



Fall Class Guide
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The Almanac

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

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THE NATURAL

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Almanac photo by Daniella Sanchez

Jean Forstner, Kepler's director of community relations, jots down her group's ideas at a three-day think tank held to map out the independent bookstore's future.

Kepler's asks, 'Who are we?'

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

Construction noise drifted up to the fourth-floor outdoor patio of Palo Alto's Oshman Family Jewish Community Center as jackhammers ripped up concrete down the road.

Construction noise of a different sort filled the air indoors, as words dissected what Kepler's Books and Magazines used to be, and built an outline of what it could be.

"Back to the future with a community connection," one small group chanted as a Greek chorus. "... A center of amazing innovative detection / Is Kepler's modern resurrection."

About 80 volunteers attended the Future Search event from July 26 to 28. Some, like Elaine Katzenberger of City Lights Books, were publishers. Some worked at Kepler's, some were donors, some were writers and others, like local political figure Gail Slocum, readers. All were dedicated to the task of reinventing the Menlo Park community bookstore.

Future Search co-founder Sandra Janoff explained that the diverse background of the participants is a hallmark of the methodology. "You want to get the whole system into one room."

The event was the first held for an independent bookstore. She glanced at Kepler's new

Menlo Park bookstore holds three-day think tank to sketch out its future.

leader, Praveen Madan, who was engrossed in an energetic discussion, and said, "It takes courage to shut everything down when you're in the middle of the day-to-day firefighting."

Mr. Madan and wife Christine Evans came on board Kepler's in January when the Menlo Park store was facing closure again. Their transition team restructured operations and about \$1 million in debt, allowing Kepler's to start turning a small profit.

In July the bookstore temporarily shut down to handle

smaller details such as restocking inventory, and larger ones such as figuring out where the store goes from here.

On Friday afternoon at Future Search, the participants, split into nine groups, presented visions of Kepler's in 2020. The scenarios were rooted in the idea of the bookstore as a community living room, integrated not only with e-book and print-on-demand technology, but also with the intellectual innovation of Silicon Valley.

Some questioned Mr. Madan's vision of a community-owned, for-profit bookstore alongside a nonprofit organization that offers author events, workshops, and other resources.

"I like the concept, but if an independent bookstore is to thrive, it needs to be a business, smell like a business, take risks like a business," producer Ted Habte-Gabr said.

By the end of Saturday's session, Mr. Madan said, people committed to taking action, such as finding new ways to

See **KEPLER'S**, page 9

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Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician

THE ASPHERIC ADVANTAGE

If you wear eyeglasses with a strong prescription, you may want to consider "aspheric lenses." This type of lens differs from conventional lenses in that its complex shape has more of a curvature that changes from the center outward instead of having a uniform spherical shape. As a result, aspheric lenses are thinner and less bulky than conventional lenses, which are differences that are especially noticeable in strong farsighted prescriptions. The lenses also make the wearer's eye look more natural. In addition, they fit closer to the face. From the wearer's point of view,

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P.S. It is suggested to purchase aspheric lenses with anti-reflective (AR) coatings because aspheric lenses' backside curvature can cause more reflections than conventional lenses for some prescriptions.

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

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Aug. 2012

Medicare Updates and Changes

Tuesday, Aug. 14, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

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Presented by **Connie Corrales**

Counsel on Aging, HICAP Program Director

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What is Medicare, and understand the benefits and costs, understand the required and optional parts of Medicare, including prescription drug coverage and understand what the health care reform legislation means for Medicare beneficiaries.

Can You Hear Me Now?

Tuesday, Aug. 28, 1 – 2 p.m.

Sunnyvale City Senior Center

550 E. Remington Drive, Sunnyvale

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Friday, Aug. 31, film starts at 7 p.m.

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Discussion moderated by **Edward Yu, M.D.**

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The natural

Israeli pitcher brings his love of baseball to the Menlo Park Legends

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Baseball came naturally to Alon Leichman, though he spent his youth in a country where the game is hardly known. In Israel, the national games are soccer and basketball.

It helped to have American parents. His dad and other American Jews who had emigrated about 35 years ago founded Kibbutz Gezer Israel, a commune near Tel Aviv to which they added a baseball diamond. "They wanted to build a field for them and their children," Leichman said.

"Honestly, I fell in love with it," he said. "Nothing ever compared to it. I guess it's my first love, so I don't even, like, doubt it. ... There's so many things in baseball you still learn every day. It's like never ending learning."

Leichman, 23, spoke to the Almanac on a Saturday afternoon from the bullpen at the baseball field at Cañada College in Woodside. The Cañada diamond, high above Silicon Valley, is the home field for the Menlo Park Legends, a semi-pro team for which Leichman is pitching while on summer break from Cypress College

near Los Angeles.

A right-hander, Leichman's pitching has him leading the team with an earned-run average (ERA) of 1.51. That means his opponents scored an average of 1.51 earned runs — runs that, for example, do not involve a fielding error on the part of the defense — per nine innings.

The Legends is a summer team for college players who have major-league aspirations. The team is in its fourth season, its third consecutive winning season, and recently won its 100th game out of 155 played.

Leichman is attending college in the United States mainly to play baseball, he said. "I'm trying to see where baseball can take me and earn a degree along the way." He's considering a major in business management or physical education, he said.

He has an interest in nature, but it runs a distant second. His closest resource is his brother, with whom he once hiked from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean Sea, about 127 miles.

"I can sit and watch National Geographic with him and have fun with it," Leichman said. "I pick his brain. ... I can't call myself an outdoor guy but I



Almanac photo by Michelle Le

Following a victory at Canada College, Menlo Park Legends pitcher **Alon Leichman** (middle) of Israel receives a gift from his teammates: a baseball with the Star of David drawn on it.

want to be."

But baseball is played outdoors and he's been playing that since he was 4. He entered Little League at 6 and found himself playing in the 8-to-10-year-old bracket — there weren't enough kids of the right age, he said. Israel's Little League is small, just four teams, he said.

Israel has a national team, though, and has since the mid-1990s. At one point, the 250-resident kibbutz where Leichman grew up supplied all the team's players, he said. As a 10-year-old, Alon (pronounced "alone") joined the team in the entry-level bracket. He's still on the roster.

In September he will rejoin Israel's team for a set of qualifying rounds taking place in Florida and other locations around the world. These preliminary games will, in part, determine which teams get to compete next spring in the

See **THE NATURAL**, page 8

Library issue heads for ballot after heated debate

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

After four and a half hours of at times sniping comments and polarized debate during a special Atherton City Council meeting on July 25, it appeared that the desire by the council to end the divisiveness in the community by allowing a vote on the plan to build a library in the park may have been mere wishful thinking.

There were only four items on the agenda. At the end of the lengthy, standing-room-only meeting, only two were decided, and two were tabled.

By a 4-1 vote, the council approved what was probably the most controversial matter on the agenda: the language for a November ballot measure on whether a new library should be built in Holbrook-Palmer Park.

The approved ballot language is: "Should the town of Atherton construct a new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park using funds dedicated for library purposes only by replacing the Main House and some surrounding patios and walkways?"

Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis voted against the language, arguing that it wasn't straightforward enough.

Also on the agenda was the certification by the council of the environmental impact report (EIR) on alternatives for locating the new library, including options not in the park.

The council certified the document on a 3-2 vote, with Ms. Lewis and Councilman Jerry Carlson opposed. The two council members had also opposed the council action late

See **BALLOT**, page 8

Attorney: Agency insists on 4 tracks

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Efforts to settle a lawsuit filed against the California High-Speed Rail Authority failed nine days after they started because the agency insisted on a four-track system, according to the attorney representing three local cities in the suit.

"Suffice it to say the mediation was unsuccessful and we're back on the litigation track," Stuart Flashman told the Almanac on July 25. He estimated the case will take at least a year now to resolve "one way or the other."

Menlo Park, Atherton and Palo Alto sued the authority over aspects of the environmental impact report for the high-speed rail project, including projected ridership figures and

the impact of various design scenarios on their cities.

Mr. Flashman said that one key obstacle to a settlement was the authority's insistence on a four-track system as recommended in the environ-

Peninsula attorney says mediation failed

mental impact report.

Even though the lawsuit wends its way slowly through the courts, the actual project got a jump start on July 6 when state lawmakers approved funding for the first phase of the \$68 billion project.

According to the plaintiffs' attorney, the key funding vote for the Peninsula portion of the project is five to 10 years away. "As most insiders know,

the Legislature's limitation on the use of funds in the initial appropriation is nothing but a smokescreen," he said. "Those funds won't be used on the Peninsula except for Caltrain electrification in any case."

He said the funding legislation does not permanently prohibit using high-speed rail funds for a four-track system along the Peninsula, despite statements to the contrary from legislators who voted for the bill.

That assertion puzzled at least one of those legislators. "The language in the legislation that was passed was very clear that those funds that were allocated cannot be used to build anything but a blended system, a non-four-track system," said Assemblyman Rich

See **ATTORNEY**, page 8

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

Menlo Park psychiatrist dies by drowning

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

Edward B. Solomon, 75, a Menlo Park psychiatrist, slipped underwater while swimming on Saturday afternoon, July 21, at Sugar Lake, Minnesota, and despite rescue efforts, died the following day at a hospital.

His wife of 44 years, Mary Solomon, said that as she pulled him out of the lake he looked peaceful, the Parkinson's disease he'd had for two decades finally gone.

A Jungian analyst, Dr. Solomon retired from private practice five years ago, according to his wife. He was born in Montreal and educated at McGill University in Canada before completing a residency in psy-

chiatry at Stanford University. Ms. Solomon said he enjoyed golfing, skiing and dancing. Lately, he'd acquired a taste for pool, walking to Little House to play a round, as the Parkinson's disease began making golf too difficult.

In addition to his wife, Dr. Solomon is survived by daughters Catherine Solomon and Justine Keefer; two grandsons, five nieces and nephews; and caregiver Ana Ramirez. The family is planning a memorial gathering.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to "PD Dance," a class offered by the Parkinson's Institute at 675 Almanor Ave., Sunnyvale CA 94085. ■

Apparent drowning at hotel

The San Mateo County Coroner's Office has identified a woman who apparently drowned in a Jacuzzi at a Menlo Park hotel early Saturday morning. She is Keri Long, 42, of San Ramon.

Menlo Park police are investigating the incident at the Best

Western Plus Riviera hotel at 15 El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

Police were called about 5:34 a.m. and found hotel staff and the victim's friend performing CPR. Paramedics arrived and she was pronounced dead. There was no sign of foul play, police said.

■ BRIEFS

City hires HR director

It may be time for Menlo Park's former human resources director, Glen Kramer, to start enjoying a leisurely retirement: the city has hired Gina Donnelly to replace him.



Gina Donnelly

Ms. Donnelly, who spent the last 11 years working for the city of San Jose, most recently as deputy director of employee relations, began working for Menlo Park on Monday, July 23, staff said.

She arrives with experience in labor negotiations, according to the city's announcement. Ms. Donnelly earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from San Jose State University and has worked as a child care center director and behavioral therapist.

City Manager Alex McIntyre, also a relative newcomer to Menlo Park, told the Almanac he wants Ms. Donnelly "to take a fresh look at helping me create a 21st century progressive public sector organization."

Ms. Donnelly replaces Glen Kramer, who worked on contract

following his retirement after nearly 40 years with the city. She starts with an annual salary of \$135,000 and retirement benefits that fall in line with the two-tier pension system implemented by Measure L.

Tri-E-Z robbed by man with semi-automatic gun

The clerk at a Menlo Park liquor store got an unwelcome customer on Wednesday night, July 25. Around 10:30 p.m., a man brandishing a semi-automatic handgun entered Tri-E-Z Foods & Liquor and demanded cash, along with three bottles of alcohol, police said.

He ran southbound on El Camino Real after the clerk complied by handing over money, two bottles of Jack Daniel's whiskey, and one bottle of Hennessy cognac. No one was injured.

The suspect wore a black hooded sweatshirt, black sunglasses and a black mask, according to the police report.

The store, located at 1820 El Camino Real was also robbed in 2007 and again in 2011.

Police ask that anyone with information about the crime to call the police department at 330-6300 or the anonymous tip line at 330-6395.

Voters asked to hike sales tax

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

It might be like making a speech to a hostile audience when the county writes its argument in support of a half-cent sales tax increase for the November ballot. After all, voters defeated two of three tax hikes in June, and very nearly killed the third, a tax on rental car businesses that passed by only 197 votes.

Undaunted, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 on July 24, with Supervisor Dave Pine dissenting, to put the sales tax increase to a vote. The proposed ordinance would raise the county sales tax to 8.75 percent from 8.25 percent for the next 10 years.

Supervisors Adrienne Tisier and Don Horsley proposed the increase, citing the need to maintain critical county services in the face of continuing government budget cuts and ris-

ing employee benefit expenses.

"We have done all that we can legally do" to reduce benefit costs, Mr. Horsley said in a press release. "Now the community has an important decision to make: Are we going to continue to see the erosion of our parks and roads, longer wait times to see a doctor in our network of clinics and cutbacks in services to children or are we going to take a bold step to protect our community's health and safety?"

Mr. Pine worried the increase might hurt those who can least afford it. "There are many important needs in San Mateo County particularly within our health-care delivery system. I believe a quarter-cent sales tax, combined with other revenues which are now growing, would meet those needs," he told the Almanac.

"But a half-cent sales tax may cause harm to local businesses, disproportionately impact lower-income residents, and make it

more difficult for local cities or other agencies, such as Caltrain, to also levy a sales tax for other critical needs. For these reasons, I supported a more modest tax proposal."

Staff projected the increase will add about \$60 million a year to the county's general fund after state administrative fees are paid. The Board of Supervisors will control how to spend the money; helping county hospitals, after-school programs and parks were raised as possibilities.

It's not the only tax increase going to voters. Also on the Nov. 6 ballot: state Proposition 30, which would raise the state-wide sales tax by 0.25 percentage points. If voters approve both measures, the sales tax rate in San Mateo County would go to 9 percent, a rate that would tie with Alameda County as the highest of nine Bay Area counties, according to data provided by Mr. Pine. ■

PG&E conducts pressure tests in Menlo Park

Pacific Gas & Electric Company is conducting local hydrostatic pressure tests on its natural gas pipelines and will be placing sections of pipeline in the Menlo Park area, according to company spokesman Joe Molica.

Testing began July 26 between Valley Court in Woodside through Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club. The work will affect traffic around the country club entrance on Sand Hill Road and the intersection of Walsh and Valley roads in Atherton.

Testing involves excavating around parts of the underground pipeline, filling the pipeline with water, and increasing pressure at a level much higher than the pipeline's normal operating pressure. Pipe that does not meet acceptable standards will be repaired or replaced with new pipe, Mr. Molica said. During testing, residents' gas service should continue without interruption in most cases, he added.

PG&E will also replace some pipeline.

At times residents may smell gas, although the pipe will have been cleared of natural gas. The gas odor is normal, he said, but he encourages those concerned about the smell to call 1-800-743-5000 at any time 24 hours a day.

Pipe replacement

PG&E will replace sections of pipeline underneath Sand Hill Road and install an automated valve in Menlo Park. The new valve will have technology that allows PG&E staff to close it remotely from a gas-control center. The valve will also close automatically if a significant change in pressure is detected, he said. The equipment will allow PG&E to quickly turn off the flow of gas in an emergency.

Work is expected to start in

early August and last through October. Gas service will continue without interruption in most cases, he said. At times, people may smell gas and hear a loud steady noise as natural gas is vented from the pipeline, Mr. Molica said. Although this is normal, those concerned about the smell of gas are encouraged to call 1-800-743-5000.

The work will affect traffic on Alpine Road near Santa Cruz Avenue and Sand Hill Road between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. Two-way traffic will be maintained at all times, he said. The westbound bike lane on Sand Hill Road will be closed from time to time during construction. Traffic flaggers will help direct traffic, but drivers should plan for minor delays.

Community information meetings about the projects were held July 12 and 19 at St. Bede's Episcopal Church in Menlo Park.

Community volunteer Florence Stuart dies at 84

Memorial services were held July 28 at Ladera Community Church for Florence Stuart, who died June 4 from esophageal cancer. She was 84.

A Menlo Park resident for 45 years, she lived in Redwood Shores for the past 10 years.

A native of the Detroit area in Michigan, she graduated from the University of Michigan, where she met her future husband, Robert Stuart. The new-

lyweds moved to Chicago, where she taught elementary school and Mr. Stuart attended dental school. In 1957 they moved to Menlo Park.

During the 1960s Ms. Stuart volunteered at Allied Arts and gave assistance to immigrants, say family members. She became an expert on the San Francisco Bay ecosystem, writing a definitive work about the Bay for the League of Women Voters.

After a divorce in the 1970s, she became a real estate agent, while continuing her volunteer activities, working for prison reform and ending the death penalty, say family members.

Ms. Stuart is survived by four children, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Visit tinyurl.com/Stuart-726 for the Almanac's Lasting Memories website, where you can leave a remembrance.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Living Near the Train Should Soon Be Quieter

Dear Monica
I have seen a house I really like but it is next to the train. I am not too concerned about this but wondered whether it makes economic sense to buy in this location. What do you think? Karen D.

Dear Karen: There are some very good properties that happen to be located near the train and these are more affordable than homes

in other locations. Some of the most desirable neighborhoods on the Peninsula are situated near Caltrain and home values in these areas maintain themselves well.

There are plans to electrify Caltrain which will mean faster, cleaner, quieter trains. If you have found a property you like and it is well-priced considering its proximity to the train, it seems like a good buy.

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

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Atherton's full plate: meetings on Little League, Town Center

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

ATHERTON

After capping the month of July with a four-and-a-half-hour special meeting, the Atherton City Council is gearing up for three more special meetings over the course of seven days. The first, on Aug. 7, will be a continuation of the attempt to come up with language for two ballot measures.

The Aug. 7 meeting begins at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

The council will try to hammer out ballot language for a measure that will ask voters whether they support aspects of a Little League proposal for facilities in Holbrook-Palmer Park, and another measure pertaining to the plan to rebuild the Town Center.

Council members tabled the same agenda items at a special July 25 meeting after acknowledging that details of both

proposed projects were so vague that neither they nor staff could figure out what they would be asking voters to decide.

Council members Jerry Carlson and Elizabeth Lewis oppose putting the two additional measures on the ballot, but the council majority asked the staff to come back with more information so the council can come up with appropriate language, which must be submitted to the county by Aug. 10.

An Aug. 9 meeting will begin

at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers to make appointments to town committees and commissions.

An Aug. 13 meeting beginning at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers is the result of a citizens' petition signed by an estimated 250 residents requesting a hearing on four matters.

One topic has already been decided with the council's decision to put a measure on the ballot asking voters whether a library should be built in the park.

Other agenda items invite the public to weigh in on where the library should be located; whether Atherton should withdraw from a joint powers authority overseeing libraries in the county; and whether the town should prepare, with public participation, a master plan for town-owned property and all town buildings and structures, existing or planned.

The Council Chambers are at 94 Ashfield Road, in the Town Center. ■

The natural

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2013 World Baseball Classic. Israel will face France, South Africa and Spain.

He's got game

"He's a great leader," Legends Pitching Coach Bill Ryan said of Leichman. "He can inspire the group. He doesn't bring a lot of size, but he brings a lot of game."

Leichman is 5 feet 9 inches, 180 pounds and unassuming. He has a black belt in jiu jitsu — achieved over 14 years, he said — and spent three years in the Israeli army.

In Israel, everyone serves in the military. In his case, in recognition of his baseball skills and membership on the national team, the army assigned him a day job that would allow him to maintain his training and continue to represent the country on the ball field, he said.

That background may have helped create a work ethic in Leichman that is superior to that of the "softer American life," Ryan said. "He's one of the more coach-able guys."

Leichman can pitch when the pressure is on, when the bases are loaded with no outs, Ryan said. "He'll just come in there and do

his job. He has mound presence."

He is also in the midst of a comeback. At Cypress College in 2011, after one and a third innings and three strikeouts into his college career, a ligament failed in the elbow of his pitching arm, he said.

The ligament's been repaired, but a curve ball is no longer part of his repertoire. Throwing it too often and too soon as a kid may have led to the injury, he said. "That's kind of what I tell the kids (at the Legends baseball camps). I threw 140 pitches multiple times as an 18-year-old. That might be (the cause of the injury). It's hard to tell. My elbow just popped one game."

Young men have a habit of thinking of themselves as invincible. Did he? "Yes," he said. "You don't see how a curve ball's going to affect you, especially at a young age."

It's an attractive pitch. "You don't really throw it because it was the right pitch in the right situation. You throw it to make (the batter) look bad," Leichman said.

The curve ball fools the batter? "It's less fooling the batter than hitting the wrong part of the bat. He thinks 'I just missed it,' but no, it's 'I threw it with a little movement on it. That's why you missed it.'" ■

BALLOT

continued from page 5

last year to approve a library in the park.

In addition to ballot language for the library measure, the council was asked to approve language to place two other questions before voters in November related to plans to rebuild the Town Center and a proposal by the Little League to build permanent facilities on space in Holbrook-Palmer now being used as a ball field.

Unable to determine what either project would actually entail, the council tabled both matters and will meet again at 6 p.m. Aug. 7 to continue working on the language, which must be submitted to the county by Aug. 10.

Library in the park?

Ballot language recommended for council approval by City Attorney Bill Conners asked voters if the town should "construct a new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park using funds dedicated for library purposes only, and not using any existing park open space for this purpose."

Council members Carlson and Lewis, as well as numerous residents who addressed the council, wanted the references to funding and open space deleted, arguing that the question should be: Should a library be built in the park — yes or no?

While some asserted that the language about funding and open space was confusing, others said it was biased in favor of building the library in the park. The additional information, they said, could be included in the ballot arguments instead.

But others argued that without funding and location information in the labeling language, the question would be too ambiguous and wouldn't tell voters what they need to know. "Vague and amorphous (lan-

ATHERTON

guage) could also be biased," said Mr. Conners, who said he wrote the language with no "axe to grind or oar to pull" in the debate.

Mr. Conners also noted that the extra language would restrict the town from using money from its general fund, and from encroaching on existing open space in the park. (The town has a special fund that can be spent only on the library; it is expected to exceed \$8 million by the time construction begins.)

Resident Peter Carpenter commended Mr. Conners' lan-

Atherton library issue heads for ballot.

guage, but urged the council to add one more element: the fact that the library would be built on the site of the existing Main House, which would be razed.

Other residents also argued for the addition, and the council added language telling voters that the library would be built "by replacing the Main House and some surrounding patios and walkways."

Library EIR

The council's certification of the library EIR, which includes environmental analysis of options for building in the park and in the Town Center, won't have a direct impact on the November ballot measure. But the recommendation to certify it drew many of the same opponents who wanted to simplify the ballot language of the library measure.

Councilman Carlson said certifying the document will confuse residents, who will wonder if the council is "taking one step further" in supporting a library in the park. "I'm concerned about the message we may be sending," he said.

But Councilman Jim Dobbie said that the town attorney "has made it crystal clear that approving the EIR is not approving a project. They're totally separate. The only reason to delay (certification) is if we think it's inadequate."

Mr. Conners and Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen noted that the EIR could provide voters with useful information to help them make their decision at the ballot box.

When Councilwoman Lewis pointed out that the document is already posted on the town's website and residents can review it before the council acts on it, Ms. McKeithen countered: "Certification says it's been completed in accordance with California law. It's an issue of credibility in voters' minds.

Mayor Bill Widmer noted that the EIR reviewed five library options, allowing comparisons of different potential sites for the facility, which could help voters in "deciding on one site over another."

Meeting start time

A number of residents criticized the town for beginning the meeting at 4 p.m., when many people are still at work or commuting home.

Interim City Manager Theresa DellaSanta said after the meeting that the start time for the special meeting was discussed at two prior council meetings. It was decided to begin the meeting earlier in the day than usual because the Planning Commission was meeting at 7 p.m. the same night, she said.

The commission had earlier planned to review the Little League proposal for permanent facilities in Holbrook-Palmer Park that night, but after the council decided to put the issue on the ballot, the commission chair and Ms. DellaSanta agreed to postpone discussion of the proposal, she said. ■

Attorney: Agency insists on 4 tracks

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Gordon, D-Menlo Park. "The high-speed rail authority is, in any current presentation they make, talking very clearly, very openly that it will be a blended system, that the Peninsula will be a blended system that will share facilities with Caltrain."

Mr. Gordon noted that he wasn't privy to the mediation, and so couldn't comment on why design presented an obstacle to settlement. "The blended system — that's what we've got, that's what is in the legislation and that's what the HSRA is

committed to building."

That's missing the boat, according to Mr. Flashman, who stands by his criticism of the bill. He said those issues are why Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, voted against it. "This is an indication of why it's a really a bad idea for legislators to rush through these bills without taking the time to fully understand them. It may have said 'these funds right now' can't be used for a four-track system, but it says nothing about the long-term. The authority's ultimate intent is to build a four-track system." ■

Matteson housing project goes to Menlo Park council

The Matteson condo development project at 389 El Camino Real, near College Avenue, goes to the Menlo Park City Council for approval on Tuesday, July 31.

Seventeen townhomes and nine single-family homes would be built on a 1.23-acre site. Two driveways off El Camino Real would provide access to the site, with the exception of two single-family houses that would be reached via College and Partridge avenues, according to the staff report.

Of the 26 proposed homes, three would be set aside for the city's below-market-rate housing program.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the project in June.

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

Go to tinyurl.com/bvbjeyq to review the agenda and associated staff reports.

Grand jury on pension costs

A grand jury report released July 23 dissects a topic near and dear to many hearts

in San Mateo County: "Controlling the County's Escalating Pension Costs."

According to the report, the county's contribution to the retirement fund, which covers 10,582 current and retired employees, will jump by another \$13 million next year. The county already carries \$842 million in unfunded liability, the difference between expected benefit plan payments and current assets over time. While initially projecting a return of 7.75 percent on investments, the county's retirement system, SamCERA, has now lowered that to 7.5 percent over 15 years.

The report suggests that the county deal with the problem by employing fewer people through service cuts, attrition and outsourcing; negotiating lower costs with unions; and considering withdrawal from Social Security. County manager John Maltbie said staff is researching whether that last option is even legally possible.

Downtown parking

Menlo Park's plans to create a down-

BRIEFS

town parking task force had barely left the drawing board before drawing the ire of some merchants and residents.

The plan proposes a five-member task force composed of two Chamber of Commerce representatives (one of whom must own property or a business downtown), one resident, one transportation commissioner, and one planning commissioner. The group would evaluate how to implement aspects of the downtown/El Camino Real specific plan related to parking, including the possibility of building up to two parking garages, and develop the scope of a parking management study.

Community members, including Downtown Alliance co-founder Nancy Couperus and former planning commissioner Patti Fry, took issue with the proposed composition. "A representative of the Chamber is fine, but why not representatives from the other groups, too?" Ms. Fry asked, referring to the

Downtown Alliance, Farmers Market and Lions Club in an email to the council on July 27.

The council will discuss the task force at its meeting on Tuesday, July 31. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St.

Go to tinyurl.com/bvbjeyq to review the agenda and associated staff reports.

Good Samaritan rescues purse

It could have been a very costly trip to Safeway. A woman shopping at the store on El Camino Real around 5 p.m. on July 25 loaded her groceries into the car, but drove home without realizing she'd left her purse behind in the cart.

Upon returning to Safeway, she discovered someone had given her purse to a store manager. "Nothing had been taken, and I shall remember this act of honesty forever and happily relate it to my friends and children," she said in an email. She wanted to thank the Good Samaritan, but asked that the Almanac not print her name.

Three more take out papers

Denise Kupperman, Bob Roeser, and Jo-Ann (Sokolov) Byrne took out candidate papers from Town Hall on July 27, the first step in a possible run for Atherton City Council.

Others who have pulled papers are incumbent Elizabeth Lewis and Cary Wiest, who ran unsuccessfully in 2010.

As of the Almanac's press time on Monday, no one had filed the papers, which would make them official candidates in the Novem-

ATHERTON

ber race for two council seats. The filing period ends Aug. 10.

Incumbent Kathy McKeithen, whose term expires in December, has not stated publicly whether she will run again. If either she or Ms. Lewis don't file papers by Aug. 10, the candidate filing period will be extended to Aug. 15.

Go to tinyurl.com/Elect-730 for more details.

Robert Samuel Hunter, III

July 12, 1933 – July 14, 2012

Dr. Robert Samuel Hunter III of Menlo Park, CA, passed away peacefully following a long illness on July 14, 2012, in Stanford, California, with his family and wife of 55 years, Marlene, by his side. A native of California, Bob was born July 12, 1933 in Berkeley, California, and lived within a 75 mile radius of San Francisco his entire life.

He graduated from Central Elementary School in San Carlos & Serra High School in San Mateo in 1950. He served with honor and distinction in the United States Navy from 1951 to 1954 and received an honorable discharge as a Sonarman Second Class.

His sister Sandra introduced him to Marlene Mori in 1954. They were married in 1956.

He received three degrees from Stanford University — a B.A. in Political Science (1959), an M.A. in Education (1960) and an M.A. in Political Science (1966). He also received his Doctorate in Organization and Leadership from The University of San Francisco (1982).

His first job post-Navy as a Social Studies teacher and chair of the Social Studies department at Carlmont High School, Belmont, California, from 1959-1975 led to a lifelong career in education and public service. He then became the school's Director of Student Activities from 1977-1986 and a Vice Principal from 1986-1999.

In the summers of 1966-1974 Bob worked as a San Mateo County Adult Probation Officer.

Bob may be best known for originating the Friends of Millard Fillmore Trivia Hunt in 1962 and shepherding it for its first 40 plus years. He created the Hunt to improve students' research and problem-solving skills, hone critical thinking skills and provide an academic setting where participating students can have fun. This entertaining and competitive weekend research project for high school students has been held annually in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties and is still active today. Students have two days to find answers to pieces of trivia and produce printed proof of their answers. Books, encyclo-

pedias, magazines and newspapers are considered valid sources, but the Internet is not.

Bob has a long history of community service. His many posts included president of Woodside High School PTA, Trustee of the Las Lomas School District, and secretary of the San Mateo County School Board Association. He was an active parishioner at St. Denis Catholic Church in Menlo Park for 45 years and also served in several key positions on the Parish Council.

Bob is survived by his wife, of 55 years, Marlene (Mori), sister Sandra Rock and her husband Jim, daughter Kelley (Sexton), son Kevin and his wife Barbara, daughter Kerrey (Saunders), and her husband Mark. He has nine grandchildren: Michel McCammon, Taylor Saunders, Grant Saunders, Paige Saunders, Mackenzie Saunders, Brooke Saunders, Robert (Bobby) Samuel Hunter IV, Brent Hunter, Corey Hunter and numerous nieces and nephews.

Written by: Barbara J. Hunter

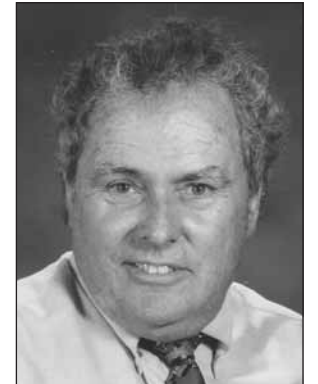
A memorial service will be held Saturday, August 11, 10:30 a.m., St. Denis Church, 2250 Avy Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to:

1) NMO (Neuromyelitis Optica) The Guthy-Jackson Charitable Foundation www.guthyjacksonfoundation.org 8910 University Center Lane, STE 725 San Diego, CA 92122

2) Friends of Millard Fillmore (FOMF) Carlmont Academic Foundation Carlmont High School 1400 Alameda De Las Pulgas Belmont, CA 94002

3) Father Peter Pabst, President Sacred Heart Nativity School & Our Lady of Grace Nativity School 310 Edwards Avenue San Jose, CA 95110



POLICE CALLS

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

WOODSIDE

Theft report: Loss estimated at \$10,300 in theft of Rolex watch and keys from golf bag, Menlo Country Club at 2300 Woodside Road, July 24.

MENLO PARK

Burglary reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$6,000 in break-in through smashed window and cut lock and theft of several cameras, Ritz Camera at 715 Santa Cruz Ave., July 26.

■ Losses estimated at \$3,100 in break-in to locked trailer and theft of

hammer-drill tool, bit set and demo hammer, Woodland Court, July 20.

■ Losses estimated at \$890 in break-in through sliding glass door and theft of laptop computer, suit, jacket miscellaneous alcoholic beverages and Christmas ornaments, Chester St., July 23.

Theft reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$2,000 in theft of tools, Menalto Ave., July 24.

■ Losses estimated at \$1,500 in theft of laptop computer, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers at 2750 Sand Hill Road, July 25.

Robbery report: Robert Longstreet, 57, of Newark arrested on robbery and burglary charges after allegedly stealing a food item, trying to leave without paying, and threatening store clerk, Willows Market at 60 Middlefield Road, July 25.

KEPLER'S

continued from page 3

leverage technology in the bookstore. Other participants will develop programs for local authors or build philanthropic support for the new nonprofit.

On his personal "to do" list for the next six months: Define a clear mission and identity for the new Kepler's; launch classes and

new literary events; and improve the rewards for belonging to the store's membership program.

"The overriding goal of Future Search was to expand the circle of committed and engaged stakeholders who are going to work with Kepler's and other community bookstores to build a better and sustainable business model," said Mr. Madan, who described the event as a success. ■

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



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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letters@almanacnews.com

and note this it is a letter to the editor in the subject line.

MAIL or deliver to:

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3525 Alameda de las Pulgas,
Menlo Park, CA 94025.

CALL the Viewpoint desk at
223-6507.

Don't undermine the Brown Act

California journalists and advocates of open government are rightfully concerned over the Legislature's suspension of an important provision of the Brown Act, the state's open meeting law. In a move they claim will save some \$96 million over the next three years, state lawmakers last month eliminated reimbursement to public agencies for posting meeting agendas in advance of the sessions — a Brown Act requirement. This move effectively removes the legal duty cities and special districts have had for decades to inform citizens of when their city councils, commissions, and boards will meet, and what they will be discussing.

Locally, the public has reason to cheer: City officials of Menlo Park, Atherton, Woodside and Portola Valley have said they intend to continue posting agendas despite the provision's suspension. Although we have yet to survey officials of special districts such as West Bay Sanitary and Sequoia Healthcare, we hope they will acknowledge the importance of keeping the public informed about board meetings, and continue posting.

But regardless of those commitments by a growing numbers of agencies across the state to continue abiding by the posting provisions despite being let off the hook by Sacramento, the suspension of this critical requirement is troubling.

The Brown Act was passed in 1953, and was largely

the result of investigative work done by a San Francisco Chronicle reporter focusing on the problem of elected officials doing the public's business in private, leading to important decisions being made without the scrutiny of those who would be affected by them. It has been expanded over the years to better protect the public's right to know and to participate in the process of governance.

Open-government advocates have applauded these additions through the years, but what happened in June may have been the first time we've had to watch our lawmakers subtract from the law. It is a development that chisels away at the principle behind the Brown Act — that citizens must have access to

their government and the ability to participate in its deliberative process, which under most circumstances must be conducted in public. The Legislature has sent the wrong message to public agencies in telling them that it is optional, not mandatory, to notify citizens that their elected officials and appointed boards will meet, and what's on the agenda.

Although local cities have stated their commitment to continue posting meeting agendas voluntarily, the public shouldn't have to rely on the government's willingness to disclose information citizens need to know if they are to participate in the public process. State lawmakers should reinstate the provision.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

Another perspective on Stanford funding for trail

By Steve Schmidt

The June 29 guest opinion in the Palo Alto Weekly submitted by Stanford's James Sweeney is laden with misleading and selectively chosen arguments. Mr. Sweeney's piece (<http://tinyurl.com/bqvh2tt>) addressed the \$10.3 million Stanford failed to impose on San Mateo County on three separate occasions to build a multi-use bicycle path along Alpine Road.

After 12 years, it is a travesty that Stanford continues to dodge its commitment and spin the facts in an elaborate attempt to confuse the community. A review of the history of the 2000 general use plan agreement (the GUP) between Stanford University and Santa Clara County is in order.

In 2000 Stanford agreed to construct a multi-use trail, designated C-1, on Stanford land in Santa Clara County in exchange for 5 million square feet of new campus development. Rather than honor its obligations and while building its newly granted entitlements to increase campus development, Stanford spent five years lobbying the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors that the C-1 Trail should be in San Mateo County, mostly in the right-of-way of Alpine Road.

I was a Menlo Park City Council member in 2000 actively involved in the discus-

sion of the mitigations for the university's expansion, and I know that a trail along Alpine Road was not a consideration included in the GUP. However, it soon became clear that Stanford had no intention of ever allowing public easements for a trail on Stanford land, even for groups like Mr. Sweeney's Stanford Campus Residential Leaseholders.

By 2006 Stanford's relentless efforts had paid off; the C-1 Trail had become the responsibility of San Mateo County. Three times the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors rejected Stanford's proposal to build a multi-use trail next to Alpine Road, in part for safety reasons. It violated well-established design standards for locating combined pedestrian and bicycle facilities within a few feet of a heavily traveled arterial road, populated largely by car and truck traffic generated by Stanford construction and growth.

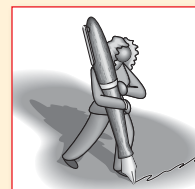
The \$10.3 million that Mr. Sweeney thinks should be used to supplement his already generous on-campus recreational

opportunities has now returned to Santa Clara County. Residents of both Santa Clara and San Mateo counties experience the loss of recreational opportunities caused by limiting public access to the Dish and the negative effects of unending Stanford expansion in both counties.

It behooves the Santa Clara County supervisors to fund recreational improvements with this money that provide the widest benefits to local residents, including but not limited to, the Stanford Leaseholders. I urge the supervisors at their Aug. 7 meeting to direct these funds for the completion of the Bay Trail in Palo Alto and to partially fund the bicycle-pedestrian over-crossing of 101 at Adobe Creek.

For years the region has endured the impacts of Stanford's twice-a-day employee commute traffic, two world-renowned hospitals, a regional shopping mall, disruptive sports events and the heavy use of local public roads for dangerous construction vehicles. The entire region deserves genuine mitigations. Thinking regionally is appropriate when one realizes the extent of Stanford's footprint on the Peninsula.

Steve Schmidt is a former mayor of Menlo Park



GUEST OPINION

Misuse of social media by 'Athertonians' blog

By Walter Sleeth

In connection with the Atherton Library controversy the moderators of the Yahoo blog "Athertonians," which was set up a number of years ago for the benefit of all residents in the community, have misused the blog.

No one disagrees with the advisability of free speech, but when a forum site is turned into a vehicle to allow only limited points of view, residents should be concerned. The concern has been missing because it is not well known.

It appears that almost a year ago the moderators who had created the Yahoo site saw the opportunity to use the blog to publish one-sided views on the library issue; they removed from the blog's address list the individuals on the Atherton Library Building Steering Committee (10 individuals at the time), arguably because they were "attacking" the blog. In fact it was because those individuals held different views than the moderators did. I believe that only one of the moderators has divulged his identity, Mr. Charles Marsala. That is to his credit.

Mr. Marsala in an email

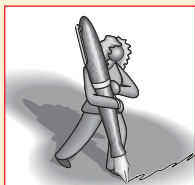
stated that the individuals removed were "undermining the functioning of the group"; their memberships were refused.

There is absolutely no basis to his position. The rationale of the original Athertonians blog was to be open to an exchange of ideas, now crippled because those wanting to block the use of legally available funds for a replacement library effectively silenced individuals with very creative and rational views on the library.

He and the moderators have been trying to monopolize a very important "microphone" in the town. Mr. Marsala believes because Yahoo policy allows control of a forum by the moderators that they are within their rights. From Yahoo's viewpoint that may be so, but does what the moderators did make it fair and not open to public scrutiny?

In this writer's opinion, the behavior is unacceptable for advocacy before governmental bodies, which must rely on fair ethics from their citizens.

Walter Sleeth is an Atherton resident



GUEST OPINION

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mcorman@apr.com



PALO ALTO \$2,850,000
Modern 2-story, 3bd/2.5ba home built in 2007 in downtown PA. Separate, charming 2bd/2ba bungalow with vintage appeal and new kitchen (2007).



Ellen Ashley
650.888.1886
eashley@apr.com



WOODSIDE \$2,760,000
Stunning custom 4 bedroom contemporary with sweeping views on approximately one acre featuring dramatic light and open spaces overlooking the magnificent grounds.



Julian Cervantes
650.430.1601
jcervantes@apr.com



LOS ALTOS HILLS \$2,690,000
New price. Unique, custom-built 5bd/4.5ba home, 5234+/- sf. Beautifully landscaped one+/- acre lot with tennis court and pool.



Monica Corman
650.543.1164
mcorman@apr.com



MENLO PARK \$2,295,000
This one-level 4bd/3.5ba home, located in desirable Felton Gables, is on a .25+/- acre lot. This home was completely remodeled and expanded in 2006.



Cindi & Brittany Kodweis
650.279.6333
ckodweis@apr.com



LOS ALTOS HILLS \$2,249,000
Outstanding 4bd/3.5ba remodeled home, 4200+/- sf., offers privacy + views of Rancho San Antonio. 1+ acre lot. Sparkling pool.



Jayne Williams
650.906.5599
jaynewilliams@apr.com



WOODSIDE \$2,195,000
At the end of a flag lot, this 2bd/2ba home is located on 1.5 +/- acre in the heart of Woodside. There is also a separate 1-bedroom cottage.



Helen Nyborg
650.468.5833
hnyborg@apr.com

Ki Nyborg
650.468.5828
knyborg@apr.com



OPEN SATURDAY & SUNDAY

MOUNTAIN VIEW \$1,150,000
High quality remodel. 4bd/2.5ba single-family home, 2500+/-sf. Gorgeous complex with pool + tennis. Huff Elementary School.



Roseann Miller
650.543.1237
ramiller@apr.com



SOLD

MENLO PARK \$650,000
Situated on larger than average lot features an enclosed porch, separate dining room and hardwood floors throughout.

PALO ALTO 650.323.1111 | MENLO PARK 650.462.1111 | LOS ALTOS 650.941.1111 | WOODSIDE 650.529.1111

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