



Starry night in Menlo Park

Benefit raises \$2 million for Alzheimer's research | Page 3

The Almanac

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

MAY 16, 2012 | VOL. 47 NO. 38



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A single seat



There's high demand for the lone contested seat on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

page 5

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Celebrity guests at "Part the Cloud" included, from left, Virginia Madsen, Mickey Hart, Joan Baez, Bill Walton, Barb Young, Steve Young, and chair Michaela "Mickey" Hoag.

It was a starry starry night

Benefit raises \$2 million for Alzheimer's research

By Jane Knoerle

Almanac Lifestyles Editor

More than 300 guests dined, danced and schmoozed with celebrities May 5 at "Part the Cloud," benefiting Alzheimer's Association's research efforts in Northern California.

The star studded-gala at the Rosewood Sand Hill in Menlo Park featured "living legend" Tony Bennett, former Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart and his band, singer/songwriter Joan Baez, and basketball star Bill Walton. Actress Virginia Madsen ("Sideways") added a touch of Hollywood glamour. Terry Moran, co-anchor of ABC News "Nightline," served as master of ceremonies.

The celebrity guest list also included Steve and Barb Young, Ronnie and Karen Lott, and several Silicon Valley titans, including George Marcus, Geoff Yang, Don Dixon, and Doug Mackenzie. Wendy Schmidt, wife of Google CEO Eric Schmidt, was also in attendance.



Tony Bennett sang at the May 5 "Part the Cloud" benefit.

Michaela "Mikey" Hoag of Atherton chaired the event. In an article in the Feb. 15 issue of the Almanac, Ms. Hoag said she was "hoping for a sellout to raise \$300,000 to \$400,000." Definitely a sellout, the event raised \$2 million.

Ms. Hoag, who lost her father to Alzheimer's disease

five years ago, put together a savvy committee of women, many of whom have chaired major charity events. They included: Melissa Badger, Ellen Drew, Sue Foley, Liz King, Lulu Frye, Laurie Jacob, Anne Lawler, Bren Leisure, Betsy Matteson, Debbie Robbins, Paula Robichaud, Sally Robinson and Ellen Rose.

After a VIP reception on the hotel terrace, guests entered a tent through a hallway decorated with masses of white flowers — roses, peonies, tulips and orchids, accented with blue hydrangeas. An ethereal atmosphere was created within the tent with white sheer draping, sky blue backdrop, and white carpeting. Dining tables were glass topped with lighted "cloud" bases. Two alternate centerpieces were used featuring white peonies and blue hydrangeas.

Tony Bennett entertained after dinner and the party continued with a jam session and dancing to the music of Mickey Hart and his band. ■

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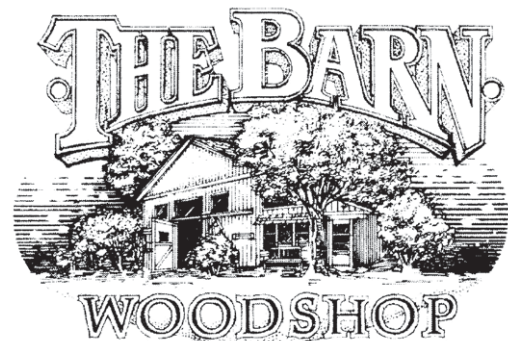
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Seven seek single Board of Supervisors seat

Candidates weigh in on key county issues.

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Creativity is an asset in the arts, but does it matter when trying to solve a complex financial puzzle such as the recent budget deficits in San Mateo County government, including a projected \$26 million shortfall for the next fiscal year?

The voters will decide in the June 5 election who is best qualified among the seven candidates running to succeed Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, one of five county supervisors. If a candidate receives more than 50 percent of the vote, that candidate will be elected. Otherwise, the top two vote-getters will face a runoff election in November.

Ms. Jacobs Gibson represents District 4, which includes East Palo Alto, much of Menlo Park and nearby unincorporated communities. She was appointed to the job in 1999, then re-elected three times. She can't run again because she is termed-out.

Running for her seat are, in alphabetical order, Andrew Cohen and Kirsten Keith, both of the Menlo Park City Council; Shelly Masur of the Redwood City School District board; Memo Morantes of the county Board of Education; Carlos Romero of the East Palo Alto City Council; Ernie Schmidt of the Redwood City Planning Commission; and Warren Slocum, former registrar of voters and county clerk/recorder.

San Mateo County is home to 20 incorporated cities and towns, several unincorporated communities, thousands of acres of open space and parks, some 750,000 residents and 335,400 registered voters, according to the Elections Office statistics.

Although a supervisor represents a district, and the candidates must reside in the district, they run county-wide. With turnout expected to be low for the June primary election, candidates tend to focus on the



100,000 or so residents expected to vote.

County services overseen by the Board of Supervisors include public health; the county jail; criminal prosecution; child support; care for the aged and people with disabilities and behavioral problems; protection of the environment and county parks; and housing for residents with financial hardships.

The Almanac sent questions on several important issues to all seven candidates; their responses are the basis for this story.

Lowering the deficit

San Mateo County faces a projected budget deficit of \$24 million to \$28 million for the fiscal year that starts July 1. The Almanac asked the candidates what they would do to address this problem.

Mr. Schmidt would have county government learn to live within its means by streamlining its functions, not by changing tax rates or cutting programs. That is kicking the can down the road, he said. The county should cultivate new sources of revenue. "I want to seek out those companies that are ready to expand and make sure that they expand here. I want to seek out new companies that are able to sustain growth and revenue."

Budgets have already been hit hard, Mr. Morantes said. Cities and towns have already "trimmed the fat, cut the marrow and deboned their budgets," he said. "We must formulate public-private partnerships. ... One of the ways businesses can help is to ensure that our county remains a strong, vibrant attractive place to live and work. Through innovative collaboration, we can keep the business engine running smoothly for both the public and private sector."

It's a structural deficit, Mr. Romero said, a problem that will require two to three years to correct, and everyone at the table. "We need a balanced approach that looks at the revenue side of the equation in a way that is collaborative and accountable," he said. The tax

increases on the ballot — measures T, U and X, meant to tap visitors' wallets — "are a good place to start," Mr. Romero said. "We should also recalibrate user fees to reflect the actual cost of providing those services."

As an example of what she would bring to the board, Ms. Keith pointed to Menlo Park's response to a loss of \$1.5 million in redevelopment funding and the city's decision to contract out for below-market-rate housing. "I have a long track record of making tough decisions," she said. She said she would not have voted to raise the salary of the newly appointed county controller. "This sends the wrong message when we are asking other employees to make concessions."

Stay the course, Ms. Masur said, referring to the county manager's five-year plan to achieve a budget surplus. "This plan is based on revenue projections, spending cuts, negotiated labor savings, and structural and management changes," she said. "A multi-faceted approach is necessary because the provision of county-wide services is multi-faceted and multi-dependent, so each budget item must be evaluated in its unique context."

Mr. Slocum's approach would include being realistic in crafting a financial plan, imaginative in cutting costs, efficient in operations, thrifty in ways like the timely billing of hospital patients, and smart in making decisions. "We can't continue to spend money we don't have," he said. "If we continue to do business as usual, we will affect the county's credit rating, leave the county without good options to respond to unforeseen emergencies, and threaten critical services."

Mr. Cohen said that he supports measures T, U and X; that with incentives, developers might build more affordable housing; that he expects the board to make further layoffs; and that the layoffs should avoid public safety and health care. "Some difficult choices will have to be made through effective collaboration among the five supervisors based on staff recommendations while preserving key services and meeting the housing needs of our growing population," he said.

Andrew Cohen

Residence: Menlo Park

Age: 72

Education: Bachelor's degree (with honors) in economics, Dartmouth College; law degree, Stanford University

Occupation: Retired lawyer and workers' compensation judge

Public Service: Current Menlo Park city councilman and former mayor



Andrew Cohen

Memo Morantes

Residence: Menlo Park

Age: 64

Education: Some college and insurance certification from the American College

Occupation: Insurance and financial services professional

Public service: Three-term member of county school board



Memo Morantes

Kirsten Keith

Residence: Menlo Park

Age: 45

Education: Bachelor's degree in political science with an international relations emphasis, University of California at Santa Barbara; law degree from Golden Gate University

Occupation: Practicing attorney

Public Service: Current Menlo Park city councilwoman and mayor, former planning commissioner, housing commissioner, soccer coach, women's advocate, including for victims of domestic violence



Kirsten Keith

Carlos Romero

Residence: East Palo Alto

Age: 52

Education: Bachelor's degree in international relations and economics, Stanford University; Loeb Fellow, graduate school of design-urban planning/finance, Harvard University; Fannie Mae Fellow, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Occupation: Affordable housing/economic development consultant

Public service: Current city councilman and former mayor, planning commissioner; volunteer on issues of rent stabilization, housing, regional government, transportation, environmental justice, community law, at-risk youth and the Latino community



Carlos Romero

Shelly Masur

Residence: Redwood City

Age: 47

Education: Bachelor's degree from Macalester College; master's degree in public health from Hunter College/ City University of New York

Occupation: Nonprofit executive director

Public Service: Seven years on elementary-and-middle-school board; member of hospital community advisory committee, county public health task force, Peninsula leadership groups



Shelly Masur

Ernie Schmidt

Residence: Redwood City

Age: 46

Occupation: On sabbatical from management position

Education: Two years at Foothill and de Anza community colleges

Public service: Member of planning commission, Latino community and leadership associations, and neighborhood association



Ernie Schmidt

Warren Slocum

Residence: Redwood City

Age: 64

Education: Bachelor's degree in U.S. history, San Diego State University

Occupation: Retired chief elections officer & assessor-county clerk-recorder for San Mateo County

Public Service: Twenty-four years as countywide elected official and, earlier, appointed to positions in government



Warren Slocum

Unions and pensions

Pension reform for unionized government employees is a hot-button issue that has and will continue to come before the Board of Supervisors, along with construction projects in unincorporated communities that directly affect the interests of the building trades.

Of the four sitting supervisors, campaign websites show

See **SUPERVISOR SEAT**, page 8

NOTE: There are actually two more supervisor seats up for election June 5. But the incumbents, Dave Pine in District 1 and Adrienne J. Tissier in District 5, face no opposition.

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WINE AND SPIRITS

2011 Rosé: Part I

Rosé season is now in full swing. The 2011 vintage seems to have produced classic wines that are snappy, crisp and very fresh. Dare I say better than the great 2010s? Well, you decide...

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2011 Dom. Sorin, Cotes de Provence	\$11.99
2011 Dom. De Fontaine "Gris de Gris," Corbieres	\$13.49
2011 Triennes, Vin de Pays du Var	\$14.99
2011 Andrieux, Cotes de Provence	\$14.99
2011 Ollieux Romanis "Classique," Corbieres	\$15.99
2011 Le Clos du Caillon, Cotes du Rhone	\$17.99
2011 Mas de Gourgonnier, Les Baux de Provence	\$19.99
2011 Lucien Crochet, Sancerre Pinot Rosé	\$27.99
2011 Dom. du Gros Noré, Bandol	\$29.99

* Mix and match the above wines for a 10% discount on 6 or more bottles.

Compost set fire at Willow Road house

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

It was the compost that set a Willow Road house in Menlo Park on fire March 6, displacing a family of four for at least a year, investigators have concluded.

The fire started in a compost pile lying next to the house and near an attic vent, Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman said on May 9.

A recent tree trimming cleared the way for more sunlight to hit the pile, accelerating decomposition and creating enough heat to start a blaze, according to the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. The fire entered the house through the vent and possibly a side wall air-conditioning unit.

The fire ruined portions of the home at 52 Willow Road, which had been remodeled six months

earlier. No one was hurt, but a family of four, along with two visiting grandparents, are living elsewhere for an indefinite time until repairs are wrapped up. Damages were estimated at \$310,000.

Neighbors living next door were temporarily forced out of their home thanks to smoke damage, the district said. While firefighters focused on protecting the neighbor's home, which has a "highly flammable" wood-shingled roof, open windows let smoke stream inside, the district reported.

The morning of the fire, neighbors reported hearing a "boom" shortly before 11 a.m. and seeing flames leap from a front corner of the home. Firefighters said they arrived on the scene about two minutes after the 911 call. ■

Menlo Park police want to connect with you

■ City launches new social media tools.

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Take your pick: Facebook, Twitter, Nixle — the Menlo Park police department is there, and hoping you'll join in.

Expanding community outreach is one of the department's goals, explained police spokesperson Nicole Acker, and social media provides an opportunity to build relationships with the public. "With the growing technological trend and improvement in communication services, there is an expectation from the community for us to provide real-time notification/news and keeping them connected and informed," she said in an interview following the social media launch on May 8.

While Facebook and Twitter expand the audience for the department's press releases and other updates, Nixle delivers alerts via email or text messaging to subscribers.

Within the past year the department also started promoting CrimeReports.com, an online crime-tracking website that dis-

plays all reported incidents within a given location and timeframe.

The police department outreach follows in the footsteps of another city initiative. Menlo Park promoted Nextdoor — a "free and private social network for neighborhoods" — in April. "We believe a healthier and more engaged city creates stronger communities," said Cherise Brandell, Menlo Park Community Services Director. "Nextdoor will help create a stronger and safer community and build on the strong neighborhood connections people in Menlo Park already have."

Before subscribing to a neighborhood group, Nextdoor members must verify that they live within that neighborhood. Information shared within the group can't be accessed by those outside the neighborhood or found via search engines, Ms. Brandell said in a press release.

Several Nextdoor neighborhood groups already exist in Menlo Park, including: Suburban Park, the Willows, Stanford Hills, Vintage Oaks, Lorelei, Stanford Oaks, North Fair Oaks, Linfield Oaks, University Heights, The Oaks, and Sharon Heights.

Go to Nextdoor.com to learn more. ■

LINKS

Menlo Park police social media links:

- Facebook (facebook.com/pages/Menlo-Park-PD)
- Twitter (twitter.com/#!/MenloParkPD)
- Nixle (nixle.com)



Rotary Club of Menlo Park scholarship winners are, from left, front row: Chrishanae Neal, Silvia Vasquez, Eduardo Lopez, Carlos Hernandez, Angelica Perez, Katherine Garcia and Josephine Bauzon. Middle row: Kailin Rasmussen, Adriana Zuno, Daniela Gomez-Jaimes, Lauren Longmire, Lindsay McCray, Amanda Harden and Courtnie Roache. Back row: Colin McGill, Daniel Noriega-Diaz, Richard Tran, Juan Francisco Gonzalez, George Nickings II and Gavin Rea. Not pictured: Catherine Mullings, Rafael Rios and Daniel Kopisch.

Rotary Club awards scholarships

Twenty-three graduating seniors from three local high schools received college scholarships from the Rotary Club of Menlo Park on May 7 during ceremonies where more than 100 additional students received scholastic achievement awards.

The need-based scholarships, totaling more than \$75,000, included \$60,000 for students attending four-year colleges, and \$15,000 for those going to community colleges and the recipient of an arts scholarship. Students from Eastside College Preparatory, Sacred Heart Preparatory and Menlo-Atherton received scholarships and academic awards. The academic honors also went to students from Menlo School and Mid-Peninsula High School.

The students who received the scholastic awards were selected by their school. The awards were handed out by school principals and headmasters as parents, friends and fellow students looked on at the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center on May 7. The ceremony was preceded by an uplifting address from Bret Simon, a trainer for the Positive Coaching Alliance and former Stanford men's soc-

cer coach.

Rotary Club president Bill Senner welcomed the students to the event and Rotary Club Foundation president John Flegel handed out the scholarships. Club member Michelle Tsui presented her family's math and science scholarship, awarded every year to a top-performing young woman, and Drue Kataoka presented the arts scholarship endowed by her work.

Here are the recipients of this year's Rotary Club of Menlo Park scholarship awards:

■ Tsui/Tsiang Family Math and Science Scholarship to Angelica Perez, Eastside Prep, who is headed to Yale.

■ Judge John D. Russell Scholarship to Catherine Mullings, Sacred Heart, who is headed to Stanford.

■ Robert G. Paroli Family Scholarship to Chrishanae Neal, Eastside Prep, who is headed to Wellesley.

■ Doris and Orm Rector Scholarship to Eduardo Lopez, Eastside Prep, who is headed to Wesleyan.

■ Ed Mintz Scholarships to Daniela Gomez-Jaimes, Eastside Prep, going to Berkeley, and Adriana Zuno, Sacred Heart, who is headed to Santa Clara.

■ Crittenden Family Scholarship to Daniel Noriega-Diaz, Eastside Prep, who is headed to Pitzer.

■ Business and Professional Scholarship to George Nickings II, Eastside Prep, who is headed to St. Olaf.

■ Menlo Park Rotary Foundation Scholarships to Katherine Garcia, Eastside, Loyola Marymount; Carlos Hernandez, Eastside, UC Davis; Lauren Longmire, Eastside, UC Riverside; Lindsay McCray, Eastside, Santa Clara; Gavin Rea, M-A, Mount Alison; and Silvia Vasquez, Eastside, MIT.

■ Drue Kataoka Arts Scholarship to Kailin Rasmussen.

■ Tom Borden grants for community college scholarships went to Josephine Bauzon, Amanda Harden, Daniel Kopisch, Colin McGill and Rafael Rios, all of Eastside Prep.

■ Rotary Foundation Awards for community college scholarships went to Juan Francisco Gonzalez, Courtnie Roache and Richard Tran, all of Eastside Prep.

Visit tinyurl.com/Rotary-510 to see photos of the ceremony on the Rotary Club's Facebook page.

Flint may be named permanent police chief

Interim Police Chief Ed Flint is likely to become Atherton's permanent chief when the City Council votes on Wednesday, May 16, on a recommendation by the town's interim city manager.

The matter goes before the council on the consent calendar, which means it could be approved with no discussion unless someone asks that it be pulled off the calendar and taken up as a separate matter.

The recommendation calls

■ ATHERTON

for paying Mr. Flint \$14,500 per month and authorizing the city manager to negotiate a contract with him. The monthly salary is the same that he's been paid since his July appointment as interim chief.

He received no benefits as interim chief, and Interim City Manager Theresa DellaSanta said determining his benefits as chief will be part of the negotia-

tions.

Also on the May 16 agenda is a public hearing on the proposed 2012-13 fiscal year operating and capital improvement budget; and a discussion of Menlo Park's response to issues and concerns raised by Atherton about the Facebook project's impact on the town, particularly on traffic circulation.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 94 Ashfield Road in the Town Center.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



I Think It's Mine!

Dear Gloria, We have just sold our house and we are wondering if there is any problem with taking a rose bush that we planted when we moved in. I feel like it is mine but our realtor advises against removing it. I am curious why that would be a problem, if it is.

Dear Jennifer, The law is that anything that is attached to the property is real property rather than personal property. Certainly a rose bush which is firmly in the ground and sprouting roses would be considered part of the real property. Imagine moving into a property you just bought and the van

pulls up and all the trees and shrubs have been removed! You wouldn't be happy. However, it often happens at the time an offer comes in the seller will ask if a particular item which is considered to be part of the real property can be excluded. Most often this is a chandelier, a bookcase or now with the televisions attached to the wall, a seller can ask that they be excluded. Or a better way to make sure that you can keep your rose bush would have been at the time you signed the listing and notified potential buyers that you would be taking it.

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Portola Valley district may lay off classroom aides

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Thirteen part-time classroom aides may lose their jobs in the next school year as the Portola Valley School District struggles with a financial crisis brought on in part by newly discovered budgeting irregularities that occurred during the tenure of former superintendent Tim Hanretty.

Mr. Hanretty resigned as superintendent in January, and

faces three felony counts that include misappropriation of public funds stemming from his employment in the Woodside School District.

The school board on May 9 voted unanimously to send pink slips to the 13 aides, whose combined hours are the equivalent of almost seven full-time positions.

Interim Superintendent Carol Piraino, who recommended the action, and school board President Scott Parker did not return

numerous phone calls seeking comment.

The board's action doesn't necessarily mean the layoffs will occur, but the district is required by law to send pink slips to employees by May if it does in fact lay them off at the end of the school year. School districts across the state have sent pink slips to employees by the legal deadline to allow for the option of layoffs as they face tough challenges figuring out ways to balance their budgets.

In the Portola Valley district's case, a projected budget deficit the school board had been working to address for the 2012-13 school year unexpectedly grew by at least \$418,000 when auditors late last month found evidence of possible misappropriation of funds from the time Mr. Hanretty served as superintendent.

The auditors, a financial adviser from the San Mateo County Office of Education, and district interim financial

officer Mark Bonnett continue to work on sorting through the district's finances, including the effects of Mr. Hanretty's underestimation of employee-benefit costs in the current budget.

The board will hear updates by the investigators at its Wednesday, May 16, meeting, which begins at 4 p.m. with a closed session and continues at 5 p.m. in open session. The meeting will be in the district office annex building at 4575 Alpine Road in Portola Valley. ■

Seven seek single Board of Supervisors seat

SUPERVISOR SEAT

continued from page 5

significant union endorsement for Don Horsley and Dave Pine and little to none for Carole Groom, Adrienne Tissier and Ms. Jacobs Gibson.

Among the seven candidates running for Ms. Jacobs Gibson's seat, Mr. Morantes received one endorsement from a trade union council, and Mr. Slocum received a similar but conditional "open" endorsement.

Union support for Ms. Masur is significant. The councils that support Mr. Morantes and Mr. Slocum also support her, as do electrical workers, plumbers and steamfitters, firefighters — including firefighters in the Menlo Park and Woodside fire protection districts — and government employees, including those in county government and in the governments of Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Redwood City.

"I am proud to have the support of both labor and business leaders, as well as from Republicans, Democrats and Independents," Ms. Masur said in response to a question about union support. With the unconditional support of the San Mateo County Central Labor Council, "I do have support, both as an endorsement and financial from some unions that represent county employees," she said.

"I am committed to working collaboratively with employee groups to address issues facing the county, including budgetary," she said. "I believe that good relationships are key to solving problems and will continue to build on those I have fostered."

Former state legislator Joe Nation, now a public policy professor at Stanford, said recently that San Mateo County's pension obligations are 47.2 percent funded, and that the county

spends 18 percent of its total annual expenditures on pension obligations.

Asked to comment, Ms. Masur disputed Mr. Nation's figures, saying that the pension obligations are 75 percent funded and that the system is "relatively healthy." The average payout is \$40,000 a year, "despite the media's portrayal of lavish pension benefits," she added.

In any case, pension reform should not be decided by voters — as was done with Measure L in Menlo Park in 2010 — because, she said, "these benefits are an agreement between the employer and the employee."

But government retirees with six-figure pensions who go back to work on government contract do "undermine the integrity of the entire public employee pension system," Ms. Masur added. "We should examine whether such practices can be reduced or eliminated."

Ms. Keith said she would be guided by a 2011 reform proposal from Gov. Jerry Brown that includes retirement at 67 (earlier for public safety employees), 401k-like employee contribution plans, an end to retroactive pension increases and benefit spiking through supplemented final-year salaries, and limits to post-retirement government employment. "We are all in this together and must work toward a solution together," she said. She did not receive a union endorsement.

Unions have a democratic right to enter the political arena, Mr. Romero said, but accepting union or corporate money "could be seen as compromising one's ability to be seen as fair and impartial." Regarding pension reform, he said he would put a two-tier system in place immediately and otherwise echo Gov. Brown's plan. "Solving this complex problem will require that all parties negotiate in good faith and trust that each

party's positions will be handled respectfully," he said.

Mr. Cohen, too, said he would move to two tiers, raise the retirement age, and increase employee contributions. As for union endorsements, he had this to say: "I have not sought nor accepted support from any union representing county employees. I believe to do so would create the appearance of impropriety, and I must be above suspicion in this respect. In making decisions as a supervisor, if elected, it is essential that I be totally detached and objective in considering the issues before me."

On pension reform, Mr. Morantes said he would not let the county go back on good-



faith agreements. Unions have shown flexibility to protect jobs, he added. "We must continue to work with our current employees to make sure that they have a reasonable pension for retirement that is just and fair to the county and to the individual."

Mr. Slocum agreed on maintaining good faith with current retirees. He said he would trim benefits for future employees and consider raising contribution levels of current employees. The first steps, he said, are getting an accurate assessment of the obligation and having at the table everyone involved.

Mr. Schmidt said he does not blame county employees for the pension situation, and that he would consider it a conflict of interest to receive their union's endorsement. A "sensible" pension policy would include a two-tier benefit system that benefits taxpayers and employees, he said. On his first day in office, he said he would propose a task force of union and community leaders and innovative commu-

nity members to discuss further reforms, with "transparency at every level of discussion."

Why me?

The Almanac asked the candidates what distinguishes them and why voters should vote for them. Their edited answers are arranged in alphabetical order.

The law provides a framework for civic life, Mr. Cohen said. In his career, he has been an advocate for clients, has weighed evidence, has followed the law and has attempted to be just and fair in making decisions, he said. He has eight years as city councilman, and has spoken on topics of post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, youth violence, and schools and cities working together, Mr. Cohen said.

Ms. Keith cites her third-generation roots in the county; her career in public-interest law, including representing financially stressed defendants in court; being a mother to her children; and volunteering for the Legal Aid Society, Haven House and JobTrain and as an advocate for women's issues. "I will bring a balanced, thoughtful approach to decision making, with a legal background and the ability to make tough decisions, to the Board of Supervisors," she said.

Citing her experience on a city school board, the nonprofit sector, and as a public health advocate, Ms. Masur said she has managed substantial public and private budgets simultaneously and partnered with city and county governments to "eliminate duplication and leverage limited dollars." Her master's degree in public health "makes me uniquely qualified to address the many public health challenges — including health care reform and criminal justice realignment — two significant policy and practice shifts that will have a major impact on our county," she said.

As a county school board member, Mr. Morantes said he has helped make projects more efficient while protecting core services in difficult economic times. As a small-business owner, he acquired the acumen to form public/private partnerships "for the common good." As a civic leader, he has a "keen understanding" of the importance of the county's safety net. "I can bring the same success to the Board of Supervisors," he said.

Mr. Romero noted his regional community leadership experience and his academic credentials in urban planning, finance, housing policy and transportation. He is committed, he said, to transparent, inclusive government and, as a supervisor, would be uniquely qualified to hit the ground running on "addressing the difficult challenges faced by our amazingly diverse and dynamic county." The issues section of his website, he said, is "frank and honest" and "thoughtfully tackles issues."

Being a planning commissioner is one of the best qualifications for being a supervisor, Mr. Schmidt said, echoing an assertion he attributed to Ms. Jacobs Gibson. "The work and decisions of a supervisor have a great deal to do with land development issues," and the supervisors now on the board have confirmed that characterization for him, he said. "Granted this is my first election, but I enter into this race knowing that I can do the job and can hit the ground running."

Mr. Slocum pointed to his innovative leadership at the Elections Office, where, he said, he balanced multi-million dollar budgets, made county records more accessible, and practiced people-centered management. "I worked hard, challenging myself and my staff everyday to streamline county services," he said. As supervisor, he pledged "to build consensus, solve problems and represent the public's interests while being accessible and accountable." ■



'Thoroughly Modern Millie'

Woodside Elementary School presents its eighth-grade operetta, "Thoroughly Modern Millie," May 30 to June 2 in the school's George Sellman Auditorium, 3195 Woodside Road in Woodside. Among those in the cast are, from left, Hunter Listwin, Ellie Schley, Jaclyn Hovsmith, Jessie Marguet and Kit Sanderson. Tickets at \$12 for adults and \$10 for children are available at the school. **Info:** tinyurl.com/Millie-602.

Pension reform wins court battle

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

■ MENLO PARK

So far the court doesn't see a problem with pension reform initiative Measure L, according to a ruling issued on May 4.

Two unions had filed a lawsuit in San Mateo County Superior Court after Measure L passed with 72 percent of the vote in 2010.

The initiative raised the minimum retirement age for new public employees, excluding police officers, by five years to 60, and also decreased their maximum pension benefits to 2 percent of their highest annual salary averaged over three years. Finally, Measure L took benefit increases out of the hands of the City Council — all increases now require a simple majority vote by the public, a key issue at the heart of the lawsuit.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the American Federation of State,

County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) argued that not allowing the City Council to increase benefits would prevent the city from being able to negotiate in good faith.

In Monday's ruling, the court concluded that the unions haven't demonstrated that any wrongful action or damage has occurred because of Measure L. Pointing to recent AFSCME negotiations with Menlo Park as an example, the ruling stated that "the undisputed evidence before this court is that successful negotiations can take place with Measure L in place."

Even if violations happened "someday," the court said, regulations already in place would remedy the situation.

Union representatives issued a joint statement on the court's decision:

"We are disappointed in the ruling because Measure L was

an unnecessary measure that wasted taxpayers money. SEIU and AFSCME stand by our opinion that workers rights that are protected by the state Constitution shouldn't be subject to the whims of political currents," the statement said.

"The fact is that it was through the proper bargaining process that allowed the City of Menlo Park and its workers to recently agree on a fair contract for all parties. Contract negotiations should be done at the table; in the end it's less costly and produces better results."

Henry Riggs, who helped lead the pension reform initiative to success at the ballot box, said he expects an appeal. "We have the right (and responsibility) to limit long-term debt that our children and grandchildren will bear," he commented in an email about the "take away" message of the ruling. "Business as usual' doesn't have to be." ■

New Redwood City jail contracts approved

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors approved contracts on May 8 for construction of a new \$155 million jail in Redwood City.

Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum was awarded a contract for architectural services, while Sundt/Layton will manage construction of the 260,000-square-foot jail, the Sheriff's Office announced.

The facility, located at Maple and Blomquist streets, will be able to house 640 people, and replace the women's jail as well as relieve overcrowding at the Maguire Correctional Facility, the Sheriff's Office said. Construction is expected to be finished in 2015.

Sheriff Greg Munks said in a written statement that he was pleased construction will start soon. "The Replacement Jail will be a state of the art correctional facility designed not to just house inmates, but to

also prepare them for re-entry into society once they have completed their sentences," he said. "I am committed to reducing the recidivism rate for offenders. This Replacement Jail will allow San Mateo County to effectively deal with the influx of state inmates that are expected to be re-aligned into our jails in the next few years."

The realignment shifts oversight of parolees and inmates convicted of non-violent crimes from the state to the county. ■

LAS LOMITAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Prospective Board Member Informational Meeting!
Monday, May 21, 2012
6:00pm - 7:00pm

District Office Conference Room
1011 Altschul Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Topics:

- Process for Filing for Election
- Duties involved in School Board Membership
- Legal Requirements

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Phyllis Moldaw
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Stanford Hospital Health Notes

A community health education series from Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Keeping Close Watch Can Catch Skin Cancer Early

Kelly Bathgate's mother was vigilant. She had three daughters, all fair-haired and fair-skinned, and the family spent several years living in Hawaii and in the Philippines. "My mom was always putting sunscreen on us," Bathgate said. "She did everything she could. We lived on the beach, and we were always outside."

Her mother's best intentions, however, were not enough. Even with sunscreen, Bathgate would get sunburned, sometimes weekly. By the time she was 24, she was conscious enough of the freckles she'd acquired that when her best friend, also fair-skinned, mentioned she'd started going for annual skin examinations, Bathgate began to do the same. A few years later, her dermatologist suggested checks every six months.

Bathgate moved to the Bay Area and fell a bit behind on her checkups. Then a friend arrived for a holiday visit. "What's that on your face?" he asked. "That's always been there," Bathgate replied. "Not like that it hasn't," her friend said. It was a spot that her dermatologist had been watching for a couple of years, but now, in just a few months, it had changed markedly.

Bathgate quickly called a local doctor for an exam, which included the removal of a small portion of the spot. A week later, the call came: the spot on Bathgate's face was melanoma. At first, Bathgate said, "My reaction was fairly nonchalant. My dad's had basal cell skin cancer removed several times. He also has a redhead's complexion and I always suspected that I would deal with the same." But her doctor had different thoughts. "The difference between melanoma and basal cell," she told Bathgate, "is that melanoma is unpredictable in how it spreads—and it spreads really quickly."

Increasingly common diagnosis

That's when Bathgate called Stanford Hospital & Clinics and found Sumaira Aasi, MD, director of Mohs and dermatologic surgery at the Stanford Medicine Outpatient Center in Redwood City. Aasi was not surprised to see melanoma in someone as young as Bathgate, who was just 32.

"You don't think of a younger person getting cancer, any kind of cancer, but we are seeing an increased incidence of skin cancer in adolescents and young adults, especially in people with fair skin who've spent time in the sun," she said.

"Kelly was the perfect patient because she pursued treatment, and we caught her melanoma in the earliest phase possible." Using only local anesthetic to numb Bathgate's cheek, Aasi was able to remove Bathgate's melanoma and repair the wound, leaving a barely perceptible scar. When the tissue was examined under the microscope, Aasi was able to confirm that the margins around the removed melanoma were clear of cancer. Nor had the melanoma gone below the uppermost layers of the skin, making it a very superficial cancer with very low risk of recurrence.

"We're not asking people to get on a treadmill or not eat their favorite foods. We're just recommending that people treat sunscreen like brushing their teeth or using deodorant."

—Sumaira Aasi, MD, director of Mohs and dermatologic surgery, Stanford Hospital & Clinics

Our skin's function as the primary and first protective barrier against the environment almost guarantees that at some point in a lifetime, it will be damaged. Exposure to the sun is impossible to avoid, of course. So, it seems, is sunburn. The most recent federal survey showed that half of all American adults have had at least one sunburn in the last year. Among U.S. residents ages 11 to 18, the rate jumps to almost three out of four. Those degrees of exposure now mean that one in five Americans will develop some form of skin cancer in the course of a lifetime.

Each year, about 3 million will be diagnosed with basal cell carcinoma, the most common type; about 500,000 cases of squamous cell carcinoma will be recorded, the second most common type.



Sumaira Aasi, MD, director of Mohs and dermatologic surgery at the Stanford Medicine Outpatient Center in Redwood City, was not surprised to see melanoma in someone as young as Bathgate, who was just 32.

About 76,000 new patients will be told they have melanoma, the most aggressive of the three types. It represents just 4 percent of all skin cancers, but accounts for 80 percent of deaths from skin cancer. Researchers have also found that the number of sunburns over a lifetime increases the risk of melanoma.

Sun exposure, and particularly the kind that produces sunburn, remains the single most predictive risk factor for development of skin cancer, which may explain why, as Aasi put it, "dermatologists are very passionate about skin cancer because it is one of the few cancers that is preventable."

When tanning salons become commonplace, starting in the 1980s, skin cancer rates for younger women began to climb. In the last 30 years, the number of women under age 40 diagnosed with basal cell carcinoma has more than doubled and the incidence of squamous cell carcinoma in that age group has increased 225 percent. Rates of melanoma rose 150 percent.

While people with darker skin can get skin cancer, Aasi said, the risk is higher for people with fair skin. Making changes, she said, doesn't require extreme measures. "We're not asking people to get on a treadmill or not eat their favorite foods," she said. "We're just recommending that people treat sunscreen like brushing their teeth or using deodorant."



Kelly Bathgate's mother was vigilant, always putting sunscreen on her daughter, but her best intentions were not enough. Even with sunscreen, Bathgate would get sunburned, sometimes weekly.

don't leave the house without it no matter what the weather is like."

And using sunscreen works: Recently, Australian researchers released the results of a study in which they followed 1800 patients for over 10 years and found that those who used sunscreen on their faces, ears and tops of hands once daily reduced their rate of melanoma by 50 percent compared with those who used sunscreen on a discretionary basis.

Advanced treatment and research

What sunscreen, sunblock, hats, long sleeves and shade does is prevent those cellular changes that trigger cancer's abnormal growth. Aasi and her colleagues are part of the Stanford Pigmented Lesion and Melanoma Program (PLMP), a large team of clinicians and researchers working to advance the understanding of skin cancer. The team's efforts include research and clinical trials in prevention, early detection and treatment, particularly treatment that combines surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

Susan Swetter, MD, who directs the program, recently received the 2012 Humanitarian Award from the Melanoma Research Foundation. One of her most recently published papers documented the importance of both self- and physician skin examinations for older men, who

Sun Damage Basics:

- Ultraviolet B (UVB) rays are the primary cause of sunburn and skin cancer, although ultraviolet A (UVA) rays also play a role in skin cancer development. UVA radiation also leads to premature signs of aging in the skin, called photoaging. They penetrate more deeply into the skin than UVB. They can also pass through the ozone layer and glass. Both types of UV radiation penetrate through clouds.

How to protect your skin:

- Apply sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 daily before going outside.
- Use enough: Two tablespoons, a palm-full, for full body coverage and one teaspoon for the face and ears. Reapply at least every two to three hours, especially if you're sweating or swimming. If your scalp is not covered fully by hair, try a spray-on sunscreen or a sunscreen gel.
- Wear a hat that covers your face, ears and the back of your neck.
- Cover as much of your skin as you can. A tightly woven, light-colored fabric can protect skin better than inadequately applied sunscreen.
- Avoid the mid-day sun (between 10 a.m.-4 p.m.), especially in the summer, unless you are fully protected. Seek shade when possible.
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Avoid tanning beds. The type of light they emit causes both non-melanoma skin cancers and melanoma.

For more information about skin cancer care at Stanford, visit stanfordhospital/melanoma or call 650.498.6000.

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.



Using only local anesthetic to numb Bathgate's cheek, Aasi was able to remove Bathgate's melanoma and repair the wound, leaving a barely perceptible scar.

are more likely to develop and die of melanoma. Last year, the program expanded to include a special skin cancer clinic for transplant recipients whose immunosuppressive medication puts them at higher risk for squamous cell cancers. That clinic will be broadened this fall to provide dermatology care for patients who have been treated for any sort of cancer; treatment side effects include a higher degree of vulnerability to skin cancer.

The Pigmented Lesion and Melanoma Program works with the Stanford Division



Since her melanoma diagnosis, Bathgate has made some changes in her routine. She's using SPF 45 or 50 sunscreen instead of the 15 or 25 she once did. "I'm definitely putting it on every single time I leave my house," she said, "not just on my face, but on all exposed skin."

of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, and with members of the Radiology and Engineering Departments, to use the newest imaging techniques for preoperative assessment and lymph node mapping. The group is currently investigating a hand-held gamma camera that uses radioactive tracing to build spatial images.

Stanford's Dermatopathology Services also offer a highly sensitive clinical test that can identify specific genetic changes present in melanoma so that targeted therapy can be specifically designed for individual patients.

A changed perspective

Bathgate is still working through what happened. "It's been interesting to get such a diagnosis and then have it be gone within a month," she said. "But more than anything, I just feel incredibly lucky. It's reminded me of how precious and valuable life is." She has begun to be more careful with small but important changes. "I'll be wearing SPF 45 or 50 instead of 15 or 25, and I'm definitely putting it on every single time I leave my house—not just on my face, but on all exposed skin. And I've got a spray sunscreen to make sure I

What to know about sunscreens:

- Use an SPF of at least 30, but be aware that this number only reflects how well UVB rays are filtered. Measuring a sunscreen's protection against UVA rays is more complicated but now required for coverage of both types of UV radiation.
- Look for sunscreens labeled broad spectrum, meaning their ingredients provide protection against the full range of UVA and UVB. Sunscreens with an SPF beyond 50 do not appear to offer significantly increased UVB protection. New FDA guidelines will limit all American sunscreens to SPF 50+.
- No sunscreens are fully waterproof, although they may be labeled as water resistant.
- Sunscreens do have expiration dates and will deteriorate if stored at higher temperatures.
- Depending on their ingredients, sunscreens either absorb or reflect harmful rays. Sunscreens with micronized titanium dioxide or zinc oxide, in conjunction with chemicals like avobenzone and oxybenzone, combine the two approaches.

Free Screening

Dermatologists from Stanford Hospital & Clinics will provide free skin examinations from 8 a.m. to noon, Saturday, June 2 in the Dermatology Clinic on the fourth floor of Pavilion B at the Stanford Medicine Outpatient Center, 450 Broadway, Redwood City. The screening is recommended for people with fair skin, excessive exposure to the sun, many or atypical moles or a parent or sibling who has had skin cancer. For more information, call 650.723.6316

reach all the parts that are hard to reach. I'm more conscientious."

"Skin cancer is one of those things that you hear about happening but don't think about it happening to you."

—Kelly Bathgate, patient, Stanford Hospital & Clinics

She's also going to spend just as much time outside, if not more but safely, protecting her skin from the sun. "My favorite thing to do in my free time is to be outside—running, hiking, being near the water," she said. "And this will make me be outside more because I'm going to live my life — every moment of it."

She has begun to talk about her skin cancer. "A friend saw the scar on my face a few weeks after the surgery and asked, 'What happened?' I told him, and he said, 'I can't believe you didn't tell me. I said, 'It's kind of personal and I didn't want to make a big deal of it,' and he said, 'You really need to tell people about this because we're out in the sun and should know that can happen to any one of us.'"

She told another friend who said, "Oh, my husband is a redhead and I don't think he ever gets skin checks. I should tell him to do that." Bathgate said, "Yeah, you should!"

"I think my generation is probably a lot more conscious of all the health risks," she said, "certainly more than my parents' generation was, and of course more than their parents' generation before. Still, especially at this age, skin cancer is one of those things that you hear about happening but don't think about it happening to you."



A friend told Bathgate: "You really need to tell people about this because we're out in the sun and should know that can happen to any one of us."

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 stanfordhospital.org.



What's in a name? Athertonians may clash in court

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Definition of Athertonians: Residents of Atherton, California. Simple, right? Think again.

Athertonians is also the name of a Yahoo email message group that hosts discussions among Atherton residents — a moderated group whose posters have become increasingly critical of certain City Council members and decisions.

The group, which has a blog at athertonians.blogspot.com, has come under the recent scrutiny of town officials, who say that the group's name is causing too much confusion among Atherton residents. That's because the town has for many years published a newsletter, also available online, called the Athertonian.

Ah yes, there's that word again.

As it happens, the question of that word's significance may result in litigation that would pit neighbor against neighbor in a town that, for its small size and idyllic environment, has seen more than its share of interne-cine squabbles.

Town officials and council members have had numerous inquiries about the Athertonians from residents who thought the site was operated by the town, said Assistant City Attorney Jennifer Larson. And Mayor Bill Widmer, who has been a member of the Yahoo group since before his election to the council, said that even he had believed the site to be town-sponsored when he first signed on.

Although the Yahoo group has been around for eight years, according to its anonymous moderators, objections to its

ATHERTON

name have been minimal until recently. But with the group's revved-up criticism of the town, particularly around the divisive issue of where to build the town's new library, council members have directed town staff to step in: Urge the moderators to change the group's name, and if they don't, prepare to take legal action.

"Let's go ahead and get started in shutting it down," Councilman Jim Dobbie said at the council's April 18 meeting. "It's high time we do something."

In a written statement sent to the Almanac in response to a request for more information about the group, an anonymous moderator said that Athertonians is "distinct from the name used by the town for

its infrequent newsletter, 'The Athertonian.' As such, we have no hesitation in assuring you that we are not discontinuing our use of a name we have held for over 8 years."

The statement was also posted on the group's blog.

Last week, Ms. Larson, the town's assistant attorney, sent an email to the group's moderators, proposing that the name be changed, even slightly, to "create more of a distinction between the two unrelated news sources."

"While we respect your right to create and maintain such an efficient vehicle for neighborhood communication and discussion, it is in all of our best interests to find a way to resolve this growing confusion," she wrote.

Free speech issue?

In the written statement, titled "Defense of Free Speech," the moderator asserted the group's ability "to use a name reserved for the denizens of a locale, in our case Athertonians," as a right protected by the Supreme Court.

At the April 18 council meeting, former council member Charles Marsala also cited freedom-of-speech rights, and warned the council that it would be entering a "gray area" of the law if it pursued the matter in court.

But Ms. Larson said the matter is not a free-speech issue. "We are receiving reports of confusion, and feel it would be very easy for the Athertonians group to take steps to prevent this confusion without compromising their free speech rights in any way.

"We have suggested a better disclaimer on their site and perhaps a name modification — nothing more than that."

The question of free speech is a two-way street in the matter: Some residents, including the mayor, have criticized the moderators' decisions to not post comments that contradict their views. Those views, as articulated in the group's written statement, include the charge that the "council majority ... has ignored expressions of concerns from both fellow council members (Carlson, Lewis) and residents and suppressed requests by residents and council for opportunities to vet these concerns."

The statement identifies the council majority as Mayor Widmer, Mr. Dobbie and Kathy McKeithen.

Mayor Widmer said in an interview that the group's censorship of comments and jet-

tisoning of critics from the membership creates a lack of balance that doesn't serve the public well.

Betsy Colby said she's one of the people who were "unsubscribed" from the membership list without their request. She had "asked the moderator a while back to say who was behind it and got a response that they insisted on being anonymous. I think this is troublesome," she said in an email. A site "that appears to represent the town should disclose their sources so everyone knows the motives and bias of the group."

The moderators didn't respond to email asking them to explain why they want to remain anonymous, but in an email to Ms. Colby, they cited a number of reasons, including: "The town's political climate is unhealthy. Rather than informed dialogue, many individuals resort to unfounded, personal attacks.

"We believe naming the individuals involved will expose them to personal accusations for political reasons and will not be a benefit to the effectiveness of this group for residents, which is our goal."

The email also asserted that the list "is moderated to be non-partisan with respect to town issues — with the only bias being to serve the important rights of Atherton residents to have a more accessible channel of information, better information about their town, and accurate information. We reserve the right to not send messages deemed misleading, no matter who they are from."

Mayor Widmer challenges the claim that Athertonians is nonpartisan. He cites examples in the written statement that accuse him and two council colleagues of "suppressing requests by residents," as well as Councilman Jerry Carlson and Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis, for the chance to discuss their concerns.

"I don't agree we're suppressing anything," he said, adding that he often lets speakers go past their three-minute limit during the public comment period at council meetings.

He challenged the group's moderators to point to examples in council videos — "I'll take a look at them," he said.

Mr. Widmer emphasized that he supports the group's interest in participating in a public discussion of town affairs. "These people are providing a valuable service to the town," he said. "But I see a lot of this as an attack," he said of the group's

Continued on next page

GUIDE TO 2012 SUMMER CAMPS FOR KIDS

Camp Connection Summer 2012

For more information about these camps, see our online directory of camps at <http://palooonline.com/biz/summercamps/>. To advertise in a weekly directory, contact 650-326-8210

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Palo Alto/

Menlo Park/San Carlos

Facebook passes Planning Commission review

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

The impact reports for the proposed Facebook campus expansion, along with the associated developer agreement, got the thumbs up from the Menlo Park Planning Commission on May 7.

The commission voted 6-0 to certify and forward the environmental impact report and associated documents to the council for approval. Commissioner Peipei Yu was absent.

The reports examine the potential community effects of Facebook's plan to hire up to 6,600 employees at its 1 Hacker Way "East" campus and make improvements to all its properties, including those on the Constitution Drive "West" campus.

One of the main concerns has been traffic generated by the influx of employees. The company has agreed to maintain a vehicle trip cap of 15,000 per day, with no more than 2,600 during each commute period, with stiff

financial penalties for exceeding the limit. The commute periods are from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Counting cars for the cap would start within 180 days of the agreement going into effect, staff said.

Wondering whether Facebook employees might tend to work later hours, Commissioners Ben Eiref and John Kadwany raised the question of whether the

hours for the evening commute trip cap should shift to 5 to 7 p.m. Chair Katie Ferrick said she felt comfortable with the current time span since it

was based on research data, but colleagues suggested that the data in the report didn't demonstrate whether the 4 to 6 p.m. period was the true traffic peak or the most beneficial time to apply the trip cap.

Not everyone was there to sing the project's praises. A letter sent on April 26 to Menlo Park stated, "Regretfully, the Town of Atherton finds itself in the difficult position of finding that serious flaws and deficiencies

exist in the proposed Facebook Project Final EIR."

Atherton Interim Public Works Director Michael Kashiwagi spoke before the Planning Commission on May 7 to outline what those flaws were. In particular, the town has problems with the traffic analysis, both with the methodology and suggested mitigations. Atherton staff believe the snarls will extend past the intersection of Marsh Road with Middlefield Road on to residential streets,

for example, an impact not addressed by the EIR, and that Facebook should help pay for any needed fixes.

As far as the Marsh and Middlefield intersection is concerned, however, Facebook has agreed to pay about 30 percent of the total costs of traffic mitigations at that spot, which should minimize the impact as long as Atherton and Caltrans approve the changes, according to Menlo Park planning staff. Atherton's letter to the city

suggests getting that approval won't be easy since it considers the traffic analysis "flawed and inadequate."

East Palo Alto has raised its own concerns about traffic and housing with Facebook. The social networking company is negotiating separately with that city for an agreement that could bring East Palo Alto more than \$1 million to address those impacts.

The City Council is scheduled to review and vote on the final reports for the Facebook campus expansion on Tuesday, May 29, at 7 p.m. ■

Atherton challenges impact report.

Police respond to gunfire

Menlo Park police responded to several calls about gunfire at around 12:30 p.m. Saturday, May 12, in the 800 block of Ivy Drive in Menlo Park. When officers arrived, they found several spent shell casings on the street.

The officers found two people believed to be the intended targets. Both were unharmed, said Sgt. Ed Soares of the Menlo Park Police Department.

Two unknown male suspects were seen leaving the area in a dark blue American-made sedan, Sgt. Soares said.

Police have not determined a motive for the shooting, he added.

Anyone with information is asked to call Menlo Park police at 330-6360.

BRIEFS

May 21: Library closing

The Menlo Park public library on Alma Street closes on May 21 for renovation.

When it reopens on June 18, patrons will see a new circulation area and an easier checkout system via radio frequency identification tags, according to the staff.

The outside book drop will stay open to allow patrons to return items, and the Belle Haven branch, at 413 Ivy Drive, will extend its hours until the main library is back in business.

identified the owner of the Wells Fargo parking lot as the city of Menlo Park. The bank owns the lot, while the city leases a portion of the property. The Almanac regrets the error.

Correction

In the May 9 edition of the Almanac, the story headlined "Bank protests Menlo Park's downtown plan" incorrectly

Continued from previous page

written statement.

Is the confusion over the group's name enough cause to pursue the matter in court if the moderators don't change the

name? "I'm hopeful there can be some sort of discussion" and that the matter can be resolved, he said.

"There are a lot more critical matters that the town needs to focus on and spend money on." ■

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- Multiples Breastfeeding Seminar: Wednesday, June 20: 7:00 - 9:00 pm

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A two-part workshop for expectant couples and new parents in their first postpartum trimester, this program designed by Drs. John and Julie Schwartz Gottman will assist in preserving the couple relationship and developing the relationship between parents and baby.

- Two Saturdays, June 30 & July 7: 10:00 am - 3:30 pm

Call (650) 724-4601 or visit calendar.lpch.org to register or obtain more information on the times, locations and fees for these and other courses.



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This committee will meet four times per year to monitor expenditures for the building projects of the recently approved Measure J school construction bond. Periodically, the committee will report bond expenditures to the community.

APPLICATIONS

Applications may be downloaded from the Sequoia District web site at www.seq.org or may be requested from the district office by calling Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services Enrique Navas at 650-369-1411, ext. 2218.

Send completed applications to
Enrique Navas
Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
Sequoia Union High School District
480 James Avenue
Redwood City, CA 94062

TIMELINE

- Application filing period – **May 1, to May 18, 2012, 4:30 p.m.**
- Committee membership announced by the Board of Trustees on May 30, 2012

For further information, contact Enrique Navas at 650-369-1411, ext. 2218.

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Ford Field fundraising drive looks promising

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The goal seems within reach of finding \$588,000 to begin a project to renovate Ford (baseball) Field at 3399 Alpine Road in Portola Valley in time for the spring 2013 baseball season.

The Alpine-West Menlo Little League, having donated \$50,000, pledged another \$50,000, according to a recent report to the Town Council. Meanwhile the Sand Hill Foundation, which put on the table a matching grant of up to \$100,000, has shown a willingness to consider some funds from the Little League and the town as fulfilling the criteria to qualify for a match.

A unanimous council on May 9 gave Public Works Director Howard Young the go-ahead to solicit bid packages. The timing is tight; if the project doesn't start in June, autumn rains could foil the planting of the sod.

With two state grants totaling \$232,000, private donations of \$18,500 so far, and a private pledge for another \$10,000, the project would still have a projected shortfall of about \$149,500, according to a report by Parks & Recreation Committee chair Jon Myers.

The Little League has also shown a willingness to contrib-

ute up to \$40,000 more toward the shortfall, with the town making up the rest.

The town had an ace in the hole, but no longer: a gift of \$2.6 million in restricted stock related to naming rights for the baseball field at Town Center, stock that is now unrestricted and saleable but worth only \$75,000, Councilman Ted Driscoll said.

In return for its financial assistance, the Alpine-West Menlo Little League — the sole organized user of Ford Field — requested several conditions in a letter. Among them: a limit to annual field user-fee increases of no more than 10 percent, and a town review of the status of the so-called “resurrection” tree, a diseased, elderly and fragile hollowed-out oak that, with the help of external supports, overlooks the home team dugout along the first-base line.

The letter also put a shot across the town's bow: “The town will consider the costs related to liability for personal injury as part of its review.”

The town commissioned independent arborists to investigate the tree's health in the spring of 2008. The verdicts in six reports were uniformly negative for the tree, but it got a reprieve thanks to significant moral support in town and having responded well to having its foliage trimmed. ▀

Suspicious scene leads to hazmat response

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

A suspicious chemical odor, a plume of smoke and the sight of a man standing at the back of a pickup truck early on the morning of May 9 in North Fair Oaks led a deputy from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office to call in firefighters from the Menlo Park Fire Protection District at 2:15 a.m., authorities told the Almanac.

A few minutes later, a single fire truck arrived at the scene, 3507 Edison Way. At about 3:10 a.m., firefighters called for a full response from the county's hazardous materials team, Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman said.

The incident came to a close around 5 a.m. with no injuries and several unanswered questions. An investigation has begun.

The deputy had been on routine patrol and stopped upon seeing a motorcycle parked oddly against the side of a building, Lt. Tim Reed of the Sheriff's Office told the Almanac. At that point, the deputy noticed the pickup truck, the smoke, the odor, and the man standing at the open tailgate, he said.

“Hey, man, this can't be good,” the deputy said to himself, in Lt. Reed's retelling of the story.

The initial impression — that it was a methamphetamine lab — proved incorrect, though exactly what was going on is still unknown. Someone told deputies that the man had been “boiling down gold,” and that is as much as the Sheriff's Office knows for now, Lt. Reed said.

The deputy on the scene detained the man, meaning

See **HAZMAT**, page 17



Silicon Valley Open Studio

"Oaks and Wildflowers" by Alice Weil is one of the recent works that will be included in the Silicon Valley Open Studio events to be held the weekend of May 19-20, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 856 Partridge Ave. in Menlo Park. Julia Munger Seelos, Lynn Montoya, Kim Holl, and Frances Freyberg will also exhibit paintings, jewelry and fine art photography. The event is part of the 26th annual Silicon Valley Open Studios, where hundreds of artists open their studios to the public in May.

Another tradition bites dust in Portola Valley

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The days are numbered for the Portola Valley Town Council's operatic tradition of working without microphones.

After a brief discussion of available options, the council gave its unanimous approval on May 9 to an initiative by Mayor Maryann Derwin to install voice-activated microphones, most likely before July 1. Each council member will have one, staff will have three, and presenters and members of the public will have a portable version.

To conserve their useful lives, the microphones will be used for meetings of the council, the Architectural & Site Control Commission and the Planning Commission, and not for meetings of the many other advisory committees.

The system is meant to ease the task of the transcription service and to help everyone hear when the room is full, according to a staff report. The outlay by the town, including purchase and installation, is \$8,754.

Some Portola Valley resi-

dents get nostalgic in response to change, particularly change that has the tone of portraying the town as a city. What is now the realm of the professional — public works, for example — used to be done by volunteers, a source of civic pride in longtime residents.

Councilman Ted Driscoll, in his fifth term on the council, remarked that microphones seemed a bit "municipal" to him.

Microphones coming to council chambers.

But others see such changes as reason to celebrate, including Ms. Derwin. "I love it," she said of the prospect of microphones. "I've been waiting for this since the first day I came on the council."

"I agree with Ted," Councilman John Richards said. "It feels a little municipal."

"I'm wistful," Mr. Driscoll said. The microphones may create an impression that the council is "talking down" to the public, he added.

"When we have a lot of people here and people are talking loud, people can't hear," Ms. Derwin replied.

"I agree with Maryann," said Councilwoman Ann Wengert. ■



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USGS holds open house

Only once every three years does the U.S. Geological Survey hold an open house, and one is coming up on Saturday and Sunday, May 19-20, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the USGS Menlo Park headquarters at 345 Middlefield Road.

Hands-on exhibits and presentations will illustrate the variety of projects USGS scientists work on, including research on earthquakes, water quality, volcanoes, coastal and marine geology, mineral and energy resources, geography, and the San Francisco Bay ecosystem.

USGS scientists will be available to answer questions.

There is no admission charge. Parking is available but visitors are encouraged to walk or bicycle to the event. Pets will not be allowed unless they are

AROUND TOWN

service animals.

All exhibits will be wheelchair accessible and handicapped parking will be available.

Limited food service will be offered each day.

Mystery Readers

Dr. William M. Gould of Portola Valley will discuss his two books, "A Little Score to Settle" and "Three Boys Like You," at the Mystery Readers meeting at 7:15 p.m. Wednesday, May 16, in the downstairs meeting room at the Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St. in Menlo Park. A dermatologist with offices in downtown Menlo Park, Dr. Gould is also a jazz musician, as well as an author.

At Maker Faire

The Sequoia Gem and Mineral Society, which has its lapidary shop at Little House in Menlo Park, will have a booth at the Maker Faire on Saturday and Sunday, May 19-20, at the San Mateo County Event Center, 1346 Saratoga Drive in San Mateo.

Lapidary describes both the artist and the hobby of cutting, polishing and engraving precious and non-precious stones. By using grinding and polishing wheels, a lapidary can create a piece of rock to be used in jewelry.

Lapidaries also make clocks, stone boxes, bookends, paper weights and more. Pieces cut can include agates, jaspers, whale bone, jade, minerals and fossils in all colors from all parts of the world.

Benefit goes 'Off the Map'

"Menlo Off the Map: A Quest for Adventure" is the theme for Menlo School's 62nd annual benefit to be held Friday, May 25, at the Atherton School.

The fashion event will be staged in luncheon and dinner runway shows showcasing senior students in Bloomingdale's fashion trends for the spring and summer. Fashions from both Stanford and San Francisco Bloomingdale's will be shown.

The shows are highlighted by entertainment vignettes featuring additional seniors. Both the "Lunchtime Expedition" and the "Dinnertime Journey" will take place in a decorated tent on campus. All proceeds benefit the school's financial aid program.

Graduating seniors will reflect on the impact Menlo teachers have made on their lives. Students will pay tribute to the faculty, with three teachers honored for their contributions.

Donation drawing items will include a \$1,000 Bloomingdale's shopping spree, a Menlo Memories quilt, a river rafting adventure and windsurfing/paddle board lessons.

The "Broken Compass," this year's signature cocktail, will

be served at the evening party. Both lunch and dinner will be catered by McCalls. After a live auction and fashion show, the evening party will be capped off with dancing to a DJ.

Erika Demma and Amy Sanford are co-chairs of the benefit committee, which includes more than 130 adult volunteers, plus the hundreds of students who support the shows in roles ranging from parking assistants to servers on the day of the event.

Alex Perez, director of creative arts and communications at Menlo School, is producing the show. Jan Chandler, Menlo School's dance director, is serving as the benefit's choreographer for the 28th year. Jeffrey Adair returns as fashion show director. He has produced and/or directed the show off and on for 25 years. He is assisted by Brenda "BB" Bernheim. Linda Lance returns as model trainer.

The luncheon show is sold out. Cost for the dinner show is \$210.

Visit tinyurl.com/Benefit-525 to make reservations and take part in the online auction.

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Correction

The name of a child and adolescent psychiatrist was misspelled in a story that ran in the May 9 Almanac about a local showing of the film, "Miss Representation." The correct spelling is Dr. Deval Shah.

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City holds meetings on plastic foam container ban

Restaurants and food vendors may have to abandon the use of styrofoam containers — Menlo Park is considering a ban on polystyrene food containers, part of a county-wide effort. To explore the idea, the city is holding two outreach meetings on Wednesday, May 23.

The meetings run from 4 to 5 p.m. and 6 to 7 p.m. at the Arrilaga Family Recreation Center at 600 Alma St.

Email recycle@menlopark.org or call 330-6740 to attend.

Democratic party hosts local forum

“From the Quill to the Cloud: Protecting Civil Liberties in the Age of Innovation” will be the topic of discussion at an Atherton home on Saturday, May 19, with U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, as the keynote speaker.

Hosts Chris Kelly and Jennifer Carrico will hold the event at their house from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Address provided upon RSVP.

Go to secure.actblue.com/page/qtoc or call 244-1714 for more information. Tickets start at \$75. Proceeds will fund the San Mateo County Democratic Party's Victory 2012 Campaign headquarters.

Thursday: Caltrain collects change to spare lives

As part of its ongoing suicide-prevention campaign, Caltrain is asking passengers to donate spare change on Thursday, May 17.

BRIEFS

Nine employees of SamTrans, the agency that operates Caltrain, plan to raise \$9,000 for the Out of the Darkness Overnight Walk June 9 and 10 in San Francisco. The 18-mile, dusk-to-dawn walk raises funds for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Meeting canceled

Time to make alternate plans for Tuesday night — the Menlo Park City Council will not be meeting on May 15. The council is scheduled to reconvene Tuesday, May 22, to review the city's budget, below-market-rate housing program, and cost projections for Recology's garbage and recycling service.

Watching memory bits dance

Interested in cutting-edge science? The SLAC National Laboratory wants to slake your curiosity with its free public lecture series, held every other month.

This month the lecture explores magnetic data storage. According to presenter Bill Schlotter, recording the activity of the bits that store information “requires the fastest movies ever made.”

The lecture starts at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 22, in the Panofsky Auditorium at SLAC (2575 Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park).

Equestrian challenge returns to Horse Park

Peninsula residents need not travel to London to watch Olympic-style, “3 Day Eventing” equestrian competition. The fourth annual Woodside Preliminary Challenge returns to the Horse Park at Woodside, located at 3674 Sand Hill Road, Friday through Sunday, May 25-May 27.

Some three dozen horses are expected to participate, said event spokesperson Nan Chapman. Prize money totals \$30,000.

The event starts Friday morning with dressage, the cross-country phase begins at 8 a.m. Saturday, and the final show-jumping competition starts at

4:30 p.m. Saturday.

Dressage and show jumping events will move to a newly resurfaced Grand Prix arena. “The footing is especially good because it has purchase and is cushiony,” said Tom Livermore of Woodside, co-chair of the new footing project. “You can ride on it in the rain, and it doesn't clump up in the horses' hooves.”

Donations paid for importing 110 truckloads of sand and 116,000 pounds of Germany textile footing, which were mixed into three arenas on the property, he said.

On Saturday, spectators can watch an entire day of cross-

country for \$10 per person, including parking and a program. The advanced and intermediate divisions compete in the afternoon.

Then, fans can watch the final phase, show jumping, from a heated ringside platform while being served a dinner catered by Cahoots Catering of Paso Robles. Music and a silent auction are included in the heated arena seating.

A gala party starts at 6 p.m. Saturday, with check-in starting at 5:15. Tickets are \$55 per person, or \$475 for a table of 10.

Visit horsepark.org for more information.

HAZMAT

continued from page 14

that he moved him away from the truck. Other deputies called out and a man came out of the building. Two more men were found inside. All the men are in their late 20s or early 30s, Lt. Reed said. At least two of the men were identified as employees of ImmunePath Inc.

And the disposition of the

men? “They are as free as you and I,” Lt. Reed said. “There wasn't any real go-to-jail type of crime.”

What was the man doing? Were the other men involved? Why was he doing it outside? Why in the back of a pickup truck? Why in the wee hours of the morning? These are among the questions that investigators are now attempting to answer, Chief Schapelhouman said.

Were the men cooperative? “They were sort of cooperative and sort of not,” Lt. Reed said.

Other county departments, including code enforcement and public health, may follow up on possible violations of regulations, he said.

A search for the company's website turned up a single page of plain text listing an email address and a physical address. ■

Marcie Dubbs

Longtime Atherton resident

A memorial service and celebration of life is planned for Friday, May 25th for Marcie Dubbs, a 30 year resident of Atherton and more recently Sharon Heights. Mrs. Dubbs passed away peacefully on April 27th of natural causes at her home at the age of 91. She was surrounded by her loving family and friends.

A native of Lake Forest, Illinois, Marcie was the second of two children born to Walter and Charlene Baum. She attended Lake Forest High School and then went on to Stanford University where she graduated in 1942. Upon graduation from Stanford, she accepted a position at The Emporium in San Francisco as an assistant buyer for better dresses eventually becoming their head buyer. It was at The Emporium that she met and married her former husband, Andre Dubbs in 1947. They were married for 33 years and settled in Atherton in 1955.

Marcie was a founding member of Peninsula Children's Theatre where she was responsible for the production, adaptation and music for many of their plays as well as starring in several of their productions. In addition, she was also a founding member of Peninsula Volunteers where she produced many of their fashion shows that benefited Little House as well as the Turnabout Resale Shop.

Marcie also served as president of the Castilleja Mother's Club as well as served

on their Board of Trustees for several years. She was also active in the Menlo School Mother's Club producing many of its fashion shows and art exhibits while at the same time acting as a consultant for the I. Magnin store in San Mateo.

Along with her former husband, Marcie was a charter member at Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club and in later years served as a mediator for the County of San Mateo as well as being asked to serve for two years on their Grand Jury. She also devoted over 25 years as a volunteer at Stanford Hospital.

She is survived by her four children, Richard (Anne) of New York City, David (Susie) of Woodside, Melissa of Menlo Park and Thomas of Studio City, California as well as four grandchildren, Stephen, Rory, Andrew and Sarah. She is predeceased by her former husband, Andre Dubbs.

A memorial and celebration of her life is planned for May 25th at 1:00 P.M. at The Menlo Circus Club. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.



PAID OBITUARY

TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 94062

INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE REVIEW BOARD

The Architectural and Site Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Director on residential, site design and commercial applications.

Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month, 4:30 p.m. Appointment is for an unexpired term through February 2015.

Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon and 1-5:00 p.m. at the Town Clerk's Office, 2955 Woodside Road, by telephone at (650) 851-6790, or through the Town's web site at www.woodsidesite.org. Deadline for applications is Tuesday, June 19, 2012, 5:00 p.m.

The Town has completed a draft update to the Residential Design Guidelines. The principal goal of these Guidelines is to advise homeowners and designers about ways to locate and design development that preserves the rural residential character of the community and its natural setting.

The Town will also be discussing proposed changes to the Woodside Municipal Code, including Sections 152.220 – 153.231, which set forth the procedures for Design Review.

The following public hearing schedule has been set to be held at Independence Hall, 2955 Woodside Road:

Architectural and Site Review Board: Monday, May 21, 2012, 4:30 p.m.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, June 20, 2012, 7:30 p.m.

Town Council: Tuesdays, July 10, 2012 and July 24, 2012, 7:30 p.m.

Applicants for the ASRB are urged to attend one of the informational meetings.

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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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.

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Editor at the Almanac,
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CALL the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

New wrinkle in June 5 primary

This year voters will find a different system in place when they go to the polls or cast their ballots by mail in the June 5 primary election. A new "open primary" system allows all voters to cast a vote for any candidate, regardless of party, for state or congressional offices. The top two vote-getters, even if they are members of the same political party, advance to the general election in November.

This new system does not apply to presidential or county central committee elections, or to nonpartisan local elections, such as for the Board of Supervisors.

The Almanac has reported on the major elections of interest in our circulation area —

Menlo Park, Atherton, Woodside and Portola Valley. Today we will share our preferences for the top two state Senate candidates and our choice for state Assembly. In the race for San Mateo County supervisor, we have narrowed the seven-person field to four, but leave it to voters to choose two finalists.

Two state propositions and three county measures are on the ballot, as well as party primary elections for federal office. Here are our selections in local elections.



State senator, District 13

In this race to replace Joe Simitian, who is termed out, Assemblyman Jerry Hill and former Assemblywoman Sally Lieber are the two best candidates to move on to the general election. Both are experienced legislators, while their opponents, Christopher Chiang, a school teacher who says he is running to promote the importance of education funding, and John Webster, a Libertarian, have no experience in public office.

In making their choices, voters must decide whether they prefer Mr. Hill, who comes with endorsements from 400 government officials and the California Labor Federation, as well as the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations, or Ms. Lieber, who also considers herself an environmentalist and the underdog in the race. She promises to work for the state's disenfranchised citizens as she did during her three terms in the Assembly, including service as the assistant majority leader. Both candidates are impressive in their own way and we will watch closely as the campaign for the general election unfolds.

Gordon for state Assembly in District 24

Already a successful legislator after only 18 months in office, incumbent Assemblyman Rich Gordon is not wasting any time running hard for a second term. His opponents offer nothing to convince us to change our opinion of Mr. Gordon, who we endorsed in 2010. A former three-term county supervisor who lives in unincorporated Menlo Park, Mr. Gordon saw 15 of the 19 bills he sponsored signed into law in his first session, an enviable record for any freshman legislator.

The three others in the race include Chengzhi "George" Yang of Menlo Park, a Republican and software engineer; Joseph Antonelli Rosas, of Sunnyvale, a network security adviser who has no party affiliation; and Gaby Espinosa of Mountain View, a Democrat and small business owner. None have a record of public service to compare to Mr. Gordon. In this race we heartily endorse Rich Gordon to win the primary and general election.

County supervisor, District 4

A crowded field of seven candidates is vying to replace termed-out Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, who was appointed in 1999 and then elected to three four-year terms. All candidates have significant experience. If no candidate wins a majority of the vote, the two top voter-getters will move on to a runoff election in November. We believe any of the following four candidates are worthy of your vote. The final cut is up to voters.

■ Kirsten Keith, the current mayor of Menlo Park, has signaled that she would favor reining in the county's projected \$24 million to \$28 million budget deficit and would vote against granting a controversial pay increase to the newly appointed county controller. In her law practice she represents financially stressed defendants and does volunteer work with the Legal Aid Society and various nonprofits. She began her first term on the City Council in 2010 after serving on the Planning and Transportation commissions.

■ Shelly Masur, the acknowledged front-runner due to her early start, is a Redwood City school board member who has served as the administrator for a nonprofit agency. Some business leaders and many unions support her candidacy, including those representing county employees and firefighters, some from the Menlo Park and Woodside fire protection districts. Ms. Masur dismisses charges that the county pension system is only 47.2 percent funded, saying the system is 75 percent funded and that average pensions are \$40,000 a year. Her answer to controlling the county budget deficit is to stick to the county manager's five-year plan to achieve a budget surplus that would include spending cuts, savings on labor, and structural and management changes.

■ Memo Morantes, who serves on the county Board of Education, says he has helped make projects more efficient while protecting core services in a down economy. To stem the flow of red ink in the county budget, he recommends developing public-private partnerships. He has won support from the county's building and construction trades council, which also backs Ms. Masur and Warren Slocum.

■ Carlos Romero believes the county's budget deficit can be resolved in two to three years by using a balanced approach that looks at revenue in an accountable and collaborative way. He cited his regional community leadership experience and his academic credentials in urban planning, finance, housing policy and transportation. He supports the county tax measures T, U, and X that will be decided June 5.

Vote yes on measures T, U, and X

Measure T would impose a 2.5 percent tax on the gross receipts of car rental agencies that do business in the unincorporated areas of the county, primarily near San Francisco International Airport. Given the county's budget woes, we recommend a yes vote on Measure T.

Measure U would increase the transient occupancy tax from 10 to 12 percent on lodging in unincorporated areas of the county. The tax would only apply to visitors to the area and is in line with the tax charged by other communities. We recommend a yes vote on Measure U.

Measure X would impose a business license tax of eight percent of gross receipts on operators of commercial parking facilities in the unincorporated areas of the county. We recommend a yes vote on Measure X.

More fallout from downtown plan

Here are some recent posts on Town Square.

TOWN SQUARE
Visit AlmanacNews.com/square

Posted by Morris Brown, a resident of Menlo Park.

A recent Wall Street Journal article explains exactly what is happening in Menlo Park. Our City Council, rather than pursuing goals such as maintaining our quality of life, is marching in lockstep to the demands of ABAG, the Association of Bay Area Governments. In the article, Mayor Kirsten Keith is quoted as saying "people are tired of vacant lots on El Camino." Ignoring the obvious, that with the exception of 1300 El Camino, Stanford is in control of those vacant lots and hasn't cared to develop them. 1300 El Camino has been an approved project for sometime, but the developer apparently has financial problems and has not chosen to go ahead. Then we have a finished project at 1906 El Camino, but the building has been empty for some years now. 1706 El Camino, promoted by the same developer, went bust and was just purchased from the bank by another developer. In my view, the Downtown/ El

Camino Real specific plan is a disaster. The real stakeholders, the downtown merchants and property owners to a large extent don't want it. Yet the city has spent about five years and \$1.5 million pushing ahead with the plan, which is now completely staff driven. We hear statements from council members saying the public is just getting in the way; lets just push it all through regardless. We should push back strongly against ABAG and their outrageous demands and timetable.

Posted by Peter Carpenter, a resident of Atherton.

In the past ABAG has done many useful things but the low hanging fruit of regional cooperation has been picked and what is left will not be easily or cheaply reached. Therefore, I believe that ABAG has become an expensive and ineffective bureaucracy that can no longer justify its existence. Atherton was the last community to join

ABAG and perhaps will be the first to leave.

Posted by Hank Lawrence, a resident of Menlo Park.

All ABAG will do is create the Manhattanization of Menlo Park. With higher housing densities you get: increased traffic pollution, increased noise pollution, increased air pollution, higher carbon footprint, infrastructure strains (fire dept., water, electricity, schools),

higher crime, loss in home value and overall deterioration in the quality of life. Anyone who cares about the quality of life in Menlo Park should reject the politburo thinking of ABAG and have the spine to push back. ABAG is destroying our community.

Posted by Menlo Voter, a resident of Menlo Park.

Menlo Park needs to get out of ABAG. We have enough problems from excess density in a city that was not designed for it. Increased density, which is what

ABAG wants, will only destroy what is left of the quality of life Menlo Park has to offer.

Posted by Bob, a resident of Menlo Park.

Just how many more people are we supposed to add to Menlo Park? People already complain about lack of parking downtown, overcrowded schools, traffic congestion, and so on. Our tax burden is already too high; all levels of government want to increase them again; adding more people would only exacerbate the situation. Enough is enough.

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