contract employees.

Now the town has shrunk to only 29 employees, 21 of whom are either police officers or work in the police department. Only eight other staff members remain to address the city's needs.

And on Jan. 19, council members were informed of a ruling by the California Public Employees Retirement System that Mr. Danielson, who was paid \$15,000 a month for part-time work and collects a pension from CalPERS, could not extend his stay beyond 12 months if he wants to retain his status as a retiree.

A hastily prepared stopgap plan was subsequently devised to pay Mr. Danielson \$14,000 a month (downsized to \$12,000 just before a special council meeting on Friday) to work as a consultant with only two jobs: to help find a permanent city manager and to advise the new acting city manager as needed. Although the contract states it is for up to three months, it could easily be extended if the town wishes. Meanwhile, Mr. Danielson continues to live rent free in a house provided by the town.

How could this happen? How could five members of the City Council not know that Mr. Danielson was not conducting a search for his replacement? How could council members not

know that Mr. Danielson was permitted to work only 960 hours, up to one year, with no exceptions? When will permanent department managers arrive to fill the positions vacated last year and now held by interim employees?

Is there another city on the Peninsula that is so poorly managed? Today, Atherton's workforce is understaffed and now without an experienced leader at the top. And its finance, public works, and police departments are headed by interim employees.

In our view, the city's troubles began when the council and Mr. Danielson thought the budget problems could be alleviated by wholesale layoffs. Other options to raise revenue and union offers to rewrite contracts were ignored, and now the town is operating with many contract employees who have nothing invested in serving the community. Their loyalty is to their company, not the town.

As a town that has virtually no commercial activity and collects no sales tax, Atherton existed for years on property tax revenue and by assessing an annual parcel tax that is approved by voters every five years. But as costs for wages and pensions have increased, Atherton came up short.

Now Atherton has no city manager, and the prospects of finding a truly talented person who could turn the town around are diminishing by the hour as Atherton becomes a textbook example of how to ruin what was once a quiet community that took pride in its employees and quality of service.

Atherton residents deserve better treatment. But they also have to realize that to go back to the old days may require more than a hotshot city manager and a roster of contract employees. The current plan amounts to a discount store operation. Is that what residents really want? There is a chance the town can recover with a talented city manager, but only if he or she is given the ability to bring in quality staff members who care about what they do.

It is time for the council to decide which kind of Atherton they want: the discount model or a first-class operation the whole town can be proud of.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Sanitary District denied sewage problems

Editor:

The West Bay Sanitary District's whiny full-page ad in last week's Almanac serves to underscore the fact that the board of this organization just doesn't get it.

For years staff members have denied ownership of raw sewage bubbling up out of manholes along Alpine and Portola roads during major rain events. Thank goodness for Baykeeper slapping them up side of the head to make them own up to at least some of the problems caused by their solipsistic arrogance.

But rather than admit to the problems in their system they chose to deny and then fight reality in court. After losing in court, too, then they whine about the legal costs of their

Our Regional Heritage

Henry Clay Judd Jr., left, enjoys a ride with a friend in a World War II-era fuel truck, fitted to be powered by horses. Everyday supplies, including gasoline, were scarce during the war. Five generations of the Judd family lived on Sargent Lane in Atherton, beginning in the early 1900s.



Atherton Heritage Association

See **LETTERS**, next page

LETTERS

own bad decision. And then they whine about unnecessary cost in a costly full-page ad. Come on.

Properly designed and maintained sewer systems don't need to pollute our environment. If the district would employ the latest pipeline technologies instead of early 20th century designs there wouldn't be a problem of storm-water infiltration. Get with the program, guys.

Stanley Gage
Old Spanish Trail,
Portola Valley

Women should learn of cancer screenings

Editor:

As a physician, there is nothing more heartbreaking than seeing a patient with a disease that could have been treated, or in the case of cervical cancer, prevented. Too many women are unaware of the simple steps that can save their lives — annual pap tests and HPV vaccinations.

Cancer screenings may seem scary and unaffordable, but with programs like Every Woman Counts, these tests are readily available for those who can't afford them. The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the leading cause in cervical cancer and with vaccines widely available today, the opportunity to reduce the prevalence of the cancer is something to seize.

While January was deemed "Cervical Health Awareness Month," we can't stop there. Educating women throughout the year about the resources available to them will continue to reduce cervical cancer and HPV rates, ensuring the health of all women.

For more information about the "Every Woman Counts" program, please visit www.cdph.ca.gov or call the hotline, (800) 511-2300.

Gregory Lukaszewicz, M.D.
President, San Mateo County
Medical Association

New guidelines for student lunches

Editor:

I was delighted to read the new USDA guidelines requiring schools to serve meals with twice as many fruits and vegetables, more whole grains, less sodium and fat, and no meat for breakfast.

The guidelines were mandated by the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, signed by President Obama in December of 2010, that will go into effect with the

Learning experience in Carl Clark's award

By Brian Belding

Last week's Almanac cover photo of Carl Clark saluting in his dress uniform is posted prominently on my classroom wall; it is a beautiful memory of an incredible day.

Thanks to an invitation from Sheila Dunec and Anna Eshoo's office, I was able to bring a number of my high school students from Eastside College Prep (in East Palo Alto) to the ceremony at Moffett Field. The real pleasure was overhearing them describe the experience to classmates and other teachers at school when we returned to campus.

The full pomp and pageantry of the band, the presentation of the colors, the formal introductions of the dignitaries and guest of honor, all of this was done to not only honor one hero, but the countless others, as Carl noted in his comments, who never received this recognition. Some of my students attend the same church as Carl, and many are his neighbors in Belle Haven.

As a history teacher, I often struggle to make history relevant and personal to the students' lives; as a government teacher, I often struggle to make the bureaucracy and

mechanisms of government have a human face — one that makes mistakes, and also has the ability to rectify these mistakes. All of these things came together Jan. 17 in a hangar at Moffett Field. Carl Clark had no hatred, animosity, or bitterness in his words or his tone. He was not angry; he blamed no one. He was honored.

All of the students had incredible insights and observations about the beauty of the medal ceremony and how it made some injustices from history seem so real.

"A medal is no small thing," as one of my students observed on the drive back to school. "Well, okay, it is really a small thing, but you know what I mean, right?" She was impressed by the simplicity of the gesture — the secretary of the Navy pinning something on an old man's uniform — but saw in it something powerful. "They can't go back in time and make things right," she continued, "but I bet it takes a lot to get the United States to admit when they made a mistake!"

Another student noted that it was "just in time," referring to Carl's 95 years. This led to the best conversation of all. It is never too late to make amends, to tend to old wounds, to seek forgiveness and try to make things right.

It may have been "just in time" for Carl,



Carl Clark at his award ceremony.

but the mere action of awarding this distinction to a black man reminds students who are growing up in a country with a black president that the civil rights movement is not, in fact, over, but still working to right old wrongs. And hopefully they will take with them the image of a man of heroism and great dignity who proudly stands at attention and salutes his flag, despite the 66 years it took to get there.

Brian Belding lives on Laurel Avenue in Menlo Park. He teaches history and government, and is the boys' volleyball coach at Eastside College Preparatory School in East Palo Alto.



next school year.

The new guidelines offer a welcome change from the USDA's tradition of using the National School Lunch Program as a dumping ground for meat and dairy surpluses. Not surprisingly, 90 percent of American children are consuming excess

fat, only 15 percent eat recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, and one-third have become overweight or obese.

These early dietary flaws become lifelong addictions, raising the risk of diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

In recent years, legislatures in

Hawaii, California, New York and Florida asked their schools to offer daily vegetarian options, and most school districts now do. The Baltimore public school system offers its 80,000 students a complete weekly break from meat.

Parents should continue to

insist on healthful plant-based school meals, snacks, and vending machine items. They can consult healthyschoollunches.org for more information.

Miles Barney
Sharon Park Drive,
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