

Portola Valley to buy
'affordable' housing site | Section 2

The Almanac

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

SEPTEMBER 5, 2012 | VOL. 48 NO. 1

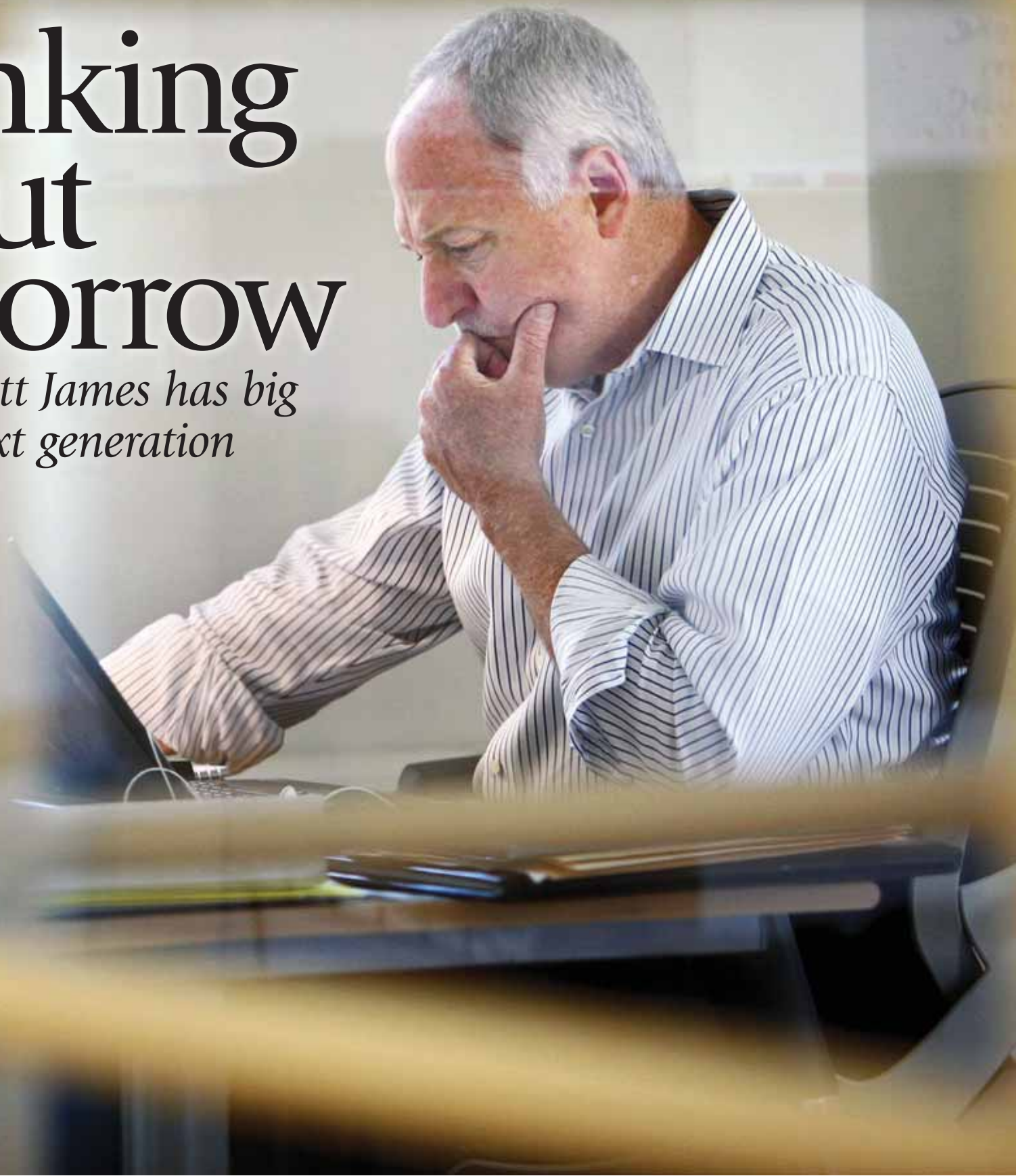


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Thinking about tomorrow

*Ladera's Matt James has big
plans for next generation*

PAGE 5





ATHERTON

This New England-style home with gated entrance is located on a cul-de-sac. Remodeled and expanded in 2009-2010, including all new landscaping on 1.15+/- acres. Master suite on first floor, 4bd upstairs, and 6th bedroom off of kitchen. Living room, separate dining room, eat-in kitchen, library, and wine cellar. Pool, pool house with trellis, fireplace and TV. 3 car garage and Menlo Park Schools.

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\$1,375,000



WOODSIDE

Sitting peacefully at end of a quiet country lane sits this charming 3bd/2ba family home. Farmhouse ambience: bucolic pasture, majestic oaks, and draping wisteria. Spacious great room with gourmet kitchen opens to a large deck overlooking the pond, and facing the Bay views. Horse property with 4 stall barn and fantastic trail access. This is a very special home in a very desirable and rare setting.

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Remembering Andrew Garcia

By Dorothy Bachler

Special to the Almanac

For the past 10 years, the Portola Valley community, and surrounding areas, have gathered at Triangle Park, at the corner of Portola and Alpine roads in Portola Valley, for a 5K walk/run/bike on Labor Day to remember the horrific events of Sept. 11, but more specifically to remember Andrew (Sonny) Garcia, a hero who gave his life in the first war against terrorism on United Flight 93.

Andy and I moved to Portola Valley in 1976 with our three small children. Andy was well-known in the community as a volunteer and coach. He was also known for the big smile he wore as he was seen running the trails and stopping to talk with neighbors.

Andy did have an infectious smile and was known for being a prankster, but he



"Andrew Garcia was a son, a brother, husband, father, grandfather and friend."

was much more than that. He was a son, a brother, husband, father, grandfather and friend. And no matter which "hat" he was wearing, his approach was one of dedication, loyalty, honesty and kindness.

Andy had a deep faith in God and was a born-again

Christian. His life reflected his faith. Andy would have celebrated his 73rd birthday on Aug. 28.

The Andy Garcia Memorial Run will not take place this year. It is our hope that each person reading this will always remember Andy's sacrifice for our country.

It is now well-documented that Flight 93 prevented the White House or Capitol from being hit. It is hard to imagine what our country would have looked like had that happened. Let us also remember all those who lost their lives on that day and remember the families left behind, many of whom are still healing.

And remember those brave men and women, many of whom have lost their lives, who continue the battle against terrorism. Remember, too, that our country was founded on faith in God and it is God who will heal our land. ▀

Woman donates money to replace stolen bike

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

"Don't let the good in the world be overshadowed by these people," said a note from an anonymous woman to a 14-year-old boy who had his bike stolen at the Menlo Park skate park.

After reading about the theft in the newspaper, the Good Samaritan contacted police to arrange a \$500 donation to replace the bike.

The teenager was attacked by two young men during a morning outing on Aug. 13. After one

asked for a ride and was turned down, he punched the boy as the other suspect grabbed the bike. Both escaped a police search.

The first suspect, described as a white man about 17 to 18

She tells 14-year-old boy to remember the good in the world,

years old, had short blond hair, freckles and light eyes. About 5 feet, 7 inches tall and weighing about 150 pounds, he wore jeans

and a gray T-shirt, according to the police report. He rode the bike as the pair fled south on Alma Street.

The second suspect, a black man about 18 to 19 years old, wore jeans and a white T-shirt. He stood nearly 6 feet tall and weighed about 180 pounds with short, curly dark hair and medium complexion.

Police spokesperson Nicole Acker said there was no update on the investigation. Anyone with information about the robbery can call police at 330-6300. ▀

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THE ALMANAC (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Wednesday by Embarcadero Media, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices. Adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for San Mateo County. The Almanac is delivered free to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside. Subscriptions for \$60 per year or \$100 per 2 years are welcome. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558. Copyright ©2012 by Embarcadero Media, All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

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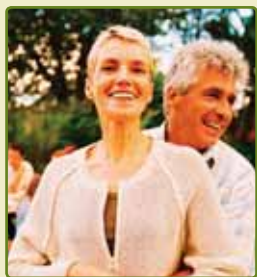
Sept. 2012

Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease: The Basics

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Palo Alto Center
795 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

Presented by Edie Yau, M.A.
Director of Diversity, Alzheimer's Association
650-853-4873



Attendees will learn about the differences between normal aging and dementia, the basics of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, the diagnostic process, and management of the disease. Additional topics consist of community resources including the Alzheimer's Association, planning for the future, and how family members and caregivers can help the person with dementia.

Understanding Hypertension

Tuesday, Sept. 25, 12:45 to 1:45 p.m.

Sunnyvale City Senior Center
550 E. Remington Drive, Sunnyvale

Presented by Aarti Srinivasan, M.D.
PAMF Internal Medicine

**No registration needed, however,
email can be sent to
nhextell@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us**



Hypertension is prevalent, affecting over 60% of older Americans. We'll review the definition of "hypertension," lifestyle changes and modifications that lower blood pressure, as well as common medications used to treat blood pressure. We'll talk briefly about other risk factors, such as diabetes, and cholesterol, that can exist along with blood pressure and increase one's risk for heart disease.

Upcoming Lectures and Workshops

October

Mountain View

- Test Your Eye Q
- Autism: What It Is and Why It Seems More Common Today – Parent Workshop Series

November

Palo Alto

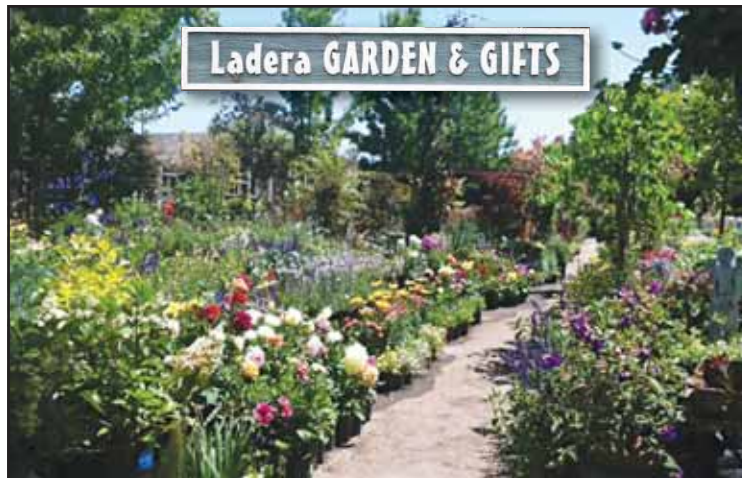
- Understanding the 2013 Medicare, Medigaps, Medicare Advantage and Drug Plans

Mountain View

- Preparing for Travel to South East Asia with Children – Parent Workshop Series



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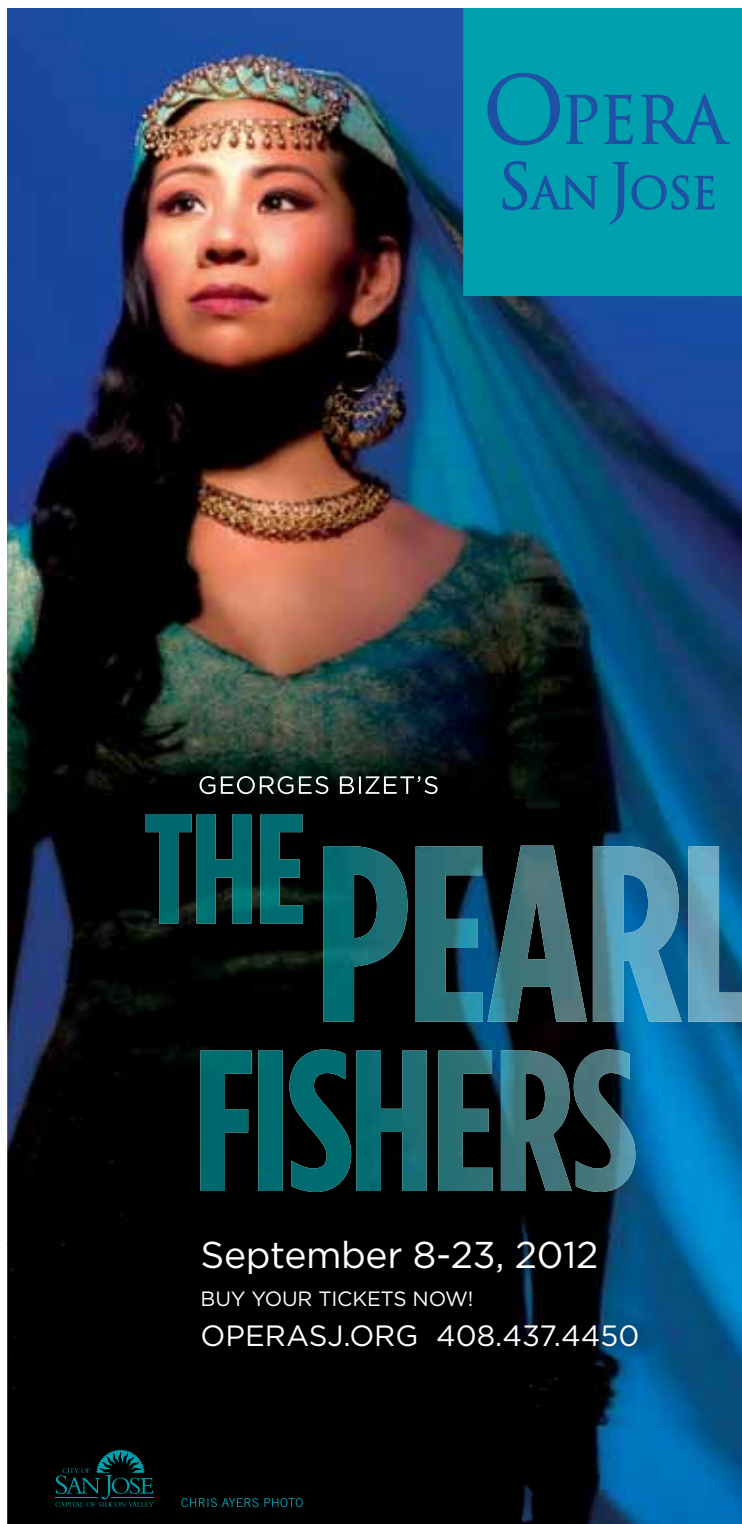
"This place is a wonderful source for plants, containers, and gifts. You can always get help and typically find what you want."
– Carol G., Palo Alto

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THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW

Ladera's Matt James has big plans for next generation

By Dave Boyce

Almanac staff writer

In his quest to assist the next generation or two in the United States with interesting careers and meaningful work, Matt James of Ladera finds it hard to overstate the importance of a public education system that meets the needs of all its students, and an economy that is actively moving away from dependence on fossil fuels.

A tall order, and Mr. James is neither an educator nor a scientist. He does have resources as a communicator. With an undergraduate degree in broadcast communications from Western Michigan University, he started off as a congressional press secretary, first for Congressman Morris Udall of Arizona, then for Sen. Dale Bumpers of Arkansas, and then Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York. He came to his current position as president and chief executive of the nonprofit and nonpartisan Center for the Next Generation (in San Francisco) after 20 years with the Menlo Park-based Henry J. Kaiser Family Founda-

tion, where he was an executive vice president.

The Kaiser foundation is known for providing facts and analysis on health issues for policymakers, the news media and the public. A testament to Kaiser's success? In the debate leading up to the U.S. Supreme Court decision on President Obama's Affordable Care Act, opponents and backers both used Kaiser data in their arguments, Mr. James says.

'If people have the straight facts and really know what's going on, they will make good decisions.'

That's the kind of reputation Mr. James says he wants for the Center for the Next Generation: to become a highly reliable source for facts, information and analysis.

The goals are to "paint a realistic picture of the lives of America's kids and what needs to be done to allow them to reach their full potential" and to provide facts that help develop "regional advanced energy innovation chapters across the United States," the Center's website says.

"We are relentlessly focused on what we think are the most important issues for the next



Almanac photo by Michelle Le

"We are relentlessly focused on what we think are the most important issues for the next generation," says Matt James, shown working in his San Francisco office.

generation," Mr. James told the Almanac over coffee recently. "If people have the straight facts and really know what's going on, they will make good decisions."

The Center is "a strategic communications firm that is also a think tank," and has funding of \$15 million for the next five years, Mr. James says. The major backer is co-founder Tom Steyer, who also founded Farallon Capital Management in San Francisco. Other major gifts

include \$500,000 from the Ford Foundation and \$3 million from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

For the children

There are approximately 72 million children under 18 in the United States. The Center's website describes the plight of many of them:

■ About 15.5 million live in poverty — a household in which the annual income is below \$22,050 for a family of four —

according to a 2010 report from the National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia University. Another 16.5 million live in low-income households, meaning up to twice the poverty level, or an income of \$44,700.

■ More than 26 percent suffer chronic ill health, including obesity, asthma, diabetes and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, according to a 2010

See **NEXT GENERATION**, page 8

Preschool coming to Bay Road; Menlo Park council upholds use permit

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

It sounded like a battle of facts in council chambers: How many preschools does Menlo Park have? Does it need another? How much noise does a group of 48 toddlers on a playground make?

Speakers on both sides of a fight over allowing a preschool at 695 Bay Road had different answers during the Aug. 28 council meeting.

In July, the Planning Commission unanimously approved a use permit for Bright Angel Montessori Academy. The decision was then challenged, leaving the council to make the final decision. The site is zoned for com-

mercial uses, a factor which seemed to weigh the votes in favor of the permit.

The design as proposed by school founders MeiLing Huang and Joe Wyffels consists of two 925-square-foot classrooms with adjunct staff rooms, and a 1,600-square-foot outdoor playground enclosed by a wooden fence. The school must pay the city \$71,842 in review and traffic-impact fees.

Kindergarten teacher Brynn Cahill, who lives across the street from the site and filed the appeal, told the council that the Planning Commission's

decision had been swayed by emotion rather than facts. She said her research showed that Menlo Park currently has more preschools per capita than any city on the Peninsula.

Kindergarten teacher who opposes the school says the decision had been swayed by emotion rather than facts.

"Nine currently have openings for students. That is a fact," she said. Ms. Cahill also challenged the school's plan to implement staggered start times to manage traffic, the number of parking spaces required, and the projected noise levels.

Other businesses, such as a barber

shop or dry cleaner, would be welcome, according to Ms. Cahill. A preschool "would be an undeniable nuisance" and its daytime traffic would compromise the safety of children and residents.

Some neighbors spoke in support of Ms. Cahill's appeal — at least 17 had signed a petition — while others supported the academy, including parents who looked forward to having a preschool within walking distance of home.

"I know the person speaking before me against the preschool gave you some statistics," one mother said, then

See **PRESCHOOL**, page 8

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‘11 Marco Porello Roero Arneis Reg. \$16.99 **Sale \$14.99**
‘11 Stefano Massone Gavi Reg. \$17.99 **Sale \$15.99**

Auto recall begins after Woodside fire

By **Dave Boyce**
Almanac staff writer

The Karma, a luxury gasoline/electric hybrid sports sedan that made local news on Aug. 10 when it burst into flames in a Woodside parking lot, is being refitted with an “improved” low-temperature cooling fan in a recall by the manufacturer, Fisker Automotive in Anaheim.

This recall is the third — and by far the largest at 1,377 possibly affected vehicles — since the car’s debut in December 2011, according to records of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

This recall involves a defect in the cooling fan that could cause an electrical short circuit that could ignite the fan housing, shroud and surrounding components, the records say.

The earlier recalls involved replacement of a high-voltage battery to correct a manufacturing defect involving hose clamps that could have leaked coolant into the battery compartment, possibly causing a short circuit and fire.

The Karma that caught fire outside Roberts Market in Woodside belonged to Woodside Glens resident Rudy Burger, a managing partner at Woodside Capital Partners in Palo Alto.

Firefighters from the Woodside Fire Protection District quickly extinguished the fire with water and there were no injuries, but the heat did blister paint on an adjacent SUV, Fire Chief Dan Ghiorso told the Almanac at the time.

Mr. Burger already has a new Karma sitting in his driveway and is hoping to participate in Fisker’s next round of financing, he told the Almanac in an email.

“I have been incredibly impressed with the way Fisker has handled this incident,” Mr. Burger said. “I have started seven technology companies and thus know from direct personal experience that there are always bumps in the road between innovation and a sustainable, successful business. Fisker is a great company and the US needs more innovative companies of this type, especially in the automobile sector.” ■

Fire destroys garage, two vehicles and part of house

By **Dave Boyce**
Almanac Staff Writer

A two-alarm structure fire significantly damaged a home at 5 Joaquin Road in Los Trancos Woods after destroying the garage, two vehicles inside the garage and parts of the attached house.

The fire was reported at about 8:15 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 22, said Battalion Chief Rob Lindner of the Woodside Fire Protection District.

Two firefighters suffered minor injuries. They were treated on the scene and stayed on duty, firefighters said.

The residents, a man and a woman, were at home at the time of the fire and made the 911 call, firefighters said.

The fire apparently started in the garage and then spread to

the house, including the attic, which meant that firefighters had to ventilate the roof of the house, Battalion Chief Lindner said.

Nine fire engines and several fire agencies helped fight the fire. Woodside district battalion chiefs declared a second alarm after determining the fire was threatening the woods around the home.

While a fire crew maintained a watch overnight, the fire itself was contained within the first hour, firefighters said.

The fire damaged a power line that was arcing during the fire, and melted a gas meter. Firefighters allowed the gas to burn off safely until Pacific Gas & Electric workers arrived to shut off the supply. ■

Large hole on Sand Hill repaired

The intersection of Sand Hill Road and Sharon Park Drive in Menlo Park was closed for several hours Aug. 28 as crews repaired a large hole — about 12 feet in diameter — that opened up during a construction mishap.

A PG&E contractor was doing some excavation work for a pipeline project at the intersection Tuesday afternoon when the small hole created for the project grew larger, PG&E spokesman David Eisenhower said.

Woodside resident helps arrest theft suspect

By Dave Boyce
Almanac staff writer

Retired San Francisco police officer and Woodside resident Bill Gilbert brought some of his professional skills to bear early on the morning of Aug. 30 near his home on Olive Hill Lane. He assisted a deputy from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office in corralling a suspect in at least one of a series of recent thefts from unlocked vehicles in Woodside and Portola Valley, according to a report provided to the Almanac by his wife, Lee Ann Gilbert.

Deputies arrested and booked into the county jail Dean Goble, 21, of Redwood City after finding him on Olive Hill Lane shortly before 6 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 29, the Sheriff's Office reported. Mr. Goble faces charges that include possession of stolen property, conspiracy and violating probation for a previous burglary.

Deputies don't have many leads yet, but are looking at Mr. Goble in connection with two of 28 recently reported thefts from vehicles, Lt. Larry Schumaker of the Sheriff's Office said in an interview.

Deputies were already on patrol when they captured Mr. Goble, having saturated the area in response to the theft reports, including seven reported by residents of Olive Hill Lane, Lt. Schumaker said.

With the residents of Olive Hill in an elevated state of awareness, at around 5 a.m. Thursday morning Mr. Gilbert decided to patrol the street "one last time," Lee Ann Gilbert wrote in her account. He was about to head off for a five-day horse ride with colleagues from the Woodside-based Mounted Patrol of San Mateo County, where Mr. Gilbert is a captain.

"It was just kind of great to have the whole street get together and do what they could to get this guy," Mr. Gilbert's daughter

Jennifer told the Almanac.

Mr. Gilbert noticed and followed "an unfamiliar man" seen wearing a backpack and leaving the property of a neighbor, Lee Ann Gilbert wrote. The man subsequently "jumped into nearby bushes" and Mr. Gilbert, who was armed, began a pursuit. A deputy happened on the scene and they joined forces, Ms. Gilbert said. Together, they "pulled the suspect from his hiding spot in the bushes and placed him under arrest."

"Because of (Mr.) Gilbert's determination to discover and capture the burglar, he,

Residents report rash of thefts from unlocked vehicles.

with assistance from the Sheriff's Department, made the arrest possible," Ms. Gilbert wrote. "(Mr.) Gilbert's grateful family and neighbors are now able to rest a little easier, however all have committed to be a part of a permanent and vigilant neighborhood watch."

Unlocked vehicles

Investigators don't yet have a complete list of the items stolen and their estimated value, Lt. Schumaker said. "We are dealing with quite a few victims."

After Mr. Goble was apprehended, "several pieces of property stolen from vehicles that were parked in the driveway of homes located in the Town of Woodside were found on his person," a Sheriff's Office statement said.

In Woodside, seven thefts were reported on Olive Hill Drive, four each on Laning Drive and Arbor Court, two each on Toyon Court and Mission Trail, and one on Dry Creek Lane.

Of the Portola Valley thefts, two occurred on Shawnee Pass and two more on Iroquois Trail, with one each on Mapache, Ash Lane, Meadowood Drive and Arapahoe Court.

The victims "told us that they haven't locked their cars ever since they moved there," Lt. Schumaker said. "It's kind of frustrating." ■

Free first Fridays at history museum

The San Mateo County History Museum offers free admission on the first Friday of each month. The next one will be Friday, Sept. 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

At 11 a.m. preschool children will be invited to learn about growing plants for food. They will create their own vegetable prints and take their artwork

home. The staff will present a program in the Nature's Bounty exhibit, which features displays about farming. At 2 p.m., museum docents will lead tours for adults.

The museum is located at 2200 Broadway, within the 102-year-old "Old Courthouse" in Redwood City.

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Almanac photo by Michelle Le

New day at Hillview

The Menlo Park school community celebrated the new Hillview Middle School campus with an open house and ribbon-cutting on Tuesday, Aug. 28. This is a view of the courtyard at the new two-story campus at 1100 Elder Ave. at Santa Cruz Avenue in Menlo Park.

Ladera's Matt James has big plans for next generation

continued from page 5

study from the Journal of the American Medical Association.

■ Among 2012-13 state budgets, there are “identifiable deep” cuts to preschool and K-12 spending in 23 states, cuts to public health care in 20 states, and cuts to higher education in 25 states, according to analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Given these grim statistics, what would the Center for the Next Generation do? Its “Too Small to Fail” program, set to begin in November, will initiate a multi-year national public information campaign to address student debt, children living in poverty, the struggles of working parents, the impact of digital media on families, and chronic health issues among adolescents.

Over the next five years, strategic messages will go out as advertisements across the country via several platforms: TV, print, radio, billboard and social media; interactive online

resources for parents; annual parent surveys; discussions in town hall meetings; and white papers presented in collaboration with “other major research institutions and affinity groups.”

The targets are parents, businesses and government. Parents will be urged to give their children more of their time. The private sector should “provide support to families through workplace policies and support the things in communities that help kids — from parks to schools,” Mr. James says. As for the public sector: “Our nation’s leaders must adequately support the institutions and infrastructure that will enable the next generation to grow and succeed. America’s kids deserve a world-class education and a quality health care system that will help them become our country’s best generation yet.”

Will the support involve higher taxes? “Yes,” Mr. James says. “Taxes are an essential part of supporting services — and we have been cutting the taxes that

support kids so increased taxes do need to be discussed.”

Among 34 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2010, student performance in the United States ranked 25th in math and 17th in science, according to the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. With U.S. job openings for engineers of 200,000 every year, U.S. colleges graduate just 60,000 engineers compared to 600,000 each in India and China, the SVLG says.

Occupations in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) “generate the technological changes that shape all other occupations,” the SVLG says. “Having the talent to fill these positions is essential to ensure growth. ... STEM jobs are the engine that will power the country out of recession.”

Breaking the habit

The other half of the Center’s mission is breaking the country’s dependence on fossil fuel, and thereby shifting the direc-

tion of the economy toward clean energy and the jobs that come with it.

No small challenge, given national and international trends alluded to on the Center’s website:

■ The United States in 2010 spent \$256 billion on imported oil, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. That’s just over half of the \$497.8 billion annual trade deficit — the amount our collective spending for imported goods exceeded our collective income from exported goods.

■ While worldwide investment in clean energy in 2010 grew 30 percent, to \$243 billion, the United States came in third with \$34 billion behind China with \$54 billion and Germany with \$41 billion, according to a report by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

■ The global capacity in 2010 for electricity from photovoltaic cells grew 131 percent, according to a U.S. Department of Energy report. That capacity rose 54 percent in the United

States, dropping the U.S. to fifth place in the world, behind Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic and Japan.

The Center will tackle the conversion to clean energy as a regional issue, Mr. James says. One model, he says, is the New England Clean Energy Council, a “progressively pragmatic” group that represents wind, solar and battery companies and gives them clout together that they don’t have alone. “I want to figure out how to do that across the country,” to create a nationwide chamber of commerce for clean-energy companies, Mr. James says.

Why do fossil fuel companies and their customers stay with coal and oil? Because it’s extremely profitable, he says. “If they know over time that there are advantages in moving to a new technology, they’ll go there.”

The next generation

Asked about strengths and weaknesses in the next generation, Mr. James says he is “totally impressed with the next generation’s ability to think outside the box. Not just in California but around the country. They’re incredibly optimistic about their future.”

Their principal weakness is not their fault: too much debt after college. “That makes it hard to dig out and do the other things you need to do to start a family,” he says.

Mr. James recently hired two women to direct two key programs: for children and families, and for advanced energy and sustainability. Do women bring something unique? “To raise successful kids, you need successful families,” he says in an email. “And the truth is that women still bear primary responsibility for child-rearing. They tend to better understand how family-friendly policies affect families and are more willing to push for family-friendly policies from both government and businesses.

“I have been fortunate to work with incredibly smart, capable and caring women at both Kaiser and now at the Center. I tend to find that the women I work with (and key advisers on my work, like my wife Donna) have a greater sense of what needs to be done to build and support successful families.” ■

PRESCHOOL

continued from page 5

presented her own. “Because I would like to enter the business, I called all the preschools and they all have waitlists. They could have an opening for a 3-year-old, and maybe you have

a 2-year-old.”

Councilman Peter Ohtaki made a motion to deny the appeal. “I listened carefully to concerns expressed ... at the same time I also get concerned about regulating businesses that might serve a useful purpose in

Menlo Park.”

“This is really a case of competing values,” Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson commented. “I guess it’s up to us to weigh these factors and make our best judgment.”

She seconded the motion, not-

ing that she didn’t think there was “enough weight of evidence” to find that the school would be detrimental to the community, particularly considering projected demographic pressures as Menlo Park continues to grow and add to the school-age

population.

The council voted 4-0 to allow the preschool to go forward, with officials urging residents to let the city know about any problems that could be resolved through techniques such as traffic calming. ■

Hiking hotel tax: city fights ballot language

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

■ ELECTION

Ballot review came to a screeching halt in Menlo Park recently when a perusal of the rebuttal to Measure K, the city's proposal to raise the hotel tax from 10 to 12 percent, lighted upon the following sentence:

"Charging hotel taxes at rates higher than those (in) neighboring cities discourages travel and penalizes businesses that cater to travelers, i.e. restaurants, bars, tourist attractions, etc."

Problem: The hotel tax, otherwise known as the transient occupancy tax (TOT), would match that of neighbors Redwood City, East Palo Alto and Palo Alto, if increased.

The Libertarian Party of San Mateo County in coordination with the Silicon Valley Taxpayers Association (SVTA) wrote the rebuttal.

City Attorney Bill McClure said that after discussing the

issue with the authors, the city took the case to court on Aug. 20 to get the language changed to "eliminate what we felt was misleading if not false information. Their agreement to amend the ballot argument did not include an admission that language was misleading."

Menlo Park says the rebuttal argument by the measure's opponents was "misleading."

The sentence was rewritten to read, "Increasing hotel taxes discourages travel and penalizes businesses that cater to travelers, i.e. restaurants, bars, tourist attractions,

etc." "The city appears to be claiming that 'neighbor' means 'adjacent,'" said Harland Harrison, who signed the rebuttal. He pointed out that some Peninsula cities — San Carlos, for example — do have a lower hotel tax. "Webster's Dictionary says otherwise, and I think they are just trying to harass and silence us."

Mr. Harrison, who chairs the San Mateo County Libertarian party, said he hadn't seen the change, noting that the association agreed to the stipulation on his behalf. "I do trust SVTA, but I think due process should at least require notifying me before changing the argument printed above my name."

Rebuttal author Mark Hinkle said he's been opposing government-imposed taxes for more than 25 years. "As a Libertarian, my view is that taxation is theft and thus immoral. So, it's my duty to protest any time elected officials put tax increases on

the ballot," he explained. "I also write arguments and rebuttals because, frankly if I don't, it's very likely no one else will. Of the five other ballot arguments that I wrote in San Mateo County, only one had another argument against it."

He didn't think the court-ordered change significantly impacted the argument that tax increases are bad business. In Mr. Hinkle's view, tax increases equal depressed economic activity, which means less money for everyone, whereas tax cuts lead to higher revenue.

"Any way you look at it, it's all

bad. If Menlo Park wants more revenue, they should reduce the TOT to make Menlo Park hotels more competitive compared to neighboring cities' TOT."

Mr. Hinkle maintains that the original wording of his rebuttal was accurate. "I still maintain that's a true statement. I didn't say Menlo Park charges a TOT higher than neighboring cities. It's a general statement that is true," he commented. "I personally would have fought the deletion, but then I'm not the President of the SVTA, and it's not my budget that's on the line, i.e. loser pays court costs." ■

Lieselotte (Lisa) Mitchell

Lieselotte (Lisa) Mitchell, of Los Altos, California, passed away on Monday, August 20, 2012, after suffering a stroke on Aug 16, 2012. She was 74 years old.

Lisa was born in Nuremberg, Germany on December 28, 1937. Her parents were Heinrich and Sophie Trautner. She met her Husband, Ralph Flint Mitchell, Jr. of Fresno, California, in Konstanz, Germany where they were married on June 8, 1957. Soon after, she and Ralph moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where they raised their two sons, Mark Mitchell of Menlo Park, and Robert Mitchell of Los Altos. Ralph passed away in December of 1993.

Lisa will always be remembered and sadly missed by

her children, grandsons and family. She loved and was so proud of her sons and grandsons. She is survived



by her son Robert Mitchell of Los Altos, daughter-in-law and grandsons, Mark, Trish, Alden and Flint Mitchell of Menlo Park, her sister, Julie Messmer of Lincoln, California and her brother Erich Trautner of Konstanz, Germany.

Lisa enjoyed gardening, sewing, knitting, traveling, golfing and taking long walks with her son, Robert. Services will be held on September 14, 2:30pm, at Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, CA.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Valley Presbyterian Church for their youth ministry.

PAID OBITUARY

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Menlo Park
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cafeborrone.com

BEST PIZZA

Applewood

1001 El Camino Real, Menlo Park
650-324-3486
applewoodpizza.com

BEST HAPPY HOUR

AND BEST FRENCH RESTAURANT

Left Bank

635 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park
650-473-6543
leftbank.com

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cafezoemenlopark.com

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Bulldog Sports & Fitness

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bulldogsportsandfitness.com

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The Pet Place

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lossalonez.com

BEST JEWELRY STORE

Gleim Jewelers

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Palo Alto
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gleimjewelers.com

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Classified Legal Advertising

Alicia Santillan

Published every Wednesday at
3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas,
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Newsroom: (650) 223-6525

Newsroom Fax: (650) 223-7525

Advertising: (650) 854-2626

Advertising Fax: (650) 854-3650

Email news and photos with

captions to:

Editor@AlmanacNews.com

Email letters to:

letters@AlmanacNews.com

The Almanac, established in September 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County. The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior Court of San Mateo County to publish public notices of a governmental and legal nature, as stated in Decree No. 147530, issued December 21, 1969.

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



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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

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

CALL the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

Splashy launch for next Facebook building

With the announcement that world-famous architect Frank Gehry will design its new west campus on the Bayfront Expressway, Facebook sent a clear message that the company is in the social network business for the long haul, and that CEO Mark Zuckerberg is firmly on that course despite the company's lagging stock price.

As expected from a craftsman of Mr. Gehry's stature, preliminary sketches show an unusual, if not spectacular, office building designed to blend into the landscape, rather than crash the senses like his Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Spain, or the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. Mr. Gehry has fashioned a friendly workspace on the main floor, a parking garage below and a garden on the roof. Employees will see finishes inside similar to the look of the company's east campus, which has been completely converted to "Facebook" style from its days as a warren of cubicles for the now-departed Sun Microsystems.

And as last week's Almanac's cover photo showed, Mr. Zuckerberg was involved in the creation of the building's design with Mr. Gehry. John Tenanes, director of global real estate for the company, said, "The building is reflective of our culture, and we hope it will offer an amazing environment for the engineers who will work there. We look forward to working with Frank and his team and anticipate a smooth and timely completion of the project."

If it receives city approval in time, the company intends to break ground this spring on the 10-acre project that will house 2,800 engineers at a site formerly occupied by Tyco Electronics and later owned by General Motors, which sold the property after the economic downturn. No price for the new building was disclosed, but apparently the company is not worried about the cost, which a spokesperson said should be on par with a typical Silicon Valley campus.

From the city of Menlo Park's perspective, this time around

the Facebook approval will be much less arduous; probably, no environmental impact report will be required since the new site was included in the report for the east campus. The company is requesting some zoning changes, but overall, the process should be straightforward, with Facebook paying a number of impact fees, but nothing like the charges for the east campus.

From the remarks he posted on his own Facebook page, it appears that Mr. Zuckerberg wants the very best for his employees and the Menlo Park campus. He said he is "...excited to work with Frank Gehry to design our new campus. The idea is to make the perfect engineering space: one giant room that fits thousands of people, all close enough to collaborate together. It will be the largest open floor plan in the world, but it will also have plenty of private, quiet spaces as well. The roof of the building will be a park that blends into the community with a long walking trail, a field and lots of places to sit. From the outside it will appear as if you're looking at a hill in nature."

Unlike the converted Sun Microsystems space on the east campus, the west campus building will demonstrate how the company sees itself, and how much it values its employees. To succeed in the highly competitive social media industry, Facebook will need to attract the best and brightest minds to its work spaces. An exotic building designed by someone of Frank Gehry's stature is one way Facebook can gain an edge over other mega competitors like Google, LinkedIn, Twitter and Apple.

The company already offers a lineup of perks, such as free shuttle rides to work from San Francisco, free dry cleaning and free gift cards to shop in downtown Menlo Park. Mr. Zuckerberg wants the best engineers to work at Facebook, and the new west campus should help him meet his goal. There is a lot of work to be done if Facebook expects to continue adding to the nearly one billion people around the world who continue to use the social network.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Writer sees flaws in new library argument

Editor:

Sandy Crittenden's letter about Atherton's library-in-the-park debate is misleading, either from exaggeration, ignorance, or his bias.

The Environmental Impact Report did not conclude that Holbrook-Palmer Park is the preferred site. In fact the response in the EIR to my idea was only to say it was not in their assigned task, which was to evaluate the environmental impact of placing the library in the park.

They pointed out some unanticipated problems, too. The council voted 3-2 to put the library in the park, but the four living past council members were all against it. The steering committee was selected by the



Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

Silas and Olive Holbrook Palmer lived at Elmwood in Atherton until the home burned down in 1958, just a few months after Olive died. The 22-acre estate was given to the town of Atherton for a park, which survives today.

Continued on next page

LETTERS

Our readers write

Continued from previous page

council and included one of the three council members in favor.

Mr. Crittenden's answer to "Why now?" misses two major negative reasons.

One, the high-speed rail project may or may not harm the present library. Only time will tell.

Two, reading is becoming even more digital with an unknown impact on libraries everywhere — time will tell.

So, in my view now is a terrible time to spend all our library money, harming the park in the process, when there is no valid reason to do it now.

*Tom Croft
Moulton Drive, Atherton*

Increasing water rates struck a nerve

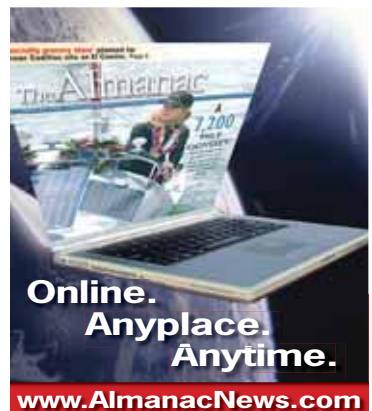
Editor:

I would like to express my complete agreement with last week's letter from Diane Braun in regard to Cal Water's request for another rate increase.

My own bills have skyrocketed. Last Monday I phoned the CPUC using the phone number provided. As soon as I said "I am calling to comment on Rate Increase No. 12-07-007" the woman who answered said "I don't have time to deal with this" and she hung up the phone. I was stunned.

In this economy with many people struggling to pay their bills, it is outrageous to justify another rate increase to fund personnel benefits. I hope that many others will study the Rate Increase No. 12-07-007 explanation that is tucked into their latest bill and email a protest. Since I have shared this sentiment with the 1,500 neighbors who participate in the Portola Valley Forum, I have had a stream of emails from people with like sentiments. I encourage everyone to get involved and make their opinions known to the CPUC.

*Alice Schenk
Westridge Drive, Woodside*



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Cal Water explains rate hike request

By Tony Carrasco

The California Water Service Company (Cal Water) is required by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to file a General Rate Case (GRC) every three years to ensure that water rates accurately reflect the costs of providing water service. Over the next 18 months, the CPUC and its Division of Ratepayer Advocates will thoroughly review our operations, expenses, and planned water system improvements before deciding whether to approve the increase we requested or something less.

In a recent letter to the Almanac, a reader expressed some concerns about Cal Water's rate case that I would like to address.

First, Cal Water **only** earns a reasonable, CPUC-approved profit on capital invested in water system infrastructure, and this is a very small part of the customer's total bill. The rest of the water bill is a direct reflection of the actual costs of providing water service.

The writer notes that her bill has increased 146 percent since July of

2006. We do not provide water service to her street, nor do we find her name in our customer data base, so we cannot address her bill specifically. However, the typical customer with a 5/8-inch x 3/4-inch meter uses 22 units of water and has experienced an increase of approximately 64 percent since 2006.

More than two-thirds of this 64 percent increase represents increased charges for wholesale water purchased from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). The SFPUC is in the midst of a \$5 billion refurbishment and earthquake retrofit of its system. Our purchased water costs will continue to increase until the project is complete. All cities and water agencies on the mid-peninsula purchase water from the SFPUC and have similar rate structures.

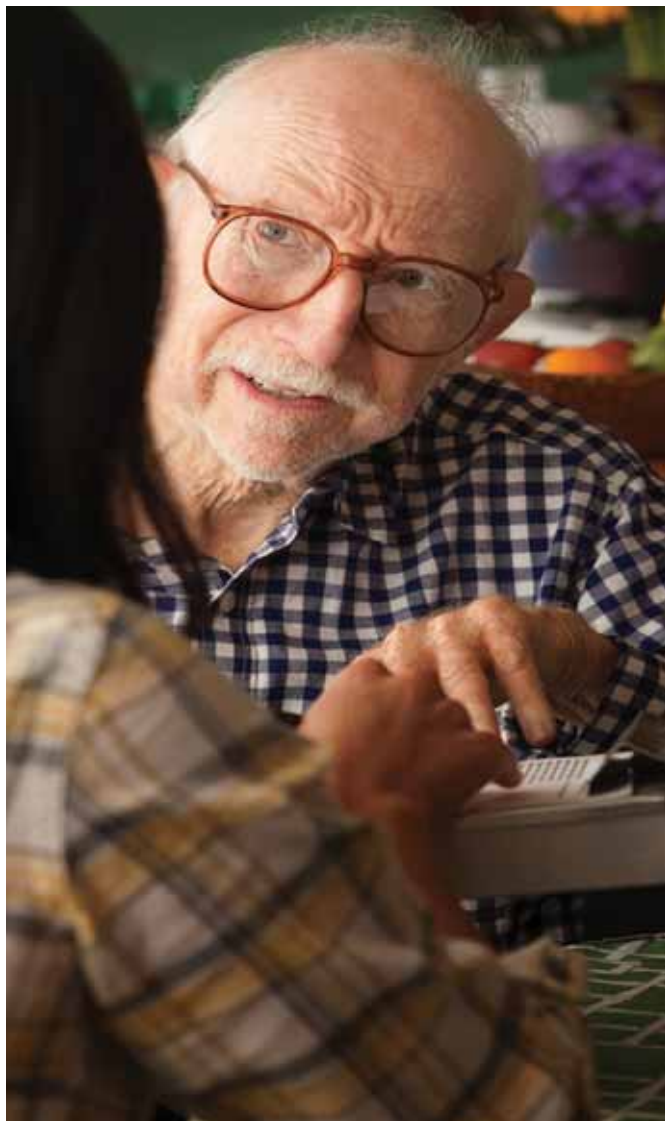
Second, the reader asks why bills are increasing despite the fact that usage is decreasing. The inescapable fact is that many of the costs of providing a clean, reliable water supply are fixed regardless of how much water customers use. Cal Water is requesting an increase in per-unit costs to ensure that fixed costs are covered

despite sales revenue decreases. Again, this is a challenge faced not just by Cal Water customers, but by water users throughout California.

Third, the reader asks why Cal Water is "increasing payouts" for employee health care and pensions. Actually, Cal Water is not increasing payouts for health care and benefits; rather, the filing asks for recovery of higher costs for the **same** level of health care and benefits. We believe that we have a responsibility to ensure that benefits are fully funded so that we can meet our commitments to the employees who dedicate their careers serving our customers.

I am proud of the hard-working men and women of Cal Water, who are dedicated to providing high-quality water and excellent service to customers as efficiently as possible. We believe this rate increase is necessary because the costs of providing water service have increased, but the CPUC will review our request for a water increase thoroughly before issuing a decision in late 2013.

Tony Carrasco is the Bear Gulch District manager for the California Water Service Company



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